Rodrigo Toscano

COLLAPSIBLE POETICS THEATER

from "CORDONED" (a body-movement poem for five players and one reader)

...

why always...

one... (1 & 2 each walk to the other’s spot)

as by two... (1 & 2 walk back to their original positions)

why never (and forever)

one

as by...

oh the combos... (1-4 each walk to the middle line (each in their line spots) and face forwards, in neutral stance)

the combos they’re...what are they?

not-here not-not-here  (1-4 put hands out in front to grab something (once))
not-here not-not-here... (1-4 pull (swiftly) hands in back into neutral stance

there... (2 & 4 turn and face each other (no walking))

I could stare...

at that stare...

perfect...

so...

I know what I know cause I feel
I don’t feel...

“perfect”  (1 & 4 face backwards, 2 & 3 face to the sides, away from each other)
I’ve been living, at best
passable present
of passable past…
hole…
deepening…
tomorrow…

* * *

The text for Cordoned can be characterized as a semi-contained social-psychological crisis, a formalization of an incipient collective consciousness from the vantage point of the collapse of a previous collective consciousness. The transition from one form of self-to-group-ratio to another, a momentary vacuum of un-“theorizable” causality (rendered bodily as opposed to “found” (and redirected) temporally), avails new tension-and-release points in the Inner Group’s potential to recombine. This recombinatory activity is the practical-theoretical root of the Collapsible Poetics Theater (CPT); its projection outward into what CPT calls the Contact Zone (the word “stage” is strenuously avoided!) signals and affirms that it is the Outer Groups’ continual formation (wrought by their respective “inner” dynamics) that is the CPT’s central, albeit anxious concern.

(1) How’s it that we’re four distinct entities here?
(4) How’s it that we’re singular and one-at-a-time?
(2) How’s it that we’re each one-quarter of one whole?
(3) How’s it that we’re each four times more than the other?”

(from “Truax Inimical” (a trans-modern anti-masque for four voices))

So that by making sensual the revolutionary-necessary initial breach of a singular consciousness through the performance of Body Movement Parameters (BMP’s), the CPT finds itself already-un-cordoned (!) in the midst of a speculative metrics of mass subject-making. The muted promise of historical futurity through common work is directed at the immediate (asleep but aroused, dreamy but prowling) Now. This Now proves itself to be not only a daunting constructivist task but an alluring one too.


(from “Clock, Deck, and Movement” a modular poetic activities piece for five players)

And that the difficulty, now, is to increase a sense of permeability unto people all around (in all of their material relatedness). And so they appear, and then they don’t, and then yes, and then no, and on and on, so that what one gets is that the process towards Mutual Aid might require tons more approximate poetic actions from primary resources, i.e. your political-aesthetic Body-Body (this is more than is being required of us now, in this age of Electronic Text Mining, Rapid De-Industrialization and its Barons).

Thus a re-commitment to Group by way of joining with other Groups necessitates an infolding of the forms of National (hegemonically-relegated) alienation. This implies real safety within the New Group as well as real peril. The creative tension between Council Communism / Anarcho-Syndicalism and Socialist State Architectonic Demands, as liberatory (synthetic) vehicle to material elsewheres, gets decompressed onto the anti-market of the Contact Zone, from whence comes this (primped-proletarian) trans-nationalist perspectivalism.

(1) How’s it that we’re four hundred million distinct entities here?
(4) How’s it that we’re singular and one-at-a-time?
(2) How’s it that we’re each one four hundred millionth of one whole?
(3) How’s it that we’re each four hundred million times more than the other?

This is to say, that the CPT intends to stand up to the local Society for Human Resource Management, and spits on all crowd-sourcing poetries that buttress such societies.

But not to stare endlessly into the spectacle of counter-ideological auto-erotics, only to be recombined by System the very minute after. Thus the CPT calls for actual response-time measurements and reflex-capability to capitalist time-&-space compression.

(1) Life is pulse really
(3) And there’s compression
(2) And there’s decompression
(4) Panoramic but seen from within
Also read Collapsible Poetics Theater (2007). In Collapsible the instructions are so thorough and exacting—\"he spends a great deal of time telling you exactly what to do with the pieces. Which he has to do, because he\'s made up all of the games. He seems to really want you to try performing them. Rodrigo Toscano\'s newest collection, Collapsible Poetics Theater, which won the National Poetry Series, is a radical book. I was caught by a quote in the back of Toscano\'s collection in which the summary asks \"Can the poem be tested any further?\" Perhaps this isn\'t quite new, but there\'s been quite a lot of experimental poetry that\'s been rending verse by traversing into other genres. In Toscano\'s case, it\'s theater and poetry.