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## Glossary

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# Glossary

## 'On Institutions'

INTRODUCTION  
(PIRKKO HUSEMANN)

The glossary *On Institutions* is a trace of the conference 'Testing Institutions', which took place from 14 to 16 November 2014 at the Kulturcampus Domäne Marienburg of the Stiftung University Hildesheim in Germany. Organized by the Junge Akademie (an association of young German scholars from all academic disciplines) and the Institute for Media, Theatre and Popular Culture at the University of Hildesheim the conference discussed the challenges and possibilities of talking about and investigating (primarily cultural) institutions as well as the perspectives and methods involved in doing so. Contributors were speakers from academic disciplines such as the sociology of culture, art history, theatre studies, philosophy and anthropology as well as curators and artists from the fields of theatre, performance and visual arts. Among others, there were Melanie Mohren and Bernhard Herboldt, two directors and curators from Stuttgart in Germany, who presented their long-term artistic research project *Die Institution* ('The Institution') that consists of various modules (that is, publication, performance, conference and installation) that invite to imagine and participate in a fictitious institution. There were also the directors and performers Eva Plischke and Frank Oberhäufser from the Berlin-based performance collective Turbo Pascal, who investigated the functioning of a German municipal theatre in Freiburg and, together with the employees, developed ideas for improving the institution's mode of organization. And there was the composer

and curator Adham Hafez from Cairo in Egypt, founder of the ARC.HIVE for Contemporary Arab Performing Arts, who is confronted with a new Egyptian law that declares non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that receive foreign subsidies without the state's permission to be illegal. At the time of the conference the only way left for him to continue working seemed to be to go into exile and re-institutionalize his association abroad.

During the conference an extensive glossary was compiled that includes those terms that seemed to be the most relevant ones for the participants regarding the concepts of and processes within institutions. Surprisingly, the glossary hardly contains any of the notions that are frequently used in sociological or art historical discourse about institutions and their critique (such as acknowledgement, expectation, orientation, habit, rules, power, and definition). Instead it consists of notions that hint at a performative and processual turn in the debate. A small, random selection of entries that is directly related to some of the speakers' lectures was chosen in order to be published in this issue of *Performance Research On Institutions*:

Affect	Narration
Authorization	Reflexivity
Historiography	Rhythm
Hospitality	Subvention
Infrastructure	

These entries deal with the modality, conditions and critique of institutions and they vary in perspective and style according to the respective author. Sociologist Robert Seyfert focuses on the affective and rhythmic potential of institutions in order to add a new

dimension to the already existing concepts of 'institution'. Theatre scholar Nick Julian Lehmann starts off from an intervention at Burgtheater in Vienna in order to show how cultural institutions are constantly challenged in their own reflexivity. For theatre-makers Melanie Mohren and Bernhard Herboldt the idea of 'institution' serves as a tool for creating performative settings that are characterized by radical hospitality.

By highlighting the issues of authorization, infrastructure and subvention, anthropologist Jonas Tinius, theatre scholar Heike Roms and curator Stefanie Wenner point at the fact that institutionalization is always a product of circumstances. It may be triggered and supported by a charismatic authority or public subsidies and has to be understood as a process that always happens within a wider infrastructure of physical facilities and social networks.

Theatre scholar Martina Groß reminds us of the fact that institutional critique is not a recent phenomenon but can be already found in the French *querelle des théâtres* (war of theatres) led by the market theatres from 1718 to 1721, which has disappeared from historiography.

Finally, Heike Roms asks from the perspective of oral history how stories become part of an institution's very fabric, particularly if they have an anti-institutional impetus.

This heterogeneous ensemble of entries shows that our endeavour to exchange about concepts of 'institution' and processes of institutionalization was partly an act of translation between perspectives (art/theory) and methods (inductive/deductive). But it proved to bridge the gap between hardly interrelated discourses and thus led to new ideas and collaborations, particularly between sociology, arts and curating.<sup>1</sup>

AFFECT  
(ROBERT SEYFERT)

Affect is an abstract concept. At times identified with feelings, emotions or drives, affect is nonetheless not reducible to any of these. A more general definition is also the more accurate one: affects define relations among bodies. An institution is characterized by its internal affective regime, that is, its *affectif* (Seyfert 2012), a neologism created in the spirit of Foucault's *dispositif* (1980: 194–5).

<sup>1</sup> The rest of the terms collected during the conference in Hildesheim have been listed below in alphabetical order. Partly in pairs, which were interrelated in the discussion, the glossary remains to be selected, filled and completed in future artistic projects, academic conferences and publications: Access/Participation, Addressing, Dis-/Enabling, Effect, Extension/Expansion, Force/Empowerment, In-/Exclusion, Instituting, Legitimation, Occupying/Interruption, Place/Space, (Aesthetic) Practice/s, Self-/De-/Re-Institutionalisation, Stability, Testing/Judging, The State, Time/Duration, Use.



■ Collection of terms for the glossary.  
Photo Ann-Kathrin Canjé

The *affectif* is the way an institution attracts close adherents (Hauriou 1970: 103), repulses opponents or leaves others indifferent. The *affectif* of an institution is a distributive formation, an assemblage of ‘thoroughly heterogeneous elements’ that include not only human and non-human actors but also material artefacts and their spatial configurations; *affectif* describes the ‘nature of connections’ and the ‘system of relations’ between these heterogeneous elements, as well as the particular affective frequencies they occupy. Relations within an institutional *affectif* are not reducible to symbolic or semantic communication. For instance, they may include sensory transmissions through voice, touch, smell or electric circuitry. Institutions create channels of communication that allow actors to affect one another, to resonate together. Each element and each actor of an institution needs to be able to communicate through these affective frequencies; they need to learn to affect and to be affected by others (Spinoza 1994). Thus, affective interactions depend on the affectability and receptivity (Kwek 2015) of all bodies and elements involved.

#### AUTHORIZATION (JONAS TINIUS)

Processes of authorization and the establishment of authority are principal institution-building practices (see Weber 1968). They can revolve around a single charismatic authority, but they can also be understood more broadly as forms of productive power (Foucault 1982). Authority in this latter sense is described by the concept *assujettissement* (Foucault 1976: 81) as a form of subject-making and self-subjecting power. It denotes both an incentive and an injunction to self-discipline (see Laidlaw 2014; Milchman and Rosenberg 2007).

The figure of the artistic director (see the contribution ‘Institutional formations and artistic critique’ in this special issue about an ethnographic case study of a public theatre in Germany’s post-industrial Ruhr valley) is one example of an instituting authority. The

director Roberto Ciulli from the *Theater an der Ruhr* represents, guides, organizes and criticizes the institution’s primary labour: rehearsals (see Matzke 2012; McAuley 2012). In the theatre, rehearsals embody the institution’s founding principle of commitment to artistic self-cultivation in an ensemble. Directing rehearsals thus authorizes practices that in turn authorize the institution. Authority in these artistic processes orients aesthetic labour and cultivates ethical subject positions. During these principal practices, the director initiates and transmits the artistic ideas and ideals that bind its members together. His ethico-aesthetic authority serves as a productive power by guiding the self-cultivation of individual actors during rehearsals. Yet, directorial authority also functions as a regulatory force, observing artistic processes and practices with a normative gaze (see Bertram 2010). Attending to authority during rehearsals therefore highlights the complexity of ethical observation and discipline in professional artistic processes.

#### HISTORIOGRAPHY (MARTINA GROSS)

The Ancien Régime (the political system established in the Kingdom of France before the Revolution in 1789) can be regarded as a model for the European development of institutions and academies, making use of a specific representational power of language and culture to secure absolutist claims to power. Thus, the purpose of the academies was linked to the court culture of early modernity. As a result, the mutual reinforcement of authority between court culture and the institutionalized arts and the influence of the academies on literary and artistic production also increases, making recourse to jointly formulated ‘modernity propositions’ implicit to all newly founded academies (compare Marx/Mayer 2009: VII–XI). Subsequently, one can discern a tight interlacing of historiography and institutionalization in the fields of language, art and science. Beyond, the academic discourse appears as the institutional interface between artistic and experimental

self-reflection, on the one hand, and the normative proof of knowledge, on the other. The institutionalization of the theatre, for example, triggers canonization and standardization processes entailing the exclusion of certain forms of acting and styles of representation. Exemplary in this respect are the occurrences during the so-called Parisian theatre war, a direct response to the institutionalization and monopolization of the performing arts under Louis XIV (Groß 2013). The market theatres (*théâtres de la foire*) marginalized through the institutionalization defended themselves as venues in public space with all available means and thus sparked 'a century-long struggle between established monopoly and the irrepressible will and inexhaustible ingenuity of the forains', the market theatre people (actors, authors, stage directors, entrepreneurs, 'which represents the war between wit and authority' (see Grannis 1931:29). With the establishment of the modern, bourgeois theatre in the mid-eighteenth century, the market theatres with their non-uniform and experimental forms disappear – subsequently also from (theatre) historiography. This may be due to what Walter Benjamin defined as the 'historiography of the victor' (compare Benjamin 1942:5). The history of the Parisian market theatre manifests the problem of the notion of progress (compare Foucault 1987; Fink-Eitel 1989) that, as an integral moment of historicism, also took hold of theatre historiography, and it shows the need also to revise it by taking institutionalization processes into account. The characteristic of a close intertwining of canonization, normativity discourses and the function of writing history affects the today still existing as well as newly founded art and science institutions.

HOSPITALITY  
(MELANIE MOHREN & BERNHARD  
HERBORDT)

Hospitality opens the door to the other, who is neither friend nor foe, and who, by crossing the threshold, brings along a basic ambivalence.

He brings the outside to the inside, what is foreign to what is one's own. At the same time, he undermines the antagonistic categories of 'friend' and 'foe' by appearing as the other, as neither-nor, as both, as not yet defined, as one who distinguishes and one who cannot be distinguished. (Gast 2013)

What the professor of psychoanalysis, Lilli Gast, describes here in her opening address of the durational performance *Die Institution*, can be applied in several respects to the encounter between performers and spectators. Her speech is fictitious because there was no occasion for it, the speech was not actually held and Mrs Gast was not even present. Instead, actors and actresses greeted the individually entering guests. As strangers, they opened the door to a flat in an old building, not exactly knowing what to expect. They were welcomed by actresses and actors, who in turn could not say for certain whom they were facing: participating artists, guests invited to an evening dinner with neighbours, participants in a seminar, registered spectators or random passers-by. The actresses and actors functioned more as hosts than as the embodiment of a system of meaning to be replicated. They invite people to a spatial and temporal set of regulations (*Die Institution*), play with its rules, do not know what their vis-à-vis knows about these rules and how they plan to deal with them. If existing institutions would grasp themselves as a script for ever new performances, their protagonists as hosts who open doors and do not turn away unexpected guests, they would reflect upon their own potential of being different in their daily practice.

INFRASTRUCTURE  
(HEIKE ROMS)

In the 1980s the British performance scene developed into what performance historian Jennie Klein has diagnosed as an 'identifiable, professionalized "field" in its own right', characterized by 'increasing institutionalization' (Klein 2012: 13; see *narration*). The 'institutions' of performance in the UK, however, are diverse:

small-scale and large-scale, self-exploitative and well-funded, short-lived and long-term, DIY and professionalized, structurally weighty or lean but possessing cultural authority. And none operates in isolation – they may be more appropriately thought of as part of a multifarious institutional framework rather than as separate organizational identities.

In *Social Works*, performance scholar Shannon Jackson (2011) has proposed an ‘infrastructural politics of performance’, which requires the recognition (often disavowed in claims of art’s autonomy) that artistic practice is always supported by multiple interdependent systems (public/private, aesthetic/social, individual/institutional). It may also help us to recognize the capacity of performance art, an art form often associated with a radically anti-institutional stance, to generate its own institutional infrastructures: the complex, interrelated web of physical facilities and social networks that have enabled, sustained and enhanced its histories.

#### NARRATION (HEIKE ROMS)

Oral historian Rob Perks pointed out that few British scholars of oral history have devoted their attention to the narratives that attach themselves to institutions, which Perks explains with the discipline’s roots ‘as an alternative, radical methodology preoccupied with the dispossessed and marginalised’ (2010:36). A similar claim could be made about performance scholarship, which has often tied itself to the emphatic anti-institutional stance of avant-garde artistic practice. Performance historian Jennie Klein has observed, however, that the success of British performance art is ‘due in no small part to what might be considered its increasing institutionalization’ (2012: 13), embodied in a vibrant network of organizations, venues, funding schemes and educational institutions.

It is vital, therefore, to record the narratives of performance’s institutional infrastructures. Where do the memories of performance’s institutions reside – with the administrators who run them, the artists or audiences who

engage with them, or in their organizational make-up (Linde 2009)? How have those memories been shaped into narratives that have given these institutions their anti-institutional appearance and nature? How do stories of past dissent and radical challenge become part of the very fabric of institutions? And how can performance practice itself be a recording device that registers such narratives?

#### REFLEXIVITY (NICK-JULIAN LEHMANN)

In October 2013 the 125th anniversary of the Viennese Burgtheater, a congress entitled ‘Von welchem Theater träumen wir?’ (What kind of theatre do we dream of?), was shortly interrupted by an interventionist, addressing the working conditions of the institution itself. One could argue that the intervention managed to intervene in the course of the institution, because it took the congress theme literally and thus forced the institution to reflect upon itself (instead of just celebrating itself). The interventionist triggered a circular act of self-reference or self-commentary in which a (discursive) examination refers to – ‘bends back on’ – and thus effects the entity instigating the action or examination. By pointing at the working conditions of Burgtheater he tried to refocus the institution’s becoming reflexive to the many bodies enacting it. Aiming at the very heart of any institution’s becoming, he shed light on the hiatus between the institution’s (self-)representation and performance. His intervention asked the simple question: are we agreeing to the institution’s course of action or could we agree on performing it differently? This act of reflexivity could easily be considered as a constituent part of an institution’s becoming because any ‘good’ institution needs to re-actualize itself. It may not ignore the fact that it is a result of human action and collective acceptance. And it does not only follow rules but is capable of appropriating them in a process of reinterpretation (see Jaeggi 2009). But the Burgtheater case also shows that institutions as disputable entities are not necessarily able

to digest this becoming-public of their internal reflexivity. It remains to be asked to what degree can institutions be set on trial without challenging their legitimacy altogether?

#### RHYTHM

(ROBERT SEYFERT)

Institutions can be described by their internal rhythms and frequencies. The life of an institution (Seyfert 2011) operates through the principle of complex repetition (Tarde 1903; Deleuze 1994). Such rhythms may guarantee the continuation of an institution (its repetition) but also allow for internal change (difference) and even dissociative and antagonistic relations (opposition) to institutions (Tarde 1897).

There exists a mutual affective attunement (Stern 1985; Manning 2013) among all bodies within institutions. Bodies are trained, schooled and socialized to the particular rhythms and frequencies of an institution. Such synchronization is not limited to the cognitive level (corporate identity, central ideas and aims and so forth) but also requires attunements on the level of the body and the senses. The institutionalization of a collective rhythm is usually guaranteed not only through the material and spatial arrangement of an institution (floors, staircases, office spaces) but also through the temporal organization of administrative processes, and a particular gymnastics of the body, which may include not only actual gymnastics (for instance, Henry Ford made his workers learn dances that rhythmically trained their bodies for their work on the assembly line), but also a more general training of bodily rhythms, as one finds, for instance, in the process of learning to drive a car.

Thus, integration into an institution or acts of institutionalization can be described as processes of synchronization and attunement. In such cases, all members or elements of an institution become aligned with one another, in alignments that may be dissonant or harmonious. Affective attunement, as a necessary requirement of institutional consistency, also explains moments

of deinstitutionalization: dissonant relations to institutions range from indifference to repulsion and disgust. Such dissonance may explain how individuals (whether members or outsiders) become critical of institutions, or alienated from them.

#### SUBVENTION

(STEFANIE WENNER)

In Germany, there is a whole system of subsidized institutions that produce theatre, whereas the production of visual art mainly lies in the hands of galleries, private collectors or the artists. Subsidized theatre seems to be a good thing: while visual artists often have to struggle to find money in order to realize their work, theatre makers, once accepted by the system, have good chances to find some money to realize their work. There are some restrictions, however: in the German theatre system you work in the *Stadttheater* (municipal theatre) or the *Staatstheater* (federal state theatre), or you are part of the so-called independent theatre scene and have to ask for money from several cultural foundations, for example, state foundations. These have their criteria and parameters of funding work. While an independent group of theatre makers may be working outside the frame of 'institutionalized' theatre (meaning the *Stadt-* or *Staatstheater*), they are still confronted with state institutions and their values. Since state theatre generally has a cultural mission (among others integration, education, communication and mediation) theatre makers receiving subsidies from the state have to prove that, and in which way, their work is valuable for the society. Taking this into account, subvention, any kind of subsidies, actually undermine independent theatre making. Even though the 'independent' theatre makers who work outside of the traditional institutions are therefore relatively autonomous from the economic market, they are confronted with and involved in another kind of economy: an economy of subvention that may be even more effective in institutionalizing the arts than the old institutions.

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