Dancing with a billboard: Exploring the affective repertoires of gentrifying urban spaces

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abstract

Based on analysis of a spontaneous dance encounter with a billboard on a construction site in a gentrifying neighborhood in Copenhagen, this article examines the potential of dance as an affective methodology for engaging with urban spaces on standby. Drawing on dance studies, affect theory and feminist new materialisms, I discuss an autoethnographic vignette of the dance encounter to show how affective methodology enables attending to embodied, spatial and temporal aspects of standby as a mode of organisation of temporary urban spaces. I propose the notion of affective repertoires to capture how dance can surface the range of ambivalent, heterogeneous affects that permeate and are afforded by the 'active inactivity' of standby. I discuss how dance as an affective methodology expands the researcher's capacities to affect and be affected, facilitating knowledge production that better accommodates the ambivalence, frictions and multiplicity of urban spaces on standby. Apart from proposing the notion of affective repertoires as a prism for unraveling urban spaces on standby, the article's discussion of the potential of dance as embodied knowing contributes to the emerging research field of affective methodologies.

Affective methodology for urban spaces on standby

This article explores dance as an affective methodology for unraveling embodied, spatial and temporal dimensions of gentrifying urban spaces. These interim spaces offer a unique prism for examining the ambivalence,

frictions and heterogeneities of standby, since they simultaneously embody acceleration and suspension; change and standstill. Earlier studies have explored the multiplicity and uncertainty of interstitial, disordered urban spaces or wastelands (Edensor, 2005; Brighenti, 2013; Vacher, 2015). On one hand, as these spaces are perceived as un-safe, un-inhabited and un-productive, their unintentional mode of organisation seems to offer alternatives to modernity and utilitarianism; on the other hand, they represent a 'wasteland aesthetic' that romanticizes and commodifies urban wilderness and abandonment (Gandy, 2016). In contrast, Mortimer-Sandilands has discussed how wastelands can point 'towards a queer ecology that both emerges from and politicizes melancholy natures, incorporating the experience of a "world of wounds" into an ethical stance that resists, rather than fostering, fetish', where these landscapes foster affective experiences 'of loss and change, rather than idyll and replacement' (2010: 334-345). Consequently, the mode of standby of urban wastelands seems to oscillate between continuity and disruption, holding the potential to challenge *and* reinforce predominant ways of relating to and being in urban space.

In addition, past and present temporary activist and artist presences further augment the standby of many privately-owned vacant lots in gentrifying neighborhoods, including the one discussed in this article. Some studies suggest that these alternative uses of space offer possibilities for democratic participation, contesting prevailing norms and inspiring new urban politics (Pinder, 2008; Paiva and Cachinho, 2018). Others argue that such DIY (Do-It-Yourself) spaces might be limited to small-scale interventions that do not necessarily call for alternative forms of authority and political subjectivity (Iveson, 2013). Furthermore, studies point to how alternative uses of space for creative and/or community-building purposes can lubricate urban development and aggravate the long-term precarity of their users (Madanipour, 2018), contributing to urban branding and gentrification (Colomb, 2012). In other words, artistic and activist uses of 'empty spaces' do not necessarily challenge the spatiotemporal logics of gentrification that fluctuate between desires to preserve an authentic past and longing for improvement and progress (Kern, 2015; 2016; Valverde, 2015; Lapiņa, 2017). In short, earlier studies highlight affective ambivalence and tensions regarding the materiality and potentiality of interim spaces in gentrifying

neighborhoods, where their modes of standby can both comprise catalysts for change and reinforce mainstream urban development.

This article explores dance as an affective methodology that enabled me to feel and bring-together, differentiating-entangling (Barad, 2007, 2014) these frictions and forces of the 'active inactivity' of standby of urban spaces in transition. I analyse an autoethnographic vignette based on fieldnotes written after I spontaneously danced with a blank billboard in Nordvest, a gentrifying neighborhood in Copenhagen. On the night of the dance, the billboard had just appeared on a construction site that had been seemingly dormant for more than a year and a half. Even being aware of lives unfolding and affects ticking in these construction sites that were put to and afforded various temporary uses, I saw them as embedded into spatiotemporal logics of gentrification: as awaiting development. The dance offered a mo(ve)ment of dishabituation, disrupting this predominant analytical prism. It reconfigured what could be sensed and known, attuning me to perceive and conceptualize flows and multiplicities of urban vacancy. I capture these tensions, ambivalences and heterogeneities by developing the notion of 'affective repertoires' of space.

Affect offers a unique prism for approaching urban spaces on standby. Drawing on affect theory and feminist new materialisms, I approach affect as the medium through which space, time and bodies come to matter (Lapiņa, 2020a). As discussed above, urban spaces on standby are neither 'on' nor 'off', in an ambiguous state of in – between. Their standby *feels* passive, dormant, hibernating; and at the same time, under tension, available, ready to be activated: a site of 'active inactivity' both outside and within spatiotemporal logics of gentrification. This ambiguity has an affective charge: as proposed by Berlant (2016: 395), sites of ambivalence are also sites of attachment, intimacy and desire; in other words, sites of affective saturation. Focusing on affect enables studying flows and intensities of standby that circulate across bodies, space and time, not necessarily directly observable or articulated in words. Consequently, 'finding form for the empiricism of the unsaid' (Berlant et al., 2017: 14) calls for attending to bodily and affective experiences. For instance, in her study of post-conflict urban spaces as affectively 'sticky', Laketa shows how 'performative space enacted as an assembly of a plurality

of bodies opens the notion of the performative beyond the linguistic domain' (2018: 181).

The past decades have brought a burgeoning forth of theoretical work on affect in social sciences and humanities, often linked to developments in feminist thought, nonrepresentational geography and philosophy (Grosz, 1994; Massumi, 2002; Sedgwick, 2003; Ahmed, 2004, 2010; Manning, 2007; Thrift, 2007; Clough, 2008; Berlant, 2011; Blackman, 2012). Following a Spinozist understanding, affect can be conceived as a distributed field of flows and intensities circulating through, around and beyond bodies (Clough, 2008; Blackman, 2012; McCormack, 2013), entailing mutual enactment of bodies, space and time (Braidotti, 2002; Mol, 2002; Barad, 2007). The fluidity, heterogeneity and diffuse distribution of affect pose challenges for empirical studies. Affect can feel impossible to locate or pin down: it seems to be everywhere at once and nowhere in particular.

Despite recent work on affective methodologies (Hickey-Moody, 2013; Knudsen and Stage, 2015; Lorimer, 2013), there remains a lack of methodological developments supporting empirically grounded research on affect (Blackman, 2015; Berlant, 2016). In particular, there is a need for methodologies that account for how affect is felt and experienced through the body, enabling bodies to act, feel and think in new ways, producing new embodied knowledges (Borovica, 2019).

Drawing on studies of dance and affectivity, I explore the potential of dance as an affective methodology. I examine how dance enables addressing spatial, temporal and embodied facets of urban spaces on standby, attending to the affective ambivalence that inhabits and fuels it. I propose the notion of affective repertoires, applied to gentrifying urban spaces, to examine how ambiguous affective circulations can manifest as more of the same, as being locked in place, but also offer instances of rupture, disrupting habitual ways of thinking, being and acting in the world.

Affective methodology entails experimenting with feeling and form, qualitatively mutating (Berlant, 2016) the range of experiencing and knowing. Methodological approaches to affect have aimed to address its heterogeneity and ambivalence by emphasizing affective attunement, sensitivity and

experimentation (Stewart, 2011; McCormack, 2013; Blackman, 2015). In addition, Gherardi argues for the need of attending to affective 'placeness': 'relating to a place, a dwelling in it (…) to stress the becoming-with and the affective attunement to other (human and more-than-human) bodies and histories, and the material-semiotic construction of place' (2019: 750).

As I will demonstrate in my analysis of the vignette, dance enables an attunement to place, time and embodiment that is pivotal when investigating urban spaces on standby. Dance enables exploring and performing standby as a continuous unfolding of the potential for something to happen, differentiating-entangling conflicting forces and intensities (Barad, 2014). Combined with the autoethnographic vignette as an exercise in performative writing (Page, 2017; Lapiņa, 2020a), dance emphasizes the co-becoming of the various agents that inhabit urban spaces on standby: human and more-than-human bodies, discourses and affects, their coming-together-apart enabled by an asynchronous, multi-layered experience of time (Borovica, 2019).

Before presenting the vignette that tells of the dance, I provide context for this research by introducing Nordvest and its construction sites on standby. I then discuss how dance can comprise an affective methodology, offering prisms for approaching spatial, temporal and embodied aspects, as well as affective repertoires, of urban spaces on standby.

Construction sites on standby as spaces of affective saturation

I engaged with the construction site and the billboard as part of the fieldwork for my PhD (2014-2017). The PhD was a study of changing spaces, relations and intersecting markers of difference in Nordvest, a gentrifying neighbourhood in Copenhagen, involving fieldwork and interviews (Lapiņa, 2017). In 2014, there were more than ten seemingly dormant construction sites in Nordvest. The pace of gentrification had slowed as the housing market in Copenhagen took years to recover after the financial crisis of 2008-2009. Some of these sites had stood seemingly abandoned, on standby, for more than a decade. However, even as these sites were awaiting development, they were teaming with life, initiatives including a DIY skatepark, ad hoc

neighborhood potluck dinners, an old factory building turned into a center for independent culture and arts, a resident-driven park, tents put up by homeless people, campfires, parties, and a housing activism workshop. The sites were inhabited by assemblages of human and more-than-human making: weeds, bicycle parts, old furniture, scraps of plastic, animals. Consequently, at the time of fieldwork, these spaces comprised a multi-layered blend of DIY urbanisms (Iveson, 2013), artistic interventions in urban space (Pinder, 2008; Vacher, 2015; Paiva and Cachinho, 2018) and interstitial urban wastelands (Brighenti, 2013; Gandy, 2013, 2016).

The ambivalent affects surrounding the construction sites surfaced in my interviews with residents. My informants evoked the vacant lots to speak about the neighborhood as a place that 'just is', outside a spatiotemporal logic of development and optimization (Lapiņa, 2020b). In other words, they romanticized these vacant sites, attracted by their unintentional nature, 'wasteland aesthetic' (Gandy, 2016), edginess and authenticity. On the other hand, they emphasized the multiple interim use practices of the sites as contributing to a sense of liveliness, creativity and community activism. Yet, informants also highlighted the precarity of these sites as doomed to disappear, as indicators for the pace of gentrification. Thus the sites comprised spaces of affective saturation (Laketa, 2018) with regards to the ambivalence and heterogeneity of standby, combining seeming standstill, temporary activation, suspension and anticipated acceleration.

In the middle of my fieldwork, in summer of 2015, I myself moved to Nordvest. I had not intended to 'go native', but Nordvest as a gentrifying neighborhood was the place where my then-partner and me could afford an apartment. We co-purchased an apartment next to one of the construction sites, the one where the billboard would eventually appear. Between 2009 and 2013, the industrial, decaying buildings on the site had housed a Do-It-Yourself, Do-It-Together cultural centre, The Candy Factory. The centre had offered a range of events and activities: concerts, exhibitions, debates, a bike workshop, recycling initiatives, a garden full of mostly dumpster-dived plants. The activists had had a temporary use agreement with the owner of the lot. In 2013, realizing their departure could no longer be delayed, they used the funds raised (by far insufficient to purchase the site) to arrange one last event. They

whitewashed the buildings. A former activist told me this was a gesture of erasure, dispelling accumulated traces of their presence.

The whitewashed buildings stood as a ghostly, skeletal-like presence/absence for over a year. As we moved into our new apartment in the summer of 2015, the construction process was gaining momentum – finally, it seemed. I witnessed the changes unfold close-hand. Digging of a foundation pit, an eerily turquoise-blue body of water in the bottom. Razing of plants. Piling up of the various objects inhabiting the site for removal – broken furniture, moldy mattresses, empty bottles, weathered cardboard, a broken shopping cart. Appearance of a wired fence around the site.

Thus in the summer of 2015, just before my dance with the billboard, there was a sense of transition. The feel of standby had changed: activation seemed no longer a matter of indeterminable future. Yet, the site had not yet become a full-blown construction site; there was still a feeling of lingering and suspension. This article examines how dance, as an affective methodology, enabled me to feel and explore these contradictory, fluctuating affective repertoires of urban spaces on standby. Before presenting the vignette of the dance with the billboard, I review insights from scholarship on dance which inform my proposal of dance as an affective methodology.

Dance as an affective methodology for urban spaces on standby

Artistic practices offer ways to approach the affective ambivalence of urban spaces on standby, as they engage directly with feelings, senses and embodied experience (Pinder, 2008), changing the feel of time and space (Paiva and Cachinho, 2018). Dance is a particularly fruitful point of departure for affective methodology for standby. It is a 'technique through which bodies develop the capacity to be affected by other bodies' (McCormack, 2013: 74), attuned to the environment and affective responses of others in that environment (Atkinson and Duffy, 2019: 22). Dance performs key elements of affective methodological approaches: it facilitates 'a slowed ethnographic practice attuned to the forms and forces unfolding in scenes and encounters' (Stewart, 2017: 192) and attunes the dancing body to the entanglements and relations that make up the place it dances with/in (Gherardi, 2019).

In my own practice as a dancer, which has deepened since 2015, I approach dance as a way to expand my body and its capacities to feel, relate and resonate; to be and become otherwise (Braidotti, 2002). I become increasingly aware of how dance heightens my sensitivities to my environment, also outside moments where I am actually dancing. Of particular importance with regard to exploring the affective ambivalence of urban spaces on standby, I find that dance increases my ability to register and make space for contradictory feelings that pull in multiple directions, allowing me to experience embodiment as simultaneously fragmented, outstretched and distributed.

Dance offers opportunities for new experiences and conceptualizations of space, time and embodiment with regards to urban spaces on standby. Studies of dance have explored how it influences audiences' and dancers' affective experiences of *space* (Simpson, 2011; Barbour and Hitchmough, 2014; Edensor and Bowdler, 2015; Paiva and Cachinho, 2018; Atkinson and Duffy, 2019). These studies show how dance can expose and challenge assumptions about how spaces can be occupied and the actions that they afford. Dance invites us to 'understand place as an effect of the inhabitation of movement' where 'space and movement fold into each other and are strongly dependent on the corporeal dimensions of the body' (Atkinson and Duffy, 2019: 21-23). For instance, through witnessing dance performances in public spaces such as streets and squares, the habitual experience of these spaces changes: passages of transit become spaces for lingering, inviting different forms of experience and social interaction (Simpson, 2011; Edensor and Bowdler, 2015; Paiva and Cachinho, 2018). Furthermore, dance's primacy of movement questions emphasis on boundaries, rootedness and territories that are characteristic of static conceptions of space and place (Cresswell, 2015). In other words, dance can attune the ethnographer to multiplicities of urban spaces on standby.

Dance also affords new ways of inhabiting and experiencing *time*. Dance can disrupt habitual, everyday rhythms that direct ways of acting in space (Edensor and Bowdler, 2015). It can slow down time (Barbour and Hitchmough, 2014), as if adding depth and thickness to temporality. In her analysis of improvised dance workshops with female university students interested in creative methods and feminist theory, Borovica (2019: 30) shows how dance as a method invites an 'asynchronous experience of time (…)

– time in dance is experienced as interrupted, alinear, contingent of past and future together with presence'. Dance can also represent a way to elicit and re-configure memories of past events. For instance, after a screening of a documentary that resonated with the participants' experiences of intergenerational trauma, To (2015) invited the members of the audience to perform a series of self-chosen movements. Conveying affective responses beyond words, these movements embodied the past that continues to haunt and rupture the present (Gordon, 2008), transcending 'the limits of verbal and written engagement of haunted histories' (To, 2015: 82). These examples show how movement can enable experiences and conceptualisations of non-linear, multidirectional temporalities. The seemingly past and yet-to-arrive come together into a disjointed, multi-layered temporality, which is pertinent for addressing the temporal aspects of standby.

Apart from opening up the multiplicities of space and time, dance (recon-) figures the dancing *body*, enhancing its capacities to move and be moved. Dance attunes us to sensory and affective flows, evoking the relationality and potentiality of our embodiment (Borovica, 2019). The directionality of movement emphasizes that the body is not delimited by flesh, skin and bones but continuously made through embodied, affective encounters: 'to point to something is to stretch the body out to the object but also to draw the object into the articulatory potential of bodily movement' (Atkinson and Duffy, 2019: 23). This echoes feminist materialist conceptions of the body and matter as affectively made, distributed, fluid and relational (Barad, 2007; Bennett, 2010; Blackman, 2012; Neimanis, 2017). Through lived movement, dance enables bodily experiences of, and co-becomings with, ambivalent affective flows of urban spaces on standby.

In order to explore the affective flows of urban sites on standby that dance made available to me, I propose the notion of 'affective repertoires' of space. I draw on the notion 'repertoires of site' employed by Barbour and Hitchmough (2014) in their analysis of a site-specific dance performance in a Chinese garden. Drawing on fieldwork and autoethnographic vignettes, the authors show how the sensory environment is configured by the dancers' capacities to move. Consequently, (witnessing) new ways of moving can change experiences of a given site. Barbour and Hitchmough (2014: 67) conceptualize repertoire as a 'range of cultural, traditional, personal and

physical choices available, including the range of typical movement behaviours of people in the site and those suggested by the site'. I conceive affective repertoires of standby as the range of ambivalent, contradictory affects that permeate and are afforded by urban spaces on standby. Here, 'affective repertoires' do not denote human emotional capacities to feel (as when the term appears in, for instance, psychology) but rather the capacities of a site to evoke and afford a range of affects in encounters between (researching) bodies and space. As I discuss in the analysis following the autoethnographic vignette, dance offers new ways of investigating how affect is spatialized, and how it makes up space, addressing affective ambivalence and multiplicity.

A dance with a billboard on a construction site

I come upon the billboard on a Friday night in August. I am on my way home from a conference dinner, stimulated, tired, full of resonance from conversations at a harbourside restaurant. The keynote speakers at the conference made repeated references to dance as a metaphor for thinking. 'We are all dancing', one of them said, most of the bodies implicated in this 'we' trapped in rows of auditorium chairs attached to one another. A jazz band was hired to play at the dinner, yet hardly anyone danced.

Warm breezes embrace me as I bike home, listening to music on my headphones. As I maneuver my bike over the cobblestones into our street, I am confronted by a blank, shimmering surface on a metal and concrete podium, elevated over the street.

This object is vibrating, humming with activity. There is a buzz emanating from it. I make sense of the object as a yet-blank billboard, a surface that will be claimed by advertisements for the new condominiums to be built on the site that is now enclosed by a wire fence.

I immediately perceive the billboard as a threatening, monstrous presence, a harbinger of gentrification. I see it as if it was already displaying advertising images of nuclear family life in Danish design surroundings: images with authentic, stylish edge that I imagine would sell apartments in this part of the city.

I park and lock my bike in its usual place next to the wire fence that separates me from the billboard. I have made up my mind about what it is I see. Yet the vibration continues to tickle and nudge me. I am repelled and yet drawn to the billboard. Separated by the metal fence, I cannot walk up to it. I cast a furtive glance around me. The street is empty. I take off my backpack. Somehow it happens that I start dancing, facing the billboard.

As I move, I sense us moving together. We are apart, and yet aligned, made of the same stuff. Like the billboard, I am a monstrous harbinger of gentrification, embodiment of capitalism and nuclear family aspirations, just having taken a loan to co-purchase an apartment on this street with my romantic partner. And the billboard and me are both more than that: entanglements of feeling and matter, distributed and interconnected layers of experience. We cannot be contained. 'We' are in the concrete that forms the foundation of the billboard, the music playing in my headphones, the wire that forms a screen between us.

The billboard feels like a white hole, drawing me in while also multiplying me. We dance fluctuations of openings and closures. Our location is a portent of (im)possibility, spanning multiple layers and connections across space, time and modes of presence/absence.

The mo(ve)ment of our dancing bodies resonates with human and nonhuman presences, including ones that might seem gone or not-yet-arrived.

> *Ravaged plants   Candy Factory activists   peeling paint*

broken furniture

> *construction workers and equipment to arrive from Eastern Europe*

> *mildewed walls   spider webs in decaying buildings*

> *the blue lagoon at the bottom of the construction pit*

the new residents   glass, steel and concrete of the buildings to emerge

> *babies put to sleep on balconies*

> *rooms populated by Danish design objects made elsewhere*

We are all here, moving with one another. The space explodes-implodes into multiple connections.

I am not sure how long it is that we dance. My breathing has accelerated, my heart is beating. I no longer sense the vibration of the billboard as coming from the outside. I am with/in it, struck, undone.

At some point movement subsides even as the space continues humming.

At some point I pick up a rucksack from the ground. I take a deep breath. I find a set of keys. I turn and walk up to a front door of a building. The movements are mine, yet they feel alien.

Assembling an affective methodology for standby

Drawing on the vignette, this section explores how dance works as an affective methodology for studying urban spaces on standby. The dance enabled different sensorial experiences, interrupting the habitual observational and pragmatic modes of moving in the world (Paiva and Cachinho, 2018). These experiences had a lasting impact for knowledge production. I first examine how dance attuned me to openness and multiplicity of space, time and embodiment. I then explore how, through enabling me to 'think, feel, and act in new ways, (…) pivotal in opening investigation of the intangible, fleeting, and sensory dimensions of social life' (Borovica, 2019: 34), dance as an affective methodology affords unpacking affective repertoires of standby – attuning the dancing body to a broad range of feelings in movement. Finally, I discuss how dance as an affective methodology enables ambivalence and multiplicity in knowledge production.

Space, time and embodiment of urban spaces on standby

While we danced, space and time felt multiple, breaching out to what otherwise might have seemed elsewhere and else-when: the decaying factory building now torn down, the evicted activists, the condominiums and the bodies that would build and inhabit them. I had perceived the construction site as a singular location, on hold in an unfolding unidirectional gentrification narrative. Dance offered a way to experience asynchronous

time and multiplicity of space, making me attuned to the continuous discontinuity (Berlant, 2016) of standby. The dance enabled embodied, felt knowledge of time out of joint (Sharma, 2014), a present saturated with pasts that are not over and futures that are not yet-to-come (Gordon, 2008; Barad, 2017). Dancing (with) this multiplicity of space and time, I could apprehend the intensities and assemblages of movement and stillness (McCormack, 2013) of the site.

Furthermore, the dance transformed the dancing bodies. I felt it was not an 'I' who danced. It was a 'we', at first composed of me and the billboard, different yet '*aligned and made of the same stuff*', then extended to include other presences and mo(ve)ments. The embodied labour of the dance can be grasped as re-membering – a bodily activity of re-turning (Barad, 2017: 83), a re-shuffling of what, who, when and where register as present. This can be linked to Barad's notion of 'spacetimemattering' where 'scenes never rest, but are reconfigured within, dispersed across, and threaded through one another' (Barad, 2010: 240). The dance enabled me to sense this threading through, as I myself became thread through and resonated with the materialities of the billboard and the site.

The dance comprised a mo(ve)ment of becoming able to attend to how any kind of fixity ('myself', 'billboard', 'construction site to be developed') is '(...) only a semblance, a seeming, a projection effect of interest in a thing we are trying to stabilize' (Berlant, 2016: 394). Instead, matter became charged with intensity, splintering and layered; fluid, relational, multiple and multiplying. I was literally dancing with the no-more and not-yet presences of the construction site: the activists, the decaying factory building, the construction workers, the future human and more-than-human inhabitants of the condominiums. I sensed my body as an assemblage of multiple presences, its capacities to affect and become affected were expanded, attuned to a broader range of connections and intensities, feelings and actions (Massumi, 2002; Clough, 2008; Blackman, 2012).

In order to understand how dance works to expand the sensorium and capacities to assemble, surfacing bodies as relational matrices, open systems that reach towards one another (Manning, 2009: 66), I would like to visit the work of the philosopher Langer who conceives dance as 'vital movement' that

'is always at once subjective and objective, personal and public, willed (or evoked) and perceived' (1953: 174). She argues that dance movements constitute virtual powers:

> (...) all the motion seems to spring from powers beyond the performers. (...) dancers appear to magnetize each other; the relation between them is more than a spatial one, it is a relation of forces (...). They are dance forms, virtual powers. (*ibid.*: 175-176)

Langer's analysis of how dance movements are animated by powers beyond the performers is useful in exploring dance as an affective methodology. Dance literally extends the dancing body in space, time and with respect to what might seem bodily limits. A moment, a space, and bodies become experienced not just through movement, but *as movements*. As I will discuss in the final part of the analysis, these movements enact knowledges that accommodate frictions, multiplicity and ambiguity.

Affective repertoires of urban spaces on standby

I have explored how dance as an affective methodology enables unraveling temporal, spatial and embodied facets of urban spaces on standby. In this section, I unfold affective repertoires of urban spaces on standby: the range of ambivalent, heterogeneous affects circulating through and afforded by the spacetimemattering (Barad, 2007, 2017) of these sites.

Even as I and my informants experienced the construction sites as spaces of affective ambivalence, we were inclined to conceive them on a gentrification timeline. For instance, perceiving them as spaces that 'just are', outside of a logic of optimization and development (Lapiņa, 2020b), or juxtaposing community activism and artistic initiatives to modes of organising in the neoliberal city reinforces binary thinking. The construction sites on standby constitute opposites to what is happening elsewhere in Copenhagen, thus reproducing the latter as the norm.

Dancing attunes me to the standby of these sites as more than a glitch in the spatiotemporal logics of gentrification: to the multiplicity and entanglement of bodies and spaces, contradicting feelings, divergent mo(ve)ments. This is illustrated by how dance reconfigures the dancing bodies through affective circulations and entanglements, extending their possibilities to affect and be

affected (Hickey-Moody, 2013). I am drawn to and repelled by the billboard. I am moved and I start moving. We move together, breaching out in space and time, becoming a new experiential assemblage from difference (Braidotti, 2011; Berlant, 2016). 'Our' movements are continuously altered by the new sense of assemblage emerging, by the feeling that we are 'made of the same stuff', which remains uncontainable and divergent. The more monstrous and unrecognizable this assemblage feels, the more my surroundings spill into 'me' and 'I' into them, differentiating-entangling (Barad, 2014).

Dancing with the billboard enabled me to perceive fluctuating, overlapping affects of changing intensities: vague, impure, entangled. Affective repertoires of standby could be best conceptualised as the changing range and amplitude of these mo(ve)ments. Things remained different even through mo(ve)ments of recognition of them being made of the same stuff, resonating towards one another. Dance enabled attunement with the affective intensities that permeate standby as a heterogeneous space of becoming, making me perceive the space, its multiple presences and affects as entangled and multiple rather than binary opposites.

Dance movements expanded my capacities to feel and resonate with the billboard, the construction site and their multiple presences. I felt I was being moved by and moved with relational forces (Langer, 1953) which expanded my way of being present and conceiving the space. It made me relate differently to the site, disrupting the affective hierarchies and binaries of difference that had hitherto, without me entirely acknowledging it, structured my thinking: 'progressive' activists, 'monstrous' billboard, 'unjust' urban development. This highlights how dance enabled a way of relating where emplaced affective intensities work not towards establishing boundaries between 'us' and 'them' and 'thickenings of difference' (Laketa, 2018: 192) but towards increased apprehension of ambiguity and heterogeneity. This highlights the experimental quality of affective methodology (Gherardi, 2019), where a feeling of something happening disturbs and animates ideas already circulating in ways that might open up possibilities for thinking and be(com)ing otherwise (Braidotti, 2002; McCormack, 2013: 9-10). Dance enables exploring affective repertoires of standby as sensed amplitudes of mo(ve)ment where '(...) all objects are granular and moving toward each other to *make new forms of approach from difference and distance*' (Berlant, 2016: 408,

my emphasis). Dance enabled exploring and performing standby as a continuous, heterogeneous unfolding of the potential for something to happen, mattering through conflicting forces and intensities, simultaneously emergent and stifled.

The disruptive potential of the dance: The (un)knowability of urban spaces on standby

The dance has had lasting impact on my knowing of the construction sites of Nordvest. I continue struggling to make sense of these sites. While conceptualisations from other studies of urban spaces on standby resonate with particular facets or modes of organisation of Nordvest's construction sites, they also seem ill-fitting. At certain points of time, the construction sites could have been recognized as vague, unintentional spaces, urban wastelands (Gandy, 2013, 2016), as disordered (Edensor, 2005) or interstitial spaces (Brighenti, 2013). In other aspects, they might be conceived as dominated by temporary artistic and activist initiatives or DIY urbanisms (Pinder, 2008; Colomb, 2012; Iveson, 2013; Madanipour, 2018). Alternatively, they could be seen as contributing to the neighborhood's authenticity, edge and 'crunchy chic', fueling gentrification (Kern, 2015). In earlier work, I have evoked the term 'dormant' to capture the active inactivity of these spaces (Lapina, 2017, 2020a). However, also this notion does not capture how these sites are bursting with activity, not just on hold for something to happen.

The dance was a pivotal mo(ve)ment in bringing about this perpetual crisis of articulation, of making me aware of the multiple, heterogeneous affectivity of gentrifying urban spaces. The dance made me attuned to the interplay of fixity and change in affectively saturated spaces (Laketa, 2018), enabling me to attend to the multiple 'placeness' (Gherardi, 2019) and divergent spatiotemporal logics of the construction sites.

This shows how affective methodology can transform the sensibilities that shape the research process – and extend the researching bodies with regards to conceiving the affective, spatiotemporal and embodied facets of urban spaces on standby. Experiences of standby materialize as a field of changing intensities, making these felt fluctuations constitutive for knowledge production (Stewart, 2011; McCormack, 2013). 'Dynamic bodily potentiality

and multiple becomings' coexist with 'fixation, habit, repetition, accumulation, and willingness to break free (or not)' (Borovica, 2019: 29). However, rather than conceiving of these as two inherently different forms of experience (Borovica, 2019) or asking how affectivity of spaces can *either* reinforce boundaries *or* enable different comings-together (Laketa, 2018), my analysis shows how habits and ruptures, the surprising and the mundane, fixity and change, boundaries and fluidity morph into one another. As we danced, I no longer perceived the billboard as an external entity, a 'monstrous harbinger of gentrification'. The dance brought about a multiplicity of becomings and muddling of affective hierarchies: on one hand, I recognized myself as a 'monster' complicit in gentrification; at the same time, 'I' became woven into the assemblage of affects, bodies and spaces on/of the site. Furthermore, the dance queered habitual ways of being and moving: when the 'I', seemingly disentangled from the dance, performed the routine actions of picking up a rucksack, locating keys, unlocking a front door, they felt strange and uncanny, challenging taken-for-grantedness of ways of moving in the world. Affective repertoires of standby denote exactly these entanglements of familiarity and rupture, sameness and difference. They entail '(…) confidence in an apartness that recognizes the ordinary as a space *at once* actively null, delightfully animated, stressful, intimate, alien, and uncanny' (Berlant, 2016: 399, my emphasis).

As an affective methodology, dance mo(ve)ments hold the potential to move and disrupt 'us' and 'our' sensibilities, just like standby disrupts binaries of movement and standstill, transformation and being locked in place. As the body becomes open to be affected in new ways, it can encounter knowledges that resist established shapes, and change its form in the process.

However, these are knowledges that resist stable forms. My analysis remains haunted by a tension between the sensed and the articulated (and articulable). This process of knowledge production is wrought with aspirational ambivalence, manifesting as a tension between affective forces that pull in various directions. I keep feeling that the 'more of it' of affective repertoires of standby escapes analysis, that 'the thing of the event is still missing' (Borovica, 2019: 33). I choose to view this tension as one to be lived with(in) rather than solved (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994), one that might enable living the openness of situations (Massumi, 2015: 6). Often academic knowledge

production seeks to explain, reduce, solve and delimit ambiguity. I propose engaging with the tension of what can(not) be captured in words as pointing towards the (un)knowability of standby.

Attempts to understand, unavoidably partial and incomplete, might reinforce a separation between a knowing self and a knowable object. In contrast, dance enables *experiencing* embodied knowledges of the divergent forces and flows entangled in affective repertoires of urban spaces on standby. This process of knowledge production is wrought with tension, as these knowledges cannot be contained, they leak, slip and evade.

I aim to practice living with the tension between what escapes and what is brought together, differentiating-entangling (Barad, 2014). These mo(ve)ments of tension provide 'affective openings-out' (Braidotti, 2013: 166) that support 'coming to terms with the present in new fundamental ways' (Braidotti, 2013: 187). They might enable encountering knowledges that are plural, mobile and unfinished, made up of impulses that always want to slip away (McCormack, 2013: 79).

Even as these knowledges are unsettled and unsettling, they are not free-floating. They remain embedded in the affective, embodied labour that produces them, even as this labour extends the implicated matter and its registers of experience. For decades, feminist scholars have argued that situatedness and partiality are enabling constraints in knowledge production (Rich, 1984; Haraway, 1988). Blackman (2012) proposes an ethics of entanglement that recognizes and reflects on how the researcher is implicated in their research process. In more recent work on posthuman feminist phenomenology, Neimanis (2017) explicitly addresses how our situated subjectivity is not 'our' own, how it leaks. She calls for performing a corporeal relational ethics in order to '(…) give an account of our own (very human) politics of location, even as this situatedness will always swim beyond our masterful grasp, finding confluence with other bodies and times' (Neimanis, 2017: 6). Having experienced the breaching out of the spacetimemattering of standby, I remain a body that moves in habitual ways, even as their ordinariness strikes me as strange. I struggle to let non-extractive knowledge emerge from my experience, even as these attempts are wrought with friction and sometimes collapse into grasps towards fixity.

Conclusion

In this article, I explore dance as an affective methodology for urban spaces on standby, taking point of departure in a spontaneous dance encounter with a billboard on a construction site in a gentrifying neighborhood. Drawing on feminist new materialisms, affect theory and dance studies, I show how dance enables attending to spatial, temporal and embodied aspects of standby. I discuss how dance attuned me to affective repertoires, highlighting the range of ambivalent, entangled affects circulating through and afforded by urban spaces on standby. In this process, standby emerges as a continuously unfolding, overspilling affective infrastructure, fuelled by and fueling ambivalence and multiplicity.

Dance comprises a particularly enabling catalyst for attending to a plurality of figurations. As I have shown, dance affords be(com)ing an outstretched and outstretching, permeable researcher-self. It cultivates sensitivity, attunement and experimentation (Stewart, 2011; McCormack, 2013), surfacing entanglements of matter and affectivity (Gherardi, 2019). Dance enables a distributed form of perception, which can bring fragments and traces together-apart, moving beyond binary understandings of fixity and change, sameness and difference, the habitual and the transformative.

Attending to ambivalence and multiplicity, dance enables being, becoming and knowing otherwise. The dance was not just an opening with regards to an object I was researching (the construction sites on standby) but a disruption in the process of seeking knowledge. These mo(ve)ments brought about a relationality beyond divisions between developers and activists, displaced activists and gentrifiers, human and non-human bodies. This did not mean a collapsing of differences or undoing of inequalities. Instead, it showed how dance constitutes an act of re-membering (Barad, 2017), reshuffling who and what is recognized as participating in a shared space, and the affective flows that inhabit and comprise this space.

Beginning my engagement with the dormant, vague construction sites of Nordvest, I did not anticipate dancing with a billboard – and even less writing about it. This highlights the experimental, emergent quality of affective approaches to research and the importance of the researcher's capabilities to

resonate and become-with the researched (Gherardi, 2019). In this respect, affective methodology emerges as fuelled by fluidity and ambivalence which permeate urban spaces on standby, enabling experiments with co-becoming, where the methodology cannot be disentangled from that which it seeks to know. As a research practice that extends the body's capacities to feel, relate and resonate, dance attenuates the capabilities to engage with affective repertoires of gentrifying urban spaces. The dancing body extends and expands affectively, becoming able to accommodate a range of emotions, also multiple layers of grief and loss (Mortimer-Sandilands, 2010).

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