

CHLOE CHIGNELL

The complete text
would be insufferable

One *or* one and another *or* pointing towards *or* standing next to *or* sitting *or* being alongside *or* being with an/other *or* not being one *or* standing *or* taking another position *or* opening the hands *or* pressing them forwards *or* showing up empty handed *or* just standing *or* slowing down the space between inhale and exhale *or* inducing repetition *or* syncing up *or* i and u and we *or* introducing by bringing something into (this) *or* making an address *or* locating the characters which will follow *or* finding the i and u and we in no specific order but nevertheless together *or* changing position *or* standing somewhere with arms drawn wide *or* preparing the scene *or* letting the ice melt rather than break *or* anticipation held out in that space between us that space between inhale and exhale *or* u and i starting by speaking *or* closing the gap with words *or* speaking words in chain-like formations with slings and sentences *or* with lips and spit and breath *or* with your lips *or* with mine *or* ours syncing up *or* in sync but not in unison *or* words swelling into the space between offering us collaboration *or* desertion *or* u and i casting a situation *or* a setting with a landscape and a timeline to be entered *or* if I told u the leaves were falling red and the flowers blooming would u believe me *or* a question (open-ended) *or* experimenting with a space just short of the present *or* just before the exhale when tension grows ropes in her neck *or* anticipation held out in that space between us *or* that space before we became like ourselves *or* just after the fact but before the story *or* before description excavates its own time *or* would it make a difference if *i* had said that *we* saw the leaves fall amid flowers blooming?

or the words ‘within’ and ‘other’ in any order or u saying something like ‘for the order enquire within’ or me hearing something like ‘for the other enquire within’ or a sign ‘enquire within’ or u and i casting a situation whilst we are syncing up or u and i were reading through the windows we passed by mouthing words whilst walking or we were trying to read a city or we were just standing reading on the pavement under yellow light or in that space so anonymous its called public or we thought we saw our names etched on the sidewalk or cursive in cement or we thought this could be it or ours or we approached and the pavement bucked under our feet cracked right in two or we continued walking, continued passing by, continued peering in, continued reading through windows until one of us pointed and shouted ‘mine’

LANGUAGE AS PROSTHESIS

The Score, a Prosthetic Device

CHLOE CHIGNELL

This last year i have been making a piece titled *Poems and Other Emergencies*¹. i invited a friend to visit me in the studio. i explained to them what i meant when i said ‘embodied language’ — a term that frequented the process of the work. i was trying to articulate a relation *between* the body and language, posing questions like: what can happen with language when it is given a body? When is the physicality of speaking and writing present within the spoken and written? How does the use of language transform when the physicality of its production is recognised as something more than a functional mediator? My memory hears my friend asking: *but what do you mean with ‘language’ and ‘body’? where does one end and the other begin? It seems you start from the assumption that they are separate.* i felt ◊ Body and Language ◊ crumble. It had seemed evident enough to me that they were not the same thing. The two words held entirely different shape and sound; neither shares a phoneme with the other. But what could i answer for their separability, not as words, but as the things they call into play each time they are said, heard and written? The body could not only be flesh (material whose haptic knowledge is bound by skin), nor could language be only immaterial (catering exclusively to the stuff of ideas). Such definitions would participate in that age-old separation of mind and body which, despite being entirely uninteresting, has already been researched *ad nauseam*.

or This Private Person *or* actually reading the terms and conditions
or experimenting with mine *or* with hers *or* letting our bodies swell
into the space between *or* to the size they could have been *or* own-
ing it *or* flaunting it *or* saying ‘you’re killing it’ whilst smiling *or*
techniques of loving yourself of living in that body of being that
body fully *or* referring to myself whilst saying that body *or* stretch-
ing out that arm *or* lengthening that leg *or* turning that head *or*
lowering those eyes *or* pointing that gaze *or* twisting that spine *or*
walking that body *or* that way

Yes, i had to admit i could not really think of a body without language, nor could i engage language without *this* body. The further i burrowed the more difficult it was to find a lasting separation. Neither the body, nor language were at fault, it was the *and*. So eager to create relation, it pushed rather than pulled, inferring an addition between the words to its sides, and turned out to be rather useless. Body and language needed no binding. A body’s composition cannot be neatly delineated from cultural-historical-imagination. Such that the materiality of the body goes well beyond its anatomy of bones, muscles, tissue, blood, water, protein and molecular formation. i was trying to articulate a relation between two things that were not two things. So i thought: what if i started from the premises: the body is always already language; language has always required a body, a subject (non-humans included). Then, rather than a relation between two entities, they have entangled capacities. From there i asked; could choreography facilitate strategies for (re)writing that living textual body?

or this body or this body as a question or a story or i have always felt that her fiction was an attempt at description or an ongoing list of possible narratives or the question: is there something more like myself than this? or we told stories, those being more solid than truths or fiction being more entertaining than truth or making something up by feeling it out by waiting for that pull or owning lies or killing truths or flaunting owning something whatever it is or lining up a few things in dubious chains of this then that or finding structure for this fiction or this body or u and i (unordered, fingers stretched, ready) or would u believe me if i told you the leaves were falling red and the flowers blooming or i'm just trying to describe a feeling and those are evidently facts or believing it despite all of the symptoms pointing elsewhere or I have always felt that this fiction was an honest attempt at description or something else or one of us just writing what happens in passing or an account of what happened or could have happened if u and i had cast that situation with a landscape and a timeline

Often by slowing down a process of thinking—looking at the premises that make ground for a thought or a question—we can examine the small details which make it possible to think further. Here the details are *body and language*. i can write them here in such a way, that we could both read across them without noticing the gaping holes of their position. What is the body? What is language? It would take more than a lifetime of reading in many diverse fields of study—philosophy, science, sociology, psychology etc—to get through the amount of literature and theory dedicated to those questions. It is not my intention here to address the ‘what is’, as such questions often tend to coerce some kind of essentialist response, and regardless, this text is neither philosophy nor science but rather a kind of writing immanent to choreography and the thinking it musters. By putting the object of study into motion, nor presuming its separation from the subject studying it, the ‘how’ is a much more productive entrance to the question. i could think through *how* the word “body” can be used: as an image, a place, a metaphor, a concept, an historical idea, an experience, a material object, an organism, a dynamic entity, a system of knowledge, an affectual field—and this is not even close to being exhaustive—but in which of these uses of the word “body” does this “i” reside? All of them.