

TIME, TRANSCENDENCE, AND PERFORMANCE  
DAY THREE - 3/10/2009  
notes by Josh Harle

KEYNOTE #6

**Lived Time in the Emotions**

**Anthony Steinbock**

This paper examines the experience of time in the context of personal emotions. One way of examining the meaning of temporality is to describe it impersonally in perceptual, kinaesthetic, and epistemic manners. Another less travelled way is to discern lived time in experiences that exhibit either a positive or negative valence, and that pertain to the personal dimension of the human being. Personal emotions have the following structural characteristics: They possess temporal orientations, their relation to being is modalized in terms of possibility, and they have a relation to otherness. By enlisting specific personal emotions, this paper begins to clarify the intersubjective meaning of lived time.

---

*Phenomenology of the emotions; in this paper exploring Repentance. In particular looking at the temporality, modes of consciousness: dispositive, and otherness.*

*Can be addressed in kinaesthetics, but we look at emotions to account for Lived Time.*

*Not looking at repentance in the context of religion or theology, but phenomenologically.*

*"remembering liberates the past" embolding, into present.*

*Repentance is reaction: re-operative on level of person, relation with past in some form. Reprise. Relived towards the future. Not denial or forgetting past, but affirming it. Increases guilt the more I am repentant.*

*Future position is related to repentance being a reprise which involves change in your life.*

*Temporal memory is futorial.*

*Repented past is given to me differently.*

*Kant says repentance comes "all at once", while Steinbock states: "it is not limited in duration"*

*Steinbock examines repentance vs regret with regards to revolution, reprise; Repentance needs coherence to allow change. Can't say "I am going to remorse this in the morning", and likewise with repent. Can't anticipate repentance.*

*Modality of possibility:*

I) *"Liberation" modalises us. Negative → positive. Dispositive past, grounded in positive of new directedness.*

II) *Dis-positive and dis-claiming*

*Not a denial; affirmation in such a way that accept it "differently" distance from it. "Who I am". Full gesture is of dis; it releases from "existential claim" am who I am. "Unity of meaning"*

*Can it be achieved as a personal act?*

*Immanent transformation/"transcendent praxis" Hamlet's uncle: How can his repentance effect, with fruits of event. Divestment of these gains. Must be matched on "transcendental dimension"*

*Freedom and ability to repent. Attachment to things: (or not) can't covet things and also repent. Economics: Marxist alienation, enslavement → necessary for survival. Want to repent but be "double business bound"*

*Attachment to self: pride, accolade of the offence (that one is trying to repent). Self-emptying. Explains vicious circle of Hamlet's uncle. Where does it start? Repentance is before another. Qualified as repentance worthy. Humility: Pride ↔ self-doubt "Diary of a Country Priest" film*

*Cannot confuse repentance with altruism. Altruism is defined as self-hatred, fleeing (by Nietzsche)*

*Repentance is socially located. From Abrahamic tradition: Does not make sense in Zen, where there is no hope or shame.*

## #13 TRANSCENDENT BODIES

### Transcendent Sensory Experiences in Circus

Prof Peta Tait Theatre & Drama, Latrobe University – P.Tait [at] latrobe.edu.au

Flying trapeze performance has been critiqued to be representing cultural ideas of transcendence (Russo 1993; Tait 1996; Stoddart 2002; Goodall 2002). Yet this is a performance illusion created in circus by highly-trained athletic human bodies doing fast action on and off specialist apparatus. In arguing that flying action is received bodily and viscerally by spectators, circus performance makes explicit how the phenomenology of sensory bodies creates an impression of transcending physical limits.

Animal bodies in traditional twentieth-century circus were stages in ways that faked transformation across species boundaries. Categories of domesticated and wild, human and non-human animal appeared to be suspended when animal performers emulated human performers. But how were animal bodies perceived? Spectators watched an elephant, lion or tiger performer undertake a series of highly prescribed physical actions interacting in a performance of actuality with a trainer/presenter. If animal performers are anthropomorphised, then human performers become zoomorphized (Acampora 2006:85). Jane Desmond writes of exhibited animals in processes outside cognitive formulations of “identification with these animals” in which we imagine their senses and their “sense of perception of our shared environment” (1999: 166-7). Ideas of body phenomenology do at least offer ways of understanding an orientation to bodies as and through sensations.

---

*Appearance of transcendence through skilled, athletic training,*

*Body to body engagement; takes the watching spectator along. (e.g. Mirror neurons) Spectators bodily feel what they see – transcendent performance.*

*Imagined cognition of animals sensations / experience.*

*Feminisation and Occidentalisation of male performers. Hint of common origins of animals and performers.*

## **The Feel of Five Minutes**

**Kath Bicknell** Performance Studies, University of Sydney – bickchik [at] hotmail.com

Athletes grapple to accurately understand time in relation to a complex, interanimating matrix of variables: fitness, technologies, landscape, skill and, critically, their experience of states of flow. As fitness and skill improves, the experience of flow alters to create a sense of mastery of the sport. At the same time, the euphoria and adrenalin produced through the experience remain consistent, despite fluctuating levels of competence and more advanced states of flow, potentially yielding a false sense of speed and performance in relation to one's competitors. Competitors need to develop strategies to balance these divergent modes of experience.

Using the example of mountain bike racing, this presentation questions the human perception of time in relation to competition, flow and skilful, risky performance. Developing Drew Leder's concepts of dysfunction and incorporation alongside John Hockey's sensory analysis of sport, I will investigate the ways in which a rider develops skill and fitness in relation to the temporo-geographic characteristics of a target event. This will demonstrate the way that athletes develop a bodily knowledge of time and pace which is carefully matched with visual and auditory cues.

---

*Mountain biking – Adrenaline, and feeling in the Flow.*

*Flow theory "state of mental arrangement when in peak performance" Mihály Csíkszentmihályi – components of flow mindset.*

*Possibility to learn and develop how to get into a flow state.*

## Mortifying performances: pain, mortality, temporality and transcendence

Gretchen Riordan Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney – cthulhus.spawn [at] gmail.com

The mortification of the flesh in performance forces artists and audience into a perturbing confrontation with the limits of the flesh as medium, in short, with mortality. Suspension, the practice of hanging the body from hooks in the skin, mimics the passivity of the corpse and invokes the inevitability of death. Stelarc used suspension to illustrate his claim that “the body is obsolete”<sup>1</sup>. Stelarc's concept of transcendence mimics the Christian denunciation of the flesh and strives towards an immortal, fleshless eternity. Amelia Jones argues that Stelarc's fantasy makes sense for a white heterosexual male. However, given the historical association of women, queers and other “others” with immanence and corporeality, most people do not have access to this phallogentric fantasy. This paper asks critical questions about its material implications.

Jones also asserts that it is difficult to imagine a white middle class feminist or a working class black lesbian “perpetuating such violence on her body”<sup>2</sup>. Yet my performance partner and I are white, queer feminists of differing class backgrounds who use suspension and other painful practices in our work. Provoked by Stelarc, Jones and others, this paper reconsiders the temporal and material relations of our particular bodies with pain, mortality and transcendence, in the context of suspension performance. It deploys Brian Massumi's (Deleuzian) argument that the body is a “sensible concept”<sup>3</sup>, or thinking flesh, to recast suspension as a modality of thinking materially. Suspension places bodies in prophetic memory of their death in order to create new configurations and capacities for the living flesh. Suspension is a potentially feminist practice insofar as it mortifies the limits that phallogentric fantasies like Stelarc's produce for other(ed) bodies.

1 Stelarc, “Stelarc”, <http://www.stelarc.va.com.au/> (accessed March 06, 2009)

2 Amelia Jones, “Stelarc's Technological Transcendence/Stelarc's Wet Body”, ed. Marquard Smith (Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2005)

3 Brian Massumi, “The Evolutionary Alchemy of Reason”, ed. Marquard Smith (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2005)

---

*Critique of Cartesian Transcendence.*

*Massumi → Thinking Body, Stelarc's affirming.*

*Abject impossibilities.*

*Suspended and in stress, the body realises its obsolescence → the zombie body. “Possibility” is radically suspended.*

*Post-evolutionary pressures. 3<sup>rd</sup> world bodies transcending? Post-human → like Übermensch. Only luxury for the middle-class.*

*Abjection*

*((Virtual bodies, Male World of Warcraft players hassling female players. Abjection and eroticism in virtual worlds is the number one use – think Second Life. Ironic considering the transcendent virtual body that is literally hollowed out, and does not leak or secrete))*

*In discussion Stelarc explains he means Body as Merleau-Ponty sense.*

## KEYNOTE #7

### A Life: Waltzing with Bashir

Erin Manning

In a paper entitled “From Biopolitics to the Biogram or, How Leni Riefenstahl Moves Through Fascism” (a chapter in my recent book, *Relationescapes*), I developed the concept of physical transcendentalism in relation to the becoming-body of Riefenstahl's moving images. Physical transcendentalism is a concept from Italian Futurist Umberto Boccioni that foregrounds the becoming-actual of the physical. One of my arguments in this paper was that Riefenstahl's work does not in and of itself subscribe to a “fascist aesthetic” so much as it creates a new aesthetic of the interval (of in-between movement). Yet, a tending toward transcendentalism (of the fascist kind) persists in her films that suggests that the physical transcendental strata can be usurped by the transcendent. This occurs when the field of emergence created through the physical transcendental (the becoming-body) is usurped by a recasting of its conditions of emergence. This creates a closed-loop system that tends toward fascism. When this occurs the immanent force of the physical transcendental becomes a metaphysics of transcendence – a closed system dependent on its own set principles.

I would like to push this inquiry further, exploring the relationship between transcendence and immanence with respect to Deleuze's notion of A Life (life as pre-individual tendency that cuts across the field of lived experience) and Guattari's notion of micropolitics – with a particular focus on Ari Folman's *Waltz with Bashir*. In this case, I will be working not with the physical transcendental (the biogram as the intensive interval of becoming-bodies) but with Deleuze's notion of the transcendental field. One of the aims is to explore how fascism situates itself at the intersection where transcendence and the transcendental field meet. Contextualising micropolitics within the field of thought proposed by Brian Massumi's recent work on ontopower and bare activity, I hope to be able to contribute to the ongoing conversation on the micro political as the intense becoming-actual of potential politics today.