

<http://comcom.uvt.nl/e-view/04-2/inhoud.htm>

**Eric Sleichim's *Men in Tribulation*,
a total theatre of sound and extended voice**

Pieter Verstraete, ASCA (University of Amsterdam) – p.m.g.verstraete@uva.nl

Artaud *rocks*. In the music theatre production *Men in Tribulation* by Eric Sleichim, Artaud and his voice are dispersed in a space saturated with loudspeakers, neon lights, electro-acoustic and spectacular noise, live musicians, screams and live electronics. The audience stands in the middle of it all and can freely walk around in the installation. The space consists of five stage platforms (a pentagon, surrounding and ritualising the performance space) with in the centre a totem of technology – two men operating laptops for light and sound adjustment. Above thrones an old man in a chair. The man appears to be Artaud, one hour before his death. His last performance. But before that, he and all the musicians go through some preparation ritual of cleaning the body and painting it over with some white magical substance. Artaud goes Woodstock, so it seems. There is electricity in the air. Clouds of dry ice surrounds the audience, who find themselves gathered in this sacred, spiritual atmosphere. Artaud is back, or at least an archetype of him. All the ingredients are there to make the evening a celebration of the live and the mediated, a theater as a *festival* as Artaud would have it. We would soon submit our souls to the experiences of the artist, the singer-songwriter of his cruelty. His master's voice revisiting.



© Herman Sorgeloos

The performance is based on an archetype of Artaud and his thought. On the plain narrative level, *Men in Tribulation* is a monodrama born in the head of the old Artaud, who is resuscitated through multiple and mediated voices, among which the voice of Phil Minton, the man in the chair. The marriage between voice and technology aims to

rewrite this archetype of Artaud, who calls for a theater beyond the normal, the possible, the imaginable, the acceptable and the understandable. Although the composer and director, Eric Sleichim, calls his piece a non linear opera, it is clear that he aims at a theatre of voice – of body, tongue and pure sonoric space – such as Artaud experimented with in his radio piece *Pour en finir avec le jugement de Dieu* (*To have gone with the judgement of God*). Let us therefore first zoom in to Artaud’s legacy of this theatre of sound and voice as an extension of his ‘theatre of cruelty’.

Sound and sonoric space have always been integral part of Artaud’s thinking. Before he wrote the manifesto of his *Theater of Cruelty*, he found inspiration in the Balinese theater, in which the awareness of space plays an important role. Zachar Laskewicz recounts that in the Balinese ‘gong kebyar’ performance, space is “directly represented in the positioning of the instruments. The preset positioning of the instruments reflects basic Balinese musical structures: rhythmic patterns played by different instruments which combine to form a whole, becoming through this unique interlocking more than simply a combination of the parts” (Laskewicz 287). In *To have gone with the judgement of God* (1947/48), Artaud realised such an interlocking of voices and percussion instruments in a total sonoric and virtual space, that reworks and mutilates the human body through extended voice techniques and screeching glossolalia. A child of his technological times, Artaud rejected film (since his disappointment in the invention of the talkies) and eventually theater for radio, where he could explore his aesthetics of cruelty and decapitate the restricting word, the speech of God and the textual inscriptions of an author through a voice. He is interested in a physical space that constitute a body without organs. Edward Sheer calls this body “a self-made body without the hierarchical emplacement of organs, a body made not in the image of god and which will liberate man, who can then be retaught to ‘dance inside out ... and that inside out will be his true side out’ (OC XII: 79)” (Sheer 6). As we know, the tape of *To have gone with the judgement of God*, was banned by Wladimir Porché, the director of the station *Radiodiffusion française*, shortly before broadcasting, because of the “inflammatory, obscene and blasphemous” content of the politically and religiously volatile text (Barber 1993: 157, qtd. in Sheer 6). Artaud, however, understood this last radio play as “a reduced model” (OC XIII: 127) or as the first “grist for the theatre of cruelty” (OC XIII: 139). Only a month later, Artaud’s life would come to a cataclysmic finale. On 4 March 1948, he died of rectal cancer.

Back to the performance. *Men in Tribulation* attempts to install a total theater of sound by firstly deconstructing and blurring the boundaries of the performance space. Artaud stated in that respect: “Once the stage is emanated, the spectacle can spread to the entire theatre and, taking off the ground, will surround the spectator in the most physical ways, leaving him immersed in a constant pool of lights, images, movements, and sounds” (OC IV: 150). In other words, Artaud’s theatre asks for an ambient set-up of the audience, such as the *Living Theatre* and the *Performance Theatre* of Schechner would later develop. “The

spectator is in the middle while the spectacle surrounds him” (OC IV: 98, qtd. in Hollier 166), Artaud wrote. And at another instance, the spectator is “placed in the middle of the action, the spectator is shrouded and so to speak grooved by it” (OC IV: 115, qtd. in Hollier 190, note 7). In the installation of the performance, not only the audience but the character of the old Artaud himself is in the middle of the space, although it is significant



© Herman Sorgeloos

that the pentagon has no epicentre and has a disorienting effect. With respect to the effect of theater on the audience, Artaud had in mind: „The theater is an exorcism, a summoning of energy. It is a means of channelling the passions, of making them serve something, but it must be understood not as an art or a distraction but rather as a solemn act, and this paroxysm, this solemnity, this danger must be restored to it. In order to do that it must abandon individual psychology, enter into mass passions, into the conditions of the collective spirit, grasp the collective wavelengths, in short, change the subject” (*Cahiers de Rodez V*, 153; from a letter of August 1993 to Natalie Clifford Barney, qtd. in Weiss 279).

Whether the audience as collective, as a spiritual feeling of ‘we’, really reaches liberation in this total theatre of sound and voice or not, is questionable. In *Men in Tribulation*, the ambient positioning of the spectator in space makes him more an individual auditor than a participant of an *audience*. However, the silent auditor is not neutral either and finds himself surrounded by a collectivity, a mass of auditors and of sound influencing some sort of joint physical behaviour. Moreover, the theater performance and the stage equipment perpetuate necessarily processes of inscription and textualization, which are hard to overcome. In the memory of Artaud’s endeavours *to have done with the text*, the question rises if the technology can be neutral. For the purpose of finding some provisional answers, I will reflect on certain observations, rather than analyse the performance exhaustively, which arise from aesthetics of cruelty, applied in the sound dramaturgy to the interdependent roles of voice, instrument and technology.

Within the following observations, I am specifically interested in the corporeal physicality of the voice’s phenomenology: a voice that goes into the machinery of the laptop and finds distribution through the loudspeakers. On the one hand, the voice and the total soundscape become physical space. On the other hand, the sound dramaturgy negotiates the duplicity between the text (to be understood as an inscription that marks the signifier-signified relations), and the body (both the immanence of the voice and the ear of the spectator). It is

exactly the voice that behaves stubbornly as a mediator between body and text, especially when it is confronted with its technological double. The use of voice within this performance and within the paradigm of Artaud's cruelty calls upon a phenomenology of presence as embodiment and of technology as means to appropriate, detach and resituate the voice in the body, the vocal apparatus as alien to the self. In this way, the mediated and extended voice introduces its solemnity of the act of cruelty and its necessary failure that lies in the judging ear. In the end, the leading question will be if it is possible *to have done with the judgement of the ear*.

Observation 1: the sound of a body in mimetic pain

Men in Tribulation shows us a picture of an old Artaud straightjacketed to the materiality of his body and to his chair. He seems to be tormented by both physical and internal psychic attacks, voices that are outwardly represented by the voice of Viviane De Muynck, the vociferous saxophones and the acousmatic soundscape surrounding him and the audience. In this way, Artaud falls down to a multiplicity of voices, as he opens with the words: "A tribe / that's me". The "men in tribulation" are in his head. They are all in a great suffering, an experience that tests each person's endurance. Given the ambient set-up of the installation just mentioned, this could also apply to the audience. But one could question if this 'tribulation' comes from the inside or from the outside, purposefully inflected on the body.

We know for sure that during his lifetime, Artaud experienced cruelty to his body from very near. For nine years he was interned in psychiatric institutions, where he suffered from electroshock and insulin shock therapy. This ongoing pain from both his illness and the 'treatment' inspired him to see "the theater as a bath of psychic electricity where the intellect will be periodically reimmersed" (*Cahiers de Rodez* IV, 321; qtd. in Weiss 298). The cruelty, however, must be relived over and over again in Artaud's theatre. The theatre must function as a bath of electro-shocks. Helga Finter adds in that respect: "'Cruelty', wrote Artaud, is 'massacred bodies'. Artaud experienced first-hand his body as massacred, excoriated, and poisoned. He wanted to give voice to that which had made his body suffer. Through the voices that besieged him, the experience of the Other that impedes the attainment of an integral body should become perceptible" (Finter 56). This 'Other' would mean many things, among which in the first place: the restrictions of language, prompted voice and prompted speech. So the cruelty with respect to the sonic content and events is effected by the disruptive, extended techniques of the voice – the vocal apparatus in distress – with which Artaud experiences and tries to go beyond his limitations.

In *To have gone with the judgement of God*, Artaud tried to achieve this through glossolalia, "a type of speech or babble characteristic of certain discourses of infants, poets, schizophrenics, mediums, charismatics. It is the manifestation of language at the level of its pure materiality, the realm of pure sound, where there obtains a total disjunction of signifier

and signified” (Weiss 281). As David Appelbaum points out in his phenomenological writings on the manifestations of *Voice*, speech tries to control the speaking voice and defend it against lapses in articulated sound (Appelbaum x-xi). Glossolalia seem to disrupt the possibility for one’s own voice of a hiding place in speech. In *Men in Tribulation* glossolalia are not that many, though the electronically produced sound effects purport a similar function. By amplifying animalised voice sounds (hissing, shrieking, growling, howling) of both Phil Minton (old Artaud) and Viviane De Muynck, the inarticulate, brutish sound of their voices finds liberation or, what Appelbaum calls, “crazed ejaculation of vocification” (Appelbaum 51).

Throughout his work (for instance in *Les Cenci*) and ultimately in *To have gone with the judgement of God*, Artaud intended to reach the ultimate cathartic sound effect: “[...] it occurs when the spectator feels surrounded to the point of surrendering. *Le Théâtre et son double* is filled with references to such an enveloping and powerful curvature of the sound space” (Hollier 165-6). The technology in *Men in Tribulation* would perhaps make this possible through the effects of the surrounding soundscape. However, the sound effect remains an effect. It purports an imitation, a representation of the madman’s *vocification*, but therefore it turns into a dramatic sign of mimesis. Moreover, the gestural and gestic spasms of the old Artaud seem to reveal over-imitation. His body seems only to play *as if* rather than folding back to the reality of the cruelty, which should force this point of surrender.

Observation 2: a total space of looping noises and text(ure)

I will now elaborate this theme in the context of the soundscape, the ambient space and the presence of text. Artaud wanted to create “a work which causes the entire nervous system to feel illuminated as if by a miner’s cap, with vibrations and consonances that invite one to corporeally emerge in order to follow, in the sky, this new, unusual and radiant Epiphany” (*Cahiers de Rodez* XIII, 131; qtd. in Weiss 273). The question here raises to what extent *Men in Tribulation* seeks to accomplish such emergence of the body through the vibrations, the resonances of voice and space. On the one hand, the overall soundtrack aims a deconstituting projection of Artaud’s state of mind. It presents rather than *represents* the body in pain: the anguish, the agony of the penultimate moment of death, the delirium *tremens*. On the other hand, the soundscape is produced in real time, but is composed according to certain cues, pre-programmed patches in the laptop, pre-written musical structures and the text of Jan Fabre.

The text, which was either projected or distributed in translation as text brochure, is



omnipresent but is not the *cantus firmus* of the performance. It provides some structure and rhythm, but similar to an incantation, its content conflates with the all-encompassing sonic texture. The

electro-acoustically amplification of the voices and the sounds of the saxophones make of this texture an impermanent world of continuous change, of metamorphosis and gesture. But the amplification deterritorialises the space in such a way that it enhances the immobility of the moment and of the body. One could speak, in that respect, of a world of audio-autism. Through technology, the spatialised movement of sound objects and events makes that the theater moves dynamically around the spectator. This defies the expected behaviour, which Robin Maconie describes as follows: “Since we cannot shut out our ears or turn our back on sound events to make them go away, we do the next best thing, which is to control them through body movement, with or without accompanying vocal remarks or noises as emphasis” (Maconie 23).

A total and sound saturated space immobilises the auditor and accredits him/her autistic hearing tendencies to certain degrees. The soundscape of *Men in Tribulation* functions as heterotopia of sound and voice, which, raised to the point of hysterical sensation, leaves no escape to an outside. The image of Artaud’s body fighting against this kind of immobility imposed on him, supplies a metaphor for Artaud’s never ending strivings that necessarily lead to paradox. The technology creates the rigidity of a mask, as it inscribes the voice and imprints its virtual double back onto the body. So apart from creating the material texture, the sound technology reveals itself as a mechanism of inscription and reproduction, both enemy forces against which Artaud was fighting.

Observation 3: organic instrumentation vs. hybridising voices

As mentioned earlier, the musicians take place at platforms surrounding the space. *Men in Tribulation* recalls in this way the physical realisation of space as it was done in the Balinese theater, i.e. through the positioning of and the close relationship between instruments and performers in space. In this way, the performance lays great stress on the instrumentation as it comes to the becoming of a space. The instruments are used as radiators that project sound energy in multiple spatial directions. On several instances, they are also used as sound resonators, modifying the feedback signal. The technique of modifying the loop by positioning the instrument in a certain direction near the amplifier historically dates back to the guitar solos of Jimmy Hendrickx. The sound loop, of course, does not only create physical reactions to its listeners, it also affects the musicians, who try to manipulate the sounds live as they hear them. The sounds of the instruments become more organically as voices – Artaud’s tormenting inner voices – travelling back to its sources and distorting them. In the strategies of the play’s imagination, they become the electro-shocks when they seem to exceed the line level and reach some sort of threshold of saturation.

As such, the instruments are used as resonating sound bodies, ritualising the live event. Although the musicians are no theater performers, they are integrated in the play and might as well be seen as priests or singers of a chorus intervening. So they do more than only creating

the ambience. They also seem to mimic animal sounds, just like the extended voice techniques. They become part of the madman's inner voices, hybridising the voice together with the amplification and cyborg projections of the human voice. For instance, at some instances a frequency tracker and a frequency shifter are (presumably) being applied in order to modify the pitch of Viviane De Muynck's voice. The effect is a double voice or the marriage of two voices: the amplified natural voice and its electronically modified disembodied double. Through the sound technology, the voice becomes part of the instrumentation and as such, of the codification. The feedback makes the voice attack its source body. The technology leaves traces into the material of the voice. Likewise, speech erupts, paradoxically, *into* the materiality of the body. The tragedy of mediation and disembodiment makes a vociferous sound resonate as a ghost in the performance space: this sound is what Helga Finter would call, the "sonorous projection of a new body in the voice" (Finter 53). It is Artaud's *corps sans organs*, the body without organs.

Observation 4: masking the voice and the lamentation of the self

Every metamorphosis of Artaud's voice in the text is, except in the ending, followed by the same chorus line and litany. The latter goes as follows: "I shall not give up / layer by layer / peeling the skins off my soul / till all that remains / is a spherical ossification of one single thought". What could be this 'one single thought'? Herbert Blau significantly saw the mourning song in connection to Artaud and the allegory: "We mourn for the world's wounds, which suppurates in the mind of Artaud. As that drains now into theory, the stench is overcome, at best, in the language of lamentations – which is how Benjamin described the broken allegory of the baroque *Trauerspiel*" (Blau 106). If it is lawful to read Artaud's litany in the context of the technology's bias to peel off the voice of its material source, the whole technological condition becomes an allegory and a lamentation for the loss of body and self. The vociferous, uncanny sound of the soundscape would be then a vehement outcry of the extended, mediated voice, which tries to mask its bodily traces in various ways. For the purpose of understanding 'masking the voice', there are two manifestations of the extended voice, I would like to briefly touch upon in this last observation: the scream and the singing voice.

The scream is bodily materiality, but with a high level of abstraction. Anthony Sheppard writes in his *Revealing Masks* (a book on ritualized performance in Music Theater) about the forms of masking: "In the twentieth century, a wide range of vocal techniques has been developed and employed that conspire to create an abstract voice, masking the performer's individuality. [...] Such techniques include extremity of register, screams, vocal glides, bestial sounds, extremity in rate of text delivery, explosive accentuation, whispers, exaggerated and affected vocal styles, and singing through objects" (Sheppard 33). So both the extended vocal techniques and the animalized sounds produce masks and therefore,

abstraction in the voice. In a sense, it creates duplicity. According to Allen Weiss, the scream as the “nonmaterial double of excrement, may be both expression and expulsion, a sign of both creation and frustration” (Weiss 287). What he means is that the masking effect of enhancing and extending the vibrations of the voice simultaneously produces signification and simulates creation and destruction. David Appelbaum describes then the effect it has, when it is being amplified by technology and thus reinscribed into the claws of inscription: “The special vibratory, resonant quality of voice which awakens self-recognition is muted by the mind for signification. Even if voice appears from its hiding-place, the unattended ear is unavailable for hearing it. Thus does technology doubly secure recognition from encountering oneself in the voice” (Appelbaum xi).

The masking effect, which technology shares with the acoustic techniques of extended voice, by its duplicity towards live and ‘death’ or call it corporeality and signification, makes us aware of the non-neutrality of the voice. For Roland Barthes, no voice is neutral: “There is no human voice in the world that is not the object of desire, or of repulsion; there is no neutral voice, and if occasionally this neuter, this whiteness of the voice appears, it is a great terror for us, as if we were to fearfully discover a frozen world, where desire is dead’. For Artaud, death is not heard in the voice through such a ‘white terror’; Artaud’s terror was dark, filthy, emanating from the deepest recesses of his body, a body that his discourse tried, always unsuccessfully, to rejoin” (Barthes “La musique, la voix, la langue” in *L’Obvie et l’obtus*: 247, qtd. in Weiss 288). The cruelty in terms of the sonic events in *Men in Tribulation* seems to lie in the rejoining with the failure of speech and voice within the singing voice. First,

there is the young Artaud-‘Angel’ (Hagen Matzeit), singing in a high, glamour rocklike voice. His voice represents the ritual and the longing for liberation in a high key. The dichotomy of singing and speaking (basically of body and signification) reaches its highest point of ‘cruelty’ in the singing voice of the mother, when Viviane De Muynck seems to rejoin as Artaud’s mother with the old Artaud before he dies. Mother and child rejoin and mute the inner voices of the soundscape. “God is the virus and the virus is God,” the mother sings in a softening voice like a ‘spoon full of sugar that makes the medicine go down.’ The distortion of the extended effects, like in *To have gone with the judgement of God*, have become mute. The tormented body without organs rests in a peace of subvocalised imagination.



© Herman Sorgeloos

To have done with the judgement of the ear?

By way of a preliminary conclusion, I will try to recapitulate my reflections to the nominative of the 'failure' and finish with a shift from the voice to the ears. *Men in Tribulation* has not failed as a performance, but it shows the paradigm of the necessary failure in Artaud's theater. The failure is inscribed on many levels. I focussed on the voice in sound technology, which reveals its mechanisms of inscription. Technology, hidden or not and however sophisticated, seems not to bring liberation of sound and extended voice. Rather, it superimposes writing, texture and signification on the voice. The hardware becomes organic though. Technology is not neutral and becomes a body in itself. The morphing with voice in real-time creates an image of a body in the sound, distributed through the use of a laptop and multiple speakers. The loudspeakers, hidden in the dark, are sounding bodies themselves, who recreate a body of physical sound vibrations, a body without organs. Or in more acoustical terms: a body of acoustic pressure waves, moving around the auditor in the audible environment it creates.

The performance laid great stress on the instrumentalisation of sound and music. In this environment, the voice becomes aware of its being an instrument. The musical instruments and the sound technology, on the other hand, become voices, masking the human voices from their embodied self. The ambient soundscape sounds like an ongoing, timeless stream of vibrations, which gives the impression that the stage is moving around the spectator. The auditor could try to control the sounds through his body movements (because of what Maconie calls 'sensory distress'), but oversaturation also causes immobility. In that respect, the listening body cries out for some moment of relieve in this continuous lamentation. But the ear has become masochistic (in a Deleuzian sense), mutes the voice and blocks it from its last resort of 'peace', the imagination. Near the end, a sudden break brings a moment of silence though. Unexpectedly there is this moment of inbetweenness, where the ears haven't stopped resonating yet. Here, the text has replaced the litany by 'metaphor': "Metaphor is an incomplete transformation of the voice's cry, be it animal or human. Behind it the force of passion and sensate life is as yet unadulterated by the imagination" (Appelbaum 64). Maybe within those ears, a voice is resonating and obfuscating the imagination, who has not yet been articulated, nor heard by our judging ears.

Bibliography

- Appelbaum, David. *Voice*. US: State University of New York Press, Albany 1990.
- Blau, Herbert. "The Audition of Dream and Events". *The Audience*. Baltimore & London: The John Hopkins UP 1990: 95-143.
- Derrida, Jacques. "From ,The theatre of cruelty and the closure of representation'". *Antonin Artaud: A critical reader*. Ed. Edward Sheer. London & New York: Routledge 2004: 39-46.

- Fabre, Jan. "A Tribe that's Me". (Written for Eric Sleichim's Artaud opera *Men in Tribulation*). Ed. S. Bousset. January 2004.
- Finter, Helga. "From 'Antonin Artaud and the impossible theatre: the legacy of the theatre of cruelty'". *Antonin Artaud: A critical reader*. Ed. Edward Sheer. London & New York: Routledge 2004: 47-58.
- Hollier, Denis. "The death of paper, part two: Artaud's sound system". *Antonin Artaud: A critical reader*. Ed. Edward Sheer. London & New York: Routledge 2004: 159-168.
- Laskewicz, Zachar. "The Balinese Musical Text Embodied in Time and Space: Towards a New Approach to the Musical Sign". *Musical Signification: Between Rhetoric and Pragmatics*. International conference on Musical Signification, Bologna 14-16 November 1996: 279-89.
- Maconie, Robin. *The Concept of Music*. Oxford: Clarendon Press 1990.
- Sheer, Edward. "Introduction: on Antonin Artaud. A beginner's guide to cruelty". *Antonin Artaud: A critical reader*. Ed. Edward Sheer. London & New York: Routledge 2004: 1-8.
- Sheppard, W. Anthony. *Revealing Masks. Exotic Influences and Ritualized Performance in Modernist Music Theater*. Berkely, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press 2001.
- Weiss, Allen S. "Radio, Death, and the Devil: Artaud's Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu". *Wireless Imagination: Sound, Radio, and the Avant-Garde*. Ed. Douglas Kahn & Gregory Whitehead. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press 1992: 269-307.

Credits

Music & direction: Eric Sleichim	Sound: David Carney
Text: Jan Fabre	Lights: Robby Cluytens
Scenography: B-architecten	Stage technician: Hans De Ley
Costumes: Chris Snik	Make-up: Leen Samyn
Dramaturgy: Bart Van Den Eynde	Stage realisation: Robby Cluytens, Steven Decoster, Roeland Ghesquière, Christoph Van Damme
Artaud old: Phil Minton	Technical coordination: Roeland Ghesquière
Artaud young-angel: Hagen Matzeit	Production manager of Muziektheater Transparant: Veerle Francke
Seven voices of Artaud/high priest: Viviane De Muynck	Production manager of B!ndman: Veerle Vaes
Demons/priests of Ciguri: B!ndman	
Soprano saxophone: Koen Maas	
Tenor saxophone: Piet Rebel	
Bariton saxophone: Raf Minten	

All sounds are in real time, no tape, no samples

Production of Muziektheater Transparant in coproduction with the Holland Festival (Amsterdam) and the KunstenFESTIVALdesArts (Brussels)

Presented by: KVS/de bottelarij, KunstenFESTIVALdesArts

Special thanks to: Kaaitheater, KVS/de Bottelarij, Laika, Selmer Saxophones Paris, Lux Lumen, Wotepa, Filmfabriek, Raymonde Carasco, Régis Hebraud

Contact: <http://www.transparant.be>, info@transparant.be

Source materials: http://www.transparant.be/NL/productie_xtrapicts.mv?id=140

All photographs are copyright protected by Herman Sorgeloos

Biographical notes

Pieter Verstraete is sinds september 2004 als promovendus met een onderwijstaak verbonden aan het departement Theaterwetenschappen van de Universiteit van Amsterdam. Zijn proefschrift - getiteld "The Frequency of Imagination: a perceptual-narrative study of the interrelations between sound, text and performative space" - wordt binnen het onderzoeksinstituut ASCA in het Engels geschreven.

Pieter Verstraete studeerde af in Germaanse Filologie (Nederlands-Engels) in 2001 en postgradueerde in de Theaterwetenschap (GGS/MaNaMa) in 2002 aan de Universiteit van Antwerpen. Het onderzoek startte hij reeds in 2003 op als beursoonderzoeker van de DAAD in het IPP-programma Performance and Media Studies aan de Johannes Gutenberg Universiteit van Mainz. In die context schreef en presenteerde hij dit artikel naar aanleiding van de Summer school 2004 'Beyond Aesthetics: Performance, Media and Cultural Studies'.