Unfolding space: an allotropic dance in three parts for two players

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Additional Information:

- Unfolding Space: An Allotropic Dance in Three Parts for Two Players is a paper/project of fragmentary visions that explore the interactions (in)between articulation and unfolding space, as might be configured through process, fluidity and our resonant, generative awareness of the creative and seductive potential of ambiguous and elusive coordinates. The paper/project was presented at Articulations, Amsterdam School of Cultural Analysis (ASCA) annual conference, Amsterdam, March 2010. In the authors' original version the paper contained hyperlinks to a series of audio and video files to create a multimedia document. However in this version you are requested to open the audio or video file listed in the Repository 'files associated with this item' at the appropriate prompt contained in the body of the PDF text. The conference website is at: http://www.hum.uva.nl/asca-nw-newsandevents-conferences/archive.cfm/F45D5441-C2B6-4778-9D58EAFAB12193F

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**Unfolding Space**  
**An Allotropic Dance in Three Parts, for Two Players**  
Marsha Meskimmon, Phil Sawdon

**Abstract**

We propose an Allotropic Dance as a paper/project of fragmentary visions to explore the interactions (in)between articulation and unfolding space, as might be configured through process, fluidity and our resonant, generative awareness of the creative and seductive potential of ambiguous and elusive coordinates. Adapting some steps from Haraway and Butler\(^1\), the project stretches ‘articulation’ and ‘materialisation’ beyond representational stasis, toward contingency, connection and desiring agency/desirous verve – the very possibility of an open-ended future. From our sense (*following our senses*) we will suggest that articulate spaces are not so much defined as they are unfolding, emergent, perhaps hidden, and becoming\(^2\)

Our careful expression refocuses defining space from the identification and description of boundaries, to an attentive engagement with how those boundaries have been made, and how we might articulate them ‘otherwise’ in future. The project is an aesthetic intervention through this territory, bringing art, theory, subjects and politics into a dialogic dance.

We introduce allotropism (‘other manner’) to our dance, as the manifestation of multiple modes of a single element at one and the same moment (diamonds, graphite).\(^3\)

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\(^1\) As Donna Haraway put it: ‘To articulate is to signify. It is to put things together, scary things, risky things, contingent things. I want to live in an articulate world.’ (from ‘The Promises of Monsters: A Regenerative Politics for Inappropriate/d Others’ reprinted in *The Haraway Reader*, London, NY: Routledge, 2004, pp p.63 – 124, p. 106). Attentive to corporeality, Judith Butler further argued in spatial terms for materialization, thus: ‘I would propose […] a return to the notion of matter, not as a site or surface, but as a *process of materialization that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity and surface we call matter.*’ (italics in original: *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*, London and NY: Routledge, 1993, p. 9).


\(^3\) The significance of allotropism to our dance, gestures toward the recent encounter with Spinoza staged by Moira Gatens and Genevieve Lloyd, *Collective Imaginings: Spinoza, Past and Present*, London and New
The dance is drawn through multifaceted encounters that endeavour to materialise spatial unfolding. Its methods, outcomes and theoretical consequences are wholly and intricately intertwined; in this dance/drawing of two players, varied modes of text, moving image and performance are simultaneously brought together, yet held, suspended, so that they cannot resolve as one.

Following Irigaray’s point that ‘(d)rawing near necessitates allying two intimacies, not submitting one to the other’, the spaces we articulate make possible an intersubjective alliance that enables difference to be materialised, however ethereally, through an ethical and aesthetic commitment to ‘corporeal generosity’ and the logic of the gift. The spaces we explore are collaborative, multiple, fluid, lyrical and engaged; spaces offering to transform the subjects with whom they are mutually constituted as they unfold their creative ambiguity.

York: Routledge, 1999, where Spinoza’s monism is at the heart of imaginative, ethical encounters with difference (beyond dualism).
