

Stand Up is a phone number tagged on an exhibition wall. Looks like it was done quickly by someone unskilled. Calling, one finds a poem recorded on its answering machine. In this poem, a woman receives a lift out of the city by an old friend. She called him after having fallen down somewhere. They talk until he drops her off in the middle of fields and forest. It turns out that the tagged number belongs to the driver.

Stand up, don't stand down, off, by, out, on, aside, back, over, still. What can be said with the verb 'to stand' mostly describes actions of omission, of stillness, and often of avoidance. I think stillness has the capacity of very effectively being an action as well, but I am rather looking at the descriptive mode of this particular word in its versions. Clearly, the specific meanings are eventually determined by the context in which the word is held, but looking at the expression itself, only three versions of standing jump out at me as expressions of care: (to) stand in for, (to) stand up for, and (to) stand up to. I gather all three of them under the host of 'standing up'.

Standing up, this moment of exposure to the unknown, before anything has really happened in terms of an action, but openness is imminent while the body moves up to balance on its legs. In this movement, may it be physical or mental, lies the movens of sovereignty.¹ When you stand up, you really stand alone. The sense of agency becomes clearer when standing up is used as an imperative: Stand up!, my mother told me when I was small, because back then I was living closer to the ground than now. Standing up implied another height to reach. But I also had to stand up, because part of learning to use my body vertically was to fall down often. Standing up after falling. She used the same voice later to tell me to get myself together whenever my pride was hurt, I failed myself, when I was feeling ill treated by others, or when something I had just learned about the world seemed to exceed yet another degree of the unjust and unreasonable I had assumed couldn't be transgressed any further.

My thoughts on this piece are gathered in a knot of knots. It's a knot I wished could be made actual in space in order to see better where the connections between knots are, and how they weave and weave. For a time, I imagined one of the two characters in the piece carrying a large physical bundle of string which was this knot, my knot of thoughts, the manifestation of the story's problem smuggled to the inside. But it turned out she couldn't carry it for me. During that time, there was a passage in the story where the two were talking about the object, and whenever I listened to my recordings of those scripts, all I could hear was them talking about a Not, a bundle of Nots, adding or untying a Not. At that moment, the story was standing in its own way, and it decided to hand the piece of knot right back to me. Now I feel it's curious that, as a completely deskilled female artist, I shall describe what's left in the process of making a work of mine as an object of traditional women's labour: the sketches for Stand Up embodied by a textile structure, laboriously generated from pieces of string, gaining an intricate structure, something to do with my hands.

Stand Up - but what is it if not a comedy show, the monologue delivered to the audience. I began an earlier piece asking whether it was a comedy, and now this work is signified directly to be a comedy routine. This call to stand up has nothing to do with a political slogan, it brings laughter through the back door. What it does is play. It, and in it its characters, and on top of it the voice; it plays identification, spins all its cranks, then snaps back.² It makes you forget it in the instant it passes, just to then pound on the same spot again. As poetry, as the knot of knots, the text in the piece is written to have no center or periphery, to be a folded map on which what happens, happens, but it makes us all, the characters and the caller, the audience to whom the monologue is delivered at the end of an answering machine which even turns on itself, too, it makes us all delivered to a freak sense of destiny. It is vandalism. Terribly superficial story telling. She plays with him, she seems to play with him, because her intentions are so

1 Michel Foucault "A Preface to Transgression", 1963, in "Language, Counter-Memory, Practice", 1977, p. 36f. Based on Georges Bataille's notion of transgression, Foucault describes transgression as such: "Transgression contains nothing negative, but affirms limited being-affirms the limitlessness into which it leaps as it opens this zone to existence for the first time. But correspondingly, this affirmation contains nothing positive: no content can bind it, since, by definition, no limit can possibly restrict it."

2 Marcus Coelen "Prolegomena to the Writing of Affect", 2016, p.6 (partly quoting Freud's late aphorisms): "'Having' and 'being' in children. Children like expressing an object-relation by an identification: 'I am the object.' 'Having' is the later of the two; after loss of the object it relapses into 'being'."

pure, she truly follows them, there is no hidden agenda at all. Feels like I'm not ever gentle enough. Experiencing such intensity, he simply expects a hidden motivation. His sense of inferiority is standing in his way. Knowing, but not knowing, that which standing up opens you up to, which is experience, and risking, daring to experience experience; because what do we do the whole time - we await, we anticipate fearfully, a change, a movement, imminent disaster that never comes,³ against which one still has to move - it's lacking. But losing the lack, both he and I wonder, is what she did.

Storytelling, just like anything else, depends on luck. It is no exception, it is a gamble. I try filling the gamble with love. The imperative of stand up! is transformed into its infinitive every time it approaches yet again, which is why it looks like a continuously back and forth game. You told me once to stand up, and then you said, all imperatives are infinitives. I agonize over the call for a counter hegemony, the faint echo of political activism, when writing it, when uttering it. I had to call my answering machine first to record the message, just like a listener. I do write to emancipate myself from assumed authorities buried in the language I'm in, to no avail. The omission implied in most forms of standing, yes, I recognize it as do the characters, but the only way around that stasis is to lift oneself with love. Always giving more. This is the writing of the lift; the infinitive which is Saying in its execution.⁴ The rupture a fall provides gets inscribed very literally as a wound on the body, turns into a scar, engraving, ornament. All of it represents the drawing of a fall; as she says.

In times of war, ruptures become more apparent. War seems to be a slip in the universe, the world slips and it gets wounded. Even my little private fall in a country that is still very much whole on its own territory, I cannot perceive it outside of war any longer. Then the becoming nurse is as immanent as water in water. It is a way of staying out of formalized movements, antagonisms - of associating but remaining infinitive, other. The anguish needed to heal and not to repair, it grows alongside care, both most urgently at the limits of being and only attained in encounters, attempting the intimacy of speaking out and listening, of touch. Being confidantes, accomplices, as a mode of gathering, it makes it possible to associate and act agonistically.⁵ It doesn't overlook the impossibility of communion.

What stands up remains valid after analysis. The call to stand up is just a preparation to escape this analysis which affirms its object into its own sphere, which annexes, often in the shape of the academic or commercial. The delusion that something has been checked and is therefore safe belongs into the elegant sandbox of the play that doesn't become, turn into, but has. There is no salvation.

For a long time, I thought the sound piece played back on the answering machine in this work would be a recording of a voice speaking only one person's part of a conversation, so that the other would remain absent, the way one hears someone talk on the phone in the street, the other making only an impossible appearance through the suggested: he is there. But without him there, she wasn't able to say anything at all. So I had to reverse it so far around that I was describing the whole set of the three of us with my one voice. Now it is me speaking while the others, the fiction, are implicit only. It gives me a perspective on the expression, dis-possession, the utterance that writing is. We're disappearing. The way my brain is disappearing from all this useful language, all the flickering screens, it's not even at a stand still. If they looked into my skull they'd find that my brain has made space for my intestines. ~~Between disappearance and intrusion, that which isn't there, but which is known or sensed to be there, has the reversed power of playing mentioned earlier, which pretends to be what it is not in order to comprehend it as part of its cosmos.~~ Mother, look, I am a bed, a nurse, a giraffe. I am a nurse, I don't have one.

3 Maurice Blanchot "The Writing of the Disaster", 1980, p.10: "Reading is anguish, and this is because any text, however important, or amusing, or interesting it may be (and the more engaging it seems to be), is empty—at bottom it doesn't exist; you have to cross an abyss, and if you do not jump, you do not comprehend."

4 Blanchot termed "le Dire" which relates to dire as l'écriture relates to écrire. Écriture is not what is written (l'écrit), but what remains to be written. An infinitive, a language no one speaks. Levinas insisted on speech alone sustaining the relation of a subject to the Other. Speech as such, not as a particular communication, but speech offered in the face of another, offered as language itself, is an element.

5 Chantal Mouffe "Agonistics - Thinking the World Politically", 2013

But it is just a short conversation on a car ride. That's all it is.

As I speak; let's say I'm on the phone, already late for an appointment, so I pick up the phone, but I'm still putting on the left shoe while grabbing the keys, pulling the door to my apartment shut, and running down the stairs on my way to the tram car, as I speak on this phone call, my voice - the very real and physical soundwaves my mouth emits - is shaken, rocked, is subjected to the drawing of my passage. When the tram car rattles around a corner and stutters on its tracks, my vocal chords transmit this movement. The relationship between the microphone and my mouth, it is sealed by the waves, and the person on the other end and me, we are physically connected by all the transformed energy of waves and sparks and waves. Then to think of audible silence makes me so happy. Because it contains the potential of these connections while being nothing, being the only reality I can truly connect with, while my speaking comes from pain. I have something to say. To stand the words,⁶ to stand the words, truly.

The sound filters of the system in the answering machine take the sound of my recorded voice apart, my answering machine's settings are designed for high efficiency and excellence in phone conferences of professional businesses, yet they distort the voice so absolutely that the piece undoes itself and whatever of that physical connection to my voice remains, in its endlessly repeating document, is a remain without provenance, a souvenir maybe, a corpse. The contact between us is a story. While supposedly a marked tag turns the exhibition space dirty - is a sign of vandalism, the signature in vandalism, the territorial claim of the streets, and surely here only a meagre substitute representation of the graffiti artist scratching the city, which recalls dirt into the show - when finally the beep sounds and the caller can answer, it is the turn of a mirror - it transgresses, it ruptures, it pulls back into being the caller who tried to listen to this mutilated chain of significant for so long they forgot they were on the phone themselves.

⁶ Ingeborg Bachmann „Wahrlich“, verse 8f: „Einen einzigen Satz haltbar zu machen, auszuhalten in dem Bimbam von Worten.“ And verse 10f: „Es schreibt diesen Satz keiner, der nicht unterschreibt.“