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Choreographing Agonism

Chantal Mouffe's Political Philosophy
and Contemporary Performing Arts

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Summary

This PhD employs contemporary political philosophy and performance theory. Its objective is to explores the relevance of political philosopher Chantal Mouffe's notion of agonism for performance theory, by continuously looking at the different philosophical, political and artistic discourses that cherish performance theory nowadays. Since agonism implies conflict and struggle, the main research question of this dissertation is: how might performance contest dominant politics and contribute to the constitution of democratic politics giving rise to alternative ways of living together?

To answer this question, it was necessary to unfold a politico-philosophical framework of Mouffe's notion of agonism. Therefore, this dissertation starts with the observation of two distinct trajectories within contemporary continental philosophical thought: the trajectory of immanence (Deleuze) and the trajectory of quasi-transcendence (Derrida).[1] Whereas the former gives rise to the project of absolute democracy (Hardt, Negri), the latter gives rise to the project of agonistic democracy (Mouffe). The distinction between these two philosophical and political trajectories is deepened in psychoanalytic terms and envisaged as a distinction between the positive ontological imaginary of abundance — desire for being in-itself, and the negative ontological imaginary of lack — desire for the lack-of-being. It is stressed that the negative ontological imaginary of lack anticipates a co-constitutive relationship between lack and abundance, precisely because the dimension of negativity precludes both the idealisation of lack and the idealisation of abundance.[2] The suggested co-constitutive and agonistic type of relationship between the paradoxically differential positions, such as lack and abundance, also became a challenge to philosopher Jacques Rancière's one-sided political model of communal anarchism, which advocates politics of disorder above the politics of order, or *mise-en-sense* above *mise-en-scène*.[3] In order to move towards pluralism, relations between the paradoxically differential positions are envisaged in terms of dialectics. Relational dialectics recognise antagonistic conflicts and polemics to be inherent in societies (Gramsci, Schmitt). Further on, antagonistic conflicts and polemics are envisaged by means of discourse formation (Laclau, Mouffe), allowing for the articulation of antagonism into agonism (Mouffe).[4] The operation of articulation requires articulation of initial immediacy into discursive

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[1] See chapter 1.

[2] See chapter 2.

[3] See chapter 3.

[4] See chapter 4.

mediation: of order into disorder, abject bodies into intelligible bodies, *mise-en-sens*e into *mise-en-scène*[5], horizontal politics into vertical politics, passive onlookers into active citizenship,[6] the multitude into the people[7], and affects into representation[8]. The operation of articulation requires a view on societies — including social practices of performance — in terms of discourse, hegemony and antagonism. These three political components enable us to envisage what I call the contesting political dimension of performance that is manifested through the strategies of engagement, giving rise to the choreography of articulation. The insights into contemporary performances by Arkadi Zaides[9], Mette Edvardsen[10], Marlene Monteiro Freitas[11], and Rimini Protokoll[12], are just some of the possible examples that allow us to observe how choreographing agonism performance practice and performance theory may contribute to the constitution of democratic politics and different ways of living together.

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[5] See chapter 3.

[6] See chapter 4.

[7] See chapter 5.

[8] See chapter 6.

[9] See chapter 1.

[10] See chapter 2.

[11] See chapter 3.

[12] See chapter 5.

Choreografie van agonisme
Hedendaagse podiumkunsten en de politieke filosofie van Chantal Mouffe

Samenvatting

Dit doctoraat is een toepassing van politieke filosofie en performancetheorie, met als doelstelling het onderzoeken van de relevantie van de notie 'agonisme' in het werk van de politieke filosofe Chantal Mouffe voor performancetheorie. Dit wordt bereikt door grondige inspectie van de verschillende filosofische, politieke en artistieke discoursen die performancetheorie heden ten dage koesteren. Aangezien agonisme conflict en strijd impliceert, is de hoofdonderzoeksvraag van deze dissertatie: hoe kan performance tegenstand bieden aan de heersende politiek en bijdragen aan de totstandbrenging van een democratische politiek die alternatieve manieren van samenleven doet ontstaan?

Om deze vraag te beantwoorden, was het noodzakelijk om het politiek-filosofisch kader van Mouffe's notie van agonisme uiteen te zetten. Daarom begint deze dissertatie bij de observatie van twee verschillende trajecten binnen het hedendaagse continentale filosofische denken: het traject van immanentie (Deleuze) en het traject van quasi-transcendentie (Derrida).[13] Waar eerstgenoemde het project van absolute democratie op gang brengt (Hardt, Negri), brengt laatstegenoemde het project van agonistische democratie op gang (Mouffe). Het onderscheid tussen deze twee filosofische en politieke trajecten wordt uitgediept in psychoanalytische termen en beschouwd als een onderscheid tussen het positieve ontologische denkbeeldige van overvloed - het verlangen naar in-zichzelf-zijn, en het negatieve ontologische denkbeeldige van gebrek - het verlangen naar gebrek-aan-zijn. Het wordt beklemtoond dat het negatieve ontologische denkbeeldige van gebrek de co-constitutieve relatie tussen gebrek en overvloed anticipeert, precies omdat de dimensie van negativiteit zowel de idealisering van verlangen als de idealisering van overvloed vooropstelt.[14] Het gesuggereerde co-constitutieve en agonistische type relatie tussen de paradoxaal differentiële posities, zoals gebrek en overvloed, werd ook een uitdaging voor het eenzijdige politieke model van communaal anarchisme van filosoof Jacques Rancière, dat pleit voor een politiek van wanorde boven een politiek van orde, ofwel *mise-en-sense* boven *mise-en-scène*.[15] Om naar een pluralisme van posities te gaan, worden relaties tussen paradoxaal differentiële posities beschouwd in termen van dialectiek. Relationele dialectiek erkent antagonistische conflicten en polemiek als inherent aan samenlevingen (Gramsci, Schmitt). Verder worden antagonistische conflicten

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[13] Zie hoofdstuk 1.

[14] Zie hoofdstuk 2.

[15] Zie hoofdstuk 3.

en polemiek beschouwd door middel van discoursvorming (Laclau, Mouffe), wat de uitdrukking van antagonisme in agonisme toelaat (Mouffe).[16] De operatie van uitdrukking van een initiële directheid in een discursieve bemiddeling: van orde in wanorde, abjecte lichamen in begrijpelijke lichamen, *mise-en-sens*e in *mise-en-scène*[17], horizontale politiek in verticale politiek, passieve omstaanders in actief burgerschap,[18] de menigte in het volk[19], en affecten in representatie[20]. De operatie van uitdrukking vereist een visie op de samenleving - met inbegrip van de sociale praktijk van performance - in termen van discours, hegemonie en antagonisme. Deze drie politieke componenten stelden ons in staat om in beschouwing te nemen wat ik de tegenstrevende politieke dimensie van performance noem, gemanifesteerd in strategieën van engagement, die de choreografie van uitdrukking doet ontstaan. De inzichten in hedendaagse performance van Arkadi Zaides[21], Mette Edvardsen[22], Marlene Monteiro Freitas[23], en Rimini Protokoll[24], zijn maar enkele van de mogelijke voorbeelden die ons toelaten om te observeren hoe performancepraktijk en -theorie door de choreografie van agonisme kunnen bijdragen aan de totstandbrenging van democratische politiek en verschillende manieren van samenleven.

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[16] Zie hoofdstuk 4.

[17] Zie hoofdstuk 3.

[18] Zie hoofdstuk 4.

[19] Zie hoofdstuk 5.

[20] Zie hoofdstuk 6.

[21] Zie hoofdstuk 1.

[22] Zie hoofdstuk 2.

[23] Zie hoofdstuk 3.

[24] See chapter 5.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

By 'the political' I mean the dimension of antagonism which I take to be constitutive of human societies, while by 'politics' I mean the set of practices and institutions through which an order is created, organizing human coexistence in the context of conflictuality provided by the political.

Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political* (London: Routledge, 2005), 9.

This dissertation is an investigation of the political dimension of art and, more specifically, of what I call the contesting political dimension of performance. The main research question is: how might performance contest existing politics and contribute to the constitution of democratic politics giving rise to alternative ways of living together? My research starts with an inquiry into the natures of discourses on 'the political' in performance theory. Many books have been written about the relationship between performing arts and politics. In *Theatre & Politics* (2009), performance scholar Joe Kelleher gives an overview of the different philosophical discourses that inspired theatre and performance philosophers to envisage the political dimension of performing arts.[25] Throughout the years, the political dimension of performing arts had been designated by a variety of verbs: to mark (Peggy Phelan), to mobilise (Randy Martin), to engage (André Lepecki), to transgress (Hans-Thies Lehmann), to transform (Erika Fischer-Lichte), to undermine (Bojana Cvejić) or to avoid (Bojana Kunst). For theatre scholar Lehmann, modernity succeeded to expel the political dimension from dramatic representation associated with conflict.[26] This is why, what he calls 'the political gesture' in theatrical event stands for tragic experience enabled by transgression, by overstepping all moral, ethical or political limits.[27] Accordingly, in postdramatic theatre, the political gesture is the immediate experience of reality through affects.[28] It designates an immanently de-structured processional event that is 'more presence than representation'.[29] In contrast, performance and dance scholar Lepecki insists on an engagement with existing

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[25] Joe Kelleher, *Theatre and Politics* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

[26] Hans-Thies Lehmann, "A Future for Tragedy? Remarks on the Political and the Postdramatic," in *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political*, eds. Karen Jurs-Munby, Jerome Carroll and Steve Giles (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 95.

[27] *Ibid.*, 93-95.

[28] Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Tragedy and Dramatic Theatre* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016).

[29]   Hans-Thies Lehman, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (Abingdon: Routlege, 2006), 85.

representations. Lepecki's theory suggests that the politics of engagement with the full and fixed representations of bodies along upright vertical axis, open up a possibility for the multiplying operations of vision.[30] This type of engagement requires the introduction of horizontal lines on the representational surface. As such, it enables the creation of 'a co-extensive affective field of compossibilization of political purpose and action'.[31] What is at stake in compossibilisation is a mutual sharing of 'a true affective-political field'[32] that can allow the rise and actualisation of the unthinkable subjectivities, bodies, identities and spaces.

I think that it is vital to stress, as Lepecki does, the need for the activation of critical and corporal capacities to engage with existing representational modes. However, instead of identifying the political in performance practice with the critical engagement and the affective compossibilisation, I would like, firstly, to point out the distinction between the *two aspects of the political* in the realm of art, including performing arts.

On the one hand, there are artistic practices, theories and institutions that disclose the political dimension by *complying* with dominant politics and representations that they have established. For example, in 2016, as an appointed artistic director of *the Athens and Epidaurus Festival,* the Belgian artist Jan Fabre planed to turn Greece's major arts festival into 'a tribute to Belgium' and devoted eight of the festival's ten productions to those from his homeland. In the midst of the Greek economic and political crisis, informed by the harsh austerity measures introduced by the EU Commission in 2010, Fabre's proposal had been seen by local arts communities to reproduce the EU's neoliberal elitist discourse of domination and neo-colonialism. Oppositions of the local art communities against Fabre's intentions led to his resignation.[33]

On the other hand, there are those artistic practices, theories and institutions that disclose the political dimension, by *contesting* established politics and representations, and by contributing to their constitution in alternative ways. For example, the former director of the KVS - the Flemish Royal Theatre in Brussels, Jan Goossens (director from 2001 to 2016), had a goal to build a programme with the local multicultural community in order to address actualities in the country, such as the administrative and political division

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[30] Andre Lepecki, *Exhausting Dance, Performance and the Politics of Movement* (London: Routledge, 2006), 68-76.

[31] André Lepecki, "From Partaking to Initiating: Leading/following as Dance's (a-presonal) Political Singularity," in *Dance, Politics & Co-Immunity*, eds. Gerald Siegmund and Stefan Holscher (Zurich, Berlin: Diaphanes, 2013), 31.

[32] *Ibid.,*

[33] Parallels may be drawn with Adam Szymczyk, the artistic director of the Documenta 14 (2017). Szymczyk split the festival, traditionally taking place in Kassel, between Kassel and Athens. At the midst of the Greek economic crisis his move had been seen as exploitative, as a sort of 'a crisis tourism'.

of Belgium between the different language communities and cultures.[34] Goossens also dedicated a great part of the KVS programme to the Belgian colonial past, a topic insufficiently at stake in current Belgian education system.[35]

Given these two examples, we can start thinking how art can always integrate a political dimension, either by complying with the dominant politics and representations, or by contesting them. What I call the contesting political dimension of art entails the possibility of art to form a constituent of a chain consisting of various social practices that intend to challenge dominant politics and representations. The critical practice of contesting enables art to engage with the dominant politics and representational norms, revealing techniques that maintain dominant politics in power.

Secondly, in order to properly grasp the *artistic strategies of engagement*, I would like to stress the importance of coming to terms with the nature of dominant politics that are put into question and contested. Modern liberal democracy is constructed out of two traditions: the liberal discourse which puts emphasis on individual liberty and universal human rights, and the democratic discourse whose values are equality and popular sovereignty. Today, as political philosopher Chantal Mouffe has pointed out, dominates the liberal political discourse formulated as neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is an order of politics that undermines the democratic element of popular sovereignty.[36] It relies on semiotic techniques that reproduce a specific symbolic order beneficial to the production of capital. Accordingly, every social practice that critically engages with the hegemony of the neoliberal political discourse relates to the exercise of democratic rights within the symbolic framework informed by capitalism. This view on liberal democracy suggests that critical or contesting artistic practices require the engagement with the hegemonic politics, representational norms and values that are not simply com-possible as a true affective field, as Lepecki's theory suggests, but more importantly, symbolically articulated by the dominant politics on many levels, weather social, moral, or economic

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[34] One of the significant programmes established within this framework is *Tok Toc Knock* festival, or the location project, launched in 2001. Since then, every year artists are invited to to create works in an encounter with the city of Brussels.

[35] KVS organised and produced performances, exhibitions, and discussions, around Belgian colonial past and colonialism in general. The programme also included the development of collaborations between art institutions in Congo and Belgium. This is how *Connection Kin* festival was born in 2009, taking place in Kinshasa. In its 2015 edition, it involved Congolese artists, such as Freddy Tsimba, Toto Kisaku, Vitshois Mwilambwe, Bebson de la rue, Fransix Tenda and Violet Nantume. The programme also included performances of *The Dialogue Series : IV. Moya* (Faustin Linyekula / Studios Kabako & KVS), *Badke* (KVS, les ballets C de la B & A.M. Qattan Foundation), *Kinshasa Electric* (Ula Sickle / KVS & KunstenfestivaldesArts) et *Fanfare funérailles* (Papy Ebotani / Studios Kabako). On the subject of colonialism KVS produced and coproduced many performances, that do not only engage with the colonial past, but also with the neo-colonialism. Some of them are: *Het leven en de werken van Leopold II* (2003) en *Missie* (2008) / *The Life and Work of Leopold II* (2003) and *Mission* (2008) / by a Belgian theatre director Raven Ruëll, *Coup Fatal* (2014) by a Belgian performance director Alain Platel, and *Macbeth* (2014) by the South African performance maker Brett Bailey.

[36] Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London: Verso, 2009), 3-4.

levels, including the level of politics. This implies that initial affectivity of critical and corporeal capacities needs to become symbolically constituted and discursively articulated in a counter-hegemonic horizon of representation, in the *mise-en-scène*.[37] It is only through the choreography of articulation of affects into representations that art in general, and performing arts in particular, may contribute to the constitution of alternative ways of living together.[38]

In the post-political era, which reduces the possibility of people to exercise their democratic rights to the level of social administration, questions about the articulating power of art are becoming urgent. Art plays a significant role in recovering the democratic element of popular sovereignty. Artists, art theorists and other cultural agents are those people whose role is not only to maintain, nor only to anticipate political change in some utopian terms, turning to the strategies of transgression or avoidance of the dominant politics and representational norms.[39] More importantly, they can also inspire political change; they can engage with the existing politics and symbolic frameworks in order to call them into question and criticise them, disrupt and rearticulate them, make numerous excluded voices heard, organise themselves across differences, stimulate particular affects, encourage innovative ideas, and mobilise people to construct politics that would be representing a variety of social discourses characteristic for the migrating, multinational and network society. It is within this framework of artistic strategies of engagement that I locate the contesting political dimension of art in general, and performing arts in particular.

In this dissertation, the contesting political dimension of art and the artistic strategies of engagement that are giving rise to the choreography of articulation are theoretical outcomes that emerge once political philosophy engages with performance theory through the following performances: *Archive* (2014) by the Israeli choreographer Arkadi Zaides[40], *Black* (2011)*, No Title* (2014), and *We to Be* (2015) by the Norwegian choreographer Mette Edvardsen[41], *Bacantes - Prelúdio Para Uma Purga / Bacchae – Prelude to a Purge* (2017) by the Cape Verdean choreographer Marlene Monteiro Freitas[42], and *100% Brussels* (2014) by the Berlin team of author-directors, Helgard Kim Haug, Stefan Kaegi and Daniel Wetzel, who work under the label Rimini Protokoll[43]. The

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[37] I discuss *mise-en-scène* in relation to *mise-en-sense* in chapter 4.

[38] Choreography of articulation is explained throughout different chapters, and particularly in chapter 4.

[39] The strategies of transgression are discussed in chapter 4, and the strategies of avoidance in chapter 5.

[40] Arkadi Zaides' performance is discussed in chapter 1.

[41] Mette Edvardsen's performances are discussed in chapter 2.

[42] Marlene Monteiro Freitas' performance is discussed in chapter 3.

[43] Rimini Protokoll's performance is discusses in chapter 5.

selection of performances is guided by a view on performance practice as a dramaturgy that may appropriate elements from different artistic genres and different genres of performing arts (dance, theatre, mime, opera, concert, video, drawing, among others), as well as from various social practices (dance, sport, aerobics, promenading, jumping, boxing, working, and so on) and discourses (economic, political, cultural, moral, ethical, archeological, mathematical, or any other discourse). Hence, this dissertation does not necessary focus on the form of performance, on its ontic dimension. The analytical approach that I employ in this dissertation puts focus on the reasons for constructing performances as such, that is on the ontological dimension of performance. Within this framework, the object of investigation becomes the way performance practices and theories engage with the hegemony of dominant politics and established representational norms and hence with the ways they contribute to the constitution of alternative politics.

art at the time of post-democracy and populism

The significance of art for political change comes to the fore once it is considered within the current post-political context. The consensual mode of politics which has been progressively developed since the Second World War — first in Europe, then, turning into a mode of global politics, in the Americas and Oceania — aims at overcoming the left / right distinction from the political realm in order to create a harmonious society of liberate individuals driven by self-interests. In order to impose control over free individuals 'a consensus at the centre' stripped state institutions of their democratic role of governance, paving the way for a politics in which the interests of people became regulated by financial capital.[44] The consequence is the establishment of a powerful and wealthy business elite and the foundation of the hegemony of transnational corporations. This is how the role of the state weakened and, consequently, people became deprived from the possibility to exercise their democratic rights through state institutions. Political theorist Timothy Mitchell calls this type of politics 'carbon democracy', binding its origins to the era of exploitation of coal and oil. Mitchell writes that carbon democracy created 'economentality', a form of govermentality of the state which rationalises economy to the level of the object.[45] The hegemony of consensual politics and economentality suppressed the differences between the left and right political parties, by leaving the people without

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[44] 'Consensus at the centre' is a term introduced by Chantal Mouffe to describe the neoliberal politics that stands for the politics of centre. In: Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political* (London: Routledge, 2005), 66.

[45] Timothy Mitchell showed that before the Second World War the term economy 'referred to the act of economising, of making prudent use of limited resources'. In: Timothy Mitchell, "Economentality: How the Future Entered the Government," in *Critical Inquiry* 40, no. 4 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), 481.

choice. This is how consensual politics silenced a variety of citizens' voices. This circumstance gave rise to populist movements acting against the domination of the elite. Political philosopher Ernesto Laclau defines populism as a way of constituting a unity of the people. He wrote that populism manifests in the articulation of plurality of unsatisfied demands in an equivalential chain of popular demands.[46] From this viewpoint, populist discourse may take different forms.[47]

Generally speaking we can distinguishing between the right-wing and the left-wing populist discourses. Both discourses play important role in strengthen the institutional framework for the agonistic struggle characteristic for the popular sovereignty. Nevertheless, there are significant differences between them. Mouffe associates the right-wing populist discourse with the 'parties that present themselves as the voice of the people against the "Establishement".[48] In the course of the EU economic and refugee crisis, the right-wing populist discourse constructs the people by successfully connecting anti-immigratory, racist and nationalistic interests with the anxiety of the workers. It designates immigrants as the enemy and a threat to the economic stability of the welfare state. In the European Union, 'burdened' by an economic crisis and increased migrations, the far-right populist movements foster euro-sceptic sentiments, essentially longing for a return to a purely nationalistic politics. Their rhetoric is grounded in the communitarian conception of moral values that are supposed to be found in the affective field of family and local community life. This is why the EU is turning into a fortress of fractious, authoritarian and conservative politics, affecting the EU's security and stability. The xenophobic parties are at record levels in Sweden, the Netherlands, Austria, France, Hungary, Slovakia and Poland. The French Front National, the Dutch Party for Freedom, the Freedom Party of Austria, the Poland's Congress of the New Right, and the UK Independent Party, are, ironically, united in a Eurosceptic-parliamentary block. Besides, when Middle Eastern refugees began arriving in Europe in 2015, police crackdowns and border controls have been introduced and new fences have been constructed along the EU frontiers — between Turkey and Bulgaria, and between Hungary and Serbia. In the advent of the economic crisis and immigrant onslaught, on 23 June 2016, a great part of the UK citizens voted for Brexit, to leave the EU; on 7 April 2017, the EU Commission pronounced a mandatory systematic checks of the EU citizens crossing external Schengen borders; during the 2017 French presidential campaign, Marine Le Pen, the president of

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[46] Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason* (London: Verso, 2005), 74.

[47] Political scientists Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltawasser defined populism as an 'ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, "the pure people" and "the corrupt elite"'. According to them, populism intends to bring back rights to the people. Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, "Populism and (liberal) democracy: a framework for analysis," in *Populism in Europe and the Americas: Threat or Corrective for Democracy?*, eds. Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 8.

[48] Íñigo Errejón and Chantal Mouffe, *In the Name of the People* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2016), 99.

the right-wing populist party *Front National* (National Front), introduced a programme which suggested Frexit — France's withdrawal from the EU Schengen zone; on 16 April 2017, in the constitutional referendum held in Turkey, the EU candidate country, allegedly out of 85% of voters, 51,4% 'YES' votes approved the abolishment of the parliamentary system of government in favour of executive presidency — a system which is supposed to significantly increase the powers of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (2014 -), under whose presidency peoples' freedoms have been significantly limited, and the EU relationships severely weakened. Across the Atlantic Ocean, in the USA, the political status quo was challenged in the Presidential elections held on 8 November 2016, when a businessman and TV reality star, Donald Trump, won the elections on the grounds of anti-establishment, anti-immigration and a nationalistic rhetoric.

On the other hand, the *left-wing populist discourse* aims at connecting a variety of social demands, including the workers' demands, in a struggle against the powerful corporate elite. In contrast to the right-wing populism, which designates the immigrants as the enemy, the left-wing populist discourse intends to designate the neoliberal politicians / businessmen bond as the elite that threatens global stability. Mouffe suggests that 'the adversary for a left-wing populist movement should be constituted by the configuration of forces that sustains neo-liberal hegemony'.[49] Alexis Tsipras, the president of *Syriza* (Coalition of Radical Left) in Greece, Pablo Iglesias, the frontman of *Podemos* (We Can) in Spain, and Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the head of *La France Insoumise* (Unbowed France) and the French presidential candidate in 2017,[50] see the EU treaties, The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), as well as many national institutions and transnational corporations, as instruments of a failing globalised capitalism.[51] Therefore, they seek a reform of the neoliberal politics on the global, EU and national level, and oppose strict anti-immigration and anti-refugee legislations. The left-wing populist discourse advocates a model of pluralist democracy — an order of politics that embraces a network of multicultural and multinational associations. This politics aims at re-evaluating the dominant political order, displacing the domination of corporate elite and returning

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[49] Chantal Mouffe, *Agonistics* (London: Verso, 2015), 123.

[50] Like Chantal Mouffe, political scientist Íñigo Errejón sees the Western populism to be the result of the crisis of political parties, and, in addition, links the emergence of populism in the South of Europe to the crisis of political institutions. In: Errejón and Mouffe, *In the Name of the People*, 104-105.

[51] Analysing Alexis Tsipras' populism in Greece, Stavrakakis and Katsambekis designated the EU, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund as the key institutions of the neoliberal 'biopolitical' project. In Yannis Stavrakakis and Giorgos Katsambekis , "Left-wing populism in the European periphery: the case of SYRIZA", *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 19:2 (2014): 119-142; The programme of *La France Insoumise* requires the modification of the European Central Bank. In: "Programme", L'avenir en commun, accessed 1 May 2017, https://avenirencommun.fr/app/uploads/2017/04/170404_programmeCourt_final.pdf.

power to the people.[52] In contrast to the right-wing populism, the left-wing populism is inclined to mobilise affects towards the creation of a progressive collective will.[53] Nevertheless, while the populist movements on the right are successfully uniting in a strategy of engaging with the current political institutions in order to take power over them and to transform current politics on the national and the EU level, the democratic movements on the left are still to a great extent divided around the strategic approach for challenging and restructuring the current EU politics. The dilemma rising on the left reads like this: should the change be maintained outside state institutions or within them?

This dilemma may be very well observed if we take a look at protest movements emanating from political and economic crises since the beginning of the millennium, across the EU and Europe more generally. These protests, against austerity measures and illimitable power of business elite, can be generally distinguished between those that are *horizontal* by nature and others that are *vertical* by nature. The horizontal protest movements are the leaderless protests. They advocate direct political change by means of withdrawal from the state and its institutions. Some of the examples are the international *Occupy* movement (2011), the Spanish *Indignados* (2011), the Greek *Aganaktismenoi* (2011), the French *Nuit debut* (2016) and the Serbian *Ne davimo Beograd / Let's Not Drown Belgrade* (2016-). The vertical protest movements assert that political change may be achieved through engagement with the state and its institutions. They seek representatives within the parliamentary political system that would defend the protestors' demands. Some of the examples of the movements that turned into political parties are the Spanish *Podemos /* We Can (2011 - 2014) and the Slovenian *Združena levica* / United Left (2011 - 2014), that grew out of protest movements against austerity measures, and the Croatian *Zagreb je naš* / Zagreb is Ours (2009 - 2017), a political party that grew out of the initiative of Croatian intellectuals rising against the politics of private interest.[54]

absolute democracy and agonistic democracy

The different natures of protest movements, horizontal and vertical, gave rise to the

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[52] The Catalan referendum for independence held on 1 October 2017, may be seen as a reaction to the dominance of the conservative Popular Party (PP) of Mariano Rajoy, the Spanish Prime Minister, over Catalonia. The president of Catalonia, Carles Puigdemont, is backed by a coalition of Catalan nationalist forces from the conservative *Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya* (CDC) and the leftist *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* (ERC) parties, which, together with the radical Left-wing *Candidatura d'Unitat Popular* (CUP) party, command a majority in the region's parliament. The conservative Popular Party is only the fifth-largest party in Catalonia.

[53] Mouffe, *Agonistics*, 123.

[54] In all three cases the first year refers to the year in which movements or protests began, while the second year refers to the year in which movements or protests transformed into political parties.

following questions: How can we generate alternative ways of living together resulting from these protests? In which way can we move beyond a consensus politics that appropriate all differences under universal economic and moral laws? What is the alternative to the politics of cosmopolitanism? How to contest a growing right-wing populism accompanied with the ideology of nationalism? Are we to seize neoliberalism and shape the course of events ourselves by restoring the legitimacy of institutions and the state, or do we let new realities be developed against our will? And, equally important, how might art contribute to the constitution of a politics, to a *mise-en-scène* that gives rise to alternative ways of living together?

This last question is the central concern in this PhD. To answer this question, I consider political philosophy to be a particularly inspiring discipline. The endeavour to move beyond a politics of consensus and economentality prompted some thinkers to envisage alternative models of democracy that aligned themselves with the horizontal and vertical natures of protest movements. Political philosophers Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri envisaged the horizontal politics of absolute democracy. For them the power of a political subject, which is a self-organising and inconclusive multitude, exists beyond representation. They see representation to be facilitated by the subjugating sovereignty of the state — either the prince, the nation, or the people.[55] The multitude provides solution for the current politics; it stands for a unitary global network of civil societies (NGOs in particular) tied to transnational institutions that transcendent the boundaries of the nation state.[56] As this view argues that the multitude is not constructed by a sovereign — as the notion of the people implies — but self-organised, civil society stands for a vital force, for the needs of life itself, for the 'bio-power'. The post-hegemonic politics of withdrawal from the state, which advocate immediate power of the multitude, are also argued by post-operaists, such as Paolo Virno[57] and Giorgio Agamben[58], and the critics of discourse theory and hegemony, such as Benjamin Arditi[59].

In contrast, Mouffe envisages democracy in terms of agonistic pluralism.[60] In her view — which she shares with Laclau — the popular will is to be exercised within the institutions of representative democracy in order to transform them in such a way so that

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[55]   Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Harvard University Press, 2000)*, 103-104.

[56]   *Ibid*., 310.

[57]   Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude* (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004).

[58]   Giorgio Agamben, *Profanations* (New York: Zone Books, 2007).

[59]   "Post-hegemony: Politics Outside the Usual Post-Marxist Paradigm," in *Radical Democracy and Collective Movements Today. The Biopolitics of the Multitude versus the Hegemony of the People,* eds. Alexandros Kiopkiolis and Giorgos Katsambekis (Ashgate, 2014).

[60]   Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political.* London: Routledge, 2005; Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox.* London: Verso, 2009; Chantal Mouffe, *Agonistics, Thinking the World Politically*. London and New York: Verso, 2013.

they allow for the agonistic confrontation between differential positions. This means that the initial network of autonomous struggles, which operate as the self-organised multitude, has to be discursively articulated at a particular moment in the people, in a common counter-hegemonic horizon of representation. If 'the state must always be rediscovered', as a pragmatist thinker John Dewey suggested,[61] then it is to the people to undertake this task. Besides, Mouffe emphasises the importance of the state and its institutions. Drawing upon writer Elias Canetti, she stresses that a vote between members of the parliament is an act of agonistic battle. In contrast, when the state institutions are destroyed, then, there is no possibility for an agonistic battle. The consequence is that agonism, a battle between adversaries, turns into antagonism, a conflict between enemies.[62] The quasi-vertical, hegemonic strategies of engagement with the state are also examined by Oliver Marchart[63], Yannis Stavrakakis[64], and Paulina Tambakaki[65], among others.

It is this political philosophy that I employ in this research, seeking to unfold the artistic strategies of engagement that the contesting (performing) arts imply. Before unfolding these artistic strategies, I would first like to describe how political philosophers have inspired theatre and performance studies in the past. As it will become obvious, the horizontal, the post-hegemonic perspective has been adapted much more than the vertical, the hegemonic perspective. It is this articulation of relations between vertical and horizontal perspectives that I am concerned with, considering their co-structural logic.

political discourses in performance theory

Despite different ways of seeing the relationship between democracy and the state, philosophers of both the horizontal and quasi-vertical politics share a view that art plays an important role in constructing societies and that art may invigorate democracy in plural, multi-ethnic and multinational terms. Accordingly, there is an increasing interest among art philosophers to examine the relationship between art and politics with respect

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[61] John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems* (Chicago: Sage Books, [1927] 1954), 34.

[62] Mouffe, *On the Political*, 21-25.

[63] Oliver Marchart, "The Absence at the Heart of Presence. Radical Democracy and the 'Ontology of Lack'," in *Radical Democracy. Politics Between Abundance and Lack,* eds. Lars Tønder and Lasse Thomassen (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 2014); Oliver Marchart, *Post-Foundational Thought: Political Difference in Nancy, Lefort, Badiou, & Laclau* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).

[64] Yannis Stavrakakis, *Lacan and the Political* (London: Routledge, 1999); Yannis Stavrakakis, "Negativity and democratic politics: radical democracy beyond reoccupation and conformism," in *Radical Democracy. Politics Between Abundance and Lack,* eds. Lars Tønder and Lasse Thomassen (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 2014).

[65] Paulina Tambakaki, "When Does Politics Happen?," in *Parallax*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (2009): 102 - 113.

to the ongoing politico-philosophical discourses. Their main concern is to explore how art practices and art institutions mobilise people to contest the dominant neoliberal political order: How may art contribute to overall movements and initiatives that stand against the politics of global neoliberalism and those of nationalism? How can art uphold a controversy that would mobilise people to engage in a struggle for alternative ways of living together and, thus, contribute to the transformation of dominant politics and the strengthening of democracy? The question that arises by extension is: What is the role of performance practices, institutions and theories in these processes?

These questions, that are at the forefront of many performance and dance studies in Europe and the USA, are also of concern in this PhD.[66] For this dissertation, in particular, are significant contributions to the research on the relationship between performance and politics made by Peggy Phelan, Randy Martin, André Lepecki, Hans-Thies Lehmann, Bojana Cvejić, Bojana Kunst and Erika Fischer-Lichte. The research on the relationship between performance and politics made by these authors suggests two politico-philosophical discourses in performance theory. Each of them in a different way envisages the possibilities of performance to challenge existing politics and incite alternative ways of living together. I propose to call the first approach the post-representational. It is closely connected to performance theories developed by Lehmann, Cvejić, Kunst and Fischer-Lichte. I will call another trajectory the representational. It is tied to the performance theories developed by Phelan, Martin and Lepecki. I have distinguished these differential trajectories in performance theory on philosophical and political grounds.

a) *The post-representational discourse* proceeds from an immanent philosophy (Spinoza, Deleuze) and the horizontal politics of absolute democracy (Hardt, Negri, Virno, Agamben, Lazaratto). It advocates the strategies of transgressing, undermining, or avoiding the engagement with representational art, which is considered to be appropriated by hegemonic institutions and deprived from the political dimension. Consequently, this venture entails transgressing, undermining, or avoiding the limits established by representational art; the limits that sustain a dualism of positions between mind and matter, subject and object, or between the passive audience and the active performers. The advocates of these strategies foresee the solution for overcoming this dualism precisely by

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[66] Once we have acknowledged that art always has a political dimension, it becomes impossible to list all the authors who explored the relationship between politics and performing arts. I will therefore limit the record to a few books that can open up an insight in this non-exhaustive field, along the other sources I have mentioned in this dissertation. Some of the recent books are: Baz Kershaw, *The Radical in Performance* (London, New York: Routledge, 1999); Jon McKenzie, Heike Roms, C.J.W-L.Wee (eds.), *Contesting Performance, Global Sites of Research* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Alan Read, *Theatre, Intimacy & Engagement. The Last Human Venue* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Sara Brady, *Performance, Politics, and the War on Terror* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Gerald Siegmund and Stefan Holscher (eds.), *Dance, Politics & Co-immunity* (Zürich, Berlin: Diaphanes, 2013); Tony Fischer and Eve Katsouraki (eds.), *Performing Antagonism* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

employing the strategies of disengagement with representational art and the limits that it implies. What is at stake in their theories, is the possibility of a direct access to the being of the object. This possibility is a result of the subject's desire for being-in-itself that provides an immediate, a pre-discursive access to the being of the object — to the real of the object that differs from its reality. The immediate character of these strategies conceives of art in terms of either affects or procedures. When art is conceived in terms of affects, performance becomes an affective field which replaces 'the object of art' with 'the event'. When art is conceived in terms of procedures, artistic creation becomes expressive, durational and truthful 'proceduralism', rather than 'the object of art'. Herewith, the post-representational trajectory suggests the production of a never-receding abundance of new, self-organising and autonomous concepts that emerge from events and procedures, independently of representations and socio-political meanings that they symbolise.

Lehmann is one of the most influential advocates of the post-representational approach to performing arts and the key reference point in the international debate on the ongoing theatre and performance practice. Lehmann's significant thesis is that new technology requires a shift from dramatic theatre dominated by a text-based and mimetic representation of conflict, to new media, immanently de-structured processional event that is 'more presence than representation'.[67] His thoughts on the ways presentation in theatre may open up a multi-perspectival form of perceiving, led him to develop a theory of transgression which stands for the affective experience of life that oversteps all sense, morals, or the limits of the self.[68] On similar politico-philosophical grounds Fischer-Lichte developed a theory of oscillation. She advocates the process of oscillation between representation and presence capable of enabling transformation.[69] Accordingly, she writes that '[t]he physical articulations which are seen, heard, smelled, or sensed by other spectators or actors in turn generate perceptible behaviour patterns and actions in those who perceive them so forth.'[70] The spectator thus becomes a participant in the performative event, not being able to foresee the difference between mind and matter, subject and object, and the audience and the performers. For her part, Cvejić scrutinises the role of performance in terms of a continuous process of posing and producing problems.[71] She conceives of problems as objects of ideas that are resolved in thought that

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[67] Lehman, *Postdramatic*, 85.

[68] Lehmann, *Tragedy*, 63.

[69] Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance* (London and New York, Routledge, 2008), 97.

[70] *Ibid.*, 153.

[71] Bojana Cvejić, *Choreographing Problems: Expressive Concepts in European Contemporary Dance and Performance* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 1.

gives rise to expressive concepts. Each expressive concept is an agreement in adequation that 'supposes the equivalence and parallelism of the two dissimilar things, for instance [...] bodily movement and the thought of a movement'.[72] The break of the body-movement synthesis undermines or replaces representation. By these means, Cvejić puts the focus on endless and limitless procedures of expression and deliberation.[73] As far as Kunst is concerned, she denounces representation by introducing a temporal dimension of duration. Meeting in duration avoids the capitalist techniques of production that brought about the acceleration of time, adding economic value to temporality. As a durational procedure, meeting opens up a space for potentiality of closeness;[74] it is capable of profaning a specific relationship with movement, by means of waiting and laziness.[75]

b) With the insights into the post-representational theoretical approaches to the artistic strategies of transgressing, undermining, and avoiding, I will develop a thesis about the *representational discourse* in performance theory which anticipates that which is not represented. This thesis draws upon the representational trajectory (Phelan, Martin and Lepecki) that evolves from the quasi-transcendental philosophy (Derrida, Wittgenstein) and that resonates the quasi-vertical politics of democracy (Laclau, Mouffe, Stavrakakis).

The first thing to be pointed out is that I share the view with Phelan, Martin and Lepecki, that we cannot do away with representation. I agree with Phelan who associates withdrawal from representation with silence, with the position assigned to women in a patriarchal society.[76] Her argument that the task of art is to interfere with representation hegemonized, regulated and controlled by men, in order to unmark the metaphor of gender, is perfectly relevant.[77] I sympathise with Martin who suggests that neither the audience, nor the performers construct totalising entities. His view suggests that the unregistered in representation mobilises the participation of the audience, by enabling the audience to critically expand the understanding of the political beyond its conventional register in representation, and, more importantly, to contest it as such.[78] Also, I find Lepecki's theory, which stands at the philosophical crossroad between the immanentist and transcendental philosophical trajectories, very inspiring. I agree with Lepecki that performance should be envisaged in terms of the politics of engagement. His theory

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[72] *Ibid*., 30.

[73] I discuss Cvejić's theory in chapter 2.

[74] Bojana Kunst, *Artist at Work* (Winchester, Washington: Zero Books, 2015), 97.

[75] I discuss Kunst's theory in chapter 5.

[76] Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked. The Politics of Performance* (London, New York: Routledge, [1993] 2006), 164.

[77] *Ibid*.,

[78] Randy Martin, *Critical Moves* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 45.

suggests that the politics of engagement may open up a possibility for the multiplying operations of vision.[79] The consequence of this practice is the rise and the actualisation of the unthinkable subjectivities, bodies, identities and spaces.[80]

Although I do not share the view with the thinkers of the post-representational trajectory that the political dimension of performance consists in transgressing (Lehmann), undermining (Cvejić), avoiding (Kunst) or transforming (Fischer-Lichte) representations by means of sheer presence, that is exclusively by affects and procedures, I do agree with the thinkers of the representational trajectory to a point. I do not think that the political dimension of performance consist only in marking identities that are visible unmarked as Phelan suggests (this view does not relegate identities from the realm of politics), nor only in mobilising participation in representation in order to contest it as Martin proposes (this view neglects the possibility of discursively constituting or articulating alternatives). Neither do I think that the politics of engagement envisaged as a true 'co-extensive affective field of compossibilisation of political purpose and action', as Lepecki suggest,[81] is sufficient to grasp the political dimension of performance (compossibilisation entails a compossibility of things possible in themselves and truth procedures as in Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz's[82], Gilles Deleuze's[83], and Alain Badiou's theories[84]; neither of them renders a political dimension, since they fall in the domain of event).

Given these points, I would like to suggest an alternative view on the ways performance might contest the hegemony of the neoliberal consensus politics and economentality, and contribute to the constitution of democratic politics that give rise to alternative modes of living together. In the view that I advocate, immediate access to the being of objects — to the real, is denounced, and a universal unifying principle, such as pre-discursive objectivity, is abandoned. The access to the being is enabled only through the operation of mediation — that is through discourse formation. Drawing upon Wittgenstein, discourse formation is envisaged as a particular system of relations between language and actions within which language is entwined.[85] More importantly, as Laclau and Mouffe suggested, discourse formation implies that initial immediacy has always to

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[79] Lepecki, *Exhausting Dance*, 68-76.

[80] Lepecki, "From Partaking to Initiating," 31.

[81]   *Ibid*., 21-38.

[82]   Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *New Essays on Human Understanding*, trans. and ed. by Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennett (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[83] Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold. Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (London: The Athlone Press, 1993).

[84] Alain Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil* (London, New York: Verso, 2001).

[85] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, [1953] 1986), 5.

be replaced by discursive mediation.[86] This means that 'the being' is always articulated within a particular discursive context, and that discursive constructions constantly exclude alternative relational possibilities.[87] This is why a subject's desire is now directed towards other possible discursive formations of the being situated outside the delimited discursive context and symbolic framework — towards the lack-of-being, that is, the lack-of-subject's-being. The acknowledgement of the lack, as Stavrakakis pointed out, precludes the idealisation of abundance.[88] In fact, the belief in positivity, or never-receding abundance, becomes continuously contaminated by negativity, or the irradicable lack. On this point, the relationship between the desire for abundance and the lack is seen in co-constitutive and paradoxical terms. The paradox emphasises hegemonic and conflictual aspects between discourse and its outside.[89] This approach calls neither for transgression, nor for avoidance of existing limits — limits between included and excluded, the subject and the object, or between the audience and the performers — but rather for the continuous practice of redrawing the limits between them.[90] This approach is a move beyond dualism, as it does not aim at presenting the being of the object, but observes how and why the being of the object is discursively articulated and what are the consequences of articulating the objects of art as such.

The practice of *redrawing the limits* between the paradoxically different positions calls for the rearticulation of their relations by means of hegemony and conflict. I am suggesting that rearticulation implies the continuous operation of sublimation of one into another position: of the immediate affective impulses of pleasure stimulated by existing discourses, into the symbolically represented cultural values. It is precisely the inscription of the affective, or the real, within this system of symbolic relations that stands for — what I call — the practice of representation.[91] Within the representational trajectory, the political dimension of art is a contesting and constitutive force to the extent that it engages with the hegemonic symbolic constructions and mobilises their rearticulation. This way, the artistic strategies of engagement disclose the political dimension of art by opening up the possibility for challenging, contesting and radically rearticulating hegemonic discourses that dominate institution that is art (museology, curatorial practices, politics of

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[86] Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (London: Verso, [1985] 2001), *xi.*

[87] I discuss discourse formation in chapter 1.

[88] Yannis Stavrakakis, "Negativity and Democratic Politics: Radical Democracy Beyond Reoccupation and Conformism", in *Radical Democracy. Politics Between Abundance and Lack,* eds. Lars Tønder and Lasse Thomassen (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 2014), 185-202.

[89] I discuss the co-constitutive relationship between abundance and lack in chapter 2.

[90] I discuss the practice of redrawing the limits in chapter 4.

[91] I discuss the operations of sublimation and articulation in more details in the following chapters, and particularly in chapters 4 and 6.

programming, different artistic practices and techniques, dramaturgy, choreography, concepts, names, and so on), and that are sedimented in dominant representations. Within the framework of the constitutive and contesting artistic practices, the goal of the artistic strategies of engagement is to disarticulate existing discourses and to articulate a (counter)hegemony of alternative discourses and representations on a symbolic level.

On this point, I advocate that in contrast to the one sided view which privileges an affective and/or procedural approach to art — the one that we find in theorists who draw upon the immanentist philosophy and the horizontal politics of absolute democracy — we need both: affects and discourses, procedures and substances, immediacy and mediation, and horizontality and verticality. This approach, which supports the demonstrable above the reasonable, requires a movement away from the autonomous, self-foundational, and inconclusive conceptions of art towards their radical relational aspect. In this encounter, discourse becomes a condition for affects and counter-discourse, while substances become conditions for procedures and counter-substances. Consequently, representation in art becomes a condition for ruptures and counter-representations. When drama is envisaged within the co-constitutional framework, it ceases to be a mere matter of the plot, of the closed system relating the conflict between the characters represented on the stage, and it becomes a matter of the relationship between the audience and the performers. This approach does not call for transgression or avoidance of all limits between the audience and the performers, but rather for the continuous operation of redrawing the limits between them.[92] Within this framework, drama, or a conflict of positions, or a tension between positions, enables the possibility of the audience to evaluate and call into question the concreteness of (performed) representations that arise from inequality and conflict. The audience's critical view of representation is then what mobilises them to take action inside and outside theatre, turning their immediate affects into concrete demands. Envisaged in this way, representation in performance may point at the self-assertive and constitutive political project of decision making, which requires the contest against the hegemony of consensual politics and economentality sedimented in dominant representations and politics. Accordingly, the order of politics that antagonise societies on racial, religious, or gender grounds, may be disarticulated and articulated into an agonistic one. It is by these means that art, including performance, may contest the hegemony of neoliberal politics and representational norms and contribute to the constitution of counter-hegemonic politics, suggesting alternative ways of identification among the people, beyond a pre-established perspective on subjectivities in terms of class- , gender- , or race- based identities.[93] In fact, by choreographing agonism, performance practices may support the return of agonistic struggles in the realm of politics.

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[92] This hypothesis is developed in chapter 4.

[93] On alternative subjectivities and communities, see chapter 5.

structure of dissertation

In the first chapter, I trace the philosophical origins that underline the radical democratic projects of absolute democracy and agonistic democracy.[94] To begin with, I will distinguish two disparate trajectories within contemporary continental philosophical thought: immanence and quasi-transcendence. The *immanentist trajectory* is developed in the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze.[95] It influenced anti-foundational thinkers such as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri and, ergo, the political project of absolute democracy. The *quasi-transcendental trajectory* is developed in the philosophy of Jacques Derrida.[96] It influenced the post-foundational politico-philosophical thought of thinkers such as Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe and, consequently, Mouffe's political project of agonistic democracy. Drawing upon Laclau's and Mouffe's quasi-transcendental philosophical approach to politics — which is accountable of the ever-present exteriority and constructed around discourse, antagonism, and hegemony — this chapter explores the political dimension of art in terms of a discursive, contesting and counter-hegemonic practice. Within this context, I will distinguish the contesting performance practices that challenge dominant politics from the complying performance practices that sustain a political *status-quo*. With the insight into Arkadi Zaides' performance *Archive* (2015), my aim is to probe choreography in relation to the sphere of contestation such that it may be understood to contribute to the transformation of politics and society as a whole. Performance is hence envisaged as the agonistic practice of encounters and contingent objectifications.

The second chapter unfolds a debate between the philosophical trajectories of immanence (Deleuze) and quasi-transcendence (Derrida) in psychoanalytic and politico-philosophical terms.[97] Drawing upon political philosophers Oliver Marchart and Yannis Stavrakakis, the trajectory of immanence is conceived within the framework of a positive ontological imaginary of abundance (desire for being in-itself) giving rise to political philosophers Michael Hardt's and Antonio Negri's political model of absolute democracy,

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[94]   This chapter has been published in a slightly different version: Goran Petrović Lotina, "The Political Dimension of Dance: Mouffe's Theory of Agonism and Choreography," in *Performing Antagonism, Theatre, Performance & Radical Democracy,* eds. Tony Fischer and Eve Katsouraki (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 251 - 272.

[95]   See for instance: Gilles Deleuze, *Pure Immanence. Essays on A Life*, trans. Anne Boyman (New York: Zone Books, 2001); Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition,* trans. Paul Patton (London: Bloomsbury, [1968] 2004).

[96]   See for instance: Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy,* trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984); Jacques Derrida, *Aporias*, trans. Thomas Dutoit (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993); Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference* (London: Routledge, [1967] 2005).

[97] This chapter has been published in a different version: Goran Petrović Lotina, "The Agonistic Objectification. Choreography as a Play Between Abundance and Lack", in *Performance Research*, Vol 21, Issue 4 (London: Routledge 2016): 34-40.

whereas the trajectory of quasi-transcendence is envisaged within the framework of a negative ontological imaginary of lack (desire for the lack of-being) giving rise to political philosopher Chantal Mouffe's political model of agonistic democracy. My goal is to show that unlike the ontological imaginary of abundance that gives priority to the phenomenon of positivity, the ontological imaginary of lack anticipates a co-constitutive relationship between abundance and lack, precisely because the dimension of negativity precludes both the idealisation of abundance and the idealisation of lack. The suggested co-constitutive and agonistic type of relationship between the paradoxically differential positions, such as lack and abundance, becomes a condition for challenging a dualist view on societies and the possibility for the rearticulation of the relations between these positions within the global socio-cosmic community in plural terms. Drawing upon Bojana Cvejić's performance philosophy, it will become apparent that the phenomenon of positivity implies adequation or parallelism of the abundance of oppositional positions giving rise to a politics of absolute harmony, whereas the phenomenon of negativity implies tensions between paradoxically differential positions giving rise to a politics of agonism. This is significant, because agonism opens up the space for polemics. As we will see, polemics are constitutive to the works of art. The insight into Mette Edvardsen's choreographies, concerned with the presence and absence of objects, that is with the representation and its exteriority, gives rise to this argument.

The suggested co-constitutive and agonistic type of relations between the paradoxically differential positions, such as lack and abundance, in the third chapter becomes a tool to challenge philosopher Jacques Rancière's one-sided political model of communal anarchism, which advocates politics of disorder above the politics of order. As we will see, for Rancière the democratic principle of the power of everybody (that he situates within the realm of politics) may exist autonomously from the representation appropriated by the coercive principle of the state (which presents the order of the police). In contrast, for Mouffe, there is no power of the popular will (designated as the political) without the moment of representation which functions as the hegemonic principle of the state (which she designates as the order of politics). This is why Mouffe envisages democracy in terms of hegemonic struggle, while Rancière conceives of it in terms of communal anarchism. And, whereas the former implies a politics of order, the latter suggests a politics of disorder. The distinction made between Rancière's and Mouffe's theories indicates different ways of conceiving the political in performance theory. From the point of view of the theory of hegemony, the role of art cannot be seen any more exclusively as *le partage du sensible,* or *mise-en-sense*. Rather, it is seen as the moment of articulation of the *mise-en-sense* in a symbolic framework, that is in the *mise-en-scène*. This thesis is supported in an encounter with Marlene Monteiro Freitas' performance *Bacantes - Prelúdio Para Uma Purga* (Bacchantes – Prelude to a Purge), which observes society as constructed at the point of intersection of the disorderly Dionysian ideals and

the orderly Apollonian ideals, that is at the point of intersection of *mise-en-sense* and *mise-en-scène.*

In the fourth chapter, I analyse in which ways the different philosophical, political and psychoanalytic trajectories — immanence and quasi-transcendence, absolute democracy and agonistic democracy, being-in-itself and lack-of-being — affect the understanding of the political dimension of performance practice.[98] To begin with, it is important to distinguish the post-representational discourse in performance theories from the representational discourse. Theatre scholar Hans-Thies Lehmann is the most influential advocate of the post-representational approach to performance practice. For him, modernity succeeded to expel the political dimension from dramatic representation associated with conflict. This is why, what he calls 'the political gesture' stands for tragic experience enabled by transgression, by overstepping all moral, ethical or political limits.[99] For the postdramatic and post-representational approach to theatre, the political dimension manifests in the immediate experience of reality through affects. I will claim that the privileging of transgression and affects through sheer presence in performance philosophy precludes the possibility of constructing alternative politics and representations. In contrast, I intend to demonstrate that the political dimension of theatre lies in a dramatic representation precisely because it is associated with conflict. In the view that I advocate, conflict is not a mere matter of the plot, of the closed system relating polemics and antagonisms between the characters on the stage, but a dramatic form of engagement of the audience with the performance. Drama enables the choreography of articulation of the audience's affects into representation. What I will be calling the representational approach to theatre is a condition for the articulation of the audience envisaged as passive onlookers into active citizenship.

The fifth chapter explains how the theoretical standpoints in performance theory developed around the post-representational and representational trajectories influence discourses about the production of alternative subjectivities and communities.[100] Post-operaists focus on the post-fordist techniques of production and the workers' resistance to the capitalist quest for acceleration of modes of production. On these grounds, performance scholar Bojana Kunst advocates strategies of avoidance of existing politics and representational forms. In her theory, alternative subjectivities and communities evolve from the temporal dimension of duration — waiting and less work. Nevertheless,

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[98] This chapter will be published in a different version: Goran Petrović Lotina, "The Return of Drama. Protests, Politics and Political Discourses in Performance Theory," in *Cultural Critic* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018).

[99] Hans-Thies Lehmann, "A Future for Tragedy? Remarks on the Political and the Postdramatic," in *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political*, eds. Karen Jurs-Munby, Jerome Carroll and Steve Giles (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 93-95.

[100] This chapter will be published in a slightly different version: Goran Petrović Lotina, "Performing Alternative Collectives,"in *Performing Ethos* (Bristol: Intelect, 2017).

the studies of the political scientists, Robert O'Brien, Anne Marie Goetz, Jan Aart Scholte and Marc Williams, show that the engagement of social movements with the multilateral economic institutions brings forth the significance of the post-fordist techniques of domination in constructing societies.[101] The accountability of both post-fordist coercive techniques, those of production and those of domination, will allow me to widen Kunst's framework for resistance. I will introduce the strategies of struggle of different collectives against capitalism through engagement. This approach enables a shift from the pre-established perspective on subjectivities in terms of class- , gender- , or race- based identities, towards the relational forms of identifications. Drawing upon political philosophers Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, I will demonstrate that the relational forms of identification enable performances to articulate subjectivities, communities and politics in alternative, co-constitutive terms that are much more relevant for the plural society. In order to explore how performance contributes to these operations, I take Rimini Protokoll's perfomance *100% Brussels* as an example.

Throughout different chapters of this dissertation I have stressed that the operation of articulation implies a sublimation of antagonism into agonism, or initial affectivity into representation. Once we have examined how agonism may change our perception of objects (Chapter 2), human bodies (Chapter 3), relations between the audience and the performances (Chapter 4), and collectivity (Chapter 5), we are able to observe the articulation of affects into representation through the practice of choreographing performances, that is, through the relationship between the choreographer and the performers. In concluding this dissertation, I will demonstrate why the artistic strategies of engagement in performance practice require the articulation of affects into representation. In order to approach this topic, I will return to the notion of compossibilisation that Lepecki introduced to performance studies. In Lepecki's theory artistic politics of engagement imply a creation of 'a true affective-political field' of compossibilisation.[102] Tracing the philosophical origins of 'truth procedures' and of 'compossibilisation', mainly drawing upon the philosophies of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz[103] and Gilles Deleuze[104], I will develop a critique of a view that conceives performance as a true affective field of compossibilisation. My goal is to demonstrate that the artistic strategies of engagement and the contesting political dimension of performance

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101 O'Brien, Robert, Anne Marie Goetz, Jan Aart Scholte and Marc Williams, *Contesting Global Governance. Multilateral Economic Institutions and Global Social Movements* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

102 André Lepecki, "From Partaking to Initiating", 31; André Lepecki, *Singularities. Dance in the Age of Performance.* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016).

103 Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *New Essays on Human Understanding*, trans. and eds. Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennett (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

104 Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic os Sense*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas, trans. Mark Lester (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

require a view of performances in terms of performative practices that articulate affects into representations, thus giving priority to opinion formation over truth procedures. In addition, this chapter opens up new questions about choreographing agonism to be further explored.

The Political Dimension of Performance Practices[1]

This chapter explores the political dimension of performance, focussing on the concept of agonism as it is conceived by political philosopher Chantal Mouffe. Contrary to other models of agonism, Mouffe's work is constructed around a definition of agonism that implies a certain degree of antagonism that can never be eliminated. This view explains that agonism (a we/they relation in which the two sides are adversaries) is always threatened by antagonism (a we/they relation in which the two sides are enemies). Given that 'the task of democracy is to transform antagonism into agonism',[2] I will argue that Mouffe's agonistic model of democratic politics enables the possibility of understanding how art, and performance in particular, is able to contest and transform the dominant neoliberal politics — their hegemonized institutions, sedimented social practices, and determined representations, which mobilise antagonistic relations. Specifically, once we have acknowledged that antagonism is inherent to every social construction, we can begin to understand how the articulatory power of performance is manifested within the context of counter-hegemonic struggle. I argue that it is precisely in the engagement with political struggle between complying forces (those that support hegemonic order) and contesting forces (those that counter dominant hegemony), that the dynamic, transformative and creative power of performance is disclosed.

In order to support this argument, I will first turn to the quasi-transcendental philosophical trajectory developed by the French philosopher, Jacques Derrida, before then turning to examine post-foundational politico-philosophical thought, which emphasises the indispensable moment of exclusion in the construction of any social practice, and the dimension of the impossibility of absolute foundation or grounding. This is of particular relevance to Mouffe's agonistic model of democratic politics which proposes the disarticulation and transformation of dominant socio-political discourses around we/they relations. For Mouffe, democratic politics begins by acknowledging — rather than suppressing — antagonistic relations within the practice of hegemony. Insight into Mouffe's political theory provides the basis for grasping the political dimension of art and, moreover, will permit an understanding of it in terms of counter-hegemonic struggle.

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[1] This chapter has been published in a different version: Goran Petrović Lotina, "The Political Dimension of Dance: Mouffe's Theory of Agonism and Choreography," in *Performing Antagonism, Theatre, Performance & Radical Democracy*, eds. Tony Fischer and Eve Katsouraki (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 251-272.

[2] Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political* (London, New York: Routledge, 2005), 20.

In the final section, I envisage performance practice from these philosophical and political standpoints with the aim of defining choreography in relation to the sphere of contestation such that it may be understood to contribute to the transformation of democracy and society as a whole. In this regard, what I will be calling agonistic encounters and contingent objectifications in performance practice will be the articulation of partial and evanescent systems of relations allowing different realities to be materialised and articulated in the same space.

The post-foundational turn: Mouffe and the radicalisation of democracy

One can distinguish, broadly, two distinct trajectories within contemporary continental philosophical thought. On the one hand, there is the *quasi-transcendental* trajectory developed in the philosophy of Jacques Derrida, who has influenced the post-foundational politico-philosophical thought of thinkers such as Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. On the other hand, there are those thinkers influenced by Baruch Spinoza's and Gilles Deleuze's ontological trajectory of immanence (Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, Paolo Virno and Roberto Esposito, among others). Where these trajectories diverge is in terms of their respective relations to metaphysics, specifically over the question of existence and the nature of existence itself. For Deleuze, the task of philosophy is to construct metaphysics — which renders what he terms the 'pure plane of immanence', envisaged as the existence of a smooth space without constitutive division. For Derrida, by contrast, the task of philosophy is to overcome metaphysics — which renders the horizon of transcendence, a movement of the 'outside' that striates the smooth space. Deleuze's concept of immanence suggests that the construction of differences is possible but restricts them exclusively to the dimension of metaphysics. Derrida — who like Deleuze, knows that there is no outside to metaphysics — understands metaphysics as a structural closure, such that the project of overcoming it is impossible. Nevertheless, for Derrida, as Daniel Smith has pointed out, it is exactly 'this very impossibility that conditions the possibility of deconstructing the philosophical tradition from within'.[3] Pointing to the aporetic and constitutive relation of the categories of possible and impossible, or immanence and transcendence, this theoretical approach renders Derrida's philosophical trajectory quasi-transcendental.[4]

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[3] Daniel Smith, "Deleuze and Derrida, Immanence and Transcendence: Two Directions in Recent French Thought," in *Between Deleuze and Derrida,* eds. Paul Paton and John Protevi (London, New York: Continuum, 2004), 48.

[4] To be sure, Derrida never described himself as a philosopher of transcendence. Derrida situated his own work at the margins of philosophy. With this in mind, I have designated Derrida as a philosopher of quasi-transcendence, whose theory may be placed at the limits of immanence and transcendence, or at the point of their intersection.

A closer look at the relation between the trajectories of immanence and quasi-transcendence shows that these different approaches to metaphysics result from two different ways of defining difference. For Deleuze difference refers to the difference between being and beings and difference of being in itself [*l'Être avec soi dans la différence*].[5] Hence, in Deleuze, difference is always part of metaphysics. His approach explains that the reactivation of virtualities and creation are possible only within metaphysics and that these operations are capable of transforming metaphysics anew. Thus, for Deleuze 'difference must be articulation and connection in itself [...] a differenciation of difference' and not representation.[6] The 'in-itself difference' is situated in becoming, in 'a life', out of which subjects and objects are actualised. Given these points, difference is contained within the plane of absolute immanence that is more real than reality — hence 'virtuality': a disembodied abstraction, a canon of laws independent of the state of affairs and thus of meaning and representation. By contrast, Derrida considers difference as something that is always excluded from metaphysics, something which is not part of it, and so constantly disrupts and destabilizes metaphysics from the outside. As such, difference may never be conceptually grasped in its totality but only precariously represented through a performative and discursive operation. Thus, for Derrida — what he terms — *différence* is a relation that transcends metaphysics and the ontological difference between Being and beings.[7] This exterior to the metaphysical tradition, which constantly threatens the closure of metaphysics, conditions its very possibility and thus makes 'exteriority' a quasi-transcendental and constitutive part of metaphysics itself.

The quasi-transcendental insistence on exteriority leads post-foundational thinkers — such as Laclau and Mouffe — to call for the de-essentialization of the classical metaphysical figures of foundation such as ground, universality, and totality, and not their recuperation on immanent grounds. They stress the need not to withdraw from these figures, but to engage with them in order to continuously contest and weaken their ontological status from *within*. The political implications of such an approach become clear once we see that this way of addressing the problem and nature of existence compels us to acknowledge that every social construction is precarious and contingent. Political theorist Oliver Marchart has described post-foundationalism as thus resting on an undecidable terrain, in the eternal tension between ground and abyss, between attempts at

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5   Gilles Deleuze, *Différence et Repetition* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968), 297.

6   Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition,* trans. Paul Patton (London: Bloomsbury [1968] 2004), 117.

7   Further on difference in Derrida see: Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy,* trans. Alan Bass (The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 67.

foundation and the inevitable failure of such efforts.[8] Expanding Marchart's thought, we may say that the frontier between these differential arrangements, between ground and abyss, may never be overcome — only expanded at the expense of another choice. It is this unavoidable tension between differential positions that acknowledges paradox as constitutive of any social construction. In sustaining paradoxical tensions within the space of undecidability consisting of different choices and in introducing a moment of decision in favour of a certain choice, post-foundationalism recognises hegemony and antagonism as inherent to society. It shows that every identity, object and relation may always be otherwise, yet, not absolutely erased. Thus, post-foundationalism strives to challenge the homogenising and totalising conceptualisations of ontological paradigms that seek to sustain the social and political *status quo*, in order to re/construct or re/articulate societies and politics in alternative ways.

This argument is particularly important to the development of post-Marxist political theory. In *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, Laclau's and Mouffe's critique of essentialism, liberal theories of rationalism and individualism, evolved from a theory of *discourse analysis*. Deepening Michel Foucault's concept of 'discursive formation', they defined discourse, not only as a combination of speech and writing, but as a system of linguistic and extralinguistic relations, accountable of 'institutions, rituals and practices through which a discursive formation is structured'.[9] This is to say that every social configuration is meaningful and only symbolically constructed within a system of differences. In fact, distinguishing 'discourse as a system of differential entities' from 'the field of discursivity',[10] discourse becomes an ensemble of differential entities materialised through a language game — consisting not only of language, but also, as philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein suggests, of the actions with which language is entwined.[11] Such language games relate one entity to another and strive to achieve totality and domination over the 'field of discursivity'. However, Laclau and Mouffe cancel the completeness of the relational logic of these entities by affirming that 'a discursive totality never exists in the form of a simply given and delimited positivity'.[12] On the contrary, the discursive totality can 'exist [only] as a partial limitation of a "surplus of meaning"'.[13] It is a type of

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[8] See Oliver Marchart, *Post-Foundational Thought: Political Difference in Nancy, Lefort, Badiou, & Laclau* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).

[9] Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy, Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London, New York: Verso, [1985] 2001), 109.

[10] *Ibid.*, 111.

[11] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, [1953] 1986), 5.

[12] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony*, 110.

[13] *Ibid.*, 111.

a fusion, of a concrete unity that requires overdetermination and a plurality of meanings.[14] Overdetermination enables us to see that any social unity is a symbolic unity — a unity constituted on a nominal level — conditioned by that which it excludes.[15] From this, we should understand that the various entities that form the field of discursivity may always threaten a discursive totality. This means that no single principle, no determination in the last instance for defining society in terms of totality — for example, the role played by class in Antonio Gramsci or the logic of reproduction in Louis Althusser — may fix the whole field of differential entities. Each fixation of totality can only ever be a result of an unstable and partial limitation enclosed in what Laclau and Mouffe call nodal points. Nodal points relate to privileged discursive points. They aim at partially fixing particular discourses in order to 'arrest the flow of differences'.[16]

Nodal points demonstrate that every social construction is a reflection of a partial *limitation* in relation to that which exceeds the discursive configuration. The production of limits point out that all social constructions are organised by the same principle of *exclusion*. For example, the identities 'poor', 'gay', or 'immigrant' become symbolically subordinated and excluded in relation to different discourses depending on whether they are discourses that prioritise class over gender or gender over race, and so on. And it is by means of revealing the differences that permeate social practices that an excluded social group struggles to rearticulate the very terms of symbolic legitimacy by threatening and destabilizing the dominant social order and its limits — stimulating ruptures within the social fabric of totality. The relational logic between these differential positions, between the symbolic order and its surplus, between interiority and exteriority, implies not only ruptures and conflicts, but also, what Mouffe calls, the drawing of *limits* between conflicting positions.[17] When limits expand they do so to the detriment of other possible symbolisations, but they are never able to entirely overcome each other. It is for this reason that Mouffe's and Laclau's discourse approach to the construction of the social

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[14] *Ibid.*, 97.

[15] Overdetermination is the concept borrowed from linguistics and psychoanalysis. In these disciplines, it has an objective dialectical connotation relating content. Overdetermination is the key concept in Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis. In his theory, overdetermination points at the unity of multiply factors and complex structures — including those that are not visible and not articulated — in various aspects of social life. Drawing upon Freud, Louis Althusser conceived of overdetermination as an accumulation of contradictions in a ruptured unity. See: Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Basic Books, [1900] 2010); Louis Althusser, "Contradiction and Overdetermination," in *For Marx,* trans. Ben Brewster (London: Verso, [1969] 1996), 87-128.

[16] Laclau and Mouffe criticize Althusser's 'determination in the last instance by the economy' that unifies the social in the space of rationalist paradigm; they propose, instead, the notion of 'nodal points' derived from Lacan's concept of *points de capiton*. Nodal points are constructed through hegemonic practices — practices of articulation. Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony*, 112-113.

[17] Envisaged by Mouffe, the political logic always require the drawing of limits between the conflicting positions, between 'us' and 'them'. See: Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London and New York: Verso, 2009), 36-59.

implies a politics that, by drawing limits, acknowledges antagonism and hegemony to be inherent to society.

Laclau and Mouffe distinguished *hegemony* and *antagonism* as key concepts in defining the nature of the political.[18] About hegemony they wrote: 'One can see hegemony as a theory of the decision, taken in an undecidable terrain.'[19] Informed by the dimension of radical negativity[20], hegemony manifests itself in the possibility of excluding other choices and, thus, acknowledges the ever-present possibility of antagonism between paradoxically differential positions: 'Antagonisms are not *objective* relations, but relations that reveal the limits of all objectivity. Society is constructed around these limits, and they are antagonistic limits.'[21] With respect to antagonism, every social order or 'objectivity' is a partial and contingent construction. Drawing upon political theorist Carl Schmitt, Mouffe acknowledges the ever-present possibility of antagonism within the social realm and formulates her agonistic model of democratic politics. Agonistic democracy implies a politics that allows for a choice between conflicting relations, between paradoxically different logics while criticising rationalist and individualist politics of consensus, totality, and harmony, which aim to do away with conflicts. Insofar as the conflict between 'us' and 'them' may never be rationally overcome, the crucial question of Mouffe's democratic politics is: How to organise human relations in a way that is adequate to the plurality of positions that constitute the social realm? How to transform and articulate the antagonistic relations that exist between 'us' and 'them' in an agonistic configuration?

These questions imply — by extension — the need for the radicalisation of

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[18] Laclau's and Mouffe's theory of hegemony begins with tracing the genealogy of the notion of 'hegemony', observed as a response to a crisis of a 'normal' historical development that entails dualism. Beginning with Rosa Luxemburg, and moving through the theories developed by Marxists, such as Karl Johann Kautsky, Georgi Plekhanov, Antonio Labriola, Eduard Bernstain, Georges Eugène Sorel, Leon Trotsky, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, Antonio Gramsci, and Louis Althusser, Laclau and Mouffe explained how the notion of hegemony gradually evolved. From designating a *contingent intervention* in Russian Social Democracy, and *contingent concrete situation* within Leninism, the notion of hegemony started to designate 'the very unity existing in a concrete social formation' in Gramsci's theory. What their analysis shows is that each of these extensions of the term 'hegemony' implies a 'logic of the contingent' and the category of 'historical necessity'. Further on, their analysis shows that contingency operates through 'spontaneism' as a logic of the symbol, while necessity operates through fixation as a logic of literality that eliminates any contingent variation. Laclau and Mouffe showed that when spontaneism is a contingent reverse to necessity, then the relationship between these two logics appears as dualist, because it merges indeterminable and determinable as positive opposites. To suggest a movement to pluralism they stress the importance of radical negativity through the introduction of the notion of antagonism. On the genealogy of hegemony, see: Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony*, 7-46; For understanding the theory of spontaneism — evolving from Rosa Luxemburg's writing about 'spontaneous rising of the masses' — see: Rosa Luxemburg, *The Mass Strike. The Political Party and the Trade Unions*, trans. by Patrick Lavin (Marxist Educational Society of Detroit, 1999), https://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1906/mass-strike/ch03.htm.

[19] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony*, xi.

[20] More on radical negativity in chapter 2.

[21] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony*, xiv.

democracy. According to Mouffe, *to radicalise democracy* is to offer a critique of the dominant discourses of liberalism that are characterised by individualism and rationalism. In *The Democratic Paradox* (2009), she explains that the aim is to challenge the hegemony of the *liberal* tradition of freedom — which stands for the rule of law, the defence of human rights and respect for individual liberty, to the detriment of the *democratic* tradition of equality — which stands for the popular sovereignty.[22] Within the liberal tradition, she distinguishes two paradigms: the instrumental rationality of the so-called 'aggregative' model of liberal democracy — which is moved by economic interests, and the communicative rationality of the 'deliberative' model of liberal democracy — which is defined by morality. These two liberal politico-philosophical regimes are constituted on an *a priori* ability to discern the excluded, the other, which is designated by 'they', as the enemy, whose 'constitutive' role, in order to be recognised, has to be subsumed to the universal economic or moral laws these regimes already prescribed. Both models, therefore, endeavour to establish a homogeneous, univocal and non-conflictual society, by achieving a consensus on the existence of universal economic regulations or human rights (as natural regulations and rights to be respected). However, by recognising and subordinating the other as the enemy (as a threat to universal economic principles and human rights) modern liberal democracy entails destructive, antagonistic contradictions, precisely by leaving 'no choice' to the people. What is necessary, in order to transform the antagonistic effects of liberalism — today formulated in neoliberalism — according to Mouffe, is to reinstitute the democratic conception of equality and the political constitution of a 'demos', and to rearticulate relations between liberalism and democracy.

Mouffe explains that the relation between these two political traditions may be rearticulated by the acknowledgement of *radical negativity* at the level of the ontological. This demands a recognition that conflict and struggle are ineradicable from the society. Therefore, the goal is not to rationally overcome conflictual we/they relations, but to constitute them in different ways. According to Mouffe, such an ontological approach enables a reconfiguration of antagonistic social relations (struggle between enemies) in an agonistic discourse (struggle between adversaries). For this to happen, it is necessary to provide the institutional framework for the principle of the sovereignty of the people characterised by agonistic struggle between adversaries. For sure, adversaries fight against each other over the interpretation of their principles in hegemonic terms, 'but they do not put into question the legitimacy of their opponent's right to fight for the victory of their position'.[23] In other words, the opponent's right is not to be subjugated and subsumed to universal economic interests or moral laws; disparate demands should rather be confronted and debated. It is precisely the acknowledgement of the confrontation between

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[22] Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 2-3.

[23] Chantal Mouffe, *Agonistics, Thinking the World Politically* (London, New York: Verso, 2013), 7.

adversarial positions — which mobilises passions and affects among people and provides active citizenship — that distinguishes 'agonistic pluralism' from the aggregative and deliberative approaches in democratic political theory.

Agonistic pluralism points at the agonistic articulation of the struggle between paradoxically different positions through democratic institutions. To clarify this new perspective Mouffe makes an important discursive distinction between *politics* and *the political*. In *On the Political* (2005) she writes:

> by 'the political' I mean the dimension of antagonism which I take to be constitutive of human societies, while by 'politics' I mean the set of practices and institutions through which an order is created, organizing human coexistence in the context of conflictuality provided by the political.[24]

Borrowing Heidegger's vocabulary, Mouffe explains 'politics' and 'the political' in ontic-ontological terms. The ontological concerns 'the very way in which society is instituted', whereas the ontic level has to do with the 'manifold practices of conventional politics'.[25] By situating *antagonism* at the level of the ontological, Mouffe identifies the space of counter-hegemonic struggle as being made possible by the dimension of the political. This view acknowledges that antagonism is inherent to society, that it presents an ever-present possibility, and that it cannot be eradicated. As such, antagonism conditions the possibility of a domestication of conflicts within the field of politics in an agonistic configuration. Nevertheless, the constitution of society in *agonistic* terms does not simply render a concrete resolution for a conflict which originates at the ontological level. Rather, agonism is a proximate solution to conflict and is always threatened by antagonism. As such, agonism, which situates politics at the level of the ontic, is a precarious and contingent practice. This explains why society can never be established as fixed totality, but only as contingent order of human collectives whose conditions of existence are always to be threatened by conflicting forces. Recognising this existential condition, Mouffe's agonistic approach to politics provides both a theoretically dynamic model of social relations and a practical radicalisation of democracy.

In concluding this section on Mouffe's political-philosophy of agonism — which, however, I will return to many times throughout this dissertation — it is necessary to emphasise that moments of *decision* play an important role for the agonistic model of democratic politics. This indicates that the confrontation between conflicting alternatives of the liberal-democratic values and we/they relations entails decisions that require

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24 Mouffe, *On the Political*, 9.

25 *Ibid.*, 8-9.

making a choice beyond moral categories of good and bad. Mouffe explains that 'a decision in favour of some alternative is always at the detriment of another one', thus situating undecidability at the core of politics.[26] 'Undecidability which is at work in the construction of any form of objectivity', acknowledges that the conflict between different choices cannot be bypassed, and prevents any form of essentialization and totality.[27] It is precisely undecidability — the impossibility of deciding between paradoxical choices, thus pointing to the contingent character of decisional acts — that distinguishes Mouffe's project of democracy from other theorists identified with agonism.[28] Within Mouffe's theoretical approach to agonism, hegemonic forces and agonistic relations are ineradicable from society.[29] This is where the argument for the pluralism of positions resides.

Art and agonism

The agonistic project of democratic politics recognises inextricable relations between art and politics. Contrary to liberalism, which considers the relation between art and politics in clearly delimited, unchallenged spheres, confined within an immanent and univocal field, an agonistic model of democratic politics introduces the ontological dimension of 'the political' offering another perspective on their relation. Accordingly, in *Agonistics* Mouffe writes:

> I do not see the relation between art and politics in terms of two separately constituted fields, art on one side and politics on the other, between which a relation would need to be established. There is an aesthetic dimension in the political and there is a political dimension in art. This is why I consider that it is not useful to make a distinction between political and non-political art. From the point of view of the theory of hegemony, artistic practices play a role in the constitution and maintenance of a given symbolic order, or in its challenging, and this is why they necessarily have

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[26] Mouffe, *Democratic Paradox,* 136.

[27] *Ibid.*, 135.

[28] Mouffe's agonism is different from the theory of agonism that is to be find in William Connolly, Bonnie Honig and James Tully, who also draw on the work of thinkers such as Hannah Arendt, Friedrich Nietzsche, Michel Foucault and Carl Schmitt.

[29] Hence, the distinction between Hannah Arendt and Chantal Mouffe. For Arendt pluralism is a shift from rational truth to opinion, to *doxa*. It relates 'the world of universal interdependence' in which all positions and opinions are impartial and interdependent. We could say that Arendt's pluralism is associative project, agonism without antagonism, while Mouffe's pluralism is dissociative project, agonism always threatened by antagonism. I return to this difference in more details in chapter 6. On Hannah Arendt, see: Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future. Six Exercises in Political Thought* (London: Penguin Books, 2006).

a political dimension.[30]

For Mouffe, the significance of the agonistic model of democratic politics for artistic practices lies in their inherent political dimension, manifested in the way they can either support or challenge the symbolic order underpinning social relations. The operation of challenging the symbolic order entails a struggle and contest against the discourses appropriated by the dominant politics of neoliberalism. It is, then, with regard to the struggle for the symbolisation of different social relations, which may invigorate democracy, that we can distinguish the contesting dimension of artistic practices from those whose role is merely one of compliance. And, it is with this distinction that the importance of hegemony and antagonism emerges for understanding the political dimension of artistic practices: it helps us to recognise the pragmatic role of art and the consequences it may have on the audience. Only when the consequences of art are analysed are we able to see that artistic practices are capable of either sustaining or contesting dominant politics, sedimented social practices and fixed representations embedded in neoliberal politics.

To grasp this point more fully, we shall take a closer look at the connections between art and *discourse*, insofar as it provides the two key notions for defining art in relation to the political — the notions of antagonism and hegemony. To say that every artistic practice is produced by means of symbolisation is to acknowledge that objects of art — just like different collectives, cultures, and identities — are discursively constructed. This operation demands an understanding of discourse not as a mere representation of the social or the historical that encompasses only practices of speaking, writing, and communicating, but as something constitutive of the social and of histories that encompasses all dimensions of social reality. In other words, discourse does not reflect the mentality of rationalising the 'being' of an object at the level of universal conceptual form (this would be idealism or realism); it rather reflects the material character of every social construction and indicates that the very being of objects is itself a discursive production — not an 'essence'. The question that arises out of the discursive approach to the understanding of objects will then be — not what the objects of art are — but rather *how* and *why* they are produced as well as what are the consequences of structuring the objects of art as such?

This way of approaching the problem of the *object* demands the abandonment of the thought/reality dualism which reduces and rationalises the being of the object — that is its existence — to the level of abstract concepts. Within this context, in order to stress the inconsistency of any rationalist conception of 'objective totality', Laclau and Mouffe introduce the idea of 'relational totality' that affirms the material character of every

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30   Mouffe, *Agonistics*, 91.

discursive structure.[31] Deepening both Marx's *materialism* which showed that the meaning of any object is a result of radical exchange and relationalism of things and Wittgenstein's concept of the language-game 'consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven',[32] Laclau and Mouffe define a discursive configuration in terms of relational sequences between linguistic phenomena and institutions, social practices, and rituals, through which discourse is structured.[33] Hence, discourse is a system of social relations within which objects are symbolically articulated, or constituted. To move away from rationalism is, then, to point out the material properties of every object, that is, to show the relational, historical, contingent and symbolically constructed character of objects.

In recognising that objects acquire the attribute of materiality we are then able to acknowledge that an everyday object is understood as an object of art only when it is inscribed in a system of relations that structures and articulates it within the social practice of art. For example, a stone is an object of art only to the extent that it establishes a system of relations with the institution of art; otherwise, when we throw it, the stone is a projectile used in a game. This example shows that the meaning of the object depends on the *context* of its actual 'use', which inscribes it within a system of relations comprised of differential entities that articulate a particular discursive totality. Provided that the meaning of the object is constructed within a particular context, that is, a particular system of relations — society is never able to fix or fully articulate the variety of possible positions of the object under the logic of a single principle. A discursive configuration reveals, in other words, that the meaning of the object lies in the performative operation that *articulates* relations between differential entities within a particular delimited context that it sustains or contests. In regard to articulation, the meaning of an object is no longer separated as a conceptually discrete element or as empirically given. On the contrary, the meaning of every object is a consequence of the articulatory practice. It is constructed on a nominal level, in discursive and relational sequences, implying polemics between different opinions.[34] Relational totality — that we have previously designated as a symbolic overdetermination — is then the property of associated entities; it entails the process of discursive configuration, which only partially fixes, or rather, stabilises the meaning of the object within a particular context by an act of decision that excludes other

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[31] Laclau and Mouffe remind us that objective totality may be defined in terms of 'the essentialism of the totality' — which aims to establish harmony between differential elements, as we find in Spinoza, and in terms of 'the essentialism of the elements' — whose goal is to secure their independence, as in Leibnitz. Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony*, 103.

[32] Wittgenstein, *Investigations,* 5.

[33] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony*, 109.

[34] On opinion formation, see chapter 6.

relational choices.[35]

For this reason, *hegemony*, which manifests itself precisely in the moment of decision, implies that the meaning of an object is conditioned by the range of discourses that a particular relational configuration excludes. Accordingly, every work of art, just as every object, is constructed by the *limits* established between differential positions — between interiority and exteriority of the object, or between its totality and its surplus — which prevent its full foundation or absolute objectivity. Once it is recognised that the production of limits cancels the existence of objective relations, we have to acknowledge that the construction of the object of art is an effect of unstable and paradoxical relations between differential entities that may never be overcome. It is, then, with regard to the moments of decision and exclusion that all limits to objectivity are paradoxical and a manifestation of *antagonism*. On the one hand, this view explains why different societies are incapable of fully articulating and fixing the being of objects; on the other hand, it shows that the stability of the object may always be threatened by its constitutive exterior. For instance, the system of fixed relations among differential entities reflects the way institutions, such as museums, art galleries, theatres, art funds, and artists themselves, seek to fasten the being of an object through the work of art in a particular representation and thereby delimit its reality. Conversely, recourse to the object's exteriority makes it possible to challenge established limits by showing the relational, historical, contingent, constructed and repetitive character of those actions by which cultural institutions have determined the 'being' of objects through the work of art. This view explains that every institution or social practice, just like every work of art, is a precarious and contingent construction and that it can always be challenged from its constitutive outside.

At this point, we shall envisage art in terms of Mouffe's distinction between *politics* and *the political*. This is how Mouffe defines politics: 'by 'politics' I mean the set of practices and institutions through which an order is created, organizing human coexistence in the context of conflictuality provided by the political'.[36] Politics belongs to the ontic level, which has to do with the 'manifold practices of conventional politics'.[37] Translated in art terms, 'politics' indicates a representational aspect of art — art as social practice. Representation is a relational and discursive configuration of differential constitutive elements of art (formal, social, geo-political, economic, and so on), articulated in a particular contingent construction. It is a source of affects that belong to the level of 'the

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[35] Writing about the meaning of art art critique and philosopher Arthur Danto stresses the significance of the meaning of art in general, and painting in particular, in relation to its context. He writes: 'The work draws meaning from the body of work within which it is placed, and this makes clear the degree to which the place of painting today is the exhibition, which provides the context in which the work alone is to be judged and appreciated'. Arthur Danto, *After the End of Art. Contemporary Art and the Pale of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 169.

[36] Mouffe, *On the Political*, 9.

[37] *Ibid.*, 8.

political'. By 'the political', Mouffe writes, 'I mean the dimension of antagonism which I take to be constitutive of human societies'.[38] The political is placed on the ontological level that concerns 'the very way in which society is instituted'.[39] In art terms, 'the political' indicates an affective aspect of art — art as a process of articulation of affects into representation. The process of articulation of affects into representations requires a passionate affective identification that gives rise to particular discourses, that is opinions, polemics, agreements and self-assertive actions, by excluding alternative relational configurations. In a nutshell, the political in art indicates a conflict of positions.

Once we envisaged art in this way, we are allowed to suggest that *art always possesses a political dimension*. And, while some art discloses the political dimension by complying with existing politics, another art discloses the political dimension by contesting them. C*omplying artistic practices* reproduce the hegemony of current politics by virtue of what Franco Farinelli calls 'geometrical objectification' — the objectification which reduces the observer's gaze to a 'vanishing point' and, thus, smooths divergences between subject and object.[40] In other words, complying artistic practices mobilise affects that reproduce dominant politics. In contrast, *contesting artistic practices* challenge the consistency established between subject and object by striating the space they share through the intervention of outside stimuli. In fact, they mobilise affects that give rise to alternative politics. According to this distinction — which stresses a co-constitutive relationship between affects and representations, or procedures and practices[41] — two obvious conclusions do necessarily follow: (1) art may be identified with hegemonic politics and the forces of compliance that intend to fix particular discourses in absolute totalities; (2) art may reveal its contesting and conflictual dimension, placing itself within the context of counter-hegemonic practices and struggle that strives to unfix established totalities. The principle of contestation hence manifests by the operation of fixity/unfixity, or articulation and disarticulation, in which ontic content assumes ontological function.

Important to realise is that through processes of repetition any counter-hegemonic or critical gesture may itself become sedimented, fixed and instrumentalised by hegemonic politics. As political philosopher Yannis Stavrakakis points out, 'something that starts as a non-conformist radical intervention often ends up being gradually absorbed by the art system and the dominant hegemonic order, partially transforming its status at

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[38] *Ibid.*, 9.

[39] *Ibid.*,

[40] With geometrical objectification Farinelli refers to the 'birth of modernity' grounded in Florentine linear perspective. Franco Farinelli, "Subject, Space, Object: The Birth of Modernity," in *Mathematizing Space, The Object of Geometry from Antiquity to the Early Modern Age*, ed. Vincenzo De Risi (Basel: Birkhauser, 2015), 143-156.

[41] On the distinction between practices and procedures, see chapters 2 and 6.

the same time'.[42] This is why art, within the context of counter-hegemony, should be seen as a continuous contest and struggle against discourses appropriated and manipulated by hegemonic politics, and social practices and forms of representation they have fixed. Against a politics that govern affects and passions, counter-hegemonic and contesting artistic practices provide a terrain for confrontation to this operation and, consequently, for constitution of politics and societies in alternative ways. If art objects are sources of affects, then the relation between art and politics does not conceive of the artist as an apolitical solipsist, but as an active participant in the struggle against hegemonic politics. The role of the artist is, thus, to plunge into objects we are all observing, in order to expose antagonism and hegemony as being inherent to the construction of any objectivity. By this, the artist may mobilise particular affects and encourage self-assertive political actions among the audience. From this point, we cab start thinking how art may contribute to the processes of disarticulation of dominant politics, and their rearticulation in an alternative way.

choreographing agonism

I have argued that in order to grasp the political dimension of any artistic practice, it is necessary to introduce a discursive approach to the analysis of art. I suggested that this can be achieved by pursuing insights found in Mouffe's agonistic model of democratic politics which emphasises discursive configuration, antagonism and hegemony to be constitutive to any social construction. Mouffe has demonstrated that reality is discursively constructed as a system of linguistic and extralinguistic relations that entail the construction of ant/agonistic limits and moments of exclusion. As we have seen, the place of the excluded is situated at the level of the ontological, from which it challenges the stability of hegemonic politics — institutions, social practices and representations. Therefore, I suggested that art may comply with politics — insofar as it supports hegemonic politics and sets of discourse and practices that those politics prescribe; and that art may contest politics — insofar as it challenges existing politics through the form of a counter-hegemonic struggle, which reveals contingency to be inherent to any objectification. This way of approaching art provides the framework for the argument that I want to advance in this final section, about the relation between performance and politics as well as about the political dimension of performance practices. In order to embrace two key concepts for defining the political — hegemony and antagonism — I will now turn attention to the construction of discourses in relation to performance practice.

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42   Yannis Stavrakakis, "Challenges of Re-politicization. Mouffe's Agonism and Artistic Practices," *Third Text*, Vol. 26, Issue 5 (2012): 554.

To show how performance practice constructs diverse and compelling communities, performance scholar Judith Hamera observes that performance is always produced in relation to *discourse*: 'all performance, including dance, is enmeshed with language, in reading, writing, rhetoric, and in voice'.[43] We can agree with Hamera that steps and positions have names, that movements always tell stories and are taught through stories, and that metaphor may be used to communicate how a movement looks or feels.[44] We can also agree with Hamera that press kits and reviews are part of performance; they communicate ideas and help performance companies to survive.[45] Here, names, stories, metaphors and reviews, acknowledge the mental capacity of spectators to rationalise the object of art at the level of concept. Nevertheless, this view reduces discourse to the realm of linguistics. It fails to account for the extralinguistic, for the institutions and practices through which discourse is formed. In this view, discourse is a mere presentation of performance as a social practice of choreographing bodily movements without questioning the nature of that social practice itself. In order to grasp the political dimension of performance practice it is necessary to conceive of discourse in terms of relations that encompass all dimensions of social reality. In such a context, discourse stands not only for the practices of writing, speaking and communicating, that is, of *presenting* the elements of performance as an aesthetic practice; it also stands for the system of relations materialised through language games, through body language and actions with which body language is entwined, that is, *representing* the moments of performance in relation to the other and the system within which it is inscribed. The operation of representation points at the process of construction of performances through encounter and processes of symbolisation that that encounter implies.[46]

The representational approach to performance implies that the body is entangled with various social practices, activities and initiatives in a particular chain — a wide network of relations discursively constituted by different actors who share an interest in bringing to recognition particular needs. In other words, the representational approach to performance points at the affective identification and shared quest for naming, the shared quest for the symbolisation of particular needs with concrete demands. In this view, performance does not relate any more to a conceptual practice occupied with the form rationally deduced from the sheer presence of performers and objects, but to a performative practice of articulation concerned with the ways sociocosmic relations are materialised through the process of symbolisation and corporeally constituted, valued,

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[43] Judith Hamera, *Dancing Communities. Performance, Difference and Connection in the Global City* (London, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 5.

[44] *Ibid.*

[45] *Ibid.*

[46] I have distinguished the post-representational from the representational performance practice in chapter 4.

viewed and exchanged. Envisaged in this way, representation in performance stands for a choreography that may appropriate elements from different artistic genres and different genres of the performing arts (dance, theatre, mime, opera, concert, video, drawing, among others) as well as of various social practices (dance, sport, aerobics, promenading, jumping, boxing, working, and so on) and discourses (economic, political, cultural, moral, ethical, archeological, mathematical, or any other discourse). In this view, the emphasis is not any more on the ontic manifestation of performance, on its form, but rather on its ontological dimension, on the encounter with the other that the performance practice implies. And, inasmuch as encounter, as we shall soon see, may invoke antagonism and hegemony propelled by the principle of exclusion, it instantly enables the understanding of how performance may sustain existing, or construct different communities.[47]

The material properties of every social construction involved in the performative operation articulate a particular discursive relation between different objects or a different range of movements. On this basis, an act of everyday movement or any social practice is understood as performance only when it is inscribed within the system of relations that structure and articulate it as a social practice of performance. For instance, brushing teeth becomes performance executed by Allan Kaprow in his own bathroom, without the presence of the audience, in the 1950s.[48] Pedestrian activities, acrobatics, workers march, sports and games, became performance in Yvonne Rainer's choreography, during the 1960s and 1970s.[49] The knife game, also known as 'five finger fillet' — in which a knife has to be stabbed between the fingers of a palm placed on the table — becomes a rhythmic performance, or a 'rhythmic exercise', in Marina Abramović's *Rhythm 0* (1973).[50] Likewise, a series of quotidian gestures such as leaning head on hand, running fingers through hair, baring and covering shoulders, among others, were utilised and connected in the system of mechanical movements in *Rosas Danst Rosas* (1983)

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[47] On the ways performance practice may contribute to the constitution of different communities see chapter 5.

[48]   Looking back at his own performances, happenings, from the 1950s, Allan Kaprow in *Performing Life* (1977) writes that the models for his early happenings were everyday life routines, such as brushing teeth, washing dinner dishes, asking for time, and so on. Allan Kaprow observes the everyday actions as performances drawing upon a sociologist Erving Goffman. See: Allan Kaprow, *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, ed. Jeff Kelley (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1993), 195.

[49] For instance, pedestrian movement becomes performance in Yvonne Rainer's *Ordinary Dance* from 1962. Then, in *The Mind is a Muscle* from 1968, '[a] film of feet gently kicking a ball is projected onto a hanging screen'. In a group pedestrian protest *Street Action* from 1970, Rainer incorporated the'M-Walk' movement from the march of the alienated workers in Fritz Lang's film *Metropolis* (1927). About Rainer see: Catherine Wood, *Yvonne Rainer. The Mind is a Muscle* (London: Afterall Books, 2007).

[50] Art historian Ješa Denegri, a witness of Abramović's early performances, introduced the term 'rhythmic exercise' to describe Abramović's performances from the Rhythm series. Ješa Denegri, "Govor u prvom licu — isticanje individualnosti umetnika u novoj umetničkoj praksi 70-ih godina," in *Nova umetnost u Srbiji* (Beograd: Muzej savremene umetnosti, 1983), 9.

choreographed by Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker.[51] In *dbddbb* (2015) Daniel Linehan departs from protest movements and marches to explore both group solidarity and individual autonomy within the choreographed space. When in El Conde de Torrefiel's performance *Guerrilla* (2016) more than sixty participants dance for forty minutes on loud techno music, a syllabus-free dance becomes a choreography.[52] As these examples show, performances 'use' bodily movements associated with different social practices, inscribe them into a particular system of relations, and articulate, or rather, embody within the context of choreography.

If, as Heidegger proposed, 'the motion is a property of the *res corporea'*, then the bodily movement must be conceived as 'a mere change of location'.[53] Thus, the body changes itself by being moved in a certain way. Understood in this way, *choreography is a decisive symbolic ordering of bodies, which stabilises a temporal performative movement in space*.[54] Being structured through the act of decision that spatially organises the range of temporal movements choreography may comply with the existing politics, practices, techniques and representations, or contest them so as to constitute them in different ways. Accordingly, choreography is a manifestation of *hegemony*. It implies the act of taking a decision on an undecidable terrain. Whether it complies with existing politics or contests them, from the point of view of the theory of hegemony, choreography nevertheless possesses a political dimension. Andrew Hewitt's assertion that choreography is 'a way of thinking about the relationship between aesthetics to politics' is perfectly justified; as is his claim that choreography cannot be 'set in the opposition to the category of "the political"'.[55]

Hewitt's suggestion that choreography may be thought in relation to politics provides a framework for the argument that I want to make about the inherent political dimension of performance within the context of *counter-hegemonic struggles*. To say that choreography stabilises a temporal performative movement in space, is to define choreography as *a hegemonic system of differential corporeal movements*, distinct from *the range of temporal moves* that it *excludes*. For instance, the rigid ballet technique that

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[51] In *Rosas danst Rosas* quotidian gestures connected into mechanical repetitive movements point at the power of production processes over every aspect of human lives.

[52] Once everyday movements, gestures or actions are put within the framework of art, then they are dramatised. This is why I call for a return of the discourse on drama in performance studies. See chapter 4.

[53] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Thought, [1962] 2008), 124.

[54] As maintained by Laclau, space is a structure discursively constructed as a system of contingent relations that exteriorise other possible relational configurations. And, since it depends on the exterior, space is thus always traversed by a mere possibility, which stands for a form of temporality, and which renders a dimension of dislocation. In Laclau's terms, dislocation is the condition of both possibility and impossibility of total spatialisation. This is to say, that every structure implies a spatialisation of time, while time continuously dislocates space. I discuss the dimensions of time and space in more details in chapter 5.

[55] Andrew Hewitt, *Social Choreography. Ideology as Performance in Dance and Everyday Movement* (Duke University Press, 2005), 11.

maintains physical mastery over dancing bodies by means of strict methods (alignment, turnout, posture, toe pointing, and so on) is grounded in the exclusion of movements that relate any other social practice from choreography (street-dance, sports, games, stand-ups, protest marches, just wars, still-acts, and so on). In a similar way, what dance scholar Andrè Lepecki calls the still-act in the performances of Steve Paxton (*Magnesium* 1972), Vera Mantero (*a mysterious Thing said e.e. cummings* 1996) and Jérome Bel (*The Last Performance* 1998, *Jérome Bel* 1995), rests on the exclusion of uninterrupted and abstract movements of ballet and modern dance from choreography.[56] Likewise, when movements of aggression function as a choreographing system, as in Arkadi Zaides' performance *Archive* (2014), then every other aspects of social moves are excluded. As these examples demonstrate, choreography may be embodied in a stable representation only in relation to the surplus moves that it excludes. And, insofar as they are constitutive for choreography, the excluded physical moves may always disrupt the system of established corporeal movements.

The disrupting potential of a range of physical moves that are excluded is manifested in the variety of *impromptu acts* inclined to destabilise and disarticulate systems of corporeal movements sedimented in choreographic representation by means of dance techniques. By impromptu bodily acts I mean the embodiment of any corporeal move in choreography that occurs as a result of the struggle of the bodies involved in the recognition of particular needs that have been excluded by hegemonic politics and representational norms, or have been subordinated to different discourses that, for example, prioritise religion over gender, gender over class, or class over ethnicity, and so on. Under these circumstances, the counter-hegemonic choreographed movement is the embodiment of any impromptu bodily act in representation. As such, it mobilises affects, triggered by acts of struggle against various universal social, cultural, economic or moral laws. The counter-hegemonic choreography aims at contesting existing modes of representation, and articulating and constituting different ones, much more relevant for the plural, multicultural and migrating societies. In other words, counter-hegemony redraws the limits and challenges the constructed, historical and contingent character of any

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[56] Still-act is a mode of performing first proposed by an anthropologist Nadia Seremetakis. I envisaged it as a contingent and temporary configuration of bodies that gives rise to a meaning of performance within a particular context at a given moment. It is important to stress, as Derrida pointed out, that 'no context can determine the meaning to the point of exhaustiveness'. In contrast, to claim that still-act is 'dance's exhaustion', as dance scholar André Lepecki asserts, would be to argue that the reality of dance as a social practice is exhausted and thus to idealise still-act as an ultimate political form of dance. Parallels to this thought could be drawn from the visual arts. In visual arts, as an art critic and philosopher Arthur Danto pointed out, the monochrome, such as Kazimir Malevich's *Black Square* (1915), would stand for the internal exhaustion of the possibilities of painting, if the painting would not be analysed within the context that gives rise to the meaning of the painting. On context see: Jacques Derrida, *Aporias*, trans. Thomas Dutoit (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 9. On exhausting dance see: André Lepecki, *Exhausting Dance. Performance and the Politics of Movement* (New York, London: Routledge, 2006), 16. On monochrome painting and non-exhaustion, see: Arthur Danto, *After the End of Art. Contemporary Art and the Pale of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 170.

representation.

This type of a choreographic practice — envisaged as a decisive symbolic ordering of bodies, redrawing the limits of representation and rearticulating discursive formations by means of impromptu bodily acts — is at work in Arkadi Zaides' performance *Archive*. Let's for a moment observe *Archive* in more details. In 2007, the Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights *B'Tselem* launched the Camera Project. The goal of the Camera Project was to distribute cameras to Palestinians in severe conflict zones of the West Bank, in order to document Israeli acts of violation against them. Zaides, Israeli himself, reviewed about 4500 hours of these video recordings and made a selection of clips that served as a starting point for his choreography that reflects on this archive of the Israeli-Palestinian conflictual relations. In *Archive*, performed for the fist time in 2014, the selected clips are projected on a big screen hanging above the stage. Zaides takes place close to the screen, in order to be able to look at the videos together with the audience. He then performs, for an hour, by extracting a range of physical moves and vocal gestures from the video recordings taken by Palestinians to document acts of violation of their rights under the Israeli occupation. With a remote controller in one hand, he manipulates the video; he plays the clips, stops them, rewinds some scenes and plays them again. This enables Zaides to focus on particular moves and vocal gestures and to perform them on stage. By the end of the performance, all the moves and gestures extracted from the video clips are connected and articulated in a choreography that in a particular way embodies the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and, more precisely, represents the hegemonizing power of Israelis over Palestinians. In this choreography Zaides embodies the physical actions (pointing a gun, throwing a stone, scattering sheep or shattering olive trees) and accompanying vocal cues (shouts, taunts or jeers) that Israeli soldiers and settlers in the West Bank resort to in various situations of deterring Palestinians. His main goal is to put on stage and into question the gestures of aggression that are sedimented in his own community, yet remain absent from a broad public debate.[57]

The significance of this performance lies in the choreographic practice as a decisive symbolic ordering of conflicting bodies, introducing the movements of aggression as a choreographing system. The archive of human movements of aggression as a representation of conflictual relations mobilises passions among the audience that as 'affective forces' may question the hegemonic politics and contribute to their transformation.[58] The potential of archive is hence to articulates affects into concrete

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[57] Arkadi Zaides, Interviewed by author, personal interview (Skype, 20 May 2017).

[58] Mouffe writes that passions 'refer to the various affective forces which are at the origin of collective forms of identifications'. In: Mouffe, *On the Political*, 24.

demands of a counter-hegemonic discourse that requires political change.[59] This counter-hegemonic discourse then points at the right to physical integrity. Stressing the significance of the right to physical integrity performance scholar Sandra Noeth observes that we need 'to concern ourselves with our own processes and policies of setting up boundaries and creating territories'.[60] Accordingly, the critical view of *Archive* is what mobilises the qualitative properties of the social — intelligence, imagination and active participation.[61] It is in this context that the conflictual relations introduced through the choreography of movements of aggression cease to be a mere matter of the plot, of the closed system relating to drama represented on the stage, and become a matter of the relationship between the audience and the performance.[62] Within this context, the audience is affected by the movements of aggression represented both within a video archive and as a choreographing system. The audience is thus invited to engage with the performance and to envisage how bodies can co-move through the different choreographic scores of living; how they can organise relations in a way that is adequate to the plurality of positions that constitute and striate social space; and, how they can articulate antagonistic relations constructed along the lines that separates 'us' from 'them' as enemies, in an agonistic configuration constituted along the lines that separate 'us' from 'them' as adversaries. It is here that the political dimension of performance ceases to be only a sort of thinking through the relations of power, and becomes a demand for acting upon these relations in order to change them, as performance scholar Joe Kelleher suggest.[63]

This way of approaching the audience implies the acknowledgement of the moves that are arrested, excluded, suppressed, silenced, or undermined by dominant politics. It also implies a mobilisation of the audience towards a struggle for the rearticulation of the very terms of symbolic legitimacy, by contaminating and destabilising the dominant social order and, by redrawing the limits established by hegemonic politics. It is probably this sort of participation of the audience in performance that performance scholar Randy Martin had in his mind when he wrote that the operation of contestation should be

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[59] In this context, the dancing body, even when performing the archive of human movements of aggression, 'is not only the medium of protest … it is the carrier of the signs and symbols of protest', as performance scholar Gabriele Klein suggests. In: Gabriele Klein, "The (Micro-) Politics of Social Choreography Aesthetics and Political Strategies of Protest and Participation," in *Dance, Politics & Co-immunity*, eds. Gerald Siegmund and Stefan Hölscher (Berlin, Zürich: Diaphanes, 2013), 197.

[60] Sandra Noeth, "Intact Bodies: Slow Violence, Gestures of Touch, and the Integrity of the Body," in *Bodies of Evidence*, eds. Sandra North and Peter Mills (Stockholm: Stockholm University of Arts, 2016), 23.

[61] Bojana Kunst envisages movement as a qualitative disturbance which enables 'a constant alteration of the forces of life, temporal dynamics and materiality of space'. Bojana Kunst, "Working Out Contemporaneity Dance and Post-Fordism," in *Dance Politics and Co-immunity*, eds. Gerald Siegmunt and Stefan Hölscher (Berlin, Zürich: Diaphanes, 2013), 70.

[62] On the return of drama, see chapter 4.

[63] Joe Kelleher, *Theatre & Politics* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 29.

envisaged as a matter of mobilisation of participation which 'rests with the possibility of theorising it as a more than simply attendance at the event […] as struggles over the context and configuration of an alternative public space'.[64] Envisaged within this framework, a constitution of counter-hegemonic spaces is a consequence of a self-assertive and constitutive political project of action, which intends to contest the hegemony of politics sedimented in established representations.

In *Archive*, the need for the constitution of resisting and struggling bodies in a counter-hegemonic discourse of relations that would be capable of challenging existing politics, is amplified by their absence, by placing the oppressed behind the camera and by inviting the audience to take their place. (One should think about the effect of this performance on the audience in different geo-political contexts.) *Archive* brings to the fore the fact that the moment of exclusion is inherent to societies and that every limit to objectivity, including performances, is threatened by *antagonism*. Antagonism evokes the ever-present possibility of conflict between complying and contesting forces. While complying forces have a tendency to fix bodies and moves in the smooth space structured by the politics of harmony and absolute immanence, and thus do away with conflicts and alterity, the contesting forces, which mobilise impromptu bodily acts, aim to striate the space without constitutive division and to open up a debate about the ways society may be constructed in different terms, along the differential positions and conflictual lines.[65]

Given these points, the significance of the contesting potential of the impromptu bodily moves, embodying resistance, struggle and mobilisation of qualitative properties of the audience, resides in striating the smooth space of 'pure immanence' that relegates differences, by opening up the space for a plurality of positions. By definition, the striated space is a space of (un)decidability; it enables the coexistence of paradoxically different systems of relations and movements rather than the silencing of different choices through antagonistic acts. It is by disarticulating antagonistic relations between 'the determined system of differential corporeal movements' and 'the rage of excluded impromptu physical moves' — transforming them into agonistic and plural configurations — that performance ultimately may invigorates democracy. As is apparent in the choreographic work of Zaides, the contesting dimension of performance is manifested throughout the struggle of the performer's body for the recognition of discourses and moves that embody ethical, political, and cultural values different than those values sustained by hegemonic

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[64] Randy Martin, *Critical Moves* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 47.

[65] Christel Stalpaert refers to this kind of society in terms of 'acculturated community' that allows different cultural identities to live together. Writing about the emigratory experience of the dance collective Les Slovaks, Stalpaert suggests that their dance technique, formed under various geo-political, educational, and cultural influences, may embody acculturation as a complex corporeal archive. Christel Stalpaert, "Performing the Emigratory Experience: Encountering Relational Identities in Dance Performances" (paper presented at the conference Post-Migration in Performance: Representation, Policy and Education, Sabanci University, Istanbul, June 8-9, 2013).

politics and social practices. It is the body as a bounded system that, as anthropologist Mary Douglas wrote, 'can represent any boundaries which are threatened or precarious'.[66]

This is why the political project of agonistic democracy, in the manner developed by Mouffe, is such an asset for performance theory. It enables us to grasp the counter-hegemonic or contestable performance practices and allows us to envisage performance practice in many different ways; not only within the framework of the theory of immanence — in terms of the actualisation of the multiplicity of abstract concepts deduced from bodily movement, but also within the framework of the theory of quasi-transcendence — concerning the performative practice which embodies the struggle between various discourses and representations.[67] Such contesting performance practices open up the space for what Mouffe calls an *agonistic encounter* of performers and the public; an agonistic encounter of separate entities located in the same space.[68] These agonistic choreographic practices produce a form of *contingent objectification*. Contingent objectification in performance stands for the contingent character of bodily articulations which only partially stabilise a specific decisive configuration of movements in choreography at the given moment. It is discursively constructed as a partial and contestable system of relations that may always be articulated otherwise.

With regard to agonistic encounters and agonistic objectifications, performance practices can be envisaged as choreo-political performances that challenge the ways in which reality, nature, objects and practices are articulated and contribute to their (re)constitution in alternative ways.[69] By recognising that antagonism threatens any social construction, choreo-political performances propose alternative ways of envisaging the systems of living together: the ways we encounter the world and the ways we objectify it. They open up the space for the agonistic polemic around social, political and cultural discourses that structure different identities, social practices, representations and institutions. Without polemic — that is to say, without the acknowledgement of agonism

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[66] Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger. An Analysis of the Concept of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 1966), 115.

[67] This distinction is elaborated in chapter 2.

[68] Chantal Mouffe, "Marcelo Evelin. Dance as an Agonistic Encounter," in *Time We Share: Reflection on and through Performing Arts*, eds. Daniel Blanga-Gubbay and Lars Kwakkenbos (Brussels: Kunstenfestivaldesarts & Mercatorfonds. 2015), 246-254.

[69] My definition of the notion of choreo-political differs from André Lepecki's. Drawing upon Rancière's distinction between the order of police and the order of political, Lepecki writes that the movement is political when it endlessly confronts police in order to open up a gap for the new modes of existence. Drawing upon Mouffe's distinction between the order of politics and the realm of the political, I define choreo-political as contest and struggle against dominant politics and as a possibility for (re)constituting politics in different ways, thus implying the moment of partial fixation or stabilisation in representation. On the notion of choreo-political in Lepecki's theory see: Andrè Lepecki, 'Choreopolice and Choreopolitics: or the task of the dancer', *TDR: The Drama Review*, Vol. 57, No. 4 (2013): 13-27. I discuss Lepecki's theory in more details in chapter 6.

— there is no political dimension in performance or in art more generally. It is only by embracing the dimension of agonism, I would suggest, that a counter-hegemonic politics can emerge within choreographic practices — transforming performance into a practice capable of challenging existing forms of identification while aiming at the agonistic constitution of new collectives.[70] Struggle against the antagonistic and destructive consequences of the neoliberal politics of globalisation appears as the only possible form of unity.[71]

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[70] On the ways performances can contribute to the construction of alternative collectives, see chapter 5.

[71] This point is elaborated in chapter 5.

2

Contingent Objectification[72]

This chapter unfolds a debate between the philosophical trajectories of immanence (Deleuze) and quasi-transcendence (Derrida) in the psychoanalytic and politico-philosophical terms. Drawing upon political philosophers Oliver Marchart and Yannis Stavrakakis, the trajectory of immanence is conceived within the framework of a positive ontological imaginary of abundance (desire for being in-itself) giving rise to political philosophers Michael Hardt's and Antonio Negri's political model of absolute democracy, whereas the trajectory of quasi-transcendence is envisaged within the framework of a negative ontological imaginary of lack (desire for the lack of-being) giving rise to political philosopher Chantal Mouffe's political model of agonistic democracy. My goal is to show that unlike the ontological imaginary of abundance that gives priority to the phenomenon of positivity, the ontological imaginary of lack anticipates a co-constitutive relationship between abundance and lack, precisely because the dimension of negativity precludes both the idealisation of abundance and the idealisation of lack. The suggested co-constitutive and agonistic type of relationship between the paradoxically differential positions, such as lack and abundance, becomes a condition for challenging a dualist view on societies and the possibility for the rearticulation of the relations between these positions within the global socio-cosmic community in plural terms. Drawing upon Bojana Cvejić's performance philosophy, it will become apparent that the phenomenon of positivity implies adequation or parallelism of the abundance of oppositional positions giving rise to a politics of absolute harmony, whereas the phenomenon of negativity implies tensions between the paradoxically differential positions, giving rise to a politics of agonism. This is significant, because agonism opens up the space for polemics.

To begin with, I will observe the co-constitutive relationship between abundance and lack through the linguistic interplay between presence and absence of objects in the performances *Black* (2011), *No Title* (2014) and *We to Be* (2015) by the Brussels based Norwegian choreographer and performer Mette Edvardsen. Tensions between the paradoxically different positions in Edvardsen's performances are envisaged as performative and articulating practices that enable the unfolding of what I call the artistic strategies of engagement. Drawing upon sociologist Antoine Hennion, I will demonstrated that the artistic strategies of engagement stress the significance of conceiving the works of

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[72] The point of departure of this chapter is my article: Goran Petrović Lotina, "The Agonistic Objectification: Choreography as a Play Between Abundance and Lack." *Performance Research*, 21: 4 (2016): 34-40.

art in terms of objects. This view on art suggests that objects have existence, while the being of objects — as political philosophers Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe observed — is only discursively constructed, through language and practices through which language is articulated. It is in this context that we can observe discourses and polemics to be constitutive to the works of art.

Choreography as a language-game in Mette Edvardsen's performances

Since her early performances, Edvardsen has been interested in exploring how bodies and objects are constructed in time and space. In her thirty minutes long solo performance *Private Collection*, which premiered in 2002,[73] Edvardsen interacts with objects — such as two wooden chairs, one indoor plant, a plastic bottle, a short wooden board, a take-away coffee cup, and her own clothes — in front of a white wall. In the middle of the wall, three lines are drawn with a black chalk in such a way so that their composition simulates a corner of a room. During the performance Edvardsen interacts with the objects in different ways. For instance, she uses her body to measure the distance between the two chairs; to experience their weight, she holds the chairs in her hands while lying with her back on the floor; to enclasp the shape of a chair, she lies on it with her stomach placed against the seat while touching the ground with her knees and the palms of her hands. Edvardsen lays the chairs aside, lifts them up, and, in fact, arranges them in different ways. At the certain moment, she walks slowly in front of the white wall, balancing the plant placed on the wooden board that she carries on her head. At another moment, she dresses the chairs in her own clothes, by putting her socks and trousers on the front legs of one chair and her shirt on the back of another chair. Suddenly, she lies on the floor and places a bottle on her stomach. During the performance, different objects, such as the coffee cup, the wooden board, the bottle and the chairs are arranged and rearranged in different ways so that they together always create 'new' objects. At the end of the performance, all the objects are assembled in a kind of a hybrid structure, placed in the corner of the 'room'.[74]

Writing about *Private Collection*, Edvardsen explains: 'I am interested in the nature of things, such as gravitation, weight, balance, stability, shape, and volume, and how we organise things which by classifying, collecting, and order relate the object in time and

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[73] *Private Collection* premiered in 2002 in Nadine, Brussels laboratory for trans-disciplinary art.

[74] Mette Edvardsen, Video: *Private Collection,* accessed on February 4, 2016, video link: https://vimeo.com/35913523.

space'.[75] Edvardsen observes that objects have 'a chameleon like quality'.[76] Therefore, to reflect on this quality, she occupies with the presence and absence of objects. This pursuit lead Edvardsen to create in 2006, a fifty-five minutes long performance *Opening*. Already in *Opening* Edvarsen explores her own body at the verge of absence and presence.[77] Her actions of walking, talking or falling on the stage, are considered of equal value as the isolated effects produced by space, sound, text, music, light, and curtains, 'performing' on their own.[78] As Edvardsen leaves and enters the stage many times, forty minutes after the beginning another performer, Nienke Reehorst, replaces the action of 'opening' a performance without making this replacement immediately visible to the audience.

The outmost idea underlining both *Private Collection* and *Opening*, that bring forth the instability of every construction — both identities and objects — is the activation of the audience's desires and affects towards the creation of different realities, or, as Edvardsen put it, 'other views and readings, to look and look again'.[79] Following this idea, in her later performances, Edvardsen began to investigate the ways language contributes to this operation. As she explains, her goal became to explore how reality exists in language and how language extends reality into space.[80] We could suggests that Edvardsen began to examine the possibilities and limits of language to materialise the being of objects through choreography and, by these means, to mobilise particular affects among the audience. Her trilogy consisting of the performances *Black, No Title* and *We to Be* demonstrate this endeavour.

Black is a twenty-five minutes long solo, which premiered in 2011.[81] In *Black* Edvardsen appears on the stage alone, wearing jeans and a simple blouse.[82] The only tools

[75] Mette Edvardsen, website, *Private Collection,* accessed February 4, 2016, http://www.metteedvardsen.be/projects/pc.html.

[76] *Ibid*.,

[77] The first version of *Opening* premiered in the art centre Vooruit, in Ghent, in 2005, and was a part of the programme organised by Les Ballets C. de la B. The running time of the first version of *Opening* was 20 minutes and it was performed by Edvardsen. The second version of *Opening* premiered in Kaaitstudio's in Brussels, in 2006. Here, a second performer, Nienke Reehorst, appeared after about 40 minutes of the performance, replacing Edvardsen and performing the last 15 minutes on her own. Sources: Mette Edvardsen, interview by the author, September 19, 2017; Mette Edvardse, website, *Opening,* accessed September 19, 2017. http://www.metteedvardsen.be/projects/op.html.

[78] Mette Edvardsen, video: *Opening*, accessed September 19, 2017, https://vimeo.com/35107862.

[79] Mette Edvardse, website, *Opening,* accessed September 19, 2017, http://www.metteedvardsen.be/projects/op.html.

[80] Mette Edvardsen, interview by the author, Brussels, August 26, 2014.

[81] *Black* premiered during *Performatik* Festival, in Kaaistudio's in Brussels.

[82] Mette Edvardsen, video: *Black,* accessed September 14, 2017, https://vimeo.com/27096736.

she uses to construct objects, as well as space and time, are language and her body.[83] She brings objects to presence by calling their names. The name of each object is repeated eight times in succession — for instance, table, table, table, table, table, table, table, table; chair, chair, chair, chair, chair, chair, chair, chair; lamp, lamp, lamp, lamp, lamp, lamp, lamp, lamp; floor, floor, floor, floor, floor, floor, floor, floor, and so on. The rhythmic alteration of the names of objects as different as table, chair, lamp, light, floor, window, and door, constructs the space of performance. All objects that thus create this 'room'— that Edvardsen measures with her steps: one, one, one, one, one, one, one, one; two, two, two, two, two, two, two, two; three, three, three, three, three, three, three, three — are brought to attention in their absence, either by pointing to them, looking at them, or by mimicking their presence by bodily movements. This is how the pattern of names — created by the different arrangements of stressed and unstressed syllables in what resembles an accentual verse, and by the differences in the timing, duration, or stress of consecutive notes — entwined with various every-day actions that Edvardsen performs in the 'room', produces the meanings of objects and the performance as a whole. For instance, water gets spilled on the floor, a dog walks around, leaves fall off a plant, fresh air is let in by opening the doors, some material is printed and work is done at the desk; Edvardsen sits, cleans, pets the dog, waters the plant, walks across the room, wonders in her daily routine, and thinks, thinks, thinks, thinks, thinks, thinks, thinks, thinks... And when the night falls, Edvardsen lies on the floor, or — we can imagine — in a bed; the tempo of pronunciation of objects, thoughts and actions, slows down, only to gradually speed up again, keeping her awake. And once she says black, only once, the imagined darkness fills in the stage and the audience knows that the performance has come to an end.

No Title is approximately forty minutes long solo which premiered in 2014. Edvardsen appears on stage casually dressed, and makes objects absent by negating their presence, that is, excluding objects that are already present, or that she brought to presence (some of them) in the previous performance *Black.[84]* With her eyes closed, she verbally enumerates objects one by one as gone, now, without repeating their names. It is mainly the verb 'gone' that patterns the performance. All objects, subjects, movements, numbers and sensations, such as beginning, walls, other walls, ceiling, floor, table, chair,

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[83] In Edvardsen's performances, time is always structured in relation to space. Writing on her performance *Or Else Nobody Will Know*, which premiered in 2007, in the art centre STUK in Leuven, in Belgium, Edvardsen notes: 'I conceive time not as duration but as exposure, where things can appear, become visible, gain meanings and capacities.' Similarly, regarding her performance *Every Now and Then*, which premiered in 2009, in the art centre Vooruit, in Ghent, the description of the performance explains: In '"every now and then" Mette Edvardsen and Philippe Beloul invite the audience to read a book as a performance. The idea is to create a space and a time inside a book, like a piece in a theatre'. See: Mette Edvardsen, website, *Or Else Nobody Will Know,* accessed September 14, 2017, http://www.metteedvardsen.be/projects/oenwk.html; Mette Edvardsen, website, *Every Now and Then*, accessed September 16, 2017, http://www.metteedvardsen.be/projects/enat.html.

[84] *No Title* premiered in Kaaistudio's Brussels.

dog, plant, but also shadows, arm, hidden cables, green emergency exit lights, mountain, clouds, negations, David Bowie, the 1960s, paint, the distinction between writing and drawing and thinking and doing, as well as the 'distinction itself', are all gone. Even when she draws a line with a piece of chalk on the floor, thus splitting the stage in two, she calls the line gone. The name of the performance "No Title" implies that also the title is gone.

In Edvardsen's performance *We to Be*, which premiered in 2015, the performer is gone too. Edvardsen is absent from the stage. What is present, however, is the darkness of the space, the empty stage filled only with words, with language.[85] Edvardsen's idea was to 'make a piece where everything was happening through language'.[86] This language is uttered by Edvardsen the performer now seated in the middle of the audience. Over fifty minutes, Edvardsen reads a book, consisting of five scenes, an intermission and a brief 'part two'.[87] The situations of experiencing objects, characters, sounds, spaces and situations in darkness (such as, a sound of a shoe dropped by a father, a spot that turns to be a hole in the floor, the silences between the speaking, the trees in a dark forest) — or, in a dream (such as the one in which the car that Edvardsen was driving sunk in the water) — are only uttered, by the director of the performance, a performer, and a prompter, all characters played by Edvardsen. None of the characters speaks in present. The director speaks from the future (of what will be), the performer from the past (of what has happened), while the prompter from the future perfect (from what will have happened). The light follows the dramaturgy that evolves in the book. Whereas the house lights fade out during the first fifteen minutes of the performance, and fade in during the last fifteen minutes, stage lights appear discretely, only to slightly open up the thick dark space of the stage, 'to shape the darkness'. The construction of objects, subjects and narratives, is left almost entirely to the audience; to the silent listeners' imagination, desires and memories. The three tenses of the play, which escape the present, mobilise the audience's imagination precisely by avoiding to tell the audience in which way to act, and what and how to see. Reading about acting in silence, Edvardsen, as the prompter, tells:

> The silences, of forgetting or remembering will have sounded very similar from where I will have been sitting. The spaces of doubt, the small shifts in attention, changes of intonation, delays, hesitations, … The darkness will not have meant much for me. The silences will have been decisive.[88]

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[85] *We to Be* premiered during *We Love Radio* festival in the art centre BUDA in Kortrijk, Belgium.

[86] Mette Edvardsen, interview by the author, September 19, 2017.

[87] Mette Edvardsen, *We to Be* (Brussels: Mette Edvardsen, 2015). In 2016, Edvardsen was awarded the National Ibsen Award for the book *We to Be*.

[88] *Ibid.*, 16.

The decisive silence does not matter only for the prompter and the audience in BUDA Kortrijk. *We to Be* is simultaneously broadcasted on radio. We can imagine a wider audience, absent from the theatre yet sitting in their homes, or cars, or elsewhere, taking part in the performance by simply listening and imagining, playing along the game at the verge of silence and utterance, past and future, and presence and absence.

In Edvardsen's trilogy, the linguistic play between presence and absence of objects, between attempts at grounding the totality of an object and the repeated failure of this endeavour, mobilises the qualitative properties of the audience: intelligence, imagination and participation. Its goal is to impel the audience to acknowledges that objects are always constructed through language; that they are not stable entities; that they are always partial and subject to change.[89] Edvardsen stresses this in *Black,* by uttering in succession each word of the followings sentences eight times: 'Things do not change, they can not, I change my mind, words and things change place'. And also: 'things that change place often blur the shape quite distinct, but obscured by dust. Shapes and thickness of dust reveal the thing removed'. With this poetic statement, Edvardsen points out that objects, as things, have existence, but that they are never given as such.[90] This implies that we can not grasp the essence of objects, except through discourse.[91] The discursive construction of this 'essence' is what we call the being of objects. This is, as Laclau and Mouffe observed, the most essential possibility of objects.[92] In fact, every objects is always discursively constructed — articulated in and through what Wittgenstein in his *Philosophical Investigations* (1953) designated as language-games: games that unfold in language and actions into which language is woven.[93] Besides, pointing to the fact that different human acts may have different consequences on the ways people articulate objects, Edvardsen entices the audience to recognise that the meaning of objects is always context-dependent. In fact, the meaning of objects is always articulated within a specific discursive configuration and it may always be articulated otherwise. For instance, we can think of a spherical object being a ball in a tennis match, a globe in a geography

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[89] Analysing ritual dance in Africa, linguist and performance theorist Leda Martins demonstrates that voice is also always symbolically constructed. Leda Martins, *Rite, Performance and Knowledge: Memory Times.* Paper presented at the IFTR conference, University of Sao Paulo, Brazil, 10 July 2017.

[90] Here,'thing' stands for an universal connotation (e.g. a spherical object), and 'object' for its particularisation achieved through the performative operation of naming (e.g. a spherical object as a ball or as a globe).

[91] The essence of the object is identical to what ancient philosophers Aristotle and Plato called *matter.*

[92] Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, "Post-Marxism Without Apologies," *New Left Review,* 166 (1987): 85.

[93] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. Gertrude Elizabeth Margaret Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, [1953]1986).

classroom, and, an object of aesthetic contemplation in theatre.[94] The conditionality of the meaning of objects by context shows that objects are precarious, contingent and contestable constructions. The process of de/construction of objects that we encounter in Edvardsen's performances is what I call the operation of articulation of the being of objects. The operation of articulation inscribes an absent object in the system of relations and structures its presence as representation.[95] By drawing a line between the representation of an object and its exteriority, between the object and its existence, between light that makes an object visible and darkness that makes it disappear, that is between presence and absence of objects, Edvardsen's performances show that controversy and tension are inherent in any objectification.[96]

abundance and lack: positivity and negativity

The political dimension of art, which is manifested in the continuous process of discursive articulation of absence into presence, that is, through tension and contest between representation and its exteriority — that we encounter in Edvardsen's performances — calls to attention the distinction between two dominant trajectories in the contemporary continental philosophical thought: the trajectory of immanence, which is grounded in the theory of Gilles Deleuze, and the trajectory of quasi-transcendence, which is informed by the theory of Jacques Derrida. These two trajectories, which also dominate in art theory, suggest different views on the relationship between presence and absence.

As previously indicated in Chapter 1 — and what I am summarising here for the purpose of the argument — the trajectories of immanence and quasi-transcendence diverge in terms of their respective relations to metaphysics. For Deleuze, the task of philosophy is to construct a metaphysics that establishes the plane of immanence. For Derrida the task of philosophy is to overcome metaphysics that enables the horizon of transcendence. Whereas the former examines existence within the smooth space without constitutive division, the latter explores it within the striated space affected from the

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[94] Performance scholar Victoria Pérez Royo writes that one always has to decide in which direction to throw the ball. Therefore, she suggests, 'the ball generates decision and action'; it is not only an object, but also an agent, a subject and a quasi-object. In: Victoria Pérez Royo, "Knowledge and Collective Praxis," in *Dance [and] Theory*, eds. Gabriele Brandstetter and Gabriele Klein (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2013), 57.

[95] On representational performance practice see chapter 4.

[96] André Lepecki offers an alternative view on Edvardsen's performance *No Title*. He does not engage with the discursive approach to performance in order to raise political questions, but with darkness and, wider, with certain blackness that is associated with darkness. Drawing upon Deleuze, Lepecki perceives darkness as singularity, as full potentiality which invokes freedom. Within this framework, *No Title* ceases to be an object and becomes a self-abstraction; a movement in the world of mind which creates 'affective-political blindness' or dispossession. See: André Lepecki, *Singularities. Dance in the Age of Performance* (London, New York: Routledge, 2016), 55-84.

outside. In this sense, as a philosopher Daniel Smith pointed out, Deleuze's concept of immanence suggests that the construction of differences is possible exclusively within the realm of metaphysics.[97] For his part, Derrida, like Deleuze, understands metaphysics as a structural closure. But, although Derrida acknowledges that the project of overcoming metaphysics is impossible, Smith suggests, he finds precisely in the impossibility of overcoming metaphysics the condition for the possibility of deconstructing the philosophical tradition from within.[98] Such an emphasis on the relational context of the categories of the possible and the impossible, closure and openness, interiority and exteriority, lends Derrida's theoretical approach a quasi-transcendental trajectory.

The distinction between the trajectories of immanence and quasi-transcendence is echoed in political theorists Lars Tønder's and Lasse Thomassen's distinction between the two dominant politico-philosophical ways of conceptualising radical democracy: the ontological imaginary of abundance, which stands for the philosophical tradition of immanence, and the ontological imaginary of lack, which stands for the philosophical tradition of quasi-transcendence. Although these two ontological positions share the idea of radical difference and criticise universalism and identity, Tønder and Thomassen identify significant differences between them: 'whether the political analysis should start from the level of signification or from networks of embodied matter' and whether politics should be constituted as never-receding pluralism or hegemonic constellations.[99] In addition, we can suggest the difference between these two ontologies in terms of a) a pluralism of adequate or parallel positions, being characteristic of the ontological imaginary of abundance, and b) a pluralism of relational positions, being characteristic of the ontological imaginary of lack. The distinction that I have just proposed, opens up a possibility for discerning a) the political dimension of performance that manifests through the adequation or parallelism of opposites, of presence and absence, from b) the political dimension of performance that manifests through the radical relationalism of paradoxical positions, of presence and absence. To unpack this hypothesis, I will now turn to political theorists Oliver Marchart and Yannis Stavrakakis.

Oliver Marchart suggests that the ontological imaginary of abundance — which emanates from Deleuze's theory of immanence, coincides with the primacy of desire over lack, and that the ontological imaginary of lack — which emanates from Derrida's theory

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[97]   Daniel Smith, "Deleuze and Derrida, Immanence and Transcendence: Two Directions in Recent French Thought," in *Between Deleuze and Derrida,* eds. Paul Paton and John Protevi (London, New York: Continuum, 2004), 50.

[98] *Ibid.*, 60.

[99] Lars Tønder and Lasse Thomassen, "Rethinking radical democracy between abundance and lack," in *Radical Democracy. Politics Between Abundance and Lack*, eds. Lars Tønder and Lasse Thomassen (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 2014), 2.

of quasi-transcendence, is a category of primacy of lack over desire.[100] In other words, whereas within the ontological imaginary of abundance 'lack' refers to a positivity of the subject's desire for being-in-itself, within the ontological imaginary of lack 'desire' refers to the lack-of-being in the subject, that is, the other situated outside the subject that renders a productive negativity. If we accept Marchart's thesis, which suggests that the phenomenon of positivity conceives of abundance and lack as reversals,[101] then we need to acknowledge that, in contrast, the phenomenon of negativity implies a tension between them. From the point of view of the political analysis, this distinction is significant. When abundance and lack are seen as reversals, or as opposites, then any polemic is precluded and people become deprived from the possibility of choice. Indeed, to the extend that positivity constitutes a reversal of terms, then, as Marchart writes, 'it will not be possible to decide, on the level of argumentation, which phenomenon is prior: lack or abundance. One will simply have to take sides between two apparently incompatible paradigms.'[102] Within this framework, abundance and lack are parallel positions; they are, to use Deleuze's term *l'adéquation*, adequate or parallel to each other.[103]

Departing from Marchart's view on the phenomenon of positivity that underlines Deleuze's theory of immanence, we can suggest that the phenomenon of negativity, that underlines Derrida's theory of quasi-transcendence, refers to an articulatory moment that conceives a paradoxical relation between abundance and lack, that is between absence and presence. In contrast to the phenomenon of positivity, which implies the adequation of opposing positions and hence a withdrawal of abundance from lack, the phenomenon of negativity is manifested through the radical relationalism between paradoxically different positions of abundance and lack, and, hence, the co-engagement of one with another. This is so because negativity, as Derrida indicated, points at a difference from itself or at a difference with itself; it admits that there is 'other than oneself'.[104] For that matter, the lack, or the other, as the condition of possibility of abundance is at once the conditions of its impossibility.[105] Consequently, we can agree with Marchart that whereas the phenomenon of positivity might be envisaged as the 'immanent overflow of presence

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100 Oliver Marchart, "The Absence at the Heart of Presence: Radical Democracy and the "Ontology of Lack"," in *Radical Democracy. Politics Between Abundance and Lack,* eds. Lars Tønder and Lasse Thomassen (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 2014), 26.

101 *Ibid*.,

102 *Ibid*.,

103 On *l'adéquation* see for instance: Gilles Deleuze, *Différence et Répétition* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, [1968] 1993).

104 Jacques Derrida, *Aporias*, trans. Thomas Dutoit (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 10.

105 *Ibid*., 15.

from presence',[106] the phenomenon of negativity might be envisaged as presence defined by a constitutive absence.[107] Or, to put it differently, whereas the former stands for the pure presence of the being in-itself, the later represents the lack-of-being. It is within this framework that the phenomenon of negativity implies tensions.

Next to the ontological imaginary of abundance and the ontological imaginary of lack, Marchart restored Derrida's notion of *différence* in order to introduce an alternative ontological imaginary — the ontological imaginary of difference. The ontological imaginary of difference is manifested in the possibility of preceding absence and presence. Quoting Derrida's definition of play, Marchart stresses that *différence* 'is always play of absence and presence, but if it is to be though radically, play must be conceived of before the alternative of presence and absence'.[108] Accordingly, Marchart writes that the constant play between presence and absence 'simply renders impossible the attainment of either full presence (totality [or abundance]) or full absence (radical lack)'.[109] This implies, as Derrida pointed out, that 'being must be conceived as presence or absence on the basis of the possibility of play and not the other way around.'[110]

At this point, the quasi-transcendental ontological imaginary of lack integrates the constitutive play of abundance and lack as relational categories in terms of articulation, precisely by connecting Derrida's notion of radical negativity and Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic notion of lack. According to Lacan, the symbolic law in which lack is constituted has its roots in the imaginary paths by which desire succeeds in identifying itself with 'want-to-be', with the other. Lacan explains that desire as a manifestation of 'an interval that demand hollows within itself, in as much as the subject, in articulating the signifying chain, brings to light the want-to-be, together with the appeal to receive the complement from the Other, if the Other, the locus of speech, is also the locus of this want to be, or lack'.[111] Both subject and the other are hence designated by a constitutive lack in which desire appears. Accordingly, 'being in itself [is] no more than that which is lacking for the realisation of knowledge'.[112] We could suggest that the indispensable lack-of-being constitutes the ontological horizon of the subject's desire for being-in-itself and enables its articulation on the symbolic level.

Writing about the relationship between abundance and lack, Stavrakakis point out

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[106] Marchart, "The Absence," 27.

[107] *Ibid.*, 26.

[108] Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alain Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 292., quoted in Oliver Marchart, "The Absence," 26.

[109] Marchart, "The Absence," 26.

[110] Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, 292.

[111] Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: a selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Routledge, [1966] 2003), 200.

[112] *Ibid.*, 226.

that 'although in Lacanian theory desire is never seen as an unlimited energy flowing *ex nihilo* […] that does not mean that Lacanians neglect the elements of excess and abundance. On the contrary, the constitutive play between lack and abundance is internal to Lacanian theory, only it never serves the idealisation of desire and abundance, precisely because of the ontological status of lack and negativity'.[113] Given these points we can see how in contrast to the ontological imaginary of abundance, in which desire is directed towards the being-in-itself suggesting the adequation of beings-in-themselves and a possibility of simply taking side between the two incompatible positions, the ontological imaginary of lack, in which desire is directed towards the lack-of-being, towards the other, points at the relational and conflictual aspect of the differential positions of abundance and lack. Whereas the ontological imaginary of abundance and the phenomenon of positivity give rise to a politics of harmony between presence and absence that are withdrawing from each other — they are in-themselves, the ontological imaginary of lack and the phenomenon of negativity give rise to a politics of tension and polemics between presence and absence — they are engaging one with another.[114]

withdrawal or engagement?

The different ways of understanding the nature of existence that these two ontologies imply — the positive ontological imaginary of abundance which evolves as a lineage of the politico-philosophical trajectory of immanence giving rise to the politics of withdrawal, and the negative ontological imaginary of lack which evolves as a lineage of the politico-philosophical trajectory of quasi-transcendence giving rise to the strategies of engagement — produce different ways of conceiving the political dimension of art. Whereas the former, as we will briefly see, conceives of the political in terms of the conceptual practice, the latter conceives of the political in terms of the performative practice. By drawing attention to the different ways of conceiving the political, I intend to grasp the political dimension underlying Edvardsen's performances: the ways they construct reality and challenge and affect the audience's spectatorial codes in order to change their viewing habits.

On the one hand, there is a performance theory committed to explore the

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[113] Yannis Stavrakakis, "Negativity and democratic politics: radical democracy beyond reoccupation and conformism," in *Radical Democracy. Politics Between Abundance and Lack,* eds. Lars Tønder and Lasse Thomassen (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 2014), 187.

[114] Inspired by the critique of the Enlightenment positivism, which takes issue with the production of true facts through empirical observations, performance scholar Christel Stalpaert envisages artists who practice a political ecology as 'eco-diplomats of dissensus'. Artists as eco-diplomats of dissensus resort to undecidability in order to provide the space of disagreement or dissensus. In: Christel Stalpaert, "This Body is in Danger! On Ecology, Protest, and Artistic Activism", *Didaskalia* (2017). I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Dr. Stalpaert for the possibility to read this text before to be published.

relationship between art and politics proceeding from Deleuze's philosophical trajectory of immanence[115] and theories developed by his followers, such as Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt,[116] Paolo Virno,[117] and Jean-Luc Nancy[118]. Borrowing a vocabulary of these thinkers, performance scholars, such as Hans-Thies Lehmann,[119] Bojana Cvejić,[120] Bojana Kunst,[121] and André Lepecki,[122] among others, support a view on ontology as the life-philosophical belief in positivity, or in a never-receding abundance of the multitude's demands.[123] Unlike the people, the multitude is self-organised.[124] Therefore, instead of providing an arena for a struggle of the people against the state, the ontological imaginary of abundance enables the actualisation of the multitude's demands in the political project that Hardt and Negri envisaged as absolute democracy,[125] in which the state disappears.[126] Embedded in Deleuze's concept of the virtual, absolute democracy advocates the idea that

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[115] See: Gilles Deleuze, *Pure Immanence. Essays on A Life* (New York: Zone Books, [1995] 2001).

[116] See: Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, London: Harvard University Press, 2001).

[117] See: Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude* (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004).

[118] See: Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

[119] See: Hans-Thies Lehman, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (Abingdon: Routlege, 2006). I discuss Lehmann's theory in chapter 4.

[120] See: Bojana Cvejić, *Choreographing Problems*. I briefly discuss Cvejić's theory bellow.

[121] See: Bojana Kunst, *Artist at Work* (Winchester, Washington: Zero Books, 2015). I discuss Kunst's theory in chapter 5.

[122] See: Lepecki, *Singularities*. I discuss Lepecki's theory in chapter 6.

[123] Paolo Virno draws attention to the seventeen century philosophical controversies between Thomas Hobbe's notion of the people and Baruh Spinoza's notion of the multitude, in which the notion of the multitude 'lost a battle'. He explains the distinction between these two competing notions in the following way: 'the *multitudo* indicates *a plurality which persists as such in the public scene*, in collective action, in the handling of communal affairs, without converging into a One', whereas the notion of the people 'is strictly correlated to the existence of the State', having one will. Virno asks if it isn't time to revive the notion of the multitude nowadays. In respond to Virno, I would raise another question: Isn't it time to revive the notion of the people? On Virno, see: Virno, *Multitude*, 21-22.

[124] Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 411.

[125] See: Hardt and Negri, *Empire*.

[126] Historian Dipesh Chakrabartry criticises Hardt's and Negri's model of absolute democracy from the viewpoint of postcolonial studies. For Hardt and Negri, he observes, the global capital creates a global non-place. Accordingly, the struggle against the capital becomes the struggle against all forms of attachment to particular places. This is why Chakrabartry envisaged absolute democracy as a theory of globalisation that celebrates contemporary forms of placelessness that argue absolute mobility. The politics of non-places, Chakrabartry points out, neglects the significance of 'localist positions'. It 'naturalises' them, that is, it colonises them. In: Dipesh Chakrabartry, *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

our reality is the real, a self-organising multitude or 'singular multiplicity'.[127] The central premise of this politico-philosophical approach is concerned with a pure structural closure envisaged as a smooth space without constitutive division[128] that absorbs everything so that — as Negri put it — 'all that which is political is biopolitical'.[129] Its task is to create a multiplicity of adequate and inconclusive concepts coexisting in harmony, by way of extracting events from beings and things.[130] Hence, by way of supporting the presupposition that the role of philosophy is not a discursive practice of naming involved with the state of affairs — which implies the question of the lack-of-being, tension and conflict, but a continuous production of new concepts — which implies the question of a continuous becoming of being-in-itself, the philosophers of immanence undermine the significance of representation for the dynamic democratic political processes.[131] To put it differently, the philosophical trajectory of immanence does not advocate the engagement with the state of affairs (i.e. the existing art institutions framed by dominant politics), as it is only — as Deleuze and Guattari would put it — effectuated within it; it is a pure event.[132] It produces concepts apart of their social meaning, hence precluding the possibility of conflict and tension.[133]

On the other hand, the post-foundational thinkers, such as Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, are inspired by the philosophical trajectory of quasi-transcendence, that

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[127] Borrowing Deleuze's vocabulary, Hardt and Negri write that 'the multitude is a multiplicity, a plane of singularities'. Nevertheless, the notion of 'singular multiplicity' is proposed by Jean-Luc Nancy to designate the origin of the world. He writes: "what we receive (rather than what we perceive) with singularities is the discreet passage of other origins of the world … it is an affirmation of the world, and we know that the world has no other origin than this singular multiplicity." Singular multiplicity conceives of the world as a multiplicity of 'indiscernible singularities', of the multitude. I discuss Deleuze's notions of singularity and indiscernible in chapter 6. On singular multiplicity, see: Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 103; Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 9.

[128] On Hardt's and Negri's critique of striation, see: Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 332.

[129] Foucault's concept 'bio-politics' designates the form of governmentality developed by neoliberalism, which aims at erasing the political dimension from societies. Foucault defines governmentally as 'an ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target populations, as its principal form of knowledge, political economy, and as its essentially technical means apparatuses of security.' This is why bio-politics is criticised in the present context. The quote in the text relates: Antonio Negri, *Time for a Revolution* (London, New York: Bloomsbury, 2003), 231. On governmentality in the footnote, see: Michael Foucault, 'Governmentality,' in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, eds. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 102.

[130] On concepts, see: Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984);

[131] On the state of affairs and representation, see: Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984); Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic os Sense*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas, trans. Mark Lester (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

[132] Deleuze and Guattari*, Philosophy?,* 21.

[133] I observed how immanence reflects in Lehmann's, Kunst's and Lepecki's performance theories in separate chapters. See reference notes: 119, 121, and 122.

gives rise to an ontology based on radical negativity and structural lack.[134] Out of this, the discourse on agonistic democracy emerges.[135] Inspired by Derrida's concept of negativity and Lacan's psychoanalytic notion of lack, these thinkers assert that our reality is discursively constructed, as a system of social relations defined by language and institutions and practices within which language is formed.[136] The central premise of this philosophical approach is concerned with the impossibility of language to ground the real in stable representations. This is why every representation is designated by a constitutive lack or negativity; it articulates a meaning that is not associated with the invention of abstract concepts present in-themselves, but with the performative operation of naming the absence, that is, the lack-of-being.[137] On the one hand, this approach explains, as Laclau and Mouffe pointed out drawing upon Wittgenstein, that our reality — all objects and our identities — is discursively constructed, through a chain constituted of language and diversity of institutions and practices within which language is articulated.[138] Accordingly, any social construction must be envisaged as always already inscribed within the state of affairs and constructed on the symbolic level. On the other hand, this approach explains that the differential discursive relations that construct identities and objects can not be fully articulated on the level of institutions and practices. This is why a discourse approach implies a moment of exclusion and, hence, an ever-present possibility of conflict or antagonism. In order to challenge a discourse sedimented on the level of institutions and practices there must be a moment of overdetermination among the excluded, which takes place on the symbolic level. Overdetermination emphasises the discursive construction of the people and the need for the people's demands to be always represented. Precisely the antagonistic, or contesting relation between the represented and its excluded — its surplus that escapes representation, points to a continuous play or conflict between presence and absence, abundance and lack, in fact, between immanence and transcendence. This view on societies implies that we need institutions to establish an order — that is to transform antagonism into agonism, and that the state may not be abandoned before the institutions are changed.[139]

The distinction between these two dominant politico-philosophical traditions allows us to suggest that the political discourse on absolute democracy that implies the politics of

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[134] See: Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy, Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London, New York: Verso, [1985] 2001).

[135] The concept of agonistic democracy has been elaborated by political philosopher Chantal Mouffe, particularly in her books: *The Democratic Paradox* (2000), *On the Political* (2005), and *Agonistics* (2013).

[136] See: Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony*.

[137] The performative operation of naming is proposed by Ernesto Laclau. I discuss naming in chapter 6. See also: Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason* (London: Verso, 2007).

[138] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony*, 109.

[139] On the relationship between the democratic project of agonism and the state, see chapter 3.

withdrawal from the established institutions and representations they have constructed, may not provide a proper horizon for art theory to grasp the political dimension of artistic practices. Within the context of the philosophical trajectory of immanence, which embraces positivism of the ontological imaginary of abundance, the realm of art is reduced to the infinite potential filed of virtualities; to an impersonal, mechanic intensity of elements beyond meaning, out of which a reality of works of art is conceptually actualised.[140] Within this context, the political is to be understood as that which overcomes or transgresses the difference between subject and object by means of *adéquation*.[141] Consequently, the political manifests in an immediate access to the abundance of beings-in-themselves, diminishing the importance of representation.[142]

Performance scholar and philosopher Bojana Cvejić is steady in this approach. She departs from the method of posing problems in order to undermine the image of thought that synthesises subject and object in representation.[143] Cvejić draws upon Deleuze's theory of ideas, problems and concepts, which conceives of problems as objects of ideas that are resolved in thought that gives rise to concepts which, at the same time, are constitutive to problems. Accordingly, the process of choreographing problems is accountable for making, performing and attending expressive concepts, such as part-bodies, part-machines, movement-sensations, power-motion, crisis-motion, and resonance, among others.[144] Expressive concepts are then observed in relation to Deleuze's interpretation of Spinoza's principle of adequation (*l'adéquation*). On the one hand, this approach implies that 'concepts are specific to the modes in which they are expressed'.[145] Therefore, each expressive concept can be accountable for either making (part-bodies), performing (becoming-molecular), or attending (resonance).[146] On the other hand, this approach implies that each expressive concept (in either making, performing, or attending), the problem it refers to, and something of the performance it includes, is an agreement in adequation which 'supposes the equivalence and parallelism of the two dissimilar things, for instance [...] bodily movement and the thought of a movement'.[147] Therefore, the objects of ideas that are resolved in thought, which gives rise to expressive

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[140] To be sure, Bojana Kunst criticises the moment of 'actualisation'. More about her theory, in chapter 5.

[141] On Lehmann's theory of transgression, see chapter 4.

[142] Inspired by Deleuze's theory, Lepecki becomes reluctant about the moment of representation. For his part, Lehmann, in his later writings, recognises the moment of representation, but does not justify it. I discuss Lepecki's theory in chapter 6. I discuss Lehmann's theory in chapter 4.

[143] Bojana Cvejić, *Choreographing Problems,* 30.

[144] *Ibid.*, 3

[145] *Ibid.*, 24.

[146] *Ibid.*, 15.

[147] *Ibid.*, 30.

concepts, are adequate. Quoting Spinoza, Cvejić stresses that an idea is adequate 'insofar as it is considered in itself, without relation to an object'.[148] According to Spinoza, idea 'has all the properties, or intrinsic denominations of a true idea'.[149] The consequence is that expressive concepts stand for an in-itself true idea of performance in making, performing and attending, which only partially actualises bodies and movements in a choreographic performance.

If we accept, as philosopher Martin Heidegger suggests, that 'the "in-itself" can by no means be ontologically clarified',[150] and, as cultural theorist and philosopher Stuart Hall proposes, that a structurally transparent 'expressive totality' stands for the simplification of social relations to the level of determination by economism,[151] then, within the context of absolute democracy, the political dimension of art, which we observed in relation to adequation, becomes a disembodied abstraction, a polity of laws and principles mediated by the set of practices and institutions which determine the reality of things.[152] What is, accordingly, called the political aspect of performance is, in fact, already a-political; reduced to an essentialist politics which strives to create the ideal society through the positivist principle of subsumption of all differences by an abstract conceptual denominator. Within this view, presence and absence are simply reversals.

On the other hand, the discourse on agonism advocates the politics of engagement, or, rather, the strategies of engagement[153] with the existing institutions, social practices and representational norms that are discursively constituted. Within the context of the philosophical trajectory of quasi-transcendence that embraces a negativity of the ontological imaginary of lack, the role of art becomes to challenge the system of social relations which discursively articulates the being of objects in stable representations by excluding other relational possibilities. In fact, through the engagement of the excluded with existing representations, art gives rise to a polemics that opens up a possibility of contesting the ways in which 'being' is already symbolically constructed. It is here that art becomes identified in relation to the other that stands for the lack-of-being. Within this context, the political dimension of performance is a performative practice that calls for a continuous process of dis/articulation of the real through symbolic representation. As

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[148] Benedict De Spinoza, *Ethics*, trans. E. Curley (London: Penguins, 1996), IID4, quoted in Cvejić, *Choreographing Problems*, 44.

[149] *Ibid.,*

[150] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Thought, [1962] 2008), 106.

[151] Stuart Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity," in *Stuart Hall. Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies,* eds. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (London, New York: Routledge, [1996] 2003), 418.

[152] I discuss the relationship between economics and abstraction in chapter 4.

[153] The distinction between the politics of engagement argued by Lepecki, and the strategies of engagement that I propose, is elaborated in chapter 6.

such, it designates an active and articulating dimension. Accordingly, performance is capable to challenge existing politics by revealing limits to any absolute objectivity that is determined by economics through institutions and social practices. By these means, performance contributes to the constitution of the societies in alternative ways. Within this view, presence and absence are constitutive and operate through a continuous tension.

abstractions or objects?

Previously, I made a distinction between the two philosophical trajectories that dominate the continental philosophical thought — the trajectory of immanence and the trajectory of quasi-transcendence, and between the two different views on ontology that they imply — the positive ontological imaginary of abundance and the negative ontological imaginary of lack. My first goal was to demonstrate what projects of radical democracy they give rise. I briefly outlined the projects of absolute democracy — which implies an adequation and abundance of positions, giving rise to the politics of withdrawal, and agonistic democracy — which implies a tension between presence and absence, giving rise to the strategies of engagement. My second goal was to demonstrate the consequences that these politico-philosophical projects have on art theory determined to examine the relationship between art and politics. First, I showed that the logic of adequation entails a conceptual operation which implies an abstract common feature, that is, the transcendental category of the virtual out of which the being is actualised through the in-itself becoming. Second, I showed that the logic of tension entails a performative operation which consists in showing the historical, contingent and constructed character of the being of objects in relation to the lack-of-being. And, inasmuch as the conceptual operation implies immediate access to the being of objects, the performative operation implies mediation, by means of symbolic overdetermination.[154] Now, I would like to explore the distinction between abstraction and performativity in more details in order to stress why the works of art are to be considered as objects.

The distinction between abstraction and performativity, may be seen as a distinction between a politics of withdrawal of one from another position (*either* abundance *or* lack) and politics of co-engagement of positions (abundance *and* lack). And whereas the former implies an abstract conceptual invention, the later implies a concrete performative innovation. A sociologist Antoine Hennion observed the conceptual practice of abstraction as a result of economics. Exploring the relationship between art and

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[154] On distinction between the conceptual and performative operations, see chapter 6.

politics, Hennion writes that 'all art is politics, but the art itself is no longer political'.[155] To justify this thesis, Hennion asserts that an economic approach reduces art to politics, to the union of supply and demand, incapable of evaluating the quality of artistic creation. What the economic approach to art in fact produces is 'a speculative rarefication of the glory of the few', a few artists, gallerists and collectors.[156] It is by these means that economics reduces the objects of art to abstractions, by covering over the reason for art, that is the motive for action that produces art and that reveals its social and political function.[157] It must be stressed that Hennion's theory does not neglect the power of economics in structuring social relations. Hennion's critique of economics, similarly to Hall's critique, is rather a critique of economism as a theoretical approach that dominates theory of art;[158] the approach that we called, after political theorist Timothy Mitchell, economentality.[159] In order to move beyond economentality, that is the objectless activities of economy and economism that transform art into abstractions and lures, Hennion suggest that we need to turn to pragmatism.

In *The Public and its Problems* (1927), John Dewey, a leading proponent of the American school of thought known as pragmatism, departs from 'the objective fact that human acts have consequences upon others, that some of these consequences are perceived, and that their perception leads to subsequent effort to control action so as to secure some consequences and avoid others'.[160] More importantly, the consequences of acts upon others, including those who are not directly affected by them, entail a responsive human behaviour which, for example, should provoke an action of nurture and care, rather than an action of ignorance and negligence. This is how the consequences of acts mobilised by different associations always take on a particular social value. With this in mind, we can see that the measure of social values, that is ethico-political values, lies in the consequences that the values of particular associations have upon other associations. Within this context, Dewey asserts that the main facts of political action are 'facts of human behaviour accessible to human observation'.[161]

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[155] Antoine Hennion, "A Plea For Responsible Art. politics, the market, creation," In *Art and the Challenge of Markets*, eds. Victoria Alexander, Samuli Hägg, Simo Häyrynen, Erkki Sevänen, trans. James O'Hagan, Vol. 1 (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018). I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Dr. Antoine Hennion and Sciences Po/SPEAP Paris for the possibility to read this text before to be published.

[156] *Ibid.*,

[157] Similarly, Hennion observes how the traditional sociologist approach reduces art to politics, to the set of social relations manifested through institutions, norms, settings, trades, markets and cooperative networks. In: *Ibid.*,

[158] See: Hall, "Gramsci's relevance", 411-440.

[159] See the introduction chapter. On economentality, see: Timothy Mitchell, "Economentality: How the Future Entered the Government," in *Critical Inquiry* 40, no. 4 (The University of Chicago Press, 2014): 497-507.

[160] John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems* (Chicago: Sage Books, [1927] 1954), 12.

[161] *Ibid.*, 19.

With this in mind, we can agree with Hennion that pragmatism, 'renounces the untouchable dogma of the dualist opposition between facts and values'.[162] In the pragmatist's view, the relationship between facts and values prevails over their isolated beings, so that objects of art become always 'objects for…'.[163] Hennion's assertion implies, as I will point out in various contexts, that the question of art critique should not be focused on what the objects of art are. Instead, the task of art critique should be to explore why and how the objects of art are constructed, as well as what are the consequences of constituting the objects of art *as such.*[164] In other words, the art critique, including performance, should seek the reasons for constructing objects — including those of art — as such and the methods that underline their construction. When we approach objects of art from the pragmatist perspective, we are able to expose techniques and calculations that construct them, stressing the importance of ethico-political values that they have upon the audience. By these means, art critique ceases to analyse art as a conceptual practice of abstraction, and starts addressing art on a nominal level, as a performative practice.

At this point, Wittgenstein's writing on naming becomes significant for the analysis of art in terms of performativity in general, and in terms of Edvardsen's performance in particular. Wittgenstein wrote that the whole is a language-game, 'consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven';[165] this is to say that, 'in the practice of the use of language one party calls out the words, the other acts on them'.[166] Drawing upon Wittgenstein, Laclau and Mouffe — whose political theory evolves as a lineage of the ontological imaginary of lack and the quasi-transcendental philosophy, arguing strategies of engagement — defined discursive formation in terms of the linguistic phenomena and institutions, social practices, and rituals, through which discourse is structured.[167] Accordingly, discursive formation makes apparent that material properties of every object lie in the performative operation that articulates a particular relation between differential entities. The performative operation entails the structuring of the totality of the object in a chain that operates as the system of symbolic relations secured and represented by

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[162] Hennion, "Responsible Art."

[163] *Ibid.,*

[164] See, for instance: chapters 4 and 5.

[165] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 5.

[166] *Ibid.,*

[167] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony,* 109.

institutions and social practices.[168] In this regard, an everyday object is understood as an object of art only when it is situated within the system of relations that structure and articulate it within the social practice of art. Hence, objects, just like subjects, are always represented. Consequently, all performed actions and language-games are not properties of objects nor of subjects; they are properties of politics, institutions, rituals and various social practices.[169] For example, a ball is an object of art only to the extent that it establishes a system of relations with the institution of art. In a similar way, an everyday movement is understood as choreography only when it is inscribed within the specific system of relations that structure and articulate it as a social practice of performance. Seeing that, variety of dance techniques and choreographies immediately come to mind.

These examples explain that the meaning of the object depends on the context of the actual 'use' of the object, which inscribes it in the system of relations with differential entities and articulates it in a particular totality.[170] Once it is recognised that the totality of the object is nominally and contextually constructed as a system of relations, we have to acknowledge that society will never be able to fix or fully articulate differential positions of objects. No context, as Derrida pointed out, 'can determine the meaning to the point of exhaustiveness'.[171] Accordingly — by recalling Gramsci's writing on the objectivity of the real — the relational totality should be seen as a partial fixation of the various past relations between differential entities, or associations, rearticulated within a particular historical context.[172] This implies that there is no pure object or pure form of art, and that the meaning of each object is conditioned by other possible systems of positions between differential entities that this particular discursive fixation, or rather stabilisation, excludes. In this regard, each object is constructed precisely by the principle of exclusion which entails tension, contest and conflict between interiority and exteriority, totality and its surplus, that is, between immanence and transcendence, abundance and lack, or presence and absence.

Once we have envisaged objects of art in terms of a performative practice, we can admit that every social practice, including performing arts, is constructed through

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[168] Writing about movement in performance, performance scholar Petra Sabisch asserts that 'it is extremely difficult to think representation in terms of articulation'. This is so, because Sabisch misses the point of discourse analysis. Although concerned with semiotics, Sabisch overlooks that movements always articulate in performances that represent context-based, contingent and symbolic constructions that can be contaminated and that can contaminate. In a nutshell, there is no articulation without representation. See: Petra Sabisch, "Choreographing Participatory Relations Contamination and Articulation," in *Dance, Politics & Co-immunity*, eds. Gerald Siegmund and Stefan Hölscher (Berlin, Zürich: Diaphanes, 2013), 126.

[169] This implies that both human and non-human entities have a political dimension.

[170] The dependence between the meaning of the object and its context is explained in more details in chapter 1.

[171] Derrida, *Aporias*, 9.

[172] Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks,* Vol III, ed. and trans. Joseph A. Buttigieg (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 175-176.

language and actions. This means, as Laclau and Mouffe observed, that objects have existence, and that their being is only discursively constructed.[173] The discourse approach to performance enables — what could be called after art critic and philosopher Arthur Danto — a post-eschatological pluralism of its possibilities and forms.[174] This is to say that performances, just like different social practices, may be constituted in a pluralism of ways, but never exhausted and overcome.[175] It is so, because forms of life enable humans to only ever grasp the world through language, in limited ways. In fact, humans can think about the world as an abstract idea, because they can never grasp it in its totality. But, the world itself is an object as real as a rock. It stands for the system of autonomous yet interrelated entities, human or not.

Philosopher Timothy Morton proposes a view on the entities, such as oil fields, nuclear material, uranium, long lasting products of human manufacture such as plastic bags, or styrofoam, not only as objects, but as hyperobjects. He writes that hyperobjects 'are "hyper" in relation to some other entity, whether they are directly manufactured by humans or not'.[176] For this reason, we can not do away with objects. The ways objects are, and the ways they are constructed and relationships between them are established, may only be discursively rearticulated and articulated in different ways. It is this 'object oriented ontology' that permits debate, or, as Hennion proposes, polemic about the objects of art; polemic which reveals the reason for art, capable of contesting its economic dimension, and economism as a theoretical approach to the analysis of art. Within the context of the political logic of polemic, contest and struggle that performance practices are to be envisaged as objects of art. To sum, whereas objects imply a concrete autonomy of the objects' existence, their dismissal implies the power of economy to abstract any entity.

opposition or paradox?

Pointing at the discursive construction of everyday objects and the indispensable moment of exclusion that it entails, Edvardsen's choreography mobilises the public to recognise that objects have existence, that they are hence autonomous and that they can never be grasped in their totality. Once we have acknowledged that humans construct objects through language and different actions, we can recognise that objects stand for

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[173] Laclau and Mouffe, "Post-Marxism," 85.

[174]   Post-eschatological approach to art implies that art may take many forms. See: Arthur Danto, *After the End of Art. Contemporary Art and the Pale of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

[175] The critique of the notion of exhaustion in performance is developed in chapters 1 and 4.

[176] Timothy Morton, *Hyperobjects. Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 19-20.

discursive, precarious, contingent and contestable constructions. When in *Black* Edvardsen rhythmically repeats the name of each object eight times in succession — table, table, table, table, table, table, table, table; chair, chair, chair, chair, chair, chair, chair, chair; bottle, bottle, bottle, bottle, bottle, bottle, bottle, bottle — and simulates their presence by her bodily movements — by lifting her arm, simulating sitting, touching a table, or opening the door — she opens up the space for the audience to imagine each of called objects in the multiplicity of forms, relating different contexts in which they encountered them and articulated them. In *No Title*, the operation of disarticulation of objects is supported by Edvardsen's presence on the stage and carried through negation, through that which is said to be gone, that which is absent and lacks. As Edvardsen utters during the perfomance: 'a door, opening and closing — gone; the ceiling — gone; shadows moving in silence — gone; emergency exit lights — gone', etc. The need for the disarticulation of objects and their articulation in different ways in *We to Be* is pushed to the most essential possibility of objects — to language. In fact, everything in performance happens only through language, in the absence of objects and the performer. By these choreographic tactics that embrace the linguistic play between presence and absence Edvardsen activates the qualitative properties of the audience, such as intelligence, imagination and participation. In fact, Edvardsen's performances, relying to a great extend on the activation of the audiences' memory through language, increase the awareness that each object is historical and of partial construction, discursively brought to presence in relation to the context of its particular historical use. As Gramsci put it, unless one recognises that without people and without the development of civilisation there is no relations, and no reality, and, in fact, no thinking about reality, it would be impossible to understand historical processes.[177] Given that, the role of a choreographer may also be to connect and expose the plural nature of objects, constructed across and together with different spaces and times,[178] in order to open up a horizon for collective identifications based on the instability of representations, on the contingent character of objects.[179]

When objects are constructed from the metaphysical projection of mitigated totalities, as in the immanentist politico-philosophical approach, we find ourselves within the realm of idealism or realism which rationalises and determines relations in abstract terms, in terms of universal concepts, promising a complete unity of differential and opposing totalities coexisting in a harmonious society. In contrast to essentialism, however, the quasi-transcendental politico-philosophical approach to reality recognises that the plural arrangements instead — as Derrida's theory implies — haunt the one in the

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[177] Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks,* 175-176.

[178] Similarly, Timothy Morton writes that 'time and space are only emerging properties of objects'. In: Morton, *Hyperobjects,* 45.

[179] On time and space, see chapter 5.

other;[180] they are partial and contingent objectifications which are constitutive of each other rather than parallel, autonomous, and oppositional totalities. At this point, the insuperable tension between absence and presence, included and excluded, full and partial, or abundance and lack, reveals that paradox is, in fact, constitutive of all social relations and constructions. Contrary to a dialectics of opposition and contradiction which aim to establish harmony between differential arrangements within a smooth space shared by adequate entities, a theory that acknowledges social paradox, by defining the precariousness and contingency of any social construction, aims at acknowledging the irresolvable tension and conflict between them.

Thus, overcoming objective relations — relations between conceptual objects and relations between 'real' objects — Edvardsen's performances, such as *Black, No Title,* and *We to Be,* open up the space for envisaging objects in terms of contingent objectification. Contingent objectification is a partial articulation of the being of objects that determine a specific configuration of an object at the particular moment. It allows many paradoxically different realities to materialise in the shared space — the striated space of constitutive division. It is, therefore, with regard to the acknowledgement of the plurality of differential positions existing in contest that we may speak about the political dimension of artistic practices. The specificity of the political dimension of art, and performance in particular, lies in the possibility to (re)construct the audience, and more generally, the people beyond the strict lines of separation, by constantly redrawing the limits between them.[181]

Given all these points, the contesting political dimension of artistic practices may be understood as the view on reality in terms of tension, or drama:[182] as the continuous play and contest between the ontology of abundance and the ontology of lack, between the presence of objects and their absence, or between attempts at the ultimate grounding of the being of objects and of revealing their historical, contingent and constructed nature. A critical reflection on antagonism, which 'creates the gap between these two dimensions',[183] and the way of understanding human values and principles in terms of contingent objectification should, in my view, be central to everything that goes on in art. It is by challenging existing and articulating social relations in alternative configurations that art may mobilise people to construct different realities and, thus, invigorate democracy.

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[180] Derrida, *Aporias*, 21.

[181] On redrawing the limits between the audience and the performance see chapter 4.

[182] On drama, see also chapter 4.

[183] Ernesto Laclau, "The Future of Radical Democracy," in *Radical Democracy. Politics Between Abundance and Lack,* eds. Lars Tønder and Lasse Thomassen (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 2014), 257.

3

Reconstructing the Bodies[184]

In order to overcome the post-political condition — which in the realm of politics blurs differences between the left and right political parties and, in the realm of art, differences between art and commodity, leaving us without choice — some thinkers envisaged alternative political projects to neoliberalism. Jacques Rancière envisaged the model of communal anarchism; a politics of disorder and dissensus, without any type of mastery. Chantal Mouffe envisaged the model of agonistic pluralism; a politics of order and conflictual consensus, regulated by hegemony and decisional acts. After drawing a distinction between Rancière's and Mouffe's theories, I will observe their different consequences for envisaging the the relationship between art and politics. To begin with, I will draw attention to Peter Bürger's survey of the mutual conditionality of the bourgeois art and the vanguard movements in art. This observation will enable a distinction between the artistic strategies of rupture and the artistic strategies of engagement, pointing at the different consequences that they have on conceiving the political dimension of art. Finally, I will show that from the point of view of the artistic strategies of engagement, the relationship between the abject and intelligible bodies is a matter of decision, that enables a move beyond class -, gender -, or race - based identities, towards the relational forms of identifications.

To perceive the body with regard to agonism and acts of decision, is to acknowledge, drawing upon Judith Butler, that the body is not constructed in an oppositional relation between the intelligible and the abject body.[185] For if a relationship of opposition aims at homogenising differential poles, it sustains intelligibility and leaves no possibility for a choice. On the contrary, it could be suggested that the body is constructed in a dialectic that entails a paradoxical relation between the intelligible body and the abject body. This approach explains that the abject body is a paradoxically different, an excluded body, the limit of possibility and, yet, a condition of the intelligible body. The abject body is thus a constitutive outside to the intelligible body; it ruptures the intelligible and opens up possibilities for modes of life that have no intelligible place. This

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[184] This article will be published as: Goran Petrović Lotina, "Reconstructing the Bodies. Between the Politics of Order and the Politics of Disorder," in *Bodies That Matter Again. Transformative Potentialities of Shape Shifting Corporealities in Contemporary Performing Arts*, eds. Marina Gržinić and Aneta Stojnić (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

[185] Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter* (New York, London: Routledge 1993), *xi*.

view suggests that the body is constructed at the point of intersection of intelligible and abject bodies. Insofar as the paradoxical bond between the differential bodies compels us to acknowledge their inherently conflictual relation it, at once, compels us to think of their mutual conditionality that manifests through decisive acts. Given these points, precisely the paradoxical relations and contingent acts of decision confront Butler's assertion that gender may not be challenged by decision.[186]

disorder and order: Rancière and Mouffe

When examining the relation between art and politics, contemporary performance scholars mainly draw upon Rancière's and Mouffe's political projects of democracy. Rancière and Mouffe share a view on democracy up to the point. Closely related are their emphasis on language, power, disagreement, conflict, struggle and collective aspect of democracy. What Rancière defines in terms of *disagreement* and *power* and what Mouffe defines in terms of *antagonism* and *hegemony*, are constitutive of the social realm. Nevertheless, whereas for Rancière the democratic principle of the power of everybody (that he situates within the realm of politics), may exist autonomously from the representation absorbed by the principle of the State (which presents the order of the police), for Mouffe there is no power of the popular will (located within the realm of the political) without the moment of representation which functions as the hegemonic principle of the State (designated in terms of politics). For Mouffe, politics is a condition and a vehicle for the power of popular will, of those who Rancière defines in terms of 'those who have no part'. With regard to Mouffe's project of democracy, the political becomes constructed at the point of intersection of the popular will and the state. Rancière's and Mouffe's perspectives on democracy differ precisely at this point. While Rancière's distinction between the principle of democracy and the principle of the state forecloses the possibility of politics to engage with the police order, the reciprocal relationship between democracy and the state, suggested by Mouffe, allows for an engagement with existing politics. Their different proposals of democracy require a much more nuanced explanation, before we can observe their different consequences on art.

1) In *The Politics of Aesthetics* Rancière (2006) explained that domination and servitude, whose objective is to impose one meaning and to establish a single reality, are part of the ontological distribution.[187] To that effect, Rancière dismisses the engagement

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186 *Ibid.*, *x.*

187 Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics* (London, New York: Continuum [2000] 2006), 26-27.

with the state as an ontological foundation of domination and hierarchy and, instead, advocates an egalitarian, contingent, and anarchistic politics, a politics of 'disorder', without mastery and without any type of consensus. At this point, Bram Ieven observes how for Rancière politics and ontology are mutually exclusive.[188] What, in fact, Rancière suggests is that an ontological distribution historicised the forms of visibility, which presuppose equality, into a dogmatic regimes of perception and ineligibility, into a representative regime. Then, to disagree with the representative regime that dogmatised forms of visibility is to dehistoricise it, by putting in action a presupposed equality between different systems of perception and ineligibility; it is to activate egalitarianism. This endeavour demands the activation of the transcendental moments of disagreement within the ontologically established dogmatic regimes of perception and ineligibility in a form of a rupture; in a form of an event which breaks it and undos it into a plurality of positions that persist in clash rather than being retained by the ontologically reductionist practices. The goal becomes to create a system in which one regime does not abolish another, but rather in which 'several regimes coexist and intermingle'.[189] The consequence of this tactic is the constitution of a politics of 'disorder'; the politics without mastery and without any type of consensus — in one word, the politics of dissensus.

As can be seen, Rancière avoids the principle of the state being identified with the ontological foundation of domination and the logic of representation that lead to oligarchy. In contrast, he advocates that power cannot be institutionalised, but only practiced.[190] Such a view of power suggests a non-oligarchic approach to societies. To clarify this view, in *Introducing Disagreement* (2004), Rancière first emphasised language as a common anthropological property which allows everyone to participate in common affairs. One of the significant characteristics of language is that it assumes disagreement, a quarrel, raised by those who are excluded from the common affairs over that which is symbolised as common. And, precisely those who are excluded stand for a surplus to social groups, that is, political subjects as supernumerary collectives which initiate a quarrel and disrupt the common which he defines as 'the counting of community's parts and the relations of inclusion and exclusion which define that count'.[191] Rancière names the way of counting community's parts *the police*, and the moments of disruption of that count by the uncounted *politics*. Accordingly, the role of politics becomes to disrupt the

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[188] Bram Ieven, "Heteroreductives – Rancière's Disagreement With Ontology," *Parallax*, Vol. 15, no. 3 (2009), 60.

[189] Rancière, *The Politics*, 50.

[190] Jacques Rancière, "Democracy, Anarchism and Radical Politics Today: An Interview with Jacques Rancière," interview by Todd May, Benjamin Noys and Saul Newman, *Anarchist Studies*, Vol. 16, (July 1, 2008): 173 - 185.

[191] Jacques Rancière, "Introducing Disagreement," *Angelaki*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (2004): 7.

hierarchical divisions between counted and uncounted, common and partial, or visible and invisible, regulated by the order of police. This is how politics stage within the realm of police that which was uncounted and excluded, by disrupting the ensemble of its counted 'parts, places and functions'. In this context, Rancière writes that 'democracy is the disrupting of all logics that purport to found domination on some entitlement to dominate'.[192]

By explaining that disagreement, or quarrel, is constitutive of politics and that it may disrupt the order of hierarchy regulated by police, Rancière explained a conflictual and dissensual potential of politics. However, what he left unclear is how a disagreement, that raises from the order of politics, may engage with the police so that it challenges the existing regime of representation and hence, invigorates democracy. In fact, we are not sure how a conflict between politics and the police may be rearticulated once politics disrupts the police order and stages itself within it. In other words, Rancière's egalitarian political project does not really allow those who disagree, 'who have no part', to engage with the police and transform it by breaking networks it established. It rather aims to dismiss it as the consequence of the ontological distribution of power and servitude and establish anarchism. This approach entices us to envisage Rancière's politics as the politics of withdrawal from the police, from 'the forces of law and order',[193] rather than as the politics of engagement with it.[194]

Rancière's perspective on politics had been criticised from different points of view. Political and media scholar Jodi Dean addressed Rancière's critic of law. Dean warns that Rancière's critic of the spread of law as the main cause of depoliticisation — of the post-political condition we live in — serves a neoliberal argument against the governmental oversight and an argument for privatisation. Pointing at the collapse of regulations in the financial sector, the importance of forms of public/private partnerships, and necessity of private surveillance for precluding terrorism, she writes that Rancière's dismissal of law, administration and expertise 'cannot serve as a basis for a critique of the neoliberal state's abolition of oversight and neglect of basic governance ... it is also incompatible with the acknowledgement of the widespread scepticism toward science and expertise and the concomitant cultivation and embrace of amateur, ordinary, and common opinion'.[195] Drawing upon philosopher Slavoj Žižek, Dean describes this attitude as a decline in symbolic efficiency. The order of law, she reminds us, still may protect certain liberties in

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[192] *Ibid*., 5.

[193] Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement*, trans. Julie Rose (Minneapolis, London: The University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 28.

[194] The significance of engaging with the order, or the techniques of domination, is elaborated further in chapter 5.

[195] Jodi Dean, "Politics without Politics," *Parallax*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (2009), 24.

common or public spaces.[196] For his part, philosopher Alain Badiou stresses that a perspective on politics without order refuses to acknowledge that every political process is an organised process of militants against the hegemony of the parliamentary state; otherwise there are no militants and no hegemony to disagree with.[197] Once this is acknowledged, it becomes apparent that the anarchistic perspective on societies fails to recognise that the demands of the militants, of those who are uncounted and who disagree with the system, will not be heard without representatives in the parliament who might defend them.[198]

Another problem in Rancière's argument stands in relation to his assertion that forms of power although ever-present, do not always imply politics. He writes that 'politic occurs only when political subjects initiate a quarrel over the perceptible givens of common life'.[199] A similar assertion by Rancière led political scholar Paulina Tambakaki to define his concept of politics as episodic, introducing doubt that politics as such may appear at all.[200] Accordingly she writes: 'while democracy has succumbed to the consensus system, the dissensual politics which could perhaps revitalise it is not there, and more importantly, it might never be there'.[201] By these means Tambakaki explains that by ascribing a rarity to politics, Rancière canceled out a radical potential of dissensus he previously introduced. What in fact Tambakaki shows is that Rancière's impossibility to explain the ineradicability of conflict and its staging within the police order fails into the trap of arbitrariness.[202]

2) In contrast to Rancière, Mouffe's different concept of democracy, which introduces the moment of *the political* and inscribes it at the level of the ontological, opens up a possibility for understanding how disagreement and conflict may be domesticated and how they may invigorate a dynamic democratic politics through the

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[196] *Ibid.*, 34.

[197] Alain Badiou, *Metapolitics* (London: Verso, 2005), 121-122.

[198] The protest movements, such as the Spanish *Indignados*, the international Occupy, or the French *Nuit debou*, which claimed no leadership and no representatives, are good examples of such a practice. Without dismissing their importance, we have to acknowledge that they faded away.

[199] Rancière, *Introducing Disagreement*, 7.

[200] Paulina Tambakaki, "When Does Politics Happen?," in *Parallax*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (2009): 102 - 113.

[201] *Ibid.*, 109.

[202] Writing about arbitrariness, Antonio Gramsci noted: '[a]ny arbitrary constructions are pretty rapidly eliminated by historical competition, even if sometimes, through a combination of immediately favourable circumstances, they manage to enjoy popularity of a kind.' In: Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, eds. and trans. Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, (New York: International Publishers, 1992), 341.

strategies of engagement.

As we have observed, by doing away with the state as an ontological foundation of domination and hierarchy, that is with the forces of law and order, Rancière suggests that the 'harmonious' society is possible. Mouffe's position is overtly different. She situates disagreement at the level of the political, acknowledging its ontological dimension. For Mouffe the ontological 'concerns the very way in which society is symbolically instituted'.[203] This means that every social relation — our realities and identities — is meaningful and constructed through the processes of symbolisation. On the one hand, symbolisation implies the constitution of the symbolised; on the other hand, it implies the exclusion of that which escapes symbolisation. The excluded is constitutive to the symbolised, yet paradoxically different from it. As its constitutive outside and its condition of possibility, the excluded struggles to rearticulate the very terms of symbolic legitimacy by threatening the symbolised; as its paradoxically different, it precludes a possibility of a reconciliation with the symbolised. The indispensable phase of exchange between the symbolised and its paradoxically different pole, explains that the process of symbolisation entails an ever-present disagreement, or, to use Mouffe's term, an ever-present conflict. Accordingly, symbolisation entails that all social practices are given through the system of hegemonic relations in the form of conflict between the symbolised and its constitutive outside. In this regard, conflict appears to be inherent to social realm and, thus, resides at the level of the ontological. This is to say that conflicts are ineradicable from societies and that the politics — an ensemble of hegemonic discourses, practices, and institutions — is always threatened by its exteriority.

In this context, Mouffe observed the social realm in terms of 'politics' and 'the political'. Borrowing Heidegger's vocabulary, she explains that 'the political' refers to the ontological level, while 'politics' refer to the ontic level. In *On the Political* (2005) she writes:

> by "the political" I mean the dimension of antagonism which I take to be constitutive of human societies, while by "politics" I refer to the set of practices and institutions through which an order is created, organising human coexistence in the context of conflicts provided by the political. [204]

Perceived in relation to Mouffe's *the political / politics* configuration of societies, we may say that the operation of symbolisation implies conflict in terms of an antagonism.

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[203] Chantal Mouffe, "Which Public Space for Critical Artistic Practices," in *Cork Caucus: On Art, Possibility and Democracy*, eds. Shep Steiner and Trevor Joyce (Cork, Frankfurt: National Sculpture Factory/Revolver, 2006), 153.

[204] Mouffe, *On the Political*, 9.

Accordingly, antagonism is situated at the level of the (onto)political which continuously disrupts and disarticulates politics constituted of institutions and practices that aim at regulating social order. Nevertheless, politics stands for a proximal solution for the antagonistic relations; the order of politics rearticulates antagonistic relations into agonistic configurations, into — what Mouffe calls — a 'conflictual consensus' that, in fact, may never overcome conflictual relations between paradoxically differential positions.[205] This means that agonism is always traversed by antagonism. Seen within this framework, 'politics' refers to the level of the ontic.

Therefore, in contrast to Rancière's egalitarian politico-philosophical approach, Mouffe's ontic-ontological theoretical trajectory suggests that the social realm is not constituted simply of the plurality of different and paradoxical associations — be it ethical, gender, or cultural — that emerge outside the state on the level of the political and that disrupt law and order regulated by institutions. Rather, it stresses that different associations of people always require an order established on an ontic level, on the level of the state. From this we understand that the role of the state is to provide a temporary and proximal unity for the multiplicity of demands advocated by differential associations. As a pragmatist thinker Dewey indicated, back in 1927, 'the state is the organization of the public effected through officials for the protection of the interests shared by its members'.[206] As long as certain interests have particular consequences upon the other, upon those who are not directly engaged in them, the state has to regulate those consequences. This is so because, as Dewey pointed out, 'regulation can not be effected by the primary groupings themselves'.[207] The significance of Dewey's assertion lies in abandoning the belief that anarchism might relegate all the evils and construct a 'voluntary fraternal organisation'.[208]

This view suggests that the role of the state within the liberal democratic society becomes to regulate conflictual relations between differential associations of the people. As Mouffe explains, what is important for the politics, for the set of institutions and practices organised on the level of the state, is 'that conflict does not take the form of an "antagonism" (struggle between enemies) but the form of an "agonism" (struggle between adversaries)'.[209] However, since the constitution of agonistic relations brings proximity to antagonistic conflictual situations, rather than an absolute resolution of them, the possibility of antagonism never perishes. This is in line with Dewey thought that the state

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[205] Mouffe, "Which Public Space," 165.

[206] John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems* (Chicago: Sage Books, [1927] 1954), 33.

[207] *Ibid.*, 27.

[208] *Ibid.*, 26.

[209] Chantal Mouffe, *Agonistics* (London: Verso, 2013), 7.

has to be re-made, 'as soon as its form is stabilized'.[210] Only by means of remaking or reconstructing, the state may domesticate demands advocated by different associations (people of colour, women, LGBTQIA, immigrants, poor, workers...). Such a view on the state, by extension, implies that every order is a contingent and temporary hegemonic order, threatened by the excluded and subject to change. In other words, a hegemonic order appears as a condition for counter-hegemony which does not only rupture the established institutions, but continuously engages with them, aiming to rearticulate law and order in alternative ways. Given these points, we can conclude that Mouffe's politics of agonism does not start with the strategies of withdrawal from the state and does not opt for disorder; it rather begins with the mobilisation of the people to change the state and establish an alternative order.

An important characteristic of hegemony manifests in the moments of decision. They are signalled in the indispensable phase of drawing the limits that the continuous processes of exclusion imply. In the plural field of choices, decisions have to be made so that a particular symbolic order becomes instituted and a particular unity proposed in a name.[211] Since they are always taken at the detriment of another choice, decisions point at the aspect of *undecidability* within the act of deciding. Undecidability entails the presence of paradoxically different choices as plural, coexisting and relational positions. For this reason, each decisional act constitutes a proximal solution for the ongoing disagreement, a temporary stabilisation of antagonism, and an institutionalisation of the hegemony of one of possible choices. In fact, a choice that is made stands for a particular symbolic delimitation and articulation of equality (of choices) and liberty (to choose) that render democratic principles. In this context, what remains outside an established order, for its part, continuously challenges and disrupts the symbolic hegemony (the chosen) aiming to establish an alternative one. By these means, the excluded assumes an aspect of an ever-present possibility of conflict within the symbolised, and an ever-present potentiality to radicalise and rearticulate the symbolically instituted order from within. We can see from this how, on the one hand, Mouffe's model of agonistic democracy identifies an ever-persisting possibility of conflict within the social realm; a conflict between different plural, equally compelling choices, that persist in a struggle for hegemony. It is in this sense that agonism does not entail a sudden and an episodic event, nor arbitrariness. On the other hand, Mouffe's agonistic model of democracy implies a possibility of constituting a counter-order, a counter-hegemonic order as a result of alternative decisional acts. This move implies that processes of constructing the people are precarious and that the state has always to be reinvented on the level of the symbolic.

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[210] Dewey, *The Public*, 32.

[211] The moment of unity is given on the nominal level, not on the conceptual. Every name is thus contingent construction. More on 'naming' in chapter 6.

the case of vanguard movements in art

What are the consequences of the agonistic model of democracy for the understanding of the political dimension of artistic practices and their possibility to contest dominant politics and contribute to their reconstitution in alternative ways? How may art contribute to the construction of people? In order to offer a possible answer to these questions, I will begin with the observation of the relationship between bourgeois art and the avant-garde art, drawing upon a literary critic and art scholar Peter Bürger. In his landmark work *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (1984) Bürger discussed why the avant-garde movements failed to challenge and displace bourgeois art. The insight into his theory shows why, rather than the artistic strategies of rupture that are suggested by Rancière's theory, the artistic strategies of engagement that we have located in Mouffe's theory play an important role in challenging dominant system of representation in art and in politics. By extension, the artistic strategies of engagement will enable a particular view on the way politics and art may challenge the existing neoliberal bodies and contribute to the reconstruction of the bodies in different ways.

To begin with, let's have a brief look on the twentieth century art. At the beginning of the 20th century, the break with the disciplinary strictures of modernity led to a renunciation of the autonomous and apolitical character of art precisely by connecting aesthetics to the political. The avant-garde movements opposed the dominant institution of art (artistic and curatorial practices, museology, representations, techniques...) in an attempt to create society anew, in which art and politics would not exist any more as separate entities. Bürger observed this move on the European avant-garde scene in terms of an attack on bourgeois art seen as an institution that is unassociated with the life praxis of people.[212] By drawing a distinction between sacral art of the High Middle Age and courtly art at the court of Louis XIV on the one hand, and bourgeois art characteristic for modernism on the other hand, Bürger demonstrated how collective production and reception of art were gradually transformed in such a way so that they became a matter of the individual production and individual reception of art. He explained that cult objects of sacral art and objects of sociability of courtly art have been gradually replaced in the nineteen century with 'the objectification of the self-understanding of the bourgeois class'.[213] With the appearance of the bourgeois class, the production and reception of self-understanding, as it was articulated in art, ceased to be tied to the praxis of life. On this point, Bürger suggested that the avant-garde movements stand for an attack, not on the

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[212] Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, [1984] 2004), 49.

[213] *Ibid.*, 47.

bourgeois forms of art, but on art as institution detached from the praxis of life.[214] This is why the avant-garde has been considered as a demand for the return of art to its social function, to its specific use connected to the praxis of life.[215] Moreover, Bürger suggests that the return to the pragmatic role of art advocated by the avant-garde movements was not sought on the level of content, but on the level of aesthetics. Accordingly, he wrote that the avant-gardists 'assent to the aestheticists' rejection of the world and its means-ends rationality'.[216] This means that the avant-gardists did not undertake a task to integrate art into the existing praxis, but 'to organise a new life praxis from a basis in art'.[217]

The consequences of the equitation of the avant-garde with the new praxis of life are far reaching. We could say that the first set of consequences belongs to the moral register. Instantly, we can notice how the detachment of bourgeois art from the praxis of life implies the construction of the image of a fictional order that is 'better' and more free than the prevailing one. By the same analogy, we can notice how the avant-gardists' construction of a new life praxis may be seen as distinct and more free from the 'bad' life praxis of the existing society. The second set of consequences belongs to register of economy. When 'the cultural industry has brought about the false elimination of the distance between art and life',[218] the avant-garde quest for the new life praxis, for the absolute beginning, became an instrument for the production of capital, thus obtaining the economic function. Once the radical negation of art in the existing praxis of life, the radical negation of the category of individual creation, and the elimination of the limits between producers and recipients, that is between art and audience, are accepted as works of art under the moral and economic principles advocated by liberalism, any vanguard movement loses its critical potential. This is to say that once a massed-produced object, such as a urinal, is signed and placed in a museum, provocation and critical gesture disappear every time such a gesture is repeated.

The failure of the avant-garde to re-politicises society, may be seen precisely as a consequence of its claim on an absolute beginning. As we have observed above, the consequence was the fall of the avant-garde into the moral and economic registers. By claiming on an absolute beginning, the avant-garde argued a total break with the dominant representational system and, thus, opposed the existing politics and institutions of art. This allowed the avant-garde to disrupt the realm of art determined by the rise of the bourgeois society and to develop in parallel to it. However, the opposition and parallelism of the

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[214] *Ibid.*, 49.

[215] The significance of *praxis* is observed in chapter 4.

[216] Bürger, *The Avant-garde*, 49.

[217] *Ibid.*,

[218] *Ibid.*, 50.

avant-garde to bourgeoise art and the existing life practice, precluded the avant-garde from the possibility to engage with the existing praxis and norms of representation, and, hence, to challenge and rearticulate them.[219] More importantly, the operation of opposition — as the logical necessity of opposites prescribes — allowed for the absorption of the avant-garde's demands for absolute beginning to the modern and postmodern teleology of consolidation under historical evolution and hegemony of capital. The consequence was the blurring of frontiers between bourgeois art and the avant-garde. This is how the avant-garde and any later vanguard movements allowed the modern and post-modern teleologies to spatialise their contesting political potential, by transforming the paradoxical nature of dialectical relations between them into the relations of contradiction and opposition, that, at the end, presupposed homogeneity and consensus in art. In fact, this is how modernity abstracted and deprived vanguard art from the possibility to intervene within the existing norms of representation and to articulate different ones.

It is then precisely by means of a transition from the disciplinary strictures of traditional art and modern aggregation of rationally organised genres deprived from the political character, to the avant-garde and later vanguard movements — which renewed a demand for politicisation and art criticism — that the artistic creativity in the 20th century was witnessing a transition from the disciplinary society to the society of control, from fordism to post-fordism, or from modernism to postmodernism, in which the realm of art and its demands for social change have been manipulated by capitalism — by the capitalist's techniques of production and domination — so that they became its 'common sense'.[220] By these means, liberalism deprived the vanguard art from its inherently contesting political potential, and strengthened its own hegemonic power to create, what we call today, the post-political condition. That being said, new strategies are necessary so that the dominant politics and forms of representations may be challenged.

the articulation of *mise-en-sense* into *mise-en-scène*
and Marlene Monteiro Freitas' choreography

Despite the failure of the vanguard movements in art to rearticulate the norms of representation that comply with the demands of capital, the political dimension of art did not disappear. To perceive the political dimension of art it is necessary to abandon the artistic insistence on an absolute beginning that opposes existing institution of art and, therefore, entails artistic politics of disruption and withdrawal. As demonstrated above,

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[219]   In chapter 5, we will see how the privilege of the temporal dimension of duration, and the artistic strategies of avoidance of existing politics and representations that duration implies, repeat the avant-gardists' mistake, allowing neoliberalism to silence, or appropriate, or spatialise initially contesting potential of duration.

[220]   I have distinguished the techniques of production from the techniques of domination in chapter 5.

the insistence on an absolute beginning precludes art from the possibility to intervene within the established norms of representation and, thus, separates art from its inherently relational, contesting, and constitutive political dimension. What is hence necessary, is precisely the engagement with the existing institutions of art and representations established on the level of the symbolic. The operation of engagement provides art with the possibility not only to continuously challenge or contest meanings sedimented in techniques, materials, or forms. More importantly, it enables art to rearticulate and constitute them in alternative ways. Accordingly, the artistic strategies of engagement support Rancière's assertion that art is a partaking of the sensible (*le partage du sensible*). Yet, they enable us to envisage how 'the system of self-evident facts of sense perception that simultaneously discloses the existence of something in common and the delimitations that define the respective parts and positions within it', by means of the distribution of spaces, times, and forms of activity,[221] is engendered and put into form, into *mise-en-forme*. A philosopher Bernard Flynn wrote that social practices, including art practice, 'are recognisable as such only because they mean something within the general context of meaning, otherwise they would be simply physical motions'.[222] Flynn's view implies that the pluralism of facts of sense perception, distributed by ways of disrupting 'the clear partition of identities, activities and spaces', has to be structured into — what Claude Lefort calls — *mise-en-scène* that concerns the symbolic ordering of social relations. Drawing upon Lefort, Flynn emphasised that the *mise-en-scène* of social relations 'means that society gives itself a "a quasi-representation of itself"'.[223] This implies that a disorder initiated by *mise-en-sense,* which contests the hierarchies of representation, has to be nevertheless articulated at the particular moment into an order of representation, into *mise-en-scène*.

The distinction between the *mise-en-sense* and the *mise-en-scène* draws a clear difference between Rancière's and Mouffe's projects of democracy and the disparate consequences that they have on envisaging the relationship between art and politics. As I demonstrated above, while anarchism stands for the artistic strategies of disruption conveyed by *le partage du sensible*, agonism stands for the artistic strategies of engagement that articulate initial *mise-en-sense* into *mise-en-scène*. And, as long as the former implies a disorder of the plurality of egalitarian positions, the later advocates an order of the plurality of positions instituted through hegemonic relations that are constructed through symbolisation; by extension, a hegemonic order always already anticipates a disorder; or, to put it differently, the *mise-en-scène* anticipates the *mise-en-*

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[221] Rancière, *The Politics*, 12.

[222] Bernard Flynn, *The Philosophy of Claude Lefort: Interpreting the Political* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2005), 112.

[223] *Ibid.,*

sense.

The Lisabon based Cape Verdean choreographer Marlene Monteiro Freitas observes society as constructed at the point of intersection of disorder and order in *Bacantes - Prelúdio Para Uma Purga* (Bacchae – Prelude to a Purge), a performance that premiered in 2017.[224] As the reference to Euripides' tragedy *The Bacchantes* (405 BC) from the title indicates, this performance is concerned with the disparate natures that construct people.[225] In Euripides' *Bacchantes,* Dionysus, the son of Zeus and mortal mother Semele, claims his divine nature whilst the royal house of Cadmus, to whom his mother belongs, denies it. In revenge, and in order to prove his divine origin, Dionysus throws rites in a mountain consisting of songs, dance and intoxication. The Dionysian rites draw women wild, including the three sisters of his mother who also denied that Semele got pregnant with Zeus. After Dionysus forced Pentheus, the King of Thebes, to climb the mountain, Agave, Semele's sister and Pentheus' mother, kills Pentheus in her madness, taking him for a lion. Within this context, a philosopher Friedrich Nietzcshe, back in 1872, observed that the Dionysian ideals stands for the spirit of chaos, music, dance, collectivity, and formlessness, in contrast to the Apollonian ideals that stand for the structural principle, architecture, sculpture, individuality and form-giving.[226] Indeed, the entire Euripides' *Bacchantes* is engaged with the place of irrationality designated by the Dionysian principles within a society rationally ordered by the Apollonian principles.

Nevertheless, the narrative of Euripides' *Bacchantes* is not evident in Freitas's *Bacantes - Prelúdio Para Uma Purga.* Rather, through the rhythmical sequences of images, objects, movements and gestures, twelve dancers and musicians[227] create situations that reflect on the conflictual natures of the Apollonian and Dionysian principles, of reason and irrationality, form and formlessness, and individuation and collectivity.[228] The tension that brings rhythmic uncertainty to *Bacantes* is the reason why

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[224] Marlene Monteiro Freitas' performance *Bacantes - Prelúdio Para Uma Purga* premiered at The National theatre D. Maria II in Lisabon, in April 2017.

[225] The Bacchaee or the Bacchantes is Euripides' tragedy written in 410 B. C. E. The entire tragedy is concerned with the view on society at the verge of rational and irrational principles. See: Euripides. The Bacchantes, The Internet Classics Archive by Daniel C. Stevenson, Web Atomics, accessed September 26, 2017, http://classics.mit.edu/Euripides/bacchan.html

[226] Friederich Nietzche, *The Birth of Tragedy, trans.* Ian C. Johnston (Blackmask, 2003), accessed June 12, 2017, http://www.russoeconomics.altervista.org/Nietzsche.pdf.

[227] The performers and musicians are: Andreas Merk, Betty Tchomonga, Cookie, Cláudio Silva, Flora Détraz, Gonçalo Marques, Guillaume Gardey de Soos, Johannes Krieger, Lander Patrick, Marlene Monteiro Freitas, Miguel Filipe, Thomás Moital and Yaw Tembe.

[228] Freitas describes her performances as situations, rather than as stories and narrations. Her goal is in to overcome abstraction and expression in performance. See: Marlene Monteiro Freitas, *The Meaning of Fictions*, Interview by Jean-Marc Adolphe, Kunstenfetivaldesarts programme (Brussels: Kunstenfestivaldesarts, May 5-27, 2017), 20.

Freitas prefers to speak about her performances in a term of fiction.[229] The staging of Freitas' *Bacantes*, as performance critic Rita Natálio observed well, 'is firmly engaged with a fragmented consciousness and it proposes a flow of associative freedom that postpones the rationality of interpretation'.[230] And further on that '[t]he history of tragedy is thus paradoxically convoked and dissolved.'[231] In fact, we should notice, the history of *Bacchantes* is constructed as the drama unfolding at the verge of tragedy and comedy and consciousness and unconsciousness within the non-linear structure of the performance.

The *mise-en-scène* of the performance is a bright white cube, with a wide yellow strip of paint covering the floor by width. Within, a few stools and music stands are arranged. The black and white male and female bodies of the performers are 'masked' with a heavy make-up that emphasises their eyes, and especially their lips. They are dressed in costumes reminiscent of uniforms. And, whereas the dancers are wearing the white costumes, the musicians are dressed in the blue and black ones. The brightness of the space, heavy make-up, primary colours of costumes, shiny swim caps and flashy gloves in Freitas' staging of *Bacchantes*, are suggestive of the *comedia dell'arte*, or, even more, of the cabaret. The music performed by five trumpeters (sometimes transformed into hybrid instruments by use of plungers or hoses) and one drummer gives rhythm to the movements. The movements are mechanical and evocative of slapstick; sometimes performers move like robots or dolls; sometimes they engage in Charlie Chaplin like walks. However, what at one moment may appear as an organised order of images, movements, gestures, and attitudes, in another moment turns into a disorder in which every threat between the performance's parts gets lost. It is within such a structural system of alternating sketches of orderly and disorderly and absurdly and logically organised situations, that a synchronised movement of performers executing the same gesture — that, for example, simulates writing on a typewriting machines, walking without ever touching the ground (while the performers are seated on stools), or, that unites the bodies of musicians in swinging — at the certain moment turns into a set of obliques gestures and actions that dissolve the initial orderly choreography into a seemingly uncontrolled set of moves and pleasures; however, only to again return to the organised choreography. And, just like the choreographic order of mechanical movements sometimes dissolves in formless moves, the melodies of Erik Satie's *Gnossienne* No. 1 (1890), and the entire fifteen minutes of Maurice Ravel's *Boléro* (1928) — performed by trumpeters live on

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[229] A moral side of 'making room' in performance and giving rhythm to it, prompted Freitas to speak about her performances in terms of fictions. In: *Ibid.*,

[230] Rita Natálio, "The Spiralled Dualism of Marlene Monteiro Freitas", written in May 2017, Departures and Arrivals, accessed October 3, 2017, http://departuresandarrivals.eu/en/texts/texts-and-reviews/the-spiraled-dualism-of-marlene-monteiro-freitas-625.

[231] *Ibid.*,

stage — at a particular moment dissolve or disarticulate into unknown scores.[232] Freitas' performance symbolises a constant play between the Dionysian and Apollonian ideals, between formless and form-giving, disorder and order, and individual principles and collective demands. *Bacantes - Prelúdio Para Uma Purga* points at the need for questioning the order of images, movements, gestures and attitudes, through the mutual engagement of the paradoxical, counter-positions, and the need for constituting their relationship in alternative ways.

This insight into Freitas' performance allows us to envisage what renders the political dimension of art. Firstly, we understand that it is necessary to abandon the idea of opposing the existing institutions of art, the idea that the historical avant-garde claimed and that the vanguard movements have reiterated. Second, it is necessary to recognise that our reality is discursively constructed, understanding discourse not as a mere representation of the social that encompasses only practices of speaking, writing and communicating, but as the practice of symbolisation through language and actions within which objects and subjects are constructed. The first suggests a need to give up a claim to an absolute beginning that entails artistic politics of rupture and withdrawal. The second indicates that art should be perceived by means of discourse analysis, which implies artistic strategies of engagement with the existing symbols and their rearticulation in alternative ways.[233] At once, this is a moment of their constitution in, what Flynn calls, a quasi-representation. This view recognises a constitutive relationship between differential situations, and the inherent process of articulation and sublimation of one into another position, of disorder into order, of that which is excluded from symbolisation into symbolisation, of the Dionysian ideals into the Apollonian ideals, of the individual into the collective, or the initial affectivity into representation. Hence, not only that disorder is possible, it is even necessary for an order to be established.

redrawing limits between the intelligible and abject bodies

My thesis is that there is no pure or total form of art. By virtue of performativity, art

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[232] When one takes into consideration that *Gnossienne* was composed at the time of archeological excavations of the city of Knossos on the Greek island of Crete, and, hence, the most common explanation that the title of Satie's piece refers to the ritual dances performed by the inhabitants of Knossos, famous in Greek mythology for the story of its labyrinth, Theseus and the minotaur, and that *Boléro* was composed as a ballet out of an interest for the reinvention of dance movements, then these compositions indeed become in Freita's performance the symbols of the constitutive and paradoxical natures of the Dionysian and the Apollonian ideals, of formless and form-giving, disorder and order, individual principles and collective demands.

[233] To read more about the importance of discourse analysis see chapter 1.

stabilises and articulates a particular system of relations into a certain configuration that is manifested in representation. Borrowing Mouffe's vocabulary, I have suggested that each representation implies a hegemony of the symbolised or chosen on the one hand, and a possibility for that which is excluded from symbolisation, and which has no entity on its own, to be articulated and sublimated into a counter-hegemony. This is so, because, however individual is production of art, no action has been discovered to exist in isolation. As Dewey stressed, 'the action of everything is along with the action of other things'.[234] To that effect, representation in art is always decisive, partial, and proximal; it is articulated and constrained in relation to what it excludes. It stands for a possible way of conceiving societies within which the matter — that is symbolised or named through art — exists in its proximity. Representation proposes an order of relations that is eternally traversed by disorder. When representation in art is envisaged in this way, then it points at a paradoxical, insuperable tension and conflict between different and counter-hegemonic discourses and, hence, properties of different associations that are concerned with the recognition of distinct demands. It is precisely the ontological dimension of conflict that renders contingent the paradoxical nature of discourses and every representation in art.

In performance, the paradoxical and conflictual relation between different social, political, or cultural discourses, is reflected through the continuous performative tension between the intelligible and abject bodies. In *Bodies that Matter* (1993), a philosopher and gender theorist Judith Butler suggested that bodies are constructed through discursive means and that they 'only appear, only endure, only live within the productive constraints of certain highly gendered regulatory scheme'.[235] In other words, 'gender is constructed through relations of power'.[236] On the one hand, the acknowledgement of the relations of power in the construction of gender precludes the view on the relationship between differently constructed bodies in terms of oscillation, as Erika Fischer-Lichte's performance theory suggests.[237] This is so, because oscillation erases all the limits established between differential bodies, between their contours and movements, just as it erases all the limits between subjects and objects, and audience and performers. On the other hand, what the acknowledgement of relations of power in the construction of gender

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[234] Dewey, *The Public*, 22.

[235] Butler, xi.

[236] *Ibid., x.*

[237] Drawing upon Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and semiotics, Erika Fischer-Lichte distinguished phenomenal bodies from semiotic bodies, that is, the sheer presence of the body from the representation of the body. In order to overcome a dichotomous relationship between them, she introduced the operation of oscillation. When the relationship between these two positions is oscillatory, then the difference between the phenomenal and semiotic bodies, including the difference between the subject and the object, and the difference between the audience and the actors, become overcame and erased. This is how the audience becomes performers. In: Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance* (London, New York: Routledge, 2008).

enables us to recognise is that the relationship between differently constructed bodies is regulated by power and hegemonic laws.[238] In this view, the body is always performative; it implies a reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names as the result of power relations and hegemony. Any attempt to erase, or rather repress the limits between differential bodies and forms of identification, as well as between subject and object, or audience and performers, is always threatened by the repressed, by the other. According to philosopher and psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva, every loss of distinction between subject and object evokes abjection. She writes that 'the plane of abjection is that of subject/object relationship'.[239] Abjection accordingly does not respect the established limits, positions and rules, but dissembles them; it 'disturbs identity, system, order'.[240]

Given these points, we can observe how abjection disturbs all the limits of the body conceived as the intelligible body. Philosopher Michael Foucault designated the intelligible body as an object of knowledge; knowledge which is regulated by means of power and discipline through different discourses.[241] Drawing upon Kristeva's notion of abject and Foucault's definition of intelligible bodies, Butler then distinguishes intelligible bodies from abject bodies. Intelligible bodies stand for a domain of formed subjects, while abject bodies are those who are not yet subjects, 'but who form the constitutive outside to the domain of subject'.[242] Accordingly, we could say that the intelligible body is a corporeal manifestation of a present way of being, of a possible way of being in the world, regulated by law. It understands itself in relation to the abject bodies that it encounters and that it excludes. For its part, the abject body is continuously concerned with the present ways of being in the world. It is possible to suggest that it understands itself through the conflictual relationship with the intelligible bodies. As such, it emphasises the fragility of the law that circumscribes the intelligible body and the possibility to disarticulate it. In fact, as Judith Butler observes, the abject body is a paradoxically different body, an excluded body, the limit to intelligibility.[243] As such, it stands for a constitutive outside to the body which is constructed through different, and hegemonic discourses. The abject body has an inclination to take up a relationship with the intelligible body and rupture it,

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[238] In chapter 5, power and hegemonic laws are discussed with respect to the distinction between the capitalist techniques of production and the capitalist techniques of domination.

[239] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror. An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 64.

[240] *Ibid.*, 4.

[241] Michael Foucault, "Body and Power," interview by Quel corps (1975), trans. Colin Gordon, accessed June 8, 2017, http://www.generation-online.org/p/fpfoucault6.htm.

[242] Butler, *Bodies*, 3.

[243] *Ibid.*, xi.

'opening up possibilities for the bodies which have no intelligible place'.[244]

All things considered, we could suggest that the body politics manifests at the point of intersection of intelligibility and abjection; it articulates their paradoxical relation by reconfiguring an ensemble of discourses, practices, and institutions, in a specific unity that however privileges certain types of bodies while it excludes others. In this context, corporeality is not any more a matter of a 'metaphysics', a matter of the human body inhabited by the spirit, nor is it a matter of the abject body displaced by the intelligible body — or vice versa, as Rancière's theory may imply. For if bodies only appear, endure and live within the productive constraints of a certain highly generated dynamic of power, as Butler suggests, then, corporeality reflects a concern and conflict with the regulative norms that materialise the bodies through categories such as sex, gender, or race, aiming to articulate the ways of representing them in another way.[245] In other words, corporeality points at the coercive techniques of domination that circumscribe bodies within particular identities and laws of intelligibility, and the need for contesting these identities and laws by means of engagement and struggle from the abject position. This approach enables a shift from the pre-established perspective on bodies in terms of class -, gender -, or race -based identities, towards that which Mouffe calls the relational forms of identification.[246]

In this context, corporeality is to be envisaged as a reflection on the performativity of the multiplicity of paradoxical and conflictual discourses, concerned with the norms of representation in choreography which contest or comply with the dominant regulatory body politics. Once this is recognised, it becomes apparent that corporeality manifests a decisive articulation of paradoxical bodily positions in an intelligible choreography of the bodies. For if choreography is constituted by corporeality, it should then be recognised that the performing body does not simply unfolds its potential of being. In fact, the body is always implicated in the system that entangles it; it represents itself in relation to the bodies that it encounters and the bodies that it excludes. Choreography, thus, acknowledges that the indispensable phase of exclusion opens up a possibility for a choice. It becomes a matter of a decisional act that draws limits towards certain bodies and circumscribes other by a particular discourse and context. To choose one, is to exclude another being; it is to confine intelligibility and propose a name. For that matter, the indispensable phase of exclusion of bodies demands, as choreographer Daniel Linehan

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[244] Butler also writes about dispossessed bodies as abject bodies. A dispossessed body is the body deprived of a belonging to the world in a broader sense; in fact, it has been stripped from the land, citizenship or property, and, as such, it is inclined for a social and political action. In: Athena Athanasio and Judith Butler, *Dispossession: The Performative in the Political* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), 59.

[245] Borrowing Heidegger's vocabulary, conflict becomes an essence, something that 'presences' itself and sets itself forth from out of itself; it is yet to happen. See: Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays,* trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper Torchbooks, [1949] 1977), 160.

[246] Chtantal Mouffe, *The Return of the Political* (London: Verso, 1993), 78-86.

suggests, a need to challenge the intelligible body embedded within the dominant system from the aporetic outside albeit acting within it.[247]

Drawing upon Freud and Lacan, psychoanalyst Nestor Braunstein argues that it is only a psychotic who has no choice, who does not choose.[248] Following Braunstein's thought, choreography becomes a matter of decision — it may either assist or contest the current distinction between the intelligible and abject bodies. The intelligible body is, hence, always a matter of contingency; an effect of a partial stabilisation, of a regulatory hegemony of discourses incited by particular social, political, or cultural demands that may always be challenged from the abject position, from the outside. To that effect, sex, gender, or race, are to be envisaged as categories that represent hegemonic corporeal systems of symbols and names to be continuously challenged and contested. It is then only by a possibility of a counter-hegemonic collective decision that the struggle between an order of identities may be contested by a disorder, or, as we previously observed, that the Apollonian ideals may be contested by the Dionysian ideals.[249] By means of struggle we may undo and redo the dominant neoliberal condition of indistinctness that is established through a particular order and that we call the post-political, and open up possibilities for articulating alternative societies. Performance practices and theories, as we will see in the forthcoming chapters, may play important roles in these processes.

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[247] Daniel Linehan, *A No One Can Make Space* (MER: Paper Kunsthalle, 2013), book VI.

[248] Nestor Braunstein,"You Cannot Choose To Get Crazy", in *Lacan on Madness: Yes, You Can't,* eds. Patricia Gherovitci and Manya Steinkoler (London: Routledge, 2015), 85 - 98.

[249] On collective decisions, see chapter 5.

4

The Return of Drama[250]

Numerous protest movements arose worldwide since the beginning of the millennium. The different natures of protest movements inspired some political philosophers to envisage alternative models of democracy. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri envisaged the model of absolute democracy inspired by the horizontality of protest movements.[251] Chantal Mouffe envisaged the model of agonistic democracy inspired by the verticality of protest movements.[252] Drawing upon political theorist Benjamin Arditi, the advocate of absolute democracy, and political theorist Yannis Stavrakakis, the advocate of agonistic pluralism, it will be stressed throughout this chapter that agonistic pluralism anticipates the choreography of sublimation of horizontality into verticality. The choreography of sublimation, that enables the engagement of horizontality with verticality, is envisaged as a condition for challenging a dominant politics and constituting an alternative.

To examine how popular passions for the political change and politico-philosophical discourses on democracy influence the understanding of the political dimension of performance practice, I distinguished the post-representational discourse in performance theory from the representational. Whereas the former resonates the horizontality of absolute democracy and the post-hegemonic politics of harmony, the latter is inspired by the verticality of agonistic pluralism and the hegemonic politics of polemics and struggles. Theatre scholar Hans-Thies Lehmann is the most influential advocate of the post-representational discourse. For him, modernity succeeded to expel the political dimension from dramatic representation associated with conflict. This is why 'the political gesture' in theatre stands for tragic experience enabled by transgression, by overstepping

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[250]   This article will be published as: Goran Petrović Lotina, "The Return of Drama. Protests, Politics and Political Discourses in Performance Theory," in *Cultural Critic* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018).

[251]   See chapter 2, and Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, London: Harvard University Press, 2000).

[252]   Chantal Mouffe: *The Democratic Paradox* (London: Verso, 2000); *On the Political* (London: Routledge, 2005); *Agonistics* (London: Verso, 2013).

all moral, ethical or political limits.[253] For the postdramatic and post-representational approach to theatre, the political dimension is the immediate experience of reality through affects. I will claim that the privilege of transgression and affects through presence in performance philosophy precludes the possibility of constructing alternative politics and representations. In contrast, I will demonstrate that the political dimension of performing arts lies in dramatic representation precisely because it is associated with conflict. In this view, conflict is not a mere matter of the plot, of the closed system relating polemics and struggles between the characters on the stage, but a dramatic form of engagement of the audience with the performance. Drama enables the choreography of sublimation of the audience's affects into representation. What I will be calling the representational approach to theatre is a condition for the sublimation and articulation of the audience as passive onlookers into active citizenship that may construct alternative politics.

the horizontality of protest movements and post-hegemony

Following the global political and economic crisis of the new millennium, numerous protest movements arose worldwide: in South America, the Arab countries, the USA, the EU and in Europe more generally. What is common to these protest movements is that they are driven by popular demands for political change. However, what distinguishes them are the strategies applied to achieve these goals. Generally speaking, there are two types of protest movements. On one side, there are protest movements that are horizontal by nature. They have no leaders and advocate direct rule of the people outside state institutions. As such, they are post-hegemonic protests. Some of the examples are the Argentinian *Piqueteros* (2001), *Arab Spring* (2010/11),[254] international *Occupy* movement (2011), Spanish *Indignados* (2011), Greek *Aganaktismenoi* (2011), *Black Lives Matter* (2013-), French *Nuit debut* (2016) and Serbian *Ne davimo Beograd / Let's Not Drown Belgrade* (2016-). On the other side, there are protest movements that are vertical by nature. They have leaders that represent popular demands. This type of protest movements support hegemonic politics and assert that political change may be achieved through the engagement with state institutions. This is why they always turn into political parties, seeking for representatives within the parliamentary political system. Some of the examples are the Spanish *Podemos / We Can* (2011 - 2014), the Slovenian *Združena levica / United Left* (2011 - 2014) and the Croatian *Zagreb je naš /* Zagreb is

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[253] Hans-Thies Lehmann, "A Future for Tragedy? Remarks on the Political and the Postdramatic," in *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political*, eds. Karen Jurs-Munby, Jerome Carroll and Steve Giles (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 93-95.

[254] *The Arab Spring* took place in Tunisia (2010), Syria, Libya, Yemen, Egypt, Bahrain, Morocco and Algeria (2011).

Ours (2009 - 2017).[255]

Whether they arise in response to the incompetence of politicians to deal with the economic and social crisis, dissatisfaction with austerity measures, or disgust with corruption or unjust policies, most of the recent left-leaning protest movements are horizontal by nature; they are self-organised, egalitarian and leaderless protests. Arditi's argument for the horizontal politics evolves around the critic of hegemony. He particularly takes issue with Laclau's and Mouffe's understanding of hegemony as a dimension that is inherent to all social practices. When hegemony is understood in these terms, he writes, then it 'construes *all* politics as hegemonic politics' leaving no space for the outside or beyond hegemony.[256] In addition, Arditi explains, if hegemonic forms of politics revolves around the production of a chain of equivalence between different demands, subject positions and forces, then there is no room for those groups that are not part of that chain and that 'do not require or demand a surplus signification for relations of equivalence among groups or struggles'.[257]

To defend his argument for post-hegemony, Arditi provides a survey of the Argentinian protest movement (2001) against economic reforms carried out under the government of the Radical Civic Union party (URC), assembled out of *Piqueteros* (a group of unemployed workers), *Asambleas de Barrios* (an assembly of autonomous neighbourhood), *Peronistas* (labour movement) and variety of radical leftist parties. Arditi stresses that despite the absence of leadership and ideology, Argentinian protesters took over factories and brought down the Argentinian President Fernando de la Rúa, the head of the URC, whose neoliberal government introduced strict austerity measures, such as budget cuts for health and education. For these reasons, Arditi sees the Argentinian protest movement as an ultimate example of what he calls a post-hegemonic outside: a multitude, or a network of movements which is self-organised outside the state, without equivalence between different groups, agency of articulation and hegemony. It is in this context that the Argentinian protest movement stands for 'the multitude in action',[258] for the plurality of movements in the public space without the moment of convergence in the single representative.

Nevertheless, Arditi does not explain how the multitude gives rise to a politics that we envisage in Mouffe's terms as 'the set of practices and institutions through which an

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[255] In all three cases the first year refers to the year in which a movement or a protest began, while the second year refers to the year in which a movement or a protest transformed into a political party.

[256] Benjamin Arditi, "Post-hegemony: Politics Outside the Usual Post-Marxist Paradigm," in *Radical Democracy and Collective Movements Today. The Biopolitics of the Multitude versus the Hegemony of the People,* eds. Alexandros Kiopkiolis and Giorgos Katsambekis, (Surrey: Ashgate, 2014), 24.

[257] *Ibid.*, 25.

[258] *Ibid.*, 28.

order is created'.[259] He is mainly attentive to vindicate the multitude, singularity and action outside chains of equivalence. What he calls 'viral politics' stands for a mode of action that is based on informal networks between singularities.[260] Viral politics are concerned with the ways these networks are structured, that is, with the tactics and procedures of organisation, rather than with the ways in which series of dispersed actions and movements may establish an order and give rise to politics. What the strategies of defection from the counter-hegemonic representations — that Arditi nevertheless reluctantly argues for — do not demonstrate are the ways particular demands of the multitude may be defended and put to work by avoiding the state.[261] In fact, as Žižek put it, the strategies of defection or exodus do not demonstrate how the multitudes rule themselves;[262] and, similarly, as Laclau put it, they do not demonstrate how the multitude articulates in the people.[263] Actually, Arditi does not inform us about the consequences of the immediate horizontal, non-representative, anti-institutional and leaderless Argentinian movement for the post-hegemonic outside, for the multitude.

However, a brief look on the *Piqueteros* movement during the Argentinian elections in 2003 may tell more about this. Namely, as Mouffe pointed out, when the elections took place in Argentina, *Piqueteros* had no relay with the institutions or the parties.[264] The consequence was the electoral struggle between traditional parties, the centre-right faction of the Peronist Justicialist Party, headed by Carlos Menem,[265] and the centre-left faction of the Peronist Justicialist Party, headed by Nestor Kirchner.[266] It is important to notice, as Mouffe emphasises, that only at the initiative of the elected President Kirchner a faction of *Piqueteros* movement entered the government. This allowed certain *Piqueteros*' demands to be heard and to be defended in the parliament. Considering this, we can certainly agree with Arditi that protest movement or 'insurgences are particularly intense moments of experimentation and improvisation' and that they, to

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[259] My definition of politics is envisaged within the framework of Mouffe's political-philosophy. See: Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political* (London: Routledge, [2000] 2009), 9.

[260] Arditi, "Post-hegemony," 29.

[261] Arditi is reluctant because he does not in fact favour post-hegemony, while, at the same time, he rejects hegemony; he writes: 'It is myopic and ideological — in the pejorative sense of this word — to think that either there is hegemony *or* exodus.' Artidi, "Post-hegemony," 37.

[262] Slavoj Žižek, *The Parallax View* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006), 264.

[263] Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason* (London: Verso, 2005), 249-250.

[264] Markus Miessen, "The Space of Agonism (Markus Miessen in Conversation with Chantal Mouffe)," in *Critical Spatial Practice 2,* eds. Nicolas Hirsch and Markus Miessen (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012), 114.

[265] Carlos Menem was the President of Argentina from 8 July 1989 to 10 December 1999.

[266] Nestor Kirchner became the elected President of Argentina on 25 May 2003, and remained the President until 10 December 2007.

the certain degree, do engage with the transformation of the given.[267] Yet, as the case of the *Piqueteros* movement shows, we have to recognise that the network of autonomous struggles, which operates as the self-organised multitude, is capable to transform dominant politics only when it is articulated in a counter-hegemonic horizon of representation and, consequently, engaged with the hegemonic institutions.

Similar to the *Piqueteros* movement, most of the 'post-hegemonic' square protests failed to transform or to displace dominant politics and fizzled out despite abounding and progressive ideas and aspirations. This could be said for the *Arab Spring*, the *Occupy* movement and the *Nuit debout*. Each of these examples testifies that the neoliberal politics always survive post-hegemonic protests and become even more stronger. First, because the hegemonic position of the neoliberal politics enables the appropriation of protestors' demands for the benefit of its own interest and, second, because the strategies of counter-hegemony are insufficiently institutionalised. Given these points, we should notice that the strategies of autonomous and horizontal, that is, non-hierarchical and non-representational protests — which argue a direct popular governance — preclude the possibility of protesters to confront, challenge and displace vertically structured hegemonic politics, representations and discourses established by neoliberalism. If global neoliberalism, obviously, can not disappear on its own accord, then, in contrast to the politics of defection, exodus or withdrawal from the discourses that are sedimented in the neoliberal politics, institutions and representations, more explicit engagement with them is required.[268]

the quasi-verticality of protest movements and hegemony:
a choreography of sublimation

Stavrakakis envisages the relationship between the horizontal and vertical politics and, consequently, between post-hegemony and hegemony, in terms of a co-constitution of immediacy and mediation.[269] In this view, immediacy stands for the horizontality of post-hegemony and direct democracy that advocate strategies of withdrawal from any representation appropriated by the state, while mediation points at the verticality of

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[267] Arditi, "Post-hegemony," 37.

[268] This is very well understood by the right-wing populist parties that filled in the vacuum between the state and the left-wing populist parties. They took over state institutions to the certain degree and united in a Eurosceptic-parliament block which gathers the French Front National, the Dutch Party for Freedom, the Freedom Party of Austria, the Poland's Congress of the New Right, and the UK Independent Party.

[269] Yannis Stavrakakis, "Hegemony or Post-hegemony? Discourse, Representation and the Revenge(s) of the Real," in *Radical Democracy and Collective Movements Today. The Biopolitics of the Multitude versus the Hegemony of the People,* ed. Alexandros Kiopkiolis and Giorgos Katsambekis (Surrey: Ashgate, 2014), 111-132.

hegemony and representative democracy that argue strategies of engagement with representations appropriated by the state. Stavrakakis envisaged the co-constitutive relationship between immediacy and mediation in terms of a choreography that implies a gradual sublimation of one position into another.

Drawing upon psychoanalytic theory Stavrakakis asserts that gradual sublimation stands for the diversion of the libido, of the immediate affective impulses of pleasure into the noninstictual, culturally acceptable values.[270] Now, to support his own argument for the choreography of sublimation in constructing any social and political totality, Stavrakakis turns to the post-Marxist discourse theory.[271] In the preface to the second edition of their book *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (2001) Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe wrote:

> "Discourse" has a pedigree in contemporary thought going back to the three main intellectual currents of the twentieth century: analytical philosophy, phenomenology, and structuralism. In those three the century started with an illusion of immediacy, of a non-discursively mediated access to the things themselves — the referent, the phenomenon and the sign, respectively. In all three, however, this illusion of immediacy dissolved at some point, and had to be replaced by one form or another of discursive mediation.[272]

In this landmark piece, Laclau and Mouffe wrote that discourse reflects the material character of every social construction and, therefore, that the very being of an object is itself a discursive production. Accordingly, they wrote that discursive totality can 'exist [only] as a partial limitation of a "surplus of meaning"'.[273] The operation of limitation, or mutual exclusion, implies that discursive totality and surplus of meaning condition each other. Contrary to the post-hegemonic political project of horizontal democracy which argues a direct rule of the multitude, that is an immediate access to the being through habits and affects of the multitude by relinquishing discourse and representation, Laclau's

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[270] Yannis Stavrakakis, *Lacan and the Political* (London, Routledge 1999), 131.

[271] Stavrakakis designates mediation drawing upon Laclau's and Mouffe's discourse analysis. In Laclau and Mouffe, a pre-discursive mediation stands for an illusion of immediacy, which is contrasted with overdetermination that stands for a discursive mediation. In their views, immediacy points at a conceptual practice, which implies a system of logical transitions that conceives relations between objects as following relations between concepts. A pre-discursive immediacy is defined by determination in the last instance. In contrast, overdetermination is a performative practice. It conceives relations between objects through symbolisation and, as such, points at the construction through articulation. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (London: Verso, [1985] 2001), 93-97.

[272] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony*, xi.

[273] *Ibid*., 111.

and Mouffe's hegemonic political project is constructed precisely through discursive mediations, allowing for the sublimation or rather — from the point of view of discourse analysis — the articulation of the initial immediacy into mediation: of the affective into the symbolic, the multitude into the people, or counter-hegemony into hegemony.

The operation of gradual sublimation is accountable for the Spanish *Podemos / We Can*, a political party articulated out of a fraction of the horizontal grass-root movement *Indignados* that arose against austerity measures and corruption (2011-2014); for the Slovenian *Združena levica / United Left,* a left-wing coalition which underwent a similar process, by transforming the initial strategy of the Party for Sustainable Development of Slovenia (TRS) to occupy the Faculty of Fine Arts in a protest against financial academic restrictions, into an organised political coalition (2011 - 2014);[274] and also for the Croatian *Zagreb je naš /* Zagreb is Ours, a political party that grew out of the initiative of Croatian intellectuals *Pravo na grad /* Right to the City that stood against the politics of private interest (2009 - 2017);[275] and, partially, for Kirchner's Peronism, which included a portion of *Piqueteros* in the government (2001-2003). In all these cases, the multitude sublimated into the people. Actually, the passionate affects of the multitude gave rise to the people through discursive means — through political institutions, representations and practices. This is why the relational, vertical, hegemonic, representative and institutional politics are playing an important role in radicalising democracy. They argue for the engagement of the protestors with actual hegemonies — dominant politics, institutions, representations and practices — through counter-hegemonic actions. The institutionalisation of protestors' demands allows the possibility of confronting, deconstructing and rearticulating a given political order and, finally, constituting or articulating it in another way. This implies that the separation of the multitude and the people in autonomous and non-relational categories arrests the possibility of transforming dominant politics and prevailing political discourses.[276]

Stavrakakis justifies the choreography of sublimation of the multitude into the people observing that 'a multitude of autonomous struggles have historically become effective only when articulated within a common counter-hegemonic horizon of representation'.[277] This means that a social movement may transform a dominant political

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[274] This coalition was established between the Democratic Labour Party (DSD), Party for Sustainable Development of Slovenia (TRS), and Initiative for Democratic Socialism (IDS).

[275] *Pravo na grad /* Right to the City is a platform that emanated from the campaign against the abuse of public spaces in Zagreb, in Croatia, in 2006. More about in: Milica Ilić, "Building on Previous Achievements. A conversation with Teo Celakoski," in *Another Europe,* eds. Philipp Dietachmair and Milica Ilić (Amsterdam: European Cultural Foundation, 2015), 269.

[276] Today, the right-wing political parties are very much aware of the importance of choreographing the multitude into the people. Using economic crisis as a pretext, the right-wing populism in the EU and the USA is institutionalising a discourse against economic migrants, refugees and Islam.

[277] Stavrakakis, "Hegemony and Post-hegemony?," 120.

order and give rise to alternative politics, provided that it appoints representatives in the parliament who will defend the protestors' demands. This is why, rather than envisaging horizontality and verticality as isolated entities, Stavrakakis' observations suggest the study of their co-constitutive interpretations, opportunities and challenges. From the point of view of discourse formation, the choreography of sublimation point at the articulation of the multitudinous of popular demands and activities into an order, of the real into representation, or what Artidi calls 'the multitude in action' into hegemony. Finally, this approach inclines the conclusion that a politics of verticality is in fact quasi-vertical by nature; it takes into account every available position and open up a possibility for the constitution of democracy in plural terms.

relational dialectics: horizontality and verticality

The operation of co-constitution or mutual engagement of horizontality and verticality allowing for a choreography of articulation calls to attention a post-Marxist politico-philosophical polemic about eclecticism and dialectics. In this polemic, which echoes revolutionary political thinker Vladimir Ilyich Lenin's world view in terms of reciprocal relations, eclecticism stands for the causal connection between different facets or different formal structures of one and the same object (a glass cylinder and a drinking vessel), while dialectics examine all facets, connections, mediations, and historical constructions of an object, reflecting relations with the 'objective world'.[278] Whereas the former is concerned with the experience of an immediate totality of the object — the extrapolation of data from its all-sidedness, or all facets of the object, the latter is concerned with a mediate totality of the object — the way it is relationally and historically constructed through discourse formation and articulated in its all-sidedness.[279]

We have suggested before that the operation of articulation opens up a possibility for the constitution of democracy in plural terms. Let's observe for a moment which type of relations may enable the operation of articulation to unfold in such a way so that it embraces a pluralism of positions: the causal type of relations characterised by eclecticism, or the co-constitutive type of relations characterised by dialectics? To suggest an answer to this dilemma, I will turn to philosopher Antonio Gramsci's critique of the

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[278]   Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, "Once Again on the Trade Unions," in *Collected Works*, vol.32 (Moscow, 1965): 93-4.

[279]   To be sure, philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's principle of the dialectical articulation is read here through materialism. This way, a unity in "I", suggested by Hegel's philosophy, is translated in a contingent construction by means of discursive mediation. The goal of this tactic is to provide a condition for a pluralism of positions. For the same reason, the title of this section does not relate to Hegel's 'dialectical relations', and instead suggests relational dialectics. On Hegel's dialectics, see: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline*, Part 1, Science of Logic (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press [1817] 2010.

orthodox revisionist's approach to Marxism. His critique points at the reduction of philosophy to a form of sociology, to 'a method of scholarship for ascertaining particular facts' and to an 'empirical compilation of practical observations'.[280] Reduced to the scientific method dependent on a pre-elaborated system, philosophy becomes a 'mechanical formula', a logical and coherent system of laws. By narrowing philosophy to a search for laws, all empirical observations become facts determined by the immediate economic factors that discern productive forces as the engines of social totality. The type of relations that the bond between economic structure and superstructural appearance suggests is — what we called — the causal type of relations: a type of relations between cause and effect characterised by eclecticism.[281] From the point of view of eclecticism, the totality of any object is reduced to the abundance of abstract concepts that objectify a closed system. In contrast, Gramsci envisages philosophy as a theory of history that reflects 'a generic search for historical sources'.[282] For him, as philosopher Leonardo Paggi pointed out, 'economics consists in confining historical materialism to historical reconstructions and thus preventing an evaluation of ongoing historical and political processes'.[283] To allow the evaluation of ongoing historical and political processes, economics has to be seen only as one among other factors in which historical processes present themselves. This implies that economics ceases to relate to the production of goods and starts to address social relations, just like politics.

Drawing upon Marx, Gramsci emphasises the antagonistic character of social relations.[284] The acknowledgement of antagonistic dimension of social relations allow us to recognise that the historicity of humanity is linked to the struggling social associations that contain in themselves the elements of further development.[285] Accordingly, we have to acknowledge that the theory of history is not social science determined in the last instance by economics, but the philosophy of *praxis*. The notion of praxis designates the system of antagonistic social relations in struggle for hegemony, a system that underlines the means of production. Gramsci asserts that praxis 'can only be conceived in a

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[280] Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, eds. and trans. Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1992), 428.

[281] Contemporary theory often mistakes eclecticism for dialectics.

[282] Gramsci, *Selections*, 428.

[283] Leonardo Paggi, "Gramsci's General Theory of Marxism," in *Gramsci and Marxist Theory*, ed. Chantal Mouffe (Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, 1979), 125.

[284] Marx wrote that '[t]he philanthropic school is the humanitarian school carried to perfection. It denies the necessity of antagonism; it wants to turn all men bourgeois; it wants to realise theory in so far as it is distinguished from practice and contains no antagonism.' In: David McLellan, ed., *Karl Marx* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 229.

[285] On antagonism, see for instance: Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, Vol. II, ed. and trans. Joseph A. Buttigieg (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 192.

polemical form and in the form of a perpetual struggle'.[286] It is precisely a view on societies and on philosophy in terms of polemics and struggle that accounts for the dialectical materialism. It permits us to envisage and evaluate the relationship between differential and paradoxical entities as co-constitutive, not supplemental. In this view, the totality of any object points at the knowledge production through the conflictual processes of objectification.

According to Gramsci's inspiring view on society, the dialectic does not relate to eclecticism, to the formal aggregation of unitary abstract facts, that is to concepts and laws deduced from the pre-discursive and primordial realm that exorcise the dimension of antagonism from the philosophical debate on society. In contrast, the dialectic demands the evaluation of ongoing antagonistic processes that shape societies. It implies the constitutive character of the multiplicity of factors (economic, political, geographical, religious...) to the struggling of different social demands (those of the workers, women, environmentalists, black people, LGBTQIA, poor...).[287] As Paggi pointed out, the dialectic is 'the cognitive method necessary to gain a concrete and realistic representation of the antagonistic social unity'.[288] Consequently, a co-constitutive relation of the plurality of positions is not simply a relation of causes and effects, or bases and superstructures. More importantly, it implies action and reaction in an attempt to construct a possible unity out of conflicting social forces in — what Gramsci calls — a *concordia discors*.[289] The dialectic is thus the critical evaluation of operations that reflect the outcome of the struggle between contesting and antagonistic social forces for hegemony at the given moment.

The way we have just envisaged dialectics — in terms of materialism, history, praxis, discourse, polemics, antagonism, struggle and plurality — is reminiscent of political theorist Carl Schmitt's writing on 'the political'. Schmitt states that 'the substance of the political' is contained in concepts, images and terms, as well as in everyday language, tactics, practices, competitions and intrigues. This is so because they are all focused on conflict and have 'a polemical meaning'.[290] Accordingly, Schmitt claims that 'the political is the most intense and extreme antagonism'.[291] For this reason,

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[286] Gramsci, *Selections*, 425.

[287] The dialectical approach to societies is developed in chapter 5.

[288] Paggi, "Gramsci's Theory," 133.

[289] Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, Vol III, ed. and trans. by Joseph A. Buttigieg (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 186-187.

[290] Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 30.

[291] *Ibid*., 29.

antagonism implies a friend-enemy grouping.[292] Without antagonism, that is, without a specific conflicts and polemics between friends and enemies, all the words that relate to different objects, such as the state, society, economics, culture, or art, simply turn into empty abstractions. Thinking with Schmitt and against Schmitt, Mouffe stresses that the task of democratic politics is not to allow conflict between the differential positions to take the form of antagonism, but the form of agonism.[293] The central category of Mouffe's agonism are adversaries. They are not enemies to be destroyed; they are adversaries 'whose ideas might be fought, even fiercely, but whose right to defend those ideas is not to be questioned'.[294] In Mouffe's view, the struggle between adversaries is the 'very condition of a vibrant democracy'.[295]

Mouffe's view on a democratic politics in agonistic terms enables us to deepen the notion of dialects. Once we have acknowledged that agonism is always traversed by antagonism, we shall rethink the dialectic in terms of the choreography of sublimation of an initial immediacy into a mediated representation. From the point of view of discourse analysis, the choreography of sublimation becomes the choreography of articulation of the antagonistic relations between enemies into the agonistic relations between adversaries.[296] Concerning the protest movements, this choreography suggest the articulation of popular and passionate demands into a set of practices; or, concerning the object, the articulation of the 'being' of the object into its symbolic representation. It is at this point that it could be said that we engage with the essence of the political and not only with the facts of politics.[297]

Hans Thies-Lehmann:
protest movements and postdramatic politics of perception

We shall envisage the consequences that different politico-philosophical ways of grasping the distinction between the horizontal and vertical natures of protest movements — absolute democracy and agonistic democracy — as well as the distinction between the types of relations between differential positions — eclecticism and dialectics — have on

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[292] *Ibid.*, 30.

[293] Chantal Mouffe, *Agonistics* (London: Verso, 2013), 7

[294] *Ibid.*,

[295] *Ibid.*,

[296] *Ibid.*,

[297] Gramsci's approach to philosophy does not reject the possibility of facts. An empirical compilation of practical observations may be constructed and facts presented. However, one has to take into account that facts 'can be employed in the science and art of politics only so long as the great masses of the population remain essentially passive'. In: Gramsci, *Selections*, 428.

performance theory eager to explore the political dimension of performance practice with respect to protest movements. Accordingly, I distinguished the post-representational politico-philosophical discourse in performance theory from the one of representation. Whereas the former reflects the characteristics of absolute democracy and eclecticism, the latter shares the characteristic of agonistic democracy and dialectics. My point of departure is Hans-Thies Lehmann, one of the most influential advocates of the post-representational approach to the performing arts and the key reference points in the international debate on contemporary theatre and performance. By outlining Lehmann's theoretical tenets relevant for our observation, I intend to demonstrate the limits of the post-representational discourse in performance theory for grasping the political dimension of performance practice. I will show that Lehmann's privileging of presence precludes the possibility of unfolding dialectics important for the evaluation of the construction of any objectivity through discourse formation, through conflicts, struggles and polemics, and hence the possibility of unfolding the choreographies of articulation. As we will see, at stake in the post-representational approach to performance are one-sided post-hegemonic politics of harmony.

In his book *Postdramatic Theatre* (2006), Lehmann envisaged the cultural and social change from the 1960s onwards mainly as the consequence of the development of new technology. According to Lehmann, new technology in theatre requires a shift from dramatic theatre dominated by a text-based and mimetic representation of conflict, to new media, immanently de-structured processional event that is "more presence than representation".[298] His thoughts on the ways presentation in theatre may open up a multi-perspectival form of perceiving — that he names the politics of perception, led him to develop a theory of transgression. In order to provide a ground for the theory of transgression and the argument for the political form of theatre in *A Future for Tragedy?* (2013) Lehmann departs from the global social and political protest movements. By drawing a distinction between drama and tragedy, he argues that tragedy, rather than drama, allows the possibility of grasping the relationship between political and aesthetic gestures in theatre within the context of mass movements. He asserts that tragedy appears in the postdramatic theatre as an event with 'no performance, no theatre, and no acting out of a dramatic story'.[299] Because there is only the audience, tragic experience stands for a certain perspective on the event which Lehmann calls a 'dramaturgy of the spectator'. This event transgresses all moral, ethical or political limits. All things considered, it is precisely tragedy that enables the audience to practice the political in theatre by means of

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[298] Hans-Thies Lehman, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (Abingdon: Routlege, 2006), 85.

[299] Hans-Thies Lehmann, "A Future for Tragedy? Remarks on the Political and the Postdramatic," in *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political*, eds. Karen Jurs-Munby, Jerome Carroll and Steve Giles (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 89.

transgression.

In order to grasp Lehmann's idea about the relationship between aesthetic and political gestures in tragedy with reference to protest movements we, should take a closer look at his work. Lehmann claims that philosophers, from Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and György Lukács to Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno, including a dramatist, theatre activist and theorist Bertolt Brecht, relegated tragedy to antiquity and historicity and proclaimed its death.[300] The dissolution of tragedy led to a new formalism, the higher level of abstract justice and despotic rationalism. By these means, modernity succeeded to expel the political dimension of theatre by giving primacy to drama tied to the representation of conflict. Now, seeking an alternative to the post-political drama and conflict that it implies, Lehmann argues for the return of tragedy. He envisaged tragic experience as the one capable of 'reaching and overstepping [...] the limits of a given cultural intelligibility'.[301] This possibility is ascribed to tragedy because Lehmann sees it to be closely connected historically to basic questions of the political: the polis, history, power and transgression.

To clarify this thought, in *Tragedy and Dramatic Thought* (2016) Lehmann suggests that the articulation of the tragic experience is not necessary linked to a dramatic procedure, but to the play between the aesthetic and the real, between aesthetically intended fiction and concrete life processes.[302] In order to develop this argument Lehmann turns to ancient tragedy. He explains that since ancient times tragedy was linked to theatre not because theatre was drama, but because theatre was connected to rituals, such as ritual death penalties, public punishments, or the ritual of the Dionysian festivities.[303] Therefore, the relationship between theatre and ritual stands for the blurred relationship between the aesthetic and the real, between the pleasure and the ethical and political responsibility.[304]

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[300] Theatre scholar Karoline Gritzner claims that Brecht did not disagree with the form of tragedy, but with the passive viewing patterns that it creates. She calls for a redefinition of the notion of tragedy in the late-capitalist society, drawing upon Adorno's notion of catastrophe and Williams' approach that connects tragedy with historical development. In: Karoline Gritzner, "Adorno on Tragedy: Reading Catastrophe in Late Capitalist Culture," *Critical Engagements,* Volume 1, Number 2 (2007): 23-52.

[301] Lehmann, "Future of Tragedy," 97.

[302] Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Tragedy and Dramatic Theatre* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 443.

[303] The superior position of tragedy over drama in Lehmann's theory is in accord with Nietzsche's view on tragedy as a supreme art, that is, a supreme source of joy, given that Nietzsche ascribes priority to the Dionysian ideals (the spirit of formlessness, irrationality) over the Apollonian ideals (form-giving and structural principle). Nietzsche ascribed a priority to the former because it enables 'an immediate reflection of the will itself, and also because it presents itself as the metaphysical counterpart to all physical things in the world, the thing-in-itself as counterpart to all appearances'. Nevertheless, Nietzsche dos not call for transgression or overflow of the Apollonian ideals. In: Friederich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Ian C. Johnston, page 42, accessed June 12, 2017, http://www.russoeconomics.altervista.org/Nietzsche.pdf.

[304] In Lehmann, the real is a synonym for the praxis of polis — for the 'the earnest sphere of religious, legal and polis-related matters'. In: Lehmann, *Tragedy*, 442.

Precisely at the point when the real enters the aesthetic play emerges tragic experience.[305] This implies that tragic experience evokes a politics of perception that undermines certainties, such as whether we are simply spectators or participants in theatre. The overlapping experience of the aesthetic and the real enables the audience the possibility to put into question the cultural norms it adheres to, as well as the structure of the being in a polis.

The encounter of the aesthetic and the real in tragedy raises the question about the nature of their relationship. Lehmann explains their relationship by introducing two theoretical approaches. The first is concerned with the nature of conflicts, such as political, moral and social conflicts. In this context, he calls attention to Hegel's notion of *sittlichkeit* which he translates in terms of individual consciousness and publicly known rules. A double existence of *sittlichkeit* conditions the possibility of *conflict* between 'the principle of justice as a rational political guiding norm and the uncompromising desire of individuals to live in a way that they deem to be authentic to their culture'.[306] Lehmann associates this type of conflict with drama and questions its relevance. The second approach concerns the *opposition* of tragic experience to all ethico-political perception. Apropos, Lehmann writes, 'even if it may assume the form of a political fight, tragic experience as such takes place beyond any moral, ethical or political — and even any rational — consideration'.[307] In other words, tragic experience is the unconditional affirmation of life in transgression, in pain, suffering and loss; it is a matter of desire and passion, but not of representation. Drawing upon Kant's notion of the beautiful, he suggests that the affective experience of life as overstepping of all sense, morals, or the limits of the self, leads to harmony.[308] This observation guided Lehmann to the conclusion that tragic experience articulates the encounter of the aesthetic and the real in terms of a disruptive and destructive force working within the self.[309]

In the context of mass social movements, protests and grassroots — from which Lehmann departs in order to envisage the political gesture of theatre — a post dramatic politics of perception designates the possibility of the immediate access to the real, to the being of the object, through transgression, which enables tragic experience within the

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[305] *Ibid.*, 443.

[306] Lehmann, "A Future for Tragedy?," 96.

[307] *Ibid.*, 93.

[308] Lehmann, *Tragedy*, 63.

[309] Lehmann, "A Future for Tragedy?," 93.

self.[310] Envisaged as transgression, the postdramatic politics of perception suggests the expulsion of conflict that allows a view on any totality, including performance practice, in all its sidedness — taking into consideration tensions between the multiplicity of relations, between all 'sides', and actions and reactions that construct these relations through discursive mediations. This approach simplifies reciprocal relationship between differential positions to the level of causality, to the relation between cause and effect, or base and superstructure. By these means, it opens up a possibility for grounding particular canons and laws that have to be respected. What is then called 'the political' in postdramatic theatre is hence reduced to eclecticism, to the one-sided interpretative 'perspective on life', or to the relationship of opposites which relinquishes the tradition of dialectics. A view on the political in terms of eclecticism suggests the production of the abundance of empty and abstract concepts independent of the hegemonic social relations and conflicts that they imply.

Lehmann's exclusively autonomous, eclectic and affective approach to theatre suggests that the postdramatic politics of perception belongs to the politico-philosophical project of absolute democracy. This argues a horizontal politics and withdrawal from the state and representational norms that they have established. Reducing the understanding of the political as a battlefield, struggle and conflict, to transgression of all limits, we are inclined to conclude that Lehmann's politics of perception are post-hegemonic politics, or, in his own terms, politics of *states* rather than *actions*.[311] It is precisely the exclusivity of the affective, self-affirmative, post-representational and horizontal approach that renders tragedy an autonomous and one-sided object of art and postdramatic theatre post-hegemonic.

the return of drama:
redrawing the limits between the audience and the performances

As demonstrated, a postdramatic politics of perception argues that performance practice is political only when it relegates what we observed to be the core of the political: the dimension of conflict between differential positions that draws limits between 'us' and 'them', between one entity and the other. But, once we have acknowledged that conflict is inherent in societies and that it is a prerequisite for the pluralism of positions and,

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[310] We should not forget semiotic phenomenology, which does not examine perception exclusively as an experiental activity stimulated by the sheer presence of objects; it rather explores perception together with semiotics and linguistics. In the view of semiotic phenomenology, as linguists and phenomenologists Antonio Bondi and Francesco la Mantia suggest, 'it is the semiotic practices that generate and organise experience'. See: Antonino Bondi and Francesco la Mantia, "Phenomenology and Semiotics: Crossing Perspectives," *Metodo. International Studies in Phenomenology and Philosophy*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2015): 13.

[311] Lehman, *Postdramatic*, 68.

consequently, for the articulation of their conflicting relations into a *concordia discors*, we have to admit that the political and 'revolutionary' dimension of art, including performing arts, cannot mobilise social change by relinquishing the other, transcendenting all limits and withdrawing from the existing politics and representational norms. Therefore, we should envisage the strategies of engagement and co-constitution in performance theory.

This task requires a redefinition of the meaning of post-Brechtian theatre as it is envisaged by Lehmann. Lehmann defined postdramatic theatre in relation to Brechtian theatre,[312] despite significant differences between these two traditions. As we have observed above, postdramatic theatre conceives of performance in terms of eclecticism, in terms of the informal aggregation and adequation of unitary abstract concepts and canons beyond representation and beyond conflicts.[313] For its part, Brechtian theatre approaches performances in terms of dialectics, in terms of the evaluation of the struggle between antagonistic and hegemonic relations through representation. Both views claim to designate the political dimension of theatre. With the distinction between eclecticism and dialectics on mind, that we observed a few moments before, I would like to suggest that, rather than the postdramatic eclecticism, the Brechtian materialist dialectic stands for the return of the political, precisely by putting a focus on antagonism and struggle against hegemonic politics.

For instance, the *fabel*, a dramaturgical technique developed by Brecht, is derived precisely from the historical materialism and the dialectical method that it implies. Writing about *fabel* in *A Short Organum for the Theatre* (1948) Brecht noted: '[F]or it is what happened between people that provides them with all the material that they can discuss, criticize, alter.'[314] Fabel is then 'the complete fitting together of all the gestic incidents, embracing the communications and impulses'.[315] In fact, *fabel* analyses the embodiment of the character's attitude, of the *gestus*, with respect to the character's *praxis* — struggle with social, political, economic, historical, semiotic and other factors, that underline the means of production in which the character is inscribed.[316] If we acknowledge that the moment of inscription of the character within the web of different

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[312] *Ibid.,* 33.

[313] Adequation (fr. *l'adéquation*) is a term proposed by Spinoza. It designates parallelism of positions. Performance scholar Bojana Cvejić uses this term to suggest a movement beyond the dualism of positions. On *adéquation* in Cvejić's theory see chapter 2. On Spinoza, see: Benedict De Spinoza, *Ethics*, trans. E. Curley (London, Penguins, 1996), IID4.

[314] Bertolt Brecht, "A Short Organum for the Theatre," in *Brecht on Theatre. The Development of an Aesthetic*, ed. and trans. John Willet (London: Methuen, 1986), 200.

[315] *Ibid*., 14.

[316] Taking into consideration the complexity of the meaning of 'fabel', I have decided to keep the word in its original German language, without translating it into English as a 'story'. To read Brecht's text that I referred to in German, see: Bertolt Brecht, "Kleines Organon fur das Theater," in *Brecht Versuche*, ed. Elisabeth Hauptmann, 27/32, 12 (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1958): 109-140.

factors is the moment of representation, then the political significance of Brechtian theatre lies in the aspiration to point at the struggle of different social associations with the given order and to challenge the means of production and norms of representation advocated by dominant politics. Thus, in contrast to postdramatic theatre which acknowledges transgression within the self as a phenomenon of a sphere where bodily awareness, sentiment, mental shock and thinking may articulate the sense of disruption, Brechtian theatre recognises conflict and struggle to be inherent to societies and aims at examining complex systems of antagonistic relations between different social associations dramatised by means of productions. What I want to stress is that in Brechtian theatre priority is not given to the consciousness of the subject, but to the other, or otherness, situated outside the subject. The accountability of otherness is a condition for the audience to put into question the concreteness of any representation. Such is the drama that Brechtian theatre evokes.

Nevertheless, Lehmann transformed the dialectic of Brechtian theatre of representing into the eclecticism of post-Brechtian theatre of presenting. For the most part, Lehmann's intention was to remove the dialectic from theatre on the grounds that dialectics 'represent a certain complexation of the dramatic situation, the paradox of the plot, whose content ultimately appears in and through conceptual interpretation'.[317] According to Lehmann, the audience in dramatic theatre is an orderly arrangement of the onlookers that may simply identify with the characters on the stage and interpret performance. Then, in order to enable the participation of the audience in performance, he replaces representation as a dramatic-dialectical model of conflict with the sheer presence of the performers. The consequence of this tactic is the transformation of the relationship between the audience and the performers. The audience ceases to be mere onlookers and becomes participants in the performance, equally present as the performers or actors on the stage. Now, instead of simply seeing the characters on the stage, the audience affectively experiences the performers and, consequently, their own presence. This is how the sheer presence of the performers addressing the audience becomes a matter of transgression, by overstepping the boundary between the stage and the audience, and by provoking the overstepping of limits within the self. It is this what characterises tragedy and tragic experience.[318] Accordingly, tragedy is the affirmation of life in transgression, in suffering, pain and loss. When tragic experience is envisaged in affective terms — Lehmann claims — then it stands for a disruptive force working within the self. This is where the political gesture in tragedy emerges. The post-Brechtian sensibility becomes tragic experience precisely in an attempt to present material — rather than to represent it

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[317] Lehmann, *Tragedy*, 50.

[318] *Ibid*., 43.

— by depriving praxis from the moment of struggle with the other.[319]

Now, if presence acknowledges the theatre's political gesture through tragedy which enables transgression and disruption, then the questions that arise are: what is the effect of the moment of disruption, and, how the affects provoked among the audience become sublimated and articulated into cultural values? I would like to suggest that in the hope to dissolve the dialectic, Lehmann produces the eclecticism that simplifies the relationship between the affects and the modes of their culturally acceptable values to a binary formulation of cause and effect, to — what a philosopher and cultural critic Walter Benjamin might call — a sterile dichotomy of form and content.[320] As I indicated before, the causal type of relationships manifests in the production of the abundance of free-floating concepts as facts and the reduction of the politics of perception to eclecticism, to the one-sided interpretative perspective on life. Lehmann's theory entices us to conclude that the affective experience of the immediate access to the real, to the being of the object or subject, reduces the cognitive capacity of the audience to the possibility of rationalising and extrapolating performance practice to the level of aggregation of self-founded and self-enclosed concepts that are deduced from formal structures. The consequence of this approach is that theatre is perceived as an event of dramaturgy and dance as an event of choreography without questioning the natures of dramaturgy and choreography as the articulating social practices.[321]

What the belief in the immediate access to the being of the object through presentness thus overlooks or obliterates is that every social configuration, including theatre and performance, is historically constructed through discourse, understood as a

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[319] Theatre scholar David Barnett observed Heiner Müller's critique of Brecht's meta-narrate of Marxism. He asserts that Müller's critical view on Brecht had for a goal to remove the 'ideological gaze' from dialectics as a 'false gaze'. Barnett observes that Lehman's theory further supports and develops this endeavour. Accordingly, he writes that '[t]he post-Brechtian sensibility thus touches that of the postdramatic in that material tends to be present rather than represented'. Barnett's thought enables us to recognise that precisely at this point the dialectic stops and, instead, the eclecticism starts taking place. To escape eclecticism, we shall further suggest, it is necessary to rearticulate ideology rather than to remove it from dialectics. This is so, because ideology helps in organising people, in establishing an order. Ideology, as Gramsci pointed out, is historically necessary and has a psychological dimension. It is a material construction, not an abstraction. See: David Barnett, "Performing Dialectics in an Age of Uncertainty, or: Why Post-Brechtian ≠ Postdramatic," in *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political*, eds. Karen Jürs-Munby, Jerome Carroll and Steve Gilles (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 47-66; See also: Gramsci, *Selections*, 375- 399.

[320] Benjamin wrote that the concept of technique that allows materialist analysis 'represents the dialectical starting-point from which the sterile dichotomy of form and content can be surmounted'. From the point of view of dialects, to overcome this sterile dichotomy means, we can suggest, to affirm content in terms of material forces that are inconceivable without ideologies or orderly constructions that stand for the 'form'. Walter Benjamin, "The Author as Producer," lecture at the Institute for the Study of Fascism (Paris, 27 April, 1934), in *Art and Theory 1900-2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, eds. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Wiley-Blackwell, 2002), 485.

[321] On the difference between performances as events and performances as agonistic social practices see chapter 6.

system of linguistic and extralinguistic relations.[322] Discourse does not stand for the self-foundational conceptual practice of speech, writing and speaking, that is for the production of the abundance of abstract and autonomous concepts deduced from the presence of the elements of theatre and dance as aesthetic events. Drawing upon Wittgenstein's writing on language discourse becomes the system of relations materialised through language games: through language and actions within which language is entwined, that is, representing the moments of theatre and dance in the presence of the other. This implies that representation does not relate a rational, self-foundational project of stasis, but a self-assertive political project of action which requires the other. It points that what we call objects of art are in fact discursive and political constructions, or representations, always already constituted in an encounter between different entities on a nominal level.[323]

Now, the encounter between the audience and the performers in theatre points at the relational construction of performances. Every performance is created among the production team, realised in the presence of the audience, and always envisaged in relation to different social, political, economic and semiotic discourses that are shared among the audience members within a particular and delimited cultural and geopolitical context. The delimited construction of performance on any of its stages of evolvement indicates that each performative totality is a contingent creation, partially fixed in a particular network of relations by the principle of exclusion of other relational choices. As I emphasised above, the principle of exclusion entails the ever-present possibility of conflict between differential positions, between included and excluded. What I am suggesting is that in theatre conflict relates the encounter between the audience and the performances. This means that drama ceases to be a mere matter of the plot, of the closed system relating the conflict between the characters on the stage, and becomes a form of the relationship between the audience and the performers.

If we agree with Butler that 'actors are always already on the stage, within the terms of the performance',[324] then we cannot fail to recognise that the experience of performance is based on acts that are always already symbolically represented by the

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[322] Analysing ritual dance, a linguist and performance theorist Leda Martins pointed out that neither gesture nor voice stand for the embodiment of sheer presence. According to Martins, voice is also always symbolically constructed. Her argument challenges Lehmann's and Erika Fischer-Lichte's performance theories. Leda Martins, "Rite, Performance and Knowledge: Memory Times", lecture, the IFTR conference Sao Paulo (10 July 2017). On Fischer-Lichte, see: Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008).

[323] It was Hannah Arendt who wrote that 'political thought is representation. I form an opinion by considering a given issue from different viewpoints, by making present to my mind the standpoints of those who are absent; that is, I represent them.' This is a question of 'being and thinking in my own identity where actually I am not'. In: Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future. Six Exercises in Political Thought* (London: Penguin Books, 2006), 542 -543.

[324] Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," in *Theatre Journal*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (Dec., 1988), 526.

principle of exclusion. Thus envisaged, drama, or conflict of positions, or tension between different positions, enables the materialisation of different possibilities, such as the possibility of the audience to critically engage with performance and to evaluate and call into question the concreteness of performed representation. A dialectical view on performances implies that representation, which always fails to grasp and reproduce the exteriority in its full totality, allows critical moments of disruption and articulation to take place.[325] Accordingly, we could say that precisely the moment of representation mobilises affects and passions among the audience and opens up possibility for ruptures to occur within existing representations. This approach does not call for the transgression of all limits between the audience and the performers, but rather for the continuous operation of redrawing the limits between them.

A redrawing of the limits may be envisaged in many different ways, whenever the tension between the audience and the performers is exposed. For instance, when the movements of aggression function as a choreographing system, like in Arkadi Zaides' performance *Archive* (2014), then the audience can react to the representation that is performed and envisage how can people co-move through the different choreographic scores of living.[326] Similarly, when Mette Edvardsen in her performance *Black* (2011) uses language to call into the realm of representation the objects that are absent, she stresses the indispensable moment of exclusion in the construction of any objectivity and the indispensable moment of drawing the limits between representation and its exteriority.[327] Similarly, Marlene Monteiro Freitas' *Bacantes - Prelúdio Para Uma Purga* / Bacchantes – Prelude to a Purge (2017) points out that societies are constructed in an encounter between the Dionysian and the Apollonian ideals, between the formless and the form-giving, the disorder and the order, or the individual principles and the collective demands.[328] These performances demonstrate the need for questioning the order of terms, images, movements, gestures, and attitudes, mobilising the audience to constitute them in alternative ways. In the overtly different performances, such as the Cuban artist Tania Bruguera's *Tatlin's Whisper #5* (2008) — in which performers as policemen on horses move through the Tate Modern's Turbine Hall Bridge in London and control the movement of the audience,[329] or the Brazilian artist Marcelo Evelin's *Batucada* (2014) —

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[325]   Similarly, Peggy Phelan wrote that "because of representation's supplemental excess and its failure to be totalising, close readings of the logic of representation can produce psychic resistance and, possibly, political change." Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked. The Politics of Performance* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 2.

[326] On Arkadi Zaides' *Archive*, see chapter 1.

[327] On Mette Edvardsen's *Black*, see chapter 2.

[328] On Marlene Monteiro Freitas' *Bacantes - Prelúdio Para Uma Purga*, see chapter 3.

[329]   On Tania Bruguera's *Tatlin's Whisper #5,* see, for instance: André Lepecki, "Choreopolice and Choreopolitics: or, the Task of the Dancer," in *TDR: The Drama Review*, Volume 57, Number 4, Winter 2013 (T220): 13-27.

in which nude and masked performers walk, run and play instruments in a staged celebration of human community and protest and hence enable the audience to decide how to move, either by following, joining, or leaving the site of the performance, the limits between the performers and the audience are redrawn in another ways.[330]

What all these performances share — despite the form of participation of the audience, which is indirect in case of Zaides, Edvardsen and Freitas, and direct in case of Bruguera and Evelin — is the will to explore the ways people organise relations and the consequences of organising relations in certain ways. They also engage us to think how relations between the people might be reorganised in a way that is suitable to the plurality of positions that constitute the social realm; how to articulate the antagonistic relations constructed along the line that separates 'us' from 'them' as enemies, in an agonistic configuration of relations constituted along the lines that separate 'us' from 'them' as adversaries. In other words, these performances point at the struggle for the constitution of alternative, striated public spaces. This is how, I would suggest, the operation of redrawing the limits between the audience and the performers enables the unfolding of discursive rearticulations and the possibility of the articulation of one into another position, thus transforming the audience as onlookers into engaged citizens, or their affects into symbols, or presence into representation, antagonism into agonism, horizontality into verticality, or counter-hegemony into hegemony. In these processes, instead of immediately measuring behaviour modifications, we encounter, as Loren Krugger suggests, the complex creation of democratic actors.[331] Allowing the mutual engagement of differential positions, the operation of representation provides the possibility for the ever-present dialectic to unfold.[332]

With this in mind, it is important to emphasise that the dialectic may not be reduced to a dialectical negation of a linguistic by its extralinguistic. Equally, it cannot be reduced to a dialectical negation of an interiority by its constitutive exteriority, and vice versa. Mouffe makes an important remark for understanding dialectics. She writes that:

> [i]n order to be a true outside, the outside has to be incommensurable with the inside, and at the same time, the condition of emergence of the latter. This is only possible if what is "outside" is not simply the outside of a concrete content but something which puts into question "concreteness" as

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[330] On Marcelo Evelin's *Batucada*, see, for instance: Chantal Mouffe, "Marcelo Evelin. Dance as an Agonistic Encounter," in *Time We Share: Reflection on and through Performing Arts*, eds by Daniel Blanga-Gubbay and Lars Kwakkenbos, 246-254 (Brussels: Kunstenfestivaldesarts & Mercatorfonds, 2015).

[331] Loren Kruger, "Democratic Actors and Post-Apartheid Drama: Contesting Performance in Contemporary South Africa", in *Contesting Performance. Global Sites of Research*, eds. Jon Mckenzie, Heike Rooms & C. J. W.-L. Wee, (London, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 239.

[332] At this point, we should be reminded that the sheer operation of presenting has for the aim to decrease the understanding of art as discursive practice.

such.[333]

Once this is acknowledged, struggles and polemics can not be any more reduced to the dialectical reversals. This means that the dialectical outside is not a constitutive opposite — as Lehmann writes — nor a constitutive contradiction — as David Barnett suggests — to the concreteness of any kind of closure.[334] The dialectical outside, that is the other, is a symbol of impossibility of any construction. It points at the hegemonic, conflictual, struggling and polemical character of the relations between differential positions. The political dimension of post-Brechtian theatre should be defined precisely in accordance to the possibility of the audience to evaluate and put into question the concreteness of any representation.

tragedy and drama

When every social practice is envisaged with respect to the dialectic — as a relationship discursively formed at the point of intersection of paradoxically differential entities in struggle — then post-Brechtian may not be envisaged as postdramatic as Lehmann proposes, nor it should be thought as a variant of postdramatic as Shannon Jackson suggests.[335] Simply, the operation of transgression that postdramatic theatre implies cannot be understood as the only experience of the political in theatre. For this reason, it is necessary to restructure the relationship between postdramatic and Brechtian and redefine the notion of the political.

As we have seen, for postdramatic theatre the political gesture of tragedy is a matter of transgression in suffering which enables an immediate access to the being of the object through the desire of individuals for being-in-themselves. In this view, tragedy may articulate social and political change by exorcising hegemony, limits, conflicts and representations by reducing relations between differential position to eclecticism. For Brechtian theatre the political dimension is the consequence of conflict or drama between paradoxically differential positions that allow a mediate access to the being through the peoples' desire for the lack-of-being. Once it is acknowledged that desire is constitutive to lack — thus pointing at the impossibility of achieving the absolute control over one's existence, over being-in-itself — then it has to be recognised that the experience of the

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[333] Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London: Verso, [2000] 2009), 12.

[334] David Barnett, "Performing Dialectics", 47-66.

[335] Shannon Jackson, "Postdramatic Labour in the Builders Association's Allandeen," in *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political*, eds. Karen Jürs-Munby, Jerome Carroll and Steve Gilles (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 170.

being is attainable only through that which lacks, that is, in relation to the other.[336] Strictly speaking, the experience of the being of the object, including art, is the result of an encounter that may be obtained only through discursive mediations.[337]

Seeing that, I want to suggest the view on the political that differs from the affective, self-affirmative, post-representational, horizontal and one-sided approach embraced by postdramatic theatre. From the point of view that I advocate, theatre of drama grasps the dimension of the political by acknowledging the mutual engagement and co-constituency of differential positions.[338] In this encounter, the desire for the immediacy of affects always articulate into discursive mediation. As Lacan emphasised, '[i]t is only once it is formulated, named in the presence of the other, that desire, whatever it is, is recognised in the full sense of the term.'[339] This means that the representational approach to theatre triggers a dramatisation of tragic experience of the suffering self, by means of sublimation and articulation of the subject's initial affective needs into *praxis*, into the network of social relations and concrete demands. By this mean, onlookers become active citizens.

If the role of tragedy, as Lehmann argues, consists in 'reaching and overstepping [...] the limits of a given cultural intelligibility', then the political dimension of tragedy may be perceived only in relation to drama, as its constitutive and counterpart, putting into question the concreteness of representation through the strategies of engagement of the audience — through their reactions and actions. The co-constitutive character of tragic to dramatic should be seen as internal to theatre, because the dialectic never serves the idealisation of tragic nor the idealisation of dramatic, precisely because of the ontological status of lack. The mutual engagement and co-constitution of tragic and dramatic allows the operation of articulation to take place. What I am suggesting is to conceive the articulation of needs into demands, the real into representation, initial immediacy into discursive mediation, or individual affectivity into collective struggle, as performative practices that render the political dimension of theatre within the context of protest movements; as dramaturgy and choreography of articulation that transform the initial horizontality of individual affectivity into the horizon of vertical representations of

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[336] On lack of being see chapter 2.

[337] On distinction between a desire for being-in-itself and a desire for the lack-of-being, see chapter 2.

[338] Performance scholar Adrian Heathfield asserts that dramaturgy is a discursive practice constructed through the encounter of paradoxes; it is always occupied with language and communal meaning making, and intends to resolve paradoxes. However, Heathfield's theoretical approach does not support paradox. Despite his claims, it suggests a possibility of a resolution of paradoxes in superabundance, in a plurality of representations co-existing in harmony. 'Dramaturgy without a dramaturge' should be understood in this framework. In: Adrian Heathfield, "Dramaturgy Without a Dramaturg," in *Rethinking Dramaturgy. Errancy and Transformation*, eds. Manuel Bellisco and María José Cifuentes (Centro Párraga / CENDEAC, 2010).

[339] Jacques-Alain Miller, ed. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan. Book I: Freud's Papers on Technique 1953–1954*, trans. John Forrester (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1991), 183.

collective struggles against dominant hegemony. The politics of perception should be envisaged precisely in terms of counter-hegemony: as a struggle between the vertical nature of representation and the horizontal axis of its contiguity that may articulate alternative politics.

Performing Alternative Collectives[340]

The post-democratic condition, which silences various people's voices, and the growth of the right-wing populism, which stigmatises people on the level of race, gender, or colour, prompted some thinkers to envisage innovative projects of democracy that would give rise to alternative views on subjectivities and collectives. Post-operaists focus on the post-fordist techniques of production and the workers' resistance to the capitalist quest for the acceleration of modes of production. On these grounds, performance scholar and philosopher Bojana Kunst advocates strategies of avoidance of existing politics and representational forms. In her theory, alternative subjectivities and communities evolve from the temporal dimension of duration — waiting and less work. Nevertheless, the studies of the political scientists, Robert O'Brien, Anne Marie Goetz, Jan Aart Scholte and Marc Williams stress the significance of the post-fordist techniques of domination in constructing societies, by observing the engagement of social movements with the multilateral economic institutions. The accountability of both post-fordist coercive techniques, those of production and those of domination, allowed me to widen Kunst's demand for a workers' resistance to capitalism through the strategies of avoidance, with a struggle of different collectives against capitalism by means of engagement. I will claim that the strategies of engagement permit a shift from the pre-established perspective on subjectivities in terms of class -, gender -, or race - based identities, towards the relational forms of identifications. Drawing upon political philosophers Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, I will demonstrate that the relational forms of identification enable performances to construct subjectivities, communities and politics, in alternative, co-constitutive terms that are much more relevant for the idea of a plural society. This view does not privilege a temporal dimension, but takes into account both temporality and spatiality. As we will see, Rimini Protokoll's performance *100% (Brussels)* gives rise to this argument and allows a reflection on this idea.

Bojana Kunst:
performing resistance to the capitalist techniques of production

In her book, *Artist at Work,* Kunst's critique of representation in art springs from

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340 Changed, this chapter will be published as: Goran Petrović Lotina, "Performing Alternative Collectives," in *Performing Ethos: International Journal of Ethics in Theatre & Performance* (Bristol: Intellect, 2017).

philosopher Maurizio Lazzarato's thesis that the production of subjectivity is at the core of the capitalist work processes. Kunst writes that 'art and capitalism have especially in common [...] the dangerous and seductive closeness of the appropriation of life'.[341] By appropriating life art, like capitalism, contributes to the experimentation with subjectivity and to the production of subjectivity, through the processes of standardisation of human social, affective, cognitive and other life forms common to mankind.[342] This also means that movement in dance and performance, collaborative relations between the performers and the audience, as well as the visibility of art and artists, are also centred around the techniques of production of subjectivity, by means of standardisation. Drawing upon philosopher Paolo Virno, Kunst observed the processes of standardisation in art along the transformation of the organisation of production processes from the industrial phase of capitalism, or fordism, to the post-industrial phase of capitalism, or post-fordism. In *A Grammar of the Multitude,* Virno envisaged the transition from fordism to postfordism as a consequence of changing the organisation of production processes and the role of work. Within this change, the means of production ceased to be reduced to machines and started to consist of linguistic-cognitive competencies inseparable from living labor.[343] Accordingly, Kunst writes that the essence of contemporary production moved the focus from the synchronisation of the body with the machine, onto the exploitation of constant movement and creative potentials of individuals to produce capital.[344] Kunst's assertion implies that by means of exploitation of human potentials to think, imagine, communicate and collaborate through movement, performances contribute to the ways of adding economic value to the physical and linguistic-cognitive abilities of the humans and hence to the homogenisation of society. When movement — including everyday spontaneous and flexible movements — is put at the core of the production of subjectivity and, consequently, capital, then dance becomes politically powerless. Therefore, in order to regain its emancipatory potential, Kunst suggests that dance, and art more generally, have to rethink the modes of work and subjectivity through spontaneous and flexible movement, and to preserve the potentiality of profanation that can return everyday movement to 'common use'. For this to happen, art has to avoid and resists obstacles,[345] such as capital, and hence artist 'needs to slow down and wait'.[346] At this point Kunst

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341 Bojana Kunst, *Artist at Work* (Winchester, Washington: Zero Books, 2015), 21.

342 *Ibid.*, 19-20.

343 Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude* (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004), 61.

344 Kunst, *Artist*, 111.

345 *Ibid.*, 116.

346 *Ibid.*, 122.

introduced a temporal dimension of duration as a moment subversive to capital.[347]

Kunst's theory suggests that duration has a subversive potential upon production processes that enable actualisation and finalisation by means of projective temporality. She suggests that the era of fordism recognised the distinction between the work time and leisure time, while in post-fordism that dividing line between work and non-work became erased. This is how the post-fordist processes of production brought the acceleration and homogenisation of time, adding economic value to temporality. Nevertheless, the entering of duration in performance revealed that our perception of time is socially constructed and economically conditioned. In contrast to projective temporality which fosters actualisation, duration 'places us into a state of pure potentiality, into what is still supposed to come'.[348] Drawing upon a philosopher Giorgio Agamben, Kunst emphasises that one becomes aware of one's own potential when potentiality is not actualised. Duration, thus, allows us to understand that 'being is potentially possible without self-actualisation'.[349] For that matter, duration enables another way of understanding temporality and, consequently, the notion of community and relations between the humans within it.

Kunst's reformulation of the notion of community springs from philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy's redefinition of the notion of common and Agamben's understanding of profanation. Nancy wrote that 'the community that becomes *a single* thing (body, mind, fatherland, Leader...) necessarily loses the *in* of being-*in*-common. Or, it loses the *with* or the *together* that defines it. It yields its being-together to a being *of* togetherness'.[350] Accordingly, common is not dominated by finality nor active transformation; it does not stand for any kind of totality in the harmonious space and time, wherein the distinction between work and leisure is erased and a future common goal determined in advance; nor, it stands for the representation of the order of community having something in common. Common, Kunst proposes, 'is merely the ordinary state of being together, deprived of all historical tasks'.[351] When common is understood in these terms, then community enables a constant dispossession of collaboration and a possibility for the subject to establish an attitude. In such a community there is no exchange, no identity, no economy, no universality, no otherness or anything else to be shared; in fact, in such a community,

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[347] *Ibid.*, 130.

[348] *Ibid.*, 131.

[349] *Ibid.*,

[350] Jean-Luc Nancy, "Inoperative Community," in *Theory and History of Literature*, ed. Peter Connor, trans. Peter Connor, Lisa Garbus, Michael Holland, and Somona Sawhney, Vol 76 (Mineapolis, Oxford: University of Minesottra Press, 1991), *xxxix*.

[351] Kunst*, Artist*, 92.

Kunst proposes, 'there is no common being'.[352] There is only "I", or as Nancy suggests, a 'strange being-the-one-with-the-other to which we are exposed'.[353] When community is envisaged in these terms, it discloses collaboration which exploits human potentialities to be part of immaterial work. Drawing upon Agamben's notion of profanation, Kunst asserts that this acknowledgment reverses procedure, allowing a profanation of collaboration, and hence returns the human potentiality to collaborate to 'common use'. It is this that Agamben probably had in mind when he wrote that profanation occurs through contact, 'a touch that disenchant[s] and returns to use what the secret separated and petrified'.[354] As he explains, through contact profanation 'returns to common use the spaces that power sized'.[355] The theory behind such view is that community is not united by representation, but by the temporal dimension of, what Kunst calls, meeting.[356] Meeting stands for a durational procedure capable of addressing a specific relationship with movement. Thus, it allows a profanation and/or dispossession of collaboration to emerge. In fact, as a post-representational and durational category, meeting opens up the space for understanding community in terms of potentiality of closeness which designates that which is *yet to come*. This, finally, 'means to belong to another temporal concept — potentiality'.[357]

The temporal concept of potentiality implies that the role of art, including dance, should be to interfere the ways of being under the modes of work that places movement, as one of life forces, at the centre of production. If, today, subjectivity is organised as a unity of everyday movements through the intensification of collaboration, then art, and dance consequently, have to emphasise the potentiality of profanation that can return collaboration to 'common use'. In other words, if contemporary techniques of production stand for the return to the field of secret by radically proliferating opportunities and identities in a homogenised time and space by means of exploitation of collaboration, art then should seek the return to the field of common by recovering opportunities and identities in the time of potentiality through the means of profanation of collaboration.

This approach conceives of art works in terms of intermediation, that is in-betweenness, which Kunst calls the 'third condition'.[358] The third condition arranges art

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[352] *Ibid.*, 96.

[353] Nancy, *Community*, xxxix.

[354] Giorgio Agamben, *Profanations* (New York: Zone Books, 2007), 74.

[355] *Ibid.*, 77.

[356] Kunst, *Artist*, 97.

[357] *Ibid.*, 98.

[358] *Ibid.*, 71.

between the audience and the artists. And, by this division, art returns the relationship between the audience and the artists to common. This move does not only bring back the symbolic role of art that enables it to point at the hierarchical organisation of society and that 'any kind of work ... is part of the constellations of power';[359] it also permits the shift from the exclusivity of present time and the obsession with the future time to 'the time yet to come'. This means that in intermediation there is no projective temporality which sets in advance otherness, identity, opportunities, or the lack, that produce economic value through collaboration. Kunst reminds us that 'the future is not related to actuality as a realisation of its "becoming"' through collaboration.[360] This is why 'we need to think about the future of collaboration in the rupture between an impossible refusal of the collaborative process in which we are already implemented, and the possibility of genuine exchange, which has yet to happen.'[361]

Following the logic of intermediation, performance may also subvert the institutional mechanisms that exteriorise movement. Kunst writes that 'the ability to move may resist the economic and social organisation of the relational aspect of movement and open up other embodied ways of moving together that continuously create flows of disturbances and affective persistence'.[362] She adds: 'with its various rhythms, movement can create tensions and put pressure on the seemingly smooth protocols of the contemporary capitalist world'.[363] What is accordingly necessary, is to envisage performances in the process of continuous avoidance of obstacles through duration. To justify the subversive potential of duration in performance, Kunst takes the Occupy movement as the examples of the ability of everyday movement to induce change. She writes that the protestors associated with the Occupy 'switched from disembodied networks and global movements to localised but connected forms of temporal persistence and endurance in certain places — to a durational search for new political embodiments'.[364] In that sense, the Occupy movement shows that the relationship between duration and movement enables waiting and looking at what is yet to come. Accordingly, Kunst writes: '[w]hile lasting, we wait for time to run out'.[365]

To further justify the subversive potential of duration in performance, Kunst looks

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[359] *Ibid.*, 49.

[360] *Ibid.*, 85.

[361] *Ibid.*,

[362] *Ibid.*, 116.

[363] *Ibid.*, 117.

[364] *Ibid.*,

[365] *Ibid.*, 131.

into Igor Štromajer's and Brane Zorman's performance *Statika* (2007), a part of their project Ballettikka Internettikka (2001-1011), broadcasted from Lippo Centre in Hong Kong onto a big screen installed in the Hellerau Festival House in Dresden. Over thirty-five minutes the audience — or what remained of it, as, we are told, many left frustrated — witnessed a static robot (though in a position as if stepping forward) in front of the flickering city lights. The result of this performance is that the audience felt disposed and hence that it needs to slow down and wait.[366] Within this framework, according to Kunst, waiting becomes a pleasure that can create a radical political and antagonistic disruption and discloses 'the plurality of the ways in which life comes to being'.[367] New ways of solidarity come from laziness, which is associated with the durational processes, such as sleep and inactivity.[368]

struggle against the capitalist techniques of domination

We can agree with Kunst that the capitalist process of production plays an important role in the transition from fordism to post-fordism. We can also agree with Kunst that art may help us to envisage such a process of transition, including a transition from the neoliberal order of politics to the much more democratic order of politics that would imply different types of subjectivities and communities. Nevertheless, we have to acknowledge that the capitalist process of production does not consist only of *the techniques of production* which extract labour-power from people; it also consists of *the techniques of domination* imposing control over people and their practices.[369] It is by means of the techniques of domination that capital controls every aspect of life, human and non-human. I will demonstrate that the accountability of the techniques of domination triggers an alternative view on the transition from fordism to post-fordism, the construction of subjectivities and communities, and the role of art. Besides, it suggests that the strategies of engagement, rather than the strategies of avoidance and waiting, may transform the post-fordist politics and invigorate democracy.

In order to develop this thesis, I will turn to political scientists Robert O'Brien, Anne Marie Goetz, Jan Aart Scholte and Marc Williams. Their study, consolidated into the book *Contesting Global Governance* (2000), examines the relationship between the neoliberal multilateral institutions, such as The World Bank (WB), The World Trade Organisation

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[366] *Ibid.*, 119-122.

[367] *Ibid.*, 85.

[368] *Ibid.*, 176 - 193.

[369] We could say that the techniques of domination are recognised by Kunst, but not justified.

(WTO), and The International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the political forms of organisation of resistance, such as the women's movements, labour movements, and environmental social movements. The insight into their study brings forth the importance of the capitalist techniques of domination for understanding the political processes and conceiving alternative ways of living together. For the purpose of our query, I have particularly focused on the relationship between the World Bank and the women's movements.[370] In return, this example will allow me to envisage a possible way of transforming post-fordism, by suggesting alternative answers to some of the central questions of democratic politics, such as: how to organise across differences and how to articulate a struggle for the recognition of diversity of political interests and ethical concerns? What kind of subjectivities are to be constructed for the democratic societies? How are citizens to exercise their democratic rights? And, how may performance contribute to the construction of new collectives?[371]

To begin with, it is important to say something about multilateral economic institutions. In the post-war period the states were becoming increasingly influenced by international institutions and multinational corporations. The multilateral economic institutions that were established after 1944, such as the WTO, WB and IMF, have been gradually transforming the nature of governments, moving the concentration of power away from the nation states to the global economic institutions. The World Bank — 'the Bank' further in the text — is a useful case-study for understanding this process. This multilateral economic institution was established in 1944, as the biggest reconstruction and development bank. The decision making of the Bank is in the hands of the Board of executive directors appointed by twenty-five member states, with the US having a disproportionally strong influence on its work.[372] The main task of the Bank is to provide policy-based loans, predominantly in developing countries.[373] Thereby, with the neoliberal economic orthodoxy prescribing state withdrawal from the markets, the Bank has been gradually increasing loans to private sector, particularly from the early 1980s onwards.[374] As O'Brien, Goetz, Scholte and Williams' study shows, the private sector, least controlled

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[370] Robert O'Brien, Anne Marie Goetz, Jan Aart Scholte and Marc Williams' study also examines the relationship between the World Trade Organization and labour and the relationship between the Internationally Monetary Fund and social movements. In: Robert O'Brien, Anne Marie Goetz, Jan Aart Scholte and Marc Williams, *Contesting Global Governance, Multilateral Global Institutions and Global Social Movements* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[371] By moving focus from the workers' struggle to the women's movements, I do not want to undermine differences between them, but to emphasise: (1) the inconsistency of ultimate unity in any rationally constructed identity and (2) the co-constitutive relationship between the workers and the women.

[372] The Board of Directors consists of the World Bank Group President and 25 executive directors. Source: "Boards of Directors," The World Bank, accessed February 13, 2017, http://www.worldbank.org/en/about/leadership/directors.

[373] *Ibid*., http://www.worldbank.org/en/about/what-we-do

[374] O'Brien et al., *Governance*, 25.

by the Bank, registered great impact on labour, environmental, and gender standards.[375]

In order to limit the power of the private sector and to promote "good governance", from 1990s onwards the Bank started to 'encourage greater participation in national institutions of governance' stimulating global social movements 'to make the Bank's work more transparent and accessible to those most affected by it'.[376] That these intentions of the Bank did not stay only on the surface, testifies the direct implementation of the Bank's rhetoric at the World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, in 1995.[377] At this conference — composed of official delegates representing United Nations member states — a range of women's issues had been discussed, such as health care, education, employment and poverty. Besides, the conference launched 'The Women's Eye on the Bank' campaign which featured the Platform for Action putting forth demands for the increased participation of grassroots women in the Bank's economic policy making, such as the Bank's greater investment in women's education and health and the institutionalisation of a gender perspective in the Bank's policies and legal and human rights, among others.[378] The Bank's president at the time, James Wolfensohn, visited the conference, met women's civil society groups, and accepted 'The Women's Eye on the Bank' petition that called on the Bank to fully implement the Platform's demands and increase women's civil society involvement in the Bank's activities. As a consequence, the same year Wolfensohn set up the External Gender Consultative Group (EGCG) consisting of fourteen women that belonged to different women's movements worldwide to be consulted by the Bank on issues such as applying gender equity to work in private sector, or gender equity in the institutional change processes.[379] The next step the Bank took was the establishment of a Gender Sector Board (GSB) in 1997, concerned with family and poverty issues on global and national levels.[380] Under these circumstances, the Bank was seen not only to foster economic development, but also to encourage the development of social justice. At the same time, the global women's movements were seen as being able to challenge the Bank's economic policies by getting into a dialogue with local governments and by enabling the NGOs to have access to the Bank.

Nevertheless, these initiatives, the EGCG and the GSB, have been widely criticised by women's grassroots on the grounds that the selection of representatives is not

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[375] *Ibid*.,

[376] *Ibid*., 26.

[377] The conference took place from September 4 through September 15, 1995.

[378] "The World Bank External Gender Consultative Group," The World Bank, accessed February 13, 2017, http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/688621468325436522/The-World-Bank-external-gender-consultative-group.

[379] O'Brien et al., *Governance*, 43.

[380] *Ibid*., 44.

transparent, that selected women do not represent a variety of women's movements, that women's demands for change are not put into action, or that both EGCG and GSB do not have real influence on social justice, assigning value to women's work, or improving women's rights to the ownership, or access to education.[381] The incapacity of the Bank to institutionalise various gender demands O'Brien, Goetz, Scholte and Williams explain with the difference in policy discourses between the Bank's demands and women's demands. They have showed that while the Bank's neoliberal economic discourse departs from the level of macroeconomy, the feminist discourse begins at the level of microeconomics and a politics of decision making between women and men.[382] Furthermore, in contrast to the macroeconomic discourse which aims to improve market efficiency, the feminist discourse aims to improve gender or social justice.[383] In the neoliberal economic environment this means to stress the economic case for gender equity, rather than the ethico-political or feminist case for gender equity.

Further on, these authors wrote, that '[i]n interactions between gender equity advocates and the Bank, the terms of discourse are set by the Bank, as the more powerful interlocutor, obliging feminist critics to work within the framework of the neoliberal concern with efficiency.'[384] This assertion is very important for our study. It stresses the fact that the Bank's organisation of the process of production implies not only the *techniques of production* which are put in motion by means of flexibility, efficiency, capital accumulation and competition — as Lazzarato, Virno, Agamben and Kunst observed; it also implies *the techniques of domination* which are propelled by the hegemony of the neoliberal discourse by means of obligations, bureaucracy, date collection and surveillance, thus putting control over the women's ethico-political demands for social justice. Once the distinction between the capitalist techniques of production and the capitalist techniques of domination is acknowledged, we have to recognise that the capitalist process of production necessarily implies a struggle of women (women in particular, and people in general) against the capital's exercise of domination and sedimented neoliberal discourses.

Accordingly, we are able to conclude that both the Bank's aspirations to dominate and the women's struggle against the techniques of domination influence the ways the process of production is organised. This conclusion is supported by O'Brien, Goetz, Scholte and Williams' analysis which shows how gender equity concerns for girls' education and women's health influenced the Bank's investment in these spheres, thus affecting the organisation and expansion of productive forces on both sides. Similarly, the

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[381] *Ibid*., 46.

[382] *Ibid*., 47.

[383] *Ibid*.,

[384] *Ibid*., 48.

gender equity's concerns with poverty by gender had been addressed through the Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest (C-GAP), by offering micro-credit to the very poor whose borrowers were mainly women.[385] On the one hand, these examples show that the EGCG and C-GAP programmes are affected both by the neoliberal logic of capital and by the logic of women's ethico-political demands. On the other hand, they testify that capital is capable of appropriating women's discourses on equality, anti-hierarchy, decentralisation and autonomy, in order to secure mode of regulation of capital production. By means of appropriation of discourses on different women's demands, capital is putting control over the process of production in a variety of fields — economic, social, cultural, and political — thus strengthening its hegemonic position through network economy. This observation shows that capital is not only reactive; rather, both capital and social movements play a pro-active role in the process of transformation of productive forces, thus enabling the transition from fordism to post-fordism.

Taking into consideration that the Bank, within the framework of neoliberal hegemony, has power over discourses in a variety of sites, and that both capital and various social groups in struggle play a pro-active role in the transformation of one into another capitalist order, it is important to recognise that the contestation of the Bank's hegemonic neoliberal discourse requires an action of women's movements on many levels, wherever the relations of power between the Bank and women are articulated and wherever women are subordinated to capital. This requires a gradual sublimation of the multitudinous of women's ethico-political demands into a hegemony, and thus, as Mouffe suggests, 'launching a counter-hegemonic offensive in a variety of fields where the nodal points securing the new post-fordist mode of regulation of capitalism have been established'.[386] Similarly, O'Brien, Goetz, Scholte and Williams argue that in order to influence dominant politics the women's movements 'must seek constructive engagement and "entry" into institutional processes and cognitive frameworks'.[387] It goes without saying that this tactic calls upon a mobilisation of many women sectors in a unity constructed around a collective decision. On the one hand, the collective decision making process exceeds women's NGOs and includes trade unions, grassroots, and other kinds of social sectors in which women take part, such as those of the people of colour, LGBTQIA, indigenous, environmentalists, human rights advocates, rural groups, and many others. On the other hand, it implies the engagement of these sectors with the variety of social practices, movements, institutions and cognitive frameworks, respectively nationally and internationally, locally and globally, or unilaterally and multilaterally, that is, wherever the

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[385] *Ibid.*, 50.

[386] Chantal Mouffe, *Agonistics* (London: Verso, 2013), 73.

[387] O'Brien et al., *Governance*, 33.

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demands of women, and people more generally, are subordinated to capital.[388] Consequently, such a unity ceases to be symbolically defined by gender, and becomes symbolically defined by — what Gramsci calls — collective wills.

This view on unity suggests that the strategy of engagement of many women's movements in a struggle against the hegemony of capital may induce a transformation of the Bank's cognitive framework from 'the economic case for gender equity', which contributes to the instrumentalisation of women under the neoliberal discourse, to 'the ethico-political case for gender equity', which empowers women in decision making processes, improves women equality and, finally, replaces neoliberal gender discourse. The goal is to establish an order in which gender-based demands would not be any more perceived in terms of problems to be addressed through particular interventions and solutions offered by macroeconomic strategies. In fact, gender would be recognised in terms of relations present in all social levels, thus rendering gender differences in the domain of politics irrelevant. The closing of the moment of a pre-established harmonious unity in which essence — such as, gender, class, race and other markers of identity — underlines common, opens up a possibility for contest, struggle, anti-essentialism, heterogeneity and articulation.

The complexity of this strategy implies that the unity of many movements around a common cause — not a 'common good' — should not be sought in any privileged subject position.[389] Once we have acknowledged that the worker's identity is a symbolic unity discursively constructed on the basis of economic interests which are inserted in the relations of production, and that the women's identity is discursively constructed due to the division between the private and the public wherein economic interests play an important part, we are able to propose that the struggle against capitalism requires another form of a unity — the unity constituted out of the ensemble of social relations in which those of production and womanhood are only a few among many. Therefore, the worker's and women's unities should not be perceived as being rational, but rather as being relational. In fact, they should be conceived as the consequence of construction through identification of different subject positions with the set of ethico-political values that, consequently, unite them in the struggle against post-fordist forms of domination over 'workers' and 'women'. This explains, as Mouffe indicated, that 'as the result of the construction of nodal points, partial fixations can take place and precarious forms of identification can be established around the category "women" which provide the basis for a feminist identity and a feminist struggle'.[390] We can envisage in a similar way the

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[388] This approach goes beyond Hardt's and Negri's proposal that globalisation may be fought beyond the state, exclusively on the global level. More about, in: Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 310.

[389] The concept of 'common good' implies a pre-established common.

[390] Chantal Mouffe, *The Return of the Political* (London: Verso [1993] 2005), 87.

category of "workers", which embraces the workers' identity and the workers' struggle. It is the feminist identity and a feminist struggle that play a foundational role in the transformation of the politics when they act collectively, together with the workers and other human associations, to establish the power of the people over the subjugating politics.[391] This view on subjectivities in relational and collective terms, enables us to envisage alternative ways of living together.

from rational identities towards relational collectives

The insight into O'Brien, Goetz, Scholte and Williams' study draws our attention to the pro-active role that both capital and social movements play in transforming the process of production. Their study points out that the process of production in post-fordism, including the production of subjectivities, is dominated by the hegemony of the neoliberal discourse over social movements. Then, the insight into Mouffe's study of citizenship stresses the importance of the struggle of social movements against the hegemony of the neoliberal discourse. What the insights into these studies show is that social movements, just like other social practices, should not be occupied exclusively with resisting the capitalist institutions through the strategies of withdrawal, avoidance, or refusal. On the contrary, they suggest that various social practices should engage in a struggle against the capitalist institutions, in order to transform the domination of the market mode of capital and the (re)production of consumer identity, secured by the hegemony of the neoliberal discourse. The strategies of engagement bring an alternative perspective on the concepts of common and community, and the ways art, including performance, contributes to the construction of alternative ways of living together. The view that I will accordingly unfold differs from the one proposed by the thinkers of immanence, post-operaists and their followers, including Kunst.

As we have observed, Kunst suggests that the strategies of avoidance may disturb and transgress neoliberalism and, hence, offer alternative answers to the central questions of democratic politics, such as: how to organise across differences? How are citizens to exercise their democratic rights? What kind of subjectivities are there to be constructed? How can performance practice contribute to these processes? In order to answer these questions, Kunst developed the thesis asserting that the post-fordist demands for the acceleration of consumption put every aspect of movement — including the relations among people that everyday movements imply — at the core of the capitalist process of production. This proposition led her to the conclusion that in post-fordism both the artists and the audience are always at work. Then, in order to secure the moment of disruption of

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[391]   From this point the place of women's movements in revolution may be analysed.

the post-fordist condition, Kunst introduced a post-representational and temporal dimension of duration, capable of providing the workers with the potential to avoid the movement accelerated by capital. Accordingly, the strategy of avoidance can enable a disruption of the temporal dimension of acceleration by waiting, that is, by working less and being lazy. The community that is called into existence by this strategy is the community without identities, consisting out of the plurality and parallelism of positions of "I".

Nevertheless, despite an attempt to erase any form of identity by means of duration, Kunst's view remains trapped in the very problematic that she wants to challenge. By ascribing the political value to duration, Kunst pre-established identity on the level of a temporal dimension, now manifested by less work, laziness and waiting. The consequence of this strategy, which opposes the workers' identity associated with acceleration with the one associated with duration, is a creation of an essentialist identity. Once we acknowledge that the logic of opposition always brings the same, we have to recognise that it simply reconfirms the workers' identity that — in reversal — works slow and lazy. Consequently, the unity of people becomes designated by class identity that should be capable of disrupting the post-fordist process of production. Within this view, the citizenship becomes a class-differentiated model of democracy.

Kunst's thesis, which puts focus on the workers' resistance to the capitalist process of production, is to the large extent reminiscent of Marxism endorsing Marx's concept of 'labour-power as commodity'.[392] The concept of 'labour-power as commodity' designates the power of the people exclusively in terms of commodity whose use-value is labor. Accordingly, the power of the people is designated by class. And, when the relations of production are conceived entirely in terms of classes, then the unity in the workers' identity has to be understood as the unity constituted around economic interests. Within this view, workers' interests are considered to be objective because they are determined — as in Louis Althusser — in the last instance by economy. For that matter, all workers' demands, such as those for the higher wages, better working conditions, lower working hours, better health insurance, right on vacation, or less work, or slow work, are objectively justified. At stake here is what a cultural theorist Stuart Hall in his reading of philosopher Antonio Gramsci's critic of economism suggested: that 'immediate class interests' are challenged by a more structured analysis of 'economic class formations', that in fact simplifies social relations to a structurally transparent 'expressive totality'.[393] Expressive totality is objectivity 'in which every level of articulation corresponds to every

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[392] The concept 'labour as commodity' is mentioned for first time in Engels' *Principles of Communism* from 1847, and elaborated in Marx's *Capital* from 1867.

[393] Stuart Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity", in *Stuart Hall. Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies,* eds. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (London, New York: Routledge, [1996] 2003), 418.

other, and which is from end to end, structurally transparent'.[394] In fact, it reduces the complexity of social articulations, both vertical and horizontal, to a single line of determination.

Within this context, it becomes apparent that the imagined *authority of the working class* united around economic interests is incapable of representing the variety of other political demands, such as those of the women, immigrants, refugees, poor, people of colour, environmentalists, LGBT, anti-bio and anti-nuclear weapon activists, including demands that vary between the workers in the same or different company, country, or continent. In fact, the unity in the workers' identity overlooks that the process of production may not be determined exclusively by economics; the process of production is also the consequence of the various social practices. What the concept 'labour-power as commodity' thus omits is an important distinction between 'the productive inputs embodied in people capable of social practices and all those remaining inputs for whom ownership by capital is sufficient to secure the "consumption" of their productive services'.[395] This distinction entails that the process of production is the result of different inputs mobilised by distinct forces and, hence, that both social practices and capital play a pro-active role in the transformation of the process of production. At this point, we can distinguish the logic of determination governed by capitalist forces from the logic of political formation governed by that which Gramsci calls social forces.[396]

Once we have recognised that *both capitalist forces and social forces play a pro-active role in the transformation of the process of production,* the capitalist forces have to be redefined in terms that are accountable of social practices capable of confronting them. For that matter, the capitalist forces are not to be perceived only in terms of economic inputs that are manifested through *the post-fordist techniques of production*, such as the acceleration of production and time, the accumulation of capital, or the exercise of efficiency and flexibility. More importantly, the capitalist forces are also to be perceived in terms of *the post-fordist techniques of domination* over peoples' own social practices. The post-fordist techniques of domination are discursively set in motion by the various systems of control, such as mass media, education, religion, obligations, bureaucracy, surveillance, and so on. They relay on semiotics that, as Mouffe pointed out, govern

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[394] *Ibid.*,

[395] Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, "Structure and Practice in the Labour Theory of Value," *Review of Radical Political Economics*, vol.12, no. 4, p. 8, quoted in Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (London: Verso [1985] 2001), 78.

[396] In his notes on the difficulties of creating an accord among different urban forces in Italy, those in the North and those in the South, Gramsci pointed out not only that the hegemonic principle underlies societies, but that this principle defines social forces that operate as motor forces of the history of a country. Precisely Gramsci's concern with hegemonic forces serves as a pretext for Stuart Hall to envisage Gramsci's relevance for the study of race and ethnicity. On social forces see: Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, ed. Joseph A. Buttigieg, trans. Joseph A. Buttigieg and Antonio Callari, Vol I. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 133-135. On Hall's observation, see: Hall, "Race and Ethnicity".

affects and passions towards the creation of subjectivities capable of reproducing capital.[397]

Leading us towards the importance of the distinction between the techniques of production and the techniques of domination for the capitalist process of production, Laclau and Mouffe emphasised that 'labour process cannot exist without a series of relations of domination'.[398] Their assertion implies that the power of people cannot be fictionalised in terms of commodity whose use-value is labor. As demonstrated above, such a view produces the acceleration/duration dualism. On the contrary, the power of the people has to be envisaged in terms of social forces in a struggle against the domination of capital whose goal is to extract maximum labour from people by putting in motion discursive means of control over their social practices. The struggle of different subordinate groups against the hegemony of the neoliberal discourse advocates counter-hegemony that encompasses different economic and political unity than the one advocated by capital.[399]

common-cause of unity

When the process of production is understood as the consequence of the struggle of the people against the hegemony of the post-fordist techniques of domination over their practices — and not only as the result of the post-fordist techniques of production concerned with the competition and accumulation of capital, as Kunst's thesis suggests — then *subjectivities* can be envisaged in alternative ways. They can be envisaged beyond reductionism to any pre-established identity that has an ultimate ontological foundation, such as workers' identity, women's identity, or any other essentialist construction of identity. When subjectivities are understood exclusively in terms of either class, gender or race identities, then in turn, as I showed above, they preclude the possibility of constructing a unity that welds together various people's demands, or — to use Gramsci's terminology — various people's wills in a collective decision.[400] Drawing upon Gramsci, we can suggest that only when the unity is organised around a collective decision, the quantity of various wills becomes the quality of collective will, which is then capable of challenging the power of capital on every level it dominates people. Finally, this means, that political identities are the consequence of collective identifications; identifications

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[397] Mouffe, *Agonistics*, 90.

[398] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony*, 79.

[399] By this, I do not want to neglect the powerful role of economy in constructing societies. Rather, I want to point at economism as a sedimented reductionist theoretical approach that determines every social practice.

[400] Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, Vol III, ed. and trans. by Joseph A. Buttigieg (New York: Columbia University Press 2007), 164.

that stand for the articulating principle of popular wills in a collective decision. That being said, the operation of identification does not relate to the process of identifying with the economic interests, but, as Mouffe's theory suggests, with the set of ethical and political values that are shared among the people.[401] When subjectivities are approached in collective, relational and ethico-political terms, constructions such as women and workers do not in fact disappear. They stand for the feminist and labour struggles for the equality of women and workers on every level on which these identities are subordinated to the capitalist forces of domination — locally and globally, nationally and internationally, inside institutions and outside institutions.

Once subjectivities are understood in relational terms, we have to acknowledge that *community* can not stand for an exposure of the ordinary state of being underlying the essence. If that is the case, then community would be given by the biological nature of subjects. Neither community may stand for a meeting of concrete workers that are united by a temporal dimension of duration, seen as a form of resistance to the capitalist process of production. This view suggest that community is defined exclusively by the capitalist techniques of production, wherein economy and capitalist demands for efficiency and flexibility determine all social relations, including everyday movements and collaborative relations that they imply.[402] In contrast to these views, I am proposing a perspective on community in different terms: as a system of social relations symbolically articulated in a collective which is at the same time a locus of struggle of that collective against various techniques of domination. In such a community, people do not avoid existing identities, economies, universalities, otherness, collaborations and everything else that can be shared, as a post-operaists' approach to community proposes. On the contrary, in the community united around a collective decision people engage with all the existing categories that are dominated by capital, in order to transform the established order and to rearticulate it in another way.

This approach, does not intend to reduce community to the equivalence and parallelism of many dissimilar subjects deprived of relations and collaborations, or — as Kunst put it, drawing upon Nancy — to the 'strange being-the-one-with-the-other' in which there is only "I". On the contrary, this approach supports the idea of a community that presupposes that "I" is part of "we". It therefore indicates that "I" is constituted at the point of intersection of an ensemble of social relations and that "I" as such has a social function in which historical processes present themselves; evidently, "I" is relationally and

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[401] Mouffe, *The Return*, 84.

[402] From the point of view of postcolonial studies, it becomes clear how the privilege of duration produces what historian Dipesh Chakrabarty calls 'the period of waiting that the third world has to go through for capital's logic to be fulfilled'. In fact, duration becomes empty, homogeneous and underdeveloped time. See: Dipesh Chakrabartry, *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 49.

historically constructed.[403] Then, drawing upon Gramsci's thoughts on human nature, we can understand social relations to be expressed by diverse associations of people that presuppose one another and whose unity is dialectical,[404] not formal.[405] They stand for the '"equalities" that are felt as such among the members of an association and "inequalities" that are felt between associations'.[406] Accordingly, community is a collective historically constructed of conflicting encounters between different associations which anticipate "I" in terms of "we" and "they". When community is envisaged in such a way, then it points at becoming in what Gramsci calls '"concordia discors" that does not have unity for its point of departure but contains in itself the reason for a possible unity'.[407]

Once we have recognised that the reason for a possible unity are capitalist techniques of domination, than we need to redefine the notion of the *common* too. Kunst's view on societies which privileges temporal dimension in constructing collectives, implies the existence of a 'common good' that is associated with "common use". But, once we take into account the indispensable moment of articulation of time into space, we are able to propose that there is only a "common cause". As I have pointed out earlier, articulation implies a necessary moment of sublimation of initial immediacy into discursive mediation. I explained that this process enables the articulation of affective into symbolic, antagonism into agonism, multitude into people, counter-hegemony into hegemony, tragic into dramatic, or the real into representation.[408] Now, drawing upon Laclau's view on time and space, I am envisaging every initial immediacy — affects, antagonisms, multitude, counter-hegemony, tragedy, the real — as the temporal dimension, and every moment of discursive mediation — symbol, agonism, people, hegemony, drama, or representation — as the spatial dimension. As maintained by Laclau, space is a structure discursively constructed as a system of contingent relations that exteriorise other possible relational configurations. And, since it depends on the exterior, space is thus always traversed by a *mere possibility* which stands for a form of temporality and which enables *dislocation*. This is to say that every structure implies a spatialisation of time, while time continuously dislocates space. In Laclau's terms, dislocation is both the condition of possibility and impossibility of total spatialisation.[409]

Since we are dealing with a specific dislocation that steams from the capitalist

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[403] I have elaborated the relational aspect of society in terms of opinion formation in chapter 6.

[404] On relational dialectics see chapter 4.

[405] Gramsci, *Notebooks*, 186.

[406] *Ibid.*, 187.

[407] *Ibid.*, 186.

[408] See chapter 4.

[409] More on dislocation, time and space in: Ernesto Laclau, *New Reflection on the Revolution of Our Time* (London: Verso, 1990), 40 - 43.

techniques of domination, we have to identify the techniques of domination with the 'common cause'. When time is spatially represented through a cyclic succession of dislocations, then, what is called space becomes a sequence in which relations between different subject positions are partially structured and represented within a particular spatial context, precisely by an act of exclusion of other possible configurations.[410] Accordingly, every sequence is always threatened by its constitutive temporal exteriority that constantly traverses it, dislocates it, and arrests its total spatialisation. Sequence is hence the common cause of a struggle that inhabits temporal exteriority. The struggle against the common cause that we observe in terms of the techniques of domination — that may prioritise class over gender, gender over race, race over religion, or economic interests over ethico-political values — has for a goal to dislocate a hegemonic discourse spatialised in institutions and representational forms. We should also notice how the common cause of subordination and struggle triggers the process of sublimation of an initial immediacy designated by a temporary dimension, into a mediation designated by spatial dimension. In fact, the process of articulation of affects into symbols, antagonisms into agonism, multitude into people, or the real into representation, enables initial immediacy not only to put into question the concreteness of any discursive mediation spatialised in dominant representations, but also to establish another order of sequences that will become a common cause for other struggles. When space is hence constructed through the process of articulation — rather by the principle of development — then it stands for a representation of a possible unity spatially constituted as a respond to the techniques of domination rendering a common cause. This is a unity discursively constituted in what we call after Gramsci *concordia discors,* or collective will.[411] Once sequence is understood to belong to the order of struggle and conflict and, hence, to the order of temporality, then common ceases to be a matter of an ontic location of 'common good', and becomes a matter of an ontological principle, of the 'common cause' of struggle.

The Occupy movement, which Kunst takes as an example of the success of the

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[410] In contrast to that which Deleuze calls an instant, a sequence has a spatial dimension. Oliver Marchart emphasised that 'the concept sequence — if it implies putting diachronous elements into synchronous order — is in itself a spatial concept'. This allows us to observe how in a sequence relations between different subject positions, between specific forms of individuality and identity allegiant to certain ethico-political values, become partially structured in representation, in a particular spatial context traversed by the dimension of time. Source: Oliver Marchart, "Art, Space and the Public Sphere(s). Some basic observations on the difficult relation of public art, urbanism and political theory," European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies (eipcp), accessed February 14, 2017, http://eipcp.net/transversal/0102/marchart/en/#f9; On instant, see: Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic os Sense*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas, trans. Mark Lester (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 147.

[411] A movement from one to another dimension, from time to space, is not a movement envisaged in Aristotelian terms as a movement from potentiality to actualisation. Neither, as Oliver Marchart shows, it is a movement from activity to passivity. Time is a constitutive outside to space, and it may prevent total spatialisation; space can always be reactivated, it can always be temporised. For this reason, as Marchart shows, Laclau's theory stands beyond constructivism and post-constructivism. In: Marchart*, Art Space.*

strategy of avoidance through duration, in fact supports the counter-thesis, that I have just outlined in terms of articulation that enables a sublimation of time into space. Accordingly, what would be necessary for the post-representational protest movements, such as the Occupy movement, is to transform the durational potential of the protestors that enables the resistance to neoliberalism, into the struggle of the protestors that would institutionalise or spatialise their demands for the purpose of establishing an order. Further on, since every order is a contingent category, then every institution stands for a sequence in a cyclic succession. Such is the drama that brings the sublimation of the protestors' initial affects into the concrete demands that would be defended by the representatives in the parliament. It is only by means of struggle, engagement and institutionalisation, that protestors may be capable not only to challenge dominant politics, but also to combat the right-wing populism and thus construct different, much more democratic communities.[412] All things considered, it seems to be that the strategies of avoidance by duration are not strategies of the political construction, but strategies of the political abstention.

the articulation of alternative collectives

The view on subjectivities, communities and common in relational, conflicting, articulating and representational terms brings alternative perspective on the role of art and the relationship between performance and its public. It implies that the political dimension of art does not manifest only in locating the artwork between the audience and the artists, in what Kunst calls the 'intermediation of a third condition' that enables the abilities of the audience to listen, watch, read and judge and, thus, rehears to be together while being separated.[413] To be sure, this has always been one of the arts' roles in which *the political* appears. This view also implies that the political dimension of performance does not manifest only in the potentiality of the body to move or to move less.[414] This is so, because neither slow nor accelerated movements render the ontological categories of performance, including dance, but their possible forms of representation in which the political appears.[415] The view that I advocate departs from the hypothesis that art, including dance and performance, always possess the political dimension. And, as I have

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[412] This critique is accountable for many other movements, such as *Black Lives Matter*, *Indignados*, *Nuit debout* or the *Women's March on Washington* that took place in January 2017, after a newly inaugurated President of the USA, Donal Trump, reinstated a global gag rule that bans US-funded groups around the world from supporting abortion. When these movements are discussed the question that always arise is: how the immediate, horizontal, non-representative, anti-institutional and leaderless movements may challenge state institutions and institutionalisation of the right-wing populism?

[413] Kunst, *Artist*, 71 - 72.

[414] *Ibid.*, 116.

[415] I drew a similar conclusion from Andrè Lepecki's theory in chapter 1.

previously argued, 'while some art discloses the political dimension by complying with existing politics, another art discloses the political dimension by contesting them'.[416] It is in relation to the complying and contesting strategies that we can observe how art, including performance, always traverse the audience.

Performance scholar Joe Kelleher observed that performance always engages us personally and this engagement has to do 'with feeling ourselves somehow involved in things going on in other times and other places'.[417] The artistic strategies of engagement enable whether complying with or contesting the constructed, historical and contingent systems that are sedimented in a variety of hegemonic institutions, representations and forms. And, whereas the complying artistic strategies of engagement reproduce the existing order and maintain *status-quo*, the contesting artistic strategies of engagement have a tendency to disarticulate the dominant order, and articulate an alternative one. One of the significant characteristics of the contesting artistic strategies of engagement is that they enable the operation of articulation. It is by means of articulation of counter-hegemonies that the contesting performance practices are capable of mobilising affects and passions towards a struggle against various social, economic, and moral laws that subordinate people to the dominant politics, techniques and representations, thus imposing control over every aspect of human and non-human lives. Since the outmost goal of mobilisation is not only to challenge the existing order, but also to constitute an alternative one, we have to recognise that mobilisation implies an articulation of initial affects into representations, or self-assertion into counter-hegemony, or *mise-en-sense* into *mise-en-scène* or *mise-en-forme*.[418] Consequently, performance does not relate any more to a particular form; on the contrary, it embraces a multiplicity of forms.[419]

When performance belongs to the order of counter-hegemony, then it ceases to be a matter of an ontic location, and becomes a manifestation of an ontological principle: a manifestation of contest and struggle against discourses appropriated by hegemonic politics that are sedimented in various social practices and representational modes. 'Against a politics that govern affects and passions, counter-hegemonic and contesting artistic practices provide a terrain for confrontation to this operation and, consequently, for constitution of politics and societies in alternative ways'.[420] Pointing at the exclusion and

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[416] See chapter 1.

[417] Joe Kelleher, *Theatre & Politics* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 13.

[418] On the distinction between *mise-en-sense* into *mise-en-scène* see chapter 3.

[419] Accordingly, I indicated in chapter 1: 'representation in performance stands for a choreography which may appropriate elements from different artistic genres and different genres of performing arts (dance, theatre, mime, opera, concert, video, drawing, among others) as well as from various social practices (dance, sport, aerobics, promenading, jumping, boxing, working, and so on) and discourses (economic, political, cultural, moral, ethical, archeological, mathematical, or any other discourse).

[420] *Ibid*.,

conflict to be inherent to societies, art disarticulates the smooth space deprived from any sort of identification, and articulates the striated space that consists out of the multiplicity of associations of people that are constructed precisely though identifications with the different ethico-political values.[421] The striated space enables an encounter between various agonistic positions and the possibility of constructing a collective out of adversaries decisively united around a common cause: to challenge and dislocate the hegemony of the capitalist techniques of domination on every discursive level these techniques subordinate freedom and liberty. By mobilising affects of hope and change, art contributes to the dislocation of dominant politics and the construction of political identities.

What this view suggests is not a call to dismiss the political dimension of Ballettikka Internettikka's *Statika*. Rather, it proposes an alternative perspective on defining 'the political' in this performance. This endeavour requires the widening of the strategies of avoidance and waiting, with the strategies of engagement with the hegemonic discourses. The strategies of engagement enable the overcoming parallelism of positions that the strategies of avoidance employ,[422] and advocate a radical relationalism between them. In the case of *Statika*, these strategies recognise illusion that the static defeat could take place without some kind of drastic rearticulation of such a political imaginary, and without engagement with the dominant order of politics and representations. This indeed, as Kunst suggests, means that duration, constructed by the static robotic performance, may be seen as a disruption of a particular order. Nevertheless, arising within the shattered symbolic framework, duration as a point of rupture requires a gradual sublimation or articulation in the symbolic and representational surface that transcendents the initial political imaginary. This is so, because the initial political imaginary, springing against the acceleration of every aspect of life, has to become articulated into a (counter-)hegemony that is represented. Without articulation, the initial political imaginary may fade away. The question that is rising out of this strategy is: how the need for slowing down the capitalist movement accelerated to the level of embracement of every aspect of human lives, is to be represented in relation to the variety of demands that are not shared by the workers' perspective on society which requires waiting and laziness, or any other pre-established perspective on subjectivities isolated in terms of class -, gender -, or race - based identities? How can it be accountable of the techniques of domination?

If the post-fordist techniques of domination, and not only the post-fordist techniques of production, take place on the multiplicity of stratums, this means that we need a type of a mobilisation of human sectors in a unity constructed around a collective decision — taken not only by trade unions, but also NGOs, grassroots and many kinds of social

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[421] Further about identification in chapter 6.

[422] On the parallelism or adequation of positions, see chapter 2.

movements, such as women, black, LGBTQIA, indigenous, environmentalists, human rights advocates, rural groups, poor and others — and the engagement of these sectors with the variety of social practices, movements, institutions and cognitive frameworks, respectively nationally and internationally, locally and globally, or unilaterally and multilaterally, wherever the demands of the peoples are subordinated to capital. It is here that the political subjectivity ultimately appears. This, by extension, implies that the political dimension of performance does not reside in time dimension in which artist as workers gather to wait for a sort of a Messianic moment to happen; it rather resides in an ontological principle which implies struggle and — as Kelleher correctly observed — concern with participation, ownership, membership and exclusion.[423] In this view, duration in performance may be seen only as a way of resisting the order that excludes particularities, but not as an ultimate political principle of performance. It is so, because duration does not provide a terrain for a complex forms of articulation of different struggles into a contingent symbolic unity. On the contrary, it reduces conflict to resistance tied to a specific structural location.[424]

performing alternative collectives:
Rimini Protokoll's *100% Brussels*[425]

If the reason for a unity of different associations of people in a struggle for the recognition of various demands lies in the capitalist's techniques of domination, we shall observe for the moment how can performance suggests a construction of alternatives collectives. My point of departure is a Berlin based team of author-directors, consisting of Helgard Kim Haug, Stefan Kaegi and Daniel Wetzel, who work together since 2000, under the label of Rimini Protokoll. The name Rimini Protokoll refers to the oil depletion Rimini Protocol, also know as Uppsala Protocol. Rimini Protocol was proposed in 2004,

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[423] Kelleher, *Theatre & Politics*, 5.

[424] If we, finally, recognised that even duration requires a structural location, then we have to acknowledge that the dimensions of time and space are constitutive to each other; they cannot be separated. The question that is rising out of this is: what kind of space is created by privileging a temporal dimension of duration? Isn't this the same space of absolute beginning and originality that brought about the failure of vanguard movements in art, as we observed in chapter 3?

[425] I have opted for Rimini Protokoll's performance *100% Brussels* in order to explore the way performance may suggest the construction of alternative communities. In this decision, I have not been led by the form of performance, but rather with the ways Rimini Protokoll conceives dance within this performance — as a social practice capable of uniting differences in a community; dance as an agonistic practice. At the same time, my interest was to explore the meaning of this dance within a particular geo-political context, having in mind that *100% Brussels* was performed a few weeks ahead of Belgian federal elections held on 25 May 2014. This is why *100% Brussels* as a choice prevailed over some other performances that are more dance than theatre, such as Jérôme Bel's performance *Gala* (2015), in which twenty ordinary people and professional dancers from a range of generations, backgrounds, abilities and disabilities to dance appear together on stage and dance over an hour and fifteen minutes.

by geologist Collin Campbell. The main objective of his proposal was the organisation of a convention of nations with the purpose of reaching an agreement on the ways of stabilisation of petroleum production and petroleum price. The purpose was to 'prevent profiteering' and to ensure a fair global distribution of petroleum, while seeking a transition to alternative fuels. Writing about oil depletion, Campbell stated that '[t]he decline of oil will have a severe impact on the modern economy which has become dependent on it. Accordingly, a Protocol to match demand against the falling supply, as imposed by Nature, is urgently needed to lessen world tensions and achieve an orderly transition.'[426] It is in this framework that we can understand the choice of the members of Rimini Protokoll to call itself label, rather than company or collective. In fact, every aspect of their work, weather theatre, sound and radio plays, or film and installation, refers to Rimini Protocol, to the impact of the decline of oil on world tensions and conflicts, in one or another way. This is why the main task of Rimini Protokoll became the 'development of the tools of the theatre to allow unusual perspectives on our reality'.[427]

To achieve this goal, Rimini Protokoll decided to work, not with actors, but with ordinary people. Performance critic Eva Behrendt refers to the presence of ordinary people in performance as "experts of everyday-life". Writing on Rimini Protokoll's play about death in *Deadline* (2003), Behrendt defined experts of everyday-life as everyday, average dying, such as the owner of crematorium, the tomb-stone sculptor, funeral-violinist and student of medicine.[428] For their part, the theatre critics Ulrike Garde and Meg Mumford envisaged ordinary people in performances as "real people", 'that is, contemporary people who have a verifiable physical existence, and who usually have not received institutional theatre training and have little or no prior stage experience' (2016).[429] Further on, they wrote that '[t]hese real people literally appear on stage or are represented — through techniques such as verbatim text, film, pre-recorded or live-feed video — and figure as consensual protagonists in specific theatre forms and genres'.[430] At this point, it should be stressed that real people are always already constructed in an encounter with the other and inscribed within the state of affairs, within the system of representations that antagonises them. Consequently, real people are not simply present on stage. Their voices and opinions are always already represented within

[426] Collin Campbell, "The Rimini Protocol: an oil depletion protocol," *Energy Policy*, Vol. 34, Issue 12 (August 2006): 1319.

[427] Rimini Protokoll, "About Rimini Protokoll," Rimini Protokoll web site, accessed October 8, 2017, http://www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/en/about.

[428] Eva Behrendt, "The Experts of Everyday-Life" (first published in 2003), accessed October 8, 2017, http://www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/en/text/the-experts-of-everyday-life.

[429] Ulrike Garde and Meg Mumford, *Theatre of Real People: Diverse Encounters at Berlin's Hebbel am Ufer and Beyond* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), 5.

[430] *Ibid*.,

the terms of performance. When real people are engaged with different forms and genres of performance, they can bring forth the significance of the capitalist techniques of production and the capitalist techniques of domination in construction of societies.

Performance scholar Katharina Pewny's writings on Rimini Protokoll's one-on-one performance *Call Cutta* which performed in 2005, in Berlin, gives rise to this distinction.[431] Pewny explains that upon the registration at the Hebbel Theater, mobile phones were distributed to the audience. Then, each member of the audience received a phone call from a call-centre in Calcutta, in India. Trained by Rimini Protokoll, teleworker-performers for the next hour 'give them [the audience] instructions via the head-sets on their phones, on how to move through the streets of Berlin'.[432] To be sure, in her analysis of *Call Cuta*, Pewny never uses the the same terminology — the techniques of production and the techniques of domination. But, what gives rise to the distinction made is her observation that the telephone communication in *Call Cutta* does not only bridges many thousands of kilometres, but also 'the separation between the local and transnational economic transactions of late capital'.[433] And, whereas 'communication techniques [that] are adapted to the demands of mobility and flexibility'[434] point at the hegemony of the capitalist techniques of production, 'the absence of trade unions for people working in call centres in India'[435] point at the hegemony of the capitalist techniques of domination. It is within this framework that I am observing how Rimini Protokoll's performance *100% City* suggests a construction of alternatives collectives that counter the hegemony of the capitalist techniques of domination.

In 2008, Rimini Protokoll staged the performance *100% Berlin*, in collaboration with the familiar inhabitants of Berlin, with what Garde and Mumford call real people. With *100% Berlin* the author-director team Haug, Kaegi and Wetzel wanted to observe how it would look like if Berlin was represented on stage by 100 persons. The casting was based on Berlin's demographic data conveyed by the Berlin Brandenburg Statistics Office which classified about 3,450,000 of Berlin inhabitants in categories of gender, age, civil status, nationality and type of income. Haug, Kaegi and Wetzel cast one person to cast the second person that would then cast the third one, and so on, until there is a 100 persons cast altogether, always reflecting on demographic data. Through this chain reaction, each

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[431] Unlike in Berlin, in Brussels, where *Call Cutta* was performed at the Kunsten festival des Arts in 2008, the audience was seated at the tables, overlooking the city from *La Monnaie / Muntschouwburg,* the Brussels federal opera house of Belgium.

[432] Katharina Pewny, "Real Theatrical Transformations in European Theatre in Rimini Protocoll's Karl Marx, Das Kapital, Erster Band and Call Cutta," *Literature and Aesthetics*, 18: 2 (December 2008): 52.

[433] *Ibid.,*

[434] *Ibid.,* 53.

[435] *Ibid.,* 54.

persons cast to participate in the performance stood for approximately 34,500 Berliners. Giving life to pie wedges, bars and curves, on stage, Rimini Protokoll demonstrated how many Berliners are male and how many are female, how many of them are employed and how many are unemployed, or how many of them are married and how many divorced. After *100% Berlin*, Rimini Protokoll staged *100%* in many cities across the world.[436] In each city *100%* was staged as a cite-specific performance in collaboration with 'real people', reflecting on demographic criteria, such as age, region of birth, family composition, residential location, sex, nationality, civil status, number of tourist per year, spoken language, and so on, in that particular city.

100% Brussels was staged in 2014, and performed during the Kunstenfestival des Arts (kunstenfestivaldesarts), within a few weeks before the federal elections that were about to take place on 25 May of the same year. The casting of 100 Brusselaars had been hold in accordance to the five criteria maintained by the Brussels Institute for Statistics and Analysis (BISA): age, sex, nationality, place of residence, and family composition. To make the population of Brussels even more representative, the data proceeding from the sociological surveys, such as language, employment, nationality at birth, religion and sexual orientation, were also taken into account. In addition to 100 persons, five undocumented individuals, such as an immigrant, asylum seeker, diplomat, expat and foreign student, were also invited to take part in the performance. Each participant was then asked to select a subsequent one, respecting the mentioned demographic criteria. Nevertheless, the complexity of Brussels demographics did not allow the chain-casting to be respected for a full 100% within the given timeframe for the production of the performance, from September 2013 to May 2014. This is why deviations from this tactic occurred. Hence, Briggite Neervoort, a Brussels based Rimini Protokoll's delegate responsible for coordination and casting of *100% Brussels*, employed a cluster principle that sometimes engaged her and her six-team staff in seeking persons that would fit the statistics.[437] Afterwards, each participant was photographed, and interviewed on the basis of the following questionnaire: "I am unique because…, At home I speak…, On stage you can recognise me by…, I would join a demonstration for or against…, The slogan would be…, I have this tic or idiosyncrasy…, The sound that I associate my life in Brussels with is…, The smell that I associate my life in Brussels with is…, I belong to the following groups…, But I definitely don't belong to the following groups…".[438] The questionnaire

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[436] Some of the cities are: Cologne, Karlsruhe (2009), Athens, Vienna (2010), Zürich, London, Braunschweig, Melbourne (2012), Tokyo, Kraków, Dresden, Cork, Copenhagen, San Diego (2013), Amsterdam, Riga, Philadelphia, Darwin, Paris, Gwangju, Brussels (2014), Yogyakarta, Penang (2015), Brisbane, São Paulo, Salford (2016), and Marseille and Motréal (2017).

[437] For example, sometimes it would take one person to find another person that corresponds to statistic data up to three weeks. To allow the unfolding of the casting in such a way meant to bring the realisation of the project under question. Brigitte Neervoort, interview by the author, October 9, 2017.

[438] Rimini Protokoll, *100% Brussels* (Brussels: Kunstenfestivaldesart, 2014).

served as a basis for the performance narrative, while answers of 100 participants to these questions accompanied their portraits in the book, also containing the statistic data, the description of the casting process and the text by a sociologist Eric Corijn who described the city of Brussels in all its diversity.[439]

100% Brussels starts in the following way: one person steps in the spotlight and starts speaking in the microphone in French and, for a moment, in Dutch: 'Je m'appelle Benoit Laine […] Ik werk voor BISA,[440] Staatsinstelling voor het Brusselse Gewest".[441] After giving some autobiographical information and showing the book that contains statistic information on Brussels inhabitants divided into categories, such as sex, age, community, civil status and nationality, as well as the list of citizens taking part in the performance, Laine — responsible for the "Methods and Statistics" unit of BISA — explains the process of casting. This is what he says: 'Après il nous fallait trouver 100 personnes pour représenter la ville avec ce plan d'échantillonnage. Moi, j'habite a Molenbeek-Saint-Jean comme 8 % des Bruxellois. Il me restait à en trouver 7. Mais, il fallait aussi trouver 14 personnes entre 0 et 9 ans. Alors, j'ai commencé une réaction en chaîne, et comme numéro 2 j'ai choisi ma fille Marion qui a 7 ans.'[442] Just like Marion, Laine's daughter, appeared on stage with the swimming googles that identify her, every other person stepped in the spotlight with an object of identification that extended their autobiographical narratives. At once, each person is live streamed on the backdrop.

Hundred inhabitants of Brussels proceed to the microphone, one at a time, and introduce themselves. They are families with children, singles, or couples. We are introduced to the people of different origins, from different countries, speaking different languages. Some are scientists, teachers, social workers, or voluntarists; some are retired, unemployed, students, or pupils. Among them are disabled people, persons without papers, people of colour, members of LGBTQIA community. Slowly, people of different origins, language groups, colours, gender, sex, age, weight, or hight, fill in the stage. From now on, all the actions performed by 105 people (within a circle lit by a video projection that has a function of an enormous spotlight) are live-streamed on the backdrop. An elderly women, Christian Gabriels, who at the beginning introduced herself as a retired person now dedicated to a voluntary work, steps out of the crowd to explain that 100 persons on stage represent 1,154,635 inhabitants of Brussels, and that each one of them is a representative of approximately 11,546 inhabitants of Brussels. Then, another person, Max Nisol, announces that 49% of Brussels inhabitants are men, and 51% women, and

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[439] See: *Ibid.*,

[440] BISA or 'Staatsinstelling voor Brusselse gewest' stands for the *Brussels Instituut voor Statistiek en Analyse / Institut Bruxellois de Statistique et d'Analyse /* the Brussels Institute for Statistics and Analysis.

[441] Video link to performance: "100% Brussels," Rimini Protocol, accessed on October 8, 2017, http://www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/en/project/100-brussels.

[442] *Ibid.*,

that transgender community, to whom this person belongs, is not officially represented in BISA statistics.[443] At that moment, the rest of 99 persons split on stage between men and women.

Hundred persons on stage would split in different associations in order to simulate different collectives of people based on age difference, nationality, or belonging to the one of 19 Brussels different communities; and, when one person announces to live in Belgium due to the political and economic crisis in his own country, another person joins the same side of the stage. Participants express their opinions on topics such as 'I think there should be one common language within the European Union', or 'I think the EU should grow'.[444] The demands of women to wear a veil, unemployed to work, gay to adopt children, and many other local actualities always split the citizens according to their opinion in different associations, left and right from the line that divides the stage. The same would happen with the questions about capitalism, about who is belonging to political parties, and so on. And, when those who decided not to vote on the forthcoming federal elections in Belgium were asked to leave the stage, they could have only observed how the rest of the Brusselaars decide about issues that might be of their own concern, such as prostitution in the city, the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), financing Congo's government — that is keeping it in debt, tax paying, reducing number of cars in the city, and so on.

Rimini Protokoll's *100% Brussels* demonstrates that different associations of people may share the view on some demands, and disagree about others. More importantly, it demonstrates that each citizen may belong to different associations of people united around disparate and conflicting ethico-political values, entailing a moment of inclusion and exclusion at the same time. By approaching collectivity in terms of various identifications, *100% Brussels* conceives the city in the eternal play between the Dionysian disorderly choreography of personal movements, lives, and demands and the Apollonian orderly choreography of shared, collective forms of life.[445] Hence, the city is a striated space inhabited by agonistics and the multiplicity of agonistic human associations that are constructed though the identifications with the different ethico-political values co-existing in conflict. Nevertheless, by putting all its inhabitants to dance, on the music performed live on stage by a jazz orchestra, *100% Brussels* suggests that dance unites all differences between various associations of people. Envisaged within the context of Belgian federal elections that were to be held on 25 May, just a few weeks after the

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[443] Belgian office BISA gathers information about population based on age, sex, nationality, place of residence, and family composition. All other data, such as those relating the total number of LGBTQIA persons in the city, or those concerned with the different religious beliefs among the citizens of Brussels, are provided by different sociological surveys, such as those led by universities, NGOs, or institutes.

[444] Video link to performance: "100% Brussels," Rimini Protocol, *Ibid*.,

[445] More about order and disorder and about the Apollonian and Dionysian ideals, in chapter 3.

performance, dance in *100% Brussels* becomes a symbolic unity of different human associations in a struggle against a common cause, against the hegemony of capital that dominates them personally and collectively and splits them on the basis of pre-established identities.[446] Besides, in *100% Brussels* a call for a unity of people in a struggle for the recognition of various demands, does not propose a unity in a revolution against the capitalist techniques of domination. It suggests an agonistic unity in a collective turnout as, so far, the most democratic way to fight the domination of neoliberalism.

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[446] Within the framework of Rimini Protokoll's *100% Brussels*, Kunsten festival des Arts organised in 2014 five talks moderated by a sociologist Eric Corijn. Speakers were invited to see the performance. Then, following talks took place: 1) Brussels Politics, with the following representatives of the local political parties: Bruno De Lille (Groen), Paul Delva (CD&V), Vincent De Wolf (MR), Liesbeth Dhaene (N-VA), Christos Doulkeridis (Ecolo), Didier Gosuin (FDF), Karine Lalieux (PS), Joëlle Milquet (cdH), Pascal Smet (sp.a), Guy Vanhengel (Open Vld); 2) European Brussels, with the following participants: Jan Truszczynski (director general for Education and Culture at the European Commission) and Bernard Foccroulle (composer & opera director; 3) Religious Brussels, with the following speakers: Mohamed Fatha-allah (imam and professor in Islamic religion) and Daniël Alliët (priest and activist for refugees in Brussels); 4) (In)secure Brussels, with the following participants: Saad Amrani (director of the Ixelles Police Department) and Bleri Lleshi (political philosopher); 5) Young Brussels, with the following participants: Mohamed 'El Killer' Boulef (21 year-old K1 Thai boxing world champion, who grew up in Molenbeek-Saint-Jean), Sarah Carlier (23 year old musician, who grew up in Schaerbeek), Muzammal Chaudry (21 year-old member of the European Muslim Network) and Lander Piccart (21 years old, president of the Flemish Youth Council, student at the VUB, living in a student house in the city centre of Brussels).

6

CONCLUSION

Performance as Agonistic Practice

        This dissertation starts with the observation of the crisis of democracy. Political philosopher Chantal Mouffe writes that the Western model of democracy constitutes of the liberal tradition of freedom, which stands for the rule of law and individuality, and the democratic tradition of equality, which stands for the popular sovereignty.[447] Whereas the former is preferred by the right political parties, the latter is favoured by the left political parties.[448] The liberal tradition, formulated as neoliberalism, dominates political discourse today. Neoliberalism is an order of politics established by the elites and regulated by financial capital. It undermines the institutional framework for the principle of the sovereignty of the people characterised by an agonistic struggle between the right and the left popular parties. The consequence of this politics is the rise of the right-wing populism and the left-wing populism. To re-establish a terrain of an agonistic battle between the 'right' and the 'left' unities of the people, the objective is to create a collective will that may change existing institutions and invigorate democracy. As Mouffe suggest, '[g]iven that numerous social sectors suffer the effects of financialized capitalism, there is a potential for this collective will to have a transversal character that exceeds the right / left distinction as traditionally configured.'[449] This could lead to the replacement of the rule of the elites and the re-establishment of agonism.

        Within such a context, the main research question of this dissertation became: how might performance contest existing politics and contribute to the constitution of democratic politics giving rise to alternative ways of living together? To offer a possible answer to this question I introduced an agonistic discourse to performance studies. My objective was to examine the relevance of Mouffe's model of agonism for performing arts, by continuously looking at the different philosophical, political and artistic discourses that cherish contemporary performance theory. To investigate how performance practice may choreograph agonism, it was necessary to outline a politico-

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[447]   See chapter 1.

[448]   Chantal Moufe, "The Populist Movement", in *Open Democracy*, published on November 21, 2016, accessed in January 2017, https://www.opendemocracy.net/democraciaabierta/chantal-mouffe/populist-moment.

[449]   *Ibid*.,

philosophical framework of Mouffe's notion of agonism. Therefore, this dissertation starts with the observation of two distinct trajectories within contemporary continental philosophical thought: the trajectory of immanence (Deleuze) and the trajectory of quasi-transcendence (Derrida).[450] Whereas the former gives rise to the project of absolute democracy (Hardt, Negri), the latter gives rise to the project of agonistic democracy (Mouffe). Drawing upon political philosophers Oliver Marchart and Yannis Stavrakakis, the distinction between these two philosophical and political trajectories is deepened in psychoanalytic terms. It is envisaged as a distinction between the positive ontological imaginary of abundance — desire for being in-itself, and the negative ontological imaginary of lack — desire for the lack-of-being. It is stressed that the negative ontological imaginary of lack anticipates the co-constitutive relationship between lack and abundance, precisely because the dimension of negativity precludes both the idealisation of lack and the idealisation of abundance.[451] The suggested co-constitutive and agonistic type of relationship between the paradoxically different positions, such as lack and abundance, also became a challenge to philosopher Jacques Rancière's one-sided political model of communal anarchism, which advocates politics of disorder above the politics of order, or *mise-en-sense* above *mise-en-scène*.[452] In order to move towards the pluralism of positions, relations between paradoxically differential positions are envisaged in terms of dialectics. Relational dialectics recognise antagonistic conflicts and polemics to be inherent in societies (Gramsci, Schmitt). Further on, antagonistic conflicts and polemics are envisaged by means of discourse formation (Laclau, Mouffe), allowing for the articulation of antagonism into agonism (Mouffe).[453] The operation of articulation requires articulation of initial immediacy into discursive mediation: of disorder into order, abject bodies into intelligible bodies, *mise-en-sense* into *mise-en-scène[454]*, horizontal politics into vertical politics, passive onlookers into active citizenship,[455] the multitude into the people[456], and affects into representation[457]. The operation of articulation requires a view on societies — including social practice of performance — in terms of discourse, hegemony and antagonism. These three political components enabled us to envisage what I call the contesting political dimension of performance that is manifested through the

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[450] See chapter 1.

[451] See chapter 2.

[452] See chapter 3.

[453] See chapter 4.

[454] See chapter 3.

[455] See chapter 4.

[456] See chapter 5.

[457] See chapter 6.

strategies of engagement, giving rise to the choreography of articulation. The insights into contemporary performances by Arkadi Zaides[458], Mette Edvardsen[459], Marlene Monteiro Freitas[460], and Rimini Protokoll[461], are just some of the possible examples that allow us to observe how choreographing agonism performance practices and performance theories may contribute to the constitution of democratic politics and different ways of living together.

Throughout different chapters of this dissertation I have stressed that the operation of articulation implies a sublimation of antagonism into agonism and initial affectivity into representation. Once we have examined how agonism may change our perception of objects[462], human bodies[463], relations between the audience and the performances[464], and collectivity[465], we are able to observe the articulation of affects into representation through the process of choreographing performance, through the relationship between the choreographer and the performers. In concluding this dissertation, I will demonstrate why the artistic strategies of engagement in performance practice require articulation of affects into representation. In the spirit of this PhD research, the concluding chapter does not aim to promote a dogmatic view on the form of performance practice. Rather, the goal is to employ the choreography of articulation in such a way that new questions about choreographing agonism may become raised in performance studies.

the relationship between the choreographers and the performers

As mentioned above, the research undertook in this dissertation is inscribed within the context of current populist movements that struggle for the recognition of different democratic demands. Despite popularity of the left-leaning horizontal protest movements without leadership, it was claimed (in chapter 4) that the left-leaning quasi-vertical protest movements with leaders play a significant role in challenging the institutionalised hegemony of neoliberalism.[466] This is why the quasi-vertical type of the relationship

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[458] See chapter 1.

[459] See chapter 2.

[460] See chapter 3.

[461] See chapter 5.

[462] See chapter 2.

[463] See chapter 3.

[464] See chapter 4.

[465] See chapter 5.

[466] See chapter 4.

between the leaders and the people, is very useful for analysing the relationship between the choreographer and the performers, and the choreography of articulation of affects into representations. In order to approach this topic, I take as a point of departure a theory developed by performance scholar André Lepecki. Lepecki observes the relationship between the choreographer and the performers in terms of 'leadingfollowing'. Leadingfollowing is dance in which 'one engages by constantly taking the initiative to fuse and to confuse lines of authority and of submission'.[467] Within this framework, 'leadingfollowing' is an a-personal, unconditioned singularity or event, while the actualisation of leadingfollowing is an immanent, 'a-personal compositional plane of choreography' that exceeds predetermined acts.[468] Henceforth, the politics of engagement enable the actualisation of the event into that which Lepecki calls 'a true affective field of compossibilization'.[469] The significance of the politics of engagement lies in opening up the space for a rupture interval, for rebellion and disobedience.

Lepecki's view on the relationship between the choreographer and the performers in terms of leadingfollowing is highly relevant because it asserts the very political point that I am trying to make in concluding this chapter: that the strategies of engagement in performances imply the articulation of affects into representation. Once the operation of articulation is considered as constitutive to performance practice, two obvious conclusions do necessarily follow: (1) choreography cannot be reduced to the initiation of a kinetic phenomenon; (2) performance cannot be reduced to 'a true affective field of compossibilization'. Abandoning the centrality of movement that implies the infinite partaking of the *mise-en-sense*, and the possibility of performance to compossibilises the unconditional truth, I will apply a different political logic in envisaging the relationship between the choreographer and the performers. After examining the origins of the 'unconditional truth' and 'compossibilisation' in the philosophies of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and Gilles Deleuze, I will turn to the political-philosophy of Ludwing Wittgenstein, Antonio Gramsci, Hannah Arendt, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. The insights into their works will emphasise the importance of 'discourse' for the analysis of the relationship between the leader and the lead and between the choreographer and the performers. From the point of view of discourse formation, choreography is a result of an affective identification between the choreographer and the performers. If it is not authoritarian, then this type of relationship gives rise to different opinions that imply conflicts, polemics and disagreements. But, once agreement in opinions is reached, a collective investment of affects in objects takes place. This is how affective identification

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[467] André Lepecki, "From Partaking to Initiating: Leadingfollowing as Dance's (a-presonal) Political Singularity," in *Dance, Politics & Co-Immunity*, eds. Gerald Siegmund, Stefan Holscher (Zurich, Berlin: Diaphanes, 2013), 35.

[468] *Ibid.*, 36.

[469] *Ibid.*, 31.

articulates into representation. We could suggest that it is on the choreographer to lead the articulation of initial affectivity into representation, into performance that always contains this conflictual dimension. I am emphasising the notion of affective identification precisely because it points at the construction of collectives. To employ affective identification to the analysis of choreography is to stress the importance of agonism for performance practices, giving rise to the conflict of opinions on the ways body language is used and performed. In this context, to choreograph agonism is to induce affects through representations, allowing the audience to see things differently and envisage different possibilities of living together.

André Lepecki:
performance as 'a true affective-political field of compossibilization"

In his essay *From Partaking to Initiating: Leadingfollowing as Dance's (a-presonal) Political Singularity* (2013) a performance scholar André Lepecki examines how dance may activate an otherwise passive politics of perception. This approach implies the production of a theory of initiation, which shifts the focus from participating in representation to the creation of 'a co-extensive affective field of compossibilization of political purpose and action'.[470] Lepecki builds the argument by drawing upon philosophers Jacques Rancière and Hannah Arendt, performance scholars Roger Copeland, Randy Martin and Mark Franko, and political philosophers Erin Manning and Brian Massumi, mainly working within the framework of the immanent philosophy of Gilles Deleuze. First, Rancière's and Arendt's theories enabled Lepecki to conjoin a sensorial distributing or partaking — as that which separates, excludes and allows participation (Rancière), and *energeia* — as that which energises energy and triggers action (Arendt). The established relationship between partaking and *energeia* in Lepecki's theory becomes a condition for overcoming 'the politics of disengagement' (Copeland), which Lepecki sees to be the western, predominantly passive patterns of politics of perception lying at the core of the contemporary production of subjectivity. Therefore, Lepecki opts for 'the politics of engagement', which opens up the space for surprise, inventiveness, rebellion, or disobedience, and moves us to the place other than the one in which we are.[471] The politics of engagement enables not only a dissensual sensorial redistribution or partaking, but also a formation of active and engaged modes of existence.

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[470] *Ibid.*,

[471] It is through Lepecki's critique of 'participation' that we can grasp the consequences of the politics of engagement. Lepecki asks: 'how much in participating and by participating do we actually engage with a kind of moving that takes us no other place that where we are (always) already (properly) expected to arrive at?' In: *Ibid.*, 29.

Borrowing Leibniz's and Deleuze's vocabulary, a politics of engagement becomes the actualisation of events in that which Lepecki calls a compossibilisation of political purpose and action, implying 'a mutual sharing of a true affective-political field'.[472]

Let's now unpack this brief summary of Lepecki's view on a politics of engagement, which is supposed to activate a passive politics of perception. Lepecki claims that dance 'engages engagement' in a politics by means of initiation.[473] Drawing upon Arendt, he shows that *energeia* refers to the notion of action, or of taking initiative. The potential of courageously taking initiative points not only at the moment of action but, as Arendt indicated, at setting something in motion.[474] Finally, Lepecki concludes, 'this is why taking initiative, to initiate an act, is always a profoundly political *and* kinetic phenomenon'.[475] Nevertheless, Lepecki moves away from Arendt's figure of a 'self' and the theatrical dance's epideictic mode of rhetoric, and proclaims their demise in order to introduce the notion of 'leadingfollowing'. For that matter, he stresses that *energeia* is linked to the act of leading, that is the ethics of following, and to the affect-event of courage.[476] Now, in order to develop the notion of leadingfollowing, Lepecki draws upon Manning. Referring to Manning, Lepecki emphasises that to follow is to initiate, 'to take the initiative of engaging with the leader and demonstrating through engaging that the leader is always the one who, by leading and because of leading, must follow'.[477] Nevertheless, Lepecki, following Manning's theory, arrests the possibility of the leader to decide. This is why leading becomes the way for the opening up a gap that is then followed. Lepecki call the opened gap after Rancière a partaking gap, a 'rupture interval that defines dissensus'.[478] Given these points, leadingfollowing becomes a choreography that creates the relation of an interval, of a moving interval which points at moving together without identification. Within this framework, leadingfollowing is not to be envisaged as the [dancer's] person or individualization,[479] 'but always as immanent force, invisibly composing a particular unexpected dancing, a particular singular actualisation of what really matters, rather than the matter of regal exceptionality'.[480] Leadingfollowing

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[472] *Ibid.*, 31.

[473] *Ibid.*, 32.

[474] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 177, in Lepecki, *Ibid.*,

[475] Lepecki, "From Partaking to Initiating", 32.

[476] *Ibid.*,

[477] *Ibid.*, 34.

[478] *Ibid.*,

[479] Lepecki asserts that a juridical name of individualisation is person. André Lepecki, *Singularities. Dance in the Age of Performance* (London, New York: Routledge, 2016), 6.

[480] Lepecki, "From Partaking to Initiating", 36.

thus becomes 'a-personal singularity', or unconditioned event, or 'a dancing that initiates' without choreographers.[481] Leadingfollowing is, we can suggest, a singular dissensual event, not representation. Given these points, a dancer is one who always engages, by taking an initiative to fuse and confuse lines of authority — or of the leader, and of submission — or of the follower.[482] This is how dance 'enacts a crucial (choreo)political critique of leadership'.[483]

The choreography of leadingfollowing without choreographers presupposes the body as 'a reservoir of dissensual somatic-political capacities'[484], and movement in dance as 'activation and actualization — of corporal and critical capacities towards the composition and formation of engaged modes of existence'.[485] Accordingly, Lepecki conceived subjectivities as affective constructions of corporealities.[486] Lepecki's theory suggests that the role of dance is to initiate activation of subjectivities to engage in the a-personal transformations of existing compossibilisations and compose different ones. Within this framework, different compossibilisations become initiated by a-personal dissensual affective energies. Whereas a-personal is a singularity, a thing, that designates both human and non-human,[487] compossibilisation is the actualisation of a-personal things, of unconditioned singularities, or actants, in a collective, whether objects, animals, rocks, or humans.[488] This is how within Lepecki's view, compossibilisation becomes 'a mutual sharing of a true affective-political field'.[489] What does this mean? Lepecki explains that when, for example, subjectivities that constitute a collective become energised by a sentiment to a particular imminence, then in response they create gestures, steps, positions, dynamics, and assemblages. At a certain moment, these gestures, steps, positions, dynamics and assemblages, become actualised in particular movements, transforming existing compossibilisations into a different co-extensive affective fields, which is corporeal.

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[481] *Ibid.*, 35.

[482] *Ibid.*,

[483] *Ibid.*,

[484] *Ibid.*, 22.

[485] *Ibid.*, 30.

[486] Lepecki, *Singularities*, 6.

[487] *Ibid.*, 36.

[488] Compossibilisation in Lepecki's theory is associated with the theory of 'compositionalism' developed by sociologist and philosopher Bruno Latour. Nevertheless, compositionalism is not concerned with truth procedures. Latour's compositionalism is concerned with the action between associated entities of actants occupied with experiments. See for example: Bruno Latour, "An attempt at 'Compositionist Manifesto'," in *New Literary History* (2010): 471-490; Bruno Latour, *Pandora's Hope* (Cambridge, London: Harvard University Press, 1999).

[489] Lepecki, "From Partaking to Initiating", 31.

Now, we should recognise, as Lepecki does, drawing upon Martin and performance scholar Amelia Jones, that subjectivities are historically created.[490] This is why Lepecki departs from compossibilisation in order to review reenactment in performance. This thought is elaborated in his book *Singularities* (2016). In *Singularities*, Lepecki recalls reenactments in performances produced after 2000 — among others, performances such as those by Fabian Barba, *A Mary Wigman Dance Evening* from 2008, in which Barba reenacts Mary Wigman's 1929 performance *Schwingende Landschaft*; or, by Xavier Le Roy, who in 2009 staged *Product of Other Circumstances*, a performance based on archival material of different Butoh dances. Lepecki writes that 'current dance re-enactments become privileged sites for exploring the theoretical and choreographic relations between experimental dance and its will to archive'.[491] Drawing upon Massumi, he defines this 'will to archive' as a capacity to identify 'still non-exhausted creative fields of "impalpable possibilities"'.[492] These fields of possibilities Lepecki calls, after Massumi, the fields of virtual '"abstraction pertaining to the thing in general"'.[493] And precisely these fields of abstraction pertaining to things — not objects — concern the possible.[494] The activation of these abstractions, of the things in-themselves, or singularities, is a matter of creating the compossible and/or incompossible.[495] Lepecki's theory of compossibilisation is steady in its proposal to overcome objecthood — and, we can suggest, representation — by fostering the concept of the thing and singularity. It asserts that 'one reenacts not to fix a work in its singular (originating) possibilisation but to unlock, release, and actualise a work's many (virtual) com- and incompossibilities'.[496]

It is not difficult to detect from this that precisely the engagement with the existing compossibilisation, and the actualisation of alternative possibilities of compossibilisation, open up a   potential for overcoming the passive patterns of the politics of perception. Lepecki indicates that the engagement of spectatorship lies in the act of initiating a movement, that is in activating a spectator to actualise 'the nascent unthinkable' beyond authority and politics of disengagement.[497] The most prolific view on the ways

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[490] Lepecki stresses the significance of history in 'From Partaking to Initiating' drawing upon Randy Martin's writing about dialectics of history and agency, and in *Singularities* drawing upon Amelia Jones' concern with the relationship between history and performance art. See: Lepecki, "From Partaking to Initiating", 31; Lepecki, *Singularities*, 116.

[491] Lepecki, *Singularities*, 117.

[492] Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation, Post-contemporary Interventions* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 91, quoted in Lepecki, *Singularities*, 120.

[493] Massumi, *Parables*, 93, quoted in *Ibid*.,

[494] Lepecki's critique of objecthood and the Object Oriented Ontology is developed in *Singularities*.

[495] Lepecki*, Singularities*, 120.

[496] *Ibid*.,

[497] Lepecki, "From Partaking to Initiating", 37-38.

performance may 'activate a spectator towards actualisation' I find in Lepecki's book *Exhausting Dance, Performance and the Politics of Movement* (2006). In it, Lepecki asserts that 'perspective is the effect created by a specific organization of lines on a representational surface'.[498] Accordingly, perspective operates by reduction of the three-dimensionality of space and the embodied nature of perception.[499] The reduction of the embodied nature of perception stands for the corporeal grounding of sensation. Here, grounding points at the moment in which sensation surrenders itself to the algorithms of visibility. Perspective hence reduces the embodiment of vision to a fixed point of view, which is associated with the hegemony of the phallogocentric representational functioning of vertical lines that organise bodies in an abstract smooth space.[500] The role of performances is thus to split the audience's attention and to keep the audience's eyes always in mobility.[501] According to Lepecki, this task requires a transformation of the reductive operation of perspective to verticality through the introduction of horizontal lines. These lines operate against phallogocentric forms, significations, and representations, and open up a possibility for a 'space of pure potentiality'.[502] In fact, it requires a choreography that enables the audience to 'attend simultaneously to the vertical plane of representation of movement and to the horizontal plane of inscription of traces'.[503] The resistance to full and fixed representations of bodies along upright vertical axis opens up a possibility for multiplying the operation of vision. The approach to choreography that challenges existing representations is capable of activating a spectator to actualise 'the nascent unthinkable' subjectivities, unthinkable bodies, identities and spaces.

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[498] André Lepecki, *Exhausting Dance, Performance and the Politics of Movement* (London: Routledge, 2006), 74.

[499] *Ibid.*, 74.

[500] Lepecki stresses the phallogocentric and vertical plane of representation by drawing upon art critic Rosalind Kraus. Observing the acts of painting, Kraus defined horizontality as a subversive force to verticality of representation. Similarly, Lepecki approaches horizontality in a formal way. For example, he develops an argument about a dissensual power of horizontality by analysing Thrisha Brown's performance *It's Draw/ Live Feed* (2003) in which the American choreographer, while dancing, leaves a trace on the surface of a paper placed on the floor. Once the paper is placed on the wall, it becomes a drawing. See: Rosalind Kraus, "Horizontality," in *Formless, A User's Guide*, eds. Yve Alain Bois and Rosalind Kraus, (New York: Zone Books, 1997); Lepecki: *Ibid.*, 65 - 86.

[501] Lepecki, *Exhausting Dance*, 74-75.

[502] *Ibid.*, 68.

[503] *Ibid.*, 74.

event as unconditioned truth

Lepecki's argument for an artistic 'politics of engagement' is significant for envisaging the political dimension of performance. The choreography of 'leadingfollowing', which enables a view on the relationship between the choreographer and the performers in affective terms, encourages us to envisage the relationships between the performance and the audience the same way. Although we could expect, by reading Lepecki's earlier work from 2006, that initial affectivity would articulate at the certain moment into a representation, in his later work Lepecki restrains from the use of the notion of representation, advocating the actualisation of affects in a true political 'field of compossibilization'. As we observed, Lepecki reduces the engagement between the choreographers and the performers to the initiation of act and motion, to the kinetic phenomenon. This is how the politics of engagement give centrality to movement and action. Once energised by sentiments, acts and movements of things in-themselves, that is singularities, initiate the leadingfollowing process. We have observed that leadingfollowing is a mutual or collective sharing of a *true* affective-political field among a-personal singularities and events. As such, it confuses the lines of authority in such a way so that in a performance there is no choreographers, but only performers. Since singularities and events stand for the unconditioned,[504] then we are able to conclude that something unconditioned to truth drives the kinetic phenomenon that underlines the affective field of compossibilisation. All things considered in Lepecki's theory, performance is a movement of singularities within a true event. It is, apparently, by these means that leadingfollowing reveals the event-effect as 'a true chore-political nature'.[505]

At this point, Lepecki's theory gives rise to the following concluding questions, revisiting the notions I have developed in this PhD: Is performance about truth or opinion? Is it about truth procedures, or about substantial types of practices? Is performance about unconditional truth, or it is conditioned by agreements and choices? Is performance actualised out of something abstract, such as truth in-itself, or articulated in relation to something concrete? Is it about conceptualising or about naming? Is performance a conceptual actualisation of an affective-political field, or is it a nominal articulation of affects into the meanings of signs? Does *mise-en-sense* require an actualisation in physical motion and mobilisation in order to destroy all of the hierarchies of representation, or it require an articulation into *mise-en-scène* and the construction of innovative representations, wherein moving or standing still does not play a decisive role for conveying the political message in performance? Consequently, is performance about action or also about passion? Is performance a collective actualised out of things, of

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[504] Lepecki, *Singularities*, 3.

[505] Lepecki, "From Partaking to Initiating", 35.

singularities in-themselves without identification, or is it a collective of persons articulated through affective identification? Is performance an event or an object of art? If performance can give rise to politics, what are the consequences of constructing society as a *true* affective field of compossibilisation and what are those of constructing society as a concrete horizon of opinion? Can we imagine politics without politicians and performances without choreographers? As Lepecki's theory of the politics of engagement invokes Deleuze's writing on event and compossibilisation, at this instant I shall turn to Deleuze's philosophy in order to offer possible answers to these questions.

To being with, I will focus on Deleuze's theory of the event, introduced in his book *The logic of Sense* (1969). Deleuze's writing on the event departs from his concern with the relationship between events-effects and language. He claims that 'the characteristic of events is to be expressed or expressible, uttered or utterable, in propositions which are at least possible'.[506] In order to unpack this thought he stresses the importance of three distinct relations within propositions: denotation or indication, manifestation or demonstration, and signification. *Denotation* stands for the relation of proposition to the external state of affairs, that is bodies, qualities, quantities, and relations.[507] It functions through the 'association' of the words relating images that represent the state of affairs, and it is expressed by form. The criterions of denotation are the 'true' and the 'false'. Whereas the '"true" signifies that a particular denotation is effectively filled', the 'false' signifies the opposite.[508] *Manifestation* is 'the relation of proposition to the person who speaks and expresses himself'.[509] As such, it stands for a statement of desires and beliefs, pointing at the internal causality of an image. Desire functions through causal inferences 'with respect to the existence of the object or the corresponding state of affairs'.[510] Belief functions on the level of 'anticipation of this object or state of affairs as its existence must be produced by an external causality'.[511] The personal character of manifestations that begins with 'I' 'functions as the principle of all possible denotation'.[512] Manifestation also implies a displacement of logical values, so that the true and the false become substituted by veracity and illusion. *Signification* is 'the relation of the word to *universal or general* concepts, and of syntactic connections to the implications of the concepts'.[513] From the

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[506] Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas, trans. Mark Lester (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 12.

[507] *Ibid.*,

[508] *Ibid.*, 13.

[509] *Ibid.*,

[510] *Ibid.*,

[511] *Ibid.*,

[512] *Ibid.*,

[513] *Ibid.*, 14.

standpoint of signification, the elements of proposition are signifying conceptual implications 'capable of referring to other propositions'.[514] In fact, they are linguistic signifiers that define relations between premises and conclusions in terms of affirmations, effects, and so on. The logical value of signification is 'the condition of truth'.[515]

According to Deleuze, from the standpoint of speech (*parole*) manifestation has primacy over denotation and signification. He writes: 'in the order of speech, it is the I which begins'.[516] That being said, "I" has a primacy over concepts. By extension, this implies that 'veracity and illusion' have primacy over 'truth' and 'conditions of truth'. Nevertheless, from the standpoint of language (*langue*) the primacy belongs to the order of signification. In the domain of language, Deleuze suggests, 'a proposition is able to appear only as a premise or a conclusion, signifying concepts before manifesting a subject, or even before denoting a state of affairs'.[517] Signified concepts such as God or the world, are primary in relation to the manifestation of "I" and the denotation of objects. The principles of true and false, which belong to the domain of denotation, 'can be explained only by the constancy of the signified concepts'.[518] Similarly, desires and beliefs which belong to the domain of manifestation, cannot enable veracity and illusion to form the orders of demands and inferences 'if the words in which they are manifested did not refer first to concepts and conceptual implications'.[519]

Nevertheless, Deleuzes emphasises that the primacy of signification over denotation is a delicate issue. In fact, 'when we consider a proposition as concluded, we make it the object of an assertion'.[520] At this point, a proposition (Z) is considered for itself, independently from its premises (A and B), and considered to be effectively true. Nevertheless, for this to happen, it is necessary that their premises (A and B) are considered to be true, too. This, consequently, gives rise to a proposition (C) whose premises belong to the order of conceptual implications, that is signification. As Deleuze explains 'the conclusion can be detached from the premises, but only on the condition that one always adds other premises from which alone the conclusion is not detachable'.[521] This implies that signification is not homogenous and that signification or 'implication

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[514] *Ibid.*,

[515] *Ibid.*,

[516] *Ibid.*, 15.

[517] *Ibid.*,

[518] *Ibid.*, 16.

[519] *Ibid.*,

[520] *Ibid.*,

[521] *Ibid.*,

never succeeds in grounding except by giving itself a ready-made denotation'.[522] This process stands for the circle of proposition.

Deleuze's observation of the relation between the domains of signification and denotation is very important for our study as it engenders, what he calls, the fourth dimension of proposition — *sense*. It is sense that breaks the circle of proposition, revealing the cause of the failure of the order of signification and, hence, the circle of proposition. We have pointed out that propositions may be either true or false. The condition of truth — which belong to the order of signification — is a 'form' of a possibility of a proposition and a 'form' of a possibility for that proposition to be true. Now, in order to assure a real genesis of denotation, outside the circle of proposition from condition to conditioned, the conditional truth must have something unconditioned that differs from the 'form' of the conditioned, that is, from the conceptual possibility. This 'something unconditioned' Deleuze identifies as ideational material or stratum, which is not any more signification but *sense*.[523] Borrowing Edmund Husserl's phenomenological vocabulary, Deleuze designates sense as an impassive and incorporeal *noema,* a perceptual content which is 'neither acting nor being acted upon'.[524] Accordingly, a sense is an ideational objective unity which does not exist and which is not given in perception, but appears as the consequence of intentional acts.[525] From this angle, sense is incorporeal[526] and is not to be 'confused with its spatio-temporarl realisation in a state of affairs'.[527] Such a view allows Deleuze to define sense not as an attribute to propositions, but to the things denoted by subjects and to the states of affairs denoted by propositions.[528] In fact, sense is 'the expressible or the expressed of the proposition'.[529] Within this view, sense cannot be recognised in an experience from the outside. Sense is simply a dimension of proposition.[530] This is why sense cannot exists in things, or mind; we can only infer it indirectly, on the basis of the circle of proposition. Irreducible to entity, sense

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[522] *Ibid.*,

[523] *Ibid.*, 19.

[524] *Ibid.*, 20.

[525] *Ibid.*, 21.

[526] *Ibid.*, 19.

[527] *Ibid.*, 22.

[528] *Ibid.*, 21.

[529] *Ibid.*, 22.

[530] *Ibid.*, 17.

resides at the surface of things, as 'a pure event which inheres or subsets in the proposition'.[531] Deleuze asserts: 'The event is sense itself.'[532]

Deleuze's definition of sense gives rise to the question about the relationship between sense and the other three dimensions of proposition: denotation, manifestation, and signification. As shown above, denotation implies the association of words that denote things, or states of affairs that are considered either true or false. Evidently, sense cannot belong to the domain of denotation despite the fact that 'all denotation presupposes sense'.[533] As far as the domain of manifestation is concerned, manifestation implies the logic of causal inferences of desires, hence expressing veracity and illusion through speech. It is 'founded on the order of the conceptual implications of signification'.[534] In other words, it is founded on the order of language. All things considered, sense cannot belong to the order of manifestation. For its part, the order of signification is concerned with syntactic connections, with language. As we have seen before, signification demonstrates a relation between premises and conclusions. In this context, signification becomes the condition of proposition and 'the condition of truth'.[535] Now, Deleuze suggests that the condition of truth is a characteristic of signification which 'it shares with sense, and which is already a characteristic of sense'.[536] When the condition of truth is at once a characteristic of sense that, however, designates something unconditional, then that which is unconditional — sense — stands for the eternal truth or pure event. In a nutshell, sense is identified with the unconditional truth. Within this context Deleuze writes, that as 'the splendour and the magnificence of the event', sense points that the event is 'the purely expressed', or the release of eternal truth.[537] Consequently, the truth of proposition — of the events actualised in the state of affairs and identities — is the expression of the pure event, of the unconditional, of the eternal truth that resides in-itself. For this reason, every possibility of proposition expresses unconditional truth.

Given these points, we shall ask what does it mean to define performance as the event? Is performance a consequence of pure events and eternal truths? Do performances express unconditional truth? If the event is incorporeal, impersonal, beyond the universal and the general, the collective and the private,[538] having no temporal and spatial

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[531] *Ibid.*, 19.

[532] *Ibid.*, 22.

[533] *Ibid.*, 17.

[534] *Ibid.*, 18.

[535] *Ibid.*,

[536] *Ibid.*,

[537] *Ibid.*, 149.

[538] *Ibid.*, 148.

dimension on its own, how can we conceive the ways performances are constructed outside these dimensions?

the compossibility of concepts

When the condition of possibility of something is the unconditional truth, then all that which is possible is inherent in things themselves and we are inclined to designate societies through truth procedures. According to this view, all that which is possible is compossible in-itself. But, what does it mean to envisage society in terms of compossibility of the compossibles in-themselves?[539]

Compossible is a term coined by Leibniz. According to Leibniz, 'our certainty regarding universal and eternal truths is grounded in the ideas themselves, independently of the senses, just as pure ideas, ideas of the intellect'.[540] This implies that the truth about contingent singular things, arriving to us through confused perception, is required by truths of the intellect.[541] For instance, as Leibniz suggests, colour or sound as illusory images arrive to us 'either from things themselves or immediatly from God's unerring veracity'.[542] When the links between the sensible things depend upon intellectual truths, then their truth is grounded in reason.[543] In other words, all relations are depended on truth, that is on reason or mind. No matter that mind might be relating human or God's mind, the ides of the mixed modes[544] of relations 'are real just as long as the modes are possible, or […] distinctly conceivable'.[545] It is this that requires that 'its [mind's] constituent ideas be *compossible*, i.e. be able to be in mutual agreement'.[546] Nevertheless, Leibniz immediatly stresses that 'not all possible species are compossible'.[547] Unlike compossible species or things that exalt the divine perfection, incompossible seems to be lower in rank and may not gain existence at all. In Leibniz's opinion, as it can be seen, the

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[539] A desire for being in-itself is explained in more details in chapter 2.

[540] Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *New Essays on Human Understanding*, trans. and ed. by Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennett (Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 393.

[541] *Ibid*.,

[542] *Ibid*., 416.

[543] *Ibid*., 445.

[544] In Leibniz's theory 'mixed modes' are 'ideas of relations'. *Ibid*., 214.

[545] *Ibid*., 265.

[546] *Ibid*.,

[547] *Ibid*., 397.

world, although containing everything in perfect harmony,[548] suggests a division in moral categories.[549]

Drawing upon Leibniz's theory of "monad" which, as we observed, posits that all distinct things have reason in themselves, individually, and that their mixed modes of relations constitute compossible, Deleuze writes that the very condition of compossibility is '*a prolongation or continuation of convergent series, one into the other*'.[550] Compossibility hence points at the infinite processes of reconstitution of convergent series, that is, the world constituted by all series.[551] In this sense, compossibility could be called 'the totality of converging and extensive series that constitute the world' and 'the totality of monads [or individuals] that convey the same world'.[552] At this point, by recalling Leibniz, Deleuze reintroduces another type of relations — incompossible. In contrast to compossibles, incompossibles designate 'the series that diverge, and that from then on belong to two possible worlds' and 'mondas [or individuals] of which each expresses a world differently'.[553] Regarding the Bible, which provides the description of the first sin committed by Adam, Deleuze envisaged the incompossibles in terms of 'the relation of vice-diction'.[554] Now, if the world is expressed by monads that are constitutive of individuals emitted by singularities, which are standing for the relationship of coincidence between ordinary points (A and B), then the world is, as Deleuze suggests, 'a pure emission of singularities'.[555] Further on, since singularities have a function of the law of convergence that ties all individuals, then the relation of vice-diction, or of incompossibles, points at the divergence from singularities of this world that, for example, do not sinn and that are, hence, considered compossible as the best of the worlds.

At this point, we should stress that every monad is defined by pre-individual singularities, and is thus compossible with monads whose singularities converge with its own, and incompossible with monads whose singularities diverge from them.[556] Although pre-individual singularities are indefinite and indeterminate (garden is just a garden), they tie individuals by the law of convergence to concepts (garden might be the one of sin).

[548] *Ibid*., 307.

[549] To be sure, Lepecki's view on compossibilisation is evolving from Leibniz.

[550] Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold. Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (London: The Athlone Press, 1993), 50.

[551] According to Deleuze, different characters make up series according to which the [physical] species never stop varying or dividing.' In: *Ibid*., 65.

[552] *Ibid*., 60.

[553] *Ibid*.,

[554] *Ibid*.,

[555] *Ibid*.,

[556] *Ibid*., 63-64.

That being said, individuals, just as subjects, appear as the consequence of the actualisation of pre-individual singularities. More importantly, they exist by virtue of the power of concept. Nevertheless, concepts that — as we have previously observed — belong to the order of signification, do not simply relate determination, but condense and prolong singularities.[557] Once singularities are understood as events, then condensation and prolongation of events means to raise events to the state of multi-determinable concepts. A concept hence stands for 'the metaphysical reality of the corresponding subject'.[558] This means that individuals convey the world, the compossible world, on the conceptual level.

In *What is Philosophy?* (1994) Deleuze and Guattari wrote that 'concept is defined by '*the inseparability of a finite number of heterogeneous components traversed by a point of absolute survey at infinite speed*'.[559] These components are singularities, pure variations ordered by other singularities. As such, they are characterised by proceduralism — that I will return to in a moment. Now, components, or singularities, are endlessly traversed by concepts. Although concepts belong to the level of the individual — as we previously noted — they are only intentions without spatio-temporal coordinates.[560] This implies that concepts are incorporeal, and only effectuated in bodies.[561] Similarly, concepts are not concerned with the state of affairs; they are only effectuated in them.[562] In fact, concepts are pure events, and should not be mixed with discourse. Unlike discourse, concepts do not link propositions together. In Deleuze's and Guattari's view, propositions are defined by their reference, expressed by sentence which is deprived from sense.[563] In contrast, concepts 'freely enter into relationship of nondiscursive resonance'.[564] We could suggests that the relationship between concepts is unconditional. Hence, in their inter-relation, concepts, just like events, monads, sensations, individuals, and affects, express a possible, understood as the unconditional truth. What in fact concepts express, we can now suggest, is an ultimate positive feature shared by all the concepts in a chain.[565]

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[557] *Ibid.*, 64.

[558] *Ibid.*, 54.

[559] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?,* trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, [1991] 1994), 21.

[560] *Ibid.*,

[561] *Ibid.*,

[562] *Ibid.*,

[563] *Ibid.*, 22.

[564] *Ibid.*, 23.

[565] On positivity and negativity, see chapter 2.

My goal is not to get into an attentive analysis of Deleuze's theory. This task would require a separate work. But, what I want to point out at this moment, for the sake of our argument, is that the analysis of relations in infinite terms of compossible and incompossible, is a result of Deleuze's endeavour to determine the truth of existence. It is from the concern with Leibniz's distinction between the truth of essence and the truth of existence that Deleuze view on compossible and incompossible evolves.[566] Once this is recognised, we can not help but notice that both compossible and incompossible fall out of the political logic. Compossible and possible, which point at the unity and pluralism of positions, stand for the arbitrary actualisations of unconditional true events into the *adéquation* of abstract concepts.[567] Within this philosophical model, all social relations are determined by the logic of unconditional truth.

opinion formation:
a flight from the unconditional truth

We have analysed a view on performance as a choreography of ledingfollowing that actualises in a 'true affective-political field of compossibilization', by locating the origins of 'truth procedures' and 'compossibilisation' in Leibniz's and Deleuze's philosophies. From this rapid, and obviously incomplete exploration of the literature, we can nevertheless move onto the search for an alternative perspective on choreographing performances. I will start by considering the relevance of the processes of *opinion formation* for this approach, drawing upon political philosophers Hannah Arendt and Chantal Mouffe. But, to begin, let's start by questioning opinion formation from Deleuze's philosophical framework.

We have observed that in Deleuze's philosophy 'the event' has an essential relationship with the order of signification, that is with language, in the processes of production of denotations as propositions. Hence our caution in identifying performance with the event. As demonstrated, Deleuze defines event as sense, having a characteristic of the unconditional truth. Accordingly, sensation embodies the unconditional truth, the truth in-itself. It is within this framework that Deleuze writes: 'art is the language of sensation. Art does not have opinions'.[568] And, further on, art 'exists in itself'.[569] But, why at this point does it matter that art has no opinions? Deleuze envisaged opinions as 'functions of lived experience that […] claim to have a certain knowledge of

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[566] Deleuze, *The Fold*, 51.

[567] On adequation see chapter 2.

[568] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 176.

[569] *Ibid.*, 164.

affections'.[570] He stresses that 'opinion misjudges affective states and groups them together or separates them wrongly'.[571] For instance, jealousy becomes an unhappy consequence of love, that is, love resembles jealousy. Now, in order to reverse the order of affective states that are 'misjudged' and 'separated wrongly' through the principle of resemblance, Deleuze turns to sensations. He suggests that sensations embody the event.[572] In fact, what sensations embody is the unconditional and eternal truth, the truth in-itself. Further on, sensation is not a contiguity within a coupling of two sensations through resemblance, but 'something passing from one to the other'.[573] Sensation is hence 'a zone of indetermination, of indiscernibility'.[574] In the zone of indetermination, things, beasts, and persons, precede their natural differentiation. They are in-themselves, pointing at the unconditional truth that underlines them. And, it is this nonhuman becoming that arises from the zones of indetermination that Deleuze calls affect.[575]

According to Deleuze, the affective dimension of indeterminacy can best be apprehended through art. Once we have recognised that sensation is realised when the material passes into the percept or the affect, then art, living in zones of indetermination stands for the being of sensation. Accordingly, artists are understood to be 'presenters of affects, the inventors and creators of affects'.[576] From the point of view of art practice, jealousy is finality or destination; it is 'the meaning of signs - affects as semiology'.[577] Given these points, the things in themselves — rather than opinions — proceeding from sense and embodying the pure event and unconditional truth, compel the subject to invent new ways of being through affects. If, as Deleuze writes, '[t]he work of art is a being of sensation and nothing else: it exists in itself,'[578] then, we can suggest that art preserves eternal truth in affects.

Now, to begin with, let's ask once more: does performance, and art in general, co-extend and express unconditional truth? Is art about truth procedures? Statements such as 'dance expresses the immanence of the act', 'performance stands for the alignment of the body with movement', 'political dimension of performance manifests in moving less', or 'tragedy is a superior form of theatre', once perceived as truth, preclude polemics and,

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[570] *Ibid.*, 174.

[571] *Ibid.*,

[572] *Ibid.*, 176.

[573] *Ibid.*, 173.

[574] *Ibid.*,

[575] *Ibid.*,

[576] *Ibid.*, 175.

[577] *Ibid.*,

[578] *Ibid.*, 164.

hence, the possibility of opinion formation to take place. We could suggest that these statements, as well as different variations of them, are coercive and despotic. They deal with the unconditional perception of truth, not with conditional operations, such as persuasion and *opinion*. In fact, they do not take into account other opinions, which would be a gesture of political thinking and the essence of political life. The political logic implies, as Arendt pointed out, that 'I form an opinion by considering a given issue from different viewpoints, by making present to my mind the standpoints of those who are absent; that is, I represent them.'[579] In Arendt's view, the process of opinion formation is a question of 'being and thinking in my own identity where actually I am not'.[580] What the political perspective suggests is that art is not concerned with truth procedures, but with opinions, with *doxas*, implying the other and the moment of representation. This is why from this viewpoint art ceases to speak facts that belong to the order of science, and aligns itself with the philosophy of praxis that designates a system consisting of a plurality of social positions.[581]

At this point, we must start questioning the political dimension of performance in relation to *the different political logics of opinion formation*. For the most part, opinion points at the liberation from private interests. Arendt states: 'I can make myself representative of everybody else.'[582] For Arendt, this detachment from private interests relates 'the world of universal interdependence',[583] in which all positions and opinions are impartial and interdependent. In such a world, people freely *associate* with the common public sphere. We can say that the common public sphere is a sphere in which the pluralism of opinions co-exist in harmony. The associative type of relations between the differential positions and opinions gives rise to a democratic politics of agonism without antagonism. Political philosopher Oliver Marchart calls this type of 'the political' associative.[584]

Nevertheless, taking into consideration political theorist Carl Schmitt's assertion that the political is the most intense and extreme antagonism',[585] we are inclined to

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[579] Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future. Six Exercises in Political Thought* (London: Penguin Books, 2006), 542. iBooks.

[580] *Ibid*., 543.

[581] About the difference between the philosophy of praxis and science see chapter 4.

[582] Arendt, *Past and Future*., 544.

[583] *Ibid*.,

[584] Oliver Marchart, *Post-foundational Political Thought: Political Difference in Nancy, Lefort, Badiou and Laclau* (Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 2008), 39.

[585] Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 29.

envisage the political differently.[586] Marchart stressed Schmitt's view on the political in which 'a collectivity is established through an external antagonism vis-à-vis an enemy or constitutive outside, that is, by way of dissociation'.[587] When 'the political' is established through *dissociations*, we are dealing with a democratic politics of agonism which are always traversed by antagonism. This project of democratic politics is envisaged by Mouffe. Hence the difference between the two kinds of pluralist democracy: Arendt's pluralism, which assumes a collective established through harmony, and Mouffe's pluralism, which assumes a construction of collectives through conflict. Mouffe's view on agonistic pluralism implies that art is not simply an aggregation of opinions, or an abundance of opinions co-existing together in 'the world of universal interdependence', as Arendt's theory suggest. On the contrary, art implies the acts of exclusion of certain opinions and hence it is a consequence of conflicts and polemics raised by particular voices in specific contexts.

Drawing upon Wittgenstein, Mouffe stresses that 'in order to have agreement in opinions, there must first be agreement in forms of life'.[588] On the one hand, this implies the *agreement* about the way we use language and terms. On the other hand, 'if language is to be a means of communication there must be agreement not only in definitions but also (queer as it may sound) in judgements',[589] in the ways we use language. These agreements are necessary so that procedures can be put in practice.[590] It is then for the reason of their inscription in the shared forms of life, that procedures, as Mouffe suggests, 'should be envisaged as a complex assemble of practices'.[591] Within this framework Mouffe writes that '[t]hose practices constitute specific forms of individuality and identity that makes possible the allegiance to the procedures'.[592] In other words, procedures presuppose ethico-political values that are accepted, and allegiance to these values constitutive to social practices. This is how procedures give rise to individuality and identity through the established social practices. It is for that matter that procedural and substantial, or procedures and practices, cannot be separated. Given the co-constitutive character of procedures and practices, we have to acknowledge that the political thought is not matter of unconditionality, but of *conditionality*. This does not mean that the political thought stands for the fidelity to truth processes and singularity, as philosopher Alain

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[586] I have discussed Carl Schmitt's political theory in chapter 4.

[587] Oliver Marchart, *Post-foundational Political Thought*, 41.

[588] Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London: Verso, 2009), 97.

[589] Ludwig Wittgenstein, quoted in Mouffe, *Ibid*., 68.

[590] On proceduralism, see also chapter 2.

[591] Mouffe, *Paradox*, 97.

[592] *Ibid*., 68.

Badiou suggests.[593] His view implies the existence of a natural, fixed locus of origin. Rather, a political thought stands for the allegiance to particular values that are shared among the people, and that enable agreement in opinion. Agreement in opinion implies the impossibility of avoiding human forms of life, which require democratic ethos and language, that is discourse.

In the absence of the fixed locus of centrality — specifically of the transcendental signified such as Arendt's, that is Aristotel's *energeia* — everything becomes *discourse*. This, above all, implies that we agree upon the meaning of the term discourse.[594] Derrida writes that in the absence of the centre everything is discourse, understood as 'a system in which the central signified, the original or transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of differences. The absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and the play of signification infinitely.'[595] Developing this idea, Laclau and Mouffe demonstrated that discourse is not only a combination of speech and writing, but a system of linguistic and extralinguistic relations.[596] This is to say that every social practice, including performance, is meaningful and only symbolically constructed.

As I have indicated throughout this dissertation, within the realm of performance, discourse stands for the system of relations materialised through language games, through body language and actions with which body language is entwined. In other words, discourse stands for the moments of performance in relation to the other.[597] This assertion implies a view on performance as a performative practice 'concerned with the ways sociocosmic relations are materialised through the process of symbolisation and corporeally constituted, valued, viewed, and exchanged'.[598] Once we have acknowledged, as Butler pointed out, that 'actors are always already on the stage, within the terms of the performance',[599] we cannot fail to recognise that the experience of performance is based on acts that are always already symbolically constructed. Nevertheless, I have cancelled the totality of performance as a discursive practice. To explain what it means, in Chapter

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[593] Alain Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil* (London, New York: Verso, 2001), 41.

[594] Derrida criticised centrality sedimented in the history of metaphysics and the history of the West in general. He writes that its matrix 'is the determination of Being as presence in all senses of this word. It could be shown that all the names related to fundamentals, to principles, or to the center have always designated an invariable presence — eidos, arché, telos, energeia, ousia (essence, existence, substance, subject), alétheia, transcendentality…"; and, that the center can not be thought 'in the form of a present-being', that it has no 'natural site'. In: Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference* (London: Routledge, [1967] 2005), 353.

[595] Derrida, *Writing and Difference,* 354.

[596] Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, "Post-Marxism Without Apologies", *New Left Review,* 166 (1987): 82.

[597] See chapter 1.

[598] *Ibid.*,

[599] Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory", in *Theatre Journal*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (Dec., 1988): 526.

1, I gave the following example: 'the rigid ballet technique that maintains physical mastery over dancing bodies by means of strict methods (alignment, turnout, posture, toe pointing, and so on) is grounded in the exclusion of movement that relates any other social practice from choreography (street-dance, sports, games, stand-ups, protest marches, just wars, still-acts, and so on)'.[600] As this example points out, the cancellation of the totality of the relational logic of performance implies exclusion. This is why a performative discursive totality does not exist in the form of a simply delimited positivity. As I have indicated in Chapter 2, there is something radically negative that underlines it. This radical negativity stresses that a possibility of one discursive totality is at the same time its impossibility, opening up the space for different opinions and polemics. It is in this context that we can say that the allegiance to procedures provides a partial limitation of performance and impossibility to define it in fixed terms, such as 'dance is the alignment of the body with movement'.

As I have pointed out in chapter 1, a discursive configuration of the social realm emphasises a *hegemonic* construction of societies and every social practice, including performance. The field of discursivity provides a view on hegemony as 'a theory of decision taken in an undecidable terrain'.[601] Accordingly, every decisional act implies a nodal point (*point de capiton*), which presupposes 'a particular element assuming a "universal" structuring functioning within a certain discursive field […] without the particularity of the element *per se* predetermining such a function'.[602] It is in this framework that before performing, the notion of the performer establishes the centrality of the category of *identification*, as pointed out in chapter 5. Identifications between performers, and between performers and choreographers, imply agreement between specific forms of individuality and identity allegiant to certain ethico-political values. Relations in performance, and, more precisely, hegemonic relations, are hence a result of agreement on shared forms of life. They imply decisions on processes of construction, such as why and how performers are going to perform, what they are going to perform, who is going to perform what, and for whom they are going to perform.[603] Such an apportionment of parts and positions, as Rancière proposes, 'is based on a distribution of spaces, times, and forms of activity that determines the very manner in which something in common ends itself to participation and in what way various individuals have part in

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[600] *Ibid.*,

[601] Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (London: Verso, [1985] 2001), *xi*.

[602] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony*, *xi*.

[603] Exploring the authenticity — understood as unmediated — theatre scholars Ulrike Garde and Meg Mumford wrote that any analysis of performances 'must consider the expectations and pre-knowledge of the individual participants — including artists, real-people performers, and audience members'. In: Ulrike Garde and Meg Mumford, *Theatre of Real People: Diverse Encounters at Berlin's Hebbel am Ufer and Beyond* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), 12.

this distribution'.[604] It is then this agreement on shared forms of performance that gives rise to certain opinions and excludes others, in such a way that performance presupposes that particularity. Therefore, to form an opinion in performance is to partially represent the universality of ethico-political values that reside in freedom and liberty for all — the democratic principles that underline human forms of life.

From this point of view, *performance* is not any more conceived as the evental choreography. When performance is envisaged as the event, it becomes difficult to imagine not only how performers establish relationship between themselves and with the choreographer, but also how performance establishes relationship with the audience. This is so, because the evental approach to performance prevents the process of opinion formation, and, hence, polemics, hegemonic relations, and conflicts, indispensable for establishing a particular type of relations.[605] However, what is crucially important is not to confuse opinion formation with the kinetic phenomenon, nor with opinionating, or with argumentation. Neither opinion formation should be associated with an agreement on a definition of performance. This is so, because to form an opinion is not about the intellectualisation of performance concerned with what performance is in-itself.[606] Rather, to form an opinion is to agree on the ways performance is to be constructed, foreseeing the consequences of constructing performance as such for the others, especially for the audience.[607] In this sense, agreement in opinion implies not only the moment of representation, but also, as we will shortly see, a passionate collective investment of affects in objects.

the performativity of names:
the articulation of affects into representations

Drawing upon Arendt, and Laclau and Mouffe, I have demonstrated that the political logic is not occupied with the relations between singularities possible in-themselves and, then, actualised by virtue of the unconditioned in a true conceptual

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[604] Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics* (London, New York: Continuum, 2006), 12.

[605] In the political arena, the types of relationship between the leader and the people may be authoritarian when the vertical politics dominates. This is the case, for instance, with the right-wing populist party *Front National* in France. But, the relationship between the leader and the people may be of different kind when it implies a quasi-verticality. This is the relationship that we can encounter in the left-wing movement *la France insoumise* in France. In this case, the leader incorporates some of the desires of the people he represents; that is, the leader and the people together participate in constructing identities. The same political logic may be applied to the analyses of the relationship between the performers and the choreographers.

[606] In chapter 1, we have observed that performance can always appropriate elements from different artistic genres, genres of performing arts, various social practices and different discourses.

[607] This is applicable to both art theory and art practice.

denominator. Consequently, I have claimed that the political logic is not a principle of proposing an ultimate positive feature shared by all the concepts connected in the chain called compossibilisation. If it was so, we would be dealing with an operation of seeking unconditional truth that resides in a unity of compossible, or, as Laclau stated, with 'a conceptual operation of *finding* an abstract common feature unrolling all social grievances'.[608] Within this context, as I have suggested earlier, Deleuze's philosophy implies a creation of an ideal society through the principle of subsumption of all differences by an abstract conceptual denominator.[609]

The political logic that I employ in this dissertation is concerned with *a performative practice of opinion formation* that implies a passionate collective investment of affects in objects. Unlike a conceptual practice which constitutes the chain of compossibles, a performative practice or operation constitutes the chain 'as such'. Let's now unfold this assertion by drawing upon Laclau's definition of performative operation in terms of *naming*.

According to Laclau, performativity implies that the names of universality — such as 'freedom' and 'liberty for all' — are singularities.[610] As such, they transcend particular demands of popular identities — such as those for 'bread, peace and land'.[611] On one hand, this means that 'popular subjects are always singularities'.[612] On the other hand, this means that particular popular identities never disappear and that they are 'always the points of tension / negotiation between universality and particularity'.[613] It is within this sense that grievances, which have nothing to do with particular demands of popular identities, always express themselves through particularities. As a result, the names of universality, that are always singularities, do not stand for abstract concepts, as Deleuze's theory proposes, but for empty terms invested in particularities.

This observation implies that from the point of view of discourse analysis the condition of possibility of something manifests through performativity, or *naming*. It resides in the realm of discursivity, in the field of opinion and political thought.[614] Accordingly, all that is possible is conditioned by a structural impossibility persisting on the nominal level, that is, by the impossibility of fulfilling names of universality, such as freedom and liberty for all. In this sense, the structural impossibility or unevenness points

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[608] Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason* (London: Verso, 2007), 97.

[609] See chapter 2.

[610] Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, 118.

[611] All antagonisms present in Russian Revolution were condensed in demands for 'bread, peace and land'. *Ibid.*,

[612] *Ibid.*,

[613] Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, 97.

[614] To clarify, the realm of discursivity is corresponding with the order of signification in Deleuze's theory.

at the specific negativity underlining discursive relations. Such a dynamic analytic framework, as we observed in Chapter 5, entails the following operation: when universal principles of freedom and liberty are put into question, let's say when they are suppressed by the capitalist techniques of domination, then they condense in particular or / and popular identities. For this reason, the possibility of popular identities does not reside in the possibility of human reconciliation sought, for example, in abstract concepts of identity.[615] Popular identities constitute a chain of a plurality of dissimilar demands connected through identification, which is embodied on the nominal level. As this operation is incapable to achieve totality, then that which is embodied is always subject to contestation.

Laclau writes that 'without constructing a popular identity out of a plurality of democratic demands' '[t]here is no hegemony'.[616] From the point of view of the theory of *hegemony*, within the realm of the political we are not dealing with the unity of popular identities on the level of abstract conceptions of a-personal singularities, but rather on the level of *empty terms*, or names of singularities invested in persons. As it was pointed out, popular identities — or any particular identities — as hegemonic identities, are consequences of collective identifications that presuppose agreement in shared forms of life: the way we use language, define terms, and judge. Accordingly, identifications stand for the articulating principles of what Gramsci calls 'popular wills'. Drawing upon Gramsci, we can see that only when the unity is organised around a collective decision or agreement upon the way we use terms, the quantity of various wills becomes the quality of popular will.[617] This agreement then presupposes an agreement in opinion. Drawing upon Arendt, we have observed that to have an opinion means to consider a given issue from different viewpoints, 'by making present to my mind the standpoints of those who are absent'.[618] This is how political identities, of which performing bodies are constitutive part, shift the focus from rational truth to opinion, to *doxa*. Nevertheless, as we have already pointed out drawing upon Mouffe, the formation of opinion is a dissociative project which presupposes a construction of collectives through conflict or agonism.

Given this, it becomes possible to suggest that without a constitutive unevenness of opinions there is no *affective investments*. To clarify this thought, we shall turn for a moment to Jacques Lacan's psychoanalysis that inspired Laclau's and Mouffe's theories. Lacan distinguished the real from the imaginary and the symbolic. In Lacan's theory, the

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[615] I have indicated in chapter 5 that identity exists as a response to the techniques of domination seen as a common-cause of unity. This unity is organised on the level of identification and, hence, established beyond class- , race- , or gender - based conceptualisations.

[616] Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, 95.

[617] Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, Vol III, ed. and trans. Joseph A. Buttigieg (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 164.

[618] Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 542.

real stands for the organism's pseudo-totality,[619] while imaginary stands for its mental schema.[620] Imaginary is constructed in relation to the other,[621] and governs the investment in objects that acquire symbolic value. Accordingly, the real is inscribed within the symbolic. Now, in political terms the symbolic is a result of a desire for the mythical fullness of reconciled society, or something universal. Since desire cannot be satisfied, Laclau suggests that 'there is no achievable *jouissance* except through radical investment in an *objet petit a*'.[622] This operation implies the particularisation of the drives or plurality of *objet petit a.*[623] We know by reading Lacan that the notion *objet petit a* designates the object-cause of desire that determines relations between the subject and the other.[624] The significant characteristic of *objet petit a* is that it embodies the impossibility of totality or fullness. This means that the radical investment of the universal or the whole in an *object petit a* 'is always going to be embodied as a part'.[625] If we agree that affect (that is, enjoyment) is the very essence of investment, as Laclau suggests,[626] then we can understand why 'the "embodying" entity becomes the full object of the cathectic investment'.[627] In other words, the embodying entity becomes the object invested with affects, the phantasmic excess of objects. From this viewpoint Laclau proposes that to embody something which has no consistency on its own 'can only mean giving a name to what is being embodied'.[628] This is how objects becomes sublimated into things.[629]

Obviously, performative operation of naming that implies the investment of objects with affects requires sublimation or articulation of universal into particular. Laclau stresses that the materiality of a part — of an embodied entity — may assume a function of a whole and become a source of enjoyment, or of affects.[630] Translated into political terms, the whole is a hegemonic representation. Given this, representation points that

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[619] Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: a selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Routledge, [1966] 2003), 96.

[620] *Ibid.*, 230.

[621] The subject is not fulfilled in his / her own identity to himself / herself.

[622] Laclau*, On Populist Reason*, 115-116.

[623] *Ibid.*, 119.

[624] In *Objet petit a,* 'object' stands for the Freud's object of desire which is mediated by 'a', whereas 'a' stands for otherness, for the other (*autre* in French). To be sure, Lacan insisted that *objet petit a* should remain untranslated. On this interpretation of *objet petit a*, see, for instance: Lacan, *Écrits*.

[625] Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, 115.

[626] *Ibid.*,

[627] *Ibid.*, 119.

[628] *Ibid.*,

[629] *Ibid.*, 119-120.

[630] *Ibid.*, 115.

hegemony is 'nothing more than the investment of a purely mythical fullness in a partial object'.[631] On one hand, the partial object testifies that representation is not capable of reproducing a fullness preceding it. On the other hand, it points that representation is the primary ontological principle. Once this is recognised, we have to agree with Laclau that 'representation is the absolutely primary level in construction of objectivity'.[632] In a word, representation is the source of affects.

performance as an agonistic choreo-political practice

We have seen that each representation may become a source of affects. Now, we can start thinking about a representation as an object-cause of struggle and conflicts between "us" and "them". Writing about a collective identity, about the construction of "we", Mouffe observes that a human collective is constructed through 'a passionate affective investment that creates a strong identification among the members of a community'.[633] What follows from Mouffe's view is that the collective passionate affective investment is enabled by identification. This type of identification requites shared allegiance to particular values and, hence, agreement in forms of life. We have already observed this as a condition for having agreement in opinion. To have agreement in opinion is to agree about the way we use language, that is about definitions and judgements of terms. To agree in opinions is hence to represent affects on a nominal level in such way so that it differs from the nominal level constructed by 'them'.

This is the point where we can say that the agreement among the people is not an unconditioned process, an arbitrary composition of differential and adequate positions. Collective agreement is a decisive and concrete unity of different demands accomplished through symbolic overdetermination.[634] The performative practice of naming points at the articulating principle of different affects into representations. From the viewpoint of discourse analysis, representation does not stand for the corporeal embodiment of the incorporeal true event. Neither it stands for the actualisation of the event into a 'true'

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[631] *Ibid*., 116.

[632] *Ibid*., 115.

[633] Chantal Mouffe, *Agonistics* (London: Verso, 2015)*,* 46.

[634] Overdetermination is the concept borrowed from linguistics and psychoanalysis. In these disciplines it has an objective dialectical connotation relating content. Overdetermination is the key concept in Louis Althusser's theory. In his theory it points at the type of fusion through symbolisation. Overdetermination enables us to see that any social unity is a symbolic unity, a unity constructed on a nominal level.

compossible field; it is not an abstraction.[635] This is so because affects are conditioned by the body. In fact, they belong to the body, to the realm of the corporeal, to the realm of opinion and representation. When affects become understanding, that is, when they articulate into opinion, then this operation is one of representation. By this, we have explained that affects as semiotics always produce a specific symbolic order, which is partial and contingent construction.

All things considered, we are able to conclude that the political dimension of performance does not reside in a kinetic phenomenon of engaging in a choreography of 'leadingfollowing' that opens up gaps for the distribution of the sensible, which are then actualised in 'a true affective-political field' of compossibiles consisting of abstract concepts.

From the point of view of dissociative political logic choreography entails a co-engagement of the choreographer with the performers, and the other persons included in the production of performances, such as costume designer, set designer, dramaturge, sound and light directors, musicians or composers, and so on. The co-engagement stimulates a passionate affective identification that gives rise to discursive practice, enabling the exchange of opinions and the construction of performance. This means that a collective affective investment always articulates in representation. From this point of view, choreography is a collective acquired through that which Gramsci calls 'compassionality'.[636] Compassionality always articulate in representations, standing for agreements in opinions accomplished on the nominal level. It is thought the articulation of affects into representation that *mise-en-sense* sublimates into *mise-en-scène* or *mise-en-forme*.[637] Once we have recognised that *mise-en-scène* or *mise-en-forme* is a primary sources of affects, we have to acknowledge that performance is not a consequence of something unconditional; it does not express abstractions such as unconditional truth. Performance is always conditioned by *mise-en-scène* invested with particular affects, giving rise to polemics, opinions, and decisions, on the ways body language is to be used and performed in an alternative way. When performance is envisaged as representation

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[635]   I would like to suggest that in contrast to the political logic which implies relations among objects, the economic logic implies relations between abstractions. Historian Dipesh Chakrabarty shows that despotism of capital and economic principles intend to suspend all differences and turn them into abstractions. Sociologist Antoine Hennion writes that economics reduces the objects of art to abstractions, by covering over the reason for art, that is the motive for action that produces art and that reveals its social and political function. See: Chapter 2; Dipesh Chakrabartry, *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Antoine Hennion, "A Plea For Responsible Art. politics, the market, creation," In *Art and the Challenge of Markets*, eds. Victoria Alexander, Samuli Hägg, Simo Häyrynen, Erkki Sevänen, trans. James O'Hagan, Vol. 1 (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018). I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Dr. Antoine Hennion and Sciences Po/SPEAP Paris for the possibility to read this unpublished text.

[636] Gramsci, *Notebooks*, 429.

[637] On sublimation of *mise-en-sense* into *mise-en-scène*, see chapter 3.
    On sublimation and articulation, see chapter 4.

and object-cause of contestation and articulation of spectatorial codes, we can speak about the artistic strategies of engagement. It is within the context of the strategies of engagement with the common object-cause that performance contains a reason for a possible unity.

The crucial aspect of performance is that it does not enclose the choreography of articulation within the stage. Performance links together the performers, the choreographers and the audience. In fact, the artistic strategies of engagement enable representational character of performance to employ the body in such a way so that it can reach the audience on the affective level. By these means performance shows its capacity to induce affects that make the audience see things differently, envisage different possibilities of constituting democratic politics and ways of living together. For this reason, we can say that the political dimension of performance does not reside in the zones of indiscernibility, but on the horizon of contingent representations, raising from the state of affairs. By these means, instead of creating a smooth space inhabited by indiscernibles, by the persons who are in-themselves pointing at unconditional truth, performance constitutes a striated space inhabited by agonistics. Agonistics are capable of uniting in their differences against a common-cause, against the capitalist techniques of domination. Such a decisive act of unity may take place on any level these techniques subordinate freedom and equality, and open up a possibility of invigorating democracy. On this horizon, performance does not only define possibilities; it necessarily criticises and challenges political narratives underlining issues as different as semiotics, gender, racism, poverty, populism, conflicts, terrorism, neo-colonialism, accumulation of nuclear arsenal, increased carbon emissions, extinction of species, and so on. For that matter, performance is not an event, but an object-cause of affects — an agonistic choreo-political practice.

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