

Response by Andreas Bürgisser

Dear Luca,

I was very pleased to have the opportunity to respond to your article. Together we answered the “Forum”, a format in which theater pedagogy students of all years in Zurich can exchange ideas on topics that go beyond the scope of a specific seminar. We agreed to implement the concept of resting together into the seminar. Initiated by your announcement that the following hour will take part in a setting of resting, we rearranged the room. In a kind of campfire atmosphere, we reflected on the last semester. It was still a non-private setting in which compulsory attendance was an important reason for our being together.

In your text, you open up differentiations based on Hannah Arendt’s distinctions between ‘work’—‘action’ and ‘private’—‘public’ respectively with Judith Butler, with whom resting could be described as a common practice that takes place between bodies and softens the rigid boundary between private and public. You raise the question: to what extent can being un_productive and un_available together be a public practice and thereby question, criticize or extend the hegemonic narratives of time and space?

At the described seminar, I had a strong feeling that everyone involved was in a sovereign position, perfectly balancing on the frontier that divides private and public behavior to create a kind of a third place. The distinction between private and public is a central category when I reflect on myself as a teacher in a pedagogical situation. A dilemma arises for me: on the one hand, I find the artistic-research (activist) crit-

ical approach to questioning this boundary relevant, and I hope that it will open up new possibilities for and practices of (non-private) encounters beyond capitalist exploitation logics. In pedagogical settings, I see difficulties that can arise from this. Public gatherings are characterized by 'keeping a distance' on various levels. This is expressed in different practices, depending on the context, on a linguistic level, on a physical level in the distance, in postures, such as sitting instead of lying around together. If there are opportunities to rest together in educational settings, the quality of 'public' distance must not be blurred, but must remain. Perhaps resting in a pedagogical setting is a 'private-non-private-practice', where the quality of distance is crucial to ensure a safe environment for everyone. This is the case, for example, with your proposed concept of a room in the room: there could be a room, where you work together but also an outdoor space where you can retreat in case you need a break.

Besides the question of private/non private practices, your argumentation made me think about curricular matters. What does it mean to incorporate moments of rest into the course of a module? What is the relationship between this rest and the required, expected level of productivity of the seminar participants? What criteria would be used to discuss and debate a supposed thinning out of productivity? Setting and practicing a 'time-space' of rest together calls into question the narrative of offering as much as possible in the limited time available for training. It challenges the narrative that the time of application and processing, incorporation should happen after the training.

A student's life can be described as a hurdle race through countless seminars, from one way of working to another, from one half-baked project implementation to the next. This requires a lot of flexibility, openness and a high degree of self-discipline and self-management skills. There is a lack of time and space to set things in motion. Other metaphors such as fermenting, sedimenting or allowing to rise come to mind. Small seminar groups mean that all students are almost always at the center of the action. In view of the high pace and high level of involvement of the students, I see the idea of rest as action as a critical, possible joint activity. As a lecturer, I will try to incorporate

opportunities for distancing and moments of pausing and stopping into teaching settings. I would also like to pay more attention to the moment of transition between different seminars.

Your focus on rest in action as a common critical practice for questioning hegemonic narratives of time and space is gratefully accepted by me as a reflexive dimension for thinking differently about teaching and curricular design.

I hope that we can share our experiences of this 'in action' at the next PAC meeting at the latest. Perhaps with others, maybe you will do a small session on this?

Warm regards,

Andreas

