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EDITORIAL

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Shifting | Dependence

This is the last editorial that will be a collaboration between the two of us. As of this issue, we will be joined by two new voices, Amaara Raheem (Sri Lankan-born Australian independent dance-artist, researcher and writer) and Dani Abulhawa (a British-Palestinian artist scholar). In a conversation she had with Dani, published in this issue, Joanne ‘Bob’ Whalley observes that this ‘offers a step change to the editorial voices that have held this space over recent issues’. She goes on to note that in the context of wider shifts within the discourse of academic practice, and the concomitant urge to develop more accountable processes, ‘the handover of editorial responsibility, from Vida and Jane, to Simon and Lee could only ever be a placeholder’. In a moment of welcome restraint, Bob stops short of saying that a journal focused on the framing of embodied practices and the attendant bodily knowledges surfaced as a result might struggle longer term with two straight, White, cis-males at the helm.

And she is not wrong.

Since stepping into the roles vacated by Vida and Jane, we have recognized that no matter what steps we might take towards ally-ship, it is hard to shuck off the sense of gatekeeping. In recognizing not only our privilege but also the inevitable bolstering of the status quo that the relative singularity of our perspectives might reaffirm, we feared our presence as editors may well have been a retrograde step in terms of active support of an expanded representation. Our conversations with each other (and there have been many, many hours of discussion at this point) have been beautifully nuanced, complex and left us feeling worryingly exposed.

But that exposure has been vital.

What we are talking about here is an attempt to engage more explicitly in an ethics of stewardship as it relates specifically to our work with the contributors to *Choreographic Practices (CHOR)*. Perhaps it has been this much-needed course correction that has sharpened our eyes to debates raging around us. Suddenly ethics are everywhere.

The Baader-Meinhof phenomenon occurs when, for instance, we learn a new word and suddenly start seeing that word everywhere. Or perhaps we become aware of a particular artist and notice that people are talking about her all of the time. The phenomenon is also known as the frequency illusion, and it happened to us recently after we were discussing Zygmunt Bauman's *Does Ethics Have a Chance in a World of Consumers?* (2008). Bauman was a Polish sociologist and philosopher and suddenly he was popping up everywhere: blog posts about technology and social media, others about productivity, and still others about consumerism.

Perhaps, as seems so often the case with philosophy, Bauman's work had suddenly become fashionable. More likely though, our shared ignorance of his work was interrupted by our discussions, and we started seeing him everywhere – a ghost in our collective machine. Chances are he was always out there, and we were simply too busy looking in the other direction to notice.

Does Ethics Have a Chance in a World of Consumers? is a remarkable book, filled with complexity and nuanced ways of seeing or imagining the planet. In addition, it offers ways in which to understand the preoccupation we *homo sapiens* have, whether consciously or otherwise, with plundering its resources. Bauman raises the question of responsibility and its relationship to dependence again and again:

Also a truly planetary responsibility: acknowledgment of the fact that all of us who share the planet depend on one another for our present and our future, that nothing we do or fail to do is indifferent to the fate of anybody else, and that no longer can any of us seek and find private shelter from storms that originate in any part of the globe.

(2008: 29)

The call to acknowledge our dependence is always difficult, although inhabiting bodies that are ageing make this increasingly visible. With this recognition comes an acceptance of its inevitability. The stakes raised so directly by Bauman's interconnectedness seem to offer both hope and a challenge. As work began on this editorial, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its latest climate report. It was shocking both in how few surprises it contained and how quickly it disappeared from the headlines. Recognizing the swift erasure of the report, writer Rebecca Solnit even described how the bad news contained therein was 'not really news' (2021: n.pag.).

The week before the IPCC report was published, a friend of Simon's shared an announcement by the New Zealand Lindy Hop group, Kiwi Lindy Exchange, titled 'The show is over':

We wish we could continue to run this amazing event, we loved running it so much! But events like this (with attendees jetting in from all over the planet) are no longer viable if we want to ensure a liveable planet for future generations.

(www.kiwilindyexchange.com)

This is, of course, from the same New Zealand that is 'a favored refuge in the event of a cataclysm' (Osno 2017: n.pag.). Then, just a week later, Simon was invited to an academic event in the United States that would mean a small group of people jetting in from Europe, the United Kingdom and from around the United States (none of these countries appear to be from the Global South). The tension in our bodies, as we discussed and tried to navigate these complex contradictions, were manifold. But the baseline of our questioning of each other, of the wider machinery that we occupy (as makers, academics, editors and so on), centred around the question, *at what point should our behaviour change?*

This question of behavioural change and its attendant complexities is writ large throughout the submissions offered in this issue. In the conversations between Abulhawa and Whalley, and Raheem and Ellis, the obvious shift in editorial perspectives begins to emerge, but both offer something more. Seated at a kitchen table, in the space between Bob and Dani, the question of flux begins to emerge. Ostensibly they are discussing Dani's recent piece *Concord*, but soon it becomes clear that questions of care, and the negotiations between bodies at the micro (between family members) and macro (between world governments), are what is really at stake, and much like the title of the work they are discussing, they start to wonder if it is through shifting that concord can emerge.

For Amaara and Simon, separated by continents and time zones, behaviours change and abide, as their conversation begins with a score to evoke the physical space they once shared. There is a moment in the conversation in which Simon asks what is at the heart of her artistic enquiry, or perhaps at the periphery. Amaara says she will answer the question by coming at it sideways; otherwise 'it's all peripheral, or it's all central'. This response, to own the edges as a way to prevent

a singularity, feels as though it should become the guiding principle of *CHOR* moving forward – a strategy for alterity.

The need for change seems also to find voice in the transcript of a conversation Lee shared with Alesandra Seutin and Jonathan Burrows, in which they discuss a workshop series held at the École des Sables in Senegal. This conversation also evokes Bauman's consideration of dependence, albeit framed through the context of networks and the unequal access to those not making work or training in the West. As Bauman reminds us, although we are powerfully and beautifully dependent on each other, the effects of climate breakdown will not be equally distributed. What might it be like to admit to being profoundly and totally dependent? To recognize that, it might be time – as political philosopher Michael Sandel describes – to change 'how we come to care for the common good' (2020: n.pag.).

While no means exhaustive, each of these editorial voices has been picking at similar questions. How do we change, how do we nurture, how do we balance the very real needs of the planet, a planet that we know has a finite number of resources, resources that we in the West have exhausted, against the needs of communities underrepresented on what we might laughingly call the 'world-stage'? As Alesandra makes clear, work from the African continent is always a balance between economics and representation. The West's profligacy is not just a question of resources; it is also a question of access.

If the climate emergency is the macro-scale backdrop for the choices we make about how to live together, then dependence is also a very real experience in the way in which we share our experiences and voices. The writing between the two of us has always been something of a tangle. A muddle of ideas written at different ends of the day, coming together in an attempt to find a sort of belonging, where our thoughts can find a home in one another's words. Bauman cites the French sociologist Jean-Claude Kaufmann: 'Belonging is used primarily as a resource of the ego' (Bauman 2008: 21) and 'a large part of the identification process feeds on rejection of the Other' (2008: 22).

As we move from two to four (and beyond that, who knows), we suspect this rejection will manifest differently; as the voices involved in framing each issue come at things from different perspectives, from different geographies, experienced through different bodies, doubtless the space for rejection will expand. But so too will the space for belonging. If we are able to do this for one another as editors, how might we also work towards this with contributors.

Recently, the *CHOR* editorial team rewrote some copy for an open call for submissions. There is a sentence in that copy that says that the journal is 'focused on the work of artists and practices on the borders and edges of what is known, understood or assumed'. What might it mean to our understanding of belonging (regardless of one's position relative to what might be called the 'centre') to focus on practices that exist on such abstract borders or edges? It is too pat, too

simplistic to simply offer ‘and this is why we need to expand our editorial voices’; but nevertheless there is a truth here.

This difference is also reflected in a shift in our reviewing process. As we continue to explore ways in which we might be with one another, accounting for differences in contexts and concerns, we look to interrogate the manner in which we speak with and to one another. Not just in the types of submissions we encourage but also in the way we support their development.

From 1 July 2021, *CHOR* began to offer three different types of peer-review processes. It is up to the author to decide which process best suits their needs, but the *CHOR* editors are happy to help if required. The process chosen will be noted at the top of each article.

- **Open peer review** follows a traditional peer-review process except that the author(s) and the reader-reviewers are openly named. The writing is not anonymized. For this process, the editors ensure there are no potential conflicts of interest, and the reader-reviewers can decide whether or not to be named in the publication.
- **Collaborative peer review** is where the author(s) and a reviewer-collaborator enter a dialogue to help develop the writing towards publication. *CHOR*'s editorial team will be responsible for choosing an appropriately experienced reviewer-collaborator, and this person can be more or less involved depending on the collaboration. For this process, the reviewer-collaborator can decide whether or not to be named at the time of publication, although we would expect most to agree to this. The extent or depth of the dialogue or collaboration would determine the way in which the reviewer-collaborator is acknowledged.
- **Traditional double blind peer review** is where the author(s) and reader-reviewers remain unknown or ‘blind’ to each other. The writing is anonymized and the author receives anonymous responses from the reviewers via the *CHOR* editorial team.

While the necessary expansion of the editorial team takes up significant real estate within this issue of *CHOR*, these are not the only voices present. Melbourne-based David Cross offers us a reflection on his Keir Choreographic Awards–commissioned dance work *De-Limit*, a collaboration with performance maker Alison Currie that explored the tension between labour and art. In ‘Ponderings with breathing/breathing with ponderings’, Helsinki-based Jana Unmüßig connects breath and thought in a piece of critically grounded reflection upon her own processes.

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