

The Apology Workshop

Description:

The Apology Workshop takes on an inquisitive method to analyze, and intervene into the rituals, habits, and politeness of the day.

It is interested in the ways in which we express regret, and shame through the apology, as complex emotion are fertile grounds for collective transformation. Distinct from the neoliberal consensus, that works to remove of spaces of dissensus, arguments and conversations, the apology thrives on acknowledging differences, and does not ask for unity. The crafting of an apology requires rigorous treatment of its content, and its effectiveness is directly evident in events of the everyday. It is an incredibly economical device to rehearse for improvements, and accessible for intervention.

The Apology workshop is a seminar that aims to dissect the structure of a well-crafted sample apology in order to shed light on the crisis that is the state of our apologies today. It is a classroom for the artist, where participants are invited to examine the proposed structure of an apology. It is a rehearsal room that invites for a collective edit of the script using the sample apology. It is a theatre, where the drama of final edits are performed for the public, and for each other within the gallery.

Through the invitation to alter the script of the sample apology, the workshop hopes to introduce arguments and disagreements- elements integral to the formation of social relations. The participants are encouraged to use the artist as the object for rehearsal (Apology to Zou Zhao).

How do we apologize to one another, and on what grounds do we apologize to each other? The attempt to write, and rehearse our collective apology will reveal ethos, and pathos of our our time.

The apology is in focus here. A well crafted apology exemplifies a hope for reconciliation, camaraderie, and a promise to listen. It requires the structure of representation, (for one could only apologise on behalf of another, even if a different version of the self), defense of an idea (motivation for the action to apologize for), emotional intelligence to read the feelings and attitude of others, and an effective mode of address...

Definition of an Apology:

An apology should do three things at once: It should be able to clarify the motivation of a previous action, that is the clarification, and defense of an idea. (This much is in debt to Plato's apologia which is essentially a defense for Socrates' Trial). Second, it should acknowledge the hurt that one's action has done to someone else, and take responsibility for it. Third. It should be able to express and echo the sentiments of the complex feelings of the addressee. It should be able to be made in public.

It is also important to realize that an apology comes from a place of privilege, and is not without its own elements of coerciveness. Notice that with an apology, the speaker is assumed to have placed the ball in his addressee's court, on top of expecting redemption from himself, with the acknowledge of the addressee, invited as witness. Last but not least, with an apology, an image of the future, is what it presents essentially. It is an image which both the speaker, and the addressee has been interpellated. This part is also most challenging, because of its inherent potentially violent nature of interpellating another into one's own narrative. A sophisticated apology requires the speaker to listen and rigorously dismantle his own assumption to reduce damage, in keeping with the need to work towards achieving equality in dialogue...

Leading questions:

What would you apologise for, to me.

What would you apologise for, on behalf of me.

What would you apologise for, on behalf of me to someone else in public office.

What would you apologise for, on behalf of me to the public space.

What would you apologise for, in private.

What would you apologise for, in public.

Under what circumstances would you apologize in a public space.

What can we possibly apologize for on behalf of each other, to the public.

What can we possibly apologize for, to each other.

What is your collective apology to Xi Xi the artist.

What is the apologia? (What idea are you defending?)

How would you improve and modify it, after hearing the feelings, attitudes and feedbacks from the others?

Editing the sample apology, into a collective apologia. Everyone needs to agree with it.

Performing the apology:

How can we distribute the sensible of a collective apologia?

What are some of the ways we can distribute that? We speak in the "I", but speak and perform different parts.

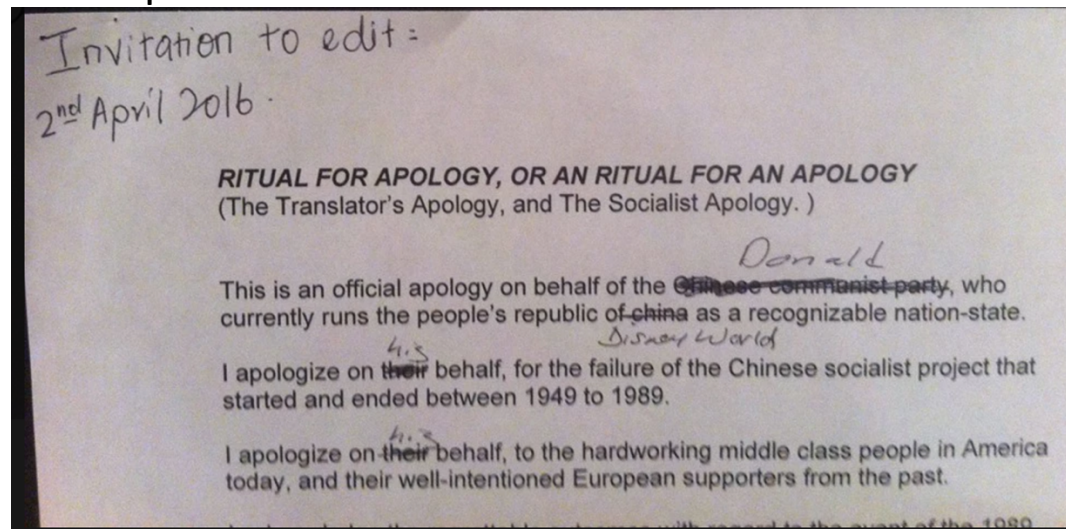
Performance support:

4 music stands. 2 microphones.

The performance is towards the public, and also for each other in the workshop.

The artist is willing to be the stand-in/placeholder as the recipient of the apology.

One example of an edit:



One Example of a collective apology performance:



Collective apology by Bryan Wilson, and Zou Zhao, Wallach Gallery, New York.

**Sample Apology
Invitation to edit:**

(The socialist Apology, the translator's apology)

Official Apology Announcement

This is an official apology on behalf of the Chinese Communist Party, who currently runs the People's Republic of China as a recognizable nation-state.

I apologize on their behalf, for the failure of the Chinese Socialist Project, that started and ended between 1949 to 1989.

I apologize on their behalf, to the hardworking middle class people in Singapore today, and their well-intentioned European supporters from the past.

I acknowledge the regrettable outcomes with regard to the event of the 1989 Tiananmen square student led protest, on at least 2 levels: the giving up of the socialist project altogether, and the willing assimilation into capitalism by supplying it with cheap labor, following America's needs. This is done in disregard to the intellectual and student protests all across the country.

This apology will attempt to cover both historical decisions that propelled this failure, and the continued legacies of these poor decisions.

You will sense in this apology, a sense of melancholia, for, I understood that it could certainly have gone very well indeed. There were support from our European, South East Asian, Latin American, and Tibetan allies.

This apology calls for my envisioning of what could have happened otherwise. While it is true that many events has gone badly during the Socialist Project, but that should not amount to giving in to Capitalism altogether. For this reason, I apologize to you all here most sincerely.

It is regrettable the Chinese Socialist Project has not deliver its potential, nor its promises to its own people, Singapore, or to the rest of the world. I apologize for failing to deliver emancipation to humanity, as promised—for that was the idea.

Through this apology, I hope we move forward from past mistakes, and move backward to re-examine history with compassion, and generosity.

The Translator's apology

****原来,**

So, and so, and so, and so....

****姹紫**

This is an outdated tune in Chinese popular music. No one sings it anymore.

****嫣红开遍**

Red and purple flowers bloomed.

Here, a parody of the translator.
Translation is impossible.

Our relationship with 'present-ness', now depends on a song. The dilemma becomes more acute.

TRUTH IS, WE ARE ALL STUCK IN A KIND OF A PERPETUAL PRESENT. WE ARE DEFINED OF A PAST,
BUT BARRED OF A FUTURE.

A woman will later appear to us through a dead song. Modern language's attempt to decipher her
nuances puts us on a spot.

****姹紫, 嫣红开遍, 似这般都付与断井颓垣。**

Red and purple flowers bloomed. I am speculating on it alone. There are only cracks on the walls.

Now, my task is to capture the thought in one dead language, and the reality it claims to put before
me, and then, express it in a way hoping that you will understand.

****姹紫, 嫣红开遍, 似这般都付与断井颓垣。**

Red and purple flowers bloomed. I am speculating on it alone. There are only cracks on the walls.

The deeply problematic aspiration becomes the chef concern of our current conversation.

My aim today is merely to provoke a feeling of agreeability, some sort of consensus between you
and I, and nothing more. On that regard, I think we are doing alright.

The rest can wait. The rest can wait!

So you will see I push on further here. But it is not without the unusual insistence that is the
translator's conventional warning and apology.

And then, I take the liberty. I move on.

****良辰美景奈何天**

Good hour, beautiful scenery.
How do I wait for time to come?
How do I share this with you?

****姹紫, 嫣红开遍**

Red, and Purple Flowers Bloomed. I wish you could see them.

Conclusion

Because of the above failures, we are now witnessing consequences MANIFESTED GLOBALLY, such as:

- 1) worsening global cyber security
- 2) Whatever that is going on in South China Sea
- 3) The outbreak of the Zika Virus

Finally, I apologize for trying to hijack the Americans' own journey to realize on their own accord, the inherent pitfalls of capitalism, the inherent pitfalls of their own game.

Together: NEVERTHELESS, I TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SAY: I RECOMMEND CHINESE SOCIALISM AS REMEDY TO SAVE AMERICA FROM ITSELF!*

***Key:**

Highlighted yellow parts are place-holder for non-verbal communications, preferably a song. The highlighted text is the punchline of the work.