

The PSi Manifesto Lexicon--An online discursive platform

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co-authoring *n*

συγγραφή [siɣɣrafi]

- 1. The act of writing / composing / constructing with someone or something.*
- 2. The joint authorship of a performance work between the maker and performers, and the spectator.*
- 3. The coming together of thought of the work and the spectator in the act of meaning construction in the time and space of the performance and beyond it.*
- 4. The unspoken agreement / contract between the spectator and the work with regards to their encounter. This agreement includes the terms and conditions according to which the artist and the spectator are equal partners in the construction of meaning. This requires, on behalf of the spectator, her active participation in this process, and, on behalf of the artist, the making of a work that creates the spaces for the spectator to co-author it; that creates room for multiple meanings through gaps, ambiguities, and the question that it raises.*
- 5. The egalitarian relationship between the work and the spectator in their encounter.*
- 6. The coming together of the work and its context.*

7. The writing of a work with its context of production in mind. The writing / making of a performance in relationship to its context of production via the examination and questioning of the ideas and values constructed by cultural and socio-economic forces.

8. The contribution, circulation, and establishment of ideas and values in a field by different authors / makers. The relationship of a work and the ideas and values it questions and circulates or re – circulates, and therefore reproduces, to those ideas and values of other works.

9. The spectator’s act of commenting aloud on what she sees during a live performance event.

10. The act of leaving in the middle of a live performance event and commenting on what the performance could mean at the bar next door.

Author and Translator: Katerina Paramana

(Paramana, “Co-authoring” in PSi Manifesto Lexicon)

If you were to use words from your native language to approach performance studies--drawing on the language’s cultural particularities and artistic usages--

what would these words be and how would they allow you to think on

performance? (PSi Manifesto Lexicon)

The entries that run through and interrupt this text are responses to the above question, which produces the Manifesto Lexicon, a project that first started as a performative session in the Performance Studies (PSi) Regional Research Cluster

in Athens, Greece (2011) and since then continues online as part of the PSi website. Similarly to the Fluid States (PSi #21) conference, a major aim of the PSi clusters was to support a dynamic exchange between the regional and the international in performance theory and practice. In the cluster in Athens, the intention was to specifically provide a platform for bringing Greece in touch with international developments in performance, but also to bring international communities in contact with academic and artistic transformations that were taking place in Athens at this time. Given the inexistence of Performance Studies in Greece then, this initiative allowed for the study of performance to invent and reveal itself within the specific context of the country. The Manifesto Lexicon in particular initiated a bilingual (in Greek and English) lexicon as a manifesto of critical discourse, which could multiply our perspectives and understandings of what Performance Studies both is and could be in Greece at that time.

The cluster in Athens was entitled Encounters in Synchronous Time. Through this focus, it questioned what it means to be contemporary, to whom (or to what) might someone or something appear as contemporary, and how contemporary performance practice might understand its relation and responsibility to time. By using the term “synchronous” (the corresponding translation in Greek of the term “contemporary”) through its etymology (which indicates the notion of “together with time”), the cluster suggested an understanding of “synchronous” as an encounter in time (together with one’s time) as well as a co-existence with another--whether a person or event. During those early stages of the economic, political, and social crisis in Greece and more globally, the cluster’s organisers sought to form processes and events that could question, redefine, and potentialise the particular historical moment. Marked by

an explosion of Greek scholars of theatre and dance pursuing research in western European universities and art institutions (such as the organisers of this cluster), while at the same time Greek artists were initiating experimental collaborative projects locally, this point in time was felt to be fertile for developing a critical language that would engage with such growth. The first day of the cluster took place in EMPROS, a then freshly squatted theatre at the centre of the city that similarly urged a rethinking of the position and role of theatre in times of austerity and foregrounded the connections between the practice of performance, reflection about it, and the material conditions and circumstances of Athens. Posing questions about the potential of the notion of “synchronicity”, the cluster in Athens hosted local and international theorists and practitioners in performance. It ultimately sought to provide a meeting place for the co-investigation of artistic production on discourse and practice, questioning our relationship to (the present) time and to one another.

The particular interest in the insight that different languages can offer to the understanding of the world more broadly was also reflected in the invitation for the Manifesto Lexicon contributions. For the cluster, eight Greek artists and theorists were invited to think Performance Studies through the possibilities offered by another language and through a different culture, and to present a lexicon for performance studies in Greek, consisting of twenty-four entries (one for each letter of the Greek alphabet). The entries were read out loud in Greek, while their translation was projected in English. This sharing of different perspectives on issues important to the field saw the relationship between language and reality as dynamic, acknowledged the importance of language and of (the socioeconomic and cultural) context to understanding, and pointed to the

significance of definitions in revealing not only what is included within their bounds, but also what is excluded.

language, tongue n

γλώσσα [ˈɣlosa]

There have been many linguists trying to interpret the meaning of the complicated term: "language". In her book "Dictionary of Language and Linguistics" (1996), Hadumod Bussmann defines language as "a specific system of signs and combinatory rules which are arbitrary but passed on as conventions." Language, she says, is a "vehicle for the expression or exchanging of thoughts, concepts, knowledge, and information, as well as the fixing and transmission of experience and knowledge". Additionally, it is "subject to societal factors and to historical change and development" (Bussmann 627). Deriving from the statement that language is a "system", an "arbitrary" one, which is accepted as "convention", it must follow specific guidelines with a recurring vocabulary, based on copying and pasting within a format. It requires consistency, acceptance, and obedience by its users. Due to these characteristics, parallelism between language and the institutionalization of the arts is impossible to avoid. Language and institutionalization both mirror the society from which they are created and maintained, concurrently shaping the way through which one understands, experiences, and interprets the world. Considering that every system is better suited to its creator(s), one can understand that it is then

directly connected to the social circumstances in which it is formulated. The power of an institution lays on the fact that it offers a stability and security of “the same” by creating an “umbrella” under which everything is structured and presented within specific rules. This stability is based on the creation and preservation of history and the organization of knowledge related to cultural heritage. That is also why the stability of a language is important for the successful continuation of a nation. Under this umbrella, illusions of choice, and therefore freedom, are offered.

Author and Translator: Stella Dimitrakopoulou

(Dimitrakopoulou, “Language, tongue” in PSi Manifesto Lexicon)

Being international is not a given but a question, and this question touches upon the very discourse we use and the ownership of concepts through which we engage with the objects we study (PSi Manifesto Lexicon).

As an initiative that started from a regional cluster event, the Manifesto Lexicon provided a breeding ground for ideas around decentring, forming part of the thinking and leading to the creation of further events. For example, it led to a Shift presentation in the PSi Leeds in June 2012, entitled “Encounters in a-synchronous time--a post-cluster shift”. This presentation sought to create an encounter between two cultural a-synchronous events: the PSi regional cluster that took place in Athens in 2011 and the conference in Leeds in 2012. It also led to the delivery of a Manifesto Lexicon session and a plenary presentation at the PSi Regional Cluster in Portugal in September 2013. Entitled Generative

Indirections, this cluster aimed to give “voice to counter hegemonic epistemologies”, blur the boundaries between theory and practice, and “challeng[e] disciplinary boundaries in order to question how Performance Studies can be received in Portugal” (“Generative Indirections Open Call”). In the plenary, Gigi Argyropoulou and Katerina Paramana reflected on the Greek Cluster and Lexicon event and their relation to the Cluster in Portugal. They addressed the different and common goals of the two clusters and their relationship to definitions and the larger political context, and questioned how we can work together to effect social change.

solidarity *n*

αλληλεγγύη [alilengí] < ***αλλήλων*** (*others*) + ***εγγύτητα***

(distance / proximity);

1. The distance / relationship between people.

“Αλληλεγγύη” therefore requires the awareness of this distance and relationship and the identification of common interests, needs and desires, and what in each moment means to show / be in solidarity with the other: how to support the colleague / performer/ artwork / human / country, which can take the form of e.g. witnessing, considering, questioning, challenging, disapproving, intervening, contributing, protesting with / against, supporting a movement.

2. The ethical imperative / obligation of members of a group to reciprocally support one another [Solidarity < French *solidaire*; interdependent (old French in common) < Latin *solidus*; solid, whole].

Although “solidarity” implies unity / unanimity, with “αλληλεγγύη” the emphasis is on the support of others as a right and responsibility and the protection of common rights and responsibilities, without the erasure of individuality and the assumption of unity, harmony or cohesion [...].

3. What Franco Bifo Berardi recommends as an antidote to today’s society suffering from “spasm”--a condition where “[t]he body is less able to live and breathe in harmony with other bodies”, because of the “precarisation--the continuous competition between bodies--of work and daily life” (TEDxCalArts).

4. What I suggest as an antidote for my diagnosis of today’s society suffering from Tourette’s--a “nervous condition characterised by lack of motor coordination [...], proliferation of tics, spasmodic jerks, and mannerisms”, where people “can neither start nor complete the simplest gestures” (Agamben 50). As time is accelerated and the political and economic landscape is shifting so quickly and drastically, we find ourselves with no time to meet, think, organise, and act, but only respond with spasmodic, incomplete gestures.

Author and Translator: Katerina Paramana

(Paramana, “Solidarity” in PSi Manifesto Lexicon)

The potential of the Manifesto Lexicon was acknowledged by Maaïke Bleeker, PSi President at the time of the Athens Cluster and speaker at the event in 2011. Bleeker invited the curatorial team of the Athens Cluster to work on an expanded multi-lingual lexicon for PSi’s new website. The idea was supported by

the PSi Board and led to the creation of the online PSi Manifesto Lexicon, launched in December 2012.

The transition of the Manifesto Lexicon to an online discursive platform further expanded its content and made it more inclusive and accessible. At the same time, going online required several changes to be considered with regards to the project's initial form and function. This generated challenges and discussions among the Editorial Team about the sustainability and dissemination of the online platform. As the focus on individual entries proved to be insufficient in expanding the lexicon, the invitation opened up to larger groups, specifically to educational environments and conferences, which would produce a series of entries for the PSi Manifesto Lexicon online platform. For instance, students from Groningen University (NL) and the Critical Practice group of the conference Berlin-Amsterdam-Brussels held at Het Vee Theatre in Amsterdam (2013) contributed a series of entries. Concurrently, the team began to expand the Lexicon by including "archival material": working towards incorporating groups of entries produced as part of past events and ideas, such as the "Context 01: Active Pooling, The New Theatre's WordPerfect" event in 1993. The Manifesto Lexicon is therefore now also conceived of as a platform where different temporalities sit next to each other, producing a multi-lingual lexicon that is expanded in time, and is therefore a great source for research material.

With a view to enabling not only the co-existence of several temporalities and of individual and group entries, but also a type of readership that can move between different modes of reflection and of production of lexicon entries in multiple languages, the design of the web page became a concern, raising questions about the concept, function, and overall dramaturgy of the project. We

continue to work on the organisation of the Manifesto Lexicon material as we consider it crucial in providing a historical as well as a thematic dimension to the project of global Performance Studies. The new format and presence of the Manifesto Lexicon as an independent and pluralised online platform has great potential in developing dialogues across time and different cultures. We hope that it can afford us to come together in multiplicity and disagreement.

discourse *n*

discours (Dutch) [*'diskɔ:s*]

Discourse is a social boundary that defines what can be said about a specific topic. Judith Butler describes these boundaries as “the site [...] where the opacity of what is not included in a given regime of truth acts as a disruptive site of linguistic impropriety and unrepresentability” (Butler 53). Humans ascribe meaning to the things they experience. These meanings are trapped in language, since in language certain meanings are fixed. This language is formed by the discourse within which it is used. Discourse is a social process in which people actively engage. In this way, all meaning we ascribe to things is a product of language and social process. Or as O’Sullivan, Tim, Hartley, John, et al. put it, “[it refers] both to the interactive process and the end result of thought and communication” (93). It is a social process--the linguistic interaction between people--and a social boundary--the restrictions someone’s vocabulary poses on his knowledge. Discourse forms vocabulary and

therefore judgment. It limits the way one looks at the world, but it also enables one to communicate her understandings.

This is also particularly evident in relation to performance. During the performance, the conveyed message is constrained by the vocabulary of the encoder (i.e. performer). This restriction creates complications for both the encoder and the decoder (i.e. audience). A performance should open up a territory of thought and create new entries for the development of meaning. These thoughts and meanings make the performance as a whole. And since the audience is, in this way, co-creator of the performance, the performer has to take in consideration the discourse in which his audience resides. Simultaneously, he has to be aware that he might not reside in the same discourse as his audience, which could lead to the audience misinterpreting his message. This could possibly undermine the entire performance, for the audience's interpretation makes the performance as a whole. This illustrates the importance of discourse in performance.

Author and Translator: Amber Barelds

(Barelds, "Discourse" in PSi Manifesto Lexicon)

Editorial Board

For the first four years (from its launch in 2012 until 2015), and with the support of PSi President Maaïke Bleeker as Project Advisor, the PSi Manifesto Lexicon was managed and edited by the curatorial team of the 2011 PSi Regional

Research Cluster in Athens: Gigi Argyropoulou, Konstantina Georgelou, Efrosini Protopapa, Danae Theodoridou, and Steriani Tsintziloni.

Since 2016, the PSi Manifesto Lexicon is being edited and managed by:

Konstantina Georgelou, Co-editor

Antje Hildebrandt, General Editor

Katerina Paramana, General Editor

Steriani Tsintziloni, Communications

Andrew Brown, Proof-reading

Justin Hunt, Proof-reading

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