

**István BERSZÁN**

**Land-rover reading/writing exercises**

Talent support in the forest: Programme of the Invisible College

**1. Introduction**

**1.1. Inception of the programme; methodological properties of the research**

The best practice to be presented below goes back to an original research in literary writing and reading launched in the 1990s, viz. *practice research* designed to offset the excessive spread of interpretive and contextual inquiry. The point is not simply to make practice the subject matter of theoretical research, but to shift the practice of research from the disciplinary and interdisciplinary space with *operation-immanent*<sup>1</sup> attention in the focal point and from the culturally dominant rite of the discursive approach to contact-making, in order to regain the opportunities offered by the practice of contact-making, neglected (also) in our system of education. Instead of the social and medial functioning mechanisms associated with the flow of information, this approach transforms literature into exercises in writing and reading providing a shared space for the emergence of diverse relationships based on the occurrences themselves, not only their observation, and hence also for practical (ethical) orientation.

I will describe the literary talent development exercises on the basis of the experience of the Land-rover Reading/Writing (or RW) Camps. The volume of *Land-rover reading exercises* (Hungarian: *Terepkönyv*)<sup>2</sup> is the most complete summary so far of the results of practice research, presenting, on the one hand, ritual, flow-oriented exercises in writing and reading and, on the other, marking the direction of the proposed research relative to the contemporary trends. The book describes the series of exercises proposed by the author for a 7-day practice camp, which can be modified in line with the stage of the specific pilot and the needs of the participants ever, and puts it at the disposal of prospective practice managers

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<sup>1</sup> Operation-immanent attention detaches practice from the event, and derives every event under study from social, historical, medial, neuro-biological etc. laws and processes. Its immanence means that it does not exit the scope of observable operations and this, in turn, means that it neglects any other rhythm of the occurrences which can be contacted in some other way than observation, e.g. during literary reading and writing or while practicing other rites.

<sup>2</sup> BERSZÁN István, *Terepkönyv. Az írás és az olvasás rítusai – irodalmi tartamgyakorlatok (Rites of writing and reading – literary land-rover exercises)*, Kolozsvár, Koinónia, 2007.

with the proviso that they should first take part in at least one Land-rover RW Camp in the capacity of participant, not practice leader/facilitator.

Talent is practice-dependent: the discovery of gifts/abilities, the development of the capabilities and their cultivation to the level of excellence all depend on the skills acquired by the talented through practice. Any strategic, institutional, educational or instrumental development effort will only be fruitful if it encourages, assists, guides and rewards practising. Since cultivated talent is intensive practice in itself, the most outstanding talents are often practice-dependent in the almost pathological sense of the word, that is, they have a propensity to go to extremes in practising. There is no need to conceal this shady side of talent education; it is enough to note and warn that excessive practising is not a good routine. The development and preservation of a healthy rhythm of living is also a practical orientation task. To date, it is well-justified to assign those who can master that skill to the category of the greatest talents.

### **1.2. University, elite education and the arts (or: BBTE, Invisible College and literature)**

At the Faculty of Arts of Babeş-Bolyai University in Kolozsvár (BBTE), practical education has already been separated institutionally, too, from the professional grounding of prospective teachers, scientists, editors and writers for twenty years: teacher training has been organised by another faculty and a different teaching staff, and whatever has been left out of the theoretical or research-oriented understanding of this professional field has been provided through casual programmes and fora. The Invisible College, a background institution of the Department of Hungarian Literature, was formed in 1993 to remedy this situation by undertaking the complementary, tutorial, education of talented students selected through special enrolment exams at its workshops announced annually. Its four or five permanent workshops are led by members of the Department, who set up research and work groups to implement the specific project announced for the given year. For lack of adequate financial support (the Invisible College survives on *ad hoc* grant applications, without any normative support whatsoever), this specialised college can only cover part of the virgin areas of practical education, but that in itself contributes to a significant extent to easing the relevant deficiencies of Romanian higher education.

The *Practice Research Workshop* is one of the annually announced programmes of the Invisible College, where the participants meet with the workshop practice of an original research in literature, and they are provided encouragement and guidance to go beyond applying the results of the contemporary researches they encounter at university and to learn

to track the practical orientation inherent in the research, and to contemplate any cross-overs between the various orientation exercises. These researches in media theory, social history and other contextual approaches to the arts, respectively, examine historical processes and social-technological functioning mechanisms which are quite different from the rhythms of the arts exercises, but they nevertheless try to derive the latter from the former, or place the latter in the space of motion of the former. Starting out from this problem of *practice conversion*, the Practice Research Workshop endeavours to ritually trace certain artistic practices. University activity pursued during the academic year is complemented in the summer by the Land-rover RW Camps.

## **2. Land-rover RW Camps**

### **2.1. Participants, organisation criteria**

Besides the members of the Practice Research Workshop, Land-rover RW Camps are open to interested students participating at the university lectures of the practice leader and also to “subscribers” coming across practice research at conferences or through technical publications, who would like to test the idea in practice. Such contacts may be the starting point of exciting co-operation with artists and researchers active in other fields of art or science. The number of camp participants is limited at 15-16, or a maximum of 18. A larger group would hinder the smooth implementation of the individual and collective exercises in reading and writing which require intensive attention and paying attention to each other. The camp is organised at a place that is away from tourist traffic, e.g. a mountain camp (the exact venue changes year on year), which can be approached, but not reached by a leased microbus. Only the car carrying the camp equipment and food goes as far as the camp, whereas the participants themselves arrive there after a few hours of walk, with their individual camping equipment in their rucksacks.

Literary qualification is not a must for participation in a Land-rover RW Camp; some experience in intensive practising and the willingness to engage in reading and writing practices requiring full attention are enough.

### **2.2. Why the mountains?**

Applicants sometimes ask whether the mountains are essential for the WR exercises or making excursions is just a bonus. I usually answer that we would return to the issue if on the

second morning at camp they still considered it topical. Most indicate on the first morning that they do not.

We go to the mountains to learn to pay attention. In an institutionalised social and urban-technological setting one tends to rely on conventional signs or rules of operation, and to conceive of every event on the model of operating principles and symbolic processes. We often speak of workplace or marriage relations which *function* well or maybe not at all; at university we orient ourselves in the human and social sciences phenomena by cultural, ideological, rhetorical and medial functions. A natural forest without artificial walkways and paths provides less opportunity to rely on conventions, signs and rules of operation to find your way back to a camp, for example. And this is equally true of keeping silent in an effort to track what is going on around you. The mountains will call you (or trap you) in activities and surroundings where you are bound to acquire new skills and leave your routine social and technological practices behind. And this is an asset in learning how to pay attention. It may well be that the camp leader is but the assistant of the mountains in the practice camp. Anyway, the wilderness is not only the venue, but also the actual stage of the exercises.

### **2.3. Community and contact-making**

The wilderness surrounding an isolated self-sustaining community will soon evoke the “tribal skills” that make you extremely open to contact-making. If you want more than to “relate” to the other(s), it is not enough to be at the same place: you need perform joint activities at one and the same place, where you meet ritually, that is, in practice. Land-rover RW Camps offer a common *field of motion* through the practices themselves, but also as a part of camp routine: access to the campsite, supply of firewood and water, everyday kitchen tasks, meals around the campfire and, in smaller groups, sharing the same tent. The participants meet on several consecutive days in many common spaces, and this makes the community experience, less frequent and less intensive in our culture normally, extremely intensive. Some participants, unknown to each other before the camp, say it feels like they had known each other for a long time, and some who had known each other in some restricted way are glad about their surprisingly new relationship.

It is definitely not irrelevant whether intensive attention and the RW practices requiring both intensive attention and complex contact-making are offered to a public which meets for an hour or two in a lecture room or to camp-dwellers practising contact-making incessantly for days. The time of the occurrence depends, as usual, on the intensity of the gestures through which we establish contact with that occurrence.

### **3. Exercises for paying attention**

#### **3.1. Gesture therapy**

At Land-rover RW Camps, one learns to establish contact through the rhythm of the occurrences. Each culture has its dominant attention-paying rites, and it is much easier to make contact through such rites and it is not easy to forsake them. The predominant attention exercises narrow your field of movement since they diminish your capacity to track any occurrences obeying a different rhythm. If you are experienced in observation (reflection), calculation (anticipation of occurrences) and intervention (the alteration of what you make contact with), resonance or reliance (tuning your gestures to the impulses of other gestures) will be a major challenge. However, in the practice of orientation, e.g. in forging links with one another, that is at least as important as the previous items.

Our culture mostly stresses creativity also in connection with the arts, whereas reliance (e.g. the reliance of the painter on the model, of the musician on the composition, the narrator on the gestures followed in the story) is equally part of the skills/agility to be mastered.

##### **3.1.1. Wrist-exercise**

To prepare the ritual RW practices, it is not enough to interpret the above concepts: gesture therapy is needed to overcome the “inertia” of the dominant attention-paying rites in practice. For example, at first you will not be able to do the task of standing face to face, in pairs, wrists touching, and alternately tracking the motion of the other’s arm while preserving wrist contact. This is due to your bias towards the dominant rite of calculation, which will make you attempt repeatedly to calculate how the other’s arm following a certain pattern (say a circle) will continue its motion. Despite the task, instead of *tracking (following)* the other’s arm, you will rather want to anticipate its motion and hence your movement will be driven by your own calculations rather than the gestures of that arm. As a result, you will soon lose the rhythm of its motion: your wrists will part again and again as the other’s arm moves or sets out in a direction that does not necessarily coincide with your calculations.

To regain and retain the rhythm of the other’s arm, you must learn to follow. You will find that what you used to regard as passive permissiveness, simple drifting or the manifestations of the “herd spirit” actually requires thorough practising. First you will only catch the rhythm for a moment or so, then you will manage to keep it up for a longer time.

That's when you discover the intensity of the shared rhythm; when you come to the practical understanding that you underestimated the challenges implied by following (e.g. the other's movements).

### **3.1.2. The Hut**

Gesture therapy is like fasting: you must refrain from using your culturally ingrained dominant attention rites to become skilled in other rites. The same applies to your individual dominance efforts. You must learn to take part in events without striving to direct them. As in the case when we build a hut in the forest out of dry twigs which are easy to break off the tree and of fallen trunks, easy to move, without any premeditated design, any guidance and without a word. Silence is such a strict requirement in almost every Land-rover RW exercise that there is no speech at all from the start to the end of the practice, except where that is explicitly required, and only in the way it is required. This is essential for actually practising diverse kinds of contact-making besides the discursive one which is one of our culturally most dominant rites. Later on, we shall see also that speech itself may involve a varied arsenal of contact-making, depending on the attentiveness exercises shaping the given shared space.

The campers set out in the forest and start to build a hut at a place which offers a sufficient amount of building materials. Instead of proposing ideas, they calmly focus on finding a suitable place. If building starts at several places, you join the one that seems the most suitable, without any discussion. You never move a twig placed already by someone else, only add yours. The hut is built until it is big enough to accommodate you all, and its roof and walls are dense enough to provide protection from a short shower of rain.

The Land-rover RW Camps so far have shown that without planning, without a boss and without speech, the hut is completed surprisingly quickly. In the opinion of the participants, the same assignment would probably last much longer with planning, foremen and speech. For, shared practice depends, in the last analysis, on sharing the rhythm of the activity, i.e., in this specific case, on attuning every gesture to the discovered rhythm of hut-building. And that, in turn, may become much more intensive through ritual contact-making, if you practise that, than with the simple information-relaying yokes of planning and organisation. Good organisers and foremen are aware of this fact and this is why they typically transform common performance into common rites instead of choosing simple verbal communication with their workers.

Gesture therapy, composed of many practices similar to the above, sensitises you to the rhythm of the occurrences and awakens your skills required for establishing practical

resonance contacts with the subjects of your attention. At the same time, it enriches the actors with the experience of the ritual of shared duration, the experience that their gestures belong to the same rhythm or, in the deepest sense of the word, the same happens to all of them: they feel what the others feel.

I know that such sentences as the above are bound to attract critical notes, questions and denial. That is all right, for you must see for yourself (test) what I am writing about to make it valid for yourself. Testing all these statements, however, will require also practising tasks, not just critical inspection.

### **3.2. Writing and reading without pen and letters**

#### **3.2.1. Perceptual poem**

Practising first the writing and reading of poems and narratives without words may be of considerable help in learning how to orient yourself by gesture-reading when it comes to printed readings. The task is to make someone practise by applying non-symbolic impulses and to learn to follow non-symbolic impulses.

The writing and reading of the perceptual poem takes place in groups of three, composed of a poet, a reader and a literary person each, who fill these functions in rotation. The reader selects as library a favourite place where he can lie down comfortably and extend his arms backwards. This may be a soft mossy area, a flowery lawn, a thick layer of fallen leaves, a near-horizontal tree trunk or an even stone surface – a nice place visited with pleasure where he likes to be.

The poet first collects materials for the prospective poem in the nearby area, anything that he can use for the sensation flow to be detected by the reader on his naked underarm used as writing surface: a piece of bark, a cone, a branch, leaves, mud etc. He will apply them to design a choreography of interesting impulses. Instead of identifying the objects used by the poet one by one, the reader should follow the flow of sensations as a lyrical or musical flow of some kind. The literary person kneels down by the side of the poet and the reader to observe their common rite as closely as he can. He is to read the duration of the perceptual poem from the face of the reader.

In one camp, for a memorable poem the poet collected eight bone-hard twigs, the length of a span, and a sizeable piece of stone that could still be lifted by one hand, covered with moss on one side. The poem started with the poet rolling the thin branch-cylinders on the reader's arm by one hand and turning the heavy stone in the other so that each of its sides and

its ends should bear in turn on the sensitive reading surface. Then the stone was put in one hand of the reader and the twigs in the other, and the reader had to lift them from his elbow. Finally, the poet took the stone again in his hand, fixed the tip of each twig between two fingers, and he nailed the reader's hands to the lawn with this sledgehammer.

The reader felt the stabs of the remaining stubs of the twig-cylinders and the stroking of the smooth bark. At the same time, he felt the alternatingly dull or more acute weight of the smoother and warmer or harder and colder surface of the stone touching his other arm. Finally, instead of the emblematic interpretation of crucifixion, he could follow along his hands the vibrations of the twigs being hammered in between his fingers with the stone hammer.

### 3.2.2. The risk of reading

In this exercise, the narratives without words which are to happen to the reader are invented by author-pairs who orchestrate such impulses, instruments and scenes which let them guide the reader whose eyes are blindfolded by bodily impulses through the plot they had prepared. They are allowed to speak while consulting on their ideas, but the plot itself must be made readable without the use of symbolic signs: instead of communicating or evoking imaginary events by conventional signs, they help the reader enter the time of the event "invented" (transformed into a rite) by them. In the meantime, they undertake absolute responsibility to guard him with their lives, since the reader will make every effort to rely on any stimulus provided by the authors, the relevant risks notwithstanding. Without undertaking these risks of reading, he could not read the story. Having your eyes blindfolded helps you wait for what is happening instead of relying on the interpretation or preliminary outline of the story. This type of anticipation provides for highly intensive tracing – similar to Abraham's ability to accept the as-yet-unknown demand obediently in the gesture of "here I am".

The rhythm of a good story is unbroken, and it makes the reader execute intensive gestures. The reader of some authors climbed an enormous old pine tree and descended from it with his eyes blindfolded. On the way, one author guided his hands towards the handholds and protected his head from clashing against the branches, while the other helped him find a foothold. In providing such parallel impulses, the authors had to pay attention to practical readability, that is, they could definitely not entice the reader to make irreconcilable gestures.

In the assignment resulting in a story of harmonising swinging movements, the reader, his eyes blindfolded, was holding the middle of the rod, and the authors at the two ends of the rod led him from scene to scene to test several kinds of swings. First he sat on a flexible

branch which the authors set in a swinging motion. Then he clang to a high branch and became the swing himself. On the third occasion, he held the end of a long and pliable pine tree branch in his forward-stretched hands, leaning slightly back, his feet tied up at the ankle. The authors stood by his sides, pushing him by the elbow from his state of balance along an increasing curve from the side of one to that of the other and catching him before pushing him again. Finally, he was laid down on his back on the fallen leaves, gathered up by his hands and feet being fixed on the rod; the authors put the rod on their shoulders and carried him swinging on the rod to the end of the story.

### 3.2.3. Tobias bread

The Tobias bread story is “told” without any words by the practice leader. The students are to follow and assist the narrator as the story progresses. They accompany him to collect flat stones the size of 2-3 palms in the spring. To construct the open oven, they help cover the fireplace with a stone floor and surround it with larger stones to prevent the spread of the fire. No words are uttered in the meantime: the participants try to sense the rhythm of the story, that is, not to break it. They imitate the narrator in the same way as he collects twigs, breaks them into pieces for the fireplace and feeds the fire lit on the stone bank.

While the strong cone-shaped fire burns down to leave amber on the stones, the readers follow the narrator’s example as he kneads pastry from the flour and spices on the plate, adding spring water with caution. When the pastry is ready and nicely flattened, they help clear the amber and blow away the ashes from the stone of the oven, and they arrange the pieces of cheese and salami provided by the narrator on the middle of the pastry, folding the edges on top the same as Tobias had done, from whom the practice leader learned the story. The bags so prepared are put on the hot stones, and they are watched and turned over from time to time. The plot ends when each person consumes his Tobias bread, as does the narrator, and they drink some of the cold spring water left over from the kneading.

## **3.3. Wandering in the spaces of printed readings**

The previous assignments helped prepare the campers to focus on the gestures of the practice of writing, to follow their stimuli, also in case of printed reading materials; to become practised in attention rites to be entered on the “invitation” of a writing practice being read, and to establish resonance contact with an occurrence concurrently with reading it.

### 3.3.1. Reader monks

First you must learn to follow the sophisticated and hence extremely intensive motions of the writing practice. The “reader monks exercise” will help you do that. The practice leader distributes, as a pack of cards, the text cut into sentences by scissors. The monks withdraw into their reading nooks designated in the forest and the pasture to sit down there and attempt to follow the impulses in the sentences as intensively as possible by reading them several times to themselves. In the next phase of the exercise, they visit/receive each other in a predetermined order (to save them from having to find out how exactly while practising). During the visit, the guest sits down, leans his back against that of the host and the latter tells him his sentences, focussing his attention again on the impulses they contain. If he is not satisfied with his rendering, instead of brooding over that, he does his best to relay his message to the next guest even more authentically along the gestures of the sentences.

This is how the text is read. What is at stake is not to reconstruct the original order of the sentences, but to learn to roam in the space of a plot at the level of the gestures of the writing practice.

### 3.3.2. Reading tour

The day-long reading tour is also a practice for reading together. In addition to the daily provisions, the participants take the same reading excerpts with them. At the stations designated and ordered by the practice leader at proportionate intervals (the same ones on the way to the destination and back), the participants settle down with the reading that is next in line and they quietly read it through to themselves two or three times. They hear the splashing water of the brook and the birds singing – and all that is not an idyllic sentence as in this description, but a series of intensive occurrences.

The participants read out aloud a text fragment – there is no predefined order –, the one that conveyed a particularly intensive occurrence to them while they read it to themselves. When someone is reading out aloud, the others lift their heads from their sheets and follow him with full attention.

One instruction associated with the assignment contains a hunting story about how I try to get as close as possible to the game unarmed. We now lie in ambush for the sentences of the reading as a deer herd or a rummaging wild boar herd: whichever comes closest will be read out aloud. The other instruction concerns tomahawk-throwing. The practice leader shows how to throw the tomahawk into the thick trunk of a big pine tree from a distance of one or two spins. Then each person makes a few throws. You watch the person in front of you with your muscle tone instead of observing any specific feature, to be ready to make a try to aim,

swing the tomahawk and let it go when it is your turn. You learn to listen to the reading fragments read out aloud by the others the same way.

### 3.3.3. Land-rover Book

#### *The Land-rover book of RW exercises*

To make a land-rover book and to read it is to practise transition from one space of practice to another; to get to know the field of each other's motion. The participants perambulate a certain area as if they were reading, and they read the short text they took with them repeatedly, as if they perambulated an area. To read an area means paying attention to its every line and letter; to perambulate a reading area means to actually arrive to whatever we are reading at the same moment.

Every camper makes a book-page of the materials found while reading/roaming, the length and width of which correspond to the distance from his elbow to the tip of his finger and to two small spans (distance between the thumb and the index finger, outstretched), respectively. The reading page covered in water-resistant foil is mounted on that. Some fixed the reading material on a frame made of weed or branches, others on a large piece of flat stone. But book-pages have already been made of the shoulder-blades of cattle, the remains of a shoe covered with moss, pinecone strings fastened to one another and a wedge woven across with flowers, cut by chainsaw to determine the lay of a tree to be felled by chainsaw.

Once the pages are ready, everyone returns to the camp and they pile them on a carrier-stretcher made of rods. An amazing land-rover book is produced, which the practice leader puts into a cautiously selected library outside the camp. From that time on, the participants visit it one by one, as if going on a pilgrimage, and they go through the entire land-rover book by reading-roaming. If night falls in the meantime, the library corner may be surrounded by candle-torches fastened on short sticks.

When everyone has finished the reading pilgrimage, they gather around the land-rover book, and they re-edit it one by one so as to have the reading site which the editor found easiest to "reach" on top, and the one which he found most difficult to trace at the bottom. When an edited version is ready, the others all leaf through it, to get acquainted with the way of orientation of the editor, i.e. the skills by which he ordered the pages. It is not necessary to read the familiar readings line by line in this phase; it is sufficient to recall their spaces from a few lines.

It is interesting to see the diversity and the typical features of the topographies of the kinetic spaces we all develop through our life-practices; and to note what an intensive way of contact-making it may be to adopt the orientation practice of the other while reading.

### **3.4. Literary writing, common novel**

#### 3.4.1. Plastering a floor

Writing practice transgresses the borderline of literature the moment when its gestures become intensive enough. This is why you need so much practice to gain an insight into the rhythm of the occurrence being followed. I choose an example showing both the writing practice and the concurrent learning process:

“No one has pushed back the roof tiles moved by wind and storm to their place; the outhouse roof has leaked for years; the plastered floor became soaked, with large cracks, and the mice looking for winter quarters have also done their bit. I found chaff at the other end of the village, in an abandoned barn; I mixed it with water and clay, putting in a little cow dung to make it stick. I lifted up a few tiles to see what I was doing. I threw off the centuries-old hay; I found empty wine bottles underneath; the farmer was drinking in secret. Then I set out to do the plastering. I had seen plastering being done, but I have never done it myself.

As I made the first motions, smearing the fine, but strange-smelling mud with my palm, I felt under my gliding hand the unknown hand that had mudded up this hay loft properly, regularly, years, decades earlier. As a find from ancient times. My palm glided on the negative of his. My palm fitted into the place of his. I had goose flesh from sensing this old-time palm. I followed it. Earlier, I had asked my neighbours how to do the mudding, but I actually learned how to do it from him who had done it before me. Fate has never presented me with such a deep experience of learning. It made me happy and vigilant. I tried to do my job as he would have done it. I obeyed with my palm the guidance he gave with his, and this has become my knowledge of the operation and hence of his life.”<sup>3</sup>

(*Péter Nádas*)

#### 3.4.2. Novel

To follow each motion of an occurrence, follow the guidance of a palm, with yours – this is no doubt one of the most intensive attention-practices of literary writing. To experience it, we write the chapters of a novel together at the Land-rover RW Camps. We lie down in the grass,

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<sup>3</sup> NÁDAS Péter, *Évkönyv (Yearbook)*, Szépirodalmi Kiadó, Bp., 1989, 95-96.

radially, with our heads in the centre: all we see is the crown of the trees, the birds flying by, the transformation of the clouds and above all the blue colour of the sky while we set out to follow the occurrences of the camp days by body memory. Instead of contemplating what we would say about them, we focus all our attention on the occurrences themselves.

As I tell my kids, in bed already, an evening story, lying on the carpet, dozing off for a minute or so, but still proceeding with the story without ceasing my narrative. At such times I completely forget about the words, I follow the rhythm of the occurrence.

In a similar way, we take turns going around in the circle, and each person tells something about the camp events in sections (of one or two minutes). Two or maybe three rounds make up a chapter of our common novel. A few hours later or the next day another chapter of the novel might be told. It is important that, instead of focusing on what they want to say while someone is speaking, the others must follow the occurrence as if it was told by themselves – the radial posture, the voice of the other nearby and the same sky is a great asset in doing so.

## **4. Summary**

### **4.1. Non-competitive strategy of talent development**

Instead of competitiveness, practice research puts the emphasis in talent development on the capacity of contact-making, i.e. a certain advanced expertise in establishing contact with the environment, the others and the events. Talent practice and development is not necessarily associated with competition: challenge is not the sole type of intensive stimulus. On the contrary: competing often narrows down the possibilities of contact-making and it may also divert the attention from the practice used as its pretext. Our talent may develop in a much healthier way if we tune ourselves more and more intensively to the events of the kinetic/attentive space where we practise our talent instead of trying to utilise the results of talent practice in a different field of motion (that of competition) from the start. For, once you consider performance the only measure of talent, the time of practising becomes an investment to achieve a certain *output* and loses much of the richness of its duration as a result. This mentality is responsible to a large extent for the fact that most people do not enjoy practising what they are talented in or even give up any further cultivation of their talent.

The performative-competitive concept of efficiency is misleading: success in the sense of overcoming others proves to be much smaller in the long run than success achieved with

others, and success will diminish also if some co-operate to overcome others. The greatest talents are needed to overcome the problems that turn us against one another: men against the natural environment or other species; diverse cultures, nations, firms and colleagues against each other. I do not deny the reality of war and competition, but I do not want to make them the model examples of practical orientation. If we did not educate the talented in this spirit either, we would probably be more efficient in disarming hostility belonging to our world or to our own reality. Hostility may be immanent to our nature, but talent practice is exactly about cultivating our talents instead of just accepting them.

The arts, literature included, can give considerable assistance in attuning ourselves to the alternatives, not less intensive in the least, of competitive challenges. The development of the skills of contact-building will make you more demanding also in practical orientation without reading, and through practice you gain a life-time that is rich in content. Many talents are lost because their owners remain unpractised or, what is the same, unilaterally practised in contact-making. Artistic education might play a decisive part in offsetting that tendency and it may contribute substantially to the development of the mentality according to which our identified and acknowledged incompetency can be remedied through the capacity for practical orientation.

#### **4.2. Impacts of practice research experiments**

The experiential exploration of the common space of the rites of reading and writing at the Land-rover RW Camps organised since 2000 has generated and confirmed the participants' need for similar duration/flow exercises outside the camps. Not only of teachers as prospective Land-rover RW Camp leaders of their students, but also of young (often not literary) talents who can put to use what they learn at the Camps in their own fields of practice. Practice research is not restricted to literary reading and writing. Students of Moholy-Nagy University of Arts and Design, Budapest, have made interesting examination pieces embodying the musical, fine arts and movie approaches after lectures and seminars on practice research and Land-rover reading exercises. Practice research inspired a PhD student in architecture to investigate the kinetic/attentive spaces of residential facilities, the results of which he exploits also in architectural projects.

After my invitations to the Italian University of Science in Florence and the Finnish University in Jyväskylä where the bulk of the audience of my lectures, seminars and exercises will be those in the “profession”, I plan to organise a Land-rover RW Camp also for students

participating in other than artistic or even humanistic studies based on the assumption that the skills of paying attention and learning to do so are the best mentors for any type of talent.

The long-term goal of practice research is to lay the foundations of an ethics of orientation which may contribute to the recognition that technology and the social/institutional mechanisms cannot replace the rites which create a duration community, and which may provide us practical assistance to regain our fields of practice threatened by competition or other globally dominant contact-making rites.

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