**What is a Live Event?**

**Gary Peters**

**The Absence of the Event**

This chapter will start by assuming that there is something particular, often special, about a live event, something that most people would acknowledge without necessarily knowing or understanding exactly what the essence of this particularity is. As such, the primary concern here will not be the now-ness of the ‘now’ so frequently conceived as the central pillar of the live event but, rather, the pre-history and post-history of the event as embodied in the regimes of practise and rehearsal necessary to preserve (re-originate) the live event.

And in advance, the discussion of improvisation here functions only as one possible means of highlighting certain overlooked particularities (or peculiarities) of the event rather than offering any particular insights into improvisation itself. That said, it is the oft-assumed tension or even contradiction between practising, rehearsing and improvisation that will be considered, as a means of shifting the emphasis away from the performative/existential now-ness of the live experience (or the experience of liveness) towards what might be called the ontological absence/presence of the evental, understood and considered in the self-emergent terms of *autopoiesis*. It is this displacement that will suggest a reconceptualisation of the live event as a *rehearsing* rather than a *happening* space. Or, put another away, what makes what happens live a ‘happening’ is the preservation of the event—that has always already happened—as an essential moment of the ‘now’. Thus, it is the implications of the Heideggerian term *preservation* of the event that will be one, if not the most important focus of the following reflections.

Much of what follows draws upon the work of Martin Heidegger, Gilles Deleuze and Alain Badiou; for all three the event is never present but has always already happened. If, to use Badiou’s language, the ‘site’ of the event is never within the present ‘situation,’ then the sense of authenticity that is often sought in the perceived purity of the improvised live event—its ‘truth’—can itself only attain authenticity if it is recognised that what is live is not the event itself but the repetition of the event as an act of being-true-to its legacy, an act of ‘fidelity’ (Badiou, 2001: 67ff). This affirmation not only keeps alive a memory of a past occurrence, but through this affirmation ensures a future for the event that, nonetheless, remains absent from the liveness of the moment. Putting aside on this occasion the fundamental disagreements between Badiou and Deleuze, the latter nonetheless captures this same thought:

The event […] in its impassibility and its impenetrability has no present. It rather retreats and advances in two directions at once, being the perpetual object of a double question: What is going to happen? What has just happened? The agonizing aspect of the pure event is that it is always and at the same time something which has just happened and something about to happen; never something which is happening. (2004:73)

Does this mean that there *is* no live event? If the event has always *already happened* or *about to happen* then what exactly *do* we experience at a live event? Obviously, we are aware, thanks in part to Philip Auslander, that the experience of liveness can, contra Peggy Phelan, be just as intense when witnessing a performance that has already happened and is endlessly reproducible. But do these different (and now somewhat entrenched) positions really grasp the essential issue, which has more to do with the event-ness of the live than the liveness of the event? What both of the above perspectives on liveness share is what Derrida described long ago as a ‘metaphysics of *presence*.’ While this is obvious in the case of Phelan, it is just as true of Auslander, given that whether what is experienced in the live moment is produced or re-produced, embodied or disembodied it is nevertheless valorised as a presence, ‘now’. For both Auslander and Phelan, liveness *is* presence, regardless of its immediacy or mediacy: but is it? If that were the case what role could, do or should *practise* and *rehearsal* play in the construction of the live event, given, both there necessity, and the fact that they are situated *outside* of the ‘now’ of live experience?

**Practise/Rehearsal**

It is possible to distinguish practise and rehearsal: practising is essentially linear, progressive and teleological, whereas rehearsing is circular, regressive and without an ultimate goal. Practising is inherently futural; rehearsal is inherently historical (and thus also responsible for the continued, albeit discontinuous, ‘happening’ of the past in the present and the future). Practising is a form of work, but it is one in service to either the mastery of a ‘work’ or the mastery of a practice, understood as a body of work, where the verb becomes a noun, and acts become things or skills. Practising is intentional, the intention being to progress within the parameters of given performative benchmarks; rehearsing is retentional and protentional. Rehearsal is not concerned with self-improvement, but with the retention, preservation and the continued ‘happening’ in the future (protention) of what is already given as a *working* rather than a work; that is to say, as ontologically evental rather than existentially eventful. The intentionality of practising is focused primarily on the solidification of chance idiosyncrasies and tics. Technical facility, prowess and virtuosity become, through practise, defining *properties* of the self that can and often do take on moral, spiritual and even mystical (certainly *mystifying*) qualities for audiences hungry for ‘special moments’ and ‘special ones.’ But where practise serves the development of technical facility, rehearsal preserves what might be described here as a performative knowingness that, while essential to technique, is either obscured or, indeed, obliterated by mere technicality. It is precisely this ontological distinction between technicality and *τεχνή* [*techne*] that Heidegger works so hard to re-address in his, so often misunderstood, ‘critique’ of technology. Here is his description in ‘The Question Concerning Technology’:

*techne* is linked with the word *episteme*. Both words are names for knowing in the widest sense. They mean to be entirely at home in something, to understand and be expert in it. Such knowing provides an opening up. As an opening up it is a revealing. Aristotle […] distinguishes between *episteme* and *techne* […] with respect to how and what they reveal. *Techne* [*…*] reveals whatever does *not* bring itself forth and does *not* yet lie before us. (1977: 13)

We might say, then, that practise relies upon a body of existing knowledge (*episteme*) that can be *put into* practice, the transference of what lies before us, and is already known, from one domain to another. Rehearsing on the other hand can be understood as an enactment of *techne* to the extent that it is a form of *knowing* rather than a knowledge of the already given. Such knowing, while ‘entirely at home’ and thus profoundly habitual (*habere*), is a form of dwelling (*habitus*) that is at home in the very *un-homeliness* of the homely (1971a: 161). *Techne*, unlike *episteme*, brings-forth what does *not* lie before us; the unfamiliar and the extra-ordinary: what Badiou would call the ‘naming’ of the evental ‘void’ (2001: 69). Practise *prepares* the improviser for a negotiation with the unknown, rehearsal does not. Rehearsal has nothing whatever to do with the *love* or *fear* of the unknown, any more than it does with the dramatic uncertainties of the live event. Interestingly, it is precisely this fact—this dwelling *within* the un-homely—that makes rehearsal so vital for the event-ness of the event. Practise ensures that something *will* happen, in spite all of all the (sometimes stage-managed) uncertainty, a live event *will* take place no matter what. But ultimately this is all quite trivial: it is not that *things* happen which is significant but, rather, *that* things happen—the *happening* of what happens—that is what en-livens the live and ‘brings forth’ the event-ness of the event.

**Machination, Lived Experience and the Live Event**

While it might be true that the improviser has no (or limited) knowledge (*episteme*) of what will happen in an improvisation, the improvisatory act—as *techne*—is, as Heidegger insists, *already* a form of knowing or knowingness that is ontologically prior to and essentially other than the technicalities and ‘machinations’ (Heidegger 2012: 99ff) of the knowledge economy. But, to reiterate, Heidegger is not merely reviving the ancient concept of *techne* in order to ‘critique’ the technical and machinic; on the contrary, his aim is precisely to re-illuminate or *rehearse* the essence of machination, which (and this is the point) he sees as ontologically obscured by its apparent opposition to what he sees as the promotion and valorisation of ‘lived experience’ in modernity. For our purposes this interrogation of the hidden relation between machination and lived experience will be extended into the discussion of the creative act experienced as a live event.

To clarify, for Heidegger machination [*Machenshaft*] is essential to what he understands as the event of beying (sometimes translated as Being or be-ing). In essence, such makeability originates not exclusively in the technical productivity/creativity of ‘man’ but in what the ancient Greeks called *φύση* meaning the self-emergence of nature or beying. The importance of *techne* (similarly obscured by its modern reduction to mere technicality and technique) is the manner in which it mediates between nature and ‘man’ (or beying and beings) through its inherent duality, one that might be conceived as the co-existence of knowingness and know-how. For Heidegger, knowingness is rooted in wonder, wonder at the self-emergence of nature, or to use his language, the ‘making itself by itself’ (2012: 100) of beying: the originary event. Know-how by comparison is rooted in the creative productivity of ‘man’ understood as the translation and actualisation of wonder in the act of fabricating a world. It is the extent to which this world comes, historically, to be understood almost exclusively as the arena for the lived experiences of ‘man’ as maker that compels Heidegger not (as is often claimed) to ‘critique’ modern machination, whereby experience replaces wonder, but, on the contrary, to reveal their belongingness. Here is an extended, but still radically abbreviated passage from *Contributions to Philosophy: Of the Event* which hopefully captures some of what Heidegger sees as the transition from this the *event* of machination to the *experience* of machination and the concealed belongingness within the perceived opposition.

The name machination should immediately refer to *making*, which we assuredly know as human activity. This latter, however, is possible precisely only on the grounds of an interpretation of beings in which their makeability comes to the fore…The *making itself by itself* is the interpretation of *φύση* [self-emergent nature] carried out by *τεχνή* [techne] and its outlook on things…Since *φύση* is starting to lose its power at the time of the first beginning, *machination* does not yet step into the light of day in its full essence…the machinational now thrusts itself forward more clearly…through the Judeo-Christian thought of creation…[Thus] the cause-effect connection comes to dominate everything. That is an essential deviation from *φύση* and is at the same time the transition to the emergence of *machination* as the essence of beingness in modern thought….the more decisively machination conceals itself in this way, all the more does it press toward the predominance of that which seems completely opposed to its essence and yet is of its essence, i.e., toward *lived experience*….If machination and lived experience are named together, that indicates an essential belonging of the two to each other but at the same moment conceals an equally essential *non-simultaneity* within the “time” of the history of beying…Yet even when machination takes definite form, as in modernity, and shows itself in popular interpretations of beings, it is not recognised as such and certainly is not grasped. (2012: 100-101)

Heidegger, in this text, goes on to conclude that it is specifically ‘mechanistic and biologistic modes of thinking’ (100) that obscure the originary *event* of machination through a humanisation, individualisation and subjectivisation of the machinic in modern technocratic/bureaucratic *life.* Here, one might say, the ‘self-made man’ replaces self-emergent beying, and individual productive output replaces the *autopoiesis* of what might be called (following Bergson) ‘creative evolution.’ Thus, as is well known, Heidegger ‘turns’ towards art (and particularly poetry) in his later philosophy in an effort to disclose and preserve the event of machination concealed by the machinic experiences of a manufactured world: formalised, commodified and indeed *grasped*. But before falling into the trap of thinking that Heidegger simply turns to art in order to ‘critique’ modern technology and the domination of science (including the ‘lifeworld’ and ‘lived experiences’ of the human sciences), we should be mindful of the fact that, for him, the concept of ‘creation’ and the subsequent lionisation of the cause-effect model of individual creativity is also *itself* a primary ‘deviation’ from the event of self-emergence that he is intent on preserving. So, thought in these terms, the creativity of the ‘creative arts,’ so often celebrated as an antidote to the mechanisation of modern culture, is, sorry to say, every bit as machinic as the machinations of mechanistic and biologistic thought. Taking our cue from Heidegger then, we might consider the extent to which ‘lived experience’ as he understands it and the live experience, or the experience of liveness being considered here, are *all* in equal measure deviations from and thus concealments of the originary event of the live.

To be clear though, the real crux of the problem here is neither life, the lived, nor the live but, rather, *experience*—very much a modern, post-Kantian *concept*. The moment life is reduced to the singular experience of the ‘transcendental ego’—the imagination/understanding of the self-reflective subject—is the moment the self-emergence of beying is ‘forgotten’ or ‘abandoned:’ that is the issue for Heidegger. Similarly, the celebration and promotion of liveness or ‘the live’ as a claimed, intended or assumed intensification of experience in general in ‘*An Experience*’ of the ‘real’, the ‘authentic’ and unmediated (or mediated) ‘presence’ is only conceivable existentially (Heidegger would say ‘ontically’) as a series of happenings, occurrences and episodes *within* the lived space-time of the subject’s lifeworld. The interruption of the dead-weight of everyday experientiality by the sudden immediacy of the ‘live’ assumes a concept of creativity that *makes* things happen in the ‘now’ and the experience of the ‘moment’. But it is precisely this existential creative act of making, one that *grasps* the moment and *makes* something happen that, Heidegger would say, reveals the secret belongingness of the machination of beings (performers, artists let us say) and the concealed machination of beying. Looking ahead to the discussion of Deleuze below, we might say that it is not the concept of creativity that should be paramount in the account of liveness but, rather, the ‘creation of concepts’, the creation of space-times *within which* concepts operate; a creativity that, being prior to concepts, is not subject to the subjective machinations that concepts allow: hence Deleuze’s notion of ‘passive creativity’ a close relation to Heidegger’s the self-making of beying.

Returning now to *techne* and Heidegger’s use of this mode of knowing as a way of remembering the ontological essence (or ‘origin’) of makeability and technology, it is clear that his primary concern is not with the production of artworks, crafts or performances—‘*techne* never signifies the act of making’ (1971b: 59)—and yet it is, as suggested above, a creative act. As mentioned, Deleuze argues in ‘What is a Creative Act?’, that what all disciplines or domains have in common (philosophy, science, painting, film making, music, performance…and so on) is the ‘formation of space-times.’ (2006: 315) In other words, it is not what happens and experienced within the space-time of, let us say, a live improvised performance that is the essential creative act, but, to repeat, the creation *of* the space-time within which the performance happens—the happening that allow things to happen— that is the event. And, once again, the evental is here understood, with Heidegger, as a form of ‘self making’, or ‘self-positing’ as Deleuze and Guattari describe it.

Creation and self-positing mutually imply each other because what is truly created, from the living being to the work of art, thereby enjoys a self-positing of itself, or an *autopoetic* characteristic by which it is recognized […] What depends on a free creative activity is also that which […] posits itself in itself: the most subjective will be the most objective. (1994: 11)

**Difference, Diversity and Habit**

Let us stay with Deleuze. In *Difference and Repetition* he differentiates difference and diversity, (1994: 222) which he thinks in relation to the repetition of difference and the repetition of the same (and remember that rehearsal is *repeater* in French). Glossing this, we might speak of the *same difference* (diversity) and a *different sameness* (difference). This in turn suggests the following: that in preparation for an improvised live event, *practise* enables the improviser to manufacture in advance a *diverse* repertoire of ‘solutions’ to imagined ‘problems’ that might occur in the performative confrontation and negotiation with the unknown. But it is not just a question of know-how; the ‘in the moment’ moment leaves no time for the careful consideration of the epistemological structure and available resources that allow a performer to perform, it is not what you know but what you *do* that counts. The ability to translate knowledge into action, in the blink of an eye, is something that needs practise. This should remind us that practising is not primarily about mastering what you know or what is available to be known, but, rather, of transforming such knowingness into habit. It is only by doing this that a performer could ever be prepared for an improvised performance, and it is the endless repetition of what we know that allows us to forget it—as habit—when we are required to act *now*. Obviously, the best habits are those that have built (or ground) into them the greatest degree of flexibility and diversity when faced with the unknown, and it is this skillset that promises the most when it comes to audience expectations of surprise and wonder, and the subsequent valorisation of liveness.

Conversely, rehearsing creates a *different sameness*. Practise operates at the level of choice, in that endless repetition and the conscious formation of ‘good’ habits, allows the performer to *choose* different improvised strategies within the performative moment. Rehearsal operates at the level of *decision*, where the decisive moment is, while enacted in the now, the *a priori* ‘canonization of being’s improvisations’ (Malabou, 2005: 74) to use Catherine Malabou’s striking phrase, where chance is transformed into habit. Not just the habit of doing but, more essentially, the habit of *being*—‘Plato’s commitment to philosophy, Pericles’ to politics, Phidias to sculpture’—to use Malabou’s examples (74). Here commitment is not being used as an existential category, where the subject commits to his or her art practice and the self-identity that this brings with it (the artwork and the artist), but ontologically as that which one is committed-to (as one is committed-to the asylum), there is no voluntarism intended here. Just as Heidegger sees the *working* of Art (rather than the work of art or the artist at work) as *decisive*, so beneath or behind the necessary ‘dissemblance’ of practise lies another form of repetition that, to repeat, creates a different sameness rather than the same difference produced by such practise. In a sense then, practising and rehearsing take place simultaneously, one creating performative habits, the other repeating (or re-enacting) the decisive *transition* of chance into habit and the origination of one’s singular habitual fate.

Practise allows the practitioner to develop a practice that is stable enough and recognisable enough (habitual enough) to allow a live performance to take place; practise is, thus, a form of preparation. As such, the *practice* is a given at the moment of any live event, but the *practise* necessary to produce and maintain this practice must cease before the commencement of the live event itself.

This is not at all the case with rehearsal, understood in the ontological sense. Indeed, it is as a work of *re-hear-sing* (to indulge in some long-resisted Heidegerrian word-play) that the live event attains to the very liveness and event-ness that is so cherished by performers and audiences alike. In other words, rehearsing is not the preparation for, but the *preservation* *of* an event: the (forgotten, Heidegger would say) transition from beying to beings, or (with Deleuze) from the virtual to the actual, or (with Malabou) from being’s improvisations to singular habitual acts.

All of those days, months and years of practising are fixated on the fixing of the unfixed in order for a performance to take place; but the live-ness and the event-ness of a performance are directly related to the sense in which (and the sensation of) the fixity of creative practise and practice is *unfixed* as a moment of repetition. Not the repetition of technical skills (*episteme*) as a performative spectacle—‘public and accessible to everyone’—but the repetition of an act of knowing (*techne*) that clears a space-time within which truth (Heidegger/Badiou) or the sensible (Deleuze) are dis-closed.

Perhaps the live event can be best understood as the *re-enactment* of the decisive moment when Art becomes artist and artwork, or Performance becomes performer and performed work. Understood in this way, and recalling Heidegger, the liveness of the event is not primarily about the live experience of the performer and/or the audience as living embodied creatures existing together in a unique *now*. No, the liveness of the event relates to two times: an originary moment that is, over time and habitually, fixed in the creative act; and the performative time of preservation where this act is re-enacted, unfixed, and thus *re-enlivened* and re-vivified. The rehearsal of this does not cease prior to the commencement of the live event, but is, rather, the defining characteristic *of* the event: all events are rehearsals. When they are not, they are neither events in the evental sense, nor are they properly ‘live’: lived perhaps in the most banal way, but that’s not the focus here.

Of course, liveness means that something must be happening *now*, but it is not the now-ness that is essential or, we would say, evental, but *that* it is happening now that needs to be sensed. Of course, liveness bespeaks a unique moment that is unreproducible, but this is trivial if we fail to acknowledge the fact that each of these pristine unreproducible moments are themselves the actualisation (or preservation) of a decisive moment-movement-transition that can only be re-called, re-heard and re-lived to the extent that it can be reproduced. True, the liveness of live events cannot be reproduced, but that does not change the fact that, ontologically, they are already and inescapably reproductive in nature, what Deleuze would describe as an order of simulacra, and Heidegger as ‘dissembling’ (1971b: 54). As such, live events are a mixed economy, containing both a productive and a reproductive moment, a creative and preservative dimension or, as we shall suggest in the conclusion, activity and passivity. Needless to say, it is the productive/creative aspect that receives most attention in our celebration of liveness, something further exaggerated when an event is improvised and thus promoted as an encounter with the surprising and the unexpected.

**Happening and Surprise**

But alongside this, something different happens, or *can* happen, or *must* happen if we are to speak of an event in the strict sense, rather than merely acknowledging the fact that something happens. Such happening is not in itself surprising in the usual sense, in fact it is always the same and to that extent, and in the ontological sense discussed famously by Heidegger, profoundly *boring* (1995: 74-180). So why then is it such common practice to mobilise the language of surprise when trying to grasp the event-ness of the event? Jean Luc Nancy here offers a typical example:

The ‘surprise’ is not only an attribute, quality, or property of the event, but the event itself, its being or its essence. What eventuates in the event is not only that which happens, but that which surprises—perhaps even that which surprises itself (turning it, in short, away from its own ‘happening’, not allowing itself *to be* event…). (1998: 91)

Derrida too sometimes falls back on a conceptualisation of the event as that which attends the surprisingness of the unscripted, the impromptu and the unpredictability of an improvised situation, as he does here.

I must say, ultimately, what is happening here, to the extent that is was unforeseeable, that it was unanticipated for me—since we improvised to a large extent—is that an event will have taken place. (2007: 239)

Here, as elsewhere, Derrida shows himself to have a peculiarly pure and un-deconstructed notion of improvisation, one that, in demanding absolute unpredictability, is bound to fall short and expose its own impossibility—hence the wariness Derrida often admits when finding himself (as he often did) in the midst of an improvised situation.

I believe in improvisation, and I fight for improvisation, but with the belief that it is impossible. (2002)

As with the ‘impossible possibility of saying the event’, Derrida here plays a double game with improvisation, both fighting for its possibility, while, at the same time, denying its possibility. The result is that improvisations are always seen as ultimately doomed to failure, and the surprise of the event is always compromised by the possibility of its inevitable impossibility.

But, perhaps Derrida is here becoming unnecessarily entangled in the aporia of possibility-impossibility and the investment of the subject (whether performer or audience) in the *live experience* of the event and its possibilities, rather than recognising, with Nancy, that the surprise of the event ‘is not a surprise for the subject. No one is surprised….’ (1998: 101). In fact, whether improvising is possible or not, just as whether speaking the event is possible or impossible, quickly becomes a matter of indifference the moment we recognise that the peculiar alterity of the event is one that is exterior to what is considered *humanly* possible or impossible: ‘*it* is boring,’ (Heidegger 1995: 135) ‘*it* happens’.

What Deleuze describes as the ‘defect of the possible’ (1994: 212) is that, contrary to the view that the realisation of possibilities epitomises the improvisatory production of endless difference, such realisation is ‘produced after the fact, as retroactively fabricated in the image of what resembles it’ (212). It is not so much, then, that practise makes perfect, but, rather, that practise makes possible, and the more we practise the more we make possible; which in Derrida’s eyes results in a saturation of the improvisatory field to the point where improvisation itself becomes impossible.

**Virtuality, Actuality and Sensation**

Something else is happening, something to do with liveness, with the physicality of the performance, the proximity of bodies, the fallibility of the human, the phenomenological intensity of the ‘flesh’ and the now-ness of the *now*. This is what lovers of live performance love above all else: the unmediated, un-reproducible and unwonted happening of improvisers improvising. Yes, but something else is happening. For Deleuze the relation between possibility and reality, through the becoming of realisation, locks us into a regime of resemblance—of ‘like to like’—that produces only ‘pseudo-movement’ (212). Instead, he proposes the non-dialectical, disjunctive binary of virtuality and actuality mediated by the becoming of actualisations that *do not* resemble that which we they actualise. It is this non-resemblance that, for him, makes possible both creativity and performance.

Actual terms never resemble the singularities they incarnate. In this sense, actualisation […] is always a genuine creation [...] For a potential or virtual object, to be actualised is to create divergent lines which correspond to—without resembling—a virtual multiplicity. The virtual possesses the reality of a task to be performed… (212)

The key term for Deleuze is *sensation*; and it is the degree to which we can *sense* the actualisation of the virtual alongside or in addition to the experience of surprise and the proximity of the human body that we bear witness to the event-ness of the event. While implicitly acknowledging that phenomenology’s valorisation of art as the locus of affect appears to bring us close to the sensation of the event, it is precisely this proximity that most effectively *obscures* the event-ness of this very event:

…the being of sensation is not the flesh but the compound of nonhuman forces of the cosmos, of man’s nonhuman becomings, and of the ambiguous house that exchanges and adjusts them […] Flesh is only the developer which disappears in what it develops: the compound of sensation. (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 183)

As the reference to the ‘ambiguous house’ testifies, prior to the affectivity of the human body is a compound space or territory within which, and from out of which the human becomes what it is. As with Heidegger (1971a), Deleuze and Guattari give priority to dwelling above the dweller, a perspective that again brings us back to habit as an essential component of the live event. Here we should note the importance of *habitus* not only as the originary dwelling place of the live performer/ improviser, but as the pre-territorial and nonhuman swarming of habitual forms and functions that crystallise into the ‘expressive features’ of the virtual: ‘the canonization of being’s improvisations’.

So, to our live improvised event: the habits of practice, and all of the spontaneous choices they allow, are in full flow, which, in turn, excite a phenomenological experience of the other as human body and flesh that intensifies and thus enlivens the event as a unique moment of lived time. To be sure, all of this helps us to understand the celebrated liveness of the live event, but the event-ness of the event remains obscure and will continue to do so unless we can find a way of further sensitising ourselves to the sense that ‘something else’ is happening. The difficulty is that, to follow Deleuze and Guattari’s lead, we are required to hone human sensitivity to enable ourselves to sense the non-human, ‘a world before man yet produced by man.’ (1994: 187) The difficulty is that what is ‘produced by man’ obscures the ‘world before man’, and thus de-sensitises us to the pure force of sensibilia that courses through us all at the level of the habitual.

Here we see the advantage of Deleuze over Heidegger: where for the latter the ‘singing’ of beying can be ‘hearkened-to’, but only in the obscure melody of the poet’s dissembling intoning, Deleuze and Guattari obsessively catalogue the infinite components of the ‘great Refrain,’ (189) tracing the ‘song’s’ territorialising-deterritorialising flight through the vertical multiplicity of the virtual ‘total work of art’ that both precedes and succeeds the actualisations of ‘man’. But, and this is the essential problem, the vertical difference of the virtual, understood as multiplicitous blocs of sensation, is profoundly resistant to a sensibility habituated to the aesthetic pleasures of surprising diversity played out across the horizontal plane of live human improvisation, interaction and dialogue; performers and audiences and their mutual pleasures. For all of the dynamism of Deleuze’s writing, the constant flight, becoming, nomadism, transformation, he is in fact attempting to describe something that, *within human lived-experience*, is always the same—the eternal return of the same—albeit a sameness that both produces and is the product of infinite transformation.

What we are trying to sense is a different sameness where transformation is not measured from lived moment to lived moment in terms of *what* is happening, but rather outside of the ‘in the moment’ moment where *that* it happened and *that* it will happen is the issue. As seen, for Deleuze the event has either already happened or is yet to happen; just as the event of song, while actualised (for us) through the human voice, is outside ofthe finite duration of the individual song: ‘the song of the universe, the world before or after man.’ (189)

If liveness is all about what happens in the moment of performance—in the now—then this, to say it again, would seem to contradict the very concept of a live *event*. And yet perhaps the eventness of the live event is not the momentary occurrence of an habitual practice, but rather the keeping alive—the preservation through rehearsal—of a *sensibility* capable of registering (re-hearing) the event of habituation outside of the public display and spectacle of human foibles and manners; and not just keeping alive the sensibility but, through sensation, the event *itself* in all of its infinite multiplicity.

**Passive Creativity**

Keeping alive this infinite multiplicity seems like a lot to ask of those attending or experiencing a live event. It sounds like a demand that we try a bit harder to sense the eventality of the event or the liveness of the live rather than just getting on with enjoying the performance. It sounds like a lot of unnecessary work dreamt-up by philosophers who have forgotten what it means to have fun. But that’s not it at all; the truth is there is no work involved in this; to sense is not to labour—sensation, unlike perception or conceptualisation is not an act: sensation is the epitome of *passivity*. It is the event that works on *us*, we are *created by* the event to the extent that we are ‘true’ (show fidelity) to it. Bringing Heidegger and Deleuze back together, it is the machination of beying or the ‘self-making’ of the event that, in ‘making’ us as creative/making beings—subjects are subject-to the event—, challenges our assumptions about agency and the so-called creative *act*, the challenge being to consider and confront the passive dimension of creativity.

As Ronald Bogue explains (ending with a passage from Deleuze and Guattari’s *What is Philosophy?*):

Sensation is fundamentally a conservation or retention of vibrations, a contraction of vibrations that takes place in a contemplative soul, *not through an action*, but a ‘pure passion, a contemplation that conserves the preceding in the following…Sensation is pure contemplation, for it is through contemplating that one contracts, contemplating oneself to the extent that one contemplates the elements from which one arises’. (2003: 181)

The challenge then, particularly in the hyper-active lifeworld of live performance, is to sense that which ‘precedes’ and ‘follows’ rather than the ‘now’ of the live act. This would require a certain dis-engagement from the action in order to contemplate a different order of passion, one quite distinct from the expressivity or intensity that has attained near regal status within the world of live performance. Does this mean then that the sensation of the event-ness of the event is only possible for those outside of the action, for the (contemplative) audience? Is sensation merely the passive reception, conservation and preservation of a creative act, rather than the act itself? Is it possible for the performer, as creator, to sense the event-ness of the event in the live moment of performance; or, following Badiou, is the event only recognised and acknowledge *after* its occurrence, when all, including the creator, have become an audience of preservers? In other words, does the absence of the event from the *lived experience* of the ‘in the moment’ moment, necessarily preclude us (either creator or audience) from sensing the evental as a dimension of, indeed the essential dimension of, the liveness of the live?

One response to these questions would be to consider making a distinction between active and passive forms of creativity, with the former mapping onto the familiar process of practise and the conscious formation of performative habits discussed above, and the latter returning us to the decisive contraction-contemplation of habit at the level of Heideggerian beying, and as a condition of the very formation of a creative identity: the subject of rehearsal: the rehearsal of the event. It is the fact that Deleuze always thinks of the contraction and the contemplation of habits together that opens up the possibility of sensation/contemplation, having a ‘mysterious’ passive creative dimension:

Contemplating is creating, the mystery of passive creation, sensation. Sensation fills out the plane of composition and is filled with itself by filling itself with what it contemplates: it is “enjoyment” and “self-enjoyment.” (1994: 212)

The question though, as regards the liveness and event-ness of the live event, is: can such active and passive enjoyment, as the contemplation of active and passive creativity, be sensed together, simultaneously, in the moment? Deleuze believes they can:

The contraction that preserves is always *in a state of detachment in relation to action or even to movement* and appears as a pure contemplation without knowledge. This can be seen even in the cerebral domain par excellence of apprenticeship or the formation of habits: although everything seems to take place by active connections and progressive integrations…the occurrences, must…be contracted in a contemplating “imagination” while remaining distinct in relation to actions and knowledge. Even when one is a rat, it is through contemplation that one “contracts” a habit. It is still necessary to discover, *beneath the noise of actions*, those internal creative sensations or those *silent* contemplations (213)

The discovery of this passive creativity beneath or within the active creativity of a performance is to introduce into the enjoyment of the moment an other form of enjoyment that, while sensed in the ‘now’ is necessarily detached from the present as are the primary habits-contemplations that, as posture, lines of colour, sonorous blocs, enjoy themselves as a condition of their own nonhuman becoming or machinic self-emergence. To bring these ‘silent contemplations’ into the ‘noise of actions’, to imagine/retain/preserve them as that which resonates with self-enjoyment is not only to experience the enjoyment of a performance but also to sense an enjoyment of enjoyment that *can*, to the extent that we can distinguish between the practising of a practice and the re-hear-sing of rehearsal, in-habit the live event.

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