

Collective writing – *a communal endeavour*

During my research period, I have taken part in several collective writing projects both as a writer, and as a head-writer, or leader of a collective writing process. Some instigated by festivals and producers, like the festival MOTforestillinger, the project EU Collective Plays!, det Andre Teater and OIAF. Others as a part of my research, or as a part of my general praxis and methodology as a playwright (*City Dwellers*, *Sweatshop-Aleppo* etc.).

A COLLECTIVE PROJECT

The collective writing workshop I did for the festival MOTforestillinger had an international and even political dimension. The goal was to create a meeting-place between Norwegian and Palestinian writers, to see what would happen if we wrote together. What themes could work for us, and what texts, or text-patterns would occur. For me it gave a perfect opportunity to widen, practice and test my methodology (see documentation [here](#)).

This was a small workshop lasting 4 days, and involving me and four other more or less professional writers.

In comparison, the OIAF workshop offered a larger and more varied group. All together thirteen actors, musicians, two scenographers and a writer. This workshop lasted in 7 day and in addition to the writing we worked with producing physical material, as well as scenes and episodes "on the floor".

I will return to both these workshops in this deliberation. I will also look at methods and experiences that I have developed in workshops that have been had as a part of the research for this PhD. In sum, all these enterprises has informed my methodology and my understandings of the inner workings of collective writing endeavours.

MOTFORESTILLINGER / OBJECTIONS

The workshop MOTforestillinger came about as a collaboration with the festival and me, and was support by the Centre for Norwegian Playwriting.

The festival initiated it as an artistic meeting between Palestinian and Norwegian theatre-workers and playwrights.

The Palestinian participants were invited by the festival, and the Norwegian participants was invited by me.

The workshop took place at KHiO in November 2017.

The English word for motforestillinger, is objections.

In Norwegian the word consists of two terms, one is *mot* – and the other is *forestillinger*. *Mot* can mean against, or it can mean courage, depending on its context. *Forestillinger* can mean both *performances* and different types of *notions* or *attitudes*. The festival had chosen this term as their heading for its inbuilt complexity. As a political project, the festival tries to shed light on the Palestinian/Israeli situation. This situation is just that. Complex.

In 1948 the Palestinian territories was divided. Parts of Palestine was occupied by the Israeli forces, and hundreds of thousands Palestinians had to flee their homes and farms, and ended up as refugees on the Westbank, in Libanon and Syria. Some even left the

continent ending up in Europe, in the US and as far away as Latin America and South Africa.

For years, there were little or no contact between the Palestinians that left and the ones that stayed behind. Even between Palestinians in the neighboring countries, in Gaza, the West Bank and Israel. Due to the difficult political situation, it is still impossible for these Palestinians to cooperate artistically or to physically visit each other.

It was a point for the festival to have Palestinian participants both from the Palestinian areas, and from Israel at the workshop. Writers and theatre-makers who would otherwise never be able to meet and cooperate, to physically be in the same room.

I, on my side wanted to invite strong writers with a developed sense of artistic integrity, but also with some notion of the area and the conflict. In the end the group consisted of Malmfrid Hallum, Runa Skolseng from Norway, Morad Hasan from West Jerusalem/Israel and Àthar Barghouti from Ramallah.



COLLECTIVE WRITING WORKSHOPS

When I organise and plan collective writing workshops – or collective writing-projects, I think of them as meeting-places. Meeting-places not only of the people involved in the workshop, but for fictional characters, situations and settings created by and belonging to the participants. A creative space that can offer an alternative – a getaway from our daily thought-patterns and understanding of ourselves and our life situation. That can widen our understanding of us self and "the other". This also opens up for cross-cultural interactions, and since the participants are equal in that sense that they are unique owners of their texts, this produces the potential of co-production of knowledge and empowerment. Writing together can thereby offer a space where one can leave ones own agenda behind, and dive into the fictional world of the other.

The goals of the workshops can vary.

It can be to develop or expand new performative texts for a particular performance. It can be a developing tool for performative writing per se. A way of exploring a theme or a form, and/or through that generate material. Or it can be a meeting place as a social mover. A way of finding a shared space and place to explore the intersection between each participants individual background, as an artist and as a person situated in an economical and social setting.

If the circumstances are right, the "reality" that is created doing the process of writing "together", there is the potential of producing a "shared reality". Not based on a homogenous worldview, but a place where languages and experience collide and co-exist, and even enter into conversation with each other. A polyvocal world that obliterates hierarchies because text is "king".

In the MOTforestilling workshop, I limit the activities to writing and then reading through the material, discussing it and contextualizing it. No extra time or effort was given to socializing or other activities besides the writing and the talk upon the writing. This makes the participant focus on the "worlds" we are producing and as a result we developed a shared language and reality, a fictional one, that only indirectly pointed to the world and the reality outside the process. A written common ground.

Creative, collective writing workshops are in that sense laboratories where one together can explore, invent and inhabit a fictional universe that is constructed by the participants

there and then. We can “talk” to each other through our characters, and let them visit each others “world” without passing judgment or invading each other’s personal spaces. If the process is lead by a qualified and experienced writer or dramaturg, this can lead to great and liberating writing processes, but also meetings and the clashing of wills in a controlled invironment where what are deeply personal, is present but never threatens the participants integrity.



WHO CAN PARTICIPATE

In my workshop I mainly accept professionals: playwrights, actors, dramaturges and directors take part. They can also involve composers, scenographers, researchers, and students on a BA or MA level within these fields. I have also undertaken collective writing workshop with visual artists, that they have greatly enjoyed, and that has also produced visual ideas and concepts. Last time I did that was under the umbrella of Time Line Galleries, in collaboration with Anke Couman and the Minerva University in Groeningen.

HOW LONG, HOW BIG, HOW INTENSIVE

A collective writing workshop can last for a day, a few hours or a whole week. It can also be spread out on weekends or evening in a series of workshops.

If one want to end up with a presentation, a minimum of two days should be allowed to produce a material that can be shared in public through a reading.

If one wants to end up with a performance for an audience, in my experience one need at least a four day workshop, included time to prepare for the presentation. I usually allow a day or at least three hours to prepare the material and the presentation. It is also important, if one invites actors to the reading, that they get enough time to get acquainted with the material. It can add added value if the performers that are reading take part in the final touches of the presentation. Such sessions where readers and writers meet, then feed into the process and expands the collective.

It’s always a good thing if the one leading the process can be in contact with the participants in advance, but this is not a must. If that's possible one can start up the process by mail or skype in advance and together find a theme or a topic, a sentence or a term that that brings the “group” together. This can also provide a start-up material if the participants bring a text and read each other before the workshop.

WHAT ACTIVITIES TAKE PLACE

The main focus is to write together under the leadership of an experienced writer and dramaturge. This leader writes together with the participants.

Starting with a setting, and then sharing these settings or spaces, gives a good place to start. Then one can start creating characters and situations, placing them in each others spaces. Write monologues, dialogues or text-landscapes that then inhabit these spaces or places. And when there is a certain amount of material in the “pool”, one can start to write in, around and on each others texts, characters, landscapes, and utilize eachothers dialogues, monologues etc.

The writing exercises are usually done individually. One minute assignments and other small on the spot asignments can be undertaken in the same room, but for longer stretches of writing, 10 minutes or more – the participants can retire to their own chosen space. And longer assignment they do at home – from one day to the other, or between the different gatherings. This can be writing on their own landscapes, characters or themes, or responding to/ writing on the writing of others.

There is no perfect number for a collective writer endeavor. I have had great sessions including three participants, but I have also had great sessions that have included 14. So the only rule I have is that the group can not be too big or too small (less than three), and that the activity has to be adjusted according to who and how many take part.



To kick start the collaboration and get some start up-material, I often use techniques like in-logs or out-logs.

LOGGING IN AND LOGGING OUT

In-log is a way of clearing or preparing the space before a work-session starts.

Each of the participants is given a slot, consisting of one to five minutes – to talk about whatever comes to their minds. The rest has to listen, one can not interrupt, comment or contribute in any way before the time is up. If one discovers that there is nothing more to say, one can stay quiet for the remaining period of time one has been allocated.

After the log-in, people are free to comment, pick up on topics, ideas, thoughts or other aspects that have been put to once attention while the members of the group were logging-in.

One can also have a similar out-log at the end of the day.

I “inherited” the bases of this technique from the production company Søstrene Haugen, who has been using the in-log as a part of their method for years. It is also a vital part of the methodology for my stage collective STATEX (link to [Performing a Collective](#)).

Log-in and log-outs only works when people pay attention to each other and to what’s being said. One needs to be focused, to concentrate on the actual listening. Interruption, corrections or even commenting can break the flow of the one talking. Take away from what the one that is talking is saying or derail and influence the focus. Having this focus, – also makes the “talker” talk differently. Being listened to in such an open and focused way, can be an emotional but also liberating experience. To be able to talk uninterrupted like this on whatever you want, can make one listen to oneself in new and different ways.

Log-in is not a social activity. It’s you, presenting your thoughts to a collective. It is a secure form of opening up. A short span of a stream of consciousness, but undertaken in a social and working setting. As such, it is a meeting-space between the personal and the private.



When I use this method in collective writing projects, it functions in a variety of ways. The team-members get to know each other. And if there is such a thing as a given theme, it can open up this theme and expose similarities and difference. By letting people present their perspectives uninterrupted, one can also experience this theme from different angles. These themes, interwoven with personal comments, experiences, anecdotes, associations and reflections (large or small) can in itself a form that connection between the private and the collective. It also gives the group common references. Things we can pick up on and remember, that everybody in this room knows about, and only knows about in this

particular way. We also know more about the themes introduced and the individual performer or writer's reaction to them.

The conversations that follows this in-logs, then becomes a way of exploring and picking up on what's being said. In the workshop I had at OIAF, at Cornerstone and with MOTforestillinger, the in-logs became one of the most essential ways of producing a material. A potentially rich and shared material. It also constituted a reference-point for the writing that was then done, and/or for the improvisation we did on the floor.

In OIAF, many of the participants were performers. Here in-log also became a base for physical material-gathering, of gestures and visual information. While people talked, we picked up on each others gests and body language. Isolating it, enlarging it, passing it around. Taking it away from its context and the person it belonged to. As if it was a sentence or a dance-move. Later on we could then pick it up when needed and combine it with other texts or physical material.

OTHER METHODS

A collective writing workshop that runs over more than one day can also include "going on the floor" with texts, universes and characters.

Here more performative improvisation techniques are used, – involving a physical and acted out improvisations that elaboration on the places, characters and/or monologues/dialogues that has been created during the writing sessions.

Working with actors, dancers and visual artists – one can include gestic work directly into this mix, and through methods like in-logs and out-logs build up a body of physical, imprivised patterns. A physical, as well as a written shared material. An own gestic and physical language added to the "pool" that we again together, or under my supervision can combine and mix with written texts, characters, scenarios, dialogues, landscapes etc.



This feedback loop-based process of generating material, will after a while start to inter-loop and material will start to feed off each other. A specific, fictional logic will emerge, and one can through that together locate the qualities integrative to the universe that is being created. I can as a supervisor gradually step aside, and let the collective continue to develop the text or the performance both individually and together. In my experience, this can lead to a common working process for the group as a whole, where the group again starts to develop its own particular methodology.

Creative writing processes can also be used when you are stuck in a text, or when you want to break free of a pattern or gain access/produce material that you can not "get your hands on" by just writing on your own.

A WORKSHOP ON VIOLENCE

While working on my project *City Dwellers II* – I discovered that although the material I had was rich and good, there was nothing there on violence. This was problematic for two reasons. One – the work had the city as its setting – and in any city, wherever and whenever, there are violence. Why was it missing in my text. The rest of the text-material seemed to flow effortlessly from its different sources (see *City Dwellers project*), now when I wanted to "skrive fram"/bring to the surface these violent texts, I did not seem to have any language for it.

The second issue at hand, was that I had decided to break the dramaturgy of general narration in the piece, with bursts of violence – as action or as verbalisations. Now, it was not there? What to do? Should I change my plan or try once more?

I took to a tool I often use – the workshop. A workshop combining in-logs and out-logs. Topical conversations. Writing exercises and improvisations on the floor based on the previously mentioned activities.

The workshop lasted two and a half days, and took place at the Academy in November 2018.

For it, I invited three actors, Kikki Stormo, Kristoffer Veiersted and Fredrik Høstaker actors for a two-day session. I already knew them, having worked with them on several projects before. I knew that they were brave and that they knew about my methods, and they had perspectives in violence and anger in their toolkit. We worked in a studio-space, and I myself swapped between participating, observing and taking notations.

This is often how I solve this double bind of both being a part of the group and its guide and its leader at the same time. I can give missions and tasks, take part in them – comment, guide the processes and offer support whenever needed, at the same time as I expose myself through talk and writing at the same level as them.

My experience similar work, and my integrity as a writer and dramaturge, makes this double role possible. It gives the process a leader, someone that defines the situation and makes decisions. This creates boundaries and limitations to a process which otherwise could have been blown completely open.

In the “violence workshop” – the most interesting material came from the log-ins (link to the first mesh of texts from the violence workshop). Also bits of the writing that the participants did, has ended up in the final script for City Dwellers complex.

THE LOG-OUT AS A TOOL FOR SHARED REFLECTION

To find a way of giving constructive feedback in such a workshop situation can prove to be difficult. Both when one is going to reflect on the work that is actually being done, on how the workshop is going ahead or being lead, or how one finds oneself constituted in it, – personally and professionally. Here the log-outs are an extremely useful tool. Under the pretence of being able to say whatever comes to your mind in two-three minutes, and also by listening and responding to what the other say, one can produce an environment that is both personal and not. Through it, shared criticism and reflection can come to the surface.

In the series of workshops I had on the piece Sweatshop – Aleppo in 2017, this was a very useful tool also to verbalize, together what we had been doing. How we read it and how we perceived it. Since I worked both with actors and dancers in several of these workshops, the out-log also contributed to develop a cross-disciplinary language, and a place where wordless actions on the floor could be pin-pointed. Both in the work we did as dance, and in physical improvisation by actors and dancers together. Having an outer eye, the director Maren Elisabeth Bjørseth, added to the mix, since she only watched, instigated action and took notes. She became a wall to bounce against – and all this combined made it possible for me to turn this “unspoken” language into text.

WRITING AS REFLECTION

Every text stems from meetings in one form or the other AND it is in itself an interaction: Between the one who writes and the one who reads. And when we read and write, between the text and us. In them are the remains of people we have met, conversations we have had, events we have experienced, books we have read. Our thoughts there and then and the influence of thoughts of others.

In the texts we write, our experiences collide against the experience of others.

Exchanges like these shapes our way of thinking. In that respect writing AND reading is also reflection. These reflections shapes our actions and lays down the ground for our personal language, and the languages we share.

It shapes our private and our public being.

Writing with others is thinking with others. It can also be a way of strengthening who you are. Through writing in, on and around other writer’s text, one also enter the language of the other. Through this you enter their unique field of experience and through engaging in that there evolves a potential for the writer to expand once own. Both in the space within your text, and the space which is yourself. To say it in the words of the French philosopher Paul Riceour: *To see yourself as the other* (Paul Riceour, *Oneself as Another*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press 1994).

Collective writing can, if the conditions are right – create its own space of experience. Through its common “made up” realities, It’s micro-universes with its own laws, languages and logics, – one can create non-homogenous interactions in a potential non-homogeneous space. And the sharing process within those worlds, can open up for a place, or a space

where that which is mine can become a part of that which belongs to the other. A polyvocal place open to collisions and tension as well as recognition and shared motifs and intentions.

A FEW FURTHER COMMENTS

One dogma is of the essence in my creative writing workshops:

1: No material is exclusive to anyone.

I encourage people not to just write beside each other, and I use different tools to create spaces for “cross-pollination” between the texts.

After the opening session, or the in-logs – the participants can be given assignment that takes place in another participants environment, that entails one of the other participants characters or be asked to entail one of the other participant’s dialogues. To mix it, include it or lengthen ones text through adding or combining it with ones own. I can also ask the participants to bounce off each other’s texts. Elaborate on them or over-write them. Or I can ask the participants to “move” into a framework that the other participant has already worked out.

Readymades can also be included in the workprocess: political figures, superheroes, an Ibsen—character, real places and events or funfacts that all too some extent can relate to. The participants can bring these to the table, or I myself can introduce them as a surprise element in a process that is about to stagnate, or to jilt the system, if it starts feeling to familiar.

THIS IS WHAT IT IS NOT

A collective writing workshop is NOT the same as working out a homogenous dramatic text in a team. This is not a one-voice project. The goal is not to find one common language with one dominating story and a central character. It’s format is meetings, collisions and dialogues. In this setting, producing hybrids is a good thing.

The ideal is not to become like one another.

TWO WAYS AS ONE

The work in a collective working process works in two parallel directions simultaneously:

1 – to strengthen personal skills as a playwright, and discover new techniques and ones own potential for polyvocality. By reading and listening to each other’s material, – we not only get hold of the other’s world view, but our own floats to the surface. Through this it becomes possible do discover or re-discover ones own aesthetic preferences, and ones own artistic. What’s usually just there, taken for granted and performed by habit, is brought to the forefront and identified through the gaze of the other.

2 – explores the polyvocality per se. Through meeting, merging and collision of the different voices involved. In other words, one can simultaneously experience a more fully version of my own voice AND moments where my contributions are so inter-woven with the others that the texts no longer belongs to any of the participants. The joy of being visible AND the joy of melting into a new and unfamiliar whole.

AN ADDITIONAL MARK ON LANGUAGE

Writing in different languages, not having one in common that is understood by everyone is possible if one has a good interpreter. A common language – like English is to be preferred.

Writing or adding different languages to the mix though, can add extra value both to the process and the result.

A PUBLIC OR SHARED READING AT THE END

A public or shared reading at the end of the workshop gives incentive and drive to the work. And then off course – there is the knowledge gained by preparing it and sharing it. A

summing up with the dramaturge or headwriter at the end is essential is this is going to give added value. Again – a log-out can be a good idea.

Involving actors in preparing for the reading and participating in the reading helps one see the material more clearly. At MOTforestillinger, the actors and the writers spend a day choosing and preparing the text. And then they read together as a group, and everybody joined in the conversation with the audience at the end.

At the presentations we did with the students at NTNU, included acted out scenes and physical elements.



MOT FORESTILLINGER: A CASE-STUDY

At the workshop MOTforestillinger, the work started before we actually met. There was an e-mail exchange between me and all the participants to begin with. People shared information about themselves, – and most of the participants contributed with a text that we all had read when we met in Oslo at the academy for the first time.

The text Àrthur Bargouti e-mailed us three weeks before the workshop triggered things in many of us.

It started like this: *The choice of heaviness that few of the people living in Palestine take is a very illogical one. The most often questions they are asked are “why choose to stay here when you can live a peaceful life outside?” or “What do you see here that is worth staying and struggling for when everyone here has giving up the struggle?”*

Institutionalization in the West Bank is similar to that in prison. You live negatively so long that if you were to ever live positively, it wouldn't really be you. If the life that you live defines you, and that life consists of constant struggles which eventually shape the person you are, who would you be if you were to live struggle-free? If you are the struggle, by what principle would you leave it?

For me the phrase: "the choice of heaviness" stuck with me, and I wrote as a response to Àrthurs text. That response became the starting-point of the metalogue/ audio essay *the Heaviness of Palaces and plains*.

The text also fed into conversations and log-ins and became the baseline for the rest of the work we did together. It was also chosen as the opening text for the reading we put together. We did one reading at the end of the workshop at Oslo National Academy of the Arts, and one a shorter, more informed reading at the festival arena. The texts were chosen together with the actors Valborg Frøysnes, Marte Magnusdotter Solems and Joakim Thrane (see the whole text presented at the Academy [here](#)).

THE FIRST DAY OF THE WORKSHOP

We started with an in-log, and then everybody wrote about a Monday a week ago. The two hours that passed after one awoke. I asked then to be particular, even detailed. And to pay attentions to sensations like smell, temperature and tastes.

Morad's morning started at home, but then took him on a drive to his families bakery. Later we realized that that would be his last day there. He's brother was now taking over the buisenes, but since he could no longer work as an actor, he was stopped for political reasons, he no longer knew what to do with himself

After this exercise, people chose one of the other writers space, moved into it and wrote from there. This is an excerpt of what I wrote:

Usually it takes me an hour and a half

Sometimes more

It depends on the traffic

...

Parking the car in the usual space

Steeling away for a cigarette

Not even thinking about the drive home

*What to do
How to do it
Just doing it
As I've always done it
I know it all by heart –*

The recipes, the procedures – what to do first and what to do next

What I do

When I'm doing it

*The dates
The caned milk
The cashew nuts
The pistachio nuts
The rosewater*

If I need rosewater

*And as I light my sixth cigarette I am not
thinking*

I am not thinking:

I wish I could love this place

I love this place

I wish I could leave this place

I am going to leave this place

I wish I could free myself from this place

I stand there

The kitchen is around me

The bakery is around me

The village is around me

I stand there in the smell of burning

sugar

I am a turtle too big for my shell

I am a princess a shedding her skin

Malmfrid Hovsveen Hallum chooses my morning text, and mixes it with her own. Here is an excerpt:

*in sneakers
white jeans
a white t-shirt*

*I will walk the dogs
I will shower*

*before I get into the car
and I go*

When I get there

*I clean the place
I make coffee
and I wait*

I stand by the counter

*and I wait
And I make sweets
flaky crispy tender sweets*

thinking

*I wake in a bed
in a flat
I have filled
with beautiful things
Persian rugs*

*plants
and candle sticks ...*

I also gave them larger writing assignments, that they did at home between the workshop-days.

Unexpected quantities of text was produced, and the conversations we had was not about the war, or politics or our lives. It was about metaphors, and fictional palaces, and structures that separated the different text and that held them apart. And not the least about the quality of the text and why they were good or not.

Morad described the process as explosive.

There was an existential thread running through all this, but also tension. Between Àrthur and Morad. Generations of shame for staying behind. Living the life of an Arab Israeli. Morad expressed this faced with Àrthur who had grown up as a third generation in exile, and who's parents and grandparents had been a part of the Palestinian resistance. In and between existential recognition and the joy of diving into each other's text, there was the resentment from the one who left, and the shame of the one who stayed. That was the divide – that was the objections

METHODS AND GOALS

Through the different workshops I have been revisited in this article, I continuously develop and explore my methods. This development of methods through exploring collective writing praxis, is a part of more complex set of strategies for exploring and testing the hybrid form and being in, even immersing myself in polyvocality.

Collective writing does not necessarily produce a “we”, but it is in its essence communal. It is a meeting-place, not only of the people involved in the workshop but for fictional characters, situations and places belonging to, or developed by the participants. Writing together offers a space where one can leave one's own agenda, and dive into the fictional world of the other. This opens up for cross-cultural interactions, and since the participants are equal in – as unique owners of their texts, this produces the potential of co-production of knowledge and empowerment.

Writing together is always – to a small or a large extent a communal experience. It demands meetings, physical, and in or between the texts. Most of the time, both. But the texts one ends up with does not necessarily become collective, or produced by these community. There can be many factors disrupting this: The introduction of an overriding plot or one dominating/main character. The introduction of one dominating point of view that overrides the other voices, or makes them succumb to it. A lack of ability to listen and respond to the other texts that are being produced by the group. In that case one ends up with blocks of texts that does not constitute anything as a whole, and can only function on their own – beside each other. On the other side, there is a potential danger of ending up with one dominating performative language. This often happens when the process of making a performance takes over. The performance becomes the main focus, and by that has the potential of unifying the different text-forms, or making them subcome to the concept or point of view of the performance itself.

The collective writing workshops are places for trial and tribulation. For exercise that can be just fun, but also has the potential to produce great results. It is an exercise in the experience of *my* input not being more essential than the input of the other. Where my world is as feasible as the other persons world. Where there is a constant flux between what is mine and what is shared, and that flux reveals what's actually mine to the writer. Things that have been hidden or seemed obvious comes to the surface. That which sets me apart stands out from that which does not in a written world that is shared.

In the workshops I state: *writing is not just a private matter.*

In it we «talk» with one another in text.

In the workshops I always look for:

What is at stake in this particular workshop, with this particular group of people?

How do *this* "we" sound?

How do that "sound" sound?

Every workshop has its own genesis.

Evolves its own methods, based on the methods and experience of the dramaturg, work-leader or head-writer. It always needs to be met with a set particular of questions, and will thereby also come up with it's own answers.

Through in-logs and out-logs, writing exercises and the potentiality of writing “on the floor” – it can also become a meeting-place for our hopes and dreams. For imagination. For that which has not yet happened. And in that respect it opens up for exchanging ideas on political, social and environmental perspectives without being de-railed by everyday mundane political opinions, motifs and conflicts. For creating new possible worlds.

NEW PLAYWRITING STRATEGIES

In his book *New Playwriting Strategies*, Paul C. Castagno states, that writing together has become a part of the game. Playwrights are building texts more collectively than in the past. The rigid parameter of the sole creative source has become less of a mantra:

*There is an emphasis on creating unique theatrical worlds, on surprising and chocking the audience, lifting from a variety of Sources (wikipedia, blogs, transcriptions and so on) or working collectively in collaborations – as befits the mission of companies like Clubbed Thumb, 13P, and Flea Theatre. More playwrights are creating through collaborators with actors, or encouraging collaborators to adapt aspects of their work to suit a particular Production (Castagno, Paul C., *New Playwriting Strategies*, New York, Routledge, 2012).*

They produce texts that are plural. Even contradictory. Hybrid in their form, and intrinsically dialogical and polyvocal.

Also in Europe collaborations produces interesting works. Not only in devised theatre and group constellations, but in writing collectives. Kristin Eiriksdottir wrote her shockingly brilliant *Karma for birds* together with Kari Ósk Grétudóttir, and some of the most interesting of Falk Richters work has come about through his close collaborations with the choreographer Anouk von Dijk.

Using the tool of these collective writing strategies, and exploring the hybrid form, the polyvocal and the dialogical as the essence of approach, strange and wonderful things can happen. Like when five writers from Norway, Israel and Palestine write together. All these texts communicate inside, in-between and in dialogue with texts by Runa Skolseng. She is the hub this clusters of texts cling too. And her text again, is bouncing off ours.

I

I haven't felt any big emotions lately

B

I am watching a movie about love, and there is everything, velvet coaches, chandeliers and beautiful dresses, it's a palace, from the palace you see the garden, the beautiful garden with more lights, you see people that runs through the garden, screaming names, kissing, but no stairs? Seriously, this is a love movie, and there is no stairs? I don't believe in that

I

I am in family with the future, I really hope I am in family with the future, bow your fuckhead my bird!

B

I am not sharing my pain with you, I am not sharing my pain with anyone, I am not a sharing kind of person

G

Life begins in the end of your comfort-zone!

B

I am always heading to new foolish horizons, I am always heading to new ridiculous units, yay, hurra hurra hurra, fuck fuck fuck fuck, if G only had said, LIFE BEGINS IN THE END OF MY COMFORT ZONE, FUCKHEADS!

Choir:

*We are building a palace
And we are building rooms
We are building stairs
and we are building
a mother
once a queen*

walking
around in her elegant
dresses with her elegant
flowers, where is my little
birdface, where is she?
The birdface is already gone
The birdface is building a palace
The birdface is building a
Kingsize bed
Just like Rihanna
Big thoughts
Half girl
Half bird
Is the body of the unpredictable
Is the mind of the unpredictable
Is the palace of the unpredictable

Literature:

Castagno, Paul C., *New Playwriting Strategies*, New York, Routledge 2012

Riceour, Paul, *Oneself as Another*, Chicago, *University of Chicago Press* 1994

Plays:

Kristin Eiríksdóttir Kari Ósk Grétudóttir *Karma for birds* Iceland National Theatre 2013

Links:

http://www.stage.is/english/news/interview_with_kristin_and_kari_authors_of_karma_for_birds/ (12.02.19)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jcjNtrH5duk> (12.02.18)

<https://www.hanze.nl/eng/research/centre-for-applied-research/art-and-society/professorships/professorships/image-in-context/research-projects/Being-Political/timelinegallery>
(12.02.19)

<http://kc.academiminerva.nl/labs> (10.01.19)