

Forsoerg Report_ Weaving Monophony

by Yeong Ran Suh

During the research, I transformed my previous dance performance <Co-Weaving on Cracks of Concrete> (2024) with five performers into a solo version, <Co-Weaving, Monophony>. I revisited my prose text <Winter Trees>, which is intertwined with personal memories of migration and friction, and wove it into the fabric of movement by employing a choreographic score of repetition, which I call this part, act 1.

The score of repetition

Act 1's repetition score invited multiple temporalities into the space and to the text. 10 repetitions become not only a score but also a structure. Within the structure, movement qualities range from fixed choreography to improvisation. As I repeated the score again and again, movements naturally fixed, leaving room to change following every day's impulse. This open-close choreography allowed me to play with emotions without being completely eaten by them.

10 repetitions made a memory of visiting a winter tree into an accumulation of intertwined, recurring memories. As some describe trauma is developed by continuously experiencing a series of disturbing events, this score unfolded the process of developing a trauma that I did not even know was mine, and an emotion that I did not realize was there in me. Saying or dancing out loud about the trauma and emotion at a personal level shifted the negative energy of those emotions. Thinking about the social effect of it, I believe that revealing emotions is already a performative act. We are afraid of expressing our emotions, especially if it's a negative emotion. In a logic-centered society, emotion is considered inefficient and useless. However, according to the theory of change, emotions like anger can effectively influence people, leading to changes in public thinking and behavior and, in turn, social transformation. Therefore, emotion is a means of politics and political movement. In this case, what kinds of effects does it have when the audience sympathizes with the performer's emotions?

The Score of Enchantment

From the beginning, I had the idea that this work should be an exorcism of the negative thoughts and emotions, and then I would transform the exorcism into enchantment. Although enchantment and positivity are often considered naive, not complicated or sophisticated, they have power. The idea of the enchantment of the modern world came from Janne Bennet, whom I read with Lara during the 'Driver' project. Modernity weeded out the enchantment of the world; simultaneously, it has been criticized for being a disenchanted world. However, Bennet seeks to rehabilitate enchantment in this modern world, showing not only that it is still possible to experience genuine wonder, but also that such an experience is crucial to motivating ethical behavior.

Searching for positive enchantment is also rooted in my culture. For Koreans, enchantment is embodied in all kinds of folklore, one of which is a traditional Korean dance called <Salpuri>, an exorcism dance that relieves the resentment of the dead. The rhythm of the dance speeds up at the climax, inviting a playful festival atmosphere for both performer and audience. The second reference is the new Korean dance, which features repeated turns that culminate in a climax. From them, I got a few keywords, such as circle, turning, the rhythm goes faster, humor, and laughter.

On top of Enchantment, my second idea is that my personal experience should not be limited to the personal, but should be social and related to everyone's experience. Following Sociologist Ulrich Beck, 'social problems are experienced as individual rather than collective, and we feel compelled to seek 'biographic solutions to systemic contradictions'. By paraphrasing it into a question, how can we transform our perception of social problems as individual than collective? This was a question and an inquiry in the experiment. Combining the two, I intended the enchantment to exorcise our perception of considering social problems as individual rather than collective.

When I was in the space, I had an image of enchantment as multidirectional, expanding in all directions, filling the whole space. Ironically, this recalled to me the 'Laban box', which I think inherits modern categorization of the directions of the dancing body. I adopted the invisible box to play with the modern concept, while, at the same time, being sarcastic about its rigid categorization and making it humorous. I started to call each angle of the box, 'welfare', 'paradise', 'unemployed', 'maternity', etc.,

the terms that every Danish citizen encounters as a citizen, I encounter as a migrant-mother-art laborer in Denmark, the friction I have with Denmark's immigration system within the welfare system.

Sharing & Feedbacks

Before and after sharing this work, self-shame of sharing my personal stories arose in me. However, there is a need to give 'personal' an opportunity to receive sympathy, and be 'social & collective' again. During the feedback after my sharing on the platform, the peer audience shared a productive discussion. A few mentioned a difference between "private" and "personal". Some mentioned that personal stories became collective and universal, so that they could apply their experiences to my experience, and were even willing to join the performance together as a collective, which gave me inspiring thoughts on how to evolve this work.

In my mind, I had two criticisms. Firstly, some say that current art is dominated by identity politics that require people to be ethical, thereby restricting art's potential beyond social norms and morals. What do we mean here by ethic or moral? For me, there are two different ethics: one historically implemented by power to control people, such as the ethic of patriarchal Christianity suppressing women to be pure, or the protestant work ethic requiring every person to work diligently like ants. On the other hand, there are ethics created and agreed upon by the community for their balance, survival, and prosperity, such as those in indigenous animism or folklore. I believe the art needs to tackle the former ethic driven to us by power. However, the latter ethic, cultivated from our sympathy and for our collective survival, to include various beings that the power has ignored, needs to be practiced further. Encountering the extreme gap between super rich and poverty, and the sociopathic attitude of the super-rich, what has created these monstrous figures who do not feel wrong about planetary destruction? The community's ethics should not have allowed them, and we need to recover the ecological community ethic. In this sense, I believe personal stories that embody political criticism and manifest different identities are valuable for changing suppressive social norms, remaking community-based ethics, and embracing affection that occurs through bodies.

The second criticism lingering in my head was the problem of relativity. We often make the social problems comparable, by saying 'your problem is less serious than the other', 'You are more privileged than the others', and 'your problem is not more urgent than the others'. These voices were blocking my mouth from speaking out by saying, 'you are more privileged than other migrants'. The privilege should not divide individuals; it is a strategy for power to separate individuals from the community, so that people cannot act together.

Reference

Jane Bennet, 2001, *The Enchantment of Modern Life: Attachments, Crossings, and Ethics*, Princeton University Press

Ulrich Beck, 1992, *Risk Society: Toward A New Modernity*, SAGE publication