

Tomasz Ciesielski  
University of Lodz, Poland  
ciesielski\_t@uni.lodz.pl

Dance Workshop as Research: Cognitive/Performative Function of Attention in Improvisation and Choreography.

Attempts to use knowledge derived from the field of cognitive studies in the practice of contemporary dance are very often nowadays. The tactics adopted by artists can be roughly divided into two types: 1. Choreographic contextualization of theories of cognitive processes as an element of the anthropological reflection. 2. Applying this knowledge for the improvement of the technical skills or the preparation of material for the performance. First one, while resulting in sometimes-spectacular performances, in fact is usually a functionalization of cognitive sciences' narrative/language as a source of metaphors for the discourse on chosen values or ideologies. In turn, the second tactic crashes down often on the clash of work strategies and languages of dancers and scientists. In result, their interaction remains shallow - artists annex cognitive concepts as a metaphor for subjective experiences and researchers engage in a narrow aspect of the experience that they are interested in and are able to explore at all. Such hypothesis is proved even by the experience of Corinne Jola - choreographer and neurocognitivist together.

In my article firstly I will present the critical analysis of contemporary dialog between performative practices and cognitive sciences (I. Hagendoorn, C. Jola, B. McConachie, S. di Benedetto, S.L. Foster and others), trying to point and recapitulate existing tactics and strategies including the distribution of available knowledge and resources. Such reflection will serve as an introduction and explanation to the solutions I have chosen in my personal practice. I will describe the exercises developed and conclusions gathered from several workshops conducted in 2015 and 2016 (including two conducted in collaboration with David Lorenc - eminent dancer of Ultima Vez and Carte Blanche).

Workshops were devoted to finding effective tactic allowing possibly most precise work within the field cognitive sciences in the dance studio. Particular interest was put into

the issue of the performer's attention, awareness and consciousness in the context of motor control. Starting with existing models of action and motor representation (M. Jeannerod, Th. Shack, others) additionally informed by the research on motor simulation, we set up a research on how they relate to dance practice in general and particular dance techniques. This led us to re-defining very specific cognitive capabilities/skills improving which may allow dancers to achieve more efficient performance, understood both in physical and theatrical terms. In the final stage, we adjusted existing and created new exercises that allow developing indicated capabilities, but also may serve as tools in the creative process.

In conclusions the results of the workshops will be evaluated and once again confronted with the newest findings in contemporary science, therefore the possibility of the synergy between the field of dance/performance and cognitive science will be re-investigated

**Tomasz Ciesielski** – Performer, dancer, theater researcher. Since 2009 member of the Theater Association Chorea, during this time worked within the projects (workshops, performances) developing the experiences of Jerzy Grotowski and especially ancient music and dance: *Antic/Dance in Re-Construction* 2010, *Koguty, Borsuki i inne Kozły* 2011, *Oratorium Dance Project* 2011 and other performances together with the Body, voice, rhythm workshops. In 2011 started cooperation with Granhoj Dans (Aarhus, Denmark) finalized with the international productions *Men&Mahler* and *Rite of Spring Extended*, both awarded Reumert Vinder for the best performance of the season. Following the individual doctoral studies program at the University of Lodz concentrated on the anthropology of theater, possibilities of applying neurosciences into dance and theatre studies.