

• MONO.DIO.POLI.META.LOGUE – An Artistic Research Project

A Project Report

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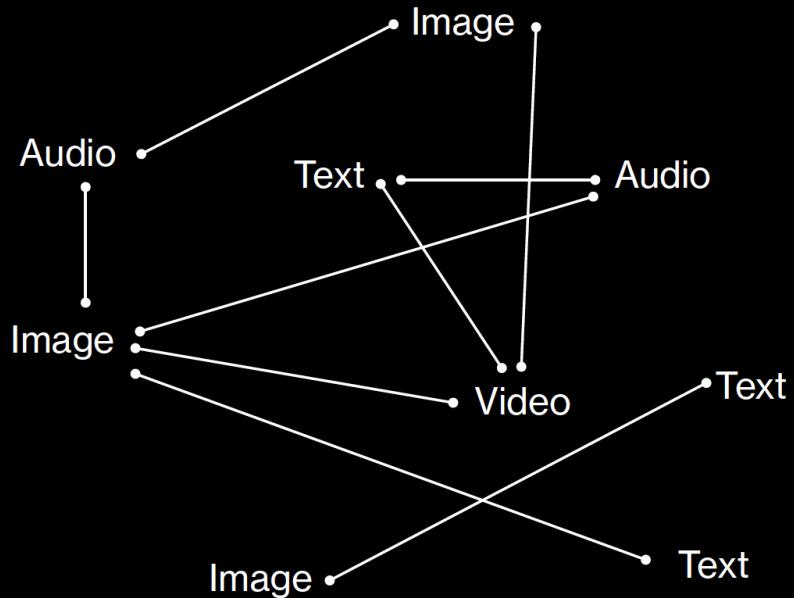
Bob Verheijden | MINERVA Hanze University Groningen of Applied Sciences

BACKGROUND

“A metalogue is a conversation about some problematic subject. This conversation should be such that not only do the participants discuss the problem but the structure of the conversation as a whole is also relevant to the same subject. Only some of the conversations here presented achieve this double format.”

Gregory Bateson, Steps to an Ecology of Mind

CROSS-REFERENCING



AIMS

The goal of this project was to generate narratives in the form of metalogues (Auden & Bateson) that formulate the possibilities of new spaces and places at the interstices of ecological discourse. It did so order to create and facilitate an understanding of propositions about impending micro-utopias that are relational (Bourriaud 1998)

These metalouges will have the threefold objectives of:

- becoming tool for unveiling of the inherent and tacit toxic ideologies that are occupying contemporary public discourses
- propose an alternative multiplicity and ecology of narratives that propose democratic empowerment
- and behave as artistic expressions that intrinsically accommodate reflectiveness within an artistic research framework

Maziar's Proposal of a statement of a rationale for ~~metalogues~~ structure.
[Tale and Maziar]

In no hierachic order except line length:

We share similar concerns.
We share an interest in multiple and parallel narratives.
We have similar sensibilities but operate in different fields.
We aim to understand our practices through self-reflection.
We have different practices but aim at similar arenas of discourse.
We also share reflexive notions of being and being creative in the world.
We flow from practice to reflection to theory and fold back into our practices.
Our reflections are orientated to dissemination, bridging the private and the public.
Our practices are democratic in that they aim to create situations, spaces and understandings that are egalitarian.
Our dialogues are a means of explaining to each other what we share, what we think and we think the other is saying.
The connections we aim to make are based on poetic filtering of ideas in order to utilise them within an artistic framework.
We feel an ethical obligation to employ optimism in order to generate a means of establishing a ~~micro-utopic~~ pocket of resistance.
We share a belief in reconsidering our contemporary culture in order to describe new perimeters for possible new futures we could live in.
We are resistant to a critical approach because as a methodological approaches it offers comparatively little in return in terms of synthesis.
One of the sensibilities we share is a need to re-evaluate the relationship between form and content and order it to tailor them for our contemporary needs.
We access and scope a range of sources and aim to circle these topics and themes in order propose connections and relationships based on an ecology of ideas.
...

A ~~metologue~~ is a conversation about some problematic subject. This conversation should be such that not only do the participants discuss the problem but the structure of the conversation as a whole is also relevant to the same subject. Only some of the conversations here presented achieve this double format. Notably, the history of evolutionary theory is inevitably a ~~metologue~~ between man and nature, in which the creation and interaction of ideas must necessarily exemplify evolutionary process.

Steps Towards an Ecology of Mind

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THE PROJECT OUTCOMES

During the MONO.DIO.POLI.META.LOGUES a number of metalogues were generated. The project created narratives for intended audiences and invited them to share in reflections upon stated themes among them:

Dialogues between Raein & Næss on violence, melancholy and patterns

<p>METALOGUE: MELANCHOLY</p> <p>IMAGINE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structural • Aesthetic • Reflective • Interpretative • Descriptive <p>Insert here</p> <p>Tale</p> <p>M: Tale, we started talking about a book you shared with me by Rachel Cusk called <i>Outline</i>, and I thought that was fantastic. And it raise many themes such the idea of the mirror being quite important to us...</p> <p>T: What is about the Cusk prose that, sort of, got you?</p> <p>M: Until I read <i>Outline</i> I'd never understood that I find character and plot really disconcerting, and somewhat annoying. I've just been listening to a radio adaptation on BBC Radio of 'War and Peace' on radio - a book I read in the past twice! I find it very frustrating. I don't understand the role of character and plot. But when I read Cusk, she strips away things from the narrative and to me it's quite an amazing insight because of the way that she manages to detach herself, and just describes. The power of description is so powerful. I think it's that her observations leave room for me, as the reader, to be part of an internal dialogue with the narrative.</p> <p>T: We talked about it before. I was trying to find a way of describing it. It's almost like a portrait, I said, like a completely, not immoral, but objectifying portrait, like she's looking at the world as if it doesn't have any meaning. It's just the way it is.</p> <p>M: Yes, and she does so not in a judgmental way, but just in a sense of, "What do I see?" Then, she makes sense of it in her own way, and she asks us to make sense of it in our own way.</p> <p>T: In our own way, yes. Through that, many of my friends say, "Oh, this trilogy is so great because we get to know all the narrative," but, I must say, that's not really what's interesting for me. I'm not reading it to get to know her. Often, when I was young, I felt like reading books was like having a companion, feeling less lonely, and also having somebody else going through pain that I could recognise. Spending time with Cusk doesn't make me feel less lonely, it just makes me feel more in the world. It's like she's not giving me companionship, she's opening up the world to me.</p> <p>M: Yes.</p> <p>T: In that way, it's unsentimental.</p> <p>M: Yes. I think that's one of the things about it, that I really appreciate.</p> <p>T: Yes, and she's not doing it to make meaning out of it. She's not piecing together the world for me, you know. Some books can be like that. You have a</p>	<p>ADDITIONAL COMMENTARY</p> <p>AIMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Editorial • Critical • Generic • Interpretations • Descriptive • Didactic diversions <p>Insert here</p> <p>Outline</p> <p>M: • Structural • Aesthetic • Reflective • Interpretative • Descriptive</p> <p>Insert here</p>	<p>IMAGINE</p> <p>AIMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structural • Aesthetic • Reflective • Interpretative • Descriptive <p>Insert here</p> <p>T: feeling, "Oh, they're going to pinpoint a certain world view," like if you read Beckett. Yes, you have a feeling, "Okay, it's meaningless. I get it," and it's meaningless in this particular modernist fashion, yes, from a European perspective, seen in this, sort of, also unsentimental but very brutal way. With Cusk, it's not like she's trying to show me a world view, or convince me about something.</p> <p>M: One of the things that chimes, and I think helps me understand why I like her work, and her portraiture of the world, is that sense that sentiment in unearned emotion. I think when a writer creates sentimentality, an artificial emotion, it's like acting in opera. It's not real, and it's meaningless unless there's something behind it that's more powerful. Through her description, and observation, she gives us insights into the powerful forces that drive our lives, the people she's meeting, or the... She turns it on herself, as well, and her relationship with her husband and children, but she doesn't go into the... Sometimes, as I read her, I find her portraits of the people she has meals with for instance, and the way they sit at the table, is quite searing, and I think, "I wouldn't want to meet Cusk, actually". Because I may end up with a portrait of myself, in a way, that you might not be so desirable.</p> <p>T: I mean, if she wrote about you, you wouldn't want to have her, like...</p> <p>M: I'd find it difficult to read that description she could make of me, because I think it may...</p> <p>T: You'd feel exposed.</p> <p>M: I think so, yes. I think she's got such a keen eye, and such a keen way of viewing the world. I think that appreciation of viewing the world is important.</p> <p>T: Yes, viewing without judging, or without commenting.</p> <p>M: Yes.</p> <p>T: But, of course, she is then choosing what to view.</p> <p>M: Absolutely, yes. It is edited.</p> <p>T: It's a point of view.</p> <p>M: Yes, it is artificial, and it is constructed.</p> <p>T: Thank God, otherwise it wouldn't be art, which it is.</p> <p>M: Yes.</p>	<p>ADDITIONAL COMMENTARY</p> <p>AIMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Editorial • Critical • Generic • Interpretative • Descriptive • Didactic diversions <p>Insert here</p> <p>Outline</p> <p>M: • Structural • Aesthetic • Reflective • Interpretative • Descriptive</p> <p>Insert here</p>
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Installation A Try out Opera by Michiel Jansen & Bob Verheijden



Two Sound Essay by Natalia Kortakova

Which explored an individuals journey through a city.

10 Field Recordings by Maziar Raein

Which recorded moments of intense listening from the urban environment.

A Monologue by Tale Næss

A reflective play that develops reflective spaces for theatre.

26 Monologues by Maziar Raein

A series of portraits of places, people and spaces.

1 / 26 I am standing at Storgata opposite Gunerius shopping centre. I'm waiting for my tram, I'm leaning on the railings. Others are waiting as well. They stand about one meter away from each other. I stand and watch a group opposite me. They look different. They stand in groups, their clothes look OK but something about them signals that they are different. They look rough, they sway, they reach across and grab at each other. As my eyes drift up I look at their faces, tired faces, stubbly faces, nicotined faces, nicotined hands, swaying leathery heads.

As a group there is a hint contamination about them and I somehow feel as if I can catch something from them.

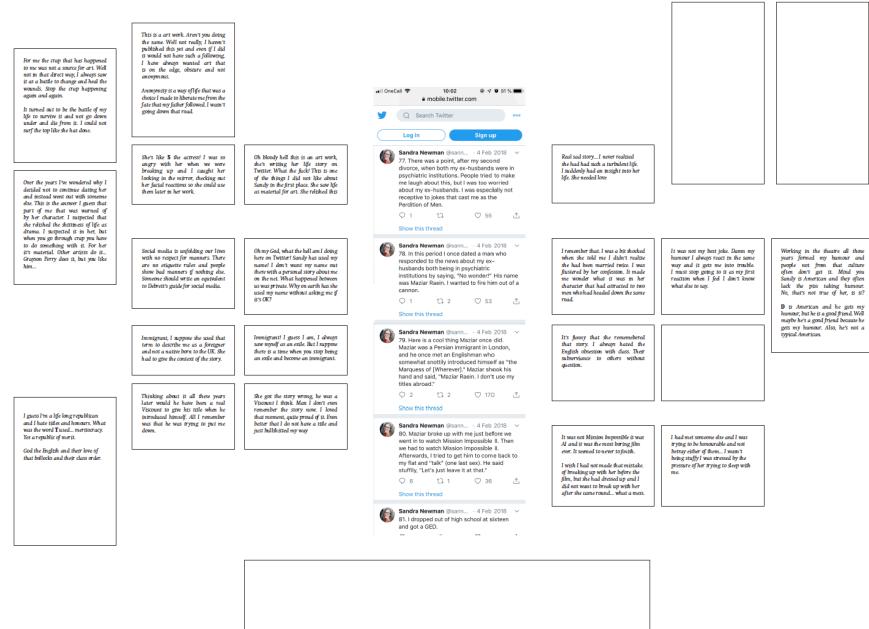
26 / 26 I'm standing near the ticket office of a central London tube station. There is an immense amount of noise as all the commuters rush through to catch their trains home. I put my hand in my pocket and surprisingly I find myself touching a single coin. I had not expected to have one in my pocket. In fact I could not remember the last time I had any spare change. I take it out and look at it, it's silver and has far eastern script on it, on one side there is a design of three lotus flowers. I guess it is Japanese. I have no idea where this coin comes from since I'm always so careful about what I carry around with me.

I suddenly remember a quote by Luis Borges "If I'm rich in anything it is in perplexities and not in certainties".

I do not know where the coin or the quote come from.

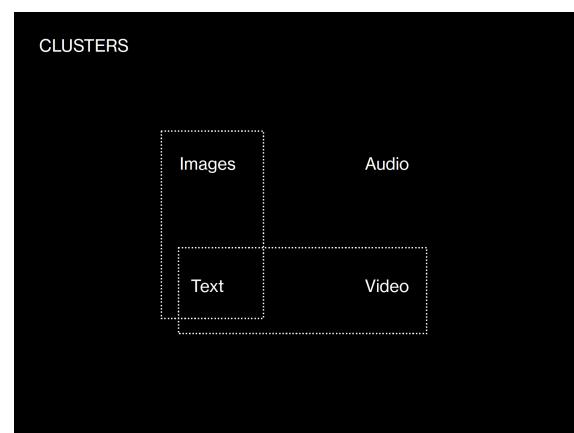
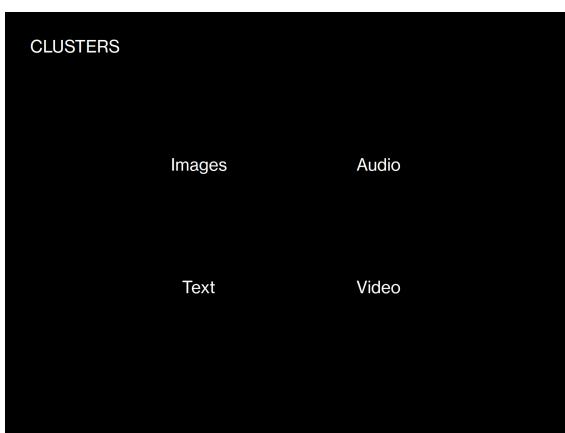
A Twitter metologue by Maziar Raein

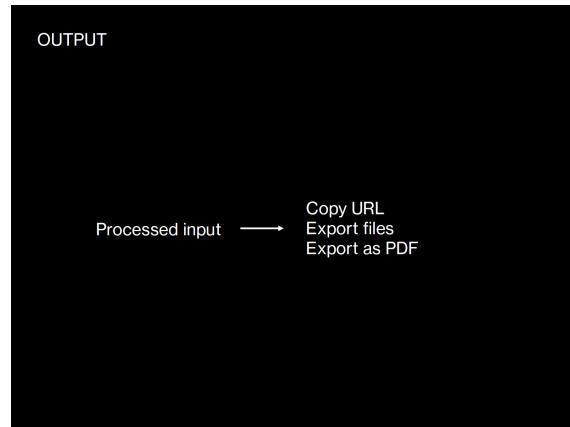
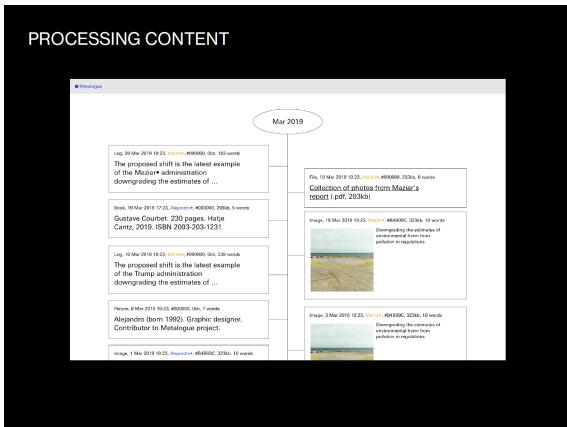
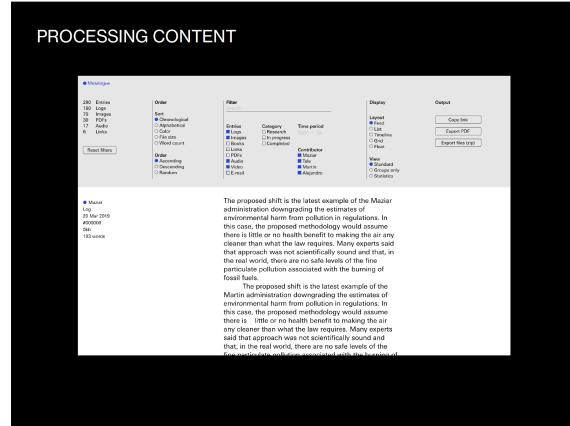
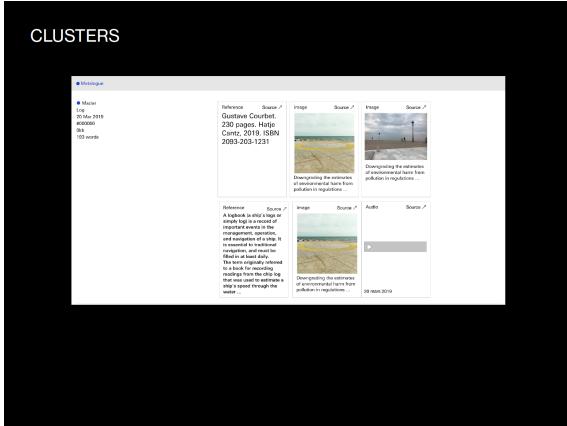
That responded to a writers (Sandra Newman) incorporating Maziar Raein into her autobiography on Twitter and Raein's generation of further narratives from that text.



THE PROJECT OUTCOMES – Irreconcilable problem

The findings and outcome of this project explored micro-utopic (Wood & Bourriaud) reflective space. However, it became evidently clear, as the project reached its end, that the division between content (generated narratives) and the forms of expressions and dissemination (paper format) were at odds and widely disparate. The researchers therefore, reached for an alternative and appropriate forms of dissemination. To that end two graphic designers Martin Asbjørnsen and Alejandro Rojas (with skills in programming and editorial analysis) were co-opted as fellow researchers and a pre-beta database / website was created that began to enable a marrying of form and content.





PROJECT CONCLUSION

The project though concluding by many outcomes came to the realisation that dissemination, which is an imperative element of it needs to locate itself at the interstices of; artistic research (shared narratives), political discourse (democratically reflective spaces) and methodological debate (the problematics of dissemination).

It became clear that the forms and functions of artistic research are demanding new formulations for debate. As an academic project located within the framework of KHiO's artistic research in Norway, it is evident that our unique position in extending an understanding of artistic research, is confronting us with ontological (Borgdorff) challenges.