

Recensioni, rassegne, autopresentazioni, note

Review

Christoph Wulf (ed.), *Handbook on intangible cultural practices as global strategies for the future*

Cham, Springer, 2025, pp. 570

The *Handbook on intangible cultural practices as global strategies for the future* (2025) is a collection of essays whose aim is to “take stock and work out which developments are desirable and possible in the future in order to live as non-violently and sustainably as possible” (p. 1), according to the sustainable development goals set at the 2015 New York convention. Edited by Christoph Wulf, professor of Anthropology and Education at the Freie Universität Berlin and vice president of the German commission for UNESCO, the text provides a wide-range picture of the accomplishments and discoveries brought about over the course of two decades by the UNESCO convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage, established in 2003. Not only is the text a scientific overview of the progresses that have been made in this newly explored field, but a base ground for rising philosophical, anthropological, political and economic questions. Given the vastness of the work presented in the book, this review will provide an overview of the whole text, while focusing on the analysis of Wulf’s introduction to the volume and on Part IV, “Living culture in aesthetic encounters”.

Significantly, the first word used in Wulf’s introductory essay, “Living culture in the Anthropocene”, is ‘culture’. Defining culture is the first, mandatory step to set the framework for a discussion on its role in the sustainable development goals’ implementation. Wulf embraces the definition of culture, given by the German commission for UNESCO in 1983, as “the totality of the unique spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional aspects that characterize a society or a social group. This includes not only art and literature, but also ways of life, basic human rights, value systems, traditions and beliefs” (p. 2). This definition successfully includes in the cultural realm both the tangible and the intangible cultural heritage, the latter being the focus of the 2003 UNESCO convention and *fil rouge* of the

essays that make up the volume. Intangible cultural heritage is defined as “the practices, representation, expressions, knowledge skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage” (p. 3). The intangible cultural heritage’s nature and function is aligned with how Italian architect Gae Aulenti interprets tradition: not something that we merely inherit, but a legacy that must be built and renewed through the interaction with human beings and their environment.

This heritage, widespread in 180 countries and expressed in 700 different practices, exists in the domain of oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, knowledge concerning nature and traditional craftsmanship. As Oliveira Pinto points out in Chapter 21, over 60% of the elements that make up the UNESCO’s representative list of intangible cultural heritage are linked with musical tradition or with music overall (p. 413). Unlike tangible heritage, which consists of historical documents and archeological sites, intangible cultural heritage has its fulcrum on the human body and its performativity. Strictly linked to these concepts is *mimesis*, intended as a way of acquiring and generating knowledge and as a means to instantiate a joyful feeling of togetherness in a community. Wulf expounds these key-concepts in his introductory essay and in Chapter 23, “Intangible cultural heritage: challenges and expectations”.

The centrality of the human body in the intangible cultural practices is implied in the name itself. ‘Cultural practices’ need to be executed by an individual for them to be experienced and thrive – or else, they would perish. The human body can be the medium of the performance when used intentionally. The act of performing is not the immediate way in which the body interacts with the world, but is a way of “acting, speaking and behaving that [...] has to do with staging” (p. 8). During a cultural performance enacted by humans through their body, the meaning acquired by the language and the surroundings is determined by the cultural practice itself and may differ from the meaning they carry in everyday life. Whenever a speech is also an action, so that naming a state of things is enough for it to become a reality, a performative practice is being carried out. This is the case, for example, with wedding ceremonies. The materiality of the performance, made up by the surroundings and the body of the actor, is bound to aesthetic aspects which are not to be found outside of the performative frame as such. The aesthetic staging of the body plays a crucial role in the reception of the practice.

Performing involves knowledge in two ways: practical knowledge (skill) is required for the performer to successfully carry out actions, while hermeneutic knowledge is needed for the actions to be seen and understood (p. 9). Arguably, a performance without an individual or a community able to understand its meaning, value and importance is not to be considered a contribution to intangible cultural heritage. The dependence of intangible heritage on human body and human knowledge makes it susceptible to continuous changes: a performance will never be the same as the one that came before it. The connection between the carrier, their skills, the receptive audience, the (aesthetic) staging of the practice and the conveyed messages is intrinsic to the nature of the performance and defines the overall experience of it (p. 10). In the domain of intangible cultural practices form and content cannot be separated from one another. It is in this sense that Wulf states that “Performative knowledge evolves in face-to-face situations and is semantically ambiguous. It is aesthetic and evolves in mimetic processes” (p. 10).

The possibility for human beings to acquire knowledge through mimetic processes is the condition of existence and evolution of intangible cultural practices. Mimetic learning is defined as “a sensory, body-based form of learning in which images, schemas and movements are learnt in order to perform cultural and social action” (p. 10). Mimetic knowledge is strictly linked to sensibility as a means of acquiring skills; this is why Wulf defines performative knowledge as aesthetic. In mimetic processes of learning cultural practices “receptivity and activity overlap” (p. 11): learning and participating become one single way of contributing to the intangible cultural heritage. By relating mimetically to a performance, the learner simultaneously acquires a skill (receptivity) and transforms it by referring it to their individuality (activity). One could argue that learning mimetically means, in the deepest Deweyan sense, transforming a given content by adding to it bits of the learner’s life experience, to then express it again into the world, renewing the content and keeping it alive and thriving. This experience results in the creation of a feeling of togetherness for the community involved in the process and eventually culminates in engendering joy and fulfillment. This processuality is called by Wulf, borrowing Csikszentmihályi’s phrasing, “‘flow’ experience” (p. 13).

Wulf then maintains that the mimetic movement helps with the creation of individual and communal identity, a crucial element in a world that is rapidly changing and daily facing humanity with new challenges. If culture is to be understood as a “transformative powerhouse for sustainable developments” (p. 16), as stated in the Declaration of the 2015 New York

assembly, grasping its potential role within this context is as ever crucial: this is the main goal of the *Handbook*.

Wulf considers the spreading of culture through mimetic processes a beneficial contribution to education for sustainable development, for global citizenship and for peace (pp. 18-23). These three fields of education share the same goal with different focuses: “a planetary pluriversal education for all people, in which intangible cultural practices play an important role” (p. 18). The three branches involve the emotional participation of the learner and intend to convey knowledge in “a vivid and experiential way” (p. 19), where particular emphasis is placed on the perceptual dimension of learning. The centrality given to the feeling of amazement (*thaumazein*) in the educational process, the Aristotelian starting point of the philosophical investigation, confers a kind of gnoseological power to the senses, bringing the aesthetic discourse at the center of the matter. Aesthetic concepts seem fundamental to understand the mechanisms and requirements of these fields of education.

Wulf concludes his introduction with a summary of the main points of each section of the volume. “Part I: living heritage as initiator of transition” (pp. 39-110) explores the role of culture as a medium for global transformation in a scientific and introductory way. “Part II: colonialism, minorities, inequalities, and the struggle for human rights” (pp. 113-220) focuses on the consequences of western colonialism on African and Asian countries through examples of intangible cultural practices and exploration of colonialism’s effects on the latter. “Part III: identity building, participation, and conflicts” (pp. 223-401) analyses the connection between intangible heritage and the rediscovery (or recreation) of national identity, specifically in post-war contexts. Pragmatic examples are brought up, such as the formation of a Korean national identity after the Japanese occupation. “Part IV: living culture in aesthetic encounters” (pp. 405-75) explores intangible cultural practices concerning artistic performances such as dances, music or art displays. Here, aesthetics is understood both as a discourse on the senses and the sensual relation between the body and its environment, and a discourse on art and artistic expressions. The final section, “Part V: challenging issues, future developments and new areas of research” (pp. 479-572) ends the volume by leaving space for discussion and reflection, raising questions and picturing possible perspectives. One of the underscored matters is the role that digitalization plays and will play in the spread and conservation of intangible cultural practices. While it may be considered an asset for its capacity of connecting and reaching a

wider audience, could it not undermine the intrinsic physicality of intangible heritage in its connection to a living body and a concrete location?

Part IV of the *Handbook* is a collection of six essays, focused on the intersection of the fields of aesthetics and intangible cultural heritage. Here, the aesthetics' domain is not only limited to the realm of artistic expressions, such as music, theater, dance and museum exhibitions. Indeed, it seems to more broadly embrace the discourse surrounding bodily sensibility as a means of establishing intentional relations with the world – relations which are closely connected to both individual and communal growth, as well as to the arising of feelings like fulfillment, appreciation and joy. Wulf's essay in Chapter 23, significantly placed in the middle of the section, recollects all the aspects exposed in his introduction and explains their functioning through the example of the Sardinian *Canto a tenore* (pp. 430-1). The theoretical concepts now come into play in the analysis of cultural performances – here, the Sardinian celebration – and are to be discovered as a fundamental common ground for all of the artistic expressions analyzed in the previous and following essays of the chapter. Aesthetics concepts appear to be the means to understand the nature of intangible cultural practices: their structure, their functioning, their potential and their significance to human beings as members of a community.

What is constantly emphasized throughout the six essays is the circular connection between experience, interpretation, learning and enjoyment. For instance, in Chapter 24, while describing the function which museums are taking on, Hartwig Lüdtke speaks in this regard of “edutainment” (p. 444), as the expression which synthesizes practical education through “hands-on experience” (p. 441), the feeling of joy which sparkles from it and the community sense that can be built by being actively involved in a museum. According to the words of Julius Heinicke in Chapter 25, the Berlin Humboldt Forum seems capable of embracing this role, being a place for discovering traditional heritage while experiencing and shaping our role as global citizens. It is in this way that our global sensibility can be developed (pp. 455-7). For us to experience culture “not as a fixed foundation but as a place of negotiation” (p. 457), it is necessary to physically entwine with it, and new forms of museal expositions can play a big role in this process.

The centrality of the body in these processes is highlighted in Chapter 22 by Vicky Kämpfe's analysis of the practices of Modern Dance in Germany, whose primary merit is to have discovered “new forms of expression of the body” (p. 419) through a process-oriented dancing and teach-

ing method, which defines dance as a “socially creative practice” (p. 419). Discovering new areas of our body’s capacity spectrum, and with that developing new mobility and adaptability skills, allows us to grow as individuals and as a community, developing a glocal sensibility which is welcoming “of every individual [...], regardless of their social history, migration paths or disabilities” (p. 426). The practice of dance as an artistic performance intrinsically entails the aesthetic dimension of performativity, which transcends its mere functional definition: in Wulf’s words, just “as the aesthetic perspective on artistic performances stops them being reduced to acts that simply have the intention of attaining functional goals, so it reminds us that the practices of intangible cultural heritage are ‘more’ than manifestations of concrete intention” (p. 434). The practice of Modern Dance in Germany fits perfectly to this conception of the linkage between aesthetics and performativity.

Living in a world that is rapidly changing, clinging to a shared and *living* cultural heritage is a way to critically deal with these changes and with the challenges that they bring about. In order to carry out this task in a meaningful and insightful way – as Part IV seems to show – the understanding of the role that aesthetics plays in our daily cultural lives proves essential, as aesthetics represents the common ground shared by human beings with bodies able to intentionally perform cultural practices. The volume is, amongst its other merits, a tangible testimony of the importance of philosophy as a potential driver of change in our society.

Elena Beccherle

Recensione

Emmanuel Alloa, *Attraverso l'immagine. Una fenomenologia dei media visuali*

traduzione italiana a cura di A. De Cesaris, Milano, Meltemi, 2024, pp. 522

È prassi piuttosto comune quella di scrivere saggi filosofici (e non solo), circoscrivendo in maniera netta, e spesso piuttosto arbitraria, i confini di un determinato tema. Al contrario, cercare di ampliare l’orizzonte argomentativo, approfondendo epoche, autori e connessioni tematiche, viene visto con scetticismo. Oltre che tendenzialmente supponente e pericolosamente esposto a numerosi errori, molti dei quali ovviamente non previsti dall’autore, quest’ultimo approccio viene velocemente messo da par-

te dai ricercatori stessi. Una tale prassi richiede infatti tempo, dedizione, accentuate capacità di analisi e sintesi così come una chiara visione del fine, ma soprattutto molto coraggio per sostenere tanto le argomentazioni (ancor più se originali) quanto gli eventuali problemi ed errori interpretativi prodotti, molti dei quali spesso inevitabili.

Nel recensire il volume di Emmanuel Alloa, *Attraverso l'immagine. Una fenomenologia dei media visuali*, dobbiamo anzitutto confrontarci con un libro senz'altro di forte connotazione nel campo dell'estetica filosofica, ma anche estremamente coraggioso e sfaccettato. Dunque, con un testo che incarna esattamente il contrario di qualsiasi (sempre volendo dare a questo termine un'accezione negativa) specialismo e che va dritto al dunque, senza però tralasciare la rete storica di influssi e rimandi che il tema porta con sé. Il volume di Alloa è la senz'altro riuscita traduzione (per mano di Alessandro De Cesaris) di un testo che nel 2011 ha segnato in profondità la filosofia e la *Medienwissenschaft*, e non per ultimo la teoria dell'arte, di area germanofona: *Das durchscheinende Bild. Konturen einer medialen Phänomenologie* (uscito per Diaphanes). Il valore storico-disciplinare del testo non può essere riassunto in poche pagine di recensione. Bisogna tenere però conto del fatto che si tratta di un saggio che viene elaborato nel pieno della temperie (per fortuna non ancora sopita) della cultura visuale e in anni nei quali il *pictorial turn* (Mitchell 1992) e l'*iconic turn* (Boehm 1994), così come le trattazioni interdisciplinari delle *Bildwissenschaften*, erano già sedimentate nel discorso scientifico sulla natura delle immagini. Non è un caso, infatti, che sia proprio Alloa a rimandare a questo sfondo storico-scientifico nella sua introduzione al volume (pp. 13-5), formulando al contempo, in maniera concentrata, un motivo che sarà articolato in profondità in indagini successive (come ad esempio in *Phänotecchnik: Skizzen zu einer anderen Ästhetik*, pubblicato nel primo numero del 2024 dell'"Internationales Jahrbuch für Medienphilosophie und Medienästhetik"): "Il senso iconico [delle immagini] [...] non può essere tradotto in altri dialetti del senso (in una descrizione verbale, per esempio) senza perdere qualcosa, perché le immagini presentano un'eccedenza iconica che è realmente visibile, o *fenomenica*" (p. 15). E tuttavia non si tratta affatto, nel caso di *Attraverso l'immagine*, di un libro, per così dire, 'rivolto al passato' o men che meno datato. Al contrario: la traduzione è assai attuale proprio perché, come voglio mostrare di seguito in breve, non si arresta alla constatazione del carattere eccedente dell'iconico, ma la indaga da più prospettive, mettendo in questione anche le condizioni di tale ricerca. In termini wittgensteiniani leggiamo in Alloa: "la nostra visibilità è dovuta al nostro guardare *attraverso* i media [,] questo libro si occupa del

vedere-attraverso, ma anche della logica di questo ‘attraverso’” (p. 17). Vediamo passo per passo, tramite il commento di alcuni momenti salienti del testo, come.

Il lavoro è strutturato in cinque capitoli, nei quali si intrecciano in maniera densa e consistente argomentazioni di taglio teorico e, al contempo, di storia della filosofia – e, da qui, dell’estetica. Nel primo capitolo è il *Sofista* di Platone ad essere chiamato in causa come il luogo in cui, nel discutere la polarità tra essere (l’immagine in qualità di oggetto) e non-essere (l’immagine non è il rappresentato), l’immagine viene concepita come una via di mezzo che pone la questione ontologica sul che cosa: “Il *Sofista* segna il momento in cui *la questione dell’essere non può più essere posta al di fuori dello spazio dell’apparire*” (p. 74). Questa posizione del problema, che riformula il piano ontologico intorno a quello dell’apparenza, rende l’immagine tuttavia indecisa, perché la sua fondazione è essenzialmente eteronoma: “l’immagine è, ma solo a patto che questo essere non sia fondato in sé, ma in qualcosa d’altro” (p. 46). All’interno di questa divaricazione, nella quale si produce un gioco di rimandi reciproci tra le apparenze ed il loro altro, l’autore inserisce la sua lettura di Aristotele, prodotta in un confronto con Heidegger e Husserl. Aristotele – il cui *De anima*, nel volume, viene analizzato in profondità facendo riferimento ad un ampio ventaglio bibliografico in quattro lingue – avrebbe infatti concepito il luogo dell’apparire come qualcosa di radicalmente dinamico, nel quale il principio di eteronomia diventa il motore che apre il campo della visibilità: “il colore deve porre in movimento il medium, che così ottiene come un che di *estraneo*, quella visibilità che esso stesso produce nel soggetto percipiente. Il medium, così, appartiene già al campo del visibile, ma non ha visibilità in sé, bensì grazie a un altro. Così viene espresso il paradosso fondamentale della medialità: ciò che è visibile da sé, lo è solo a condizione di espropriarsi nella forza complementare del medium” (pp. 138-9).

È proprio attraverso questa struttura eteronoma che, per Alloa, l’apparenza si traccia solo attraverso il suo altro. Siamo alla teoria aristotelica del diafano, che rappresenta il fulcro concettuale del libro e della quale l’autore, nel capitolo terzo, mostra una possibile storia filosofica sullo sfondo dei paradigmi di opacità e trasparenza. “Attraversare l’immagine” significa, cercando una prima sintesi, rifletterla non come qualcosa di dato, bensì come una serie di condizioni mobili e mai date una volta per tutte. È in questo spazio di possibilità che la teoria del diafano in Aristotele assume una forte attualità in qualità di strumento euristico di tali condizioni di senso. Sarebbe interessante sapere, da questa prospettiva di ricerca, quale ruolo potrebbe giocare Warburg – citato in maniera piuttosto pun-

tuale a p. 314, p. 460 e p. 470 del volume – in una teoria filosofica del medium immagine così concepita.

È alla natura epistemologica del diafano che Alloa, nel capitolo quarto, dedica un confronto con la fenomenologia husserliana (insieme ad Aristotele, l'altro grande pilastro teorico del libro) e con altri approcci fenomenologici in Derrida, Fink e Merleau-Ponty. È in Husserl che Alloa riconosce il passaggio da una concezione binaria dell'immagine (il cosa ed il come di essa) ad una ternaria, nella quale la struttura materiale-mediale, il suo "attraverso", viene in primo piano (p. 292).

Nell'ultima parte del libro, l'autore sceglie infine di allargare il suo percorso facendo confluire la sua fenomenologia mediale in una sintomatologia delle immagini di stampo goodmaniano (pp. 401-58). Tale sintomatologia si manifesta nelle singole immagini in maniera più o meno significativa o evidente. Seguendo questo carattere incerto e, per l'appunto, euristico nel delineare la sintomatologia, l'autore coglie non solo in argomentazioni, ma anche in fenomeni-immagine, molti dei quali riprodotti nel testo, dei momenti nei quali l'apparenza del medium porta ad espressione la sua profonda eteronomia. In questa parte del lavoro Alloa mostra come sia possibile coniugare una filosofia dei media con una riflessione sull'arte, che sia in grado di rendere quest'ultima, anzitutto, uno strumento di interrogazione esemplare del mondo dei media. Alla versatilità filosofica dei capitoli precedenti, si abbina qui dunque un'attenzione nei confronti del mondo dell'arte, che rende il lavoro ancor più dichiaratamente interdisciplinare e prezioso per futuri eventuali sviluppi.

Bisogna, in conclusione, evidenziare che l'edizione italiana è stata, per l'autore, l'occasione per rivedere la sua teoria e per compiere delle variazioni rispetto all'edizione tedesca (l'ultimo capitolo ne è un esempio). Tali cambiamenti sono anche resi possibili dal fatto che ciascun capitolo, come afferma lo stesso autore, può essere letto come un universo argomentativo a sé stante. È proprio tale carattere – non tanto enciclopedico, quanto piuttosto aperto a diverse letture – a rendere il volume, nonostante la sua mole di circa cinquecento pagine e la densità di argomentazioni prodotte, un punto di riferimento imprescindibile per qualsiasi filosofia dei media ed in particolar modo del mondo costitutivamente instabile e ricco di senso delle immagini.

Luca Vigliani

Rassegna

The art of playing: art and play as practices of re-aestheticization

on: Anne Boissière, *L'Art et le vivant du jeu*, Presses Universitaires de Liège, Liège, 2023, pp. 175; Jean-Philippe Pierron, *Pour une insurrection des sens. Danser, chanter, jouer, pour prendre soin du monde*, Actes Sud, Arles, 2023, pp. 223; L. Martin, C. Vollaire, *Distance ludique, distance critique? Des usages du jeu dans les dispositifs de travail et de leurs enjeux politiques*, Loco Paris, 2022, pp. 143

The common trait shared by the three texts here analysed is also what gives each of them its distinctive feature: a claim to commitment –*engagement* in the French sense – which takes the form of an invitation to feel, to which the authors respond in different yet complementary ways. Our starting point is *L'Art et le vivant du jeu* (2023) by Anne Boissière, which acts as a prism through which to view the other works, refracting them in a way that restores their specificity. The outcome of years of research into the experience of play, Boissière's book stands out for making explicit, among other things, that the artistic capacity to reinvent our relationship with the world in new ways depends on the artist's ability to replicate the exploratory, trusting and complicit attitude that enables children to "animate their surroundings, imparting to them a liveliness [*vivant*] that adults lack" (p. 159, my transl.). This attitude prevents one from "perceiving the environment in any way other than objectively or rationally" (p. 155) and from acting upon the world as if it were a passive entity to which one remains detached, imprisoned in the atrophy of mechanical gestures.

By contrast, the child's actions while playing are inseparable from that of space itself, a 'living', mobile space that invites and impels the child, whose touch seems, in return, to make everything around 'come alive'. Neither dominant nor dominated, the child is not seized by 'doing' – the mere carrying out of a task – but by a way of being: a being *seized* by play, oblivious to the passage of time and the changing of circumstances. The issue at stake is a way of being that is characteristic of childhood: the child never plays 'at' something, but always 'absolutely'. This is where the distinction between *play* – or better, *playing* – and *game* emerges. The latter, indeed, is play governed by rules and consistent with the regimentation that follows the reification of the world. By contrast, the former is the expression of an essential dimension of experience: feeling, which knows no rule except that of an order constituted by the act of feeling

itself. This order of this formation is unpredictable and unstable; it is foreign to the dichotomy between subject and object, and between activity and passivity.

The impossibility of reducing such a ‘formative law’ to a rule ‘to be followed’, with respect to which one might act ‘well’ or ‘badly’, lies in the very manner by which feeling manifests itself: what Erwin Straus calls ‘pathicity’, appearing as a seizure (*Ergriffenheit*), a sense of being ‘acted upon’ by a movement that unfolds within and through oneself in an unpredictable and unintentional way. Both the anthropologist, biologist and psychologist Frederik Buytendijk and the historian Johan Huizinga take up this notion to characterise play. It refers to the coexistence of feeling ‘alive’ and present in the moment while simultaneously being the ‘unseated’ from one’s perceived self, as though ‘set at a distance’ from the conscious, deliberating agent striving to maintain control over its surroundings. Thus, to inquire into play thus means to account for this irreducible dimension of experience that marks not only art but also ordinary life. Philosophical theorizing itself is no exception; it is impossible, in fact, to separate the object of inquiry from the inquirer. In the opening pages of her book, Boissière discusses this situated dimension, claiming that the very object of research imposed upon her the necessity “to no longer remain outside of what one thinks, and to acknowledge the inevitable share of experience, against the demand for self-foundation often claimed by philosophy in its systematic pretensions” (p. 14). Questioning this claim and the demand for self-foundation is inseparable from questioning the idea that *vivant* (the fulcrum of feeling and playing) cannot be reduced to a concept. This risk surfaces whenever play is subsumed under *game* and testifies to the dominance of a “syndrome of rules” (pp. 59-69).

Boissière seizes the opportunity presented by this theme to break free from that logic. Drawing upon the ‘micrological’ approach introduced by Theodor Adorno, she situates the analysis of play within an orientation “to the concrete” (p. 17), rather than within the “logic of system that subjugates and homogenises” (p. 121). The result is not another theory of play but rather a *perspective* on the theme, inseparable from that of a female philosopher seized by the “experiential commitment” (p. 11) (*engagement expérientiel*) of writing. Never claiming domination, yet never lacking rigour, the argumentation gives voice to her personal experience to in the form of “experiential texts” (p. 141). These pages enrich the work, conferring upon it a qualitative, embodied texture that marks the emergence of a form of *recherche-crédation*, in which one philosophises

with and through a hybrid form of writing that stimulates, rather than substitutes for, philosophical thought.

From a conceptual standpoint, Boissière draws primarily upon Hui-zinga's *Homo ludens* which celebrates the irrationality and illusory nature of play. This involves stepping into play, or *lusio*, which is bound up with the experience of seizures that define it. It unfolds in the form of collusion, or complicity akin to that of initiates or conspirators through play (cf. p. 96). This 'collusion', operating at different levels of everyday life, escapes the mesh of a conception of relations shaped by the 'telegraphic metaphor', according to which an active sender transmits information to a passive receiver – a metaphor historically tied to the notion of 'interaction'. Instead, what is at stake is the emergence of a mutual influence in which everyone participates through 'col-lusion' with the world, as expressed through play and taken up by art. This is why artistic experiences have the capacity to transform the way we feel, giving our emotional state a particular 'shape' that impacts the way we relate to ourselves and others.

In this way, the artistic experience guides the peaceful – since playing is not about competing – representation of beautiful forms (cf. p. 91), and their ordering according to an unpredictable and ungovernable logic that arises in real time. The way art introduces us to this logic and renders us sensitive to feeling while it shapes and transforms it, following the trajectory traced by the configuration of the feeling itself, is exemplified in the work of dancer and choreographer Françoise Dupuy. Inspired by the notion of rhythm at the heart of the 'Rhythmics' by pedagogue and musician Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, Dupuy is committed to an 'education in feeling'. The latter aims to counter the absence of rhythm of our lives by cultivating an awareness of the coincidence of feeling, bodily movement, unity of time, and unity of space through dance, music, and theatre.

These reflections highlight the necessity of implementing a series of practices and strategies to access the living dimension of play, which is indispensable for its creative and artistic development. In this sense, Plessner's notion of eccentricity reveals that art embraces the constitutive ambiguity of human beings, related to being and having a body. This ambiguity is expressed in the paradoxical coincidence of feeling coinciding with oneself at the very moment one is 'set at a distance from oneself', dislodged from the self-controlled subject one believed oneself to be. In this context, one should consider the artist's 'artifices': from the cumbersome costume that restricts Carolyn Carlson's every movement, to stage props – devices through which the artist interprets their role by distancing themselves from themselves. This distancing has allowed the

artist to discover and actualise an unprecedented mode of being. However, this only occurs insofar as the artist feels themselves to be ‘carried’ – here the notion of *portance*, which Boissière borrows from Emmanuel de Saint Aubert, is noteworthy – sustained in their ‘becoming-other’.

This aspect comes to the fore in the text recounting her ‘journey with the voice’ – hence the neologism *voxage*, a fusion of ‘voix’ (*voice*) and ‘voyage’ (*journey*) – an experience in which the voice itself becomes a scenic body, the very medium through which this new body emerges. This transformation of bodily listening involves a kind of doubling between the body that sustains and the body that emerges and takes flight. Through this process, one soars in space without ever mastering it. This soaring is inseparable from a sensation of both loss of control and of ‘holding’, of trust and of perceiving a “space that belongs to oneself without belonging to oneself” (p. 146). This space enables complicity to emerge not only among players or artists, but also among the objects produced by artists. For example, Alexander Calder’s circus elements are in complicity with each other even without human intervention to set them in motion. When such intervention does occur, it is the frivolousness to which Adorno refers (*das Alberne*), designating the ‘mimetic’, non-intentional stratum of art that encapsulates its entire critical potential. For Anne Boissière, the capacity for critical thinking is inherent in play. This is why it is important to ‘save childhood’ and preserve the ability to approach the world with curiosity and a sense of wonder.

For Jean-Philippe Pierron, author of *Pour une insurrection des sens. Danser, chanter, jouer, pour prendre soin du monde* (2023). This is precisely the task of art whose specificity lies in its “capacity to move beyond the experience of mere resonance and to reproduce, express and render perceptible the full spectrum of possible relations to the world [...]. The arts help us inhabit this problem and invest this breach, from which other ways of being and doing can emerge” (p. 45, my transl.). The atrophying and anesthetizing effects of capitalist production logic can therefore be countered by art, dance and, above all, music, as well as non-artistic practices that engage the senses and body (cooking, gardening, playing). These practices reconnect us with our own existence at a bodily and emotional level, offering the potential to subvert the dominant logic. Pierron’s engagement thus takes the form of the mobilisation of feeling effected by such practices, which enable sensitivity by mobilising an attention to the body that “makes body with the world through incorporation” (p. 59). This attentiveness to bodily incorporation enables us to understand the intersubjective nature of every gesture. “Cultivating is a relationship that

goes back to the ancient separation between the farmer Cain and the herder Abel because the gardener's soil is a network of relationships to be cultivated. Eating is a way of reconnecting, so cooking cannot just be another form of industrial production" (p. 59). Every action related to cooking, eating or gardening as well as sensations – such as hunger – reconnects us with our physical existence and implies belonging to a community that encompasses nature. The garden is a microcosm of this community, and acting within it, if guided by attentiveness, is an act of 'care'. In this way, play reveals itself to be a precious resource for developing an 'ecological' attitude, often also described as 'ecopoietic', which underlies the way of inhabiting the world that such practices facilitate. It is therefore fitting that Pierron devotes one of the 'interludes' of his book to play, though it also serves as an underlying theme throughout the entire volume. Like Boissière, Pierron emphasises play as an activity that is "regulated by the rules rather than by their mechanical application" (p. 77), because it is only the former that "mobilises the highest degree of attention to presence, arousing and educating [us]" (p. 78). This component of play stems from the fact that playing forces us to take responsibility for our corporeal engagement in the web of relations and, thereby, with alterity: "To play is to accept being marked by the unpredictable roughness of others" (p. 78).

This perspective is evident in the intertwining of play and work, an aspect absent in Boissière's work but present in the book by Martin and Vollaire. This intertwining aims to uncover and reactivate the "creative and relational dimension of play" within labour, enabling it to "recover the alterity of the world and of nature" (p. 90). This rescues labour from the extractivist logic of production. However, this discourse on play runs as a *basso continuo* through all subsequent reflections concerning play as an activity in itself and play enacted in the performing arts. Dance's re-aestheticising function is evident in its ability to serve as a "resonance chamber in which the subject and the object are reconnected through rhythm" (p. 92), thereby restoring the character of bodily movement as "alive at its core, vibrating with other living beings and rendering us sensitive to all our connections" (*ibid.*). Dancing is akin to sowing: in both cases, a choreography is at work that celebrates our spatial existence and our very existence, "standing upon the Earth" (p. 100). Dance restores the gestural, relational and generative nature of such acts, revealing "plural, inventive and inaugural ways of being alive" (*ibid.*). The choreographies enacted in both dance and sowing thus embody the 'ecopoietic' rewriting of space performed by all the practices discussed by Pierron. In Pierron's

critique of Paul Valéry's well-known distinction between the 'prosaic' movement of walking and the 'poietic' movement of dancing, his priorities become clear: rather than emphasising the separation between art and life, he prioritises cultivating a common sensibility – an attitude and practice of inhabiting spaces. Walking is a practice of 'mobilising the senses' and, consequently, of mobilising attention. From the traveller's journey to the pilgrim's path and the *flâneur's* wanderings to marching, walking becomes a celebration of our spatial existence and a geopo(i)etic practice of rewriting space. This process presupposes an attunement with the environment. This attunement simultaneously renders walking a gesture of 'care' for the environment that gives way to its reconfiguration: "the trace of a gesture found in its fragile power to inaugurate a path" (p. 104).

It is precisely this 'fragile power' that is performed by the mode of inhabiting which, according to Pierron, should be taken as a model: that of the hut. A "architecture without an architect" (p. 110), the hut privileges horizontality over verticality and flexibility over rigidity. It functions as a sheltering nest that reveals the dynamic and ambivalent nature of inhabiting, being a threshold between inside and outside. This makes clear that building and inhabiting a hut implies also attentiveness to materials such that building and inhabiting cannot be separated from a gesture of care, a care that makes no distinction between caring for oneself and caring for the humans and non-humans with whom one coexists. Furthermore, it responds to the childlike desire to playfully inhabit space: to "put oneself to the test of other ways of being" (p. 111) giving way to everchanging 'relational constructs'. The art form best suited to realising this way of inhabiting, symbolised by the hut, is music, which Pierron devotes much of his book to. One cannot make or listen to music without experiencing the silence that connects the notes and enables music to exist. For this reason, music teaches us to listen and, in doing so, to discover ourselves as 'resonant' with the relationships that listening creates – relationships that connect us to a shared sense of belonging within this 'ecology of listening', and to the powerful emotional appeal of feeling: "Music thus directs us towards mobilising reasons for being and acting, which are not reasons, but sensations, impressions and sensitive relations [...] less a *realised form*, and more a *form in becoming or formation*, as Henri Maldiney says, music invites us to experience our communion with life as an ongoing process. It encourages us to view this communion not as something fixed, but as an ongoing task" (pp. 129-31). By making us participants in the formation of sensitive relationships, music – which Pierron (cf. p. 130) describes as an 'art of passage' – lays out paths rather

than ‘plans’. It makes us more open to the process of forming bonds with others and with the environment, based on attentiveness and care. The emblem of this ‘doing together’, to which ‘listening together’ should orient us, is the ‘orchestral experience’, which reveals both the necessity of corporeality for the ensemble’s production of sound and the coincidence of listening and producing sound in a phenomenon of resonance and co-vibration. Connected to this phenomenon is the ‘ecocritical’ writing gesture, which, as Pierron puts it, is responsible for a ‘radicality of nuance’. This opens up the capacity to ‘make traces’ not by planning, but by following the path of feeling and giving voice to its processual unfolding, celebrating its nodes and its unprecedented configurations. Yet, in order to remain open to feeling and the living relationships it feeds on, and to allow feeling to arise, a place is required, whether physical or not, in which to practise listening and, with it, attentiveness. That place is the theatre. Like building and living in a hut, theatre trains the capacity to attune to the multiple ways of being that inhabit the world through the elaboration of an inexhaustible encyclopaedia of attentional gestures, and experimenting with infinite modes of co-inhabiting with them.

While Pierron’s book highlights the urgent need for an education in sensing, the transition to an ecopoietic way of living from the practices he illustrates does not appear straightforward. Indeed, it seems that such a transition requires the development of a specific teaching method and way of carrying out these practices, so that they can fulfil their educational role and effectively translate into dwelling practices shaped by the mode outlined through the aesthetics of attention developed by Pierron.

The book *Distance ludique, distance critique? Des usages du jeu dans les dispositifs de travail et de leurs enjeux politiques* (2022), highlights the challenges posed by the intersection of play and work in capitalist societies. Work psychologist Lydia Martin and philosopher Christiane Vollaire observe that, rather than counteracting the productive logic, such encounters risk confirming and even reinforcing it. Play activities integrated into company training programmes, such as role-playing games, are only apparently practices capable of awakening in employees their ability to autonomously solve practical and relational problems. In fact, the corporate system is structured in such a way as to prevent these forms of play from fostering the emergence of situations of playing, understood as an activity “that arises spontaneously from the very work situations themselves (free play)”, and instead reduces them to activities “prescribed by hierarchy (play [...] governed by rules, in the form of an organized game)” (p. 59, my transl.). This reduction of play to game occurs through the tend-

ency to skip debriefing moments, when employees reflect on the implications of play for their work. These moments are crucial acts of awareness for workers, but they are effectively eliminated, which deprives workers of the capacity to establish a critical distance from the present situation and reconfigure it by reconfiguring their own position within it, as Boissière has shown. It is also important to stress that, psychologically, playing in a work context is not truly playing, but part of working. One does not have the freedom to withdraw from it since doing so would incur ‘sanctions’. Consequently, one never enters Winnicott’s ‘potential’ space; rather, play becomes part of a mechanism of not only subjection, but also actual ‘training’ (cf. the etymological parallel between ‘management’ and the Italian ‘maneggiare’, which previously “designated [...] the training of horses” (p. 115).

The adaptive capacities fostered through ‘serious games’ are precisely the forms of adaptation to the system that playing allows one to question. Thus, play becomes complicit in a system that exploits the game’s ability to divert attention away from work in order to distract workers from the injustices of the system and the manipulative mechanisms of which they become an integral part. After surveying reflections on work in Western philosophy, the book reviews the ways in which companies – especially in the French context – implement the gamification of work. It is not merely a critique of this system, but also an invitation to challenge the capitalist conception through this process of gamification. This perspective allows us to identify a vulnerability in the system: the necessity of hierarchy, which is supported using play as a tool for asserting power. Examining the comforts offered by the most profitable companies reveals them to be the exclusive bearers of the privilege of play, now an indicator of status. The ludic dimension becomes a tool for discriminatory demarcation between winners and losers, masters and servants, and those who can and cannot change the rules of the game, Olympus and hell (cf. pp. 105-7 and especially 110-5, which illustrate the disastrous effects of the ludic ideology that saw the game as a tool for productivity and aggressivity during the Nazi era. This ideology was not only functional to the assertion of Aryan racial supremacy, but also to the deadly ‘cult’ of obedience as a means of defending and pursuing one’s interests).

Although concrete solutions to this problem may be lacking, the volume succeeds in de-anesthetising the readers as it awakens their consciousness to the subjugation of play to the logic of power. When juxtaposed with Boissière’s and Pierron’s reflections on playing, these pages highlight the difference between games and play, shedding new light on

the type of political engagement that play offers. As well as offering avenues for research on play and work, the book also challenges the instrumentalisation of play as a Foucauldian device of power, notably through the materiality of the book itself. The photographs in the central section depict people in “playful positions” (p. 139) at work. This “suspension of the text” (ibid.) appears as a performative act with political significance, echoing the suspension created by play: a distancing from postures, behavioural arrangements and architectural and spatial organisations that serve the ‘serious game’ of power. The photograph *Stop #87*, which depicts a security guard leaning against the partition that demarcates his workspace, shows that the critical potential of art and philosophy does not unfold through the rules of the game, but rather through complicity with space and (self)irony – Adornian *Alberne?* – discovered with and through the *vivant* of playing (to which not only the performing arts, but also photography, are attuned). Through this emerges the destabilising force of the ‘oblique logic’ by which the depicted person exhibits and subverts the dominant/subordinate logic of his workplace.

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