ABSTRACT

Mobile Performance and Nomadic Theory: Staging Movement, Thinking Mobility

This essay discusses the nomadic not so much in terms of mobile existence or physical displacement, but primarily in connection with the concept as a type of movement that disturbs the notion of territory, and that is intrinsically related to processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. This particular reading of the nomadic is based on how the concept has been theorized and conceptualized by Gilles Deleuze, partly in close collaboration with Félix Guattari. Their nomadology serves as a lens through which to study territories-in-motion, in connection to (urban) mobile performances and relationships between theory and practice. The essay intends to demonstrate that the enquiry into dispersed and mobilized territories is a productive tool for analyzing movement and mobility in contemporary performance. Firstly, nomadism is presented as a particular attitude, connected to acts of de- and reterritorialization. Secondly, this perspective is employed to explore some of the dispersed territories that form the basis of the ambulatory performance *No Man's Land* by Dutch director and scenographer Dries Verhoeven. Lastly, the discussion is extended towards a mobile research symposium, *Thinking Scenography*, which takes scenography itself as an (embodied) mode of thought. Here, a nomadic attitude materializes through non-hierarchical, practice-based forms of knowledge production.

Keywords: nomadic, territory, deterritorialization, reterritorialization, (nomadic) attitude, mobility.

BIOGRAPHY

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Mobile Performance and Nomadic Theory

Staging Movement, Thinking Mobility

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MOBILE PERFORMANCE

In 2000, the German performance collective Hygiene Heute presented the performance *Kanal Kirchner*, in which spectators, equipped with headphones and a Walkman, traversed the city by following instructions on an audiotape. While navigating the streets of Berlin, they became engaged in a story full of suspense that gradually put them into a sense of being the object of pursuit themselves. Performance scholar Christopher Balme describes this performance as an instance of "audio theatre".[1] Audio theatre perhaps calls forth associations with a radio play. *Kanal Kirchner* is a radio play 2.0, so to say, an audio-performance that involves walking, mobile listeners and, occasionally, when looking at related examples, includes interactive dialogue as well. Hygiene Heute later evolved into Rimini Protokoll. In 2005, this German performance collective presented *Call Cutta*, a mobile phone theatre play. In this performance, single spectators embarked upon a journey by foot through Berlin's Kreuzberg district, guided by a call-center employee who was based in Calcutta, India. The mobile phone afforded navigation, and interactively engaged a single performer and a single spectator into a conversation about the local particularities at both ends of the line.

Balme sees walkmans and mobile phones – and also credit-cards – as symptoms and equipment of contemporary *nomadism*. They are tools for way-finding; prosthetic extensions of migrant bodies navigating through a diffused and decentered world.[2] In Balme's account, nomadism primarily refers to the displacement of people, objects and technologies in a world that is on the move. Indeed, the nomadic is often aligned with physical movement, mobility and displacement. In *Dramaturgy and Performance*, for instance, Cathy Turner and Synne Behrndt shortly mention the "nomadic dramaturgy" of performances that take the form of (urban) journeys, performance walks or guided city-tours.[3] They observe how in particular the engagement with urban space, which allows everyday life to intervene anytime, even more than in other types of site-specific theatre, "seems to force open the dramaturgy of the work".[4]

In this essay, I will approach the nomadic not so much in terms of mobile existence or physical displacement, but present it as a type of movement that disturbs the notion of *territory*, and is intrinsically connected to processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. This particular reading of the nomadic is based on how the concept has been theorized and conceptualized by Gilles Deleuze, partly in close collaboration with Félix Guattari. I use their nomadology as a lens through which to study territories-in-motion, in connection to (urban) mobile performances. My aim is to demonstrate that the enquiry into dispersed and mobilized territories is a productive tool for analyzing movement and mobility in contemporary performance. Nomadism in my view points to a particular *attitude*, which manifests itself in patterns of de- and reterritorialization. A territory instigates borders, ownership, or property regulations. On the other hand, a nomadic attitude is connected to a mode

of distribution that involves the occupation of a borderless domain, without possessing it entirely.[5] Similar processes are also at work in performances like *Kanal Kirchner* or *Call Cutta*, in which, for instance, the urban environment partly occupies the theatre event, and the performance in turn nests within and captures the codes of everyday life in the city. Such patterns of distribution are not restricted to mobile theatre performances. We might also recognize a nomadic attitude in deterritorialized relations between theory and practice, where thinking and doing do not constitute an oppositional pair but maintain a relationship of being distributed through one another. In order to flesh out these arguments, I will first enquire into ways in which the nomadic "forces us to think" and deals with the mobilization of territories.[6] Secondly, I will explore some of the dispersed territories that form the basis of the ambulatory performance *No Man's Land* by Dutch director and scenographer Dries Verhoeven, after which I will extend the discussion to include a mobile research project which takes scenography itself as an (embodied) mode of thought.

"IT IS FALSE TO DEFINE THE NOMAD BY MOVEMENT"

In daily life, the word 'nomadic' is quite often deployed to describe or evoke the idea of aimless wandering, or to qualify life in terms of a mobile and rootless existence. A similar line of thought seems to inform the use of the term 'city-nomads' by (Dutch) city councils when referring to the urban homeless. As suggested above, it is tempting to equate nomadism with physical movement and displacement. Deleuze's nomadology however offers a slightly different orientation. "It is false to define the nomad by movement," write Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. According to them, it is not movement that distinguishes the nomad, but speed.[7] Speed does not imply quickness but relies on perpetual movement, continuous deferral and *deterritorialization.* Deterritorialization involves the destabilization or 'undoing' of territories and materializes, for instance, in acts that capture, change or escape the codes of a system (systems of power, systems of organization).

Such strategies render territory into a state of continuous variation.

In one of his earliest essays on nomadism, "Nomadic Thought", Deleuze discusses (the force of) the work of Nietzsche. For Deleuze, Nietzsche is an exemplary nomad because he radically thwarts the hierarchical conventions of philosophy. Deleuze describes how Nietzsche's unique style of thinking and writing produces a sensation of not-knowing; his style escapes the code of recognition, and puts the very idea (and territory) of philosophy in motion.[8] In their joint *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari do include more stereotypical examples of nomads, amongst many others, but even when referring to nomadic tribes roving the steppes, they point to a particular *attitude* that lies underneath this wandering, a specific mode of relating to the ground on which one moves. To the nomad, the ground is a surface for movement, not a territory as it is for the sedentary. By opposing nomadism to the sedentary, Deleuze and Guattari draw out two diverging types of behaviour and related to this, two types of spatial relationships. For the nomad, ground is not a territory; when conceived of as a surface, ground has no borders. At the most, a nomad temporarily occupies a place, takes a place, yet this is a temporary hold, a staying in order to leave. To the sedentary, in comparison, ground provides the foundation for building a house; ground is something to settle on.[9] Borders emerge along with the sedentary, as well as property, ownership and, in their slipstream, inclusions and exclusions, inside/outside divisions, in sum: territories.

When observing the world in terms of territory, we cannot but notice that by far the largest portion of the land in the world is organized into territories. A nomadic relation to ground is the exception rather than the rule. More accurately: the nomadic *is* the exception of the rule, the counter-force to order, regulation, legislation and to that which has grown into conceptions of normality, standardization or convention, as the result of those rules. The nomadic therefore always acts against the State. The State is the territorial force, and this of course does not only pertain to geographically defined areas, but also to economics and finance, political institutions, science, sexuality, ideologies, education, or any

other field in which certain conceptions and ways of doing strongly dominate over others. The nomad destabilizes the seemingly self-evident nature of the State, through deterritorialization.

In his essay "Art and Territory", Ronald Bogue points out that deterritorialization cannot be separated from reterritorialization as they are always co-existent. He describes the process of de- and reterritorialization as respectively "the detachment or unfixing of elements and their reorganization within new assemblages".[10] Reterritorialization does not entail a return to a previous situation, a re-installment of 'the same'. Through deterritorialization, elements are given greater autonomy; through reterritorialization, components acquire new functions within newly created fields.[11] Reterritorialization is similar to deterritorialization involved with acts of (temporary) occupation, but also relates to the distribution of parts or elements of a system onto other systems. We may recognize such patterns as well in Rimini Protokoll's *Call Cutta*. In this mobile phone play, the stage is deterritorialized, as it has no centre, clear-cut borders, or fixed location: the stage 'happens' simultaneously in Berlin, Calcutta and in-between; the stage materializes in the process of performance rather than being a pre-defined territory. Concurrently, global and digital mobility reterritorialize the theatre: by way of the mobile phone, the stage is distributed over several locations and resurfaces on three different platforms across the globe.

EUROCENTRIC IMAGINARIES?

My emphasis on the nomadic as an attitude stems from dealing with a certain problem in my encounter with Deleuzian thought. There is nothing wrong with problems. Problems generate thought and lead to the creation of concepts, as Deleuze and Guattari point out in *What is philosophy?*.[12] But this is a problem nonetheless. Is it not utterly romantic to conceive of the nomadic in terms of perpetual displacement or of being distributed onto an open, borderless space? Marc De Kesel, a Flemish philosopher, critically asserts that the nomadic often serves to qualify postmodern notions of global citizenship, in which the nomadic is put to use to appreciate

ourselves as dynamic, ever-changing globe-trotters.[13] De Kesel instead points to the aggressive 'nature' of Deleuze's and Guattari's nomadism. Indeed, it should be acknowledged that Deleuze and Guattari, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, present the nomad as a war machine, and some of their descriptions accomplish what one rather imagines for an Al Quaida terrorist rather than a fashionable cosmopolitan.[14] This sensation of unease further increases when taking into account the many examples of involuntary exile and social migration, or the forced displacements of political refugees, marked and unmarked by newspaper headlines – even though Deleuze and Guattari distinguish between the migrant and the nomad.[15] Posited against this sociopolitical reality, one can even wonder whether nomadology as a tool for analysis is inappropriate, if not politically incorrect.

In a similar stream of thought, several theorists have criticized the concept of nomadism. Caren Kaplan, for instance, argues that the idea of a perpetual transcending of boundaries actually repeats a Western Enlightenment dream, closely connected to a (European) history of colonial expansion and exploitation.[16] Cultural geographer Tim Cresswell criticizes the "nomadist metaphysics" of mobile theories, including those of Deleuze and Guattari, which not only take a world-on-the-move as their subject matter, but seek to incorporate mobility in the very structure of thought itself. For Cresswell, those theories tend to celebrate mobility for mobility's sake, while they ignore the fact that access to mobility is unevenly distributed, due to reasons of class, race or gender. Such nomadism tends to flatten out differences and fails to do justice to social inequality, and thus ignores the "racialized root of the metaphor".[17]

These issues are taken up by Paul Patton, in "Mobile Concepts, Metaphor, and the Problem of Referentiality in Deleuze and Guattari".[18] Patton discusses the critique of Caren Kaplan next to Christopher Miller's, amongst others, who both accuse Deleuze of perpetuating a (neo)colonial tradition based on the myths of expansion and fascination for the primitive Other. According to Kaplan, this is a repetition of the "rhetorical structures of a modernist European imaginary".[19] Patton offers an

insightful answer to these and other accusations, by arguing that these problems do not pertain to the nomadic, but concern the problem of referentiality. According to Patton, the issue is not whether and how Deleuzian concepts refer to certain phenomena in reality, instead one ought to investigate "the relationship of those concepts to their apparently empirical claims".[20] In other words, the question is whether Deleuze and Guattari use the nomad as a metaphor. The answer to that particular question wholly depends on how one conceives of a metaphor, but for Deleuze and Guattari, the nomad is *not* a metaphor. For them, the metaphor belongs to the realm of representation. A metaphor expresses one thing through another one, which not only relies on the independent existence of things, but as well differentiates between an original and its derivative. Deleuze and Guattari strongly reject such a representational image of thought. [21]

Taking Patton's observations as a lead, the nomadic in my view manifests itself in many different ways, the one not truer or closer to the 'original' than the other. The nomad in science is not closer to the nomad than the nomadic tribes in the desert. Therefore I prefer to speak of the nomadic as an attitude, a particular way of doing and thinking that manifests itself in a range of occasions and allies itself with strategies of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, thus questioning the notion of territory. Nomadism surfaces in (guerilla) war tactics, but as well in art and philosophy. Some of these practices may raise ethical questions, but however contested these practices may be – this can hardly be a reason for disqualifying the concept itself.

Giving consequence to this, I briefly mention a very illuminating example of nomad science where Deleuze and Guattari describe a twelfth-century practice of building Gothic cathedrals. This building process is not based on pre-designed work plans, but on the embodied knowledge and experience of the craftsmen engaged in the building process. Pre-existing templates are the instrument of the State; they are based on fixed models and operate through reproduction, regulation and the generalization of labour. Nomad science instead is grounded in (collaborative) experimentation, in the

creation of structural coherence through squaring, approximation and qualitative calculation, generated by the material and the work-in-progress. The qualified labour in nomad science is based on experience as it has been built up in time and is stored as corporeal, local knowledge: "One does not represent, one engenders and traverses."[22] Engendering and traversing the work: this is a remarkably apt description of ambulatory performances that take place in urban environments. Performers and spectators are not engaged in an act of constructing a building of course, yet they are mutually involved in a process of building performance. They traverse the urban environment, while navigating and embodying the work.

STAGING MOVEMENT IN *NO MAN'S LAND*

To recapitulate briefly, in the above I have argued that the nomadic instigates a type of movement that allies with processes of de- and reterritorialization, with the act of taking hold of places without claiming ownership. In addition, nomadism surfaces in processes of traversing and engendering the work, in local operations and embodied practices. Such strategies also mark the ambulatory performance *No Man's Land* by Dutch director and scenographer Dries Verhoeven. The performance was originally presented in Utrecht (in the Netherlands) in 2008, but has been re-staged in various European cities since then, each time slightly adapted to local conditions.[23] When analyzing such a mobile performance, we might start with enquiring which territories are in play, and how processes of de- and reterritorialization are put to work in order to question these territories. In the following, I will focus on two characteristic territories in the theatre: the stage, i.e. the place where usually the performers present themselves to an audience, and the auditorium – the conventional place of assembly for the spectators.

Verhoeven's *No Man's Land* stages an encounter between migrants and theatre spectators. The performance starts in the crowded hall of Utrecht Central Station. Amidst the zigzagging travelers in the station concourse, the spectators are lined up in

a row, wearing headphones. While waiting for the event to unfold, they gradually discover 'another' choreography, in which some people are standing still, and literally stand out against the strolling and hurrying commuters. These are the performers they will meet in this performance – in fact, the encounter has already started. A similar smoothness qualifies the stage. The stage achieves a distributed quality, being dispersed through the station concourse. One by one the performers quietly approach one of the spectators and with a friendly nod they invite the spectator to come along and walk out of the station. In the second and largest part of the performance, the stage multiplies itself into twenty parallel trajectories in which a single spectator follows a migrant-performer on a walk through the city. These walks all take place in the same area but the trajectories slightly differ. In the original performance, the spectator is guided through Lombok district, an Utrecht district with a dense population of immigrants with diverse cultural backgrounds. The migrant-performer leads the way, through busy and quiet streets, past shops, squares and park benches, as if showing the spectator around in his or her habitat. Meanwhile, the spectator listens to an audio-track over the headphones, which conveys a range of different stories and experiences, providing an impression of what it means to be a migrant in the Netherlands.

Although the spatial set-up is quite different from Rimini Protokoll's *Call Cutta*, *No Man's Land* also plays with the boundaries of the stage. Instead of a strict separation between the stage and the auditorium, performers and spectators share the stage and traverse the work together. Instead of fixed on one particular location, *No Man's Land* distributes the stage over the city; the performance occupies the borderless domain of urban space, without possessing it entirely. The auditorium as a place for assembly is deterritorialized, and reterritorializes as twenty synchronous trajectories, running parallel through town, with slightly different rhythms and coordinates. As the performance's title reminds us, a migrant's life often is a no man's land, a life in-between homes, marked by displacement, lacking one-ness. While traversing the streets of Lombok, the stage as well seems to transform into a no

man's land. The stage lacks clear-cut boundaries and unfolds as the trajectory progresses. Meanwhile life in the city follows its routes, ruptures and routines. The theatre space and the urban space are separated by an invisible, yet extremely porous and permeable membrane. *No Man's Land* is a theatre of local operations and of perpetual variation, cutting across the unpredictability of the urban environment, each time instigating new connections and encounters, which render each walk into a singular trajectory.

During the walk, the spectator gradually discovers that the stories revealed through the headphones are full of contradictions. This is not the story of one single migrant, but that of many. Actually the story is a collage of the stories told by the migrants who participated in the project.[24] Each spectator hears the same story. The performance thus plays tricks with the spectators' expectations because spectators are tempted to project the stories conveyed through the headphones on the migrant-performer walking or standing in front of them. *No Man's Land* seems to promise an encounter between a migrant and a spectator. The personal tour through the Lombok district suggests that they will get to know each other. But instead of the expected encounter, the performance installs a feedback loop through which spectators are invited to experience and reflect on their own, often unconscious ways of perceiving and thinking about migrants. As a consequence of the isolation brought about by the headphones – amongst other strategies –, the performance redirects the attention to how spectatorship is the product of personal projections and prejudices, and is influenced by cultural baggage. By obscuring the relation between migrant and performer and by the mash-up of stories, *No Man's Land* escapes the dominant imaginary and puts the very idea of 'the migrant' itself into a state of continuous variation. This strategy is in a way similar to Deleuze's account of the work of the Italian avant-garde director Carmelo Bene. In "One Less Manifesto", in which Bene's work is discussed, Deleuze asks: "But might not continuous variation be just such an amplitude that always overflows, by excess or lack, the representative threshold of majority measure? […] Might not theater, thus, discover a sufficiently modest, but nevertheless, effective function? This antirepresenta-

tional function would be to trace, to construct in some way, a figure of the minority consciousness as each one's potential."[25]

For Deleuze, perpetual variation points to a process of continuous differentiation, which is not a repetition-of-sameness or re-presentation, but instead a threshold of potentiality. Perpetual variation points to things in a state of change, to the option of the always-otherwise. In *No Man's Land*, it is not only the stage that is put into a state of continuous variation, the notion of 'the' migrant is deterritorialized as well. The spectator is invited to realize that getting to know someone perhaps requires something else than listening to stories of asylum procedures, dreams of 'the West' or experiences of still being called a migrant even after living in the Netherlands for 22 years – however relevant these reports in itself are. Processes of de- and reterritorialization, thus, capture the dramaturgy of this performance as well. The performance deterritorializes stereotypical conceptions of the migrant, and reterritorializes the expectation of the spectator by challenging habitual assumptions. Instead of organizing a 'true encounter' with a migrant, the performance directs the attention to another mode of encounter, namely that of collaboratively traversing and engendering the work. Performers and spectators navigate the streets of Utrecht's Lombok district, meanwhile traversing and engendering the paradoxes of a migrant's life in the Netherlands.[26]

The separate stage-trajectories join coordinates at the end of the performance, when all couples arrive at an empty field near Utrecht Central Station, covered with a silver beach, where twenty small beach houses stand erected. Each migrant-spectator couple enters one of the houses, where the headphones are taken off. The migrant sings a song for the spectator, and then leaves. When the spectators step out of the houses a few minutes later, they find the field empty. The migrant-performers have disappeared into town, as suddenly as they popped up in the middle of the crowd in the station concourse. Dries Verhoeven's scenography of encounters cuts across a range of spaces, deterritorializes the station concourse and the streets of the Lombok district, and reterritorializes on the intimacy of the (beach) house, to explore different modalities of encoun-

ter, each building up to a sense of shared space and shared time.

THINKING SCENOGRAPHY

Deleuze's and Guattari's analysis of the building process of twelfth-century cathedrals reveals that knowledge may manifest itself as and within situated, local and embodied operations. In fact, many of the examples in their Nomadology chapter in *A Thousand Plateaus* might be regarded as a way of 'thinking through practice'. Nomadology addresses and negotiates the boundaries between theory and practice, and facilitates the thinking of theory through practice and *vice versa*. Such patterns of de- and reterritorialization materialized as well in a mobile practice-as-research conference, organized by the HKU University of the Arts, called *Thinking Scenography – Shifting Layers of Disbelief* that took place in September 2014. This mobile conference investigated contemporary strategies of representation, and in particular sought to revisit the dramatic convention of the suspension of disbelief, not by reflecting on these issues in paper presentations or panel discussions, but by actively engaging the participants in changing, shifting and encapsulating environments. Instead of reflecting on the subject matter from the distanced position of the observer, the participants – consisting of scenographers, dramaturges, designers and publicists – were invited to traverse and physically experience contemporary suspensions of disbelief themselves.

Thinking Scenography was curated by the Dutch Platform-Scenography (P-S), an open source movement that seeks to increase the visibility of the scenographer's profession, and to provide insight into the idiosyncratic qualities of spatial design. P-S is founded on the experience of a number of (Dutch) scenographers, who observe that theoretical reflection on scenography often does not capture the material-discursive vocabularies that are practiced by scenographers 'on the floor', in particular because many of these scenographers work within a context of postdramatic theatre and within public space.[27] In that sense, there is a wide gap between (scenographic) theory and practice; they seem to be two distinct territories. P-S starts off from the standpoint

that scenographic practice *itself* is a particular mode of thought and, in taking this stance, allies with strategies of de- and reterritorialization. Scenography thinks, through the analysis and dissection of material, visual, temporal and spatial structures or phenomena, and by way of drawing, composition, orchestration, transformation, mutation, framing, or staging. Scenography is to a large extent a practice of embodied thought as the knowledge of scenographers is not often put into words, but instead materializes in actual design and design problems, in patterns of visual association or in the sensory archives of practitioners. P-S locates scenography's territory not only in the theatre, where it manifests itself in the design of space, costume, light, audio-visual projections or soundscapes, but notices that scenography reterritorializes on games, advertising, film, architecture, public space, interaction design, fashion and more.

Both P-S and *Thinking Scenography* challenge the boundaries between theory and practice, and deterritorialize these domains by rejecting the idea that theory and practice are two distinct fields of expertise. *Thinking Scenography* was conceived as an "exposium" – wedged between an *ex*pedition and a sym*posium* – taking the participants on a bus tour through the Netherlands in order to explore and conceptualize ways in which designers, architects, urban planners and scenographers create environments that in one way or another allude to the idea of "*garantiertes Abenteur*" (guaranteed adventure). This term calls upon the imaginary and often immersive worlds that promise new experiences and encounters with the unknown, yet do so by adopting the already known, by fulfilling our expectation of the estimated adventure. Guaranteed adventures produce manageable and pleasant experiences. Such phantasmagorias can be found in theme parks, shopping malls or augmented reality games, but also in stylized suburbs, zoos, luxury office-buildings, or social media networks.

Scenography can be understood as a mode of writing *with* and *of* (theatrical) spaces, through which the notion of the stage can emerge. This is illustrated by the mobile scenography of the bus tour. The bus tour is composed in such a way that the urban environment is rendered visible as a stage, where distinctions between nature and culture are obscure. The bus takes off with the curtains closed, asking the participants to open them while the bus drives over a four level traffic square. This opening of the curtains, accompanied by a tension-building audio-score, frames the fly-over as an enormous spectacle, a super-stage in open air. After installing this perspective, subsequent urban and industrial landscapes become equally part of an ongoing scenery – a scenography of perpetual variation. Meanwhile the tour itself is organized as a guaranteed adventure: the members of the expedition are provided with new experiences, but simultaneously they are shielded from 'outer' reality, safely seated within a mobile cage. Yet in order to investigate this type of adventure, the travelers are also taken off the bus, where they are confronted with spaces in which the difference between the natural and the artificial is equally hard to distinguish. They learn that the fly-over is destined to become a nature park, they discover a forest in the middle of an industrial site, and pause on a huge beach that until two years ago was not even there – a man-made beach seezed from the sea.

By placing the participants within the situations and phantasmagorias that the exposium wishes to explore, while also disrupting these encapsulating environments, *Thinking Scenography* offered a material-discursive way of exploring the many fashions in which the natural and the staged merge and feed into each other. In *Dramaturgy and Performance,* Cathy Turner and Synne Behrndt remark that in contemporary practice, the real and the represented no longer are opposites but have become *modes* of reality: "While remaining ambivalent towards representation, contemporary performance seems interested in exploring the range of ways in which 'reality' can be produced, explored and understood, […] the ways in which 'make-believe' is made believable."[28] We may also observe, then, that these deterritorialized areas have become materials for artists to work with. As the bus tour progresses, the various sites and spaces form a series. They become links in a chain of visual arguments, revealing that scenography is not only to be found in the theatre, but is distributed as much over contemporary movement-spaces. Together, these staged move-

ments build towards an increased sensibility for the layers of (dis)belief that constitute our daily reality.

On the second day of the exposium, the participants assembled in a theatre, only in order to mobilize thought in a different way. They were invited to propose topics for discussion or to devise activities that addressed design problems. The exposium thus explored the potential of collaborative dialogue and non-hierarchical, practice-based forms of knowledge production, also as part of a larger research project initiated by the Research Centre Performative Processes of the HKU University of the Arts. All in all, the exposium explored a variety of movement-spaces, by thinking, doing and designing mobility – both literally (day 1) and in relation to hierarchies of knowledge (day 2). In this way, *Thinking Scenography* deterritorialized theory and reterritorialized practice by presenting scenography as a particular mode of embodied thought.

DETERRITORIALIZING THEORY AND PRACTICE

The examples discussed in this essay do indeed involve movement. But the heart of the matter lies elsewhere. These practices make an art out of processes of de- and reterritorializaton. *No Man's Land* mixes and merges the auditorium and the stage and distributes the theatre space over the urban space. This performance, just like the exposium discussed above, can be regarded as an instance of 'thinking through practice'. *No Man's Land* questions spectatorship and invites awareness of how spectators are addressed by and positioned within this performance. By inviting the spectator 'on the stage', the role of the spectator itself becomes an object of attention – exemplified by the feedback loop that challenges the spectators' expectations. As such, a performance like *No Man's Land* may be regarded as a practice that theorizes the theatre itself. The performance advocates an understanding of theatre as a practice that is (literally) deeply embedded within society and engages with a world in motion, and in particular investigates those lives that are marked by movement (sometimes involuntary). A theatre performance, then, is not only an object for theoretical reflection, but a thinking practice itself. The

symposium-expedition *Thinking Scenography* equally challenges strict distinctions between theory and practice, between thinking and doing. By actively engaging participants in the project, this research project exhibits scenographic practice as a form of thought and theorizing as a mode of performance. *Thinking Scenography* thinks scenography by doing scenography, and renders reflection into a collaborative, non-hierarchical affair. In both these mobile performances, movement is very much involved. A movement that conveys a particular attitude, a mode of thinking and doing that we may call nomadic. An attitude which does not take territories for granted, but instead explores fields of potentiality.

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14 The full title of the Nomadology chapter in *A Thousand Plateaus* is "1227: Treatise on Nomadology – The War Machine".

15 Deleuze, Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, op. cit., p. 419.

16 Caren Kaplan, "Transporting the Subject: Technologies of Mobility and Location in an Era of Globalization" in *PMLA*, vol. 177, no. 1, 2002, p. 35.

17 Tim Cresswell, "Introduction: Theorizing Place" in *Mobilizing Place, Placing Mobility: The Politics of Representation in a Globalized World*, Ginette Verstraete, Tim Cresswell, eds., Rodopi, Amsterdam 2002, p. 18.

18 Paul Patton, "Mobile Concepts, Metaphor, and the Problem of Referentiality in Deleuze and Guattari" in *Metaphoricity and the Politics of Mobility*, Maria Margaroni, Effie Yiannapoulou, eds., Rodopi, Amsterdam, New York 2006, pp. 27-46.

19 Ibid., p. 40.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 Deleuze, Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, op. cit., p. 410.

23 In 2014 for instance, the performance was restaged in Athens and München. See also www.driesverhoeven.com. A few short trailers are available on the Internet.

24 This text is slightly adapted in each city, in connection with the local context and to the migrant-performers participating in the performance.

25 Gilles Deleuze, "One Less Manifesto" in *Mimesis, Masochism and Mime: The Politics of Theatricality in Contemporary French Thought*, Timothy Murray, ed., The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor 1997 [1979], pp. 253-4.

26 For a more extended discussion, see my PhD Thesis *Nomadic Theatre: Staging Movement and Mobility in Contemporary Performance*, Utrecht University, Utrecht 2015.

27 See www.platform-scenography.nl and http://www.pq.cz/en/exposium-thinking-scenography-shifting-layers-of-disbelief.html.

28 Turner, Behrndt, op. cit., p. 188.