

Potentiality

I. Philosophy

The future is not related to the past as an actualisation of its becoming, but finds itself in a rupture between something which has not happened and something which has yet to happen. This is a temporal rupture which is intrinsic to the mode of potentiality, to the revealing of the ways that life comes into being. When reflecting upon potentiality we have to be aware of the paradox that for Giorgio Agamben is an inevitable paradox of this peculiar philosophical concept. One can namely become aware of his or her potential to exist, create and spring forth from oneself only when this potential is not realised. Potentiality is then a temporal constellation, which is divided from the action itself, it is not translated into the action at all. Potentiality can come to light only when not being actualised: when the potential of a thing or a person is not realised. A certain failure, an impossibility of actualisation, is then an intrinsic part of potentiality. At the same time, only when the potential is not being actualised, one is opened to one's being in time, to one's eventness. In this openness one experiences the plurality of ways that life comes into being and is exposed to the plurality of possible actions.

II. Political moment

It is very important to reflect on this notion in the time when we are confronted with the ruthless appropriation and exploitation of human potentiality. Our present time is experienced through the actualisation of all potentials, where human beings are continuously displaying their potential. The actualisation of potential has become a primary

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force of the value on the contemporary cultural, artistic and economic market. To put it differently: with the rise of immaterial work, human language, imagination and creativity have become primary capitalistic sources of value. The present time of permanent actualisation is also deeply changing the ways that we perceive and experience time, where the present is perceived as the only (more and more contracted) time we have, the past is transferred into the nostalgia of remembering and the future deprived of its imaginative potentiality.

III. Performance

A performance deals with the rupture between that which has yet to come and that which has not yet happened, a kind of exposure of time of another becoming. Therefore performance itself has to refuse the contemporary processes of actualisation and not participate in the exploitation of the totality of experience. In that sense the performance has to resist the actualisation of experience, the experience without remains, which was one of the key aesthetic and political notions of contemporary performance in the 20th century. In the core of a performance there is potentiality, a resistance to actualisation, a kind of working together which resists the presupposed 'now' of performance. A performance is a result of a creative process that is interrelated around what it could be and tracing what has yet to come. Even if performance is most of the time experienced as an event in present time, where the co-presence of dancers/actors/performers and audience is of essential importance, that doesn't mean that performance is fully about actualisation of the present moment. Performance practitioners know very well how strong the work on performance is related to the paradox of potentiality, how much it has to deal with actuality, which always surpasses itself and with anticipation of what has yet to come. Therefore I imagine the performance as a field of potentiality, a certain rupture in time, an another time frame where there is no difference between the possible and the impossible event. The concept of potentiality helps us to invent and give a voice to our ongoing practice, which would not conform to the affirmative exclusivity of our own time in which we live and create.

