Figuring thought: between experience and abstraction

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CHAPTER 14

Figuring Thought

Between Experience and Abstraction

Ksenia Fedorova

1 Introduction

The chapter is inspired by an old philosophical problem: what is at stake when the act of thinking a thought is captured or represented? While neuroscientists attempt to identify areas in the brain responsible for a certain bodily and mental activity, the operation of thinking—the act of making sense of the world—eludes mechanical capture and may arguably be more appropriately tackled by philosophy and the arts. Part of the puzzle is that thought is directly tied to an experience: it stems from an amalgam of intuition, memory, knowledge, and bodily conditions, among other elements. The significance of the form in which a thought is expressed and communicated, discursive or non-discursive, should also not be underestimated. In what follows, I will approach the process of thinking through the concept of figuring. There are reasons why comprehension, or thinking something through in order to understand it, is often called "figuring out." I will treat "figure" in this text as situated in between an image (something visible), a diagram (a non-symbolic means for expression of logical relations), and a schema (a cognitive capacity of linking objects of experience to abstract concepts). I will argue that figuring is an active process that does not only represent what is already there (either as an abstract notion or part of an experience) but also is instrumental in generating and making manifest new forms of thought. Particularly, I will consider two experimental ways of figuring thought processes—graphically, through creative diagrammatics in the work of Austrian artist Nikolaus Gansterer, and bodily, through embodied action and interaction in both Gansterer's work and in selected workshops of the "Experimenting, Experiencing, Reflecting" interdisciplinary research project. I will thus discuss what these different approaches to representation and imagination as an active experience can evince about thinking processes.

Gansterer's artistic research in the field of figuring thought presents a thought-provoking case. Having studied large amounts of existing diagrammatic images, he "internalized," as he put it, the key motifs and set off to explore visual ways of constructing knowledge and developing his own grammar of

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graphic notation (Gansterer, "Preface" 21) (Figure 14.1). Reflecting on the making of his diagrammatic images, he asks: how are these figures "to be read, given their ambivalent nature between image, symbol, and drawing. Moreover, how do they in turn configure our thought processes? What narrative forms can be found in these drawn figures of thought? And what happens when figures are removed from their original context? What poetic, performative and speculative action potential is then liberated?" ("Preface" 21). Gansterer's collection of drawings and the resulting publication *Drawing a Hypothesis: Figures of Thought* (2011/2017) intrigues me by its agenda that bridges image-making and thinking as a process. Extending these ideas, Gansterer subsequently collaborated with writer Emma Cocker and dancer Mariella Greil in a project titled *Choreo-graphic Figures: Deviations from the Line* (2014–2017), which brings forward the value of embodied experience in thinking. In this project, thought processes are situated in a special relational environment: the participants were encouraged to contemplate their relations to other objects or people in space while performing certain scores.

I use the term "embodied figuration" to explain how creative practices like Gansterer's helps us to conceptualize thought as a temporal experience that can be activated by physical action. I follow here the idea of embodied diagramming, initially proposed by the artist and his collaborators, putting it in the broader context of figuration as an epistemic practice of figuring out, but with the engagement of the body. To gain a better understanding of the idea of embodied diagramming, I also examine experimental workshops on cognition and perception, including those that are part of the multi-year research project "Experimenting. Experiencing. Reflecting" run by neuroscientist Andreas Roepstorff at the Interactive Minds Center (Aarhus) in collaboration with Studio Olafur Eliasson (Berlin). Putting the human body at the center of an intersubjective experience, such group artistic engagements problematize visual interpretation as the dominant way of figuration. In an innovative way, they point at the multisensorial and relational aspects of cognition and thus stress the ambiguity of representation. Ultimately, the chapter argues for a new way of interpreting the "operative" dimension of imagination and the figurative through exploring the connections between abstract thought and embodied, materially grounded, and collective experience.

2 Figuring Thought in the Act

Relations between cognitive processes and the figural have a long and convoluted history within philosophy. It is impossible to do proper justice to the

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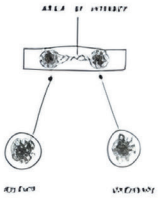

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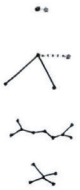

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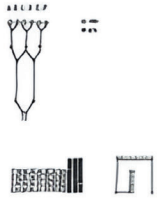

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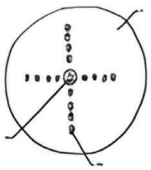

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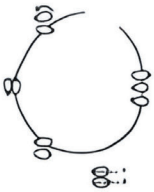

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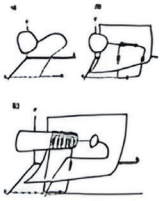

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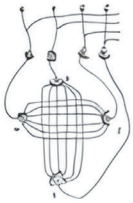

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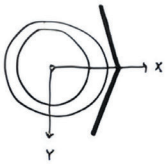

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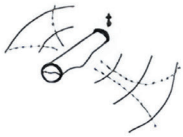

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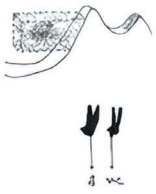

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diversity of approaches to the figural and to the related concepts of mental image or mental representation in this chapter, hence I will only point out at a few aspects that are most relevant to the creative experiments in focus.

We can talk about the figural, first of all, in terms of an image: as belonging to an inner activity of imagination, a mental image, or as an outer expression of that activity that is shareable with others. W. J. T. Mitchell and Gottfried Boehm discuss images through the characteristic of iconicity, a type of correspondence between sign and meaning that goes beyond symbolic language: the meaning is contained within an image. They define this quality as a form of thinking which is both non-symbolic and non-mimetic. Conceived this way, images do not have to correspond to a state of actual affairs (as proposed in the classical picture theory of language by Wittgenstein).[1] In addition to the quality of iconicity, it is important to stress another characteristic: the meaning of an image emerges in the very fact of its presentation, an idea particularly elaborated in the French postmodern tradition. As Jean-François Lyotard put it, the work of the figural is in the act of manifestation and showing.[2] An image can make apparent what is otherwise paradoxical and indescribable, including the non-representable itself (Rodowick 15–16). The figural, thus, has a special place in cognition and transcends discursively and logically constructable thought.[3] The figural as an image also implies an act of perception, it is there to be actively engaged with.

Figuration becomes key to cognition particularly through the work of imagination. In Kant's philosophy, imagination is a capacity that helps to bring together the otherwise disjointed domains of the imperceptible concepts and the perceptible world of experience. Imagination facilitates the work of schemata, which relate abstract concepts to the corresponding empirical phenomena in the real world, yet without tying them to individual images, the appearances of these phenomena. Hence, schema is not the same as image. It should be treated rather as a structural condition for establishing

1 The pictures in Wittgenstein's theory are logical forms into which the states of affairs of the real world are projected. The pictorial form (*Form der Abbildung*) of a proposition serves as the main means for the expression of thoughts (Wittgenstein 13).

2 According to Lyotard, the figure gives language its "density" and "thickness" and is responsible for the very ability of expression (40).

3 Elsewhere, I have discussed the importance of the fact that the event of presentation of the image, both mental and given through the senses, should also be cognized (Fedorova). The new software-enabled technologies of visualization bring the role of an image to another level—of providing feedback on bodily and thinking processes that are otherwise invisible and unknowable. The way the feedback is presented plays a crucial role in restructuring and reordering the processes of gaining awareness.

correspondences between abstractions and objects of experience. It helps to reconstitute the experiential data in a way that they could be cognized. It can be argued then that figuration is located somewhere in between the cognitive capacity of schematization and images as sensory phenomena. The figural has the qualities of both: iconicity and making something apparent to the senses (as in images) as well as the capacity to relate to the conceptual and logical dimension (as schema does).

In her discussion of Kant's schematism, philosopher Sybille Krämer stresses another important point for our discussion: "A schema is not simply a visual structure, but rather an action, which [Kant] characterizes as 'figural synthesis'" ("Trace" 21). This means that the schemata are primarily conditioned not by space but by time. For instance, to conceive of a line does not mean the appearance in the mind of an image of a stable demarcation, but rather "the temporal action of its own production (the line is its drawing)" (21). Krämer points to Kant's reasoning in *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* that he cannot imagine any line without drawing it in his mind to make a record of our *Anschauung* (Kant 140, qtd. in Krämer, "Trace" 21): "The schema, which guarantees that abstract concepts take on a meaning within perceptible experience, can itself not be explained through concepts. Thus our graphical, constructive faculty (our capacity for figuration) [is] the originating location for the work of the imagination" (21). Krämer's argumentation helps to recognize why it is important to talk not about the figure or the figural, but figuration and *figuring* as an active process. The relationship between the sensible realm of experience and how we cognize it is actively constructed in the *process* of schematization.

It can be said that thought itself emerges "in the act," i.e., its expression is inseparable from what it is. Aloisia Moser, in her book on the performativity of thought, advocates for the necessity of an account of meaning that is pragmatic (active and situational) in a new sense. She writes: "What makes a proposition meaningful are neither the contents of the atomic bits that we put together nor the pragmatics of putting together bits of language or thought. Instead, the fact that we make sentences or speak or think at all is what gives meaning to thought or language" (Moser 8). Recently, a number of scholars have paid attention to the processuality and performativity of thought, informed not only by process philosophy but other philosophical traditions as well (as exemplified by Moser's analysis of Kant and Wittgenstein) and often in close relation to creative practice (Manning and Massumi). Importantly, such novel process-oriented understandings of thought also pay attention to the fundamental aspect of mediation. How to capture or register these (fleeting) acts of thinking? And how do the modalities and media, in which these acts

manifest themselves, affect their meaning? Again, in investigating this question of recording and mediation, research with and through the arts can make an important contribution.

3 Graphical Thinking

Through his creative practice, artist Nikolaus Gansterer develops his own theory of cognition and how it can be understood with the help of visual and performative tools. He writes: "The cognitive act of perceiving, translating and allocating occurs continuously when we compose thoughts and receive or process information. This process of sense-making always happens by establishing relations and through drawing connections" (Gansterer, "Preface" 21). For Gansterer, "drawing mediates between perception and reflection, it plays a constitutive role in the emergence, production and communication of knowledge" (21). Whereas Kant's schemata support the work of imagination but are not easily expressible, "graphical thinking" as proposed by Gansterer can serve as a visual example of the formation of abstract ideas through figuration.

Gansterer's creative interpretation of multiple iconographic patterns demonstrates how mental processes can be represented. Titled "Questions of Order and Relational Characteristics of Figures of Thought" (Figure 14.2), an extensive map of drawings builds up on Gerhard Dirmoser's "Collection of Figures of Thought" that in turn outlines recurrent principles and motifs of "thinking in drawing": knots, cuts, curves, folding, rhizomatic root networks, marking and tracking, silhouettes, cellular setups, and others (Dirmoser). Some of Gansterer's figures are titled: "sequence," for instance, is presented as a row of dashes, with arrows pointing towards them from dotted, cloud-like abstract shapes floating around. Gansterer's collection of drawings, however idiosyncratic and poetic, can be treated as nearly scientific (or definitely inspiring further scientific inquiry). His work goes straight to the heart of the problem (representation of thought processes) and develops its own method that parallels a scientific one.

Gansterer's drawn figures capture dynamics of thinking processes as if approached simultaneously from within and from the outside, as a lived experience (of a certain thought) and as an *object* of a new experience. The intelligible is turned into the perceptible (visual images) only to come back to the intelligible in a different way. His drawings become conditions for the emergence of a new type of *thought about thought*. To use Kant's terms, they serve as a tangible ground for a "synthesis" of an empirical experience of thinking and a potential concept standing for that experience. What gives these fanciful figures epistemological weight is not only the extensiveness of the research

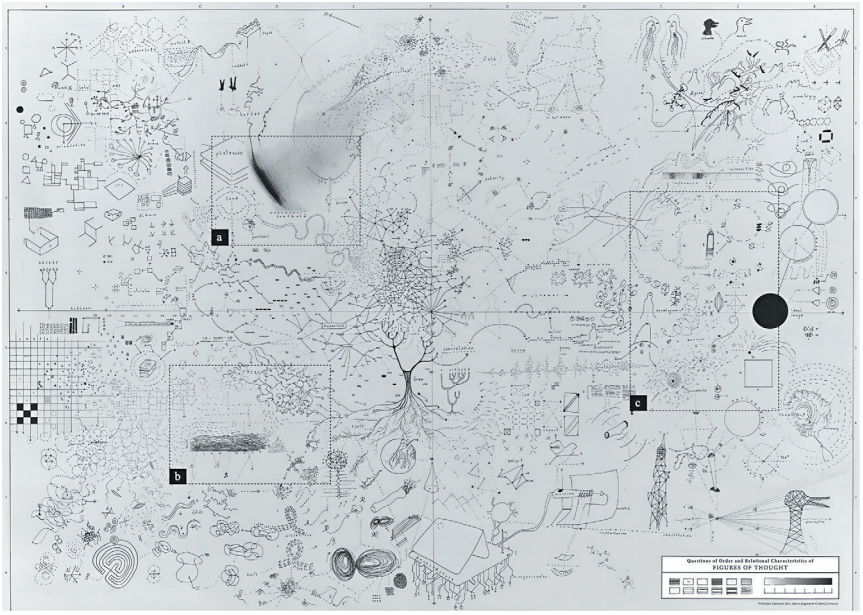

FIGURE 14.2 "Questions of Order and Relational Characteristics of Figures of Thought" (Gansterer, *Drawing a Hypothesis*)

behind them, the ingenuity and imaginativeness, but the very subject matter and form at hand—diagrammatic representation of thought.

A diagram is an instance of the figural and is particularly relevant for our discussion. Positioned in between text and image, the logical and the sensible, a diagram appeals to both rational and aesthetic types of cognition. Diagrams can therefore serve as useful tool for presenting abstract ideas. They provide non-symbolic means for expression of logical relations in the world, making "explicit" the "implicit" abstractions (Stjernfelt). Diagrams are not the same as illustrations, since it is their graphical logic that elucidates the relevant relations and helps in generating the message. They are distributed in space and are perceptible (unlike the schemata, which are still abstract mechanisms) but can stand for whole intuitions and "gestures" of the mind, as suggested by the names of the figures used in another project by Gansterer on *Choreo-graphic Figures*: "Temporary Closing", "Qualitative Moments", "Waves of Intensity", "Hybrid Hiatus" (Figure 14.3). One can think of Rudolf Arnheim's notion that *gestalt*, or spatial form perception and grasping of the "configuration," shapes concept formation.[4] Key to our discussion is that diagrammatic figures do not

4 A well-known example is the tree-model as an expression of Charles Darwin's idea of evolution that grants it its full meaning.

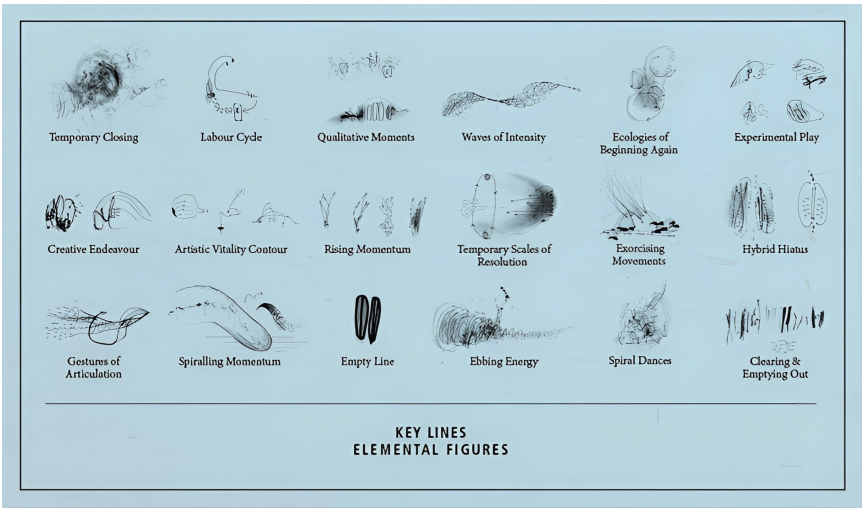

FIGURE 14.3 *Key Lines* (Gansterer et al., *Choreo-Graphic Figures*)

only serve as representation and transmission of knowledge about the objects but help to create such knowledge.

Among the characteristics of diagrams identified by Sybille Krämer (flatness, graphism, homogenization of relation, schematism, referentiality, usefulness) one feature stands out as particularly relevant for our discussion—operativity. As much as they outline the logical connections between elements (however diverse the types of logic), diagrammatic figures can also serve as a set of instructions for action. This way, they do not only re-present but also shape new possibilities for thought and action. Operativity entails a scope of meanings, for instance "to perform a mental operation in such a way that it is liberated from mental activities and can be realized as a mere mechanical process" (Krämer and Ljundberg 6). One of Krämer's examples is the nomogram of a multiplication table, which visually facilitates arithmetic operations. Similarly, the meaning of a music notation is activated when it is performed by a musician and the meaning of a map when it is used in navigating a territory. As Krämer puts it, "operative pictoriality proves to be not only a medium of illustration, but also a tool and an instrument for reflection (*Reflexionsinstrument*)" (*Operative Bildlichkeit* 100).[5] The space that is generated in between the domain of abstractions (represented through visual language) and the

5 "Writing, graphs and maps do not only (re)present something, but open up areas where the representable can be handled, observed and explored" (Krämer, *Operative Bildlichkeit* 100, my translation).

concrete, to which they can be applied, is where the operation of reflection, the back and forth between the two realms can happen, one informing and proving the other.

Diagrammatic figures like Gansterer's trigger thought, but what about the fact that thought is a durational phenomenon, while a drawing on a piece of paper is a spatial one? There surely are images that present movement and dynamics,[6] but the interesting part about diagrams is that, as scores, they *anticipate* action. They materialize, if only on a flat surface and in points and lines, the imaginary "what if." (What if Leonardo da Vinci's technical drawings were correct and we could build those imaginary machines with contemporary materials? What if the whimsical drawings by Gansterer could be instructions for specific action, e.g., a dance move?). Time is thus fundamentally presupposed in the nature of diagrams: looking at them and reading them happens in time, and the mental representations that they may form also emerge in the course of time. Moreover, as a form of writing, they serve as mnemonic devices: the linear movement of time itself can be "undone" in these still images. In science, but also in creative process, diagrammatic figures and drawings often indicate the initial stage, a model for something to unfold. Such a model, or a draft, attempts to *foresee* (e.g., *Entwurf* in German and *набросок/nabrosok* in Russian literally mean "to throw ahead"). The aim of this space for thinking-in-progress is to register the development of an idea from a proto-form to its full realization in the future.[7] As descriptions of the not-yet-realized, drawings have a hypothetical function: they point towards the possible, which is not yet fully known. As Gansterer's collaborator Emma Cocker elegantly puts it: "Like the hypothesis, drawing is a conjectural operation, the tentative manifestation of an insurgent *if*" (100–102).[8]

Psychologists and cognitive scientists have developed criteria and visions of the "effectiveness" of diagrams and visual forms of information communication in general (Andersen et al.; Isenberg et al.). But what kind of studies should be used that do not address the evaluation of processing information

6 The debate about whether an image can adequately represent time goes back to Lessing and his distinction of the arts of time and the arts of space. In his essay "Moment and Movement", Ernst Gombrich importantly argues that perception is always dynamic and durational and that an image should be understood as a process and not as a structure (Gombrich).

7 Diagrams are process-models also because they refer to procedures (Mareis).

8 "The hypothesis signals a transitional state of being between, where things are neither yet proven nor disproved. It is a double-headed arrow. Like Janus, its glance is double-facing, for it always looks towards the conditions of the present-past for stimulus, whilst gesturing forwards to the future, to the (imagined) arrival of clearer understanding, towards the moment of realisation" (Cocker 98).

but the process of *knowledge-in-formation*, i.e., the usage of figures in an active way, as figuring and figuring out? I would like to posit that this is exactly when self-reflexive artistic methodology can be useful. In the hands of an artist, a diagram can leave the flat surface: graphical features can be taken into three dimensions and, moreover, can become alive! Of course, a full living body in the role of a "diagramming agent" has the capacity of being much more than a mere instrument of drawing. The resulting figure of thought also goes far beyond the given spatial boundaries and the temporal dimension. Fully actuated through an embodied physical action, the figure acquires a new level of importance.

4 Embodied Figuration

Embodied action is the next logical step in moving from abstract mental activity (including its interpretation in scientific analysis of recorded brain signals) through the two-dimensional surface of a drawing to the inherently different parameters of the self-reflexive actuations of the living body. Embodied diagrammatics, as conceived by Gansterer and his collaborators, supposes active participation of the body in constructing the image of thought. But what does it mean to imagine with the body? What does the bodily dimension add to the process of "schematization" taking place in imagination? Or does it contribute to a *different* type of figuring, one that moves away from the rationalizable and attempts to capture a different type of logic? The body informs us about what happens when a thought is being thought and can thus be endowed with a key role—a subject of thought. It is not only the brain's intuitions, beliefs, and fantasies that perform a thought, but the full body—through physical gestures and felt sensations.

The collaborative artistic research project *Choreo-graphic Figures* by Nikolaus Gansterer, Emma Cocker, and Mariella Greil intends to explore the "taking place" of "thinking-making." The intuitions behind the flat diagrams of Gansterer's previous work find here a multidimensional, multisensorial, and multi-body expression. The work shows how, within particular material conditions, hypothesizing about the possible leads to that possible becoming real. The operational core of the project is a "Method Lab"—"a hybrid of studio and rehearsal room, research residency and retreat …, a working context for exploring the nature of 'thinking-in-action' or the 'figures of thought' produced as the practices of drawing, choreography and writing enter into dialogue, overlap and collide" (Gansterer et al., *Choreo-graphic Figures* 25–26). Within each Method Lab the group composed and improvised what they call "scores of

FIGURE 14.4 Method Lab, scores of attention (Gansterer, *Choreo-graphic Figures*)

attention" (Figures 14.4 & 14.5). An action with selected objects (ropes, mirrors, paper, wooden beams, etc.) *becomes* a figure, one that is distributed *through and within* the action, with the bodies of the actors and through their connections with the objects and with each other. Every physical expression becomes meaningful and amounts to the resulting figure: a posture (standing, sitting, leaning, laying), specific bodily gestures and types of movements, including their qualities (tension, balancing, stretching, relaxing), interactions with the objects (holding, throwing, carrying, gathering, watching). Attending to the durations and what the authors call "energies" of the objects and materials is as important for the embodied outlining of the collective figure as observing one's own reactions. The artists explain this process of figuring as "those barely perceptible micro-movements at the cusp of awareness: the dynamic movements of decision-making, the thinking-in-action, the durational 'taking place' of something happening live" (Gansterer et al., *Choreo-graphic Figures* 70).

What is being choreographed and mapped here is purely intuitive and abstract, and yet it scores the space of potentiality, making sensible what is only intuited. The artists are heedful of the temporal nature of their practice. For instance, one of the "elemental figures" represents what they call a

FIGURE 14.5 Method Lab, scores of attention (Gansterer, *Choreo-graphic Figures*)

"spiraling momentum" (Figures 14.6 & 14.7). Both the drawing and the material-relational score of this figure emphasize the need "to set in motion," to rotate, to twist and to embrace the kinetic force of whirling (Gansterer et al., *Choreo-graphic Figures* 268). A moment in time, when related to motion, can also mean "momentum," a contraction of motion that gives it a sense of importance (stillness can be equally potent). The project attempts to cultivate a special type of presence, which they describe in terms of "when-ness" of the "kairotic" time (from the Greek *Kairos*—an opportune moment, which is opposite of *Chronos*—linear time). Kairos does not point at any imminent future, since it exists outside of the parameters of the linear time and is indeterminate (Gansterer et al., *Choreo-graphic Figures* 249–51). This is why, despite of their placement in time, these performative acts are treated as "figures" and scores to be potentially played again.

There is an important conceptual similarity in the agenda of *Choreo-graphic Figures* and the research initiative "Experimenting, Experiencing, Reflecting" (EER) co-run by the Interacting Minds Center (Aarhus) and the Studio Olafur Eliasson (Berlin), 2019–2023.[9] The latter project brings together

9 At the moment of the current writing, the research is still ongoing and hence the findings are limited; for more information see www.eer.info.

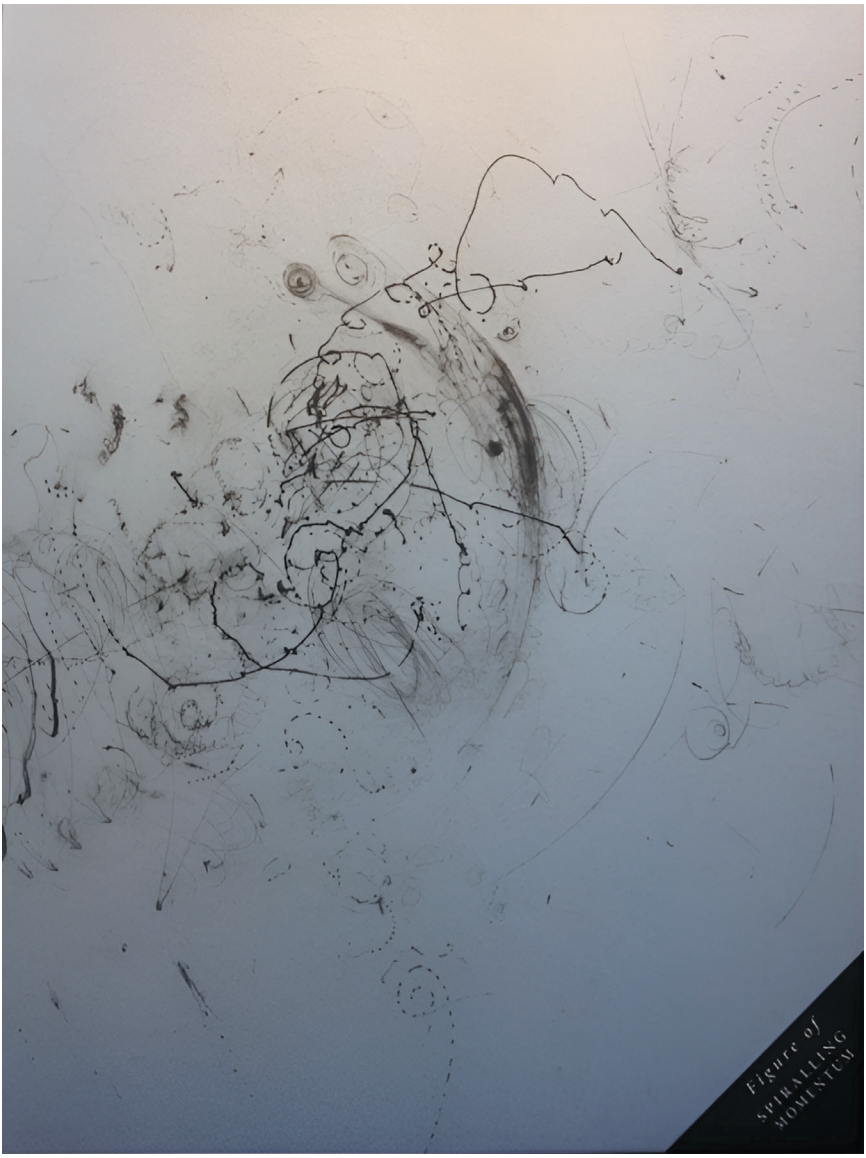

FIGURE 14.6 "Figure of Spiraling Momentum" (Gansterer et al., *Choreo-graphic Figures*)

behavioral psychologists, neuroscientists, anthropologists, visual artists, and choreographers with the aim to create a dialogical space for the interaction of the first-person approach (usually attributed to the arts) and a third-person scientific perspective. The experiments are designed to examine the key thematic threads both in science and art: perception, decision-making, action, notions of togetherness, collaboration, and the transmission of knowledge. In

FIGURE 14.7 "Figure of Spiraling Momentum" (Gansterer et al., *Choreo-graphic Figures*)

the EER group workshops, which take place in artists' studios and musea, participants shape choreographic scores not unlike the work of Gansterer and his collaborators.

For instance, in the workshop "Uncertainty and Participation," led by cognitive scientist and movement practitioner Asaf Bachrach, the participants were asked to imagine the perspective of an object (a rock, a tree branch, a piece of paper, a chair, etc.) and to locate this object in the room so that it could "observe" the group in a certain way. This task presupposes careful consideration of the physical parameters of the given space and intuiting its atmosphere. The object's "perspective" implies quite literally a line of sight, a "point of view" of the objects directed towards the human bodies. The spatial constellation of the objects and the human participants would reflect emotional attachments, mutual projections, and expectations. Taken together, they compose a figure of the collective state of mind, the state of being present together in a particular moment of time. After having registered this state in a mental but also a physical "figure"—the objects and the human bodies

would form specific constellations in space—the participants were invited to reconstruct this interactive setting in another location, an adjacent room filled with yellow light (one of Eliasson's experiments with atmospheric conditions of perception). Each person would lead a partner, whose eyes would be closed, to the second room through a hall, as if through a tunnel. The figure of collective presence then had to be built anew with the other objects at hand and within other spatial conditions. This challenge to transfer a mental figure reminds us of the communicative dilemma behind both Gansterer's drawings of thought and the neuroscientific agenda to record and analyze brain data during a cognitive performance. How to capture the transient intuition of a thought in a way that it could be re-produced and re-activated? Critical to Bachrach's method are forms of participatory sense-making, the intra-, trans- and pre-subjective ways to create meaning of a shared experience (Bachrach). Spatial organization of the emergent knowledge (through grids or in a spontaneous and unconstrained way, as in this case) may be then a useful alternative to discursive communication.

Another workshop, "Sharing Perspectives," led by anthropologist Joe Dumit and choreographer Dorte Bjerre Jensen, was devoted to a similar challenge—of exchanging memories of the body-mind and relating to space through someone else's perspective. Selected visitors of Olafur Eliasson's exhibition at Tate Modern were invited to consciously place themselves somewhere in space, which itself has already been transformed by Eliasson's installations (differently angled walls, dispersed color, materials of various texture, etc.). They then needed to share their reasons behind choosing this position with two other participants, but they had to do so nonverbally. As the subsequent interviews showed, sharing perspective made people more conscious both of their own experiences and the intersubjective space of possibilities of experience more generally (Dumit and Roepstorff). Reflection on one's experience done through the act of sharing it is thus another way of "figuring out" what that experience was about.

These tasks (the "scores") cannot be described diagrammatically on a flat surface, and yet they similarly involve the mapping of a relational space: lines of sight, positions of physical balance/unbalance, geometrical/topographical and temporal orders[10]—all these elements constitute a figure of thought-in-the-making. As pointed out by cognitive scientist and phenomenologist Claire Petitmengin, the author of another workshop within EER ("Being Aware. Sharpening our Tools"), these kinds of actions are experiments in

10 The concept of order can be of interest here as implying both the distribution of elements in space and a command (see Brandstetter).

microphenomenology—attending to the nuances of being present in a relational environment. Petitmengin proposes to design very precise "experiential protocols" that could complement experimental psychological and cognitive (neuroscience) studies. At their core lie "micro-gestures of attention," ways of paying attention, which bring us closer to the present and allow to reflect more accurately on our being in time and associated mental states (Petitmengin).

The value of this project is in its layering and intertwining of the experiential experiments with scientific observation. The scientific lead of the project, neuroscientist Andreas Roepstorff, has previously expressed his concern about the ambitions of cognitive neuroscience to create generalized frameworks. He proposed that human decision-making is based on the ability of "build[ing] shared worlds that are at the same time material and symbolic: worlds that exist outside the individual, and in time-windows, which extend beyond the here-and-now of interaction" (Roepstorff 224). For Roepstorff, sharing is more than the ability of abstract thinking and writing as a means of knowledge transmission. What matters here is the collective nature of subjectivity—thinking beyond one's immediate self-interests. Roepstorff's lab presents an important example of the rigorous analysis of the experiences of awareness in perception and thinking-together that take place in the context of a hybrid artistic-scientific lab. Interviews and surveys about subjects' experiences may give us as much, if not more than the gathered quantitative data, especially when it concerns figuring intersubjective positions not only in mental but in physical space.

My analysis of different ways of figuring thought processes has demonstrated that researching imagination indeed takes imagination, such as in the imaginative artistic research constellations discussed in this chapter. Whether it is "drawing a hypothesis" and outlining "thinking-making" with one's body, or sharing perceptual experiences—the prevalent method is non-discursive. By concentrating on the operation of figuration—in the sense of figuring out, imagining, mapping out and scoring an action—I wanted to stress the epistemic potential of experimenting with a space of possibilities. Thought happens in time, and one of the first stages, supposition and intuiting—and becoming aware of this process taking place—is especially precious. Paradoxically, static images on a flat surface disclose the potential to register the fleeting intuitions, the images of the not-yet-known. Artistically created figures, beyond being enigmatic in terms of their semantics, capture the momentum of the live generative process. They speak of the vitality of inner processes and allow the manifestation of not just being, but of being alive. The relations charted in the experiments by Gansterer and his collaborators, as well as in the "Experimenting, Experiencing, Reflecting" project, represent the abstract logical realm and are at the same time informed by the very material and

physical processes of interaction between the bodies, objects, and space. In fact, the duality between the sensible and empirically given, on the one hand, and the imaginary and the intelligible, on the other, becomes suspended, and the outlined scores of attention can help guiding us through the momentum of this transition, allowing new forms of meaning to emerge. Further experimentation with novel methods of thinking about thinking, particularly those that experiment with understanding (inter)subjective experiences and material conditions, should then unveil new dimensions of the very logic of making sense.

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