

Multimodality and Performance

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Edited by

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*In memory of my father,
who has shown me the beauty of light and the power of the arts...*

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INTRODUCTION

The chapters of this book have evolved from original papers presented at an international conference organised in Lisbon, at the *Centro Cultural de Belém* Foundation¹, May 2013, as the closure of an FCT-funded research project, *TKB: a Transmedia Knowledge-base for performing arts*, conceived of and directed by myself. TKB² was a transdisciplinary project seeking to provide a research space for rigorous, critical exploration of the intersections between language, body movements, cognition and digital media in the performing arts.

Under the title *Multimodal Communication: Language, Performance and Digital Media*, this conference has provided a multidisciplinary forum for researchers from various disciplines and artists interested in the study and documentation of performing arts (with a focus on contemporary theatrical dance and performance), as well as in issues of multimodality in human communication and in human-computer interaction, particularly regarding video annotation tools and digital platforms for cultural heritage preservation. To my knowledge, this has been the first conference at an international level to explore these unexpected, yet rather productive crossings.

Face-to-face communication is by nature multimodal, involving speech, gestures, prosody, facial expressions, head nods or full-body movements, and multimodal communication as an established research area is growing rapidly. There is surely an increased interest in embodied and situated communication, in how humans interact with each other using different modalities, and in how technological artefacts affect communicative activities and respective contexts. Moreover, the more recent increase in the use of the term “multimodality” in fields such as artificial intelligence, design, media studies and conversation analysis, clearly denotes a growing interest in the bodily aspects of language and communication, an interest which has always been present in the daily practices of performing artists in the first place! Indeed, the high awareness that contemporary choreographers and dancers have of complex questions, such as the embodied mind or the inseparability of language

¹ <https://www.ccb.pt/Default/pt/Inicio>, accessed 13 December 2016

² <http://tkb.fcsh.unl.pt/content/introduction-tkb-project>: accessed 16 March 2016

from gestures, was the trigger for my decision to organise this conference and edit the present book. The performing arts often mirror daily life actions and routines, thus providing a rich corpus for the analysis of human body movements and emotions, turn-taking management or decision-making in groups, for instance. They make a recurrent use of speech simultaneously with body movements and, being theatrical, they highlight expressiveness, therefore contributing to an easier recognition of relevant features for research.

At the time of our conference in Lisbon, in 2013, the first volume of *Body - Language - Communication: an International Handbook on Multimodality in Human Interaction*, edited by Cornelia Müller et al., was just about to come out. Together with its second volume, published one year later, this handbook has become a reference work on how body movements relate to language and communication. It presents current multidisciplinary, historical, theoretical and methodological aspects of the state-of-the-art on how body movements are used for communication around the world. The case of Portugal is covered in volume 2, chapter VII, dedicated to “Gestures across cultures”, with the paper “Gestures in Southwest Europe: Portugal”. The TKB project is mentioned there as an initiative towards the integration of gesture studies in dance analysis and documentation through the creation of an annotated digital archive for contemporary dance, funded at national level, and therefore fostering the study of multimodality in language and in the performing arts in Portugal.

Since the TKB conference on *Multimodal Communication: Language, Performance and Digital Media*, several other events have taken place, or are being organised at the time of writing, in which the conjunction of language, cognition and the performing arts has been under scrutiny. Important examples include the conference on *Cognitive Futures in the Humanities* (Durham, April 2014), where a thematic session was fully dedicated to “Theatre and Performance”; the forthcoming *Conference of the Association for Researching and Applying Metaphor* (RaAM), which will focus on *Metaphor in the Arts, in Media and Communication* (Berlin, July 2016), intending to go beyond the scope of solely language-based discourse; and the well-established *Conference of the International Society for Gesture Studies* (ISGS), which will be entirely dedicated to *Gesture, Creativity and Multimodality* (Paris, July 2016). Taking such relevant events into account, one can only rejoice at the rising interest in the study of this interdisciplinary research area of multimodality and performance, where the contribution of performing arts such as contemporary dance and theatre, analysed from cognitive and ethnographic perspectives, will hopefully keep growing as seeds in a fertile ground.

In 2015, I was challenged by Isabel Rodrigues and a few other Portuguese scholars working in the domain of gesture studies in diversified settings, to co-found an association for the study of body movements in communicative contexts, now officially registered as “iGesto.” Its first important event will be the *iGesto International Conference on Gesture and Multimodality* to take place next year in Porto, which plans to promote scientific exchange and research in gesture studies specifically in Southwestern Europe.

Here and now, in Lisbon, with the presented volume, we wish to offer an interdisciplinary perspective on the various domains involved, by bringing together a cognitive linguistic approach to speech, gestures and full-body enactments, and the impact of digital media on dance and performance in general. We believe this is a novel and hybrid territory to be explored in the framework of arts and cognition interactions, and one to which this book can make a timely contribution.

The book is organised in three interconnected sections: **I – Multimodality and Metaphor; II – Hybrid Territories: Dance Documentation, Space, Language and Gestures; and III – Performance and Digital Media.**

The section on **Multimodality and Metaphor** groups together new insights and contributions from conceptual metaphor theory, gesture studies and multimodal communication.

Charles Forceville opens this section, expanding on Lakoff and Johnson’s conceptual metaphor theory by focusing on two specific dimensions of the JOURNEY metaphor: the FORCE and the BALANCE schemas. He demonstrates that the metaphorical potential of these schemas is highly pertinent in animated journey films. He argues that these schemas retain some of their impact in the medium of dance, opening the door to further studies on multimodal metaphor in the performing arts.

Clotilde Almeida and Bibiana de Sousa draw on Forceville (2006, 2008 and 2009) and I. Mittelberg (2008) to aim at a multimodal metaphoric deconstruction of the fundamental issues of rap in the Portuguese Rap scene. Focussing on rappers’ portraits in posters and clips from music videos, they propose an integrative approach to linguistic, pictorial and gestural signs, as well as movement patterns in rap song performances.

Bjørn Tolvig offers a contrastive study by investigating how Danish and Italian speakers express motion in speech and gesture and what these gestures may reveal about linguistic conceptualization. The results show cross-linguistic differences and similarities in speech and gesture patterns,

namely that Italian speakers diverge from standard verb-framed patterns and that gestures add to information not readily expressed in speech.

Anja Arts and Joost Schilperoord close this first section with their work on images, multimodal metaphor and communication. They discuss the concept of optimal innovation in language and derive from that discussion a set of structural criteria that have to be met for an expression coded in the verbal modality to count as optimally innovative. They then demonstrate that current approaches to visual innovation have so far not sufficiently dealt with what constitutes a visual optimal innovation.

The second section, **Hybrid Territories: Dance Documentation, Space, Language and Gestures**, builds the bridge between the first and last sections and takes contemporary dance as a guiding thread through expressive movement, technology, discourse and cultural heritage documentation.

Sally-Jane Norman looks at how we construe the contexts in which movements are deemed expressive, to propose that in performing arts, as much as in analytical systems, renderings of movement are obtained by idealizing or abstracting these same contexts. Expressive human movement is examined with respect to the place in which it is staged as art. The need to idealize or simplify place in the context of artistic creation is compared with processes of idealization or simplification of phenomena required for scientific modelling purposes, which may be far more arbitrary than expected.

Sarah Whatley reflects upon the impact of digital technologies on artists' creative strategies and on the viewer's experience of dance. She considers the particular contribution that digital technologies have had on documenting dance *after* the event, but also how digital technologies might intervene *before* or *during* the work's creation, questioning the ontological nature of the dance event itself.

Isabel Rodrigues analyses a section of a contemporary dance performance by choreographer Rui Horta (who has been a case study in the TKB project) to focus on positioning in space, bodily and speech modalities and the enactment of the dimensions of freedom and attachment in face-to-face interactions. The different kinds of spaces created by the dancers, the way they come close or move away from each other, as well as gestures, facial expressions, speech and prosody are thoroughly analysed.

On a mixed approach to contemporary dance and its fluid terminology, Bertha Bermudez proposes that although dance is usually characterized as ephemeral and intangible, there are cognitive aspects of the process of creating dance that can be revealed through the creation and invention of

documents. She argues that the role of the lexicons generated by choreographers throughout the trajectory of their work should be considered for the production of such documents and objects, even if the act of finding terms that represent movements and their qualities is a huge challenge.

The third and last section, **Performance and Digital Media**, brings together innovative works in video annotation, augmented environments, interactive artworks and performative installations, thus illuminating the proximity between the body and the new media available today.

João Gouveia and Carla Fernandes open this section with a description of a video annotation tool that supports the multimodal annotation in real-time of any human activity that can be adequately captured by video. Designated as the “Creation-Tool” and developed in the framework of the TKB project, it was originally designed to facilitate the compositional process of artistic works such as rehearsals of contemporary dance. However, with the recent development of a remote application for this tool, it has become extremely useful for several other fields of work, from gesture studies and anthropology to sports, educational environments and journalism. By allowing the annotation of works in progress, the results obtained can easily become “scores” or traces of bodies in space to be included in an innovative type of “archive of processes” such as the TKB platform.

Stephan Jürgens follows by presenting three approaches to multimodal video annotation in the context of interdisciplinary and collaborative choreographic projects. He clarifies the difference between notations and annotations and explains how the methods proposed in his paper contribute to the existing techniques in the field of multimodal video annotation in dance and the performing arts.

Simon Biggs et al. describe the compositional process of *Bodytext*, a performance seeking insight into the relations between kinaesthetic experience, memory, agency and language. Associating dancers’ movements and speech within an augmented environment employing real-time motion tracking and voice recognition, this performance eventually disrupts the relationship between reader and text.

Paula Varanda argues that if dance as an artistic practice can propel distinctive qualities in media-based interactive artworks, as well as in the relationship with potential audiences, then it is worth reviewing the possible scope of current practice and analysing how characteristics that are fundamental to defining dance as a performing art can be refashioned in new media forms. She foresees that transmedia research and multimodal

epistemology may find useful applications if we succeed in bringing the physical and the digital closer via intentional artworks.

The book closes with Carlos Oliveira, who builds on the concept of “Nexus” (by Alfred N. Whitehead) and its emergence by analysing his participation in the *Emergence Room* performance-installation in Berlin. Intrigued by the potential for the emergence of unpredictable patterns in a finite system of reference, he has generated a “document” to explore these possibilities, creating a digital site of memory capable of re-enacting this installation’s characteristic emergence of patterns.

Lisbon, March 2016

Carla Montez Fernandes

PART I –
MULTIMODALITY AND METAPHOR

CHAPTER 1.1

THE FORCE AND BALANCE SCHEMAS IN JOURNEY METAPHOR ANIMATIONS

CHARLES FORCEVILLE

1. Introduction

The metaphor LONG-TERM PURPOSIVE ACTIVITY IS SELF-PROPELLED MOTION TOWARD A DESTINATION, informally known as LIFE IS A JOURNEY, is probably the richest conceptual metaphor there is for human beings to impose structure on their goals, plans and hopes for the future (see e.g., Richie 2008; Katz and Taylor 2008; Martínez Martínez et al. 2013). Unsurprisingly, it also prevails in film, which can even boast a subgenre based on it: the road movie (e.g., Cohen and Hark 1997). Let me first consider the concept of the JOURNEY metaphor in some more detail.

Any journey minimally has a starting point (SOURCE), a destination (GOAL) and a trajectory (PATH). This structure is, in Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; for a recent overview see Kövecses 2010), referred to as the SOURCE-PATH-GOAL schema. The JOURNEY domain has numerous aspects and dimensions that can be mapped onto LONG-TERM PURPOSIVE ACTIVITY. For one thing, a traveller needs a mode of transport, for instance a bike, a car, a train, a boat, a camel, a plane, a broom... Each of these vehicles has its own type of trajectory: a cycling track, a road, rails, water, sand, sky... In order to make physical progress, they also require a source of energy. Motors require petrol or kerosene, sailing boats wind, brooms witchcraft magic, and human bodies plain muscle power. The various vehicles of transportation also all encounter their own trajectory-specific impediments. Travellers on road journeys need to negotiate obstacles such as impenetrable thickets, road-blocks, walls, rivers and ravines. Cars may end up without petrol and run up against roadblocks, trains can derail, boats sometimes sink and planes could crash. All vehicles run the risk of collisions, and their progress is hindered, to a small or large extent, by bad

weather. Adversaries may manifest themselves in the appearance of sinister hitchhikers, dragons, ghosts, robbers, giants, pirates or hijackers. But “the road” also has many PATH-specific good things in store for the traveller: trees that provide shade against a burning sun; wells with water to slake thirst; boats or bridges (see Strack 2004) to cross rivers; signs, maps, TomToms, buoys, lighthouses and radar to help navigate. And the weather may be good, the wind favourable, and a pond suddenly freezing over may turn an obstacle into a path that affords quick progress on skates. Finally, the traveller may of course also encounter benign wizards, white-magic-wielding djinns and all kinds of friendly people that are willing to help him/her solve problems. The point of this catalogue is that all of these elements in the JOURNEY domain, and many more, can potentially be recruited for metaphorical mapping onto the PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY domain.

Given the richness of the metaphor, it is unsurprising that educators, novelists, painters, cartoonists, advertisers and others have adopted it for their specific purposes, and in their specific medium. Since each medium has its own affordances and constraints, one way of narrowing down research on the JOURNEY metaphor is by medium (another one is by genre). In previous work I have explored its dimensions in autobiographical documentaries (Forceville 2006a, 2011) as well as in animation film (Forceville and Jeulink 2011; Forceville 2013a, Forceville 2013b; see also Kromhout and Forceville 2013). I have found animation particularly useful for research purposes, because many short animation films do not use language, which means that the metaphor needs to manifest itself entirely via the visual, sonic and musical modalities (for more on these and other modalities, see Forceville 2006b). This is a bonus for researchers, such as me, who want to promote Lakoff and Johnson’s claim that we *think* metaphorically (1980, 1999) by showing that structural metaphors such as X IS A JOURNEY are used pervasively in discourses that do not depend on language. Animation is also an attractive medium because it does not need to respect physical laws: creatures (and objects) can transform and morph without a problem, they can age 20 years from one moment to another, walk on air, and reincarnate endlessly. Animation can therefore exploit dimensions of metaphor (and of many other things, for that matter) that other media can not, or not so easily, achieve. And finally, because in animation every single visual element is *created*, rather than simply recorded, we can attribute intentions to the inclusion of almost any detail in an animation film; a characteristic, incidentally, that it shares with comics.

In this paper I will pursue my interest in the JOURNEY metaphor in animation films by zooming in on two specific elements that are often mentioned in the metaphor literature and play a key role in JOURNEY animations, namely FORCE and BALANCE. This is hopefully of interest to readers of a book about multimodality and dance, since surely one of the things that make a dance choreography aesthetically interesting is the variety of ways in which a person, a couple, or a group embody and negotiate various kinds of force and balance in the face of physical challenges. The structure of this paper will be as follows. In section 2 I will briefly discuss the FORCE and BALANCE schemas. In section 3 I will show how these schemas play a role in five JOURNEY animations. Most of these animations have been analysed in my earlier publications, but the explicit focus on FORCE and BALANCE is new. The final section presents some concluding remarks.

2. The FORCE and BALANCE schemas

In *The Body in the Mind*, Mark Johnson, reiterating Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) insights, begins by insisting that

a metaphor is not merely a linguistic expression (a form of words) used for artistic or rhetorical purposes; instead, it is a process of human understanding by which we achieve meaningful experience that we can make sense of. A metaphor, in this “experiential” sense, is a process by which we understand and structure one domain of experience in terms of another domain *of a different kind* (Johnson 1987: 15, emphasis in original).

Metaphors rely on image schemas (or “gestalts”), embodied conceptual structures that human beings use as templates to understand, and to negotiate relations with, their environment. One central image schema is that of FORCE. Johnson points out as its pertinent dimensions the following: (1) we experience it through interaction, since it affects us or something in our perceptual field; (2) it involves movement through space in a certain direction; (3) a thing that is subject to a force tends to follow a specific path of motion; (4) forces have origins and, when under the influence of agents, can be directed to certain targets; (5) forces have degrees of intensity; (6) they make themselves felt according to a certain structure, or “sequence of causality” (Johnson 1987: 44). Given forces' highly embodied nature, Johnson urges metaphor scholars to investigate them systematically:

We need to explore more concretely how forceful bodily experiences give rise to image-schematic structures of meaning that can be transformed, extended, and elaborated into domains of meaning that are not strictly tied to the body (such as social interactions, rational argument, and moral deliberation). [...] I shall [...] describe and diagram several [...] force schemata [...] (Johnson 1987: 44-45).

In a later study, Johnson rephrased this idea succinctly, noting that “structures of *perceiving* and *doing* must be appropriated to shape our acts of *understanding* and *knowing*” (Johnson 2005: 16, emphases in original). Acknowledging that further refinements are possible, Johnson (1987) distinguishes seven forces (compulsion, blockage, counterforce, diversion, removal of restraint, enablement and attraction), and considers how they are used metaphorically in goal-directed activities, including story-telling itself. For whoever remembers the structuralist approach to narratology advocated by Greimas, some of Johnson’s forces will have a familiar ring. Greimas, inspired by Propp (1968), argued in his “actantial model” that stories typically have slots for certain “roles.” Roles can be fulfilled by a whole range of actants—characters and mythical beasts as well as natural phenomena. One of the roles is that of the “helper,” which could be a friendly passer-by, a magic wand, a sympathetic flying horse, a wind blowing the heroine’s sailing boat in the right direction, and a host of other things. Johnson, one could say, abstracts this role to that of “enablement.” Similarly, Greimas’ “opponent” – a dragon guarding the cave with the treasure, a ravine separating the hero from the promised land, the wall of an intimidating fortress where the princess is imprisoned – can be seen as exemplifications of Johnson’s “blockage” or “counterforce.”

After his discussion of the FORCE schema, Johnson argues that it is closely linked to the BALANCE schema. He first of all notes that “it is crucially important to see that balancing is an *activity we learn with our bodies* and not by grasping a set of rules or concepts” (Johnson 1987: 74, emphasis in original). Drawing on Arnheim (1974), he goes on to point out that our physical sense of balance is at the root of our metaphorical sense of balance, as in psychological states, legal relationships, and formal systems (1987: 80).

Striving to make successful progress in this narrative force field, the hero(ine) in a road movie needs to retain his or her balance. In live-action films this is often not very salient, but in scenes where the hero(ine) is involved in a chase or needs to negotiate challenges facing him/her in the physical environment, we are subconsciously aware of this all the time. Most vehicles can only transport us well if they move upright, allowing only a limited degree of tilting over before they stop functioning. Toppling

over is potentially dangerous: when this happens we fall, get crushed or drown – or are caught by an antagonist. All of this holds in an intensified sense for the “vehicle” of our bodies. Climbing a wall, crawling over a slanted surface, jumping from one roof to another, swimming across a current-ridden river all crucially require control over our physical balance. That being said, if we have fully functioning bodies we can hardly *not* move: standing still literally gets us nowhere, so we need to risk losing our equilibrium by moving. The issue of retaining or regaining balance is thus inextricably linked to the very act of moving itself.

It thus makes sense that the physical BALANCE concept is often used with a metaphorical meaning. By and large, positive states and actions are metaphorically coupled with maintaining or regaining one’s balance, while negative states and actions are understood as not having one’s balance, or losing it. This transpires from many words and idioms that pertain to (lack of) balance. Persons, relationships, judgments and menus, for instance, can be balanced or unbalanced.

In his 2005 paper, Johnson expresses a concern that analysts of image schemas run the risk of focusing too much on their patterned nature alone, whereas it is the unique ways in which, in a given situation, the basic template is used that leads us to respond to its affect-laden and evaluative meaningfulness. “When we describe the image-schematic structure alone, we never capture fully the qualities that are the flesh and blood of our experience” (Johnson 2005: 28). This is exactly what good animation films (and good dance performances, for that matter) remind us of, precisely because in these media “embodiment” is experienced so much more directly by the audience than, for instance, in written stories. In the next section, I will therefore take a closer look at how the FORCE and BALANCE schemas are used in several short animation films, in which these embodied schemas are emphatically to be mapped upon the process of achieving goals.

3. FORCE and BALANCE in short animation films

The animation films studied for FORCE and BALANCE all feature a hero or heroine who moves using only his or her own muscle power to make progress.¹ The travellers use their own bodies by crawling, walking,

¹ Several of the films were accessible via YouTube at the time of writing this chapter. Also, “*LIFE IS A JOURNEY*: an animated metaphor” (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MvocTKD5o5A>) may be of interest, as it aims to audiovisualize some of the ideas presented here. See also Forceville (in prep.).

running... In several cases, moreover, they visibly become older. These two factors (no external forces aid the self-propelled progress and the short films tend to condense a lifetime into a few minutes) contribute to the existential nature of the films – these are comments on the human condition itself.

Khireet Kurana's *O* (UK/India 1996) portrays the development of a human being from infancy to old age. The protagonist, who moves from left to right, is at first a crawling baby with a single "concept" in the thought balloon above his head: a ball (or "O"). When he grows up, he learns to walk, but at first he can barely retain his balance (figure 1a). That the learning process to maintain physical balance has a counterpart in his mastery of concepts is suggested by the fact that in this early stage his thought balloon is as shaky as his body, something that is conveyed both by the movements of the thought balloon and by the clunking sound of the concepts within it. During his progress through life, he meets various people. One of these is a dangerous-looking motorbike-rider, out of whose mouth "negative" concepts (visualized as a skull, a spanner, a knife, a gun) first forcefully hit the protagonist's body, threatening his balance, and then end up in his thought balloon. When he is an old man, the numerous concepts he has collected, both voluntarily and willy-nilly, weigh upon him heavily, particularly when he needs to climb stairs (figure 1b). In this latter sequence, the thought balloon with the overload of concepts is a force that burdens the man down, hindering his progress, while at the same time he needs to be careful not to lose his balance.

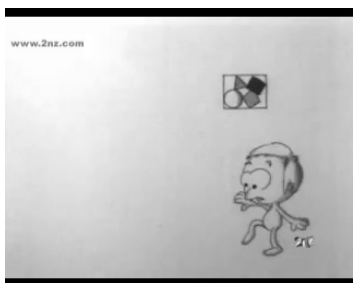


Figure 1a. As a young child, the protagonist of *O* needs to learn to maintain his physical balance. The thought balloon above him is at this stage similarly shaky (still from *O*, original in colour).

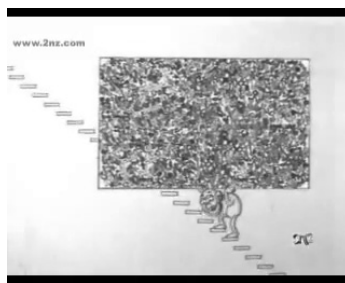


Figure 1b. As an old man, the protagonist suffers from the burden of all the concepts he has acquired during his life, aggravated by the fact that he needs to climb stairs (still from *O*, original in colour).

Michael Dudok's *Father and Daughter* (UK/NL 2000) describes the lifelong search of the protagonist for her father. As a young girl she waves goodbye to him when he goes out to sea in a rowing boat, and she keeps returning to the place where he disappeared in the hope of seeing him return. The vehicle she uses is a bicycle. This eminently enables mappings from the literal to the metaphorical journey: first of all, the bike is a vehicle whose progress depends on the rider's own muscle power, and requires the ability to retain balance – something that has moreover to be *learned*. Furthermore, bicycle-riding can be hard work when hills need to be climbed and the force of strong winds withstood (figure 2a). And when the woman is old, she can actually no longer keep her balance on the bike and has to walk beside it. The bike is a metonym for the woman herself. This idea is reinforced when she arrives for the last time at the fatal spot where she took leave of her father long ago. Her bike keeps falling over (figure 2b); she puts it upright twice, but when it falls over a third time, she can't be bothered to try again. Her inability to ride the bike and to keep it balanced when standing still mirrors her own, now endemic, inability to keep her metaphorical balance – and thus suggests her imminent death.



Figure 2a. After seeing her father off, the young girl needs to negotiate obstacles and strong winds to go to the place where she hopes to see him again (still from *Father and Daughter*, original in colour).



Figure 2b. An old woman now, the protagonist still returns to the place where she last saw her father. Tellingly, the transportation that she has always used – the bike – can no longer keep its balance and falls over (still from *Father and Daughter*, original in colour).



Figure 3a. The Sandman is overthrown by flying sheets of paper in the “paper world” (still from *Quest*, original in colour).



Figure 3b. Suddenly erupting stone formations threaten the Sandman’s balance in the “stone world” (still from *Quest*, original in colour).

Tyron Montgomery and Thomas Stellmach’s *Quest* (Germany 1996) presents the regenerative life cycle of a “sandman.” Desperately in need of water to keep himself literally together as a balanced body, he follows the sound of a droplet he keeps hearing. His search brings him first into a paper “world,” from which he falls into a stone world, then into a metal world. In each world he is threatened by various forces that jeopardize his balance: he runs the risk of being knocked down by heavy windstorms that cause paper sheets to whirl through the air making him fall (figure 3a), of being flattened by falling stones, dismembered by suddenly appearing saws, and crushed by machines that encroach on him; and of course if he

does not find water soon enough, he will simply fall apart anyway. In order to succeed, he constantly needs to run away or step apart, for which it is crucial that he retains his balance (figure 3b).



Figure 4a. Keeping their balance is crucial for the father and his son, both for their physical survival and in order to ensure that they can reach their goal – reaching the top of the totem pole (still from *The Life*, original in colour).



Figure 4b. The father climbs the totem pole, carrying a big bag. His hardly visible son climbs below him. Their progress is hindered by heavy snowfall. On the left and right we see totem poles similar to the ones the father and his son are climbing (still from *The Life*, original in colour).

The two protagonists in *The Life* (Jun-Ki Kim, South Korea 2003) are a father and his son, who climb some sort of huge and seemingly never-ending totem pole. They carry with them a big bag (visible on the right in figure 4a) whose contents remain mysterious until the very end of the story. In several shots we see similar totem poles in the background, which suggest other people climb their own totem poles (figure 4b). In the beginning the child is an infant, carried in a kind of rucksack on the father's back. The father thus needs to keep his balance to ensure both his own and his son's safety, while at the same time the big bag, swinging on a rope, endangers his steadiness. The climbing is hard work, as not only the visuals, but also the man's heavy breathing and the boy's frustrated crying make clear. During their journey up the pole, they both grow older. Climbing is obviously a form of defying the forces of gravity, and thus requires a constant monitoring of one's balance. Losing one's balance in the situation at hand means falling, resulting in death. Forces of nature, in the form of howling winds, rain, snow storms and birds angrily picking at them form the other type of obstacle that might keep the two characters from reaching the top of the totem pole – which we assume is their goal. At one stage, the father, now an old man, starts coughing, and is no longer

capable of climbing. He stays behind, presumably dying, the son continuing the ascent alone.

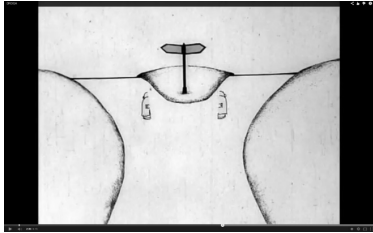


Figure 5a. A man comes to a crossing and, after hesitating over which road he will choose, splits himself into two; each half takes a different road (still from *The Road*, original in black and white).

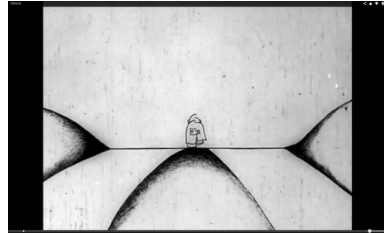


Figure 5b. After the man's two halves have taken different roads, they are reunited again – but the two halves no longer entirely “fit”; nonetheless he limps on (still from *The Road*, original in black and white).

The Road/Droga (Miroslaw Kijowicz, Poland 1971) introduces us to a man, seen from behind, who walks forward on a road. When he arrives at a crossing, he hesitates over whether to go left or right. After some hesitation, the man splits himself (or is split?) into two parts. His left half takes the road on the left; his right half takes the road on the right (figure 5a). As viewers we follow his right half. After a while, the two roads merge again – and the right-half encounters the left-half again. Moving towards each other, the two halves seem to be able to merge once more. However, it turns out that the man's left half has grown, such that the two body halves no longer naturally match; they have become “unbalanced.” Nonetheless, the two parts get together again; in an awkward fashion the man limps further on along the road (figure 5b). Again, we are invited to extend this imbalance metaphorically from the physical to the abstract: for instance, we could see the left half as a real or imagined life abroad, while the right half symbolizes the man's “natural” identity; coming back home, his life abroad no longer sits easily with his original life. But many other interpretations are possible. What matters is that in one way or other, the man's identity, captured in the image of a single, “whole” body, has become fundamentally divided because of a crucial choice he made. Although it seems that this choice can be “undone” later in life, this turns out to be impossible. But crucially, even though he will have to live with his choice in later life, he accommodates to the fact that he no longer has a

whole identity, and proceeds, though less smoothly, on the road of his life journey.

The last example to be discussed here, *Journey of Life* (Rasna Allam, Egypt 2014) is remarkable because it hinges entirely on the BALANCE schema. A boy climbs a narrow plank and tries to walk along it, keeping his balance. He fails, gets older, tries again, fails again (figure 6a), and finally, as an old man, succeeds (figure 6b). The entire idea of life's journey depends on the persistence to learn to move forward (to the future, old age – and eventually death) without losing one's balance, or else regaining it if lost. That is, we have to learn to become a “balanced person.” Interestingly, the short film has no narrative; the character's process of learning to negotiate physical balance on a narrow plank, in combination with his ageing, is as such sufficient to interpret the visuals metaphorically, although the title further reinforces this interpretation.

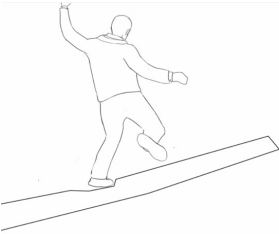


Figure 6a. A man tries to keep his balance on a narrow plank, but initially fails, stumbling on a gap in the plank and falling off (still from *Journey of Life*, original in black and white).



Figure 6b. In old age, the man has learned how to keep his balance/live a balanced life and sits contentedly below the plank he has managed to walk (still from *Journey of Life*, original in black and white).

Conclusion

The animated journey stories discussed would be completely uninteresting if we only noted that the characters moved from starting point A to destination B. Their fascination and emotional appeal reside in the fact that the journeys are used as source domains in metaphors that all have some form of purposive activity as their target domain. In all cases, this purposive activity is of an existential, life-spanning or life-changing magnitude. This is clear from the fact that all the main characters become visibly older, or at least change physically – and not for the better. Four of the five (*The Road* being the exception) moreover span almost an entire life, and at the end of their journeys the characters are close to death. It is

therefore inevitable to understand the “forces” and “balances” (along with many other features from the JOURNEY domain) pertaining to the characters as being metaphorically applicable to their plans and goals in life. But it is essential to acknowledge that the embodied nature of these source domain schemata comes to the fore splendidly in the animation medium. We *see* and *hear* the various forces that affect the protagonists, and probably we mentally simulate their attempts at achieving, or regaining, balance. In this respect, then, animation is the medium *par excellence* to examine Johnson’s “the body in the mind.”

Since this is a book devoted to dance, let me (non-expert in dance research, but lover of modern dance) risk a few remarks about how FORCE and BALANCE as theorized in this paper may be pertinent to dance as well. There is no doubt, of course, that dance is a fully embodied art form – perhaps the most embodied of all arts. Furthermore, I expect that everybody agrees that the bodily negotiation of various forces and the play with balance are at the core of every dance performance. More generally, almost any performance will provide numerous examples of Johnson’s various forces. On an essential level, the aesthetic pleasure that dance spectators enjoy comes from the admirable physical control of dancers over their bodies and over the interaction of their bodies with other bodies, and their challenging of the forces of gravity.

But surely we are invited to go beyond mere admiration of the physical control and prowess of good dancers, and interpret at least some of the playing with forces and balancing acts metaphorically as well. No doubt we can generalize Ray Gibbs’ observation about a specific dance performance that “throughout the performance, bodily movements that are balanced, whether a dancer is moving or stationed, alone or in contact with other dancers, reflect mental, emotional and moral stability” (Gibbs 1999: 316). True, the degree to which it makes sense to interpret dance movements metaphorically is partly determined by the question of whether a choreography has a clear storyline. The more “narrative” a performance is, I suspect, the more self-evident certain metaphorical interpretations of embodied behaviour are; also, because certain locations of the stage have fixed meanings (“the castle,” “the wood,” “the cave”), the fact of dancers coming from, or going to, these places feeds into specific narrative themes.

But my hunch is that even in much modern dance, usually considerably less concerned with story-telling, there are elements of force and balance that trigger meanings beyond the aesthetic pleasure that the purely embodied dimensions of actions command. Even when the specific locations of starting point and destination are not pertinent, surely *paths* of danced movements, and the multifarious forces and aspects of balance,

always are. When there are two dancers, micro-scenes of compulsion, blockage, counterforce, diversion, removal of restraint, enablement and attraction sometimes invite metaphorical mappings. For instance, compulsion may appear as physical pushing or pulling, which in turn conveys imposing one dancer's will onto the other dancer's, forcing the latter to do something he or she does not want to; two dancers whose bodies press against each other experience each other's counterforce, which suggests they are, momentarily, antagonists; and one dancer lifting another is an example of enablement, the first dancer metaphorically helping the second to achieve the goal of excelling – and it is not difficult to find similar metaphorical meanings for the other forces. Any form of balance, particularly after earlier stages of imbalance, obviously suggests the achievement of some form of harmony. Indeed, in dance the constant process of regaining BALANCE in the midst of competing FORCES bestows not just embodied, but also conceptual and emotional pleasure, and arguably constitutes the very essence of the art form.

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