



PERFORMANCE
PHILOSOPHY

OPERATIONAL CHOREOGRAPHY: DANCE AND LOGISTICAL CAPITALISM

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"Hey, the morning rush has started. Get to this area, that's where demand is biggest."

"Hey, the concert's about to let out. You should head over there."

"Make it to \$330. You're \$10 away from making \$330 in net earnings. Are you sure you want to go offline?"

These are three of the many messages ride-hailing service company Uber regularly sends through the company's app to their drivers (Scheiber 2017). They were developed by the company in collaboration with behavioral scientists as a technique to increase and control the work of their self-employed drivers, directing them into service areas where rides are profitable and advance the company's comprehensive coverage of the city. These nudging messages are the techniques of what one could call the company's choreographic politics—choreographic in its effect of directing and regulating the trips of Uber drivers, and choreographic in that it is constituted by movement. Through the use of tracking algorithms, Uber captures and analyzes the movement patterns of their entire fleet, including measurements of their drivers' accelerations, abrupt stops, etc., in order to optimize each ride for profit (Scheiber 2017). In concert with Uber's other modes of business operation, the messages are part of the choreographic power deployed by the company.¹

Uber's methods for controlling and regulating the movements of their drivers is just one of the newer iterations of a regime of choreographic power. The concept of choreographic power, or choreopower, denotes the execution of power on and by movement. In this sense, choreography

describes a “technique of power” (Foucault 1995) that is at work also beyond the realm of dance. It is found in various fields and on all scales ranging from logistics to migration or colonialism. It comprises bodily movement as much as global movements of trade or displacement.² As an operational politics, it controls movement from the inside, regulating and modulating it by its very own logic. Instead of subsuming processes to the external regulation by pre-given scripts, goals, acting or moving subjects, operational politics is based on the logic of process and its regulation via immanent techniques (Massumi 2015, 212–16; Mezzadra and Neilson 2013, 14–15). In regard to movement, operational politics started to gain hold in the field of logistics in the 1960s. Over the last decades, these operational choreographies proliferated into all realms of society, creating a logistical regime that comprises modes of thinking as much as modes of existence and action. It governs the movements of economic production as much as the way we perceive, live, and move.

Dance—seen as a practice in which new modes of thinking, moving, and acting as well as new forms of subjectivity are explored in a physical manner—is an integral part of this logistical regime. With the emergence of logistical capitalism during the second half of the 20th Century, choreographers started to engage with the logic of operations. Since the 1960s, Yvonne Rainer, Steve Paxton and others turned away from movement as a form of expression on stage, focusing on the question of how to use choreographic technique as operations to modulate (rather than express) modes of collectivity and individuation. Addressing dance practice from the perspective of logistical capitalism shows how this shift from performance as product to performance as process is still subject to the regulating powers of choreography (be it in dance or be it in everyday life). The shift from theatrical presentation to operation alters the logic of choreography itself, foregrounding its operational politics as it surfaced in late-20th-Century logistics and dance. The study of operational choreography show how dance engages with logistics in a double way: First, dance explores the potential of operational modes of choreography to produce forms of practice, collectivity, and individuation that challenge the capitalist logic of operations at work in logistics. Second, the performative work of the choreographers becomes itself an investigation into the operational politics of the logistical regime, studying its logic on a bodily level.

By combining the analysis of choreographic power at work in the logistical regime and the engagements with operational politics from the field of dance, the following questions will be addressed: How do choreographic techniques operate immanently in actions and movements, governing them from within? And in which way does this immanent operational politics of these choreographic techniques challenge or reaffirm logistical capitalism on the level of movement?

The Logistical Regime

Most often, the term logistics is associated with global developments in capitalist production: distributed production chains, the perfect flow of goods and money as well as the regulation and distribution of the workforce in so-called “free-trade zones,” ports and distribution hubs. These all mark developments in the economic system termed by Anna Tsing as “global supply chain capitalism” (2009, 149). This world-spanning, or better, world-producing choreography, is more than a set of algorithmic operations contingent upon missing or precarious labor rights. Logistics

encompass the macro as well as micro scales of movement: small-scale actions, bodily performances, affective dynamisms and rhythms. These choreographic powers affect all dimensions of life, even without the need to up- or downscale their operations. As multi-scalar movements, logistics' supply chain is already part of the rhythms of work, bodies, and everyday life, regulating their flow immanently.

In the first half of the 20th Century, Fordism searched for perfectly optimized paths and rhythms for productive movement. In his analysis of labor as choreographed movement, Mark Franko has shown how in the 1930s the movement of American factories were segmented, analyzed, and perfectly trimmed in order to improve efficiency (Franko 2002; Taylor 1998; Gilbreth 1921). Beyond the factory, patterns of repetitive movement emerged between the workplace, university, apartment, supermarket, restaurant, and bar and segmentation and efficiency of movement spread into the city (Chombart de Lauwe 1952). The discipline of movement permeated all working conditions, exercising a form of choreographic power aligned to what Foucault described as the "disciplinary regime" (1995). In this way, Fordism can also be called the regime of the perfect way. Through segmentation, each gesture, each turning of the head, each walk in the city, the supermarket or the airport could be extracted and analyzed in detail. This is the regime of fragmented and mechanical rhythms of everyday life. Pattern synchronization and the segmentation of rhythms injected discipline into movement's operation, and discipline ruled the movements of the everyday.

In the 1960s, the logistical regime began establishing a new regime of choreographic power based on the continuously adaptive rhythms of production and delivery (Cowen 2014, 34).³ Changes in supply and demand as well as the costs of production were permanently evaluated and created a constant re-adaptation of the circulation of movement. Shipping routes were changed in real-time alongside shifts in the location of production in order to create a perfect (seamless) circulation of flow. Movement was constantly in the process of auto-correcting itself (Rossiter 2016, 5), creating and at the same time being created by an ever-changing factor of process-oriented optimization. In the ever-changing flux of movements, logistics profited most from the flexibility of its ability to adapt. Irregular movement and asynchronicity were no longer problems, but had rather become sources of value, allowing for even more on-time modes of production and distribution. Daily routines of work and living were backgrounded by the search for better modes of circulation. In the mode of constant adaptation, movement took over and flow became the generator of surplus value.

In the choreography of the disciplinary regime, the individual was center stage. The operations of logistics, however, exceed any individual action. Movement affects movement itself on a dividual level, creating a highly adaptive system in which the individual becomes a mere differential operator creating profit by connecting disparate flows. The labor of the messenger, the Deliveroo courier, the cab or Uber driver is paradigmatic in the logistical regime. Their work is a constant re-positioning. The slightest alterations in weather, traffic, demand and supply alter their rhythms and routes. A restaurant's sudden popularity, a breaking rain shower, a cancelled concert or a technical problem in the subway are events that directly affect the entire logistical system and the

multitude of individual positioning decision taken to best serve the customer. Searching for the most lucrative position and the fastest route becomes a constant re-adaptation of navigational strategies. The rhythms of work need to adapt to its environment: Rather than moving on a pre-given trajectory and against the milieu's conditions, logistical movement moves *with* its environment—the environment of everyday living.

The movements of work can now include the necessities of everyday life. Suddenly, shopping, meeting friends, and going on vacation are movements that can be integrated into the choreographies of work. Together they create chains of operations, adapting and regulating each other's flows, and thus replace the politics of segmentation and the synchronization of work and life. Every movement can now become a factor in rendering logistical navigations. In composition, the multiple choreographic operations form the logistical regime.

Operational Politics

The shift towards an operational logic within the logistical regime renders choreographic control immanent. Rather than simply applying an existing politics onto the field of movement, the choreopower of logistics affects a new logic of politics: the logics of operations. As shown above, this logic is based on the very processes it regulates. In logistics, operations are the immanent regulation of movement by movement.

For Brian Massumi, a logic is operative “because it governs a pragmatic working out” (2015, 212). Instead of giving an inherent meaning that demands an interpretation, the operative logic calls for production (ibid). It is even “doubly productive” (213). First, it produces a solution to the problem it raises. Second, the operation comes with a mode of production, that is “a set of mechanisms ensuring the accumulation of the surplus-value produced, making it available to be fed back into the processual circuit at strategic points” (ibid). Both are two sides of one process of production: the logic of operations.

Take the case of logistics. One can call the first side of operations the “production of flow.” It is characterized by the construction of streets, warehouses, ports, etc., and the calculation of optimal shipping routes, the avoidance of accidents, and the minimization of unexpected delays. Tax and security regulations, working rights and border regulations are similarly considered here. The second side of operations is the system of labor created by the logistical regime (e.g. Uber, DHL, FedEx). This system controls the workforce as well as the everyday life of workers, creates precarious working conditions easily exploitable by logistical companies, etc. Both these aspects are effects of one single process. Both feed into each other while nevertheless partially differing and contradicting each other. But instead of producing inefficiency, Massumi points out that this “differential between its part-concepts” (2015, 214) is the very motor of the operative logic. Operative logic acts precisely across tensions: “What gives consistency to the process is the tendential direction in which the formations possessed of it move together, across their tensions” (ibid.). Logistics' tendency is perfect flow and smoothness. Smoothness itself is an abstraction, never to be reached. In fact, if reached, the operations of logistic would be over: the system would

simply stop since everything would be immediately available.⁴ Thus smoothness and perfect flow are the “limit” (215) of logistics. But, as limits, they are not outside operational logic. In the logistical regime, perfect flow is part of the choreopower at work: “It abstractly folds into the operative logic’s working-out” (216). Smoothness is the immanent outside (Deleuze 2006, 84) of the logistical operation.

Next to productivity and the limits of smoothness and perfect flow, the “engine of the process” is essential to an understanding of the operative logic (Massumi 2015, 216). While each operation starts from a problem, it would be a mistake to conflate the problem’s solution with the operation’s conclusion. The effects of an operation cannot fully be determined in the beginning. The problem sets an operation in motion. “What is set in motion needs apparatuses to move through, and these supply the efficient causality. But the formula is still really potentializing. It in-forms process with the potential that comes to be expressed in the emergent cases of solution” (ibid). Rather than being a given to the process of operation, causality has to be produced, or, in other words, the causality of an operation is an effect of itself. Massumi terms this “quasi-causality” (ibid). Circulation (in the logistical sense of a value-producing movement) is the quasi-effect of logistics. To produce circulation, multiple events of movement have to be synthesized. Without the operation of synthesis, movement would just exist in a bubbling field without any direction or causality. By capturing these movements and making them operational, the logistical regime creates causality, making it possible to produce, ship, and trade goods and create value—value by and of movement. What we call movement in its usual sense and what here is called circulation is the synthesis of multiple movements in their nascent state actualized and ordered into causality by logistics’ operational logic. The logistical regime as it became dominant over the last decades is a choreographic politics in-act, or, to use another term by Massumi, logistics operates by the “ontopower” of movement—a power that *makes* move (12). Rather than regulating movement as an already given, the operational choreopower of logistics modulates movement in the act of its making, immanent to the process of its actualization.

Logistics’ operational logic is a productive power at work in movement. It acts as an immanent power, creating causality: movement as a directed, goal-oriented action. At the same time, the operational logic presents movement’s causality as a fact of necessity: movement’s “natural” condition. In the words of Stefano Harney: “[L]ogistics tracks us because it assumes fugitivity. Indeed, what is called surveillance might also be called preemptive logistics” (Cuppini and Frapporti 2018, 97). This pre-emptive logic of quasi-linear movement and economical effective circulation is based on the double production of its choreographic operation: It produces movement as economically productive and at the same time an apparatus that sustains and values its economics. In this sense, the messages sent by Uber to its drivers are operators in the logistical regime. They use their psycho-choreographic power to synthesize movement and produce circulation to create value for the logistical regime, in one word: capital. While its limit, the perfect flow of movement, is far from being achieved in the circulations of global or urban traffic, its “force is that it is too powerfully abstract to be—but still causal enough to express itself (and to make history in the process)” (Massumi 2015, 218).

The operations of performance

While the logic of operative politics has been key for the advancement of a logistical capitalism since the 1960s, it can also be found beyond the realm of capitalist production. Simultaneously, in the fields of theater, dance, and performance, the logic of operations gained the interest of choreographers and theater makers who started to explore this logic on a bodily level and by their own means. Already in 1934, Walter Gropius described his vision of a theater as comparable to a “cargo station [Verladebahnhof]” (Gropius 1968, 159, trans. modified). He turned away from the Logic of theatrical expression and its architectural manifestation in the form of a stage as platform, presenting movement and action to the audience. Instead, Gropius imagined the theater and its stages as a space of circulation and operation, a logic he architecturally designed into his plans for the “Total Theater” of Erwin Piscator (161). “A network of aisles,” he writes, “should make it possible for actors to cross the playhouse to and from the stage levels, either individually or in groups. Openings at both sides of the stage can facilitate the flow [Durchfluß] of processions from the outside over the stage and back out again” (159–160, trans. modified).

Gropius’ Total Theater halted in the planning stages, but in the 1960s choreographers were once again interested in the operative logic in theater, choreography, and performance. Concurrent to the advancement of operational techniques in logistical work and everyday life, choreographers such as Anna Halprin, Yvonne Rainer, Alan Kaprow, and Steve Paxton were exploring and exercising the logics and potentials of operations in their practice. They started to move away from a system of given and well-defined choreographic techniques meant only to be incorporated and mastered in a most perfect manner. These choreographers’ interest was to invent new techniques, techniques without any pre-given goal or ideal mode of execution. They searched for techniques for improvisation and experimentation that would be productive instead of reproductive. For that, their work shifted away from the logic of theatrical expression, directed towards the audience of a performance, and towards a logic of operations. Experimenting with the operational logic at work in choreographic techniques, they used their artistic work to question the politics of the logistical regime. Being situated in logistical capitalism, dance, as well as every domain of society, was increasingly regulated by operational techniques. By addressing choreography’s own logic of operations, they raised the questions: “What do operations do?” “What do operations produce?” Using the pragmatics of choreography, they started to invent their own (counter-)operational politics. But instead of addressing the operative logics of their choreographies as resistant *per se*, they aimed to produce performances as “processual operators” (Guattari 1987, 84). Their choreographies became tools to explore the immanent possibilities and impossibilities “to produce a feed-back effect and open new lines of virtuality” (84).

Collective Operations

Continuous project – altered daily was a project initiated by Yvonne Rainer in the late 1960s as an attempt to create a setting in which choreographic techniques become “processual operators.” The existing structure of a rehearsal process, with its linear set of goal-oriented techniques designed

to create a virtuous performance and a public presentation of that achievement was replaced by an open structure of continuous experimentation and alteration. The performance itself was to become an open space for the audience to participate in this ongoing process—a temporary window rather than the final product. In a performance note, Rainer states, “[CP-AD] was an ongoing effort to examine what goes on in the rehearsal—or working-out and refining—process that normally precedes performance, and a growing skepticism about the necessity to make clear-cut separation between these two phenomena” (Rainer 1974, 129). Every “performance,” if this is still the correct term, was the continuation of the collective process itself, embedded in techniques of learning, experimenting, rehearsing, and teaching. For Rainer, this process was as much an advancement of her work as a choreographer and performer as it was a development of her teaching activity at that time (Rainer 2006, 317). By bringing techniques of teaching into her artistic work, she shifted from a performance- and presentation-oriented work to the techniques of collectivity and transmission. And while CP-AD was attributed to her person and authored in her name, after two years she would transform the work into *The Grand Union*, a collective of artists without any director.

CP-AD consisted of 6 dancers, plenty of movement material and different choreographic techniques. Each of the dancers contributed movements and techniques to the process, and it was the aim of the group to let these materials circulate among all bodies in different solo and group performances. The movements introduced to the process by the dancers did not consist of ready-made scenes. Most of the choreographic material came in the form of “tasks” or “problems.” Both could be articulated verbally or in material form. Together they formed an operational choreography that constantly connected and combined techniques and movements. Every technique became a new processual operator that modulated the movement again. Together they created an assemblage or ecology of techniques.

In a text published only a couple of years prior to CP-AD, Gilbert Simondon describes the ecology of techniques as well as the ecological dimension of techniques themselves in relation to breeding and farming: “Cultivation techniques [*les techniques de culture*], moreover, act primarily on the environment, which is to say on the energy resources at the plant’s disposal over the course of its development, rather than on the plant itself, as a living individual” (Simondon 2015, 17). Here, techniques are less actions directed upon the living individual, in this case the plant, but on its environment; or, to use another term of Simondon’s, on (and in) its “associated milieu” (Simondon 2017, 59). To change an individual or an individuation, one needs to change the milieu it is emerging in. Each individual is produced by its “associated milieu.” Yet, at the same time, the milieu is produced by the act of individuation. None of these processes precedes the other. Only in relation to its associated milieu is individuation possible and the techniques nest precisely in this relation in a constant modulation. Techniques are therefore directed toward the milieu and thereby modulate the act of individuation in the very differentiation it produces. “Every technical gesture engages the future, modifies both world and man, as the species whose environment that world is. The technical gesture does not exhaust itself in its utility as means; it leads to an immediate result, but also provokes a transformation in the environment, which rebounds onto living species, man included” (Simondon 2015, 19). The process of individuation and its milieu are

in constant alteration and adaptation—spatially as much as temporally. Therefore, the techniques at work in this process act on the given as much as they address the future.

Simondon thinks the relation to the milieu as an adaptation to the future and the milieu as-if: Individuation needs to address the problem posed by the milieu as-if this adaptation has already taken place, remembering that this adaptation changes not only the process of individuation but the situation in its totality—the individuation and its associated milieu. Adaptation necessarily becomes a speculative operation, set to work by speculative techniques: “Everything takes place *as if* the corporeal schema of the human species had been modified, *as if* it had dilated, had received new dimensions; the order of magnitude changes; the perceptual grid is broadened and differentiated; new schemas of intelligibility are developed” (Simondon 2015, 21, my emphasis). Here, adaptation is not directed towards the actual, but—to use Deleuze’s vocabulary—towards the virtual, a virtual process of individuation as much as of the milieu. Every technique at work in the milieu needs to fold the virtual into its operations, or, as Massumi pointed out, this virtual dimension is precisely its operational logic: “It in-forms process with the potential that comes to be expressed in the emergent cases of solution” (Massumi 2015, 216).

Going back to the techniques of breeding as well as to the milieu of *CP-AD*, they precisely operate on and with the virtual of the process. The virtual makes their techniques speculative and therefore inventive. Limited to the actual, Rainer’s project could not be altered and would fall back to the repetition of the same. In the mere actual, breeding—be it of a plant or of a performative process—would not be possible.

The techniques at work in the processes of individuation are in no way limited to the individual body. As *CP-AD* shows, they move transversally through multiple bodies and individuations. For Simondon, this transversal dimension of individuation is important, terming this process “transduction” or “transindividuation” (Simondon 1992, 307). The potentiality of a milieu does not cease with the act of individuation; it neither starts with nor resolves in an individual.⁵ Transindividuation moves beyond one milieu, feeding into other milieus (of other individuations) and thereby modulating it. Its techniques operate—like transindividuation itself—between bodies and between milieus. No technique is just performed or incorporated by or even directed towards an individual body; techniques are transversal operations at work in the very collectivity that is the choreographic process of the “rehearsal.” They are “choreographies of tensions” (Egert 2019, 446–449) in which the smallest operation can immediately re-compose everything.

In the light of individuation and its milieu, no body is simply part of the process of individuation or the milieu—it always emerges in the relation between both. Their status (individuation/milieu) as well as the relation between them is rather operational than foundational: Every individuation can be the milieu for another individuation, and every milieu consists in itself of multiple individuations, which again are associated with (other) milieus. While the “rehearsals” of *CP-AD* are the milieu of the “performance,” the performance is itself the milieu of the performers and their bodies. Nonetheless, these bodies are not just the effect of the performance but of multiple techniques, of which only some are part of what one usually calls the “performance.” And, of course, each body

is itself the milieu of multiple individuations. These bodies are, like the performances, co-emergent with other bodies, new milieus, and individuations. All of them are processual operators in the process entitled *CP-AD*; together they create new constellations, calling for the invention and alteration of techniques. *CP-AD* becomes a field of operations, modulated by, as well as modulating, its techniques and processual operators. In other words, Rainer made her work operational, advancing an operational understanding of bodies and choreography on the level of performance. These bodies operate by techniques to relate to their associated milieu, folding its future potentiality into the act of their individuation. These future-based techniques are the very motor of the process's creativity. And at the same time, they are one of the most powerful operations in the system of logistical capitalism.

Linking *CP-AD* back to the milieu of its emergence (i.e., the early advancements of a system-based logistical system of production), the speculative dimension of operations was as much the possibility of artistic experimentation as it was the focus of capitalist capture (in its latest iteration as Uber's messages to possible future options for lucrative rides).⁶ Which effects and modes of individuation the politics of operation bring forward and *how* they address the future's potential was not pre-scripted. Do they render this future uncertainty operational and calculable in the present (as in logistical capitalism), or can they fold the future into the present while keeping its openness?

Rainer's choreographic experiments are precisely situated in this tension between operation's emancipatory potential and its contribution to the advancement of logistical capitalism. They were part of an emerging logic of operations and a culture of logistics beyond the realm of global trade and the circulation of goods. Exploring the operation of a changing political situation, the relevant questions posed in Rainer's choreographic work at the end of the 1960s were: What are the new (i.e., operational) techniques in the time of a changing capitalist logic? What other modes of individuation and existence are possible?

Turning towards the milieu of performance and ecology of techniques as described above, the question of collectivity became key for the choreographic work: How can a collective improvise, and how can one improvise collectivity? Or, in terms of the operational choreographic practice set at work in *CP-AD*: How can collectivity be practiced pragmatically, without the act of theatrical presentation and without an already defined form? That is, how to practice collectivity with and into the future? For Rainer, collectivity was more than just the setting of choreographic improvisation—it became itself an improvisation technique.

By shifting the focus away from the theatrical performance to the operational process of their work, Rainer and her collaborators used choreographic techniques to experiment with collective modes of individuation. While the shift from performance to process was in no way *per se* countering the developments of capitalism, the work of *CP-AD* nested in the process of capitalism's transformation to explore and challenge its operational logic. Logistical capitalism's aim to create seamless circulations of goods, money and people was based on the production of logistical subjectivities, constantly adapting to and advancing the flow of movement. Instead of stopping the

circulation of movement or trying to withdraw the process of individuation from the logic of operation, *CP-AD* radicalized individuation by pushing it beyond the individual. Inventing and experimenting with techniques for transindividuation, *CP-AD* opens the individuation to the milieu. Across milieus and bodies *CP-AD* renders choreographic techniques transindividual, producing operational collectivities as much as, ecological modes of subjectivities.

Operational Collectivities

Over the decades and with the advancement of logistical capitalism and its operational politics, the questions, aims, and needs of choreographers and their work changed. Choreographers such as William Forsythe and Merce Cunningham invented new operational techniques and promoted their institutionalization. “Somatic practices” such as Body Mind Centering, Alexander Technique, and others dominated for the last decades the field of operational work in dance, giving ground to the development of techniques that are performed individually and taught and sustained in daily routines, workshops, and training sessions (Schuh 2019; Vujanovic 2017; Hölscher 2020). Focusing on pragmatic and operational settings, with the workshop as one of its most prominent formats, their politics can neither be called critical nor affirmative *per se* towards logistical capitalism. Using and experimenting with the very same modes of operation, these practices shift away from the question of (re)presentation and ask: What do choreographies do? What do they produce? Given the productivity of their operational logic, the question is: What modes of individuation and transversal techniques (e.g., transindividual, ecological) do these operational choreographies produce? How do choreographers work the logic of operations without subsuming their practices under an existing system of control and profit? These questions articulate the pragmatic politics of operational choreographies of dance in times of logistical capitalism and its techniques of constant evaluation and adaptation.

The work of Yvonne Rainer and The Grand Union used the logic of operational choreography to turn the performance into a space of rehearsal, experimentation, and transmission of techniques: in one word, a workshop. For them, the rehearsal/performance-turned-workshop created a milieu to experiment with choreographic techniques so as to produce collective forms of individuation. They opened up an experimental space, in which they tried to shift the individual-based capitalist logic of the 1960s into one of transindividuation. While the operations of logistical capitalism advanced over the decades and moved from the realm of the individual to that of the dividual (Deleuze 1995, 180), the workshop still offers a choreographic format to experiment with the techniques of operational politics.⁷

Since 2016, choreographers Juli Reinartz and Tea Tupajic followed up on this interest in operational choreographies and developed a workshop entitled *The Perfect Robbery*.⁸ The leading question of the workshop is clear and simple: How to rob a bank? The rest is detail: Timeframe, 5 days; bank to rob, nearby and easy to reach; date of robbery, fixed and shortly after the workshop. The goal is set, but the techniques needed to achieve it had to be invented. Reinartz writes:

The task of the four to six days is to collectively plan a bank robbery. The planning includes on the one hand the investigation of the immediate environment of the selected bank, including the local specifics and time schedule of the branch, the coordination and perfection of the process, the design of escape tactics and the discussion of possible defense strategies in the event of an arrest. On the other hand, it also includes the discussion about the social and legal significance of a chosen strategy and the question of its aim: Should it be an end in itself or finance another project, who benefits from which tactic? How? And can everyone live with the personal consequences that result from it? (Reinartz 2020, 217)

While the goal—to rob a bank—seems simple, the techniques, decisions, skills, etc. needed to pull it off are multiple and stem from many different areas of life. The workshop on how to rob a bank quickly becomes a workshop in techniques of navigation (how to move [invisibly] through the city); of psychology (how to create sympathy and empathy in the general public); of finance (how to invest and launder money); of martial arts training (how to avoid injuries during the robbery); of jurisdiction (how to behave if caught and/or investigated). All these techniques feed into the workshop and foster the process.

On the other hand, the workshop also nests itself in the practices of everyday knowledge and modulates its operations. Embedded in the realm of the everyday, the workshop becomes a springboard for modulating techniques and thereby feeding them into the wider realm of society. Here, choreographic practices operate beyond the collectivity of present bodies, making the workshop a space for immanent planning. Even though it is directed towards the outside, towards the operations of finance as much as towards the traffic of the city, towards the life of the participants as much as towards the working conditions of the people in the bank, it is not—as Reinartz states (2020)—a workshop in public space. It is rather a workshop *with* public space: the workshop is an operation, which renders public space (as much as finance, traffic, etc.) speculative again.

Reinartz and Tupajic use the planning of a bank robbery to introduce a speculative dimension into the choreographies of the city, its ways of moving and its architecture, but also into its institutions such as the bank, the system of finance, its capitalist working conditions, etc. Being speculative and operational at the same time, probably the best term to describe the choreographic operation is *speculative pragmatic* (Manning and Massumi 2014, 89–90). On the one hand, the scenario of a robbery is absolutely alien to the reality of the participants (its speculation). On the other hand, its parameters (set time, place, building, people involved, etc.) are ultra-specific (its pragmatism). *The Perfect Robbery* directs every speculation towards a specific yet unrealistic goal. Enabled and fostered by the situation of the workshop in the realm of dance, an exceptional setting is created resulting from the interweaving of artistic and potential criminal action. Challenging not only the logic of criminal action but also of artistic production, the question raised is: “Which lines of flight yield when we use the realm of art for precisely such projects, that would not be possible outside of it?” (Reinartz 2020, 214).

The speculative pragmatic dimension of *The Perfect Robbery's* choreography works with and by the workshop's operational logic. Operations are infused with a speculative dimension that challenges the linear pragmatism and (quasi-causality) of an action. The workshop uses the technique of planning to potentialize the future orientedness of its process and opens up a speculative dimension of the everyday and its pragmatics. "*The Perfect Robbery* is intended to question reality by means of the collective planning of a fictitious event, to challenge its social processes and thereby create new realities. Fiction and reality become mutually inclusive. They condition and expand each other. We are therefore concerned with the effectiveness of fiction on reality and with the new configurations of reality that open up in it" (215). Here, speculations are not just limited to the realm of the fictional but operate across fiction and reality, thereby introducing a future potential in both realms. This speculation in and with the operations of the participants' thinking, their knowledge and everyday practices makes the workshop a tool for political action. The act of planning invites participants to question the actual and rehearse a logic of collective speculation (that is, it revokes the quasi-causal logic of its operations). The politics of planning the perfect robbery should not be mistaken with a robbery to serve another political goal (as seen especially with terrorist groups such as the German *Rote Armee Fraktion, RAF*). The workshop engages with a politics of planning itself.

For Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, a politics of planning is key for an operational logic that is not subsumed to the powers of logistical capitalism. Reappropriating it from its dominant neoliberal usage, they argue for planning as a collective and existential activity. "Planning in the undercommons is not an activity, not fishing or dancing or teaching or loving, but the ceaseless experiment with the futural presence of the forms of life that make such activities possible" (Harney and Moten 2013, 74–75). The politics of planning is an existential politics; it is existential and future oriented, modulating the future from the inside. In this sense, it is the opposite of policy: "What we are calling policy is the new form command takes as command takes hold. It has been noted that with new uncertainties in how and where surplus value is generated, and how and where it will be generated next, economic mechanisms of compulsion have been replaced by directly political forms" (74). While policy also acts on an operational logic, it captures the existential operators from the outside, overcoding them with the logic of logistical capitalism.⁹

What makes *The Perfect Robbery* an act of planning is its collectivity.

The Perfect Robbery thus became a project in which the collective planning of a hold-up strategy is primarily concerned with reassembling the participants' relationships to one another, their political and social assumptions and their knowledge economies. Whether the plan is feasible at all is important, but not necessarily interesting. After all, the central point of our planning lies in the process and not in the success of its strategy. (Reinartz 2020, 215)

The workshop is an act of collective trans-individuation. Like Rainer and The Grand Union, the modes of collective existence are key to the experimental techniques deployed in the workshop. Rather than simply setting a pre-given form of collectivity as the workshop's goal, collectivity is part of its process. The goal—to rob a bank—is used to invent the techniques for the invention of new

collectivities and new modes of collective existence. In reference to Moten and Harney, Reinartz writes, “[i]nside, in the negotiation of a common goal, rather than in the common identity of a collective, *The Perfect Robbery* raises its hopes” (213). To produce collectivity, the workshop uses the double productivity of the operative logic at work in its choreography to create a solution for its problem (the robbery) and to create a milieu for this solution to take hold in (its collectivity). In the act of planning, the workshop becomes a processual operator of collectivity and collective modes of individuation. Here, collectivity is a collectivity in the making: an operative collectivity, based on an assemblage of techniques.

By reformatting individual techniques from such diverse fields as psychology, hacking, navigation, jurisdiction, etc., and linking them in new ways, a collectivity emerges based on this ecology of techniques. While the ability to navigate the city by bike or car was an individual skill of the quotidian commute, it is now part of a collective process (escape). The knowledge of financial regulation—previously used to maximize one’s individual earnings—is now part of the collective’s process of planning (money laundering). Thus the workshop’s planning renders the techniques of the individuals into collective ones. At the same time, it changes their operative logic, making them an act of planning on the level of existence. The collective of *The Perfect Robbery* is one of movements and choreographic techniques, rather than one of individuals.

The future-orientedness of planning, its collective practice as well as its strong engagement with everyday knowledge prevent the workshop from self-enclosing itself. It is situated in the spatial givens of the city, in the specific knowledge of the participants, and in the speculative timing of the robbery open the workshop constantly to its milieu. The autopoietic operations of valuation and feedback, dominating logistical capitalism and control are confronted with a heterogenetic process (Guattari 1995, 33), that differentially remodulates the workshop’s and its participants’ associated milieus. Without imagining itself outside an operative logic, *The Perfect Robbery* initiates collective acts of planning in and with transversal operational choreographic acts that challenge the regime of logistical capitalism on the level of its modes of choreographic practice.

The control of movement at work in the regime of logistics—ranging from the calculation of shipping routes to the messages sent by Uber to its drivers—show how choreography cannot be limited to the realm of dance. The regime of a choreographic politics and its techniques of choreopower became one of the most powerful operations in “global supply chain capitalism.” However, the advancements of operational politics since the 1960s did not boost logistics alone. To unfold its full power, operational politics simultaneously affected working conditions and their accompanying modes of living, including the production of dance and performance. Today, operational choreographies and the immanent modulation of movement can be found in global trade and its working conditions as well as in dance performance.

To address dance as part of the logistical regime should not be mistaken as a simple subordination or determination of its movement by logistics. At the very same time that dance is seen as part of the logistical regime it also becomes a possibility for experimenting with the operational logic in movement and the choreopower installed by it. The choreographic techniques in dance were

always powerful operations of movement. Over time, the regimes of controlling and regulating movement changed. Choreographies, such as the above-mentioned works by Yonne Rainer and *The Grand Union* or Juli Reinartz and Tea Tupajic, addressed the logic of operations that dominated (or became dominant during) the time of their work. Shifting away from the level of presentation and towards the level of existence, their concern was one of exploring techniques for collective action and other modes of individuation.

The political question raised by these performances is: How to modulate and reformat choreographic operations in times of logistical capitalism to abstract them from the mechanisms of profit? Rather than affirming process as such, and thereby adapting to the logic of operation as a freedom from the power of representation (which it certainly is, but with limited effects), the questions imposed on choreography by the logistical regime are: What power and what potential inhabits these operations? How can this potential be exercised beyond its reductive capitalist use? How can techniques be invented that—while being immanent to the choreographic regime of logistics—allow for other modes of existence and speculative-collective forms of individuation? This is the existential politics of performance and the political task of operational choreographies.

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Notes

¹ For similar practices at other companies, such as food delivery services Deliveroo and Foodora (now Lieferando), see Ivanova et al. 2018.

² For a more comprehensive study on the concept of choreopower, see Egert (forthcoming).

³ Deborah Cowen (2014, 34) describes the shift towards a “system approach” in logistics as a shift away from a logic of cost-reduction to a logic of value-adding. With the “systems approach”, the government of movement by movement and its milieu took center stage. No longer was movement adapted to fixed external factors such as territorial givens, i.e., factories or warehouses. Quite the opposite: the locations of productions and consumption (i.e., dispersed factories, free trade zones, airport shopping malls) were now the effect of a system of movements. Factories as well as distribution centers were built where routes of transportation crossed. Instead of the territory, the flow of movement was key to maximizing profit.

⁴ Massumi writes, “The operative logic serially works itself out through the cases of solution, each of which, while fully reaching the tendential destination that is the ulterior limit of the process, nevertheless gives it an actual expression” (2015, 214).

⁵ Simondon writes, “To seek the principle of individuation in something that preexists this same individuation is tantamount to reducing individuation to nothing more than ontogenesis. [...] The process of individuation must be considered primordial, for it is this process that at once brings the individual into being and determines all the distinguishing characteristics of its development, organization and modalities” (Simondon 1992, 298–300).

⁶ Danielle Goldman shows in her study (2013) how improvisation was an integral part of dance in the 1960s (i.e.,

Contact Improvisation), as well as political activism of that time (i.e., the Freedom Riders). While acts of speculation and experimentation became key for logistical capitalism, they were also at work in modes of non-capitalist production and forms of resistance.

⁷ On the changes of the workshop as a format in the performing arts since the 1960s see Hölscher (2022). In reference to Michel Foucault's work on the technologies of the self, Hölscher focuses on the "workshop [...] as ascetic sets of exercises, practices, and technologies both of the self and in the sense of group technologies" (2021, XXThis issue).

⁸ A first iteration of the workshop took place in Berlin in 2016. Since then it was hosted in several places, among them Jerusalem and Tromsø.

⁹ Planning as a political activity happens as Moten and Harney argue in all realms of society and is especially prominent in community organizing. In the realm of the arts, planning is often reduced to the practice of creating fictitious worlds or narratives. Following Guattari's concept of art as existential experimentation (1995) and Massumi's concept of play (2014), planning in dance is here addressed as a mode of "lived abstraction" (Massumi 2014, 27), in which the "as-if" forms the existential territory instead of being limited to the realm of imagination or representation.

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Biography

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