Chapter 9

Performance and Performativity: A Geography of Unknown Lands

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> This my hand will rather
> The multitudinous seas incarnadine
> Making the green one red.
> *Thomas De Quincy*

> Bow, stubborn knees and heart with strings of steel
> Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe
> *Hamlet 3.3.70–1*

> Crying is a puzzler.
> *Charles Darwin 1838*

Introduction: An Awkward Perspective

I take it as axiomatic that cultural geography has lost its way. A particular picture of the world has held it captive, a picture based on just a few brushstrokes: a stubbornly humanist metaphysics, the repeated application of methodologies that just confirm that world's existence, and a politics which still attempts to take the moral high ground. The result, at least, is clear. Cultural geography has become intellectual work as usual, cutting itself off from its radical origins.

But there is another way. In this chapter, I will sketch out some of the elements of what a revivified cultural geography might look like, one not based just on the academic grind of text and countertext but on an ethos of constant experimentation across many registers of experience in a world "saturated with phenomena," to use Helen Vendler's (1995) pregnant phrase. I will argue that this reformulation requires three main elements, each of which forms a key part of the chapter. One is to recognize the richness of the world. Another is to take an expressively formed embodiment into our thinking. And the last is to produce a different ethos of engagement with the world.

In each case, what is being attempted is to produce a new kind of political weave to the world, one which attempts to meet despoliation with an ethos of creation

rather than just resistance. It is engaged, above all, with forcing new kinds of sur-facings, born out of the burn of raw energy released by making implicit and pow-erful connections (Taussig 1999; Thrift 2002). What is being aimed for, in other words, is a definition of the political which avoids a model of a hallowed ground of politics surrounded by a desert of quietism, in favor of "continuously" political activity woven into the fabric of life.

Such a change of horizon can be located as part of a broader project, which is to finally slough off the perpetually futile but seemingly ever-renewed legacy of thinking of history and geography through totalizing systems, with an utter dis-proportionality between the types of questions posed (most of them by the great systems of Christian theology) and the vaulting types of answers provided as thinkers felt compelled to "'reoccupy' the 'position' of the medieval Christian schema of creation and eschatology – rather than leave it empty, as a rationality that was aware of its own limits might have done" (Wallace 1983: xx–xxi). In other words, as Hans Blumenberg (1983: 48–9) puts it in his magisterial *The Legitimacy of Modern Reason*, the attempt to "answer a medieval question with the means available to a postmedieval age" is a case of "the wrong tools for the wrong job" (Rabinow 2002: 14). But now we are finally facing up to the fact that we need new forms of more modest theoretical curiosity which are minded to overcome prob-lems in quite different ways. Not coincidentally, such a move requires a reworking of space – as we shall see.

But let me start with a prayer, Jorie Graham's (2000: 36), to be precise.

> What of   the quicksand.
> My desperate eye   looking too hard.
>
> Or the eye   of the world
> looking too hard
>
> for me. Or, if you prefer, *cause*,
>
> looking to take in
> what could be sufficient—
>
> Then the sun goes down   and the sentence
>
> goes out. Recklessly towards the end. Beyond
> the ridge. Wearing us as if lost in
>
> thought with no way
> out, no eye at all to slip through,
>
> none of the hurry or the between-
> hurry thinkings to liquefy,
>
> until it can be laid on a tongue
>
> oh quickness – like a drop. Swallow.
> Rouse says the dark.

The act of prayer. For 40 years or so, that act has been at the center of debate in the social sciences and humanities, ever since Louis Althusser revived Pascal's dictum "kneel down, move your lips in prayer and you will believe" as a means of berat-

ing humanism and moving beyond reading techniques based on the standard rhetorical and semiotic models. As Graham's reworking of fragments from Hölderlin makes clear, we can now see that numinous historical moment returning in full force as a series of belated recognitions – of the urgency of thinking materiality anew, of the importance of technologies of carnality to what we call thinking, and of the consequent need to instigate another way of proceeding. These three reformulations will make up the main part of this chapter. Having touched on these reformulations, I will then at least begin the task of showing how they show up in the many acts of performance and so provide a capacity to know the world from "an *awkward* perspective" (Hölderlin, cited in Fenves 2001: 1; my emphasis) which cannot, or so I believe, be easily kept in play in other ways. By way of a conclusion, I will then touch on what all this might mean for how geography is once it no longer expects to get its bearings.

The World is Rich

I want to start this process of re-cognition by revisiting the vexed question of *materiality*. For one of the most striking developments of the last few years has been the series of struggles to make a new compact with this term, partly the result of the renaissance of a certain kind of vitalism (see May & Thrift 2001), partly the result of new technological developments which seem to presage a new kind of lightness to being, and partly the result of a desire to inject a sense of wonder[1] and astonishment back into a world which sometimes seems to have become tarnished by spectacle.[2] This new sense of materiality challenges a whole series of traditional divisions – between organic and inorganic, science and art, and space and time, for example – in its hunger to redefine how the world is/could/should be.[3] What are the chief aspects of this new sense of materiality? I think there are three. The first is what we might call, following Tiffany (2000), a lyric materiality. It is becoming commonplace to identify the point at which materialism both breaks free and simultaneously stultifies with Marx's doctoral thesis on Democritus and Epicurus (e.g. Bennett 2001; Tiffany 2000). In that thesis, Marx half-animates the world. He uses Epicurean philosophy to show that the "sensuous appearance" of the world is built into its very character and is not just a subjective impression but then, falling back on Democritus, he only allows that sensuousness limited play, and so ends up with a standard philosophical anthropology in which exaltation, enchantment, and derangement are marked human (some might say all too human). "By the time Marx gets done with it, the fighting spirit of matter has settled down into the bodies of men" (Bennett 2001: 120). Marx therefore loses touch with the appreciation of agency within nature that Epicurus's fundamental atomic property of swerve affirms.

But now there are attempts to reinstate exaltation, enchantment, and derangement back into materialism in a way already prefigured by writers like Walter Benjamin. How does this kind of "aesthetically disposed" materialism differ from the old materialism? First, it extends the imagination into matter, rather than seeing the two as separate and distinct, by exploring the poetic dimension. We cannot escape the fact that our means of depicting the world is bound up with what we take the world to be. It is not the case that this is just a simple depiction of the real by the imagination, however. For material substance is:

A medium that is inescapably informed by the pictures that we compose of it. We are confronted with the idea that a material body, insofar as its substance can be defined, is composed of pictures, and that the conventional equation of materialism and realism depends on the viability of the pictures we use to represent an invisible material world. (Tiffany 2000: 9)

And the lyric nature of substance is, if anything, being underlined. Why? Because, at this point in history,

Science becomes rich in visualizing skills and art gains many entries into the object. Fiction is no longer free under the pretext that it would be subjective or impotent, and science is no longer merely "accurate," because to be so it would also need to be unmediated, unsituated and unhistorical. (Latour 1999: 428)

And this tendency can only expand as more and more of the practices of science, spurred on by powerful technical media, rely on imagining the invisible (Ede 2000).

A second aspect of the new materiality that is inherent in the lyric is what we might call a sense of wonder. Fisher (1998) argues that wonder disrupts ordinary narrative expectations by producing sudden experiences in an instant of time in which all details are present at once in a kind of spatial crowding. The everyday is shuffled and displaced by a rare or even singular and utterly compelling event. It is therefore something more than surprise, because "wonder does not depend on awakening and then surprising expectation, but on the complete absence of expectation" (p. 21). Again, wonder is something more than the by now overly familiar notion of shock; "shock is a rejuvenation within fatigued systems of representation and thought. That is why the classical and religious mind of Baudelaire gave us our greatest poet of the aesthetics of shock. With shock we face the all or nothing, the Russian roulette of a mind or a system at the end of its rope" (p. 5). Rather, wonder is a kind of local intelligibility, as Fisher (1998: 9), in a wonderful passage, makes clear.

Socrates insisted that to know what it is that we do not know is the humbling first step of true knowledge. We need to add that the impossibility of knowing any such thing is one of the things that strikes us when we look closely at the reasoning and science of the past, even in the moments of its greatest accomplishments . . . When we look at the history of successful explanation and ask how it could be that it remained undamaged by the unreliable tools, unavailable technology, hidden errors carried on through the entire project of thought, inadequate basic terminology, sectors of ignorance built in like blank spots on a map and sometimes taking up 90 per cent of the map itself, then we can see just how fruitful the idea of local intelligibility is as the necessary alternative to certain knowledge. Defective but still manageable rationality is what we actually have to use to make sense of the objects of our curiosity.

Wonder drives and sustains the defective rationality that gives us intelligibility under conditions where we will not even know that we have reached certain knowledge when and if we have.

A third aspect of the new materiality I will call involution, calling to mind the great and interlinked dream metaphors that De Quincy called "involutes" that reveal new connections, making the green one red. Nowadays, this aspect of materiality is often tagged as neobaroque, bringing to mind a tradition of conceiving of complexity that reaches back to Whitehead and finds its current keenest exponent

in the works of Benjamin (1985) and Deleuze (1993). In this tradition, the world appears as a heap of highly significant fragments (somewhat akin to Leibnizian monads), rather than a seamless web which adds up to a superorganic whole. This is a constantly fluctuating world of the side-by-side existence of mutually exclusive realities, realities in turbulent motion forming short-lived patterns with each other – when patterns exist at all. The "emancipation of dissonance" (Kwa 2002) that results from such a vision emphasizes the creative aspect of the world in its attention to the swerve. In the neobaroque tradition, then, the world is contingent and complex, a space for opportunities and events. This is the opposite of the view that sees general laws in every single local instance and event for "when we cannot predict the future course of a complex system, it is not because we don't know enough. The world is uncertain. Uncertainty in the baroque case is ontological rather than epistemological" (Kwa 2002: 47).

This new sense of materiality takes the world into new territories. To begin with, it takes the poetics of metaphor seriously, where metaphor is not taken to be something cozy and familiar but what Husserl once called a "resistance to harmony" which is also simultaneously an act of restitution. It strains against both disciplined experience and the objective univocity of certain kinds of abstraction in that it contains more than it is selected for. As Blumenberg (1997: 84–5) so brilliantly puts it,

This is the model of what is claimed for hermeneutics, but in this case it runs in the opposite direction: interpretation does not enrich the text beyond what the author consciously puts into it; rather, the alien relationship flows unpredictably into the production of texts. Metaphor's imprecision, now scorned in the rigorous self-sharpening of theoretical language, corresponds in a different way to the maximal abstraction of such concepts as "Being," "History," "World," which have not ceased to impress us. However metaphor retains the wealth of its heritage, which abstraction must deny.

Then, the new sense of materiality takes investments of affective energy in objects seriously. So, for example, the investment of such energy in commodities is no longer peremptorily dismissed as fetishism. It does not only entail a kind of mindless amusement but all kinds of pleasurable affirmations. More importantly, objects become elements of ethologies which can go wild, making new paths and clusters, distributing themselves as key parts of various passions (Attfield 2000).

And, to finish up, the new sense of materiality necessarily involves itself in trying to trace out the political unconscious of the material world as a kind of performative agency in the shape of those physical automatisms, based on the mimetic dimension, which provide most of our grounding in the world. These "lyrics" – a host of historically contingent expressions, with their attendant traumas, joys, and conversions – are "songlines" which are now drawn on not just media like the body and the movement of air but also the screen and the mundane para-ethnographic apparatus of such incessant and insistent objects as networks of pipes, families of formulae and clearing systems (Marcus 2002; Riles 2002).

Thinking Embodiment

Again, what we can take from the example of Graham's prayer is the need to be careful not to assume that the message is the be-all and end-all of life. In a certain

sense, the medium really is the message in that if the body conforms then the doctrine follows on, as Bourdieu, in Pascalian vein, so often demonstrated (e.g. Bourdieu 1999). Belief is about sedimenting the body.

But, more than that, her careful mixing of metaphors also shows the importance of questioning what is meant by the body. Thus, recent work has tended to radically undermine the idea that the body is a finished organic whole beginning or ending at the wall of skin. Rather, the body is seen as a set of interdependent associations or interactions or populations, stressing commonality over isolation, which are born out of the force, even vehemence (Fisher 2002), of expression as *embodiment*. And this really does mean commonality out of force. So, to begin with, embodiment is a set of spatially and temporally distributed series: body a-whereness rather than body awareness. It consists of the differential flow of a particular kind of constantly moving carnality which has its reasons and its modes of reasoning, but these are not necessarily cognitively framed. Modern dance has often tried to make this point by arranging moving bodies in such a way that "disconnected movements can take off and develop at the same time in the same body" (Gil 2002: 118–19), inducing the simultaneous superposition of multiple positions in time and space, proliferating articulations which demonstrate that movement can become its own motivation. Take the case of Merce Cunningham. He

decomposes gestures in the balancing act of the body-in-movement, so that the nexus of positions of bodily parts is no longer that of an organic body. One could even say that to each of the simultaneously held positions there corresponds a different body. (Organic, yes, but out of the multiplicity of organic virtual bodies that constitute one same body there emerges an impossible body, a sort of monstrous body: this is the virtual body.) This body prolongs gesture into virtuality since what follows from gesture can no longer be perceived by and in an empirical, actual body.

It follows that there is no single body, like the "proper" body of phenomenology, but rather multiple bodies. (Gil 2002: 123)

Then, embodiment does not just consist of the particular consistencies of flesh. It is radically extended by tools of various kinds which are an integral part of what we call humanity, rather than being something set to one side of individual human bodies as means through which these bodies attain various goals and meanings (Leroi-Gourhan 1983). Gradually, the human has come to consist of more and more "body parts" – and more and more wordly "counterparts" – each learning to affect the other. As Latour (1999: 147) puts it, "the pair human–nonhuman does not involve a tug-of-war between two opposite forces. On the contrary, the more activity there is from one, the more activity there is from the other." Because of this active intermediation, intersubjectivity must be seen as much as an outcome of capture by various kinds of tool (texts, devices, and body disciplines) as a driving force.

In turn, this leads us to a last point. The nonhuman counts. Not as a back-up or an interface or a possession but as a more or less extensive architecture of action whose concerns do not just impinge on "us" but make "us" what "we" are. Massumi (2002a: xxix–xxx) puts it well:

There are any number of non-human strata in the world, with their own "perceptual" mechanisms: means for picking up a charge of potential aflow in the world and capturing it in a

stratum-forming self-production or reproduction. Many of these non-human formations are in fact integrated in the human body. A ray of light passing into the human eye strikes on the level of physics. Its impulse passes through many an interlocking level, from the physical to the chemical to the biological. On each level, it produces a dedicated effect that is captured as a content, and around which certain functions alimenting the self-regulating system will come to revolve. The cascading generation of alimentary effects and functional capture continues across the gaps between bodily strata. When it reaches the brain, the whole series repotentializes. Brain functioning serves as a hinge between the internal stratifications contained by the skin and the wider systems of capture into which the human organism as a whole is in turn integrated.

So, to summarize, embodiment may best be thought of as a set of circulating ethologies, architectures of unlike things which come together and are aligned as particular functionings (that is bodies of sensation that do not refer to the perception of an object or the affections of a subject) with particular capacities to produce effects and affects. These ethologies are moving "thought-ways," ways of doing/thinking world, what Deleuze calls "refrains," orderings that drive across and produce regions by constantly making and remaking alliances and relationships: the work of doing relation.

Engaging the World

In turn, this kind of depiction of a rich and sensuous materiality suggests a very different kind of ethos of engagement with the world, what I have called elsewhere "summoning life" (Thrift 2002). This is an attempt to carve out a different kind of ethos from that which currently takes up and deadens so much of our energies, one which adds to the world by framing the energetics of encounters in creative and caring ways which add to the potential for what may become, one which – in the teeth of all the evidence – is always moving towards possible celebration. It tries to produce more artful responses to the questions encounters continuously ask of us, expanding just a little the spaces of joy and generosity that so often show up but are mutilated by the assumptions of what the circumstances must be. This is not a romantic conception of a political ethic, I hasten to add, since it assumes that what is being striven for at most times is agonistic respect (what is often called deep pluralism) born out of an expanded sense of what constitutes sensibility and thoughtfulness. But it is a hopeful conception – or so I hope – which attempts to undo some of the damage inflicted by numerous orderings on our capacity for thoughtfulness and to amplify responsiveness.

Producing such an ethos therefore depends upon making assumptions about how the world will be disclosed.

One of those assumptions is that the world will *not* turn up as a secularized modernity. I have no truck with an account of the world as a realm of disenchantment (Thrift 1996; Bennett 2001). Instead, I see our current conjuncture as no less full of gods and spirits than the medieval period, though they may take on radical forms. I simply do not believe that capitalism or bureaucracy or science has the power to iron out the imagination, though they certainly condition and channel it.[4] I see these kinds of secular orderings (and since they are themselves shot through with manifestations of superstition, leaps of the imagination and affective energy, I might question the use of the description "secular") as attempts to produce

efficacious organizations of public space which will crowd out precisely these kinds of manifestations. Of course, the repressed then returns, but powered up by these secular conditions orders enormous organizational resources into counterproductive conflicts, schisms, and wars.

Another assumption is that politics operates at all manner of levels, of which one of the most important, as Connolly (1999) has pointed out, is the "visceral" register of the amygdala, stomach, and numerous other body parts (not all of which, as we have seen, are in what has conventionally been regarded as the body) which generate intensities, images, and feelings. Connolly concentrates on this visceral register for a number of reasons – in part to show just what is lost if a Kantian and Habermasian notion of public discourse is asserted, in part to allow him to listen receptively to politics at points of inception other than those at which its practices are conventionally understood to kick in, and in part as a political ambition in itself; to be able to modify the "infrasensible" aspects of this register of feeling in order to allow new energies and surprising experiments to emerge.

One more assumption is that we need to inhabit and take responsibility for the world differently. That is we need to be more open to attentive openness and less concerned about control. But how to express this? One analogy that comes to mind is with the display quality of the sentient world. As Arendt (1978: 29) puts it, using – significantly for this context – a theatrical metaphor, "whatever can see wants to be seen, whatever can hear calls out to be heard, whatever can touch presents itself to be touched." In other words, "sentient creatures . . . possess an active response to being perceived – in the form of an impulse to distinguish themselves. Thus 'what is' is constantly contributing to and bringing forth the wild spectacular quality of the world" (Curtis 1999: 31). In a remarkable paper, Read (2000) has demonstrated how this performance imperative produces a recognition of alterity and a certain vulnerability which can in turn produce a kind of ethical stance.

What such an ethic of engagement is trying to work on above all might be summarized as affective capacity, a capacity which constitutes something more than the personal quality of emotion but which retains the emphasis on feeling (Brown & Stenner 2001). Affect is understood here in a classical Spinozan fashion as "the modifications of the body by which the power of action of the body is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time the idea of these modifications" (Spinoza, *Ethics*, part III, def. 3). Of course, the Spinozan body means here something different from the individual organic body, something more like dispositions for movement or transition within a particular diagram of encounters which are both affecting and affected.[5] As Massumi (2002b: 15) so clearly puts it:

For Spinoza, the body was one with its transitions. Each transition is accompanied by a variation in its capacity: a change in which powers to affect and be affected are addressable by a next event and how readily addressable they are – or to what degree they are present as futurities. That degree is a bodily intensity, and its present futurity a tendency. The Spinozist problematic of affect offers a way of weaving together concepts of movement, tendency, and intensity in a way that takes us right back to the beginning: in what sense the body coincides with its own transitions and its transitioning with its potential.

And it is important to note that the variation in intensity is felt: it is the felt reality of the work of relation. Out of such an understanding of affect and body, Spinoza

forged an ethics of expression which has now come back to haunt us. Massumi (2002a: xxii, author emphasis) puts that ethics into words so:

What expression is most emphatically not dependent upon in the first instance is any purportedly generally applicable moral rule of assigning responsibility for it or toward it. There is indeed an ethics of expression, which Deleuze and Guattari acknowledge and accept as a central problem. They insist on the term "ethics," as opposed to morality, because the problem in their eyes is not in any primary fashion that of personal responsibility. It is a basically pragmatic question of how one *performatively* contributes to the stretch of expression in the world – or conversely prolongs its capture. This is fundamentally a *creative* problem. Where expression stretches, potential determinately emerges into something new. Expression's tensing is by nature creative. Its passing brings into definite being. It is *ontogenetic*. To tend the stretch of expression, to foster and inflect it rather than trying to own it, is to enter the stream, contributing to its probings: this is co-creative, an aesthetic endeavour. It is also an ethical endeavour, since it is to ally oneself with change: for an ethics of emergence.

And So To Performance

I hope it now becomes clearer why I and others have become so interested in the topos of performance in recent years (Thrift 2000; Thrift & Dewsbury 2000). For performance asks the right questions in the right way, born out of an intense desire to work on the imagination in order to add something into the world, in a world in which constantly altering demands to perform have become commonplace (McKenzie 2001). I tend to see performance as the modern equivalent of prayer in its focus, intensity and ethical commitment whilst remaining different in its desire to use repetition to do something different each time. It is not, of course, a panacea but it starts to provide a body for the thoughts I have worked between on a screen. Performance has built up a knowledge about technologies of carnality, space and time which is aware of itself and its effects. It can do the grand and the epic but it is also aware that the "smallest" things – from the flicker of an eyebrow to the positioning of a chair, from the track of a tear to the staging of an entrance – matter.

Performance does many things – that is its point – but here I will concentrate on just its ability to perturb. We need to be careful here. Much performance simply cements established orders: it is not an orgy of guerilla tactics and incursionary resistances but a part of dominant cultural orders (McKenzie 2001; see also Genosko 2002). But enough of it is different to provide a base for thinking other.

Perhaps the best way of thinking about performance is as a cultural store of expressive longings, sometimes explicitly articulated, sometimes, like a lover's glance across a room, left unsaid. And these longings are not by any means always in the cognitive domain. Many of them are only expressed as prereflexive signs, little mo(ve)ments of affect pointing towards something without being able to say what it is.

In what follows, I will just – very briefly indeed – note how these performative moments can sometimes (and sometimes not, which often proves just as interesting) produce a certain kind of ascension by pointing to cases from musical performance, specifically opera and country music. (In doing so, I have tried to select for different aspects of the contemporary performative agenda which point up different ways of doing different, in the sure knowledge that all I am doing is scratching

the surface.) These choices may not, at first sight, seem very promising. After all, in most incarnations, neither of them exactly conjure up the avant-garde. Then, both opera and country music work to well-worn performative scripts which pass "into performers' bodies, performers who are in a chimerical state between aliveness and deadness, singers [and musicians] who produce sound that has violent force" (Abbate 2001: 18, my addition). And both opera and country music are not only routinely recorded but that recording may indeed be the main motive force.[6] Given these glosses, how can we understand performance in genres like opera and country music without falling back on the usual stereotypes of performance as either a form of puppetry only brought to life by a master script or score or an illicit improvisation which functions as the equivalent of radical political action. What is playing the instrument–performer–audience? The answer, in large part, is to try to better understand performance networks' affective dimensions and especially their ability to "possess" both performers and audience. Abbate (2001: xv–xvi) gives some sense of the process in opera as it gives expression to powerful affective forces when she writes about the virtuoso performances that she still remembers as if they were yesterday:

They conveyed the impression that the work was being created at the moment, "before one's eyes," never seeming to invite comparison between what was being heard and some lurking double, some transcendent work to which they had to measure up. In other words, they never produced the sinking feeling that one was in the presence of *werktreue*, that "this is a good performance of that." Though they were performances of pieces that I knew well, the template had been forgotten. Suggesting that what one heard was simultaneously being invented and fading away, they produced a strange undertone, inviting held breath as if they could arrest all loss. At the same time they were distinctly, exaggeratedly material, directing attention to the physical reality of the musicians and the sounds they create, and one's place as a listener or performer within that sound. There were acoustic irregularities or odd visual angles, all sorts of surplus allied to unique circumstances. Revisited in memory, they have often directed what I write about music. They raise an interesting question: how mortal is performance, if it can resonate this powerfully this long?

That same question is raised in a different way by country music. Country is often seen as the anthems of a reactionary pathos and therefore dismissed by many intellectuals; but, as Shusterman (2000) has argued so effectively, part of the reason for this dismissal is precisely its recognition and use of affect in performance: "extreme emotion or sentimentality is a trademark of country music and a prime reason why intellectuals dismiss it as vulgar kitsch" (Shusterman 2000: 85). According to Shusterman country music demands the construction of sincerity which requires the deployment of emotional styles which can signal authenticity and which themselves, through continuous use, trigger the expectation of emotional response in the audience. Relying on this emotional style archive, a relatively limited musical repertoire, and a strong narrative push, country music is often able to use the common failures of life to construct a kind of affirmation.

However, what is particularly interesting about musical performance is when things get awkward so that the process of emergence is exposed in all its workings. Most performances are not perfect reproductions; there are dropped notes, missed cues, and fluffed entrances.

Error and breakdown are byproducts, exposing the dead-object problem, an aspect of the performance network that few wish to see. This is one reason why performances that go wrong – where someone forgets, or when the music making threatens to fumble or stop – do not simply create frustration or disapproval in the audience. The emotions are more complicated. There is a sense of fear, of anxiety or even panic. And not only from sympathetic identification with those on stage: the spectacle has shown its other face, as a moribund collective that has somehow gotten derailed from the commands that have supplied it with temporary, harmonious life. (Abbate 2001: 45)

I want to illustrate some of these thoughts more fully by considering one of the most neglected of embodied affective states, namely crying. Part of the reason for this neglect is that crying has proved a genuine conundrum, both because of its extreme obviousness and, simultaneously, its extreme opaqueness. Thus the cultural history of crying is at one and the same time a history of attempts to practice crying appropriately and to categorize and explain what crying is. From the early categorization of Saint Augustine to the latest thoughts of psychotherapists (e.g. Kottler 1996) to the almost constant struggles by scientists from Darwin (1998/1872) onwards to put any kind of functional meaning on crying, tears have proved a primary way of thinking a usually highly gendered expectation of how embodiment shows up.[7] And we can be quite sure, as a result of this history, that crying varies widely in its frequency, uses and effects in cultures now and through the historical record (Vincent-Buffault 1991; Hvidberg 1992; Lange 1996; Lutz 1999; McEntire 1990; Reddy 2001).

What interests me about crying in current Western cultures is both crying's generality – as Frey (1985: 21) puts it, "adult tears can appear in response to almost any imaginable situation" – and its often extreme awkwardness: though there are sad or joyful situations where crying is accepted as appropriate and even, in some senses, pleasurable (at funerals and goodbyes, as an element of reconciliation or solace, as a public declaration of sincerity, as an expression of wonder, as a release when watching certain kinds of performance like "tear-jerker" movies or listening to certain kinds of music – such as country music), quite often crying can prove highly inappropriate and difficult to deal with, both for those who are crying and those who are also involved (Cavell 1996). I would argue that crying is often therefore best understood as an act of theatre, a practical means of becoming awkward announcing a change of affective state, a means which, in particular, circumvents some of the expressive limitations of language; "crying emerges when culture forces people to embody a response that they cannot say" (Katz 1999: 198). There is a dramatics to the crying body: as Katz (1999: 179) again puts it, crying is "a panoply of distinctive, aesthetically guided ways of mobilizing the expressive body." In turn such crying is often highly experimental; it has no exact goal in mind but is rather simply a means of changing the situation in order to see what will turn up, which may well simply be another form of awareness/appreciation of that situation. An artful and sensual bridge to something else. The need to bridge can take many forms – between small and large social worlds, between absence and presence, between hubbub and silence – but what cannot be denied is a high aesthetic competency which allows events to be molded: "crying exhibits a poetic logic by which people bring to the surface and mark things that are routinely effaced in ordinary non-emotional conduct. They hit upon, transform, and present dimensions of the

routinely invisible, natural three-dimensionality of their conduct" (Katz 1999: 213). In other words, they move into another register of embodiment which precisely underlines and indeed searches out the degree to which they are embodied: "the flow that intertwines person and world metamorphoses as it moves from the background to the foreground of experience" (Katz 1999: 220) Various parts of the body search out new counterparts, transforming the metaphoric structuring of experience. Breathing is a good example. The catch of breath in crying brings to the fore an action that is normally considered to be automatic (at least in the West) and can be used to artful material effect in numerous forms of event. As Irigaray (2002) makes clear, air too can be cultivated and shared, and crying does exactly this as it breathes out of tune.

Conclusions: Jangling Space and Time

What I want to conclude this chapter with – at last, some will say – is the kinds of geographies that turning in the direction I have pointed to will allow to come to the fore. I hope that by now the political goal is clear: to show up the work of relation in new ways which concentrate on boosting powers of emergence. It follows that the kind of approaches to timespace that will be preferred are those forms of radical empiricism and pragmatics that show up the ways in which circulations emerge and are maintained, of the kind to be found in the work of, for example, Whitehead, Deleuze, and Latour. Such approaches are unlikely to have much truck with "natural" boundaries and relationships, will refuse to deal in fixed warrants such as "nature" or "reason," and are wary of predetermined lines of knowing. They paint, instead, a picture "of a social order constantly threatened by immediate decomposition because no component is ever fully part of it" (Latour 2002: 124).[8]

The point, of course, is that we are only just beginning to explore these timespaces and their different potentials, so I cannot bring back from the front dispatches full of tales of great disaster and even greater triumphs. But, I should also add that it is in the nature of these kinds of approaches to shy away from precisely these kinds of narratives, and to concentrate on something altogether more modest. No single spatio-temporal logic can encompass all the ins and outs of the world. So I find much more *political* sustenance in the few recent "geopathic" (Chaudhuri 1995) attempts to dwell on performance by writing about music (e.g. Smith 2000), walking (e.g. Wylie 2003), and other preternaturally expressive practices. What all these attempts have in common is their tentative character as they try to track their own process of emergence as part of a more general lesson about drawing out.[9] And each of them draws on methodological knowledges that can provide sustenance for expressive points of view, most especially those knowledges: that do not forswear the lyric; that privilege movement; that realize that bodies speak in all kinds of different ways; that value indeterminacy and; that believe that there is a politics of the ordinary which can be and sometimes is extraordinary. These knowledges are necessarily eclectic, drawn from all aspects of the variable mappings provided by "performance," whose "phenomenology" is both conceptual and physical from the start (Chaudhuri 1997; Rehm 2002).

And what spaces do they discover? Spaces that have to come to life because they are in play and so can track and intervene in the play of space. As I have noted else-

where (e.g. Thrift 2000), play is often considered to be a lightweight activity. But it is equally possible to argue that play is one of the most serious activities that it is possible to participate in, not least because its sense of space depends upon the inversion of the relation of position to movement. In play space "movement is no longer indexed to position. Rather, position emerges from movement, from a relation of movement to itself" (Massumi 2002b: 180).

Thinking space through movement is, of course, exactly what performance does but the insight can be generalized up (e.g. Amin & Thrift 2002). And, in turn, we can see this kind of thinking starting to have impacts upon how the spaces around us function, in various new forms of topological architecture, in experiments with the mobile technologies and new forms of mobile address that are beginning to surround us (Thrift 2002), in the continual performances made possible by the internet (from music to prayer), in certain new forms of radical economic activity, and so on. This is akin to Massumi's (2002b: 207) "translogic":

A translogic is different from a metalogic. It doesn't stand back and describe the way multiple logics and the operative levels they model hold together. It enters the relations and tweaks as many strands as it can to get a sense of what may come. It imaginatively enters the fabric of transition and pulls as many strands as it can to see what emerges. It is effective. Rather than metalogical, it is supermodulatory.

Use imagination. Unfold, experiment, modulate, become. Formation not form. Life as more life.[10]

In closing, I want to suggest that such a stance provides the most wonderful opportunities – if only we have the nerve to take them. It will not be easy. The discipline's body image of itself, so to speak, will require changing and that will be deeply threatening to more than a few, and most especially those who believe that they and only they have true knowledge of how the world is and ought to be. As I have argued, following Hölderlin's interpretation of Sophocles, what is needed instead is an awkward perspective, a "perspective that cannot get its bearings, achieve a stable stance and set itself on the right course" (Fenves 2001: 1), a perspective that does not just detach itself from the privileged vantage points sanctioned by the order of law but actively tends perspectives that are likely to go awry, not out of some adolescent need to simply favor the contrary but out of a deep-seated conviction that securing a point of view that never goes wrong cannot add to the world and detracts precisely from those lyric qualities that it is important to tend. "Awkwardness, to paraphrase Spinoza, is the index of itself" (Fenves 2001: 12).

The sentence goes out, it ends – but it does not finish.

NOTES

1. Complicating the idea that any intellectual history is straightforward, it is worth recalling that one of the first cogent discussions of wonder was by Descartes (see Fisher 1998).
2. Though it is worth remembering the enormous efforts, many of them involving sophisticated performative techniques full of "special effects," made by the medieval church.
3. To prefigure my argument, I think that this conjures up a wonderful picture of the world as a set of continually instantiated longings, prayers, and curses (I did not say the picture

was necessarily a beautiful one) which have built up effective repetitions that resonate in our lives and lead us on. But I mean to go farther than this in trying to show why this picture of continually circulating prayers and curses itself provides a platform for rethinking materialism.

4. For me, such attitudes betray the lack of a convincing historical imagination.

5. At times, Spinoza does indeed refer to individual human bodies, and this needs to be kept in mind in reading his work.

6. There is a lively debate over whether in such a media-saturated world a notion of liveness still makes sense (see Auslander 2000).

7. Though as Lutz and others make clear, not always as expected. For example, as he points out, it is becoming acceptable for male politicians to be seen to cry in the media, but this would cause problems for female politicians.

8. As Tarde, writing in 1898, (cited in Latour 2002: 124) puts it:

    It is always the same mistake that is put forward: to believe that in order to see the regular, orderly, logical pattern of social facts, you have to extract yourself from their details, basically irregular, and go upwards until you embrace vast landscapes panoramically: that the principal source of any social coordination resides in a very few general facts, from which it diverges by degree until it reaches the particulars, but in a weakened form; to believe in short that while man agitates himself, a law of evolution leads him. I believe exactly the opposite.

    It has taken us nigh on a hundred years for the ramifications of such a statement to be fully understood.

9. This was of course the original meaning of the verb, to educate (Roach 2002).

10. I have abused Simmel's famous usage here for my own ends.

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