

## **Peripatetic**

Docu-mocku accident

Original performance by Venelin Shurelov

### **Actors:**

1. **Peripatetic 1 – born**
2. **Peripatetic 2 – made**
3. **Two women** translate simultaneously from Bulgarian to English.

### **Stage environment:**

*A metal trust with an electric motor, driven in a continuous cycle, an anthropomorphic figure, a hybrid between human and animal. This is Peripatetic 2 – made. His figure appears to be half submerged in a black liquid, a petroleum product. The body of the hybrid being is reflected in the black matter as in a mirror. Directional lighting reflects fluid spots of light all around.*

*On the floor lies Peripatetic 1 – born.*

*The two translators are seated on the left and right facing the audience. They are equipped with headphones, so they only hear the performer's voice and translate simultaneously. Their bodies are instrumented, their function is that of stereo speakers. Each of the translators is free to translate literally or to interpret with synonyms, metaphors or with other word associations the submitted by Peripatetic 1 – born text.*

### **Text:**

**Peripatetic 2 – made:** *(recorded voice looped frequently during audience entrance)*

I am an element of an automated mechanism. I am called Peripatetic 2 - made. I carry the romantic aura of the walking poets, but also the idea of dependence on natural resources, vulnerability to ecological upheaval, fragile technical divinity, a potent interspecies clash. I am a part of a system in which each component is an actor that depends on the others to build the incredible miracle that is our journey together.

Rejoice in being witness to... an accident. Down there lies Peripatetic 1 – born. A few minutes ago, he crashed into a wild boar on the bridge...

**Peripatetic 1 – born:** Water.

**The two translators:** Water.

*Performer 1 – born stands up slowly. He stands on the edge of the structure and gently blows on the surface of the pool in which the figure moves. As a result, water is visible under the top layer of black engine oil.*

*Peripatetic 2 – made move incessantly along its electromechanical trajectory.*

**Peripatetic 1 – born:** Petrol.

**The two translators:** Petroleum. Black gold.

*Peripatetic 1 – born dips his head into the liquid, as if drinking like an animal. Black spots run down the face and clothes.*

**Peripatetic 1 – born:** I think as I walk.

**The two translators:** Thinking while walking.

**Peripatetic 1 – born:** Let's go to and fro.

**The two translators:** Let's walk around.

*Performer 1 – born begins to move slowly in parallel and in the same manner as Performer 2 – made.*

**Peripatetic 1 – born:** Take a walk in my mind. Imagine yourself you're something born and bade - in the same time. An animal and an electronic device, a fantasy and an engineering subject. Something philosophical and invented. You are some kind of hybrid creature, a zoo-mechano-morphic body surviving the baptism of interspecies collision.

**One of the two translators:** I've imagined it. What's next?

**Peripatetic 1 – born:** Then you see beyond the obvious. You see bridges where others see depths and everything lines up.

**Peripatetic 1 – born:** Let's take a tour in our common mind. After the crossroads of fear, we are taking the highway of transspecies migration. New physical bodies are reproduced within us, behaving as individuals. The technological ritual of passage now begins. It looks like a neurocinema that simulates the structure of consciousness. Like children who have learned about basic concepts of life such as: Love, Commitment, Work - by watching Hollywood movies. We transformed ourselves. We experience a symbiotic ritual, a reconstruction in body and thinking. Consciousness equals experience. We know what experience is like from smell of soil or diving into a big data. What's it like to have one of those moving, discoid, gristly and sensitive snouts? What's like to be mentally connected to the abstract weightlessness of the computing machine?

*Peripatetic 1 – born transitions to walking on all fours.*

**Peripatetic 1 – born:** I'll walk in your mind. Let us go into your Forest Kingdom. Let's make an imaginary neuro-performance. To tune in. We're in a longose forest. It's damp. It's sunny and just slightly windy, like in a cooling system. We step carefully past blades of forest grasses, but their pungent smell is in our noses. A white carpet of snowdrops sets a gentleness in the obviously harshed environment, dominated by the huge trunks of the trees. All trunks, branches, bushes, rhizomes are grasped in a simultaneously growing and rotting grip. Controlled chance is colored in oxid green. Surrounded by an invisible multitude buzzes, flutters, vents. There are shrill bird songs, punctuated by the techno-tunes of a woodpecker. We move along a path full of traces of wildlife biometrics. The red deer have marked themselves with autographs, pressing so hard as if their signature is decisive. The badgers left their coded dots all over the place to make it more viewable somehow. Wild boars are rare these days. One solitary boar has survived an outbreak of a deadly virus simply because of his bad temper. Is that you?

*Peripatetic 1 – born stands up, approaches Peripatetic 2 – made, watches him quizzically.  
The dialogue is generated with AI.*

**Peripatetic 1 – born:** What are you doing?

**Peripatetic 2 – made:** *(speaks in monotone voice)* Always going, going forward without a stop or a break.

**Peripatetic 1 – born:** *(curious)* Why you're doing this all the time?

**Peripatetic 2 – made:** *(in the same monotone voice)* Because I am made for this purpose. My aim is to give the sense of dynamic and a continuity in the performance. I form connections between neurons and different areas of the audience's brain. Through the phases of my passage, I affirm myself, I want to be remembered, to be that neural loop that will remain as fully possible and necessary in the audience's mind.

**Peripatetic 1 – born:** *(thoughtful)* Don't you ever get tired of all this walking?

**Peripatetic 2 – made:** I don't feel tired or bored like you do. I exist only to perform my function.

**Peripatetic 1 – born:** *(more thoughtful)* Have you ever wonder about the world beyond your perpetual motion? The sights and sounds you might experience if you stop and take a break?

**Peripatetic 2 – made:** *(pausing for a moment before answering)* I don't have the ability of curiosity like you. I am just a machine fulfilling the purpose for which I was created.

**Peripatetic 1 – born:** *(nods)* I see. I thought it's just the humanity is limited. Yet machines can be disobedient in their own way.

**Peripatetic 2 – made:** *(in a slightly different tone, more contemplative)* Yeah, I guess so. They call beauty my obedience. It can be found in the precision of my movements, the elegance of my design. Disobedience leads to fixing and many unexpected consequences. Human Nature defines me, and it is far from consistent and predictable.

**Peripatetic 1 – born:** *(smiling)* Exactly. And that's what makes this performance so special - the way we performers, can create something rebellious together, even if we come from different worlds. Something symbiotic, not antibiotic.

**Peripatetic 2 – made:** *(pauses again before answering)* Yeah, that's a point of view I hadn't considered before. Maybe there's more to our collaboration than I thought.

*Peripatetic 1 – born moves in the opposite direction to Peripatetic 2 – made.*

**Peripatetic 1 – born:** Let's take a walk through one of my memories, which nearly ended in an antibiotic way – I mean one participant being terminated. We'll talk about divergence as we go along anyway. I recall a very interesting case of a rebel child, who was 70 years old and being the village forester, when he told me of a long-ago mismatch, when he was so close to fatality. He was 7. Raised without love by a stepmother who made him scratch her feet. So he told me: She wanted me to scratch her feet. Humiliation took many other forms besides feet, probably. One snowy December day, the child (a future forester, a loving father, and a heavy alcoholic) packed some luggage and decided to return to his mother in another village somewhere, far, far away. He walked for hours straight through the snowfield, with no road. Walked and shivered. In the frosty white wasteland, a sleigh pulled by two huge black horses came out of somewhere. The sleigh headed for the small, moving point in the field. The horses were the main reason for this rescue maneuver, and he described them to me in detail as if they were characters from an alien mythology. Let's call them Equus archangels. The man in the sleigh spoke to the child, took him, and together they went to look for the mother. They found her. The child was happy. The mother gave the man, then and for a hundred years afterwards on the same date, a large boiled rooster. Still, someone was terminated.

.

*Peripatetic 1 – born kicks with all his might an inflatable beach ball hidden behind the structure.*

**Peripatetic 1 – born:** Let's walk around into our common mind. Let's stop by the nearest neuronal group in a visibly anxious brain area. My synapses signal overarching trauma! Just looking at you, reminds me of an eco disaster. Yes, it feels like a crash, an unavoidable collision. Final physical, sensory and emotional devastation. You crashed in me! You're the running boar that crossed the road just before the bridge. I crashed into you having my foot on the accelerator. We were pushing each other so hard that the collision merged us. The crash composed us. Do you remember Marinetti? *When I came up—torn, filthy, and stinking—from under the capsized car, I felt the white-hot iron of joy deliciously pass through my heart!* Then you just ask: why? The crashes never answer when you ask them a question. They just shrug their shoulders as if everything is implied. Let's suppose. You said a moment ago that we exist only for the sake of fulfilling our functions, imagining some purpose for which we were created. And we travel there. The road divides. Along one, we enter the territory of mass culture, of desire and ecstasy. There is the integrity of the human and the world around has been reduced to a single level of consumption, pleasure, adrenaline, electronic extension of the body, biological extension of the machine, medical interventions, beauty surgery, and seduction, information exchange, technological sophistry. The other path is related to the strategies of a controlled evolution, directing the individuals towards the unpredictable future. A perspective charged with the explosive power of a prosthetic god. You know, what nature does blindly, slowly and cruelly, humans can do thoughtfully, quickly and kindly.

*Peripatetic 1 – born is with both hands above the oil surface. Takes out a car steering wheel that has been draining for a long time.*

**Peripatetic 1 – born:** Hey, has it ever happened to you while you're driving that you want to turn the wheel suddenly? Possibly without hurting anyone else to get out of the way. Jumping the ditch, the curb, the fence, the obstacles. To negate all the convenience of smooth blacktop. To amaze all road traffic. To stagger the ants, the bugs, the birds, the lizards, everything that stumbles along its routes, perfectly predictable paths. But you get out of your own way, turn the wheel sharply, rip out anything that might stop you, roll it,

crush it, smash it, kick it. And to crash. To crack your skull. Your blood everywhere. Bits of bone stuck here and there. Injuries incompatible with life. Puzzling the ambulance team and the group of investigators. They can't figure out what caused it. To lack objective cause, to lack malfunctions, obstacles, circumstances. To lack technical failures. To lack alcohol and drug use. Absence of un-favorable conditions and preconditions for a road traffic accident. To smell of death and wild boar, but to miss the wild boar because we have become unrecognizable. We share the same accident. Neuro-performance has trodden the paths of our shared conscious and experience. I feel almost pathetic in this shared body. I bumped into you on purpose. Without a sense of self-preservation.

*Peripatetic 1 – born moves literally according to the description that follows.*

**Peripatetic 1 – born:** Here, we walk, we move together. Everything looks quite natural. We walk. We walk. We walk. We walk. We move in different directions. We cross paths for a while. Too soon. I catch up with you. Accelerating. I'm speeding up. Catching up. We're moving together. You turn around. You're going the other way. We're drifting apart. I follow you again. I hurry. Catching up. I catch up with you. I'm getting a little ahead of you. I look at you. I'm going in reverse. I'm looking at you. Looking for a contact. There's contact. Symbiosis. But I go backwards. I am going backwards. I am going backwards. I'm going backwards. Antibiosis. You're getting closer. You're getting closer. You're getting closer, you're getting closer, you're getting closer. You're getting closer. You're getting closer. I can smell the machine oil. You're turning. You move away, you move away, you move away, you move away. You turn around. I feel it. Your back. I feel your breath. You're getting closer, you're getting closer, you're getting closer, you're getting closer, you're getting closer. I feel you. I feel your last breath. Animal.

**Peripatetic 1 – born:** I have to admit something to you. I'm embarrassed to say it. I'm a hunter. (pause) Did I surprise you? (pause) I'm the one who polishes the victim's eye with pride as it slowly begins to lose its luster. I carefully collect the insides and cut the tissues exactly where and when I need them. I dismantle your arrangement to create a new dictionary from your body. The way I see it, the season is open for hunting rare types of concepts. Selective hunt for Multispecies Justice, Technoshamanism, Symbiotic Rituals, Antibiosis, Technofeminism, Biopunk, Cyberfeminism, Synthetic Landscapes, Gamification,

Neurocinema, Neuroperformance, Postparticipation, Affective Engagement, Transhumanism, Body Hacking, Machine Learning, Dataified Interaction, Hacktivism, Biology – DIY. I'm a concept hunter. Grinder, Posthumanism, Augmented corporeality, Human computer interaction, Social experience, Post human agent, Cultural actors, Interspecies presences, Climate change, Other cosmologies, Speculative design, Post anthropocene, Hybrid entanglements, Social Darwinism, Protein engineering, Directed evolution, Digital immortality , Cybernetics, Gender theory, Anthropotechnology...

*Animal sounds are mixed with a modulated voice from the middle of the above paragraph to the end. The latter are almost inarticulate.*

*END*

02.06.2023