**"Still Harping On (About Expert Practitioner-Centred
Modes of Knowledge and Models of Intelligibility)"**

Elena Gianotti in Hidden Voices by Rosemary Butcher

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1 *Introduction*

Hidden Voices by Rosemary Butcher

My presentation starts from a number of practical questions, each of which, if we unpack it, brings with it a number of theoretical perspectives, issues and enquiries. One such question has a precise empirical focus, which is how to establish a digital archive, working with the practitioner herself, in the case of thirty years of Rosemary Butcher's making new 'choreographic' work, where a complication is added, which is that the practitioner herself continues to make new work in the time of archive production. This is new work that the act of archive production itself might have its impact upon.

I am supposing that some of the problems thrown up by this particular exercise of archive production might have implications for archive production in the performing arts more generally, not least because the Rosemary Butcher undertaking is positioned quite explicitly in the context of performing arts practice-led-research (and generously funded in large part by the AHRC). My own research has focused in recent years on

the question of expert practitioner-specific modes of knowledge and models of intelligibility, on performance-making processes as distinct from the practices of spectating, and on the issue of what might be called the 'signature practices' of the expert practitioner. Against this backdrop, a further set of questions is bound up with the issue of digital archive production.

First, how might we identify, document and archive disciplinary specificity, in performance-*making* practices, as distinct from the practices of expert spectating, upon which much performance-documentation tends to be modelled? What is at stake in this question is the issue of the university's failure, over recent decades, to engage theoretically with disciplinary specificity as such, in contrast with the widely preferred and marketable 'interdisciplinarity'. Second, what are the identifiers of signature practice, in the named expert practitioner, when and where do they emerge, and can they be/how might they be documented? Third, what constitutes performance-making expertise and is it the case, as I sense that it might be, that we know it when we see it, in the university, rather better than we know how to instruct others to identify it? The expression 'as I sense it might be', that I have just used, signals the tentative and speculative nature of my own enquiry and expertise here, and I am flagging up, in case there are any 'hard-edge' e-scientists amongst us, the wholly fuzzy nature of my certainties. I am setting up the formula, 'as I sense that it might be', to represent a major model of intelligibility that is central to the ways of knowing in this particular field of practice.

I want to ask, in addition, who and on the basis of what sort of competence and artistry, does and *should* document and archive expert performance-making practices, in a practice-led-research context? My question here provides a basis for arguing for the need for our recognition of the disciplinary expertise and indeed the virtuosity of the IT-practitioner-archivist: I want to insist on the need for us to acknowledge that, *like* the expert arts practitioner and the expert performance researcher, the digital archivist is similarly expert. But what this shared expertise means in terms of practice, is that all three of us, as experts in our disciplines, tend to make decisions via the operations of a discipline-specific expert intuition. On this basis, I will proceed to argue that it is time for us to identify expert-intuitive processing in expert decision-making *as such,* in order to master some of its implications, not least for archiving in the present context.

1.1 *The State of Things*

I have observed over the past decade that enquiry into none of these four – 1. disciplinary specificity, 2. disciplinary expertise, 3. expert making practices (rather than spectatorial, interpretative practices), and 4. expert-intuitive decision-making – has been central to the ways the performing arts have been practised theoretically, over the past three decades, in much of the older university. So thoroughgoing is this omission, that we might well need to accuse ourselves of wholesale erasure – even marginalisation – of something that I am viewing as constitutive of *making*, in the performing arts disciplines. The question which follows, is whether digital archive production linked to the recent history of the performing arts can do anything other than to replicate, in the archive produced, precisely that erasure of data specific to disciplinary specificity, disciplinary expertise, and performance-making processes rather than spectatorial practices and their secondary processing.

Where spectator-positioning, the times of spectating, and spectator-based interpretations are documented, rather than performance-making processes, I am arguing that certain models of intelligibility apply to making sense in the field; that these are naturalised and widely reproduced in many performing arts programmes in the university, despite the fact that these very models of intelligibility work against the sorts of changes that some of us have been calling for over the past few years in the case of performing arts practices-as-research. I am asking, overall, what our options might be, in archive-production, if the data that a shift in perspective and positioning to the making processes would require, were historically unavailable – as is certainly the case in part for the Rosemary Butcher archive.

1.2 *'Set-up': between 'practice' and 'context'*

Before I go any further, I want to introduce another term which I am going to argue is bound-up with these opening questions, and has been implicit in the ways I have used a number of terms: that is, I am interested in the 'set-up', or 'set-ups' that apply in the performing arts, and that tend to regulate the ways that notions like disciplinary specificity, disciplinary expertise, and performance-making practices - as distinct from 'the show' - are understood. To bring these perspectives together, and to relate them furthermore to the issue of memory and the archive, I have effectively implied that the 'set-up' within which digital archive production is more generally

undertaken will tend to perpetuate dominant and naturalised ways of seeing and doing, with regard to performance, in the university, unless and until we bring what is specific to practitioner-centred performance disciplines explicitly into account.

In order to underline what is at stake here, I want to make a clear distinction of an operative kind between the *relational* set-up specific to expert performance-making, on the one hand, and on the other the event-specific relational set-up, which is that bringing together the performers and spectators, in the performance event itself. It's banal to observe that these are wholly different; but the implications of that difference are often overlooked when we use the term 'performance', as though it were stable and its implications generally shared. In general terms, it happens that while the expert practitioner can expertly imagine the relational set-up of the performance event, and takes the detail of that imagining into account in terms of her compositional decision-making, it is not the case that a spectator has the means to similarly imagine what is specific to performance-making. Whereas even expert spectating requires no professional expertise to flourish, and its activities can be assimilated into the everyday, expert and discipline specific performance-making, where signature is involved, requires a competence and a mastery that others have called 'extra-daily'. It remains the case, nonetheless, that in many university courses some of us teach students to mistake performance effects for performance-making causes, and/or to try to guess at the latter. Let's not continue to perpetuate this; but to change, we should need to recognise that expertise tends not to be democratically available.

As long as the role of the informed spectator continues to proliferate in the university, performance-documentation, as an activity that tends to make 'data' available to digital archiving, will tend in turn to focus on and even to prefer to capture product; to focus on 'the production', and on the times and spaces of spectating in the performance event, rather than on performance-making. On this basis, as far as the older university at least is concerned, not only will disciplinary expertise, operating in terms of externally-validated arts community values, tend to be omitted from expert documentation, but so too will be the debate on performance aesthetics in practice. Yet no academic, in my own experience, fails to make judgements of taste and value in her or his own performance-going. On this sort of basis, I am going to argue that perhaps some of us *know not* (or *will not say*, in the theory seminar) *what we do*. But the quite particular relational set-ups specific to the disciplines, within which material is produced and evaluated, can only be 'understood', 'captured' and 'documented', it

seems to me, to the extent that their role in expert performance production is explicitly identified as such in advance, and secondly to the extent that the archivist is in a position to realign her activities with those specific to expert performance-making processes.

1.3 *Expertise's place*

Expertise seems to be 'held', and to be internalised, in such a way that others can only see it in the quality of its enactments. In identifying one aspect of expert performance-making as an internalised mastery of multiple major and minor mechanisms, which come into operation at all of those points where signature practices are articulated and synthesised, by an expert practitioner, and in terms of 'the new', I am calling for a realignment of documentation, away from product and into decision-making processes, where that complex of processes and the challenges it presents is explicitly targeted. That the complex of processes I have described tends to prioritise the operations of expert intuition, along with a whole series of constantly renewed evaluative mechanisms, and that these operations tend, as far as documentation is concerned, to be invisible as such, should be seen as no more than an intriguing challenge for those of us who work in documentation and archive production.

I am arguing that in the absence of a set-up-specific, performance-meta-theoretical and archive-meta-theoretical undertaking, however, the older university's attempts at documentation and preservation of data have tended historically, and may well continue to be reactive to models of intelligibility, including evaluative mechanisms, which default to university-established ways of seeing and doing. I have identified those established ways of seeing and doing, in the past, as specific to what I have called a closet Spectator Studies which masquerades – often in order to market the degree programme effectively - as Performance Studies.

Finally I propose to raise very briefly the matter of the nature and degree of impact of 'media-theoretical' and mediological discourses on the work of the expert IT practitioners involved in archive production, from the viewpoint I have adopted, which is that in my experience, decisions-made, in the hands-on digital arena, tend to be strongly characterised by trial and error, by an art of making-do, as well as by the operations of expert intuition. I want to raise in my presentation the issue of the creative expertise of the IT practitioner, within the set-up specific to archive production, arguing that an account of the IT practitioner's expertise and discipline-specific

invention is, similarly, often erased from media-theoretical as well as digital performance studies discourses in the university.

2 Practising a theoretical shift

2.1 *How to theorise in practice, in the context of archival in(ter)vention in the Performing Arts*?

In my introduction I have hinted at the role of a number of different 'set-ups', specific to performing arts in the wider community, to the university, and to digital capture and uses for the purposes of archive production. I have suggested that these determine different ways of seeing, knowing, doing and evaluation – and of a discourse production that tends to renew precisely those set-ups. Much of the university, despite its own declared interest in interdisciplinarity, seems to me to continue to be dominated by disciplinary difference operating at a micrological, as well as naturalised, rather than open level: indicatively, the discourses and other practices specific to the discipline of Contemporary European Philosophy differ markedly from those specific to Cultural Studies and differ again from those preferred in Performance Studies and/or Performing Arts. These differences are revealed, as far as discourse is concerned, in terms of the preferred range of thematisations, the nature of the generalisations specific to the discourse; the ways analytical subject and object are understood; the degree of importance attributed to verifiable evidence in the field; the role of the discipline-specific meta-discourse, and the range and types of tropes central to its operations. Indicatively, while it is common enough to find practitioners in Performing Arts talking about 'integrity' – for which it is relatively difficult to identify an evidential basis – Performance *Studies* in the late 20thC model often challenged traditional humanist concerns, and preferred to adopt discursive positioning associated with what has been called the 'hermeneutics of suspicion' (Ricoeur 1970).

I am going to argue, on the basis of differences of this sort, that documentation and archive production might need to be alert to the different agendae associated with these different positionings. Ideally, the document-maker and IT practitioner will be at least alert to some of these issues, and may manage, thereby, to avoid modes of production that simply default to the reactive, the habitual, and the commonsensical. It has sometimes been the case, in my experience at least, that discipline-specific difficulties, in the performance-maker's work, will be met by skilled problem-solving strategies in the archive-maker.

2.2 *Epistemics and epistemic cultures*

My overall approach here is epistemic, where by epistemics I am signalling a focus on "knowledge-centred practices", "epistemic objects", and the "models of intelligibility" that apply to these, in particular set-ups. "Epistemic objects", in the words of practice-theorist Karin Knorr-Cetina (2000), are those that "bind[…] experts to knowledge things in creative and constructive practice[s]" (182). What Knorr Cetina understands by a 'knowledge-thing' is revealed in her account of "epistemic cultures", which are

> amalgams of arrangements and mechanisms – bonded through affinity, necessity and historical coincidence – which, in a given field, make up *how we know what we know*.

"Epistemic cultures", she adds, "create and warrant knowledge", and the analysis she proposes is one that explores "the meaning of the empirical, the enactments of object relations, [and] the construction and fashioning of social arrangements" within a disciplinary field (Knorr Cetina, 1999). On this sort of basis, I want to make a distinction between Performance Studies in the university as an epistemic sub-culture - with its own preferred epistemic objects – and the epistemic sub-culture that applies in the wider arts-productive performance communities. On the basis of that distinction, my suggestion is that it remains to those of us who operate between the two, to identify what is specific to and of central importance in each, not least if we are concerned with performance archive production and with what, when we bring the digital archive into the equation, we might want to highlight.

In these sorts of terms, I am identifying 'the expert or professional practitioner', 'performance mastery and expertise', 'performance-making practices', the 'operations of expert intuition', 'the 'logics of production', 'the externally-ratified performance event', and 'expert performance-making documentation' as examples of "knowledge-centred" and "knowledge-producing" epistemic objects, many of which have tended, over the first 20 or so years of Performance Studies in the UK and American universities, to have been largely sidestepped in published Performance Studies writing. This sidestepping has occurred for reasons which are historically interesting and linked to attempts within the newly emerging discipline to combine the academic with the market-appeal of performance.

The relatively recent shift to practice-as-research in Performing Arts in the British university has led to an increase in overlap between the different sub-cultures identified, but not without producing a new set of difficulties. The expert practitioner entering the university tends to bear the burden of some of these difficulties. As soon as a third set-up is introduced – such as that brought by digital archive production - those of us who are performance specialists, in either of the subcultures I have identified, need to insist that the default to commonsense-based approaches to documentation is unhelpful, to the extent that it produces a digital archive that cedes to the discursively dominant sub-culture of Performance Studies in the university. What is needed, instead, of the university, is a theorised meta-archival undertaking, which involves a praxiological engagement – by which I mean a political intervention through critical practice into established practices. On the basis of that sort of critical intervention, university-based theorists might begin at least to try to catch up with creative collaborations, including the archival, already happening outside of their doors or on their doorsteps.

2.3 *Discipline, signature practices, and singularity*

I want at this point to begin to identify some of the flash-points where differences in the ways 'performance' is approached in the different sub-cultures I have identified are acute, if our concern is with positioning in regard to our object, and with the intelligibility models or ways of seeing and understanding that apply: I have already suggested that expert performance making-processes differ so significantly from what is available to spectators *under the same title*, that I might need, prior to working on archive production, to determine which 'knowledge orders', and which subjects and objects, are proper to our task. It is on this basis that I am providing the present empirical focus on the 'Rosemary Butcher' archive.

My first observation concerning disciplinary specificity is given away by my use of the name itself: 'Rosemary Butcher' is less a name, in the everyday sense, than short-hand for a widely established practitioner-signature, and whatever it is that constitutes that signature is encoded in her work in terms of what I am calling 'signature practices'. By 'signature practices', I am asserting something quite complex: in the case of the particularities of Butcher's signature, while much of her work seems to retain the disciplinary markers of dance, while it is produced through choreographic process and draws on highly trained expert performers; and while it operates in terms of an

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engagement with the production values that apply in the wider arts communities, 'something in' that work is equally recognisable as hers.   As is implied by 'her work', signature has a legal status, and cannot be replicated without offending against intellectual property ownership - whereas 'style', with which signature is sometimes confused, is endlessly copyable.   The Rosemary Butcher 'something' is singular, but equally it is recognisable; it is widely identified as such, in disciplinary terms and by

critical response, even though it is also the case that in each new instance, it is required to be 'new'. Thus signature practice is not simply singular, but – apparently paradoxically – it is recognisably so, and coherent with the discipline, hinting at the presence of performance 'regularities', across the body of her work. It is apparently challenging, but at the same time its production values are professional, hence more or less stable in terms of, or referencing the terms specific to external evaluation; and its 'newness', when it emerges, excites rarely consistent expert commentary.

Vanishing Point by Rosemary Butcher

I want to note in this precise context, the mid-1980s observation from J-F Lyotard – sometimes known as one at least of the progenitors of the postmodern - that the signature artwork tends to disarm the viewer; it tends to disarm "thinking machines" or "representing machines" (17). If Lyotard's judgement is valid, something in that art seemed to locate itself, at its time, on the margins of written and possibly digital inscription. On the other hand, in terms of professional expertise, Lyotard was not simply a cultural theorist, widely published from the 1970s onwards, but his disciplinary field was Philosophy. Lyotard's mid-1980s observation as philosopher,

trained in expert representations and interpretations mediated by writing, was that in the face of art's powers to disarm, the response of the academic and critic is to seek at great haste to write "twenty or one hundred pages", in an attempt "to pick up the [mind's] pieces, and [to put] the plot together again". That writerly picking up of the mind's pieces, by the academic and critic, immediately renders our experience historical, and our commentary reactive. But I'll come back to this sort of observation from Lyotard.
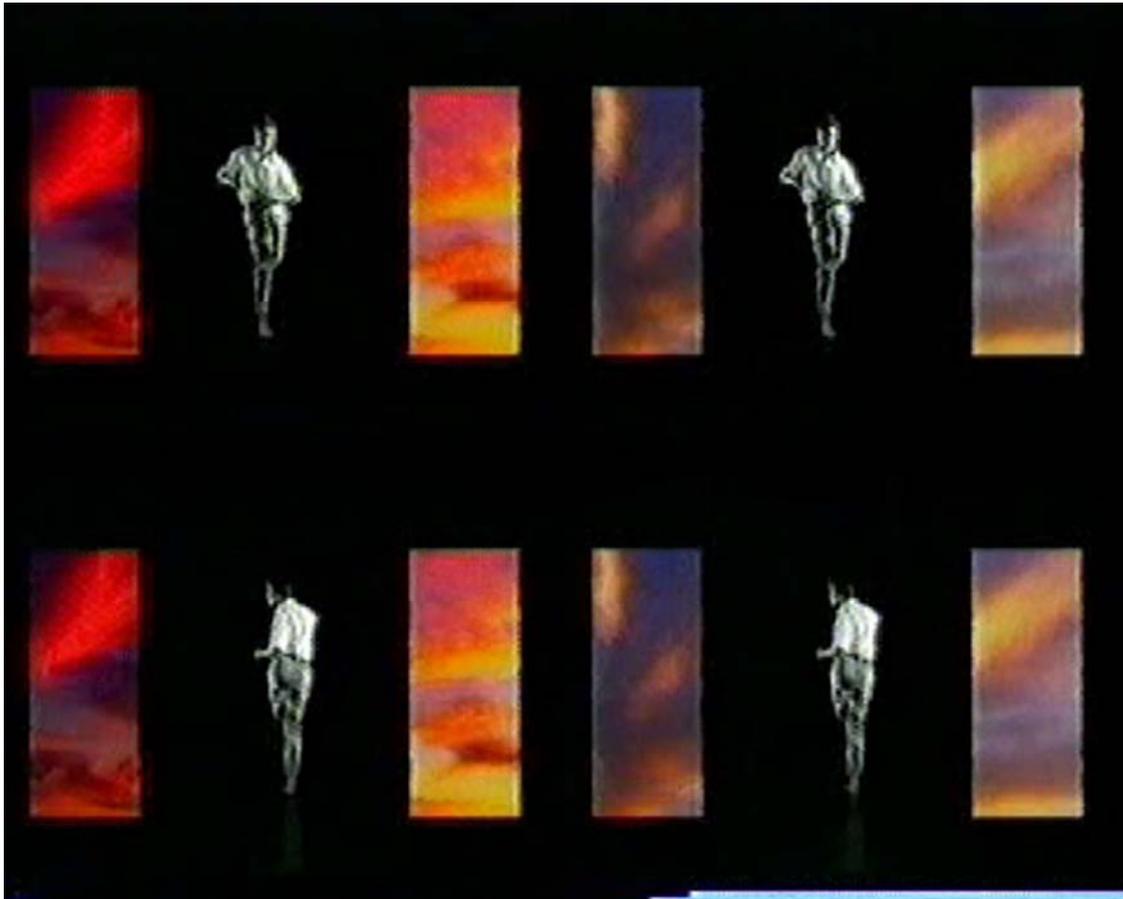
After the Last Sky by Rosemary Butcher

In the case of Rosemary Butcher's signature practices, these have equally been identified, in the early 21stC, *as research*, which locates them within a further set-up, and in epistemic terms, in a different subculture.   In Knorr Cetina's enquiry into epistemic practices and research, she would tend to identify 'the show' that takes Butcher's name as a "partial epistemic object". On this basis, 'the show' is not 'the [research] thing', and nor does 'the show' constitute, in itself, whatever I am recognising as signature: the signature of the artist, perhaps not wholly unlike the

signature of the named research writer, is likely, instead, to emerge with time, on the basis of performance or writerly regularities *across the researcher's body of work*. In performance-making terms, *choreographic* regularities tend to be identified through engagement with a complex, historically-differentiated practice-memory, which informs and conditions expert-intuitive process and decision-making, where these are equally conditioned by the aspiration to the new, to qualitative transformation (Massumi 2001), and, in Knorr Cetina's terms, these are "undergirded" affectively.

'The show', as in the case of *Vanishing Point*, in which Butcher shifts explicitly into film, is in these terms a partial 'knowledge object,' a "momentary instantiation" of a professional 30-year enquiry; it tends as 'show' to be responsive to requirements specific to the wider arts community's economy of production, and these different perspectives, I am arguing, beg a number of questions as to what of, or in, 'the show' might best be documented: if, for example, 'the show' *itself* is non-identical with what drives it as research; if it is also non-identical with whatever drives the artist to go on making new work, to continue to practice as an expert practitioner; if, in professional terms, the artist's need and drive to make new work are *existential*, as the philosopher Peter Osborne notes of the professional artist, then the catalogue of what 'we' archive might need at the very least to take account of some of these notions.

2.4 *Representing 'signature' in practice*

I am requiring of the digital archive, then, that it concerns itself with how to represent the enquiry into signature practice, into the indices of affective investment, and into the practitioner's own drive to qualitative transformation, which means, then, that the archive needs to enquire into its performance –disciplinary representation itself. At the same time, when that archive is produced within or in relation to the research economy of the university, I am also arguing that we need to be attentive to what I would call different *registers* of practice, in relation to this sort of 'knowledge complexity'. The encoding scheme or schemes adopted, and the meta-data that apply, need to take onboard, and to categorise, not only knowledge complexity, but the ongoing speculative nature of the enquiry. On the other hand, to return to the case in point, it is likely to be the case that data available from Butcher's work of the 1970s through to the 1990s will have been compromised, to the extent that the documentational set-up, at different historical moments, will have tended to operate in terms of the dominant models of intelligibility specific to the period and the sites of

recording. 'Performance histories' are likely to be limited, at best, and are potentially compromised when historical data has been produced mostly from the perspective of spectating, the times and spaces of spectating, and not from the perspectives specific to expert practice in the making processes.

       What needed, historically, to have been 'captured', thereby becoming available to be "digitally inscribed" (Lyotard 1988) in the early 21stC, is something other than spectator-positioning in terms of 'the show', something other than spectator-specific interpretations, which tend to be based on performance *effects, after the time of their experience*, and not on expert practitioner signature practices. According once more to Peter Osborne, the dominant models of intelligibility that informed perspectives from the 1970s onwards, replicated a schism between the communication sciences, on the one hand, and aesthesis, on the other. '*Signature practices'* in the making, and compositional strategies, amongst these, have as a consequence of this sort of schism, been systematically under-theorised in the set-ups that have dominated in the older university, not least under the headings of critical theory and the critique of representation.

2.5 *Signature and mediatheoretical writing*

       In setting out 'signature practices', 'compositional strategies' and 'self-singularising practices' as specific to expert performance-making in particular cultural contexts, I want to proceed to ask, today, to what extent signature practices, on the one hand, and self-singularisation – the notion that a work of art is one that 'stands up by itself' (Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?)*– on the other, can find and take their place in and 'fit with' media-theoretical discourses in the university. In order to approach the subject in the context of our concerns here, I have focused, rather perversely, on the mid-1980s writing of J-F Lyotard, in his collection entitled *The Inhuman*, cited in my abstract. Lyotard's *Inhuman* is subtitled, in the French, *Causeries sur le temps*, or 'conversations about time', and these include the times of art-making. I have wanted to test some of his observations against more recent publishing, and to that end I want to cite here Rudi Laerman and Pascal Gielen's 2007 web-published "The Archive of the Digital An-Archive", as an example of writing on the digital/ archive, but coming out of the disciplinary set-up of the Sociology of the Arts.

It is of some interest, in terms of the concern with discipline that I have introduced here, that media-theoretical writing comes from a wide range of discipline-specific set-ups. Each is likely, despite this cross-disciplinary aspiration, to operate in terms of sometimes significantly different models of intelligibility. It might be appropriate at this point to say a little more about the term 'set-up': by set-up I am referring back to Knorr Cetina's term 'epistemic culture', which you will recall was identified in terms of "amalgams of arrangements and mechanisms which make up *how we know what we know*", and "create and warrant knowledge", within a disciplinary field (Knorr Cetina, 1999). I want at this stage to further complexify the term by linking the notion of to Foucault's observations in 1977, when he attempted to provide a clearer account of what he meant by the notion of an *assemblage of apparatuses*. I want to identify the capacity of apparatuses in terms of their role in cultural production and reproduction.

I am supposing that what I understand by the notion of a discipline, and of disciplinary specificity, is at the very least a cluster of productive and regulatory apparatuses and mechanisms invested with cultural values. In the case of arts-professional production in the cultural contexts with which performing arts specialists here are most familiar, these tend, as far as the artist is concerned, to be articulated in the *first person* (i.e. 'my work') and oriented to the *performance present tense* (whence the key question, '*is it happening*?'). By 'disciplinary set-up', then, which has its implications for the digital archive, I am attempting to draw on what has been identified (Rabinow 2003) as a network of heterogeneous and loosely linked institutional arrangements, pre-suppositions, expectations, attitudes, laws, ways of seeing and doing, concern with provenance and evidence, evaluative and interpretative models and understandings, and so on. Each of these plays its part in disciplinary practice. Only some of these, as you are well aware, are consistently articulated discursively. Some are articulated – and by articulation here I refer to a whole range of possible encodings and structurings – architecturally, musically, through bodywork, through light and sound, through positioning and gestuality, and in terms of a relation to spectating. The fuzziness of a term like 'assemblage of apparatuses', Rabinow notes, comes from the fuzziness of the rules that operate in the disciplinary set-up - which observation should not however inhibit those of us who operate in the very fuzzy fields of performance-making and accounting for it.

3 The Discursive Set-up: from surface to the submedial, and back again

3.1 *The Archive of the archive*

In discipline-specific terms, the Laermans/Gielen's "Archive of the digital an-archive", comes out of the Sociology of the Arts. The writers announce an explicit foucauldian interest in "the law of what can be said", as their starting-point. In terms of the notion of a disciplinary set-up that I have begun to identify, their published article itself suggests to me that the authors write, if I might put it this way, *out of writing* itself, and out of what I would identify as a critical 'belief in' writing as the dominant knowledge-medium. Despite a stated concern with "contemporary cyber-reality", their disciplinary set-up seems – again on this limited evidence - not merely to privilege writing, but their text is repeatedly concerned with what they identify as the "ongoing *discourse* 'on' the digital archive" (my emphasis). The archive users they reference, in turn, typically "*read* data" (my emphasis), rather than viewing it, thereby prioritising the orders of writing and reading; and the writers themselves openly observe that even in the case of "the treatment of images and sounds (both need words in order to become meaningful) [in archival terms]".

What are the implications of what I am effectively identifying as a 'writerly set-up', which thematises the digital archive but approaches it through writing, and effectively *through a belief in the natural ascendancy of* writing, if you think back to my identification of the signature-practices of the named artist? What I am calling signature practice, in Butcher's work, brings together multi-dimensional and multi-schematic, architectural, movement-based, and performer-focused practices: these are twice modulated, first by her idiosyncratic take on them, and second by strategies specific to the logics of professional production. As such, Butcher's work, unlike that of the sociologists cited, might seem to resist writerly inscription; might even seem not to share their belief in writing. In Lyotard's terms, Butcher's signature practices might equally be resistant to *digital* inscription – at least if the latter is pursued unreflexively.

3.2 *Resisting/Inscripting and the times of experience*

Lyotard's 1980s use of the term 'digital inscription', on the other hand, may well not have come out of hands-on experience, in the mid-1980s, of digital inscription; it is rather more likely to have come from others' *written* observations on the digital, including Adorno's observations on music, which Lyotard cites. As far as the 21stC digital is concerned, then, Lyotard's 'conversations' of the 1980s are 'history', even if,

as 'progenitor of the postmodern', he seemed, in the 1970s *to be in advance of his time*. His expertise as philosopher, as I have indicated earlier, was writing-based, and it took writing as its means of production as well as its outcome. His interest in aesthetics in the 1980s, then, 'comes out of' the registers of writing specific to the discipline of philosophy. *Writing out of writing*, Lyotard tried to focus on what, according to his own disciplinary orientation at the time, seemed to resist a specifically writerly inscription. (His engagement with regard to the mid-20thC sublime, and the figural, were similarly identified as lying outside of writing, in the realm of the not-yet writerly – hence the power of art, to disarm "thinking machines" or "representing machines" (17).)

The art-effect, that I am approaching in terms of signature practice, *dis*-arms, for Lyotard, in the way it brings uniquely together an abiding enigma and the work's technicity; the greater its technicity, he argues, citing Adorno, the greater the likelihood that it will make itself available to digital inscription; and as a consequence, the less its abiding enigma is available to be grasped as such. I have already indicated that the "picking up of the mind's pieces", by the academic and critic, would immediately render the initial, spectatorial engagement historical: the 'is it happening?', of Lyotard's aesthetics, is thereby rendered as 'it happened'. The academic and critic, on this basis, are history. The only remedy I can find in Lyotard, to apply to the case of the expert practitioner's work, would be to undertake a process of documentation that might "mediate[…] what happens before reacting" to it.

We might thereby begin to engage with the making processes, in advance of the performance event, in a set-up activated on the basis of our evaluation of the practitioner's already evidenced expertise. We should, thereby, be able, with expert process in mind, to begin to engage with and document 'the work that finishes the work', as Lyotard has so neatly put it. Without that engagement with the making processes, in the research context, the academic researcher's attempt to seem to put the work back together again, *after experiencing it*, is likely to be *other* to the signature effect that I am targeting, and would thus "owe[…] nothing", in Lyotard's words, "to the place [the work] can take (and which in a sense it never takes) in the intrication of sensory positions and intelligible meanings" specific to the practitioner's understanding and undertaking. Yet Lyotard's wording itself remains far from unproblematical, in the terms I have set up today, for the simple reason that his account omits mention of the artist or expert practitioner her or himself from its formulation.

Meanwhile, Laermans and Gielen's paper sets out observations on the differences between a database, which is user-need oriented and hence open to constant update, and an archive, which is a necessarily closed and hence stabilised database. They note the fairly widespread argument that 'the digital' and 'the archive' "are clashing notions because they refer to the basic, and opposite, characteristics of old and new media", and, as a consequence, that the digital archive is differently evaluated by traditional archivists and 'new media' archive specialists. Where their work seems to me to become more compelling, is in their identification of what they call the "hidden performativity of computer programs, which make information production simultaneously possible and impossible".

"The archive of the [digital] archive" itself, note the writers, is "not neutral". They cite Wolfgang Ernst's observation (2002) that "Behind every collection [of information] that is dressed up in a narrative or iconic way stands a bare technological structure, an archival skeleton that is with strategic consciousness withdrawn from discursive access on the level of the interface (…)". "Apparently without irreversible hierarchies", they note, still citing Ernst, "the system of technical transfer and storage protocols is, beyond the visible surfaces, much more rigid than a traditional archive ever was". In media-theoretical terms, the writers add, "most users do not actually observe the […] mediating and performative role of the different sorts of programs on which they rely when story, retrieving or processing information". What is at work, the writers point out, at this unobserved and generally speaking unobservable level, is a "sub-media space within which hierarchies of carriers of signs lead into dark opaque depths". From my point of view, the writers' uses of qualifiers like "dark", "unobserved" – even "sub-" - here, seem to me to be indicative of the critical-theorist's discipline-specific need to dramatise and hierarchise.

How might we link this sort of observation back to my earlier points on the determinant role of set-up, in practices we might normally tend to see as 'our own', and the role of disciplinary specificity in what I might call 'Rosemary Butcher's work' in expert performance-making? The writers note an order of control operating in the digital realm that is relatively inaccessible to and unownable by the expert user. The notion of the invisible, the inaccessible and the unownable, as determining to some significant extent what Rosemary Butcher calls "her work", does play its role wherever analysts have been intrigued by the unseen, the apparently enigmatic (as is clearly shown in Lyotard writing on art). But what seems to me to be intriguing in the case of

the dark sub-medial space, in mediology, is that this determining 'player', far from being invisible to all of us, emerges on the basis of industry standards, regulated by Relational Database Management Systems (RDBMS).

These, as I understand it, are agreed not only between multiple authors but between authors and vendors of these systems, in order to maximise 'inter-operability' between systems. The 'enforcability' of such standards is in some cases undertaken by industry standards bodies - for example the International Standards Organisation (ISO) - and in other cases by market forces. All operate within a linguistic frame and use 'pseudo-code' (programming statements) which ressemble language, and programming algorithms which are normally stated in standard language before being translated into programming 'languages' (e.g. SQL, C++, PERL, Java). These are rules-based systems, and all users, willy-nilly, rearticulate them, regardless of their own aspiration to digital difference.

In this rules-based economy, and in terms of the inescapable impact of rules on what is produced, these standards differ significantly from the relatively fuzzy rules operating within what I have called disciplinary set-ups, and what Knorr Cetina has called 'epistemic cultures'. One implication of the limits on choice and potential imposed through a rules-based system is that in order to produce a web-site we are plainly limited to what can be done technically, in terms of 'standards' and inter-operability.

The performance archivist, in other words, in seeking to inscribe what is particular to the expert practice concerned, has a wide but strictly limited range of options available, but otherwise cannot intervene in the display options that these control. Hence in adhering to standards, she attempts to obtain a best approximation of how the end user will receive the material; but that in turn means that in order to maximise access, she has either to produce in terms of the lowest common denominator, or risk excluding some users from access to the material – for example by use of technologies such as Flash Animation, where rich media is embedded into webpages, requiring of users that they install the appropriate but not universally available plug-ins. From my own point of view, however, I should want to add that the existence of constraints has not stopped artists from finding creative solutions in other media.

4 Expert Practices and Memory (Effects)

The expert-performance-practitioner herself, bringing her expert recall of what she was looking at and staging, in the developing work, and how she then realised it in terms of professional production logics and production values, may well provide particularly valuable input to effective archive production. Her impact, in the terms I have set out, lies in her ownership of and ability to recall the making processes themselves, as distinct from their outcome. Yet Lyotard's identification of the abiding enigma of the artwork may well apply to the artist's own grasp of her 'process', not least in the sense that a creative 'unknowing' is often cited by the arts-practitioner as a major model of intelligibility applying to production processes: that wilfully-retained 'expert unknowing' is likely to manifest itself with regard to the expert-intuitive operations themselves, to the impact of contingency and happy accident on production processes, and to the notion of what the emerging work might thematise.

4.1 *Temporal Syntheses and associated memory effects*

It is at this point that I have drawn again on Lyotard's observations on time, memory effects and digital technologies: his terms re-engage with the philosophical tradition that provides his own disciplinary expertise, and his enquiry into what he terms "temporal syntheses" revisits Kant, on apprehension and reproduction, Bergson on recognition, and Freud, on memory: from the perspective of 'preservation' of a past that needs, in fact, to be reconstructed (since the cyber-realm otherwise has no memory), Lyotard focuses on what might be the bases for the practitioner-archivist's selection of already digitised data, already delocalised and detemporalised, and on how simulacra – one of which is 'the past' itself, and another of which is 'signature' – are produced, and might be grasped auto-reflexively as well as expert-intuitively (50). It is these simulacra, once constructed, that re-anchor data in a number of conceptual frames which trigger their own memory effects on behalf of a user. The three memory effects noted by Lyotard, in the mid-1980s, "coincide more or less with three very different sorts of temporal synthesis linked to [digital] inscription": "breaching" renders the past in terms of habit, including habits of thought and feeling; it coincides with the identification of elements drawn together on the basis of affinity, habit or habit-memory.

At issue here are questions as to what in Butcher's past work, was and is now recognised as 'dance', *of its time*, and might be shown to relate to the larger arts-expert

contexts of the time. "Scanning", coinciding with remembering, in Lyotard's own words, effects its own temporal synthesis and seems to evoke the experience that attaches to that synthesis: it "implies not only the retention of the past in the present as present, but the synthesis of the past as such and its reactualization as past, in the present (of consciousness)". Remembering "implies the identification of what is remembered through its classification in a calendar and a cartography" (51), and it is self-referential: "it remembers its own presuppositions and implications" (53). "Passing" coincides with that involuntary but often puzzling memory, which seems to 'come to the practitioner': it is associated with 'working through', in the Freudian sense of the term. Passing, Lyotard adds, uses up more energy than other techniques, because "it is a technique with no rule, or a negative rule, deregulation". It involves an ongoing 'working through', where elements retained trigger again, in the practitioner, an ongoing and perhaps unanswerable enquiry.

5 *Interim Conclusions*

If 'we' are to work together, as differently-skilled expert practitioners, on the digital archiving of signature creative *process*, I would argue that a meta-theoretical engagement, on the part of the expert digital practitioner, working with the artist on the expert-practitioner archive, is important. First, the latter needs to be in a position to advise the former, as to what is most important, and what has most commonly been overlooked; and the former needs, on that sort of basis, to be able to trial and test digital solutions for disciplinary problems. 'We' may need to re-invent historically precise set-ups, and to provide alternative perspectives with regard to missing data, if we are to overcome long-established and naturalised prejudice.

The invention and the professional virtuosity of the digital practitioner are central here, as becomes clear as soon as we recognise that in order to archive the shift to practitioner expertise and experience, creative digital solutions need to be found. Second, the expert digital practitioner needs to learn to make explicit and therefore transparent to the artist, the existence and operation of rules in setting the parameters of the digital archive. Third, and finally, all partners need to recognise the limits which the existence of a rules-bound system imposes on any attempt to archive material requiring a rich meta-narrative, derived through collaborative invention, if its complexities are to be understood by an eventual user.

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