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MAKING SENSE OF PERCEPTION AND POWER IN PARTICIPATORY PERFORMANCE

Horizons of Change and Politics of the Sensible in Lois Weaver's *What Tammy Needs to Know*, Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen's *Complaints Choir*, and Claudia Bosse's *dominant powers. was also tun?*

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the transformative potential of contemporary participatory performance practice and the possibilities for locating and interrogating it through performance analysis that pays special attention to the dynamic of human perception. The writer suggests that the crucial ideological assumptions, power relations, as well as the processes of exclusion and inclusion of participatory projects, are not to be seen solely in their "goals" or "themes", but, even more distinctly, in the modes of bodily participation that they employ. The study consists of a theoretical part and three case study analyses. In the theoretical part, the writer presents a novel analytical framework for addressing the ways in which artistic performances engage and affect their participants, and for understanding the culture-bound dynamic of perception, power, knowledge and the body both in participatory performance situations and in our everyday lives. This framework provides a detailed account of the material-performative human perceptual apparatus, a theme less explored in the field of theatre and performance studies. Drawing especially on the views of human perception, power, and experience of Jacques Rancière, Marcel Mauss, and Michel Foucault, the main concepts of this framework are "sensory fields", "experience fields" and "body techniques". As for the verbalization of experiences through performance analysis, the framework draws on Joe Kelleher's and Alan Read's notions of "theatre images".

Based on the analytical framework, the writer locates and interrogates "politics of the sensible" i.e. modes of participation; underlying assumptions regarding the participants and the efficacy of the chosen participatory strategy; potential inclusions and exclusions; and horizons of change in Lois Weaver's *What Tammy Needs to Know* (2006) and *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* (2008), the Complaints Choirs of Helsinki (2006), Singapore (2008) and Vienna (2010 –) based on the *Complaints Choir* project concept by Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen, and *dominant powers. was also tun?* (2011) by Claudia Bosse and her group, theatercombinat. This study also shows how all of these projects embody features of post-Fordist work and how they relate to the ethos of de-alienation in participatory art practice.

Besides locating productive transformatory potential and tendencies in all of these performances, this study brings about critical perspectives and notions that have not been addressed in previous research on Weaver's, Kalleinens' and Bosse's projects. In Weaver's performances, being introverted, shy or reluctant appeared as an "inhibition" that needed to be cured. Sexuality – and the belief that we can learn to enjoy it more through facilitated taboo-breaking speech – was conveyed as a given fact, which can be seen as othering shy and introvert spectator-participants, and spectator-participants in whose lives sex, and sexuality do not play a central role and who do not adhere to the therapeutic undertone of the performances. That said, Weaver's performances challenged social myths and taboos around and about the elderly, sex problems and sex toys. The performances also highlighted identities as social and performative

processes and may thus have affected the world-view of some participants and helped them to understand our own position in the processes of social passing. These performances also hinted at the possibility of coalitional feminist identity politics that emphasizes dialogue between individuals and groups with different identities to locate grounds for alliance-making and co-operation. Simultaneously, they can be seen as productive feminist and LGTBQ+ consciousness-raising and community-building events.

The Kalleinens' *Complaints Choir* relies strongly on the assumption of the therapeutic power of harmonic and affirmative group-based action; however, this study suggests that the project may risk a proto-totalitarian dynamic through performances built on spectacularity and a uniform mode of performance. Furthermore, while the project relies on a grounding open-access policy, its basis in choir singing – a skill and practice not familiar to everyone but adopted in formal and informal learning situations – and its references to demographic representation, have an exclusionary tendency. On the other hand, Complaints Choirs have political potential in that they give complaints audibility and visibility through attention-raising choral performances at public sites. The wide Internet presence of the project contains much potential for distribution; for devising new Complaints Choirs; for fighting censorship; and for linking people concerned about similar issues at a grassroots level, beyond the frames of national and local politics. As a concept, the *Complaints Choir* can also be seen as eschewing the problematic assumption about a pre-existing community with a shared set of interests to be activated and included in the project, prevalent in much community-based practice.

In Claudia Bosse's and theatercombinat's *dominant powers. was also tun?*, the reliance on proactivity, navigating on one's own on the performance site, and the decentral non-theatre location, give rise to an potentially exclusive ambience that limits its audience base to art aficionados. Moreover, while the performance de-stabilized and challenged glib classifications of "nation" and "democracy", it problematically hinted at demographic representation at the level of video interviews and the naming of the volunteers' choir that were part of the performance. This said, *dominant powers. was also tun?* may have affected the participants' ways of viewing and interpreting news stories and, more broadly, media representations of revolutions as critical media consumers and art audiences. The performance can be seen as a novel form of critical immersive performance practice that employed immersive strategies without offering its participants any consumerist spectacle in which to immerse themselves.

The writer suggests that the analytical framework presented in this study provides new insights into perception, power and the body in performance theory and analysis, and may also offer productive inputs for artist-researchers, curators and art educators in planning and reflecting on their projects, and for scholars in areas such as epistemology, semiotics, and political science.

TIIVISTELMÄ

Väitöskirjassani tarkastelen osallistavien esitystaidepraktiikoiden poliittisuutta ja niihin liitettyjä maailman muuttamisen mahdollisuuksia erityisesti havainnon problematiikan näkökulmasta. Työni koostuu teoreettisesta osasta ja kolmesta tapaustutkimuksesta. Teoreettisessa osassa esittelen kehittämäni epistemologisen ja esitysanalyyttisen mallin, joka pohjaa erityisesti Jacques Rancièren, Marcel Maussin ja Michel Foucault'n ajatuksiin havainnon, vallan, tiedon ja ruumiin suhteesta, ja jonka keskeiset käsitteet ovat "aistikenttä" (sensory field), "kokemuskenttä" (experience field) sekä "ruumiintekniikka" (body technique). Joe Kelleherin ja Alan Readin näkemykset "teatterillisesta kuvasta" (theatre image) ovat puolestaan keskeisessä osassa ruumiillisten kokemusten esitysanalyyttisessä sanallistamisessa.

Analyysimallin avulla pyrin havainnollistamaan yhtäältä sitä, millä tavoilla taiteelliset esitykset vaikuttavat osallistujiinsa ja toisaalta sitä, miten valta, tieto, kulttuuri, aistimellisuus ja ruumiillisuus kytkeytyvät lähtemättömästi toisiinsa ihmishavainnossa, niin osallistavissa esitystilanteissa kuin arkielämässämmekin. Mallini tarjoaa yksityiskohtaisen näkemyksen materiaalis-performatiivisesta havaintoapparaatistamme, jota ei teatterin- ja esitystutkimuksen piirissä ole vielä laajalti tarkasteltu. Lähtökohtani on, että osallistavien(kin) esitystaideprojektien ideologiset sitoumukset ja pohjavireet näyttäytyvät julkilausuttujen tavoitteiden ja teemojen lisäksi siinä, miten osallistujia konkreettisesti kohdellaan esityksissä; minkälaista aktiivisuutta heiltä ja heidän ruumiiltaan edellytetään ja millaisia toimintamahdollisuuksia heille annetaan.

Sovellan kehittämääni mallia kolmen erityyppisen osallistavan esitystaide-projektin analyysiin. Tarkastelen Lois Weaverin esityksiä *What Tammy Needs to Know* (2006) ja *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* (2008), Tellervo Kalleisen ja Oliver Kochta-Kalleisen *Complaints Choir / Valituskuoro* -konseptiin perustuvia Helsingin (2006), Singaporen (2008) ja Wienin (2010–) Valituskuoroja sekä Claudia Bossen ja hänen luotsaamansa theatercombinat-ryhmän esitystä *dominant powers. was also tun?* (2011). Analysoin kussakin projektissa vallitsevaa "aistisen politiikkaa" (politics of the sensible): erittelen projekteissa käytettyjä osallistamiskeinoja ja niiden välittämiä käsityksiä osallistavan esitystaiteen vaikuttavuudesta, politiikasta, ruumiista ja subjektiudesta sekä tarkastelen projekteihin sisältyviä muutospotentiaaleja, ongelmallisia taustaoletuksia ja inkluusioiden ja ulossulkemisten dynamiikkaa. Osoitan myös, millä tavoilla postfordistisen työn erityispiirteet ja osallistavalle taiteelle ominainen "vieraantumisen vastainen eetos" (ethos of de-alienation) näkyvät projekteissa. Weaverin, Kalleisen ja Kochta-Kalleisen ja Bossen projekteja ei ole aiemmin tutkittu samankaltaisesta näkökulmasta käsin; tutkimustulokseni haastavat monilta osin tähänastiset, affirmatiivisiin luentoihin painottuneet tulkinnat. Ehdotan, että analyysimalliani voi soveltaa myös taiteellisen tutkimuksen, kuratoinnin ja taidekasvatuksen sekä epistemologian, semiotiikan ja valtiotieteiden piirissä tehtävään tutkimustyöhön.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of This Study

A critique is not a matter of saying that things are not right as they are. It is a matter of pointing out on what kinds of assumptions, what kinds of familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought the practices that we accept rest.[1]

Michel Foucault

Participatory practices are gaining more and more in popularity in the field of performance both in Finland and internationally.[2] Informed by the assumption that participation is one of the key factors in promoting equality, democracy, inclusion and collective action in most areas of society, a growing number of policy makers, artists, funding bodies, curators and theorists are investing participatory performance practices with various therapeutic, pedagogical and overtly political goals. Participatory projects are often based on affirmative ethoses and they are assumed to have positive effects on the life of their participants, as if "participation" were always a productive tool for facilitating personal and social change for better, and, ultimately, for making art matter both to its participants and to wider society, moreso than would conventional theatre performances. The growing emphasis on participation is by no means limited to the arts but is, instead, a prevalent issue in much social policy planning, political discourses and the gaming and entertainment industries that, in their turn, constantly embrace and harness participatory art practices to serve their interests.[3]

Indeed, as Adam Alston, Claire Bishop, Marco De Marinis, Jen Harvie, Shannon Jackson, Grant H. Kester, Bojana Kunst, Markus Miessen, Jacques Rancière, Irit Rogoff and Florian Schneider among other scholars have pointed out, participatory practices in the arts entail ideological assumptions and

[1] Foucault 1988, 154. Italics added to the original.

[2] In this study, by the term "performance" I refer to performances that were deliberately created by artists and performed within, or supported by, art institutions. When I wish to indicate another meaning of the term, I state that explicitly. On the various meanings of "performance", see Carlson 2004, 1-6; Fortier 1997, 11-14; McKenzie 2001, 3-26; McKenzie 2003, 117-120.

[3] For participation in social policy planning and political discourses, see e.g. Bishop 2012; Freshwater 2009; Harvie 2013; Jackson 2011b; Kunst 2015; Miessen 2010; Rogoff and Schneider 2008. For the relevance of participation in the entertainment industry and its links to participatory and immersive performance, see Alston 2016; Alston 2019; Cirque du Soleil, "Immersive Experiences"; Ghazzawi et. al. 2014; Judge 2019. There are, of course, also many non-commercial participatory forms of gaming and entertainment such as LARP (Live Action Role Playing) that, from the outset, essentially relies on volunteering and the input of the players (see Kamm and Becker 2016). Also, as Claire Bishop has pointed out, "reality television, where ordinary people can participate both as would-be celebrities and as the voters who decide their fate", as well as "social networking sites and any number of communication technologies relying on user-generated content", are key forms of participation in the contemporary society (Bishop 2012, 30).

exclusions that demand critical attention. These critical reservations range from the allegedly naïve belief in the transformative power of affirmative action to the rather limited scope of active agency that many projects offer to their participants, to the harnessing of participatory art to the service of Neoliberalist governmentality and social policies, and to the questioning of the plausibility of the very term "participatory art" – aren't *all* spectating, beholding and reading acts participatory by nature?[4] That is, definitions of "participatory art" and of what passes for it depend on the context of use and the interests of those that formulate these definitions.[5] If we agree that "participation" is far away from being a simple and cosy concept with solely positive promises, we need ever more sensitivity to and critical analyses of the practices that this term is taken to describe. My study is but one example of these undertakings.

This study brings together issues and questions that have intrigued, interested and troubled me for nearly two decades: How do performances affect and engage their participants? What implicit and explicit assumptions about the functions and effects of participatory practice, and about the nature of the participating subject do participatory performance projects entail? What discrepancies might there be between the goals of a participatory project and the practical strategies employed to reach those goals? What political relevance can participatory projects have? And how are these issues to be approached analytically and yet at the same time recognizing the bodily, spatial, temporal and cultural situatedness of all acts of participation in artistic performances, in research practice, and, ultimately, in all social interaction?

This study consists of a theoretical part and three case study analyses. In the theoretical part, I present a novel analytical framework for addressing the dynamics of perception, the body, knowledge, culture and power both in contemporary participatory performance, and in our everyday lives. In the case study section, I apply my framework to the analysis of three contemporary participatory performance projects.[6]

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[4] See Alston 2013; Alston 2016; Bishop 2012; De Marinis 1987; Freshwater 2009; Harvie 2013; Jackson 2011a; Jackson 2011b; Kester 1995; Kunst 2015; Miessen 2010; Rancière 2007; Rogoff and Schneider 2008; White 2013.

[5] See Bishop 2012, 1-2, 13-18; Freshwater 2009, 75-76; Harvie 2013, 4-12; Miessen 2010, 43-57. Miessen addresses the problematic use of "participation" in politics in a manner relevant to this study. I adhere to the core assumption of institutional theories of art, namely, that artistic work cannot be separated from the cultural, material and economic conditions within which it is practised and within which artworks are produced. Certain artworks and actions gain the status of "art" through acts of recognition, appreciation and judgement by art institutions and their representatives that have authoritative power, such as curators, art grant boards, politicians, bureaucrats, journalists, art researchers and art teachers (see e.g. de Botton and Armstrong 2013, 66; Carroll 1999, 226-231; Jackson 2011a; Jackson 2011b, 104-143; Seppä 2012, 113-114). It follows that our views of art's "functions", too are always culturally, socially, ideologically and historically bound value judgements. This applies to participatory practices, too.

[6] The earliest and concise account of my analytical framework and of the critical analysis of Lois Weaver's performance *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex,* "How to Address Politics of the Body in Participatory Performance? On the Possibilities of Sensory Fields and Collective Body Techniques as Analytical Tools" was published in *Nordic Theatre Studies*, 27:2, 36-46 (Lahtinen 2015). In this study, I present a revised and more detailed account of both the analytical framework and of Weaver's performance. I have also discussed the identity political relevance of Weaver's project from a rather affirmative perspective in my early

My analytical framework has an epistemological undertone; it aims to shed light on the sensory preconditions that shape our perceptions and experiences of reality *both* in everyday life situations, *and* in performance situations. While many of us in the performance and art research community discuss and ponder the bodily and performative relationship and affective dynamic between the participants and elements of performance situations, attempts to systematically shed light on the grounding human capacities for perception that our meaning-making, experiences and analyses of a performance rely on, have been scarce.[7] I believe that such accounts can help us make sense of both the political relevance of participative performance situations, and of the processes of exclusion, inclusion, and subjectification such situations involve. By addressing and connecting the performative and the material spheres of human perception, such accounts may also facilitate what Jen Harvie terms "materialist performativity" and "performative materialism" in research practice, that is, analysis that pays attention to both "the material conditions of performative practices and the performative effects of the material theatre."[8]

I agree with Coleen Conroy that, while "[i]deas about the relationship between the inert body and its movement or action are crucial to the ways that we watch and appreciate theatre and performance [--] at all levels of critical and performance-based work, there is surprisingly little consensus on how to think and write about bodies and theatre" to such a degree "that we find it difficult to connect our theorising, spectating and acting with our cultural and scientific understanding of the shape and form of the body."[9] On their part, my analytical framework and this study aim to cater for this need for explicit and clear accounts of our "perceptual apparatus" – about our bodily and cognitive ways of sensing and making sense of performance situations and of the reality (or realities) beyond it – in our field.

This said, I do acknowledge that insightful and highly topical analyses on the relationship between performance, participation, perception and power have been coined within performance studies, visual studies and dance studies, which I will also discuss in this dissertation. For instance, Marco De Marinis[10] has done groundbreaking research on the dynamic of perception and participation in performance situations; Adam Alston[11] on the entrepreneurial and neoliberalist modes of participation in immersive practice; Claire Bishop[12]

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research essay "Reflections on Identity Politics, 'Making Together' and Public Engagement in Lois Weaver's Tammy WhyNot Performances" published in 2012 (Lahtinen 2012).

[7] For recent approaches to participation and relationality in performance, see below and Chapter 2.8 of this study. For approaches to perception within performance studies, please see Chapter 6.2.

[8] Harvie 2009, 72.

[9] Conroy 2010, 4-5, 7-8. See also Read 1993, 9-11.

[10] I discuss De Marinis's views in Chapter 6.2 of this study.

[11] See Alston 2013; Alston 2016. I outline Adam Alston's view in Chapters 2.8, 5.5 and 5.8.

[12] Claire Bishop interrogates ways in which past cultural policies, genre definitions and art traditions crucially inform both contemporary participatory practices and how participatory artworks have been and become received, assessed, analyzed and criticized in the public sphere. Bishop argues against the tendency to value and assess participatory art projects merely on their assumed relevance and merits for current social policy agendas, or as "processes"; instead, she calls for attention to what they produce or bring about, and to their aesthetic qualities (Bishop 2012, 1-40). She is sympathetic to a Rancièrean view of "aisthesis" as

on a rather discourse analytical critique of the underlying assumptions of historical and contemporary participatory projects and related theory-making; Maaike Bleeker[13] on the power-invested modes of viewing and visuality in theatre, and their relation to cultural presumptions; Erika Fischer-Lichte[14] on the analysis of the co-creating agency and interaction of all participants of a performance situation, and the transformatory potential therein; Shannon Jackson[15] on institutional and infrastructural dimensions of participation; Amelia Jones[16] on the relevance of new materialist thought to the analysis of novel "hybrid" practices that draw on body, conceptual and installation art; André Lepecki[17] on the political relevance of moving and dancing bodies; and Irit Rogoff and Florian Schneider[18] on deliberations about the possibility of non-identitarian yet still participatory communities. However, none of them addresses explictly the question that I find vital for my research purposes: what are the sensory preconditions required in order for any relations between human beings, and between human beings and their surroundings to take place in art practices and in our lives generally?

It is important to note that in this study I do not wish to propose a universalistic view of a human subject; meaning-making processes are, indeed, always bound to specific cultural, social and economic relations and spatiotemporal situations. My framework aims to offer a plausible account of the perceptual apparatus based on which our cultural self-understandings and subject assumptions arise.[19]

In this study, the words "sense" and "sensible" have a double meaning: they refer both to cognitive and reflective activity ("what makes sense") and to sensory experience ("what can be sensed") in Davide Panagia's line of thought.[20] The title of this study, *Making Sense of Perception and Power in Participatory Performance*, points to both of these experiential spheres and to the entanglement of bodily and cognitive, material and performative processes in experiencing – and researching – performances.

"an autonomous regime of experience that is not reducible to logic, reason or morality" (ibid., 18, see also ibid., 27-28). While Bishop explicitly draws from Rancière and his concept of "distribution of the sensible" as I do too in this study, she does not discuss her view of human perception and Rancière's possible impact on it.

[13] I discuss Bleeker's views in Chapter 6.2.

[14] I discuss Fischer-Lichte's views in Chapter 6.2.

[15] I outline Jackson's views in Chapter 2.8.

[16] I discuss Jones's views in Chapter 6.2.

[17] Following Lepecki, dancer-performers and performances can bring about moments that challenge what he, drawing on Rancière, terms as "choreopolicing" that "imposes a forced ontological fitting between pregiven movements, bodies in conformity, and pre-assigned places for circulation" (Lepecki 2013, 20. See also Lepecki 2016, 12-18). While, as I will show, I agree with Lepecki on the political relevance of moving bodies in performance situations in a Rancièrean vein, Lepecki focuses on the dance context and does not discuss in detail his view of human perception and Rancière's possible impact on it. I discuss Lepecki's views in Chapter 2.7.

[18] I outline Rogoff and Schneider's views in Chapter 2.8.

[19] In this study, when not referring to specific individuals with clearly stated gender identities, I use the nouns "he", "she" and "person" interchangeably so as to eschew *a priori* fixed gender attributions and binary and patriarchal thinking that grants "he" a predominant position in language.

[20] Panagia 2009, 3.

1.2 Goals and Research Questions

This study has two interrelated goals. First, it aims to offer a novel analytical framework for addressing the ways in which artistic performances engage and affect us, and for understanding the culture-bound dynamic of perception, power, knowledge and the body both in contemporary participatory performance and in our everyday lives. This framework is based on – and it offers – a detailed view of our performative, material, bodily and cognitive ways of sensing and making sense of reality. Drawing especially on Jacques Rancière's, Marcel Mauss's, and Michel Foucault's views of human perception, power and experience, the main concepts – and tools – of this framework are "sensory fields", "experience fields" and "body techniques". As for the verbalization of experiences through performance analysis, the framework draws on Joe Kelleher's and Alan Read's notions of "theatre images".

Secondly, based on the analytical framework, this study aims to locate and interrogate potential inclusions and exclusions; modes of participation; underlying assumptions regarding the participants and the efficacy of the chosen participatory strategy; and horizons of change in three recent performance projects: *What Tammy Needs to Know* (2006) and *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* (2008) devised by the US-American performance artist and feminist activist Lois Weaver; Complaints Choirs of Helsinki (2006), Singapore (2008) and Vienna (2010 –) based on the *Complaints Choir* concept by the Finnish-German artist team Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen; and *dominant powers. was also tun?* (2011) by the Vienna-based director and installation artist Claudia Bosse and her company theatercombinat.

My analyses pay special attention to the hegemonial "order of reality"[21] and hegemonial ideologies[22] that, in my view, structure and affect our daily life, art practice, and self-understandings in the contemporary Finnish, British, and Austrian societies within which Weaver, the Kalleinens, and Bosse have developed their participatory projects. Most importantly, these include post-Fordism, neoliberalism, possessive individualism, and politics based on the assumption of a society as a sovereign "whole", as a clearly-defined limited spatio-temporal social body. In the field of participatory art and performance, the explicit or implicit goal of transformation and de-alienation – that may be reached through direct or indirect pedagogical or therapeutic action – can be seen as having similar hegemonic currency.[23]

[21] I outline my understanding of the "order of reality" in the chapters 1.5, 2.1 and 2.8.

[22] I use the term "ideology" in the Althusserian sense as referring to "the systems of representation in which people live their relationship to the real conditions of their lives. Ideology is an indispensable dimension of human life, the means through which experience itself is produced. Experience becomes a political reality rather than a natural 'fact' that remains free of political determination [--] ideology is always embedded in the actual material practices of the language use of particular social institutions" (Grossman 2005, 177. See also Williams 1985, 153-157).

[23] I discuss participatory art as a de-alienative practice in Chapter 2.8.

The main research questions of this study are:

- How to make sense of and analyse the performative and material relationships between perception, power, knowledge, culture and the body in participatory performance practice?
- What participatory strategies do Weaver's, Kalleinens', and Bosse's projects employ?
- What transformatory, therapeutic and pedagogical undertones and goals underlie these projects?
- What assumptions about the participants, participants-as-groups, and the qualities of ideal participation do these projects rely on and produce?
- What inclusive and exclusionary processes may take place in these projects?
- How do these projects relate to post-Fordist mode of work and to the tradition of counteracting "alienation" in the arts?
- What kinds of change do these projects aim to and, possibly, just happen to bring about?

1.3 Participatory Performance

Theatrical[24] performances are usually seen to require at least a performer who performs for, and before, a live audience. As Gay McAuley puts it, "[t]heatre consists of human beings *in a defined space* watched by other human beings, and it is this reality that constitutes the basic apparatus of theatre."[25] In its popular meaning since the 17th and 18th century, the term "audience", for its part, refers to

> the idea of a group of people who are the consumers of a communicative event of some sort. The audience, in this usage, then refers to those who are physically, and collectively, present in the same place, as the addressees of a sermon or speech or theatrical production. This was extended [--] to the readers of a book and eventually, to the consumers of other forms of communication. Audiences of this type are evidently small, by comparison with the mass audience for contemporary forms of broadcasting, which perhaps today supplies us with our primary sense of what an audience is.[26]

"Participatory performance" is an umbrella term that can refer to various forms and strategies, such as "delegated", "immersive", and "one-to-one" practice.[27] In

[24] I use the term "theatrical" here solely in its typical meaning "being 'of the theatre'" and not in the anti-theatrical sense: "inauthentic or false [--] exaggeration or make believe" (Bleeker 2008, 3), nor as a degrading term in fashion of the Friedian tradition; the Modernist art critic Michael Fried infamously attacked Minimalist Art and, more broadly, theatre on the grounds of their intermediality, explicit audience relationship and "medium impurity" (see Jackson 2011b, 105).

[25] McAuley 2000, 245 (italics in the original). See also White 2013, 6-7.

[26] Morley 2005, 8. Emphasis omitted from the original.

[27] Jen Harvie has summed up concise general definitions of these concepts: delegated art refers to practices in which "[p]eople who are not, nominally, 'the artist' make, or contribute to making, the art or performance", often "without remuneration"; immersive works offer a "through-designed environment which surrounds audience members and in which they are generally invited to move about"; and in one-to-one events, "each audience member experiences a unique event, however similarly the performer repeats it for each audience

this study, I define participatory performances as events that encourage and sometimes force the bodies of all – or most of the – participants to become visibly and audibly active and moving. Thus, their lowest common denominator is that they do not adhere to the conventional modern bourgeois theatre setting with its illusion of the "fourth wall" and in which the group of spectator-participants, that is, the audience, sits "in darkness, in silence, contemplating moving performers on a stage set apart in the light"[28], and watches the events on the stage as if from a distance.[29] At a grounding level, I adhere to Gareth White's definition of audience participation as "the participation of an audience, or an audience member, in the action of a performance" that "invite[s] the spectators to participate in ways that are differently active to that which is typical of the theatre event."[30] I call this participatory position "spectator-participant".

Performances that take place in public space – at a square or a railway station, for instance – give rise to yet another participatory role: that of the bypasser who becomes part of the event whether she wants it or not. In addition, projects which include workshop elements for non-professionals who then perform with the professional artist for an audience that, for its part, may

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member", in a format that "usually entails direct address and requires, or at least requests audience interaction" (Harvie 2013, 29-30, 32-33, 36). While spectators of immersive performances do not always contribute to the dramaturgy of the event, provide verbal or other input, or significantly influence the actions of the performers as is the case in most forms of participatory performance, I nevertheless regard immersive performance as one form or branch of participatory performance; the "free-roaming within hands-on and multi-sensory performance environments" (Alston 2012, 194, quoted in Harvie 2013, 30) often taking place "not in purpose-built theatres but rather in large and usually flexible spaces such as railway arches, disused factories, vacant offices, and civic buildings" (Harvie 2013, 30) that immersive projects entail, require the spectators to become active and moving - to a degree "exploratory" - agents, thus departing from conventional modern bourgeois theatre setting outlined below. See also Chapter 5 of this study.

[28] Harvie 2013, 6.

[29] "The passive audience really only came into being in the nineteenth century, as theatre began its division into artistic and entertainment forms. Practitioners and theorists such as Wagner, with his 'mystic chasm', and he and Henry Irving with their darkened auditoriums, took some of the many small steps in the nineteenth century that physically separated the audience from the performance and discour- aged spectatorial acts of ownership or displeasure or even vociferous approval" (Susan Kattwinkel, *Audience Participation: Essays on Inclusion in Performance*. Westport (CT): Praeger Publishers 2003, ix. Quoted in White 2013, 7. See also Harvie 2013, 4-6; White 2013, 6-7; Worthen 1991, 5-6, 17). For a concise yet detailed account of the term "scopic regimes" that "govern what we look at, how we look, and why" according to "political logics", and of the historical relation between theatre, representation, power and the visual, with the focus on the "invention of artifical perspective during the Italian Renaissance" and "the industrial provision of gas and electricity" in the nineteenth century, see Johnson 2012, 10-12, 23-39. See also Chapter 6.2 of this study. For a detailed discussion of the historical formation of the "observer" that was "immanent to the elaboration of new empirical knowledge of vision and techniques of the visible" (Crary 1988, 5) in the 19th century, see Crary 1988.

[30] White 2013, 2, 4. However, White categorically excludes rehearsal and workshop situations from his definition, thus strongly emphasizing the "actual" performance situation (ibid. 4-5). I do not regard that to be necessary for my purposes, and I also address workshop and rehearsal situations in my case study on the *Complaints Choirs*. White also draws a categorical and rather simplistic distinction between "theatre" and "performance" events based to a high degree on "institutional practice" i.e. where the event is held (theatre building or gallery) and the status of the performer(s) or creator(s) (theatre group or "artist")(ibid. 2-3).

participate in the course of the performance, produce different registers again, or different "degrees" of participation.[31] Obviously, the desired – and possible – forms of agency and action for each of these participatory roles differ from each other. While artists and initiators who devise explicitly participatory projects aim to activate the audience – that is, the spectator-participants who come to take part in the event – they often retain ultimate control and authority over the course of events.[32] Despite the acts of granting participants opportunities for active visible and bodily agency during the performance event, the possibilities for action in participatory performances are rarely equally distributed. That said, I do not wish to suggest that participatory performances should – or even could – strive for a total equality of the possibilities for action between the participants.[33] Each participatory strategy has its own rationale and goals that need to be taken into account in the analysis of specific performance situations.

Since the publication of Nicolas Bourriaud's influential *Relational Aesthetics* at the turn of the millennium, "relations" have increasingly been a key topic for debates in the critical discourse around the modes and efficacy of participatory art practices.[34] My understanding of participatory art and performance is rooted in the "social turn" or, more accurately, "*re*turn to the social"[35], described by Claire Bishop as

> an artistic orientation towards the social in the 1990s [that] has been a shared set of desires to overturn the traditional relationship between the art object, the artist and the audience. To put it simply: the artist is conceived less as an individual producer of discrete objects than as a collaborator and producer of *situations*; the work of art as a finite, portable, commodifiable product is reconceived as an ongoing or long-term *project* with an unclear beginning and end; while the audience, previously conceived as a 'viewer' or 'beholder', is now repositioned as a co-producer or *participant* [--] these shifts are often more powerful as ideals than as actualised realities, but they all aim to place pressure on conventional modes of artistic production and consumption under capitalism. As such, this discussion is framed within a tradition of Marxist and post-

[31] For *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*, Weaver held workshops with elderly London women who then became her co-performers in the show, but she also interviewed individual spectator-participants during the show. In my analysis of the *Complaints Choir* project, I use the term "audience" in its conventional sense so as to draw a division between the choir singers i.e. the choir members and the people who viewed the choir performances live from a conventional spectatorial position, or through video recordings. In other words, in this case "audience" refers to those who did not take part in the choir and the song devising process. Also Claudia Bosse's and theatercombinat's *dominant powers. was also tun?* included a group of voluntary performers alongide three main professional performers.

[32] See e.g. Bishop 2012, 18-26; Freshwater 2009, 75-76.

[33] For a concise account of the problematic belief in the "automatic" connection between participatory practice and political empowerment, especially cherished by theatre scholars, see Freshwater 2009, 3-5.

[34] See Bourriaud 2002. The French original *Esthetique relationnelle* was published in 1998 by Les presses du réel, Paris. I outline Bourriaud's theory and the subsequent debate in Chapter 2.8.

[35] While Bishop employed the term "social turn" in 2006 (see Bishop 2006), she has coined the new formulation "*re*turn to the social" so as to emphasize the history of "artists' preoccupation with participation and collaboration" that preceded and, in part, has informed contemporary socially oriented practices (Bishop 2012, 2-3).

> Marxist writing on art as a de-alienating endeavour that should not be subject to the division of labour and professional specialisation.[36]

While I discuss projects that have been devised in the field of performance – not in fine arts, Bishop's main area of research – and while I do not regard my case study performances as exemplifying all aspects and features of the "*re*turn to the social", Bishop's notions regarding co-producing, process- and project-orientedness, and anti-capitalist de-alienating endeavours, have crucially informed my study.

Although participatory practices may seem a commonplace or even a "given" in the contemporary performance arts field and discourse, they have had, of course, numerous precedents throughout the 20th century Europe and beyond. As for the developments in the first half of the century, Claire Bishop has discussed in detail the experimental participatory practices of Futurist artists, the "Proletkult theatre" and "mass spectacle" in the newly established Soviet Union, and the Paris Dada under André Breton.[37] For his part, Marco De Marinis has located changes in the parameters of theatre spectatorship especially in Walter Gropius's "total theatre" and in Antonin Artaud's practice at the Theatre Alfred Jarry in Paris.[38] After the Second World War, there has been ever more proliferation as to the development of participatory strategies in the arts. For instance, the *derivé* of the Situationists[39], the Happenings of Jean-

[36] Bishop 2012, 2-3. See also Harvie 2013, 4-10.

[37] According to Claire Bishop (Bishop 2012), Futurist artists, especially through the *serate* events, "were in direct control of a display format in which audiences could be confronted directly, rather than through the meditation of an exhibition or book" (Bishop 2012, 43). Bishop emphasizes "Italian Futurism's break with conventional modes of spectatorship, its inauguration of performance as an artistic mode, addressing a mass audience for art, and its use of provocational gestures (both onstage and in the streets) to increasingly overt political ends", and retraces "the beginning of the active/ passive binary that holds such sway over the discourse of participation throughout the twentieth century" to the Futurist logic in which "conventional theatre is derided as producing passivity, while Futurist performance allegedly prompts a more dynamic, active spectatorship" (ibid., 41, 44). Bishops also locates "two distinct modes of performance as theorised and implemented by the state: Proletkult theatre and mass spectacle" in Russian culture after 1917 (ibid., 41). According to Bishop, "[t]he displays of participatory *presence* in mass spectacle [--] stand as the aesthetic and ideological counterpoint to Proletkult theatre's emphasis on participatory *production*: in the former, a hierarchical apparatus of state propaganda used theatre to mobilise public consciousness through the overwhelming *image* of collectivity; in the latter, the state gave support to a grass-roots amateur culture that encouraged the workers to participate in a de-hierarchised creative *process*" (ibid., 61, italics in the original). Also, according to Bishop, the Paris Dada under the influence of André Breton "shifted its relationship to audiences away from combative cabarets and towards more participatory events in the public sphere" (ibid., 41).

[38] According to Marco De Marinis, Walter Gropius and Antonin Artaud were among artists who broke out of the "'Italian' stage, the *boite aux illusions* with its neat separation between a raised stage and the stalls, both of which were laid out facing one another straight-on" and who sought for "various alternative spatial arrangements that might dispose of this frontal relationship and the distance between performance and a spectator" (De Marinis 1987, 105).

[39] Claire Bishop writes that "[w]ith its roots in Dada excursions and Surrealist nocturnal strolls, the *dérive*, or goal-less 'drifting', was employed by artists and writers associated with the Situationist International (SI) from the early 1950s to the late '60s as a form of behavioural disorientation. Best undertaken during daylight hours, and in groups of two or three like-minded people, the *dérive* was a crucial research tool in the Situationist para-discipline of

Jacques Lebel[40], the experimental theatre performances of The Living Theatre and of Jerzy Grotowski[41], the Environmental theatre movement[42], Joseph Beuys's projects[43], the Artist Placement Group (APG) and the community arts movement in Great Britain[44], as well as Eugenio Barba's International School of

'psychogeography', the study of the effects of a given environment on the emotions and behaviour of individuals" (Bishop 2012, 77).

[40] Michael Kirby defines Happening as "[a] performance using a variety of materials (films, dance, readings, music, etc.) in a compartmented structure, and making use of essentially nonmatrixed performance" (Kirby 1995, 34). Jean-Jacques Lebel who, according to Günther Berghaus, was "instrumental in popularizing the Happenings genre" in the 1960's, thought of his Happenings as not allowing "any voyeurism or exhibitionism"; they were "not designed to be contemplated by spectators but to force them into active intervention" (Berghaus 1995, 351, 352. Berghaus refers to Jean-Jacques Lebel's text "Theory and Practice" in *New Writers IV: Plays and Happenings*, ed. by John Calder, London: John Calder, 1967, 11-45 (34). See also Bishop 2012, 93-101).

[41] According to Claire Bishop, "[a]udience participation techniques pioneered in the 1960s by the Happenings, and by companies like The Living Theatre and Théâtre du Soleil, have become commonplace conventions in the theatrical mainstream" (Bishop 2012, 30). Like Jerzy Grotowski in his early 1960's productions, The Living Theatre in New York, co-led by Judith Malina, made attempts to give the audience a role "within the performance itself", for instance as "the people of Argus at war with the Thebans" in their 1967 production of *Antigone* (De Marinis 1987, 105-106). The Living Theatre was also among the very few theatres that "gave their facilities and personnel over to those who were experimenting with Happenings" in the United States (Schechner 1995, 218. See also Bishop 2012, 96-97). Referring to Happenings and the practice of artists such as Jerzy Grotowski and Ariane Mnouchkine, Marco De Marinis notes that "[p]reviously, the performance had appeared as a unitary object to be grasped whole by the onlooker. This had led to the unitary model of performance usage that for centuries had been the basis of Western theatre. Now, however, this unitary model entered a deep crisis. In many cases the spectators were forced to acknowledge the irredeemably partial and subjective nature of their experience of the performance; this experience was now strictly conditioned by their material position, their point of observation. The same audience member occupying different places on different nights would see, literally, a different performance" (De Marinis 1987, 105). For Cirque de Soleil and its development into a key player in the global live entertainment industry, creating immersive and participatory environments and shows, see Ghazzawi et.al. 2014; Cirque du Soleil, "Immersive Experiences".

[42] Environmental theatre was "a branch of the New Theatre movement of the 1960s that aimed to heighten audience awareness of theatre by eliminating the distinction between the audience's and the actors' space" (Encyclopaedia Britannica, Definition of "Environmental theatre"). The set designs of Richard Schechner and his New York based company The Performance Group "were usually based on multilevel platforms, balconies, ramps, and scaffolds surrounding a stage area that encroached on the audience's territory, providing a wider range of space for the actors and a greater flexibility of interaction between the audience and performers" (ibid.). The concept "was taken to greater extremes by radical artistic groups such as Welfare State International, based in England, and the Bread and Puppet Theatre, based in the United States" who "took art to the streets, often working in derelict urban neighbourhoods" (ibid. See also Schechner 1994, 40-86).

[43] Much of Joseph Beuys's practice combined "direct activism and artistic techniques" (Bishop 2005, 105). According to Bishop, "[t]he key idea underpinning all of Beuys's activities was the notion of 'social sculpture', in which thought, speech and discussion are regarded as core artistic materials", as in his famous debate-based live installation *The Bureau for Direct Democracy* [*Büro für direkte Demokratie durch Volksabstimmung*] at the documenta 5 in Kassel in 1972 (ibid., 104).

[44] To Bishop, "[t]he post-'68 period in Britain saw the formation of two attempts to rethink the artist's role in society. The first was set in motion in 1966, and its politics were contested within years of its inception: the Artist Placement Group (APG), founded by the artist John Latham and his then-partner Barbara Steveni, and which continued until 1989 when it was renamed O+I

Theatre Anthropology (ISTA)[45], can be seen as postwar forerunners of contemporary participatory practice.[46]

It is also important to note that I do not restrict the participatory possibilities of a performance to the live event; I also believe that "mediated" acts of encountering a performance, such as viewing a video recording, or even reading a newspaper review, are participatory by nature. Such "documentary" modes of encountering the performance or its "remnants" provide sensations, feelings, and pieces of information for the viewer that – while potentially being different from those aroused by the performance for the live participants – are nevertheless participatory acts as an affective relation between the viewer and the event is formed.[47]

1.4 Ideal Participation, Power and Body as the Starting Point for Analysis

Artistic performances do not stimulate their participants merely on the intellectual, reflective level but they also affect the participants' bodies and senses kinaesthetically. Doing research is also always bodily and physical activity and all research is informed by conscious and subconscious assumptions about what reality is like and how human beings act within it. Needless to say, these assumptions inform the ways in which we researchers approach our objects of study and position ourselves in relation to them. That said, while human bodies are parts of any performance situation they are

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[Organisation and Imagination] [--] The second is the community arts movement, whose emergence in the UK forms part of an international push across Europe and North America to democratise and facilitate lay creativity, and to increase accessibility to the arts for less privileged audiences. These developments represent two distinct poles of rethinking the artist's place in society in the late 1960s and 1970s: one in which the artist undertakes a placement with a company or government body, and one in which the individual artist assumes the role of facilitating creativity among 'everyday' people" (Bishop 2012, 163, 332 (endnote 1)).

[45] Since 1979, Eugenio Barba's International School of Theatre Anthropology (ISTA) and the Odin Teatret based in Holstebro, Denmark, has been carrying out research "into the technical basis of the performer in a transcultural dimension" for gaining an "understanding of the fundamental principles which engender the performer's 'presence' or 'scenic life'" (ISTA - Odin Teatret). To Barba, theatre anthropology "is the study of the performer's pre-expressive scenic behaviour which constitutes the basis of different genres, roles and personal or collective traditions" (ISTA - Odin Teatret, Theatre Anthropology. See also Barba 1995, 9-11). As Marco De Marinis has shown, the spectator-actor relationship is one of their research areas (see De Marinis 1987, 109-110. See also Barba 1995; De Marinis 2016, 63-64).

[46] That said, in this study I do not wish to place Weaver's, the Kalleinens', or Bosse's projects and practice on neat and generalizing historical continuum(s) along the lines of the participatory practices presented above.

[47] In this respect, I second Philip Auslander who criticizes "many performance theorists' desire to reassert the integrity of the live and the corrupt, co-opted nature of the mediatized" (Auslander 2008, 44) and the claim "that live performance has a worth that both transcends and resists market value" (ibid., 7), as, prominently, Peggy Phelan (Phelan 1993) has argued. For Auslander's detailed critique of Phelan, for his arguments against "clear-cut ontological distinctions between live forms and mediatized ones" (Auslander 2008, 7), and for his account of digital communication technologies and their potential for creating a sense of "community", see Auslander 2008, 43-72. See also Phelan 1993, 146-149.

nevertheless a difficult issue for researchers to address, as Colette Conroy has pointed out.[48] In this study, I aim to tackle these difficulties. First, I take bodily participation – what is actually done to and expected from the bodies of the participants during the performance event – as the starting point for critical analysis. Secondly, my analytical framework is based on a general view of human perception and signification processes, and it pays attention to the subjective researcher's point of view.

I believe that crucial ideological currencies and processes of exclusion and inclusion of any participatory project are not to be seen solely in their "goals" or "themes" but, perhaps even more clearly, in the modes of bodily participation that they employ. Assumptions regarding issues such as the human body and its capabilities, the senses, identity, freedom and work that inform and underlie a specific participatory performance can be located through the analysis of the modes of participation employed in that performance. Indeed, each participatory performance demands and rehearses participants' specific bodily and communicative skills, thereby producing specific relations of power and specific forms of agency concerning its participants. Within the rationale of that performance, certain skills and behavioural patterns appear as desirable, and some others as not. In this study, I aim to locate such features or qualities of "ideal participation"[49] in Weaver's, the Kalleinens', and Bosse's projects so as to address their underlying assumptions as well as their potential exclusions and limitations.[50]

In my view, power relations are inextricably connected to the body, perception, and production of knowledge; as I will show below, sensory fields, experience fields and body techniques are concepts through which we can make sense of this interconnectedness, and of what I term "politics of the sensible" in Weaver's, the Kalleinens', and Bosse's projects.[51] I agree with Foucault that the human body is "directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs."[52] Further, all sensory encounters – images, sounds, touches, and so on – as well as the routines of using one's body that each of us adopts in our daily life from childhood onwards, play a crucial role in our understandings of reality. It is strongly through the interaction between my body and other bodies, that we

[48] See Conroy 2010, 4-5, 7-8.

[49] I use the term "ideal" here in the meaning of "most suitable" while "not likely to be real" (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, Definition of "ideal").

[50] My aim to locate features of ideal participation in these participatory projects echoes Marco De Marinis's idea of a "Model Spectator". De Marinis's term that essentially draws on Umberto Eco's influential concept "Model Reader", "represents a hypothetical construct" that can be used "to show exactly in what way and to what degree a performance anticipates a certain type of spectator (a certain type of reception); that is, to show precisely in what way and to what degree a performance tries to construct/predetermine a certain type of reception, both as a part of its internal structure and as it unfolds" (De Marinis 1987, 102-103).

[51] This said, I believe in a new materialist vein that also inanimate objects can have agency in performance situations (and beyond): they can affect my perception and understanding of the situation and change its atmosphere and/or my feelings towards the event (see Chapter 2.6). For a more detailed discussion of the relation between power, knowledge, behaviour and subject assumptions, see Chapters 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4.

[52] Foucault 1995, 25.

learn behavioural patterns, strategies of communication, and build our identities.[53] It is crucial to pay attention to bodies since they – in all their materiality, performativity, and discursivity – play a role in all human activity; in policy-making as well as in our understandings of work, rights, freedom, jurisdiction and what it is to be a human being, starting from the very notion of "my" body, as Ed Cohen has pointed out.[54]

1.5 Politics of the Sensible and the Order of Reality

The analytical framework and tools employed in this study aim to help us interrogate what I call "politics of the sensible" – that is, modes of participation, underlying assumptions regarding the participants and the efficacy of the chosen participatory strategy, potential inclusions and exclusions, and horizons of change – in participatory performance situations. I believe that each society gives rise to a certain hegemonic "order of reality" with the reigning ideology or ideologies that govern the organization and functioning of that society and its members. That said, our experiences of reality are not necessarily incommensurable but depend on our everyday practices as a member of a household, formal and informal education, and our experiences of playing (or not playing) a specific part within that order of reality. In the performance context, "politics of the sensible" refers to the relation that the performance has to the current "order of reality" – or, in Rancière's terminology, "police order" – and the hegemonic ideologies that reign in the society, either affirming, reiterating, or challenging it. In my view, this relation can also be nuanced; a performance can adhere to and reiterate the order of reality in certain respects and challenge it in some other respects.[55]

Furthermore, I understand "politics" broadly as being about the very practices of "ordering" and "dis-ordering" reality[56]; about the processes of making bodies, issues and things sensible both materially and discursively; and about fights and negotiations about having and not having a part and a share in a social body, and at its borders.[57] That is, politics is not solely about distributing power, visibility, and capacities for action *within* some social body, that is, about the "distribution of power across social relations, among different

[53] These processes of interaction also include mimetic encounters between my body and other – human or other – bodies, or with an image that represents another body that my body mimetically recognizes. I discuss mimesis in Chapter 2.2.

[54] See Cohen 2008, 103-104. I discuss possessive individualism in Chapter 2.8.

[55] See e.g. Rancière 1999, 29; Rockhill 2004b, 89. Rancière draws a strict division between what he calls "politics" (la Politique) and "police" (la Police). We might say that if a performance – or any other action – induces breaks to the police order, it is "political" and dissenting in Rancière's sense, and, vice versa, if it reiterates and strengthens the order of reality, it belongs to the "police". I discuss the Rancièrean view of the "police" and "politics" in Chapter 2.5.

[56] I discuss "reality" in the chapters 2.1, 2.5 and 2.8.

[57] While I draw on Rancière, I do not draw a strict division between "politics" and "police" as suggested by him; in my view, activities that support the "police order" can also be seen as political in that they – through the very acts of support – do have counter-dissident power and solidifying effects on the order of reality. In my use, politics can include both activities that induces breaks in the police order, and activities that support the police order. See Chapter 2.5.

groups or classes or interests that make up, however momentarily, a social body"[58] but also, and foremost, about who and what are visible; who and what are "legitimate" parts of the social body; and who and what have a "part" in a certain social body and certain reality in the first place. My case study performance analyses pay special attention to the current hegemonic order of reality – or "police order" – that structures and affects our daily life, art practice, and self-understandings. The central characteristics of the current "police order" are, in my view, above all post-Fordism, immaterial labour, neoliberalism, possessive individualism, politics based on an assumption of a "whole" and – especially regarding participatory art practice – transformatory and de-alienating ethoses.

I believe that artistic performances are capable of playing with and challenging our experience of reality: what it consists of, and who and what have a part in it. This is why they have political relevance. Partakers of participatory performances relate to each other spatially, kinaesthetically, and intellectually. The performance is an event in which the participants with their various biographies, expectations, motivations, and skills gather together to be(come) parts of the event and the rationale behind it. It is in the relationship between the suggested mode of participation and the participants' responses to these suggestions that the politics of the sensible in the performance context can be located: what part(s) are the participants asked to play and what is demanded from them as individuals and as a group; what kind of participation is brought to the fore and becomes legitimated within the performance and what is not; what themes, assumptions, and ideologies become visible and sensible within the project and to what exclusions may they may lead; that is, what "order" of the sensible and of the reality does the performance rely on, reiterate and, possibly, create?

1.6 Horizons of Change

I believe that change – in the form of personal or social transformation, regarding novel or unconventional modes of relating to each other – is an ethos that looms implicitly behind many, or even most, of our contemporary views of the functions, efficacy, and usefulness of art in general and of participatory performance practices in particular. Participatory performances are often granted, implicitly or explicitly, "countermeasure" functions against the supposedly negative sides of our everyday life; they are seen as a channel for improving one's quality of life in one way or another. As Helen Freshwater puts it, "one of the most cherished orthodoxies in theatre studies" is "the belief in a connection between audience participation and political empowerment."[59]

[58] Kelleher 2009, 3. Kelleher discusses Stefan Collini's (Collini 2004) definition of politics. I discuss the relation between politics and participation in Chapters 2.5, 2.7 and 2.8.
[59] Freshwater 2009, 3. See also Bishop 2012; Harvie 2013; Jackson 2011b; Kunst 2015.

All artistic performances induce a "break" or a "halt" in the daily routines of the participants, however momentary that may be.[60] While performances draw on the everyday, they offer contexts, experiences and encounters that differ from what we usually do, or they encourage us to rethink our relation to what we usually do, or, they may urge us to change our everyday behaviour and rethink what the everyday should consist of in the first place.[61] It follows that interruption lies at the core of any performance practice and it is this "interruptive" nature that opens up room for the possibility of change and reflection. We might even say that every performance aims to be significant and to affect – in broad terms, to transform – the life of the participants and of the artists in some way; otherwise there would be no reason to devise it.

However, I wish to emphasize that in this study, I do not assume that "change" and "horizons of change" would *a priori* contain solely "positive" promises. Instead of adhering to an affirmative ethos, I pay attention to the possibly problematic ideological biases that underlie my case study projects, and to the possibly exclusive consequences that they may entail or give rise to.

In this study, change serves as a vital main reference point also because it is closely connected to our understandings of what "politics", "freedom", "agency", "work" and "subject" mean, and what participatory performances should "do" or achieve. In particular, the idea of "change" is an essential feature of both contemporary post-Fordist capitalist labour, and of performance practices that have empowering goals. All of the case study performances that I analyze in this study have been devised and performed in the 2000s within, broadly taken, increasingly post-Fordist societies; in my analyses, I aim to locate ways in which their modes of participation and the specific views of change and transformation underlying them might acquiesce to, but also break with, the post-Fordist ethos.[62]

The reasons for my use of the term "horizons" are threefold: first, the term refers to the intentions, motivations and goals that the artists have as they

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[60] I do not wish to "edify" performance, or art in general, or view it as something "more valuable" than other human activities; I simply think that one's consciousness of being in a performance situation changes one's experience of that situation. For instance, even if the performance consisted of doing one's daily routines alone at one's home for a video camera, this elementary performance context would change the atmosphere of the situation and, most likely, one's experience of and reflections about doing these routines at that moment too.

[61] "As well as taking people from and to the theatre, everyday life has other more obvious conditions of association with that theatre. Theatre poaches on everyday life for its content, relationships, humour, surprise, shock, intimacy and voyeurism. It takes for its forms unities of time and place, domestic settings, landscapes and speech patterns that are often identifiable because they are drawn from everyday life, and are celebrated precisely because they are somehow true to that world" (Read 1993, 47). I agree with Alan Read's view of theatre (and, in broad terms, performance) not as opposed to the "everyday" but as drawing on, feeding, and affecting it; "[t]he everyday is at once the most habitual and demanding dimension of life which theatre has most responsibility to. Theatre does not tease people out of their everyday lives like other expressions of wish fulfilment but reminds them who they are and what is worth living and changing in their lives every day" (Read 1993, 95). However, I am sceptical of lending such power *exclusively* to theatre as a specific expression of wish fulfilment.

[62] In post-Fordist economy, "[c]reative, linguistic and affective work becomes the centre of production. Work is no longer organized in an instrumental and rationalized manner, behind the factory door, but becomes part of the production of sociality and the relationships between people" (Kunst 2015, 111). I discuss post-Fordism in Chapter 2.8.

devise participatory performances; secondly, I do not only explore these intentions but also the horizons of change that the performances might open up, *without* the artists' intentions; and thirdly, I ponder whether the case study performances I analyse in this study might open up ways to rethink the parameters of the very concept "change" in the context of participatory performance.

1.7 Research Apparatus and Case Study Performances

Research apparatus, selection of performances and access to them

In this study, my research approach combines theoretical inquiry culminating in the analytical framework; remembered personal experience; and study of written, audio-visual and photographic documentary materials. I apply my framework to the analysis of three contemporary participatory performance projects, each of which employs a different strategy to discuss and facilitate "change" within its specific rationale. Lois Weaver's *What Tammy Needs to Know* (2006) and *What Tammy Needs to Know About Getting Old and Having Sex* (2008) addressed sexual empowerment, identities and the importance of sharing knowledge; Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen's *Complaints Choir* (2005–) focuses on the potentially empowering qualities of collective song composition processes and choir singing; and Claudia Bosse's and theatercombinat's *dominant powers. was also tun?* (2011) interrogated power-invested relationship between recent revolutionary political events in northern Africa and their narrativizations, the (in)visibility of experiences, and the problematic of democratic change.

I believe that each researcher, and each spectator, experiences and views a performance through his or her biography and the various exposures and sensibilities that are part of it. It follows that there is no "objective" research that would be independent of the researcher and the institutional, material and discursive research framework. Indeed, Niels Bohr and Karen Barad have pointed out the "inseparability of objects and agencies of observation"[63], that is, that the methods, measuring instruments, and the research object are inevitably intertwined; there is no such thing as an independently-existing research object with some independently existing properties; instead, the research object is created through research practice.[64] Thus, what I present in this study should be understood as *one* possible set of interpretations and conclusions, not as an attempt to "reveal" any final and all-encompassing meanings.

While, in the context of traditional performance analysis, propositional language is the main means of communicating one's research to others, it is important not to forget the multi-medial and embodied character of one's encounters and engagement with the performance one analyzes since they, too, form and inform one's research process, reasoning, and outcomes. In this study,

[63] Barad 1998, 96. Barad summarizes Bohr's ideas and refers to Bohr, Niels (1963): *The Philosophical Writings of Niels Bohr. Vol. III. Essays 1958–1962 on Atomic Physics and Human Knowledge*. Woodbridge, Conn.: Ox Bow Press, 3, 4.
[64] Barad 1998, 94-97, 122 (endnote 17).

my "research apparatus"[65] – "observing instruments" that "are productive of (and part of) phenomena" in Bohr's sense – consists of my body and memories; of my experiences of the performance situations that I analyse; of propositional language; of my epistemological and theoretical considerations; of written notes, photos and documentary video records of the case study performances; of theory books, evening programmes and so on; and of the computer with its word processing, editing and formatting software.[66] While my research project culminates in this written PhD dissertation, I wish to take the embodied, multi-medial and, to a degree, subjective research process into account and render it visible for the readers so as to emphasize the fact, as Gabriele Sofia puts it, that "the 'scholar–spectator' can no longer retain the privilege of an external point of view onto the theatrical event but finds him/herself studying an event that, whether s/he likes it or not, s/he is collaborating to create [--] when a scholar analyses a theatrical event, s/he studies, in one way or another, his/her own experience of the event."[67]

I have participated in Weaver's and Bosse's performances as a spectator-participant, and as a singer in the Complaints Choir of Vienna [Wiener Beschwerdechor] in 2010–2011.[68] Each of these projects fascinated me from the beginning; they started to "resonate" in me immediately in form of memory traits of sequences and ambiences that I had experienced as a participant, and despite the temporal distance and my critical and analytical undertakings, they still do. Alluding to Joe Kelleher's and Alan Read's thinking, I would say that these projects have "stuck with me" and "bothered" me, leaving strong "theatre images" in my memory.[69] In this study, theatre images refer to written descriptions of specific memorable sequences, scenes and spatial arrangements of a performance project as well as ambiences and feelings that the project has aroused in the researcher through "live" or "mediatized"[70] encounters. That is, they function as the interface between the performance events and my analytical framework.[71]

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[65] In its general meaning, the term "apparatus" refers to "a set of equipment or tools or a machine that is used for a particular purpose", or to "an organization or system, especially a political one" (Cambridge Dictionary, Definition of "Apparatus"). In this study, the research apparatus can be seen as the set of equipment and tools – both material and discursive – with and through which I carry out my research. I discuss the concept of apparatus/dispositif in the specifically Foucauldian sense in Chapter 2.3. See also Barad 1998, 98-100.

[66] Barad 1998, 98.

[67] Sofia 2016, 54-55. See also Jones 2015, 21. I discuss the subjectivity of research and the limitations of language, as well as their research ethical dimension in Chapter 2.9.

[68] The years mentioned above refer to the years of the performances that I focus on in my analyses. Weaver's performances were part of her long-term and on-going performance research project "Tammy WhyNot". Also the *Complaints Choir* project is still running at the time of writing this study. After the premiere in Vienna, theatercombinat has performed *dominant powers. Was also tun?* in Zagreb, Croatia (2012) and in Tunis, Tunisia (2012). I discuss my research ethical stance in Chapter 2.9.

[69] See Kelleher 2015, 3, 5, 137; Read 1993, 53. I discuss "theatre images" and their significance for my analytical approach in Chapter 2.9.

[70] Here, I refer to TV, video, Internet and newspapers as "mediatized" forms of encountering a performance. As I noted in Chapter 1.3 (footnote 30) above, I do not wish to reiterate "clear-cut ontological distinctions between live forms and mediatized ones" (Auslander 2008, 7).

[71] I discuss theatre images in detail in Chapter 2.9.

In addition to theatre images and my written notes of the case study performances I have participated in, I use and refer to various audio-visual documentary material in this study. Live footage of the exact performance of Weaver's *What Tammy Needs to Know*, which I saw at the seminar room of Kiasma Museum as part of Kiasma Theatre's *URB 06* Urban Art Festival on 09 August 2006, does not exist. However, I have viewed the video documentation shot on Weaver's second performance at Kiasma Theatre the next day; while there were differences in the spatial setting and the dialogue between Weaver-Tammy and the other participants between the two performances, the grounding structure, dramaturgy and cues were nevertheless similar. As for the sequel *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*, which I saw at the John Ellis Lecture Theatre of the Royal London Hospital Whitechapel on 17 November 2008, I have had access to a video trailer of the performance I participated in.

As to Bosse's *dominant powers. was also tun?*, I have viewed a full-length video documentation shot at one of the evenings of the performance cycle in Vienna in November-December 2011; while there may have been slight variations between the performance I participated in and the performance that was documented, their structure, elements and cues were similar to each other. As to the Complaints Choirs of Helsinki and Singapore, I have viewed video recordings of their performances, as well as archival documentary video material about the song composition process of the Complaints Choir of Helsinki, accessible at The Finnish National Gallery's Audio-visual Archive for research use, and the documentation of the workshop process of the Singapore Choir as presented in the film *Complaints Choir* (2009) directed by Ada Bligaard Søby.[72]

In addition, I have viewed available photographic documentation for each project on the Internet as well as project websites, and familiarized myself with research literature and the evening programmes and critiques published in newspapers and magazines. In a rather early stage of the research process, I also conducted interviews with Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen, and with Claudia Bosse. Regarding my final research focus, these interviews do not offer essential information that would not have been mentioned and published in written materials that I refer to in this study.

While these case study projects include delegative and immersive features, I am well aware that they may not represent the (seemingly) extreme modes of participatory performance; for instance, none of them encourages physical violence towards the spectator-participants or the performers. However, as my study will show, Weaver's, Kalleinens', and Bosse's projects do have potentially radical undercurrents – both regarding their participatory strategies and their goals – that may go unnoticed at first sight.

Moreover, while I address issues and problems that, in my view, are highly relevant for a broad spectrum of research on participatory practice, I do not aim to offer a comprehensive overview of contemporary participatory performance strategies and their problems. My main reason for analyzing exactly these projects is that they represent and embody three distinctly different ethoses

[72] See Bligaard Søby 2009.

and modes of participatory practice, thus providing an intriguing combination for the application of my analytical framework. To date, Weaver's, the Kalleinens', and Bosse's projects have also attracted surprisingly little research attention in the academia, a state of affairs that I would like to see change. Needless to say, the researcher's emotional investment in and with his/her subjects of study – in my case, the power of Weaver's, the Kalleinens', and Bosse's projects to both fascinate and trouble me, first as a spectator-participant then as a scholar – has also played a key role throughout the research process, from the early stages until the final manuscript.

What Tammy Needs to Know and *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*

The core of the *Tammy WhyNot* performances is Weaver's alter ego character – or, in Weaver's terms, persona – "Tammy WhyNot", a "Southern blonde" country singer.[73] Tammy is a combination of Weaver's autobiographical and fictitious elements as well as stereotypes of popular culture. *What Tammy Needs to Know* was about Weaver-Tammy trying to find out, together with the audience, which things she should know in order to change her identity from a country and Western singer into a radical lesbian performance artist. Besides talking with the spectator-participants and asking them questions, Weaver – performing both as herself and as Tammy – told stories and anecdotes about her life and that of Tammy, and sang country songs.[74] In *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*, Weaver-Tammy encouraged the spectator-participants, and her co-performers – a group of elderly women living in London, and a professional sexologist – to share their thoughts and experiences about sex, sexuality, and how ageing can affect them.

I saw *What Tammy Needs To Know* in the seminar room (Seminaari-tila) of Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki in August 2006. The performance was jointly presented by Kiasma Theatre's *URB 06* Urban Art Festival and the IFTR World Congress.[75] I took part in *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* at the John Ellis Lecture Theatre of the publicly-funded Royal London Hospital Whitechapel in November 2008. It was presented as part of the *Performing Medicin*e project that "uses methods found

[73] Weaver says herself: "With persona, I think you can actually see the outer characteristics of an outrageous, utterly different, or an extreme personality, but deep inside those characteristics you can actually see the personality of the performer who's carrying, developing, or dressing-up in those characteristics [--] I think or at least hope that you can always see Lois inside the pink and orange chiffon, blonde wigs and sling-back heels [of Tammy WhyNot]" (Weaver 2015b, 223-226). In this study, I use the form character-persona to refer to Weaver's ambiguous relationship to Tammy WhyNot. I discuss Weaver's and Split Britches' character-building strategy in Chapter 3.6. Weaver invented Tammy WhyNot for Spiderwoman Theatre's performance *Lysistrata Numbah* in 1978 (see Story 2009, 12; Evening programme of *What Tammy Needs to Know About Getting Old and Having Sex*).

[74] From now on, I refer to Weaver's performance as Tammy WhyNot with the term "Weaver-Tammy".

[75] The 15th World Congress of the International Federation of Theatre Research (IFTR) took place at the University of Helsinki on 7-12 August 2006. Weaver also held a Keynote Address titled: "Diary of a Domestic Terrorist" in the congress. Source: IFTR World Congress Programme 2006.

in the arts to help medical students and health professionals develop skills essential to clinical practice and healthcare."[76] Due to their emphasis on audience participation, Weaver's performances vary significantly from place to place. My focus is on these two performances that I attended in person.

Lois Weaver has become one of the icons of Anglo-American feminist and lesbian performance. She was a member of the Spiderwoman Theatre, a group that deconstructed representations of "woman" and "femininity", and a co-founder of the legendary New York-based lesbian and feminist theatre group Split Britches.[77] Weaver has also co-founded the WOW Theater in New York and worked as a co-director of the Gay Sweatshop in London. She has devised and realized socially-engaged projects in educational institutions and prisons in several countries; directed the Performance Studies International (PSi) conference *Performing Rights* in London; curated and performed in prestigious art institutions; and developed novel participatory performance formats. In 2014, Weaver was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in Drama and Performance Art.[78] At the time of the writing of this study, Weaver works as Professor of Contemporary Performance Practice at Queen Mary, University of London.[79]

The character-persona Tammy WhyNot had a long history before ending up as the star of *What Tammy Needs to Know* and *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*. Weaver developed the character in 1978 for the performance *Lysistrata Numbah* of the Spiderwoman Theatre.[80] Tammy became a proper play character in the third Split Britches' performance *Upwardly Mobile Home* in 1984.[81] Between *Upwardly Mobile Home* and *What Tammy Needs to Know*, Tammy WhyNot has been seen, for instance, as the MC (Mistress of Ceremonies) in the feminist cabaret evenings at WOW-Café, partly organized by Split Britches, in New York clubs at the end of the 1980s, as well as in LGBTQ clubs in Great Britain, and at events organized by Queen Mary, University of London.[82] Weaver performed as Tammy WhyNot for the first time in an international event in London in the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) as the MC of "Club Girrls" in 1994.[83]

[76] Performing Medicine website.
[77] Aston and Case 2007, xvii–xviii; Harris 1990, 487; Muurinen 2006, 41; Sundqvist 2006, 4.
[78] See Aston and Case 2007, xvii–xviii; Harvie 2015a, 8-10; Harvie and Weaver 2015b; Weaver 2009.
[79] Department of Drama, Lois Weaver.
[80] Story 2009, 12; Evening programme of *What Tammy Needs to Know About Getting Old and Having Sex*.
[81] Case 1996, 7.
[82] Evening programme of *What Tammy Needs to Know About Getting Old and Having Sex*. Weaver-as-Tammy has hosted the student performance forum of Queen Mary College, named "Tammy's Art and Beauty Salon". See Story 2009, 12-13.
[83] Evening programme of *What Tammy Needs to Know*.

Photo 1. Lois Weaver performs as Tammy WhyNot in *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*, Royal London Hospital Whitechapel, London, 2008. Screenshot of the video trailer filmed by Leo Lee. Screenshot by Joonas Lahtinen.

Complaints Choirs of Helsinki, Singapore and Vienna

According to Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen, the *Complaints Choir*[84] project is rooted in an ideas game: "what if all the energy individuals put into complaining about small things could be transformed into something grand and collective?"[85] The Finnish word for *Complaints Choir*, "valituskuoro", describes a situation in which many people complain at the same time about something. The Finnish-German artist couple Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen took this word literally and organised a "complaints workshop" principally open to anyone and aiming at a public choir performance, as part of their Springhill Institute residency in Birmingham, the U.K., in 2005. Since then, Complaints Choirs have been formed and organized both by the Kalleinen couple and by local initiators in dozens of cities on all continents. Complaints Choirs have performed at public sites and in art institutions, for instance, in Helsinki, Vienna, Singapore, St. Petersburg, Melbourne, Chicago, and Tokyo, and an Internet site and forum has been established to connect all the Complaint Choirs around the globe.

In this study, I focus my performance analyses on three choirs: the Complaints Choir of Helsinki (Helsingin Valituskuoro, 2006), the Complaints Choir of Singapore (2008) and the Complaints Choir of Vienna (Wiener Beschwerdechor, 2010 –). Moreover, I extend my analysis to the project website "Complaints Choir Worldwide" and the independent website of the Vienna Choir. Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen were the initiators of the Helsinki Choi*r* realized within the framework of the major

[84] In this study, I write *Complaints Choir* in italics when I specifically refer to the project concept of Kalleinen and Kochta-Kalleinen.
[85] Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 12.

quadrennial exhibition *ARS 06* at Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Finnish National Gallery. The song was composed, conducted and accompanied by Esko Grundström. Kalleinen and Kochta-Kalleinen also devised the Complaints Choir of Singapore as part of the *M1 Singapore Fringe Festival* whose song was composed and conducted by Chong Wai Lun. The Kalleinens were not involved in the Vienna Choir but, instead, it was initiated by Oliver Hangl and Stephan Foidl. The first, emblematic song of the Vienna Choir, *Wien, wir beschwerden Uns!* [Vienna, we're complaining!], was composed by Sir Tralala and conducted by Stefan Foidl.

Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen are Helsinki-based contemporary artists who, as a duo, work with various media – cinema, installation, performance, events and games – especially in participatory formats that address and play with "different social psychological phenomena and the dialogue between individual and collective."[86] Kalleinen graduated from the Department of Time and Space Arts at the Academy of Fine Arts in Helsinki, and Kochta-Kalleinen from the University of Fine Arts of Hamburg, Germany.[87] Their projects have gained a relatively large amount of attention in the Finnish and international popular press, especially in the wake of the long-term international success of the *Complaints Choir*, award-winning films, and the prestigious *Ars Fennica* award granted to the couple in 2014.[88]

Photo 2. Complaints Choir of Helsinki in the filming and audio recording session at Kiasma Theatre, Helsinki, 2006. Conductor-composer Esko Grundström in the front. Photo: Petri Summanen. Detail of the original photo cropped by Joonas Lahtinen.

[86] Tellervo Kalleinen's website, section BIO/CV.
[87] Studio Kalleinen, tab CV.
[88] See Tellervo Kalleinen's website, section BIO/CV.

dominant powers. was also tun?

Claudia Bosse's and theatercombinat's *dominant powers. was also tun?*[89] premiered in November 2011 in an old industrial building at the outskirts of Vienna; one floor of the building was transformed into a site for the two-hour-long performance, presenting "an arrangement of realities by facts, documents and fictional events of recent history."[90] *dominant powers* invited the spectator-participants to explore a maze of old production and office rooms now hosting a large quantity of fragments of information about the recent political changes in northern Africa[91] and their relation to European politics, and about cultural histories of revolution and democracy in various media, such as: audio and video interviews, clips from TV news features, scenes performed by three actors and a choir, screened fragments of video interviews with Egyptian residents, theoretical text passages taped on the walls and voiced through loudspeakers, and sheets of texts lying on the floor. "Remnants" of the earlier function of the building, such as stickers about safety rules in former factory production rooms were also to be seen in many places. The spectator-participants were left on their own to decide on what stimuli to concentrate on and how to move about on the performance site. I participated in the performance on 2 December 2011; it was the sixth performance of the premiere season that comprised eight performances.[92]

Claudia Bosse works as the artistic director of theatercombinat that she co-founded in 1996.[93] Bosse studied directing at the Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Arts in Berlin. She has devised projects both at site-specific locations, at international festivals, and in art institutions such as theatres and museums. She has also written texts for various publications and lectured at art academies, universities, theatre schools and festivals. Bosse's Vienna-based theatercombinat is especially well-known in German-speaking countries, and

[89] From now on, I use the shortened form *dominant powers* to refer to this performance that premiered in Vienna in 2011 and that I analyse in this study. The phrase "was also tun?" translates as "what is to be done then?" in English, see: Theatercombinat's website, *dominant powers* in Vienna.

[90] Theatercombinat's website, dominant powers in Vienna.

[91] These uprisings, demonstrations, and protests have often been termed as the "Arab Spring", but the ideological and political biases and connotations of the term can be scrutinized critically, see e.g. Massad 2012; Massad 2014. The Encyclopaedia Britannica defines the "Arab Spring" as a "wave of pro-democracy protests and uprisings that took place in the Middle East and North Africa beginning in 2010 and 2011, challenging some of the region's entrenched authoritarian regimes. Demonstrators expressing political and economic grievances faced violent crackdowns by their countries' security forces" (Encyclopaedia Britannica, Definition of "Arab Spring"). For an outline of the events in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Libya, and Syria, see ibid. In the dossier of *dominant powers. was also tun?*, Bosse uses the formulation "political changes in northern africa" (in her writing, Bosse always omits the capital letters intentionally). See: Theatercombinat's website, Dossier dominant powers.

[92] Theatercombinat's website, Dossier dominant powers. See also Theatercombinat's website, *dominant powers* in Vienna.

[93] Based in Vienna since 1999, theatercombinat was founded in Berlin in 1996 by Claudia Bosse, Dominika Duchnik, Heike Müller and Silke Rosenthal. Theatercombinat's website, Chronicle (English).

the group was awarded the esteemed Austrian *Nestroy* theatre prize for their staging of Elfriede Jelinek's play *Bambiland* in 2009.[94]

Photo 3. *dominant powers. was also tun?* in Vienna, 2011. Performer Nora Steinig in the middle. Photo: Alexander König.

1.8 Structure of This Study

In the following chapter entitled "Analytical Framework and Theoretical Background", I present the central concepts – "sensory fields", "experience fields", and "body techniques" – that I employ to shed light on the functioning of the human perceptual apparatus; outline their theoretical background and essential links to Jacques Rancière's, Marcel Mauss's and Michel Foucault's thinking, as well as to the notions of discourse, performativity, apparatus, cultural capital, power, subjectification, governmentality and politics elaborated on by Rancière, Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu and Judith Butler; and show in detail how this view informs my framework for performance analysis, and my understanding of the political currency of participatory performance. I then lay out the central characteristics of the current police order. Subsequently, I present my research approach that recognizes the subjectivity of analysis as well as the limits of verbalization and of propositional language, and that thus employs "theatre images" as the starting point for the case study performance analyses.

[94] Claudia Bosse's blog, section "BIO".

I then proceed to the three case study analyses (Chapters 3–5), all of which are organized into subchapters in the same manner. First, I present artist statements and other key descriptions about the ethoses of each project that I interrogate in my analyses, followed by the outlining of the "theatre images", that is, descriptions of specific sequences, scenes, spatial arrangements and ambiences of the performances and other encounters that have left strong memory traces in me as the participant in them. Based on these theatre images, I locate the central features of the experience fields of the performances, and the main body techniques they employ. I then address the performances' relationship to the key characteristics of the current "order of reality": first, I interrogate the therapeutic and pedagogical undertones of the performances, as well as their relation to post-Fordist labour and the tradition of de-alienation in art practice. I proceed to discuss what I term the "politics of the sensible" in these performances, including the assumptions about the participants and about participants-as-groups, as well as the features of ideal participation conveyed by the performances, the exclusionary and problematic tendencies of these performances and, finally, the horizons of change potentially opened up by these performances. I conclude each case study by comparing my findings to previous research and, as a thought experiment, provide suggestions for further development of these performance projects based on my findings. In the Conclusion of this study (Chapter 6), I summarize my case study findings and outline points of convergence and difference between the projects. I also show how my analytical framework has provided new insights into performance theory and performance analytical practice, and suggest that it can prove to be useful for other fields of research such as epistemology, semiotics, and political science, and for artist-researchers, curators and art educators. The extensive List of Sources can be found at the end of this study.

2 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Sensory Field, Experience Field and the Distribution of the Sensible

Sensory field, affect, feeling and emotion

I believe that there is a specific sensory apparatus or mode in which the human organism, and possibly many other organisms we call animals, register their surroundings.[95] The term "sensory field", which refers to forms, intensities and elements that the senses of an organism register amidst the continuous flux of stimuli that surround it, is a useful term to shed light on this mode.[96] Here, "registering" does not refer to language-based acts of signification, but to acts of momentarily being affected by some elements in the ocean of stimuli that delineate and guide the perception of the organism. Erin Hurley describes affects as "uncontrollable, skin-level registration[s] of a change to our environment", as "sets of muscular and/or glandular responses" that make themselves known "through autonomic reactions, such as sexual arousal or sweating" and which "we cannot consciously control."[97] Thus, affects are nothing that the organism could consciously choose but they refer to what just happens to engage its senses and arouse bodily sensations.[98] As Simon Sullivan

[95] While I concentrate on human bodies and human perception in this study, I do not wish to delimit my view and my framework essentially to human beings from the outset; indeed, many other living organisms that we call "animals" may have similar perceptory apparatus to that of ours. Also, it is possible for human beings to sense and experience moments of likeness with animals who may also experience moments of likeness with human beings. For mimesis, see Chapter 2.2 below.

[96] I agree with Andrew C. Rawnsley that "all bodies are situated prior to their socio-cultural positioning by the chiasmic interwovenness of bodiliness and environment" (Rawnsley 2007, 643). My description of the functioning of the human perceptual apparatus might shed some light on the process in which this pre-individual, pre-conscious situatedness turns into conscious experience. As Dominic Johnson puts it, "[w]hile historical contingencies affect what and how we see, vision also has some basic physiological aspects. Very briefly, the trans-historical phenomena of human optics include the problems posed by the human eye's ability to process only 1 per cent of the light waves that it apprehends; a blind spot in the visual field, where the optic nerve meets the retina, but which the brain patches over for the sake of continuity of vision; saccadic vision, or the inability of human eye to pan across a scene, which it overcomes by moving swiftly from one fixated point to another; three-dimensional perception, which muddles the visual information provided by each of two eyes; and the vergence system, where the brain fuses short- and long-range focus into one coherent visual experience" (Johnson 2012, 11. Johnson refers to Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*, Berkeley (CA): University of California Press 1993, 7-8).

[97] Hurley 2010, 13. See also Massumi, 2013, 39-43.

[98] Davide Panagia defines "sensation" as "neither sense nor perception (though both are crucially involved), but rather the heterology of impulses that register on our bodies without determining a body's nature or residing in any one organ of perception. In this respect, I consider sensation to be an experience of unrepresentability in that a sensation occurs without having to rely on a recognizable shape, outline, or identity to determine its value." (Panagia

suggests, while we render affects meaningful to us through language, "they are not to do with knowledge or meaning; indeed, they occur on a different register – an asignifying register", as "moments of intensity, a reaction in/on the body at the level of the matter."[99]

Thus, affects are not personal but prepersonal activity. Affect crucially differs from feeling that Eric Shouse characterizes as "a sensation that has been checked against previous experiences and labelled. It is personal and biographical because every person has a distinct set of previous sensations from which to draw when interpreting and labelling their feelings."[100] Affects are also not synonymous with emotions that are relational and, according to Erin Hurley, "act as a bridge between body and mind, between sensation and evaluation, and indeed between individual and group."[101] Emotions can be considered acts of "conclusion-drawing" from the "evidence presented by our bodies and interpreted with the aid of contextual cues" and, as acts of "interpretation of bodily response" they are "inevitably influenced by a person's expectations and interpretive lens; the shape of the expectations and the curvature of the lens are forged in experience and cultural norms that vary across geography and period."[102] That is, emotion is an "expression of or a name for affective experience [, a] conventional and codified affect"[103]; a way of making sense of affects and "inserting them into a social context of meaning and relation."[104] The difference between affects and emotions can be further illuminated by a reference to infants: "Through facial expression, respiration, posture, color, and vocalisations infants are able to express the intensity of the stimulations that impinge upon them [but they] have neither the biography nor the language to feel. The transition from childhood to adulthood is one in which we partially learn how to bring the display of emotion under conscious control."[105] To conclude, we might say that "feelings are *personal* and *biographical*, emotions are *social*, and affects are *prepersonal*."[106] Even though affects are prepersonal, they do have a link to cultural codes through emotions.[107]

2009, 2). Similarly, Elizabeth Grosz, referring to Deleuze's and Guattari's views, describes bodily sensation as something that "impacts the body, not through the brain, not through representations, signs, images, or fantasies, but directly, on the body's own internal forces, on cells, organs, the nervous system. Sensation requires no mediation or translation. It is not representation, sign, symbol, but force, energy, rhythm, resonance" (Grosz 2008, 73).

[99] Sullivan 2013, 11.

[100] Shouse 2005, section 3.

[101] Hurley 2010, 20. Hurley refers here to Sara Ahmed's view of fear (see Ahmed 2014, 7).

[102] Hurley 2010, 18-19. Hurley discusses William James's (1884) view of emotion (James, William: "What is an Emotion?", *Mind* 9 (1884), 188-205).

[103] Hurley 2010, 20. Here, Hurley summarizes Brian Massumi's views in his *Parables for the Virtual. Movement, Affect, Sensation*, Duke University Press: Durham (NC) 2002, 24. See also Massumi 1987, xvi; Massumi 2013.

[104] Hurley 2010, 21. Here, Hurley refers to Oatley, Keith: *Emotions: A Brief History*, Blackwell: Oxford 2004, 10.

[105] Shouse 2005, section 6.

[106] Shouse 2005, section 2. Italics in the original. Shouse refers to Massumi 1987, xvi.

[107] See Ahmed 2014, 1-19.

Experience field, the distribution of the sensible and everyday

The human mind automatically seeks to take sensory affects into language and turn them into experiences of a self-conscious "I". That is, one's affections on the sensory field are "turned" or "translated" as reflected and conscious experiences, feelings, and emotions. In this process, the particular sensory field turns into an experience field insofar as the affects and sensations that the sensory field gave rise to can be rendered meaningful. As Karen Barad suggests, the human meaning-making process is inevitably both material and discursive, and in our experience, nothing is solely cognitive or solely physical.[108] For instance, thinking requires a material organ, the brain, and the fact that we can realize and name the "brain" through language, is cognitive work.[109] Regarding the experience field and our conscious experience, "sense" has a double meaning in my use: it refers to all of the bodily, material, and discursive and language-based ways through which we encounter and "know" reality around us; to both cognitive and reflective activity ("what makes sense") and to sensory experience ("what can be sensed").[110]

The processes of sensing and sense making – of accessing and engaging with our surroundings through sensory fields and of translating them into experience fields, conscious experiences and thoughts – can be illustrated by Jacques Rancière's term "distribution of the sensible". It refers to

> the implicit law governing the sensible order that parcels out places and forms of participation in a common world by first establishing the modes of perception within which these are inscribed. The distribution of the sensible thus produces a system of self-evident facts of perception based on the set horizons and modalities of what is visible and audible as well as what can be said, thought, made, or done. Strictly speaking, 'distribution' therefore refers both to forms of inclusion and to forms of exclusion. The 'sensible', of course, does not refer to what shows good sense or judgement but to what is *aisthēton* or capable of being apprehended by the senses.[111]

In Davide Panagia's words, distributions of the sensible suggest that "our modes of perceiving the world, of sensing the presence of others, are parsed; that as subjects of perception, human beings are partial creatures variably divided. A

[108] According to Barad, "materiality is discursive (i.e., material phenomena are inseparable from the apparatuses of bodily production: matter emerges out of and includes as part of its being the ongoing reconfiguring of boundaries), just as discursive practices are always already material (i.e., they are ongoing material (re)configurings of the world)" (Barad 2003, 822).

[109] Victoria Pitts-Taylor has pointed to the "process" nature of the brain and the material and cognitive intertwining of human bodies: "The bodies are bodies with brains: neurobiological bodies, bodies conceived in relation to the central nervous system, to neurons, neurotransmitters, and brain regions. They are also minded bodies, whose psychic capacities are material and physical as well as phenomenological and situated [--] the brain is not hardwired, but rather constantly developing and changing in response to experience. The plastic brain can be understood as nurtured as well as natured, and thus as a mode for and a reflection of environmental influences on the body and self" (Pitts-Taylor 2016, 1-2). Similarly, to Antonio Damasio, "[i]t is the entire organism rather than the body alone or the brain alone that interacts with the environment [--] when we see, or hear, or touch or taste or smell, body proper and brain participate in the interaction with the environment" (Damasio 1994, 224).

[110] See Panagia 2009, 3.

[111] Rockhill 2004b, 85. Italics in the original.

partition [i.e. distribution[112]] of the sensible thus refers to perceptual forms of knowledge that parse what is and is not sensible, what counts as making (i.e., fabricating) sense and what is available to be sensed."[113] Thus, the distribution of the sensible can be seen as the material, cultural, spatio-temporal and porous "horizon" within which a person experiences and makes sense of his or her life and of reality, and within which social systems of government are formed. Distributions of the sensible cannot be controlled by any single instance or quarter. They should also not be confused with ideologies; instead, distributions of the sensible can be thought to function as the parameters within which ideologies can take place. Rancière emphasizes that

> the distribution of the sensible is not an ideological machine or the disciplinary rule, fixing individuals in their places by a mechanism of necessary illusion or a control of the body. It is the play of relations between the visible, the sayable, the thinkable and the doable at the heart of which gazes operate, things are named, discourses produced, actions undertaken. From one perspective, the forms of distribution of the sensible are like a datum, more or less accepted, more or less conscious – which forms and limits the capacities of perceiving and thinking. But on the one hand this datum defines a plurality of different articulations between its elements, a multiplicity of possibilities that combine together in different ways; on the other, it is constantly modified, for individuals and collectives, either by singular sub-systems, or by events that, breaking the ordinary temporal logic, deploy other forms of possible experience, other possible ways of giving sense to these experiences.[114]

It follows that our experiences of reality and what and who have part in it, vary. There is no *a priori* or universal and all-encompassing order of reality shared by everyone; while all people exist and lead their lives simultaneously on the globe, one's experiences of reality are not commensurable, universally shared by everyone else. Instead, all experiences – including feelings and emotions – are bound to sensory, bodily and cultural everyday practices and to our formal and informal education and experiences of (not) having or playing a specific part in the prevailing distribution of the sensible, and in the social dramaturgy of a certain social body or of a society.[115]

By the everyday, I mean, as Alan Read has put it, "the most habitual and demanding dimension of life" that is "bound not only by the cyclical return of natural phenomena, the seasons, elements and climate [--] but more mundanely

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[112] Rancière's original French term "la partage du sensible" can also be translated as "partition of the sensible" as Panagia does. In this study, I use the more common form "distribution of the sensible" throughout. See Rockhill 2004b, 85.

[113] Panagia 2009, 6.

[114] Rancière 2011b, 242.

[115] I agree with Luc Boltanski that "each individual can only have one *point of view* on the world. A priori, there is nothing that permits us to conceive these points of view as shared or capable of converging unproblematically. No individual [--] is in a position to say to others – to all the others – the *whatness of what is* and, even when she seems to have this power, does not have the requisite authority to do so. Thus, in the position we have posited as original, no participant possesses the resources that make it possible to reduce uncertainty and dispel the unease it creates. Extending this argument, it can be suggested that different people featuring in what might be regarded as the same *context* – if we define it exclusively by spatial and temporal coordinates – are not thereby immersed in the same *situation*, because they interpret what happens differently and make different uses of the available resources" (Boltanski 2011, 59-60, italics in the original). See also Read 1993, 97-98.

by the linear rhythms of life's trajectories through birth, marriage and death, and even more mundanely travel to school, commuting to work and retirement."[116] Everyday life "escapes everything which is specialised"; it is "habitual but not unchangeable" and includes "common sense, local knowledge, tactics and ruses [--]."[117] This habitual dimension – what we encounter in our everyday life in a particular distribution of the sensible, and within the experience fields that it gives rise to, crucially informs the parameters of our world-views and our ethical and social standpoints.

2.2 Body Techniques and Social Norms

Behaviour and mimesis

Every human being has been born into and lives in a specific social, political and historical situation within a particular distribution of the sensible and, inevitably, our experiences as members of a household within a specific distribution of the sensible affect our behaviour. I suggest that we constantly learn to interpret and produce feelings and emotions, and assume and learn body techniques to master various social situations both mundane and extraordinary, that is, in order to survive within the social dramaturgy of the community within which we live. These techniques are ways in which we adapt – or do not adapt – to the behavioural codes of the society, and ways through which others perceive and assess us. In this ongoing process, we also create a sense of "self" and subjectivity.[118]

These techniques are based on mimesis that, here, does not refer to the relationship between "original" and "copy", or to the relationship between language and a sensory experience as it does in representationalist theories.[119] Instead, mimesis describes affective processes of temporary likeness between two or more participants in specific situations; moments in which mirror neurons[120] get activated. In my view, mimesis is not limited to one-to-one, or even inter-human relations: it is possible for us to sense and experience moments of likeness with, say, a mass of people, an animal, or a stone, or with an image – a pictorial representation – of another body. Also, animals may experience moments of likeness with human beings. That is, mimesis crucially contributes to subjectifications and the appearance of agential positions.[121]

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[116] Read 1993, 95, 117.
[117] Read 1993, 15, 97.
[118] I discuss the dynamics of subjectification in Chapters 2.4 and 2.5.
[119] On representationalism and its problems, see Barad 2003, 803-11; Paavolainen and Tervo 2018. I discuss the relation between representationalism and subject formation in Chapter 2.8.
[120] There are moments in which "the observation of another's action – say, grasping a high wire – activates the same neurons that would light up if the observer grasped a high wire herself"; mirror neurons "reproduce the neural component of the observed movement [that is,] they produce a literal mental image of the observed action" (Hurley 2010, 30).
[121] My elaborations here owe significantly to the discussions that I have had over the years with Dr. Petri Tervo. See Tervo 2006, Dissertation Abstract and 1-16; Paavolainen and Tervo 2018.

Collective body techniques, learnt skills and social norms

Mimesis makes it possible for us to learn and adopt behavioural patterns through observing and mimicking other people's behaviour both automatically and intentionally. Drawing especially on Marcel Mauss' thoughts, I call these behavioural patterns "collective body techniques" so as to emphasize their bodily, social, technical and skill-bound dimension, although these skills are not solely results of "conscious" training but also of our automatic mimetic activity. While Mauss did not explicitly address the question of language, I wish to emphasize that I consider all acts and ways of speaking – not only the basic techniques to produce speech through the organs[122] but also vocabularies, colloquialisms, and so on – to be body technical in nature. One learns a language and ways to use it in and through specific social situations from childhood onwards, and any speech situation is always accompanied with culturally informed facial and other bodily gestures.

In his article "Techniques of the body" ("Les Techniques du corps", French original first published in 1934), Marcel Mauss was the first to use the concept "techniques of the body"; he referred to them as "the ways in which, from society to society, men know how to use their bodies."[123] It is the body that is "man's first and most natural technical object, and at the same time his first technical means [--]."[124] According to Mauss, "we are everywhere faced with physio-psycho-sociological assemblages of series of action. These actions are more or less habitual and more or less ancient in the life of the individual and the history of the society."[125] To Mauss, education – learning and teaching of the ways of using one's body within a community in the broadest sense – is the primary way through which we adopt and sustain body techniques: "[t]he individual borrows the series of movements of which he is composed from the action executed in front of him, or with him, by others [--] The constant adaptation to a physical, mechanical or chemical aim (for example, when we drink) is pursued in a series of assembled actions, and assembled for the individual not by himself alone but by all his education, by the whole society to which he belongs, in the place he occupies."[126] In Mauss' view, authority is at play in the acts of adopting body techniques through "prestigious imitation": "[t]he child, the adult, imitates actions that have succeeded, which he has seen successfully performed by people in whom he has confidence and who have authority over him."[127] Mauss believes that there are social, psychological and biological processes at play in body techniques: it is the "notion of the prestige of the person who performs the ordered, authorized, tested action vis-à-vis the imitating individual, that contains all the social element. The imitative action that follows contains the psychological element and the biological element. The

[122] We produce speech through the interplay of the mouth and related body parts: the tongue, lips, vocal chords; the lungs, and so on.
[123] Mauss 1992, 455.
[124] Mauss 1992, 461.
[125] Mauss 1992, 473.
[126] Mauss 1992, 459, 462. See also Mauss 1992, 474.
[127] Mauss 1992, 459.

whole, the ensemble, though, is conditioned by the three elements indissolvably mixed together."[128]

While Mauss' insights form the basis for my view of collective body techniques, Mauss is locked in binary thought that I do not share: he often uses simplistic binary divisions such as "natural"/"unnatural" in a way that can be easily interpreted as value statements on the axis "good"/"bad".[129] Mauss also writes about human "races"[130]; believes that techniques of the body are principally "divided and vary by age *and* by sex"[131]; and claims that women are weak and cannot throw as well as men do[132]. These claims may reflect the academic discourse at the time of Mauss' writing in 1934 but they are untenable from my perspective.[133]

I suggest that collective body techniques "embody" social norms, values and hierarchies in that they produce and manifest accustomed ways of using one's body "properly"; of reacting to other bodies "properly"; and of having a "proper" relation to one's own body in various social situations. They can be taught and imposed on individuals and groups purposefully in institutions such as schools, prisons, hospitals and museums but we also adopt them without noticing it. For instance, from our childhood on, we learn body technical routines and divisions of labour in household chores, the ways of behaving at home with other household members, guests, alone and so on. Also, our cultural ways of expressing and hiding feelings and emotions through facial and other bodily gestures are body technical in their nature. Indeed, as Mauss has pointed out, many of our "most essential" activities such as walking, sitting, sleeping, and pushing, have a body technical and "learnt" culture-bound character.[134]

As Nick Crossley puts it, body techniques are "forms of shared practical reason, pre-representational and pre-reflective forms of collective understanding"; body techniques are "learned, shared and [--] they 'constrain' agents in the respect that we do them without thinking and may have difficulty stopping ourselves from doing them or learning to do them differently."[135] Also, body techniques "embody a practical understanding and meaning [and] are dependent upon certain biological/anatomical structures and mechanisms. As forms of understanding, knowing and reasoning about the world they are psychological [and] social facts [--]."[136]

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[128] Mauss 1992, 459.
[129] On the essentialist and "modern" basis of binary thought, see Pulkkinen 2000, 37-39.
[130] Mauss 1992, 474.
[131] Mauss 1992, 462. Italics in the original.
[132] See Mauss 1992, 463.
[133] For detailed accounts of Mauss' central ideas and of his significance to anthropology, see e.g. Brubaker 2004; Carrithers, Collins and Lukes 1985; Valeri 2013.
[134] See Mauss 1992, 458, 465-473.
[135] Crossley 2004, 38.
[136] Crossley 2004, 38. To illustrate the practical understanding and meaning of body techniques, Crossley writes that "[t]o learn to swim, for example, is not merely to learn to perform a fixed set of movements but rather to grasp, in a practical and pre-reflective way, principles of buoyancy, water displacement, etc. It is to develop an understanding of 'deep water' sufficient to allow one to stay afloat and move around within it. Moreover swimming embodies a purpose and thus meaning (i.e. staying afloat and moving in a desired direction) and is performed for this purpose" (Crossley 2004, 38).

Living in a specific society, we constantly assume and learn collective body techniques, and learn to express and interpret feelings and emotions in order to survive and thrive in that society. These techniques are also ways in which we adapt to the behavioural codes of the society, and ways through which others perceive and assess us. In this ongoing social process, we also continuously create a sense of "self" and of our subjectivity. Many of the body techniques that we encounter and adopt in our everyday life turn into parts of our habituses and identities. In Bourdieu's line of thought, habitus can be seen as the "embodiment of social rules, values, and dispositions [and as] an internalisation of the social world [that] shapes individual actions, thoughts and feelings based on a history of experience."[137] Bourdieu has defined the habitus as the "structured, structuring structure" that, in Jessica Lee and Doune Macdonald's words, "is a result of internalising the social world (structured structure) which organises practices and the perception of practices (structuring structure)."[138] Basing on Mike Featherstone's view, I see habitus as lifestyles, values, dispositions and expectations that we acquire through our everyday activities.[139] Any habitus, as Nick Crossley puts it, is

> a product of the power and (largely involuntary and pre-reflective[--]) tendency of the body-subject to habituate and thereby 'conserve' structures of behaviour and experience which have proved significant or useful. Habitus is not an independent thing but rather a flexible dispositional structure formed within and by the body, qua inter/action system, in the context of its ongoing interactions with the world.[140]

However, as beings capable of reflection, we do not automatically "adopt" all body techniques we encounter but, in part, we can assess them and consciously decide on what body techniques we adopt into our habitus and identity.[141] Indeed, as Nick Crossley points out, "we are capable, qua bodily 'I', of turning back upon, objectifying or thematizing and acting upon our embodied existence, generating a bodily 'me'"; Crossley calls activities "that act back upon the agent, modifying him or her, and which are employed specifically for this purpose" as "*reflexive* body techniques".[142]

If a person does not succeed in learning the collective body techniques – and proper use of language in specific situations – prevalent and "suitable" in the social body or community he or she lives in and that are essential for recognition and acceptance as a member of that community, he or she is likely to encounter social alienation, discrimination and violence. The same goes for

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[137] Lee and Macdonald 2009, 361.

[138] Bourdieu 1984, 170; Lee and Macdonald 2009, 361.

[139] Featherstone 1987, 64. See also Chapter 2.3 below.

[140] Crossley 2004, 40. Here, Crossley critically draws on the phenomenological approach (especially on Husserl) to the interaction of body-subject and world.

[141] Marcel Mauss states that habits which form habituses "do not vary just with individuals and their imitations; they vary especially between societies, educations, proprieties and fashions, types of prestige. In them, we should see the techniques and work of collective and individual practical reason rather than, in the ordinary way, merely the soul and its repetitive faculties" (Mauss 1992, 458).

[142] Crossley 2004, 38. Italics in the original. Crossley mentions e.g. jogging as an example of reflexive body techniques.

the situation in which the person is not given an opportunity to learn these techniques and ways of speech, or refuses to comply with them.[143]

2.3 Discourse, Performativity, Apparatus, Cultural Capital and Power

Body techniques, discourse, apparatus/dispositif and performativity

My view of the relation between collective body techniques, the distribution of the sensible, and social power resonates with Michel Foucault's thoughts; in my view, Foucault's research focused on the interspace between language and what I refer to as collective body techniques. Foucault pointed out and analysed ways in which human behaviour, body techniques, and gestures have been and become – intentionally and unintentionally – disciplined, controlled and rationalized through language, power relations and violence, and how they have been harnessed for specific interests and logics in specific social and historical situations. Foucault argued that the individual is not

> a sort of elementary nucleus, a primitive atom or some multiple, inert matter to which power is applied, or which is struck by a power that subordinates or destroys individuals [--] one of the first effects of power is that it allows bodies, gestures, discourses, and desires to be identified and constituted as something individual. The individual is not, in other words, power's opposite number; the individual is one of power's first effects. The individual is in fact a power-effect, and at the same time, and to the extent that he is a power-effect, the individual is a relay: power passes through the individuals it has constituted.[144]

Foucault addressed the relations between power, body, discourse, knowledge, truth, and subjecthood from a genealogical[145] perspective. Some of the most crucial and persistent ideas for Foucault were, as Colin Gordon succinctly puts it, the

> *productivity of power* (power relations are integral to the modern social productive apparatus, and linked to active programs for the fabricated part of the collective substance of society itself) and the *constitution of the subjectivity through power*

[143] For instance, all communities involve behavioural codes or rules as to when their members are allowed to touch other bodies and objects and which situations are seen to require integrity (see e.g. Kirkkopelto 2013, 97). In his doctoral dissertation on the relation between the birth of modernist and avant-gardist authorship, violence and shock, and the mass society and mass culture, Petri Tervo, for his part, has pointed to the human body's vulnerability and consistent threat of becoming a "bodypiece" that is stripped of the possibility for mimetical action and body techniques. See Tervo 2006, Dissertation Abstract, 1-16.

[144] Foucault 2003, 29-30.

[145] According to Tuija Pulkkinen, "Foucault defines genealogy as opposing itself to the search for origins" (Pulkkinen 2000, 81) and states that "the genealogical approach does not assume the existence of an original 'something' which then acquires its own history and which is affected by power over the course of history. Instead, it conceives of the phenomena under study entirely as an effect of power, that is, as entirely constructed in its past and present without any starting point or nucleus which becomes modified. In other words, there exists nothing which becomes modified by power. Instead power produces, from the beginning on, the phenomena" (Pulkkinen 2000, 183).

> *relations* (the individual impact of power relations does not limit itself to pure repression but also comprises the intention to teach, to mold conduct, to install forms of self-awareness and identities).[146]

I think that it is the particular distribution of the sensible that allows certain power relations, apparatuses/dispositifs[147], and discourses, in the Foucauldian meaning of the terms, to appear. In Tom Frost's words, the apparatus/dispositif "represents the network of power relations which articulates how a power not based upon classical conceptions of sovereignty manifests itself [--] [i]t is through the *dispositif* that the human being is transformed into both a subject, and an object, of power relations."[148] Drawing on Foucault, Giorgio Agamben defines dispositif as "literally anything that has in some way the capacity to capture, orient, determine, intercept, model, control or secure the gestures, behaviours, opinions or discourses of living beings."[149] My view of the human perceptual apparatus that I have presented above, plays a crucial role in this process; it might even be seen as an "ur-apparatus", or as a biologico-cultural pre-apparatus that underlies the functioning of apparatuses/dispositifs in Foucault's sense; that makes their functioning possible.

Karen Barad states that to Foucault, "'discourses' are not merely 'groups of signs' but 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak.'"[150] Stuart Hall has concisely defined the term "discourse" in Foucault's sense as a "group of statements which provide a language for talking about – i.e. a way of representing – a particular kind of knowledge about a topic. When statements about a topic are made within a particular discourse, the discourse makes it possible to construct the topic in a certain way. It also limits the other ways in which the topic can be constructed [and it] enters into and influences all social practices."[151] Thus, the "very language we use to describe the so-called facts interferes in this process of finally deciding what is true, and what false."[152] It follows that "at least for the study of human beings, the goals of power and the goals of knowledge cannot be separated: in knowing we control and in controlling we know."[153]

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[146] Gordon 2002, xix. Italics in the original. See also Foucault 2002a and Foucault 2002c.
[147] Foucault's term "dispositif" is often translated as "apparatus". See e.g. Callewaert 2017, 29-30.
[148] Frost 2015, 152. Italics in the original. Foucault himself described dispositif/apparatus as "a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions – in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of the apparatus. The apparatus itself is the system of relations that can be established between these elements. Secondly, what I am trying to identify in this apparatus is precisely the nature of the connection that can exist between these heterogeneous elements [--] I understand by the term 'apparatus' a sort of – shall we say – formation which has as its major function at a given historical moment that of responding to an *urgent need*. The apparatus thus has a dominant strategic function" (Foucault 1980b, 194-195. Italics in the original).
[149] Agamben 2009, 14.
[150] Barad 1998, 103. Barad quotes Foucault, Michel (1972): *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse of Language*. New York: Pantheon Books, 49.
[151] Hall 1992, 291.
[152] Hall 1992, 293. See also Foucault 2006, 170.
[153] Gutting 2014, section 4.4.

I see my view of human perception based on the distribution of the sensible as one possible answer to Rosemary Hennessey's plausible critique of Foucault, summarized by Karen Barad as follows: Foucault failed to "theorize the relationship between 'discursive' and 'nondiscursive' practices. As materialist feminist theorist Rosemary Hennessey insists in offering her critique of Foucault, 'a rigorous materialist theory of the body cannot stop with the assertion that the body is always discursively constructed. It also needs to explain how the discursive construction of the body is related to nondiscursive practices in ways that vary widely from one social formation to another.'"[154]

The Foucauldian view of discourse paved the way for contemporary views of performativity, especially that of Judith Butler who draws, beside Louis Althusser and J. L. Austin, significantly on Foucault.[155] In the speech act theory, "a performative is that discursive practice that enacts or produces that which it names."[156] As André Lepecki concisely puts it, "[e]xamples of performative utterances associated with the reproduction of a social code are sentencing a prisoner, declaring matrimony, naming a child. In a performative utterance, the speech-act transforms the status of the body of those which are spoken to" and the changes in status is enforced, for instance, "through bodily discipline, sensorial modulation, physical education, mimetic representation." [157] For Butler, especially drag is an efficient way to show that body is not something static and "ready" but a spatio-temporal process. James Loxley points out that

> [a]n important implication of Butler's argument here is that if this ontology of gender goes, the parallel ontology of theatrical performance goes with it. If our identities offstage are the product of various acts through which we become who and what we are, then the notion of an essential person underlying those acts turns out to be merely a socially dominant dissimulation of that process of performative constitution.[158]

Butler has been accused of granting too much potential for conscious and voluntary acts of performing the gender differently, and that "in her analyses the body disappears and everything becomes culture." [159] While Tuija Pulkkinen, among others, has responded effectively to some of these criticisms, I also find that Butler does not properly address the material conditions in and through which performative acts can take place.[160] As Karen Barad asks: "how

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[154] Barad 2003, 809-810. Barad quotes Rosemary Hennessey, *Materialist Feminism and the Politics of Discourse*, Routledge: New York 1993, 46. See also Barad 1998, 99.

[155] For Althusser's view of "interpellation" and Austin's "speech act theory", see e.g. Althusser 1971, 170-174; Butler 1993, 13; Loxley 2007.

[156] Butler 1993, 13. Butler refers here in particular to J. L. Austin's, Shoshana Felman's, Barbara Johnson's and Ludwig Wittgenstein's thoughts.

[157] Lepecki 2000. Lepecki seems to use the term "mimetic representation" here in its conventional meaning, as outlined in Chapter 2.2.

[158] Loxley 2007, 142-143.

[159] See Pulkkinen 2000, 159. See also Burkitt 1999, 90-98; Tervo 2006, 8-10.

[160] According to Pulkinen, Butler "does not privilege culture over nature but instead shows how the very distinction culture/nature is part of the modern way of asking the question, and how it may be deconstructed. She does not valorize culture over body, but instead refuses to take part in the competition culture/body. She does not differentiate culture as non-material or non-bodily and body as non-ideal or non-cultural" (Pulkkinen 2000, 160). Also, "with the idea of performativity she [Butler] underlines that the conditions of any individual gender performance are deeply embedded in the gendering power of culture. The gendering power is the condition

can we account for the ability of these [social] norms to materialize the human body? That is, what is it about the material nature of regulatory practices, and of human bodies, that enables discourse to work its productive material effects on bodies?"[161] I believe that, being productive and delimiting at the same time, collective body techniques, sensory and experience fields, and the distribution of the sensible help us understand the material-sensory-cognitive preconditions for any performative acts.

My framework also offers a way to understand the materiality and corporeality of Butler's idea of "passing" and the possibility of exclusion and violence related to it; to be accepted in society requires that one acts and performs one's identity "credibly" – or, in Butler's terms, "passes" – within one's social environment or in the eyes of the hegemony of the society.[162] Referring to my framework, situations in which a person does not abide by or does not reiterate the "proper", "normal" and normative collective body techniques or "proper" use of language prevalent in a social group or in a society, might well be, to echo Butler, described by the term "not passing".

Body techniques, experience fields and cultural capital

One's experience of reality – and what and who have a part and a "role" in it – is based on the specific body techniques and experience fields that he or she encounters as a member of a specific household and society, including its formal and informal educational and disciplinary institutions and practices. In that sense, body techniques and experience fields also relate to what Pierre Bourdieu – who also drew essentially on Marcel Mauss's thinking – termed as "cultural capital", as well as to the potential inequalities and exclusionary processes this form of capital may give rise to. Bourdieu's term "cultural capital" refers to

> the symbols, ideas, tastes, and preferences that can be strategically used as resources in social action [and] as a 'habitus', an embodied socialized tendency or disposition to act, think, or feel in a particular way. By analogy with economic capital, such resources can be invested and accumulated and can be converted into other forms. Thus, middle-class parents are able to endow their children with the linguistic and cultural competences that will give them a greater likelihood of success at school and at university. Working-

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of any subject position which makes it impossible to individually ignore or oppose it at will. The shifts in this power are produced when gender is performed slightly differently, and the possibility of the different performances functions as a crucial reminder of the cultural nature of this power, which functions as purportedly natural. Butler does not suggest that these 'different' performances are accomplished independently of the general gendering power. On the contrary, her point is to remind us that they are possible only because of its existence" (Pulkkinen 2000, 186). Butler herself has said that, in *Gender Trouble* (Butler 1990), "I think that I may have made a mistake by using drag as the example of performativity, because many people have now understood that to be the *paradigm* of performativity, and that's not the case" (Kotz 1992, 84. Italics in the original). See also Hall 2000, 27-28.

[161] Barad 1998, 107.

[162] See Butler 1993, 20, 124-127, 167-185, 241-242; Rottenberg 2003; Salih 2006, 61-66. In *Bodies That Matter*, Butler discusses e.g. "discursive performativity as it operates in the materialization of sex" (Butler 1993, 12) and suggests e.g. that "race" and "racial identity" are social processes, "something that is 'assumed' rather than something one simply 'is'" (Salih 2006, 63), as well as analyses Nella Larsen's novella *Passing* "in which one of the protagonists attempts to 'pass' for white" (Salih 2006, 64).

> class children, without access to such cultural resources, are less likely to be successful in the educational system. Thus, education reproduces class inequalities. Bourdieu sees the distribution of economic and cultural capital as reinforcing each other. Educational success—reflecting initial cultural capital—is the means through which superior, higher-paying occupations can be attained, and the income earned through these jobs may allow the successful to purchase a private education for their children and so enhance their chances of educational success. This 'conversion' of one form of capital into another is central to the intragenerational or intergenerational reproduction of class differences.[163]

I would emphasize that the command of "proper" behaviour and "proper" body techniques in specific situations is a key component in the accumulation of cultural capital in one's life. According to Bourdieu, "the social order is progressively inscribed in people's minds" through "family or the educational system", as well as through "the meetings and interactions of everyday life"; in this way, "[s]ocial divisions become principles of division, organizing the image of the social world."[164] While Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction was based on (supposedly) clearly definable social classes and class identities – an issue that can be problematicized and contested from our contemporary perspective – his theory nevertheless testifies to the fact that our predispositions and tastes – also the very appreciation of "art" – are acquired culturally and socially.[165]

Disciplinary power, pastoral power and biopower

In my view, many collective body techniques – in hospitals, schools, and the military, to point out a few rather obvious areas – serve, and are bound to what Foucault has termed as pastoral power, and as disciplinary power in *Discipline and Punish*. Disciplinary power organizes spaces and regulates the behaviour and use of time of individuals in a society, making them "docile"; it is about "exercising upon it [the body] a subtle coercion, of obtaining holds upon it at the level of the mechanism itself – movements, gestures, attitudes, rapidity: an infinitesimal power over the active body [and about] the efficiency of movements, their internal organization", implying "an uninterrupted, constant coercion, supervising the processes of the activity rather than its result and it is

[163] Oxford Reference, Definition of "cultural capital". See also Bourdieu 1984, 13-14, 22-23, 114; Jeannotte 2003, 38; Chapter 4.8 of this study. Despite his decidedly "relational" stand, Bourdieu and his theory of social reproduction can, rightly, be criticized for his theoretical and methodological limitations or shortcomings, such as his privileging of "relations between social positions at the expense of exploring the substance of these positions; [his] assumptions about the interactional properties of habitus, field and social space [that] are left unexamined, [and his] neglect of the interactional character of social networks [that] leads to a disengagement with the intersubjective world." (Murphy 2013. Murphy paraphrases Bottero, Wendy (2009): "Relationality and social interaction", *The British Journal of Sociology*, 60:2 (June 2009), 399-420. For critical discussion on Bourdieu, see also e.g. Edgerton and Roberts 2014; Goldthorpe 2007; Tzanakis 2011). Murphy goes so far as to term "the habitus of classed existence as a rather flat theoretical landscape, shorn of ambivalence, complexity, and most importantly, agency" (Murphy 2013). Nevertheless, I view Bourdieu's theory as a useful tool – not *the* all-explaining tool – in trying to explain the basic dynamic of social reproduction and social exclusions.

[164] Bourdieu 1984, 471.

[165] See Bourdieu 1984, 14-19, 66-67; Chapter 2.2 of this study.

exercised according to a codification that partitions as closely as possible time, space, movement."[166] Disciplinary control over people often relies on spatial arrangements and visibility of individuals, and it can, to a great extent, "be achieved merely by observing them. So, for example, the tiered rows of seats in a stadium not only makes it easy for spectators to see but also for guards or security cameras to scan the audience."[167]

Also, control based on disciplinary power especially concerns "what people have not done (nonobservence), with, that is, a person's failure to reach required standards. This concern illustrates the primary function of modern disciplinary systems: to correct deviant behavior. The goal is not revenge (as in the case of the tortures of premodern punishment) but reform, where, of course, reform means coming to live by society's standards or norms."[168] In Foucault's view, disciplinary power has widely "replaced pre-modern sovereignty (kings, judges) as the fundamental power relation."[169]

Pastoral power, for its part, is strongly individualizing and it is about providing protection and organizing people as a "political" and "civil" collective. According to Foucault, "the modern Western state has integrated into a new political shape an old power technique that originated in Christian institutions" that is "salvation-oriented", "oblative", and "individualizing".[170] In the Western state, this pastoral power is not "a question leading people to their salvation in the next world but, rather, ensuring it in this world. And in this context, the word 'salvation' takes on different meanings: health, wellbeing, (that is, sufficient wealth, standard of living), security, protection against accidents [--] the multiplication of the aims and agents of pastoral power focused the development of knowledge of man around two roles: one, globalizing and quantitative, concerning the population; the other, analytical, concerning the individual."[171] Pastoral power "spread out into the whole social body [and used] an individualizing 'tactic' that characterized a series of powers: those of the family, medicine, psychiatry, education, and employers."[172]

Of course, pastoral power and disciplinary power often appear together, for instance in the police forces with its "legitimated" practices of violence, coercion and observation in order to protect citizens, and in the school discipline that educates the pupils in areas such as timekeeping, social conduct, and a work ethic so that they become "decent" – and "normal", obedient – citizens, that is, so that they learn the necessary body techniques in order to survive and thrive in the hegemonic social dramaturgy of society.[173]

Disciplinary power and pastoral power, and the related body techniques, can be seen as forms of biopower that Foucault characterized as "the set of mechanisms through which the basic biological features of the human species became the object of a political strategy, of a general strategy of power, or, in

[166] Foucault 1995, 137.
[167] Gutting 2013, section 4.4. See also Foucault 1995, 187.
[168] Gutting 2013, section 4.4.
[169] Gutting 2013, section 4.4.
[170] Foucault 2002c, 332-333.
[171] Foucault 2002c, 334-335.
[172] Foucault 2002c, 335.
[173] See Foucault 2002b, 318-319; Howley and Howley 2011, 279-280; Valverde 2008, 19-20.

other words, how, starting from the eighteenth century, modern Western societies took on board the fundamental biological fact that human beings are a species." [174] According to Catherine Mills, biopower "incorporates both disciplinary techniques geared toward mastering the forces of the individual body and a biopolitics centred around the regulation and management of the life of a new political subject, the population."[175] Biopower "entails new forms of government and social regulation, such that power no longer operates through a violence imposed upon subjects from above, but through a normalising regulation that regularises, administers and fosters the life of subjects. In this new regime of power, power incorporates itself into and takes hold of the body of the citizen through the 'normalisation of life processes.'"[176] We might say that a contemporary "version" of biopower manifests itself in neoliberalism and entrepreurialism that, as I will show, also influence and inform participatory art practice.[177]

2.4 Subjectification and Governmentality

It is to a high degree through contemporary forms of "governmentality" – "the dissemination of knowledge that people internalize so that they become self-governing"[178] – that we assume and thereby naturalize specific views of what and who we are; how we should act and behave; and what reality is like. To a large extent, governability, disciplinary power and pastoral power manifest themselves in and through modern "psy-disciplines" such as "psychology, psychotherapy, educational psychology, psychological counseling and guidance"; as a "psy-complex" through which

> individuals could formulate their own aspirations and anxieties in terms of the norms of the institutions they inhabited. It has thus become routine for us to articulate an inner self in such terms as the wish for job satisfaction, the fear of communication failure in our relationships, the concern for a child's low self-esteem, or the desire for self-empowerment. Whether consumed voluntarily in private or administered by human relations 'facilitators' at work, the discourses and practices of the 'psy-complex' now

[174] Foucault 2009, 16. See also Cohen 2009, 17-22. According to Catherine Mills, "on occasion Foucault makes a distinction between 'biopolitics' and 'biopower,' wherein the former term refers to the constitution and incorporation of the population as a new subject of governance, and the latter is a broader term that encompasses both biopolitics and discipline. Even so, he does not rigorously maintain it" (Mills 2013, 85 (footnote 36)).
[175] Mills 2013, 85.
[176] Mills 2013, 86. Mills quotes Georges Canguilhem, "On Histoire de la folie as an Event", in Davidson, Arnold I. (ed.), *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, Chicago University Press: Chicago 1997, 32. See also Wallenstein 2013, 11-12.
[177] For the relation between biopower and neoliberalism, see e.g. Willse 2012.
[178] Harvie 2013, 3. Harvie refers here to Foucault, Michel (1991): "Governmentality", in Burchell, Graham, Gordon, Colin and Miller, Peter (eds.): *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality: With Two Lectures by and an Interview with Michael Foucault*. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 87-104.

> permeate public and private lives, allowing the norms governing conduct to be acknowledged as those by which we seek to govern ourselves.[179]

Current governmentality is especially about the "'soft' or 'empowering' mechanisms of power" including, for instance, "ways individuals and social groups are governed by freedom and choice" and "the intimate relationship that exists between the universal call for 'self-determination' and quite specific societal expectations and institutional constraints" in today's neoliberalist societies.[180]

In my view, subjectification is always bound to governmentality and the processes of getting – or not getting – a part in a social body. Drawing on both Foucault and Rancière, I locate two types of subjectification: subjectifications that primarily concern individuals and groups within a social body, and subjectifications that concern individuals and groups at the borders of a social body or outside it.[181] On one hand, governmentality and the various forms of power produce subjects as Foucault suggests; they interpellate, urge or force individuals to view themselves, and behave in certain ways and thereby grant them parts to play in a social body – or the social order – within the distribution of the sensible. They also lay grounds for identifications and identities.[182] On the other hand, as Rancière suggests, there are always human and other beings that are not visible and sensible within – or who are outside – that social body, and who are thus not "taken into the count" and allocated parts in it. Subjectification also takes place when someone or something "breaches" or destabilizes the assumed order of reality and its part(icipant)s; their roles and assumed "places", or becomes sensible within it for the first time and demands attention either intentionally or merely by becoming visible.[183] That is,

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[179] Hunter 2005b, 318. See also Hunter 2005a; Mauss 1985; Parekh 2015.

[180] Lemke 2013, 37. Here, Lemke discusses studies on governmentality. It should be noted that Foucault's use of the term"governmentality" was inconsistent: "Foucault originally used the term 'governmentality' to describe a particular way of administering populations in modern European history within the context of the rise of the idea of the State. He later expanded his definition to encompass the techniques and procedures which are designed to govern the conduct of both individuals and populations at every level, not just the administrative or political level" (O'Farrell 2005, 138. See also Lemke 2013, 38.).

[181] My view of subjectification does not orthodoxically adhere to a Rancièrean or a Foucauldian approach; rather, it is a combination of them. I believe that despite their differences (see Lazzarato 2013), Rancière's and Foucault's perspectives are compatible, as Adeena May (May 2013, 178, 183) and Mathieu Potte-Bonneville suggest (Potte-Bonneville 2006, 179-180). Moreover, the dance theorist André Lepecki sees convergences between Foucault's and Rancière's thinking as to the "police" (see Lepecki 2013).

[182] Laplanche and Pontalis concisely describe "identification" as "the psychological process whereby the subject assimilates an aspect, property or attribute of the other and is transformed, wholly or partially, after the model the other provides. It is by means of a series of identifications that the personality is constituted and specified" (Laplanche and Pontalis 1973, 205. Quoted in Diamond 2007, 405).

[183] In Rancière's theory, subjectivization (or subjectification) means "the process by which a political subject extracts itself from the dominant categories of identification and classification" (Rockhill 2004b, 92. Emphasis omitted from the original). The "political subject is neither a political lobby nor an individual who seeks adequate representation for his or her interests and ideas. It is an empty operator that produces cases of political dispute by challenging the established framework of identification and classification. Through the process of subjectivization, political subjects bring politics proper into existence and confront the police

subjectification is not solely about the construction of individual subjects *within* a social body and the power relations in it, but it has essentially to do with disputes over participation and interruptions in the order of reality, including the culturally produced individual subject positions. I believe that subjectification is always political because it is linked to the processes of getting a part and having say; about capacities for action; about control of bodies; and about distribution of power in a social body and beyond.[184]

2.5 Dynamic of Politics and Police

As I pointed out in Chapter 1.5, I believe that politics is not solely a process of distributing power, visibility, and capacities for action *within* some social body, but also about who and what has a part; who and what counts as a "legitimate" part of a certain social body and certain reality in the first place. Politics consists of fights and negotiations about having and not having a part and a share in a social body, and of making breaches to the hegemonic performative discourses that underlie our understandings of reality and what it consists of. That is, politics is about the very practices of "ordering" and "challenging" reality; about the processes of making bodies, issues and things sensible both materially and discursively.

Here, I draw especially on Rancière, to whom it is in the moments of interruption in the distribution of the sensible that political activity begins. He draws a division between what he calls "politics" (*La Politique*) and "police" or "police order" (*La Police* or *L'Ordre policier*)[185]. The police is "an order of bodies that defines the allocation of ways of doing, ways of being, and ways of saying, and sees those bodies are assigned by names to a particular place and task; it is an order of the visible and the sayable that sees that a particular activity is visible and another is not, that this speech is understood as discourse and another as noise."[186] Police always operates at the level of society and it reiterates the hegemonic view of reality based on which defines and polices who is visible; who is allowed to and who can talk; who is recognized and acknowledged as an active or "equal" participant; how and where occupations become allocated, and so on, within a society.[187] Police, in my Foucault-inspired view, also includes the hegemonic performative discourses, dispositifs and our

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order with the heterology of emancipation. However, the manifestation of politics only occurs via specific acts of implementation, and political subjects forever remain precarious figures that hesitate at the borders of silence maintained by the police" (Rockhill 2004b, 90. Emphasis omitted from the original). For the political relevance of subjectification, see Chapters 2.4 and 2.5.

[184] By the term "social body", I wish to refer to both organized societies and to smaller formal and informal social formations as part of which people lead their (daily) lives, such as households and workplace communities. On the definitions of "society", see Dean 2005, 326-329; Williams 1985, 291-295.

[185] Rancière's original French term "la police" can also be translated as "policy" in English. I use the form "police", as Gabriel Rockhill does (Rockhill 2004b, 89).

[186] Rancière 1999, 29. See also Rockhill 2004b, 89.

[187] See Rancière 1999, 29; Rancière 2008a, 31-32; Rancière 2010, 36-37; Rancière 2011a, 6-9; Rockhill 2004a, 3-4; Žižek 2004, 69-71.

grounding assumptions about the subject, work, freedom, law, and ethics, and so on.[188] The specific collective body techniques that manifest and embody disciplinary and pastoral power, too, are based on the logic of the police.

Police, if understood as a logic that has one of its material-discursive manifestations in the police forces in a state, assumes that all those parts or components of the society who are meaningful – real, sensible, recognizable – are gathered together and present in and through the distribution of power.[189] It follows that representational forms of government, such as the representative (state) democracy, rely on the police logic: the political system is thought to be all-inclusive in that every citizen is given a vote which she or he can use in elections to choose someone to represent him or her. The police logic also lies behind the system of state-bound direct democracy that rejects the representation through MPs but still relies on the governmental institution "state" and its "citizens". But, there are often those who do not agree to the decisions taken, or who have not been included in the decision-making process at all.[190] From the perspective of those people or parties – they might be described as "non-parts" or "non-shareholders" – such distribution of power is, we might say, a "wrong calculation" that questions the supposed equality premiss of the decision-making process.[191]

To Rancière, politics is contrary to police. Politics is about dissensus, about "acts of subjectivization that separate society from itself by challenging the

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[188] While Rancière is sceptical of Foucault's view of power (see May 2013, 177 (May translates and quotes Jacques Ranciere, *La Mésentente*, Galilée: Paris 1996, 55-56); Rancière 1999, 32), in my use, "police" includes operations within what Foucault termed as disciplinary, pastoral, and biopower. Indeed, Rancière's view of police comes close to Foucault's disciplinary power. Foucault wrote that discipline works "on the principle of elementary location or *partitioning*. Each individual has his own place; and each place its individual. [--] Disciplinary space tends to be divided into as many sections as there are bodies or elemens to be distributed. One must eliminate the effects of imprecise distributions, the uncontrolled disappearance of individuals, their diffuse circulation, their unusable and dangerous coagulation [--]" (Foucault 1995, 143). Thus, it might be said that Foucault's analyses concentrated on the sphere that Rancière terms "police". Also Foucault's view of "police" echoes with that of Rancière: "The *police* includes everything [--] [m]en and things are envisioned as to their relationships: men's coexistence on a territory; their relationships as to property; what they produce; what is exchanged on the market [--]" (Foucault 2002b, 319). According to Adeena May, "Rancière agrees with Foucault's analysis on the point that the 'police' as a form of government extends beyond what he calls 'the lower police' (the police of policemen and their sticks) and is thus part of 'a social apparatus in which the medical, assistance and culture were entangled' and 'bound to become a form of counselor, manager as well as an agent of the public order.' [--] Yet, at the same time, Rancière distinguishes the order of the 'police' from a second logic, which consists in the 'suspension' of this order deemed harmonious. It is from the suspension of this given ordering of bodies and the way they participate in it as appearing and being heard that 'politics' emerges" (May 2013, 176; May translates and quotes Jacques Rancière, *La Mésentente*, Galilée: Paris 1996, 51).

[189] See Rancière 1999, 29; Rancière 2010, 36-37; Rockhill 2004b, 89.

[190] See Miessen 2010, 41-50.

[191] "Rancière's conception of equality must not be confused with the arithmetical distribution of rights and representation. The essence of equality is not to be found in an equitable unification of interests but in the acts of subjectivization that undo the supposedly natural order of the sensible" (Rockwell 2004b, 86, emphasis in the original). To Rancière, "[a] wrong is a specific form of equality that establishes the 'only universal' of politics as a polemical point of struggle by relating the manifestation of political subjects to the police order" (Rockhill 2004b, 93. Emphasis omitted from the original).

'natural order of bodies' in the name of equality and polemically reconfiguring the distribution of the sensible. Politics is an anarchical process of emancipation that opposes the logic of disagreement to the logic of the police."[192] That is, politics begins by interrupting the assumedly natural order established by the police and the current distribution of the sensible; when each individual does not "keep to his own trade (anymore)" not only in occupational but in general terms; that is, in situations in which some of those who are included in the distribution of the sensible start to call for a change and/or through situations in which some of those who are not included in the current distribution of the sensible at all – who have not *taken part* in it – become sensible and, often, start to demand a say and a share, and who then challenge the status quo and the current order of reality.[193] This process temporarily subjectivizes those who do not (yet) have a share, those who call for a change.[194] It is through such processes that the dominant discourses and our grounding assumptions are challenged or questioned.

Collective body techniques play a crucial part in this process. I suggest that if someone does not master the "proper" and normative body techniques needed in a specific social situation, or refuses to use and reiterate them, or modifies them in a radical way, or proposes novel body techniques to replace the normative ones, this individual – or group – receives a different kind of attention and becomes subjectivized differently from those who behave "normally" and normatively.

All interruptions that have political currency have their roots at the sensory level; it is in the moments of affective and sensory dispersion – that is, the displacements and confusions within the acts of "translation" from sensory field to experience field, and the inherent instability of the particular distribution of the sensible – that displaces or challenges our current positions within the social body and thereby force us reassess our assumptions about and views of about reality. Indeed, the "turn" from sensory fields into experience fields and specific distributions of the sensible does not lead to an all-inclusive and stable state of affairs but, instead, it is an unstable and "porous" process.[195]

[192] Rockhill 2004b, 90 (original emphasis omitted). As I pointed out in Chapter 2.4, I do not restrict subjectification (or, in Rancière's terms, subjectivization) to dissensual practice but, instead, suggest that subjectification can also take place through governmentality and power in Foucault's sense.

[193] See Rancière 2004b, 3-29.

[194] See Rockhill 2004b, 86, 90, 92; Rancière 2010, 28-29.

[195] For instance, according to Eric Shouse "[o]ne of the simplest ways to understand how affect continues to operate meaningfully in the lives of adults even after they have gained some conscious control over their emotions is to look at an individual whose affect system has gone haywire" (Shouse 2005, section 7).

2.6 Sensory Fields, Experience Fields and Body Techniques in Performance

Sensory fields and experience fields in performance situations

Based on my view of human perception, I suggest that every performance gives rise to a particular sensory field, which in this context means the specific material, kinaesthetic, visual, aural and haptic situation created by the performance, as a combined effect of all its participants and elements. It is through this sensory field that the participants form a conscious experience – an experience field – of the event. Whenever we talk about or analyse a performance situation, we talk about our partial and subjective experiences rooted in the sensory field of that situation; it is not possible to describe or reason about sensory fields "as such".

The artists bring crucial elements to the sensory field by means of their actions and the scenography that they have created – for instance what they do and make visible and audible; where the participants are supposed to sit, stand or move about; what kind of atmosphere the artists try to generate and so forth – but they do not and cannot take complete control of the sensory field of the event.[196] This is because sensory fields and the experiences that they arouse in participants are always situational; they depend on the specific bodily constellation, expectations, moods and reactions of each participant that cannot be fully predicted in advance.[197] Indeed, any stimulus in the sensory field can engage the participants' senses; participants often register random stimuli such as cracks in the wallpaper, uncomfortable seats or the humming of the ventilation system. Sensory fields lead us away from thinking of agency as a human privilege or as solely intentional activity. Not only can human participants have agential force, but other sources too: sounds, noises and lifeless objects can affect me, cause sensations in my body and also attract my attention when I do not consciously focus on these stimuli. These "involuntary" stimuli can be seen as "distractions"; they engage my body and thus they distract my conscious and reflective effort to concentrate on something else. In this respect, my approach can be seen to align with the so-called "new materialist" view that "the experience of a piece of art is made up of matter *and* meaning. The material dimension creates *and* gives form to the discursive, and vice versa."[198]

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[196] The intended strategies and means that the artists use might be characterized as the "performance text" in Marco de Marinis's sense; for De Marinis, the performance text "is conceived of as a complex network of different types of signs, expressive means, or actions, coming back to the etymology of the word 'text' which implies the idea of texture, of something woven together" (De Marinis 1987, 100). Further, for De Marinis, "the actual placement of the spectators within the theatrical space and their relation to the playing area are central to the way in which the performance is received" (ibid., 104).

[197] See Freshwater 2009, 5-10.

[198] Dolphijn and van der Tuin 2012, 91, italics in the original. See also Cox et.al. 2015, 26-31; Kontturi 2012, 13-38; Kontturi 2013. New materialist approaches assume the entanglement of matter and meaning in all human experience and pay attention to the sensory and affective dimensions of human perception. Following Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin, "new materialism is a cultural theory that does not privilege matter over meaning or culture over nature. It explores a *monist* perspective, devoid of the dualisms that have dominated the

Further, our experience of what an artwork or performance feels like also depends on, and takes form, in the process of people participating in it. When a person views an artwork, the properties – and actions – of the beholder become "properties" or "parts" of the artwork; for example, if a group of lively drunkards view a painting on the wall, the liveliness of those drunkards becomes a property of that painting.[199] The same dynamic occurs in performance situations; the people who participate influence the "character" of the performance, and yet each participant experiences and interprets the performance through her own history as a member of a certain household and other social groups, having specific histories, imageries and, possibly, previous encounters with art. That is, the other people and all other elements in the performance situation become parts of the sensory field of the event and, insofar one renders these elements "sensible", of one's experience of it.[200]

Body techniques and normative behaviour in performance situations

In performance situations, there are many collective body techniques and cultural codes of conduct at play that we are most likely to become aware of when someone or something breaches them.[201] For instance, a child or anybody who attends a conventional drama theatre for the first time and who loudly comments on the actions on stage has not yet learnt the "proper" behaviour in theatre: that one is supposed to be silent and keep one's thoughts and reactions mostly to herself while viewing the events on the stage.[202]

This is not to say that normative collective body techniques and codes of conduct would *only* be at play in conventional theatre situations. Participatory performance situations can also have established modes of presentation and codes of conduct for participation. For instance, I, as a researcher and artist, know roughly "what to expect" in most cases of participatory performances I'm

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humanities (and sciences) until today, by giving special attention to matter, which has been so neglected by dualist thought. Cartesian dualism, after all, has favored mind [--] It [new materialism] is not embraced in opposition to transcendental thinking, but instead re-reads metaphysics as a whole from a 'natureculture' perspective, as science studies would call it [--] it is interested in actualizing a metaphysics that fully affirms the active role played by matter in 'receiving' a form [--]" (Dolphijn and van der Tuin 2012, 85, 90, 91. Italics in the original. The authors refer to Georges Simondon's "The Position of the Problem of Ontogenesis", in: *Parrhesia*, no. 7 (2009) (pp. 4-16), 4. See also Barad 2003; Cox et.al. 2015). For her part, Rebecca Schneider defines new materialism broadly as a set of research approaches operating on the premiss that "all matter is agential and that agency is distributed across and among materials in relation. As such, matter engages with matter as well as with (or without) humans, who are also matter" (Schneider 2015, 7. Schneider refers here to Barad 2003). For a concise account of the philosophical grounds of recent materialist and realist approaches, see Cox et.al. 2015, 15-25.

[199] See Tervo 2006, 11.

[200] See Kontturi 2012, 13-17.

[201] According to Marco de Marinis, who hints at the body techniques here but does not elaborate on them, it is "with and in his body that the spectator experiences the performance, this is how he perceives, lives, understands and responds to it. (One could perhaps speak of 'body techniques' as conceived by Marcel Mauss, in view of the work that the spectator truly carries out at the theatre)" (De Marinis 2016, 63). It is especially in the moments of discrepance between the (in)competences of the spectator and what is demanded from him/her in the performance situation that the cultural codes of conduct become tangible and sensible. I discuss De Marinis's views in Chapter 6.2.

[202] See De Marinis 1987, 103; Harvie 2013, 6; McAuley 2000, 245; White 2013, 6-7.

about to attend: I have gained experience by taking part in dozens of various kinds of participatory events; I usually read the promotional material of the performance I'm going to attend and thus have knowledge of the "meaning" of the terms used in that discourse; and can anticipate what is going to happen in the performance.[203] I have, at least to some degree, acquired and learnt skills that help me act "accordingly" in the participatory situation; what to do when I want to be seen and be active, and what to do when I want to stay in the background.[204] Referring to Nick Crossley's thoughts, I am aware of my own visibility in the performance situation and can, using reflexive body techniques, control my behaviour in that situation to meet my needs yet act somewhat "properly" in the eyes of the artists and perform my art connoisseur habitus "rightly" – "pass" as an art connoisseur – in that situation.[205] That is, partakers in participatory events can have – and mostly do have – an expectation horizon about the likely modes of participation that they will be confronted with in the performance. I suggest that, as in other social situations, in a participatory performance situation new or surprising to us, we tend to automatically, without much thinking, follow the way in which other people behave in that situation.[206]

Regulatory art institutions and participation as work

Participatory performances that take place in publicly supported and funded institutions such as museums, theatres, festivals and performance centres, have an ambiguous relationship to control and power: on one hand, participatory performances often aim to "remodel" social relations by suggesting novel or non-conventional ways of agency for their participants, but, on the other hand, the art institutions in which the performances take place suggest and condition the participants behave in certain ways; to comply with and reiterate certain body techniques; and obey disciplinary and pastoral power. Needless to say, these institutional – and architectural – environments also inevitably inform the participatory strategies that participatory performances employ. As Tony Bennett suggests, historically, the museum

> explicitly targeted the popular body as an object for reform, doing so through a variety of routines and technologies requiring a shift in the norms of bodily comportment. This was accomplished, most obviously, by the direct proscription of those forms of behaviour associated with places of popular assembly by, for example, rules forbidding

[203] Indeed, it might be even said that, since the "social turn" – "a shared set of desires to overturn the tradi- tional relationship between the art object, the artist and the audience" in contemporary art and performance in the 1990s (see Bishop 2012, 2) – participatory performance practices have given rise to a collection of participatory strategies that, from a seasoned participant's perspective, can be viewed as "mainstream" and predictable. See also De Marinis 1987, 111; Freshwater 2009, 75-76; Harvie 2013, 29-61; Rogoff and Schneider 2008, 353; Roselt 2013.

[204] I often try to deliberately convey my interest – or reluctance – to become active in the performance to the other participants through subtle facial gestures, body postures, where I look at, and so on.

[205] For reflexive body techniques and habitus, see Crossley 2004, 38, 40; Chapter 2.2 of this study. See also Kunst 2015, 67.

[206] This may be partially due to the "mirror neurons". See Hurley 2010, 29-30; Chapter 2.2 of this study.

> eating and drinking, outlawing the touching of exhibits and, quite frequently, stating – or at least advising – what should be worn and what should not. In this way, while formally free and open, the museum effected its own pattern of informal discriminations and exclusions [--] the museum constituted not merely a culturally differentiated space but the site for a set of culturally differentiating practices aimed at screening out the forms of public behaviour associated with places of popular assembly.[207]

Thus, Bennett writes, "[g]oing to a museum, then as now, is not merely a matter of looking and learning; it is also – and precisely because museums are as much places for being seen as for seeing – an exercise in civics."[208] Bennett draws on Foucault: "as architecture ceases to be concerned with making power manifest, it comes, instead, to serve the purpose of regulating behaviour by means of new organizations of the relations between space and vision – the one-way, hierarchically organized system of looks of the penitentiary, for example, or the focusing of the pupil's gaze on the person of the teacher in popular schooling."[209] While participatory performances can play with these regulative settings, as well as challenge and broaden the parameters of "civicness" and "decency" they also can – and do – bring about exclusions as to the desired body techniques and inability or refusal of some participants to reiterate them. As Bojana Kunst puts it, in participatory situations

> there is plenty of social violence – a sort of rehearsal of delinquency, transgressions, aversion and negotiation. It is usually not about crude violence, but is usually mental, verbal and emotional, demanding from the audience certain skills, the acceptance of challenges, presence or absence, engagement or disinterest, which calls for many entirely different affective skills. Another skill that is frequently performed at these events is the exchange and circulation of gifts and obligations, again demanding the audience work with affective powers and engagement in terms of 'critical' social situations.[210]

While performances and art are generally considered a leisure activity for the audience, the body technical and cognitive engagement required from the spectator-participants can be seen as work[211], in the sense of using one's time and energy to the specific activity of spectating, beholding or participating, and in the broader sense of co-creating, co-performing – that is, co-producing – the public[212] of the event and of the institution that hosts it. I agree with Bojana Kunst that

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[207] Bennett 1995, 100.
[208] Bennett 1995, 102.
[209] Bennett 1995, 100. Bennett refers to Foucault's conversation with Jean-Pierre Barou and Michelle Perrot, published as "The Eye of Power" (see Foucault 1980a).
[210] Kunst 2015, 67.
[211] Drawing on Hannah Arendt, Nicholas Ridout characterizes "labour" [labor] as "the necessary task of subsistence or reproduction", and "work" as "the labor of production, or poesis, a making that includes 'art'" (Ridout 2013, 16). However, the terms are somewhat fleeting and intertwined (e.g. as to when and how labor processes turn into work, and as to remuneration), and they are often used synonymically (see e.g. Harvie 2013; Kunst 2015; Ridout 2013). For histories of and discourses about work and labour, see e.g. Donkin 2010; Lazzarato 2006; Ridout 2013.
[212] Here, I refer to the "public" primarily as the pool of people who are interested in that institution – as audiences, as critics and journalists, as patrons, and so on – and who, for their part, legitimate its existence and its social and societal relevance. See Calhoun 2005.

> [t]here is exchange of work between audience and museum (or any other cultural institution where artistic events are performed); by means of its effort (affection, communication, emotions, desires, efforts connected with dispersion, organization, collaboration, isolation, etc.), the audience performs the work and performs the public of the contemporary museum. In turn, the museum enables and produces a platform for the public by means of letting the audience to do their work. In this sense, the artist stands somewhere in-between as a researcher of society and a cognitive experimenter, with the artist's work increasingly curated by the institution so that it can belong to a 'specific public'.[213]

I suggest, in the chapter 2.8 below, that work done by participants in contemporary performance projects and events especially comply with the post-Fordist mode of production.

2.7 Political Currency of Participatory Performance

As I have pointed out above, to me politics is about the very practices of "ordering" and "sensing" reality, and bound to the issue of participation: what and who is sensible in a specific social body. As Rancière puts it, politics "revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, around the properties of spaces and the possibilities of time."[214] All artistic performances can play with and challenge our experience of reality; what it consists of, and who and what have a part in it. Ultimately, this is why they can be seen as having political currency.[215]

Participatory performances can intervene in our senses and sensing – including but in no way limited to the relations between the participants – in a very palpable manner. I believe that the political currency of participatory performances lies primarily in their capability to create and play with sensory fields and collective body techniques; in their potential to challenge and bring about – at least momentarily – interruptions in the "police order"; in the distribution of the sensible; and in normative collective body techniques, apparatuses/dispositifs, and subjectifications. As the term "sensible" suggests through its two meanings, these breaches can be material or intellectual. That is, participatory performances can interrupt our ways of sensing and making sense of ourselves and of reality. They can also suggest, or just happen to bring about, novel sensory fields, body techniques, and subjectifications. In this sense performances may bring about moments that challenge what André Lepecki, drawing on Rancière, terms as "choreopolicing" that "imposes a forced

[213] Kunst 2015, 61.
[214] Rancière 2004a, 13.
[215] In broad terms, I agree with Marco De Marinis that "in order to attract and direct the spectator's attention, the performance must first manage to surprise or amaze; that is, the performance must put into effect *disruptive or manipulative strategies* which will unsettle the spectator's expectations – both short and long term – and, in particular, her/his perceptive habits" (De Marinis 1987, 109, italics in the original).

ontological fitting between pregiven movements, bodies in conformity, and pre-assigned places for circulation."[216]

Needless to say, performances and performance-making processes do not take place in a vacuum but are always bound to the artists', spectators' and spectator-participants' specific experiences of the everyday reality. As Alan Read writes, "[t]he everyday humanises organs of the body and profoundly affects the meaning ascribed to them" and, "[a]s well as taking people from and to the theatre, everyday life has other more obvious conditions of association with that theatre. Theatre poaches on everyday life for its content, relationships, humour, surprise, shock, intimacy and voyeurism."[217] I consider this dynamic to apply to experimental and participatory performances, too. However utopian, speculative or radical a particular performance may be, the experiences and interpretations of the participants about it are nevertheless rooted in their everyday experiences; it is through this intimate connection that the performance may bring about changes.

I draw on Jacques Rancière to whom "[a]esthetic experience has a political effect to the extent that the loss of destination that it presupposes disturbs the way in which bodies fit their functions and destinations. What it produces is [--] a multiplicity of folds and gaps in the fabric of common experience that change the cartography of the perceptible, the thinkable and the feasible. As such, it allows for new modes of political construction of common objects and new possibilities of collective enunciation."[218] To Rancière, art is not something "other than life" but also not something that is to be equated entirely with everyday life; instead, it is a negotiation between these spheres. Rancière favours an "aesthetic revolution" that, as Peter Hallward puts it, "both confuses and distinguishes art and non-art, avoiding thereby the two forms of entropy which force the end of art — art dissolved as an aspect of life, or art forever isolated from life."[219] That is, through art practices we may address and play with various distributions of the sensible with their specific dynamics of visibility, audibility, authority positions, as well as their limits and transgressions.

That said, I wish to emphasize that in my use "political" is not *per se* an ethical concept that would *solely* imply "positive" changes and empowering goals and ethoses. I do not link "political performance" – or "politics" in general

[216] Lepecki 2013, 20. While Lepecki focuses on dancers and dance performance, I suggest that "choreopolicing" and its opposite, "choreopolitics", can be broadened to apply to the "choreographies" that performers and audiences enact; to the the conventional – or unconventional – body technical procedures and actions they participate in within the performance situation. To Lepecki, choreopolitics "requires a redistribution and reinvention of bodies, affects, and senses through which one may learn how to move politically, how to invent, activate, seek, or experiment with a movement whose only sense (meaning and direction) is the experimental exercise of freedom" (Lepecki 2013, 20. See also Lepecki 2016, 12-18). In my view, this freedom can include also clearly programmatic and mundane practices and goals projected beyond the frames of the performance event; choreopolitics and "freedom" related to it do not need be restrained to the dancers' skilful performance in a performance situation. I take "freedom" here to mean any kind of body technical practices that break the "pregiven" rules of behaviour, and/or the police order.

[217] Read 1993, 9, 47.

[218] Rancière 2008b, 11.

[219] Hallward 2005, 38.

– to any specific ideological value judgements but to the acts of reiterating or disturbing the police understood as the hegemonic order of reality. Thus, say, an unannounced Neo-Nazi concert and rally at a public square in a predominantly "liberal" city can very well qualify as a political (and artistic) act.[220]

Participatory practices can be seen as ways to create and suggest visions about the future: about possible forms of community, possible means and discourses of communication, possible practices of relating to each other, to ourselves, and to conflicts, and even possible novel forms of life and existence, that the future might entail. That is, I believe that participatory art – and art in general – are not only, and not always, about "mirroring" or "representing" issues, events, or phenomena that are sensible in a (supposedly) shared reality. Instead, participatory art can suggest novel – even heterotopic – ways to craft forms of participation, collectives, and spaces, as well as point to the simultaneous heterogeneous everyday experiences; their variety and partial incommensurability. Michel Foucault has defined "heterotopia" in relation to "utopia" as follows:

> First there are the utopias. Utopias are sites with no real place. They are sites that have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of Society. They present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down, but in any case these utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces. There are also, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places – places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society – which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and in- verted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. Because these places are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias.[221]

Foucault considers, for instance, theatres, museums, libraries, prisons, cemeteries, gardens, brothels and ships as exemplary heterotopic sites.[222] I would add that also performances that take place outside the institutional theatre walls can offer heterotopic and political possibilities by playing with or challenging normative behavioural codes and conventional body techniques associated with and proposed by those institutional art spaces, as well as places and institutions that we visit on a daily basis.

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[220] Claire Bishop criticizes Rancière's view on the grounds that "[w]hile brilliantly theorising the relationship of aesthetics to politics, one of the drawbacks of this [Rancière's] theory is that it opens the door for all art to be political, since the *sensible* can be *partagé* both in progressive and reactionary ways; the door is wide open for both" (Bishop 2012, 27-28, italics in the original). Here, Bishop seems to have misinterpreted Rancière's perspective. It is important to note that Rancière does not link "political art" – or "politics" in general – to any specific ideological value judgements but to the acts of disturbing the hegemonic order of reality – i.e. the distribution of the sensible – and its part(icipant)s and actors. Bishop seems to link "progressive" political action and ethically favourable art practice tightly to each other while Rancière, in my reading, propagates quite the opposite: his criteria of "political" art is not linked to ethical or moral assessments or standpoints but to the degree to which it can disturb or suggest changes in the prevailing order of reality.

[221] Foucault 1986, 24.

[222] Foucault 1986, 25-27.

2.8 Where We Are Now – Key Characteristics of the Current Police Order

Positioning us within the current police order

Every distribution of the sensible gives rise to a specific police order, including hegemonial ideologies and discourses. Following Rancière, the police and, by extension, the police order is "the set of procedures whereby the aggregation and consent of collectivities is achieved, the organization of powers, the distribution of places and roles, and the systems of legitimizing this distribution." [223] In my use, the police order also includes Foucauldian apparatuses/dispositifs that shape our self-understandings and that, to draw on Giorgio Agamben, "capture, orient, determine, intercept, model, control or secure the gestures, behaviours, opinions or discourses of living beings."[224] In this chapter, I outline the key characteristics of the current police order – that is, essential features of the hegemonic social, political and economic order – in contemporary Finnish, British, and Austrian societies in which Lois Weaver, Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen, and Claudia Bosse have originally devised their projects, and within which I analyse them. Despite slight differences, a similar police order predominates in these societies.

The most essential features of the current police order that I discuss in the following subchapters are: post-Fordism, immaterial labour, and neoliberalism; possessive individualism and representationalism; and the view of politics and of the society that is based on the idea of a "whole". I also discuss the following interrelated common assumptions, that is, features of the police order specifically regarding participatory performance: explicit and implicit pedagogical and therapeutic goals; the assumed relevance of participatory art practice to social and financial policies; and the belief in its potential for counteracting the assumedly alienated everyday life of the participants.

Post-Fordism and immaterial labour

The case study performances and my research have been developed, implemented, performed and experienced in the 2000s and, broadly speaking, within societies and an economic situation that can be called increasingly post-Fordist and neoliberalist.[225] As to post-Fordism I follow Bojana Kunst who summarizes it as the

> shift in the early 1970s and can today be described as post-industrialism or post-Fordism, especially in connection with the modes of working. The main characteristics of this shift are great changes in the organization of production and the role of work,

[223] Rancière 2009a, 28. See also Chapter 2.5.
[224] Agamben 2009, 14.
[225] The term "post-Fordism" (and the post-Fordist society) is often used synonymously with the term "post-industrial" (and the post-industrial society) as they describe the same economic and labour-related developments that have taken place in the industrialized countries within the last decades (see e.g. Kumar 2005; Ransome 2018). I use the term post-Fordism throughout this study as it captures the difference between the monotonous Fordist factory work at the "production line" and the "creative" post-Fordist work that often takes place within the field of "culture industries" and that, technically speaking, is not completely post-*industrial* work.

> influencing social relations in general. Creative, linguistic and affective work becomes the centre of production. Work is no longer organized in an instrumental and rationalized manner, behind the factory door, but becomes part of the production of sociality and the relationships between people. Creative, spontaneous, expressive and inventive movement, which used to be excluded from the denaturalized movement of the Fordist machine, is now at the core of production. The essence of contemporary production calls for creative and potential individuals, with their constant movement and dynamism promising economic value. [--] Today's Fordist machinery moves away from visibility to countries with a cheap labour force with no escape to leisure, only a brutal exploitation of life in all of its aspects. The contemporary post-Fordist worker is no longer part of the rationalized machine, but rather that of affective and flexible networks, with his or her potentiality up for sale.[226]

Work that Karl Marx considered, as Kunst puts it, "as personal services becomes work into which capital is invested: industry changes into a communication industry and the shaping of factories of ideas."[227] I agree with Kunst that our contemporary post-Fordist society entails "disharmonious working rhythms, flexible work times and individualized and displaced work. The factory whistle is replaced by free-will and silent deadlines, driving people into many simultaneous and connected activities in life and work. Celebrated throughout the twentieth century as the discovery of the potentiality of freedom, the movement of the individual now stands at the centre of appropriation; its affective, linguistic and desiring aspects are exploited."[228]

Post-Fordism also favours "immaterial labour"[229]; according to Maurizio Lazzarato, it includes

> two *different aspects* of labor. On the one hand, as regards the 'informational content' of the commodity, it refers directly to the changes taking place in workers' labor processes in big companies in the industrial and tertiary sectors, where the skills involved in direct labor are increasingly skills involving cybernetics and computer control (and horizontal and vertical communication). On the other hand, as regards the activity that produces the 'cultural con- tent' of the commodity, immaterial labor involves a series of activities that are not normally recognized as 'work' — in other words, the kinds of activities involved in defining and fixing cultural and artistic standards, fashions, tastes, consumer norms, and, more strategically, public opinion.[230]

Following Lazzarato, neoliberalism demands creativity and positions subjects as "entrepreneurs" that he terms as a "figure that neoliberalism wants to extend across the board to anyone, artists included [--]."[231] As I will show in this study, participatory performance artists operate increasingly entrepreneurially as a kind of service producer. Participatory performances often demand immaterial work input from their participants; they promote proactive behaviour, and,

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[226] Kunst 2015, 111-112.
[227] Kunst 2015, 219-220 (footnote 243). See also Virno 2004.
[228] Kunst 2015, 110. See also Boltanski and Chiapello 2007, 90-101, 108-121.
[229] In this study, I use the British spelling of "labour" throughout.
[230] Lazzarato 2006, 133. Italics in the original. See also Ridout 2013, 121-124.
[231] Lazzarato 2011, 47. JonMcKenzie has pointed out the double nature of the term "performance": performance in the financial discourse calls us to "perform organizationally, to help improve the efficiency of companies and other institutions; the other calls us to perform culturally, to foreground and resist dominant norms of social control" (McKenzie 2001, 9). That is, "'performance' can be read as both experimentation and normativity" (McKenzie 2001, ix). See also Lepecki 2016, 8-9.

drawing on Adam Alston, can be characterized by "haziness between modes of production and consumption, pitching producers as subjects whose immaterial labour is consumed as a productive source of capital, and consumers as producers or pseudo-producers whose experiential and 'active' engagement with a product [or a participatory performance event] is appealed to in its design and/or marketing."[232] Participatory performances also employ affective strategies, operate on relationships and sociality between people, and often rely on extrovert action, creativity, sociality and spontaneity, all of which, following Bojana Kunst's view presented above, can be seen as paradigmatic of post-Fordist work. Furthermore, participatory performance practices engage their participants in "the processes of the constant transformation of bodily states and affective powers" that characterize post-Fordist work too.[233]

Neoliberalism, psychocentrism and governmentality

As to the individualization, flexibility and the assumed freedom of labour, post-Fordism goes hand in hand with neoliberalism. Verónica Schild describes neoliberalism as "an evolving cultural political project that subjects all realms to an economic, or market, logic, and celebrates the figure of the sovereign consumer who is liberated from dependence on the welfare state. As such, it is an active process of marketization that relies on knowledge and practice to reorganize 'the articulation of the private, familial realm with the state and the market.'"[234] To David Harvey, neoliberalism "is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade."[235] Maurizio Lazzarato, for his part, suggests that "debt is a universal power relation, since everyone is included within it" and that "creditor–debtor relationship shapes all social relations in neoliberal economies". [236] That is, at least in contemporary neoliberalist societies, "freedom" seems to correlate ever more with the possibility and impossibility of doing work: as the social services gradually diminish, our welfare depends more and more on our employment conditions – and if we have work or not – to cover our living expenses and to build our personal futures on. In this situation, consumption, salary and debt have become central "indicators" for measuring the success of this freedom in one's life, and in the success of countries as well.[237]

Neoliberalism and post-Fordism necessitate and produce a specific form of governmentality and subjectification; as Johanna Oksala puts it, neoliberal political subject is

> an atomic individual whose natural self-interest and tendency to compete must be fostered and enhanced. He or she is a fundamentally self-interested and rational being

[232] Alston 2016, 16. See also Kunst 2015, 110-112; Lazzarato 2006, 138.
[233] Kunst 2015, 32.
[234] Schild 2015, 548. Schild quotes Clarke 2004, 87.
[235] Harvey 2005, 2.
[236] Lazzarato 2012, 32, 35.
[237] See Thorgeirsdottir 2015, 565, 570. See also Lazzarato 2012, 32.

> who will navigate the social realm by constantly making rational choices based on economic knowledge and the strict calculation of the necessary costs and desired benefits. The popularity of self-help guides and self-management manuals are seen as a symptom of this current, neoliberal understanding of the subject: individuals are solely responsible for a number of problems that were previously considered social or political issues [--] Neoliberalism scrambles and exchanges the terms of the opposition between 'worker' and 'capitalist' by constructing a society in which everybody is a capitalist, an entrepreneur of himself. This means that any antagonism between classes can only ever be apparent because ultimately everybody wants the same thing: to succeed in their enterprise and to win in the economic game.[238]

To a high degree, neoliberalist governability relies on "psychocentrism", that is, "the outlook that all human problems are innate pathologies of the individual mind and/or body, with the individual held responsible for health and illness, success and failure."[239] As Heidi Rimke and Deborah Brock put it,

> [w]e are incited, directed, and instructed to be self- and other-critical [--] Consistent with the political rationalities of neoliberalism, psychocentrism dominates a cultural landscape, masking how broad and unequal political and social structures, discourses, and practices impact individual lives physically, emotionally, and mentally [--] Productive subjects have to be healthy, upstanding, obedient, and efficient – in one word, self-governing – in order to sustain neoliberalism in the face of a weakening and quickly shifting global economy [--].[240]

Needless to say, performance artists operate within – and against – these parameters. As I will show in the case studies, Weaver's, the Kalleinens', and Bosse's projects can, in project-specific ways and to various degrees, be linked both to entrepreneurialism, neoliberal political subjectivity, and the self-governance based on the centrality of the individual's psyche.

Possessive individualism, representationalism and the bourgeois subject

Neoliberalist subjectivity and the assumption of an "atomic individual" is based on, reiterates, and reinforces possessive individualism. Ed Cohen has pointed out that John Locke's seminal claim – "Every Man has a Property in his own Person. This no Body has any right to but himself" – has led us to assume the "imaginary equivalence between 'being a person' and 'having a body' [--]."[241] Also, "our legal and economic notions of individualism and individual rights

[238] Oksala 2013, 66-67, 69-70.

[239] Rimke and Brock 2012, 183. According to Rimke and Brock, pathological approach is "a distinctly Western and recent historical phenomenon, in which it is assumed that personal problems are individual and caused by biological and/or psychological factors" (Rimke and Brock 2012, 182). Pathologization is always in a negative relation to normative assumptions about health. As Catherine Mill rephrases Foucault, "life is inherently normative, in the sense that it aims at the restoration of functional or 'normal' relations between an individual organism and its environment. And as this suggests, health is a 'normal' situation, insofar as it indicates that the organism is normatively attuned to its environment and is able to meet the demands of it. Conversely, pathology or disease is the incapacity to meet those demands" (Mills 2013, 83). Mills refers to Canguilhem 1991.

[240] Rimke and Brock 2012, 198.

[241] Cohen 2008, 103-104. Cohen quotes John Locke's *The Second Treatise on Government* (II § 27) (1689).

(such as the right to property) rest on the premise that as embodied persons we possess ourselves."[242] According to Cohen,

> our prevailing notions of freedom, on the one hand, or wage labor, on the other, both owe their significance to Locke's seminal formulation. Framing our most basic forms of social and personal engagement, these concepts saturate our self-understanding about how we live, both as humans among other humans and as organisms in the world [--] Taking care of our bodies has become the cultural equivalent of maintaining our capital. The body is a kind of property that we invest in – psychically and financially – because 'it' gives us back to ourselves. We can exercise 'it', we can liposuction 'it', we can work 'it', we can neglect 'it', because 'it' is ours to control. Conversely, whatever we do, or do not do, with and to 'it' seems to tell us something profoundly true about who we are. If our bodies are fit and 'well defined', we seem healthy, energetic and productive; if our bodies are under-exercised and overweight, we are self-loathing, lazy and depressed.[243]

Thus, possessive individualism, for its part, also fuels neoliberalist governmentality with its focus on psychocentrism, therapy industry and therapy culture. The roots of possessive individualism can be traced back to the Enlightenment period. According to Serge Bonnevie, the terms "subject" and "representation" are historically closely linked to each other. Thinking about representation and representing became possible at the time when questions about reality were first posed of the conscious subject. Since Descartes, the definition and idea of the "subject" has been tightly linked with representation and representationality.[244] Joseph Rouse points out that "[t]he presumption that we can know what we mean, or what our verbal performances say, more readily than we can know the objects those sayings are about is a Cartesian legacy, a linguistic variation on Descartes' insistence that we have a direct and privileged access to the contents of our thoughts that we lack towards the 'external' world."[245] Representationalism is, in a Rousean perspective, "a Cartesian by-product – a particularly inconspicuous consequence of the Cartesian division between 'internal' and 'external' that breaks along the line of the knowing subject."[246] Karen Barad argues that the

> idea that beings exist as individuals with inherent attributes, anterior to their representation, is a metaphysical presupposition that underlies the belief in political, linguistic, and epistemological forms of representationalism. Or, to put the point the other way around, representationalism is the belief in the ontological distinction between representations and that which they purport to represent; in particular, that which is represented is held to be independent of all practices of representing. That is, there are assumed to be two distinct and independent kinds of entities – representations and entities to be represented.[247]

According to Barad, representationalism "is so deeply entrenched within Western culture that it has taken on a commonsense appeal. It seems

[242] Cohen 2008, 103.
[243] Cohen 2008, 103-104.
[244] See Bonnevie 2007, 197, 200; Maukola 2011, 211. In her PhD dissertation, Maukola paraphrases Bonnevie in Finnish.
[245] Rouse 1996, 209. Quoted in Barad 2003, 806.
[246] Barad 2003, 806.
[247] Barad 2003, 804.

inescapable, if not downright natural." [248] Indeed, while many of us contemporary researchers and artists promote the view of our life and identities as processes, it is difficult to renounce altogether the idea of individual consciousness – that there is a mental and bodily unity, an "I", a nexus of all our experiences.

Together, enlightenment, possessive individualism, representationalism and modernity[249] have brought about the assumption of an "autonomous individual", or, as Nicholas Ridout puts it, "bourgeois subject, for the individual making ethical choices is an individual in a particular social and historical situation, one in which power is gradually moving away from kings and queens who seem to derive their authority from God towards merchants and industrialists whose power [--] is founded on economic success in a capitalist society." [250] This assumption underlies the contemporary neoliberalist governmentality as well.

Politics based on a "whole" and bourgeois society

Contemporary common views of politics are based on the assumption of individual bourgeois [251] subjects – the supposedly free, morally and

[248] Barad 2003, 806.

[249] Nicholas Ridout summarizes modernity as a "set of social and economic circumstances that came to their fullest fruition from the middle of the nineteenth century in Europe" and enlightenment as a "set of philosophical and scientific developments that established reason as the supreme principle of human life and that sought to be the master-narrative of modernity itself" (Ridout 2009, 26).

[250] Ridout 2009, 26. Willi Oelmüller suggests that the concepts "subject" and "subjectivity" have referred to the (assumed) coherence of a modern individual person since the end of the 18th century, both in the language of idealists, materialists, bourgeoisie as well as socialists. This entity called "subject" was meant to help us "get a grasp" and define the possibilities for emancipation in the new economic, social, political, juridical, customary, aesthetic, spiritual and religious parameters. According to Willi Oelmüller, the term "subject" does not primarily serve theoretical or scientific interests but it primarily functioned (and functions) as a term, as the propagator and claim for the public acceptance for this new form of life; for the modern institutions it requires; and for the seeking of novel forms of life that would secure the emancipatory potential this new situation might open up (Oelmüller, Willi: "Subjekt aus der Perspektive der Philosophie der unbefriedigten Aufklärung" in: Schrödter, Hermann (Hg.) (1994): *Das Verschwinden des Subjekts*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 43. Quoted in Dörfler 2001, 14. Free translation by the author of this study).

[251] For genealogies and critical accounts of bourgeois(ie), see e.g. Kirkkopelto 2011, 52-53; Williams 1985, 45-48. Immanuel Wallerstein points out that: "as the term [bourgeois] came to be used, it was in practice identified with a certain level of income – that of being well off – which implied both the possibilities of consumption (style of life) and the possibilities of investment (capital) [--] It is along these two axes – consumption and capital – that the usage developed. On the one hand, the style of life of a bourgeois could be contrasted with that of either the noble or the peasant/artisan. Vis-à-vis the peasant/artisan, a bourgeois style of life implied comfort, manners, cleanliness. But vis-à-vis the noble, it implied a certain absence of true luxury and a certain awkwardness of social behaviour (viz. the idea of the *nouveau riche*). Much later, when urban life became richer and more complex, the style of life of a bourgeois could also be set against that of an artist or an intellectual, representing order, social convention, sobriety and dullness in contrast to all that was seen as spontaneous, freer, gayer, more intelligent, eventually what we today call 'counter-cultural'. Finally, capitalist development made possible the adoption of a pseudo-bourgeois style of life by a proletarian, without the latter simultaneously adopting the economic role as capitalist, and it is to this that

economically autonomous citizens who accept the right to private property and mainly represent their own interests in public discourse – who form a sovereign "whole": a limited social and spatio-temporal social body or society.[252] The most obvious and common form of such a society is the "nation-state" based on methodological nationalism.[253] The views of politics that are based on the assumption of a "whole" are deemed to take the social reality as "granted" or commensurable; they assume that reality is commensurable also when it is unfair from the viewpoints of some people.[254] Politics is, then, considered to be about organizing the life and power relations of people who (assumedly) share the same reality.[255]

For instance, Stefan Collini defines politics as "the important, inescapable, and difficult attempt to determine relations of power in a given space."[256] Paul Chilton and Christina Schaffner, for their part, locate two dimensions of politics in the traditional study of politics and in discourse studies of politics: it is viewed as "a struggle for power, between those who seek to assert and maintain their power and those who seek to resist it" or as "cooperation, as the practices and institutions a society has for resolving clashes of interest over money, power, liberty and the like."[257] According to Anita L. Wenden, the "first theme points to power struggle as the essence of politics while the second views politics as the management of conflicting interests in a nonviolent

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we have given the label 'embourgeoisement'" (Wallerstein 1988, 92). For critique of the "myth" about the assumed "givenness" of the bourgeoisie, see Wallerstein 1988, 99.

[252] This view can also be described as the "container model of society" in which "the citizenry is mirrored in the concept of a national legal system, the sovereign in the political system, the nation in the cultural system and the solidary group in the social system, all boundaries being congruent and together defining the skin holding together the body of society" (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002, 309). Wimmer and Glick Schiller discuss the container model of society as to "methodological nationalism", see footnote 220 below.

[253] Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller designate "methodological nationalism" as "the assumption that the nation/state/society is the natural or given social and political form of the modern world" (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002, 302. See also ibid., 327 (note 1)). In research discourse, the nation is often "understood to be a people who share common origins and history as indicated by their shared culture, language and identity" whereas "'the state' is generally understood to be a sovereign system of government within a particular territory" (ibid., 306). In the nation-state ideology, these two definitions coincide: the territorial "state" is inhabited by and secures the sovereignty of the "nation" and its assumedly shared "national culture" (cf. ibid. 308-309). In the processes of nation-building, shared "ethnic" and "racial" background such as common ancestry and shared homeland has been emphasised (ibid., 313-314). I believe that the nation-state ideology is grounded on a false assumption that space, "territories" as well as "nations" and "cultures" are (or were) in some sense "from the beginning" divided up; that, in Doreen Massey's words, "they have an integral relation to bounded spaces, and are internally coherent and differentiated from each other by separation" (Massey 2005, 64. See also Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002, 309). This essentialising assumption does not acknowledge the fact that the organising of "space" and the making of nations, states, cultures and all identities are characterised by constant change and negotiations, multiplicities, fractures and dynamism (Massey 2005, 65. For an account of Finland – a nation-state *par excellence* – see Raento 2008, 1-2).

[254] Esa Kirkkopelto points this out in Silde 2010, 8.

[255] See e.g. Balibar 2004, 65-69; Kirkkopelto 2011, 52-53.

[256] Collini 2002, 90. See also Collini 2004, 67; Kelleher 2009, 3.

[257] Chilton and Schaffner 2002, 5, quoted in Wenden 2005, 89.

manner, further listing examples of what may be the focus of such conflict."[258] Both the view of Collini and that presented by Chilton and Schaffner seem to assume or necessitate a territorial and actorial "whole", a "society", within which political struggles and cooperation take place. From a Rancièrean perspective, such views concern the "police": they solely include and participate people who are "counted in" in the "whole" of the society. They necessitate political actors who master the ways of acting in discourse, that is, who know "how to play the game", and who are already in some way "counted in" it.[259]

Social policy, neoliberalism and entrepreneurial participatory artists

One of the crucial characteristics of post-Fordist art-related work in neoliberalist societies is the constant request to measure and assess the "efficacy" and social and political relevance of art projects supported by public organizations. Especially in Great Britain, since Tony Blair's New Labour government between the years 1997 and 2007, public funding for art has been extensively tied and harnessed to the service of social and financial policies. Moreover, New Labour's view of arts funding and the functions of the art have been widely adapted by other European governments and arts bodies.[260] Claire Bishop writes that New Labour

> deployed a rhetoric almost identical to that of the practitioners of socially engaged art in order to justify public spending on the arts. Anxious for accountability, the question it asked on entering office in 1997 was: what can the arts do for society? The answers included increasing employability, minimising crime, fostering aspiration – anything but artistic experimentation and research as values in and of themselves. The production and reception of the arts was therefore reshaped within a political logic in which audience figures and marketing statistics became essential to securing public funding. [--] Participation became an important buzzword in the social inclusion discourse, but unlike its function in contemporary art (where it denotes self-realisation and collective action), for New Labour it effectively referred to the elimination of disruptive individuals. To be included and participate in society means to conform to full employment, have a disposable income, and be self-sufficient.[261]

Bishop also claims that, to a high extent, New Labour's social inclusion agenda was "a mission to enable all members of society to be self-administering, fully functioning consumers who do not rely on the welfare state and who can cope with a deregulated, privatised world" that aimed to "allow people to access the holy grail of self-sufficient consumerism and be independent of any need for welfare. Furthermore, social exclusion is rarely perceived to be a corollary of neoliberal policies, but of any number of peripheral (and individual) developments, such as drug-taking, crime, family breakdown and teenage pregnancy."[262]

One of the key ideas that New Labour promoted was "Creative Economy". It "refers to the socio-economic potential of activities that trade with creativity,

[258] Wenden 2005, 89.
[259] For a concise account "police" in the Rancièrean sense and my view of it, see Chapter 2.5 of this study.
[260] See e.g. Bishop 2012, 13-15.
[261] Bishop 2012, 13-14.
[262] Bishop 2012, 13, 14. See also Harvie 2013, 12-16.

knowledge and information."[263] The ethos of Creative Economy is based on the assumption that the Gross National Product of the country will no longer grow through heavy industries and farming but through the service sector and especially the creative industries: through the activities of advertisement agencies, museums, architecture firms and computer game designer firms. The art world also took part in this combination of creative and financial sectors: the art market boom in the early 2000's had its roots here. "Creative Economy" relies on knowledge production and knowledge transfer as well as on the creative sectors that also includes art practitioners and art institutions.[264]

Within the paradigm of Creative Economy and New Labour's emphasis on "social inclusion", artists and art institutions are given an implicit entrepreneurial and service-oriented status as "facilitators", "organizers", "initiators" and "directors"; they are delivering a service for, say, (allegedly) socially inclusive processes and situations to take place, or creating the framework and site for those processes to happen. David Harvey has pointed to the precarious position of artists:

> artists have had to submit to the vagaries of an art market, but their position within that market system (as artisans? as cultural producers working to the command of hegemonic class interest? as rebels seeking new insights? as an avant-garde of social revolution? a mere bohemian fringe?) has never been as securely anchored as the ranks of professionals (academics, jurists, doctors and the like) who make up the bulk of what Marx referred to as the 'ideological classes' of capitalist society.[265]

Indeed, contemporary artists – but also more and more academics and other workers – have to work and live in precarious circumstances, as "artrepreneurs" or "creative entrepreneurs".[266] While it may not make sense to talk about any strict "class divisions" in Marx's sense in contemporary Western societies, artists can be seen as belonging to a loose "professional-managerial class" (PMC), a term coined by John and Barbara Ehrenreich in the 1970's and employed in the arts discourse among others by Martha Fleming. For Fleming, the PMC referred to "the critics and curators currently creating careers and fiefdoms for themselves by harnessing and bringing into the fold an artist's activity that has been threatening the institutions that employ them."[267] However, Miwon Kwon points out that the juxtaposition between artists and curators does not hold in every situation, since artists also "function in administrative and managerial capacities in relation to, or as a form of, site-oriented, project-based art."[268] I think that the ethos of Creative Economy and its effects on the artists' "job profile" – the ever more present entrepreneurial, managerial and marketing tasks – make it plausible to see artists as belonging to the PMC class. Historically, people who have belonged to the PMC class in Ehrenreich's definition belong to the educated "middle class" such as

[263] Creative Cities, "What are Creative Industries and Creative Economy". See also Bishop 2012, 13-18; Harvie 2013, 67-74, 96; Lazzarato 2006, 142-143.
[264] See Dusini 2010, 9. See also Flew 2012, 9-32; Bakshi et.al. 2013; Harvie 2013, 67-74, 96.
[265] Harvey, David (1988): "Foreword". In Zukin, Sharon: *Loft Living: Cultural and Capital in Urban Change*. London: Radius, ix-xii. Quoted in Harvie 2013, 77.
[266] See Harvie 2013, 62.
[267] Fleming, Martha: "Letter to the Editor", *Afterimage*, June 1995, 3. Quoted in Kwon 2004, 143.
[268] Kwon 2004, 145.

academics, teachers, engineers and nurses, and they are "distinct from both the 'working class,' from the 'old' middle class of small business owners, as well as from the wealthy class of owners."[269] Thus, they are not unambiguously "proletarian" or "bourgeois" but often live in a rather precarious situation and in economic insecurity.[270] This holds also for many artists whose income consists of grants and project-based artist fees.

Therapeutic and pedagogical ethoses in participatory art

As Alan de Botton and John Armstrong put it, "[i]deas about what is 'good art' are not formed by themselves. They are the result of complex systems of patronage, ideology, money, and education, supported by university courses and museums, all of which guide our sense of what makes a work of art especially worthy of attention."[271] It follows that our views of art's "functions", too are always culturally, socially, ideologically and historically bound value assumptions and judgements. I locate two broad ethoses that are prevalent in the contemporary participatory performance practice and, in the form of the discourses surrounding it, part of the hegemonic "order of reality": the therapeutic and the pedagogical ethoses that manifest in the performance practice either implicitly or explicitly. By definition, both of these ethoses also have transformatory goals.

The therapeutic ethos manifests, for instance, in the belief that the participatory project influences the participants' psychical condition positively through counteracting alienative societal processes, or in the project's capacity to create and strengthen communities and communal feelings. The pedagogical ethos, for its part, manifests, for example, in the strive to educate the participants through giving them the possibility to shape (supposedly) non-conventional modes of social interaction and for acquiring new social skills, or through encouraging collective consciousness-rising and critical reflection on societal problems, norms, and power structures.[272] In practice, the therapeutic and the pedagogical ethoses intertwine and feed each other, and also have both "police" currency and political currency.

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[269] Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich 2013, 2.

[270] Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich 2013, 2-3.

[271] de Botton and Armstrong 2013, 66. I adhere to the core assumption underlying the institutional theory (or institutional theories) of art, i.e. that the work of any artist and any artwork cannot be separated from the cultural atmosphere and the material and institutional contexts in which they were devised, produced and viewed. Certain artworks and actions gain the status of "art" through acts of the recognition, appreciation and judgement by art institutions and their representatives that have authoritative power, such as curators, art grant boards, politicians, bureaucrats, journalists, art researchers and art teachers. (See e. g. Carroll 1999, 224-239; Jackson 2011b, 16, 104-106; Groys 2010, 50-69, 121-134; Seppä 2012, 113. See also Bourdieu and Haacke 1995; Rogoff 2005). In broad terms, my research approach can also be termed "cultural materialist": I believe "that cultural practices such as art and performance do not exist in some kind of material and historical vacuum, hovering in an idealized realm outside of time, political signification, social relations and material processes and conditions" and that it is crucial to "examine cultural practices and processes in material contexts in order to assess their political and ideological effects [--]" (Harvie 2013, 16, 17).

[272] For examples of therapeutic and pedagogical recent participatory projects and related critical discourses, see e.g. Bishop 2006; Bishop 2012, 3, 11-30, 241-284; Harvie 2013, 4-12, 29-61; Jackson 2011b, 11-29; Kester 2004, 1-16, 82-123; Kester 2011, 1-42.

The idea and history of of "emancipation" can be seen to underlie the therapeutic and pedagogical goals and assumptions of much contemporary participatory practice, especially as to the enhancement of life quality and consciousness-raising efforts. Susanne Lettow states that "emancipation" is "one of the most opaque words in political language and political theory" that "refers to the hope of overcoming all forms of domination, yet is laden with the highly ambivalent notions of reason, progress, equality, and liberty and the unfulfilled utopias that accompany them."[273]

Originating in Roman Law as a legal term that meant "the father's legal act of accrediting maturity to his son", since the eighteenth and nineteenth century emancipation has come to designate acts of "granting equal rights to particular social groups defined by nation, religion, or social status" and to "a process of becoming noncompliant, or of not responding to ideological interpellations."[274] John Locke's notion of "body-as-property" has become the main assumption that underlies our sense of autonomy, freedom and wage labour, all of which are at stake in emancipatory processes. [275] Suzanne Lettow efficiently summarizes that

> [i]n the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the concept of emancipation gained new meanings in the context of social and political movements such as Jewish emancipation vis-à-vis the Christian state around 1800, the emancipation of the Catholics in England, abolitionism, the socialist movements, and the women's movements. In these new political settings, the original legal meaning of emancipation changed. As historian Reinhart Koselleck has argued, the politicization of the concept and its temporalization went hand in hand. This, first, means that emancipation no longer referred to a legal act by the sovereign, be it the *pater familias* or the state, but to a political process of transformation that included the self-transformation of the subjects involved. As Koselleck puts it, the term became "reflexive" in the grammatical sense of the word: it was no longer about emancipating somebody else, but about emancipating or empowering oneself.[276]

Emancipation and emancipatory politics are historically bound to modern thought and the idea of a modern subject with a sense of self-determination and selfhood. Indeed, as Patti Nyman points out,

> selfhood and self-determination are part and parcel of any pursuit of emancipation because the latter must involve an identity to be emancipated, and further, what has been historically sought in struggles for liberation is a realization of a freedom that is inextricably bound to the right to determine one's own life. With this in mind, at least minimal notions of agency, autonomy, and selfhood seem necessary for emancipation to

[273] Lettow 2015, 501. The idea of emancipation has been criticized, for instance, for its reliance on grand narratives that are essentialist and monocausal; for universalism and Euro-centredness; for the reliance on the idea of progress; for over-emphasizing the repressive and alienating dimensions of power; and for the belief in a rational(ist) proprietary self-governing (Western) bourgeois human subject based on the Enlightenment ethos. Its strong bias to Leftist tradition of thought does not make it fashionable to all, either (see Critchley 2001, 64-67; Lettow 2015, 501-507; Nyman 2014).

[274] Lettow 2015, 503, 504.

[275] See Cohen 2008, 103-104.

[276] Lettow 2015, 503. Lettow refers to Koselleck, Reinhart and Grass, Karl Martin (1975): "Emanzipation" in Brunner, Otto, Conze, Werner and Koselleck, Reinhart (eds): *Geschichtliche Grund-Begriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland, Vol. 2*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 159. See also Coole 2015, 532.

> be possible. It is also important to note that in the western philosophical tradition there is a strong connection between notions of agency, autonomy, and selfhood on the one hand, and accountability and responsibility on the other. [--] The understanding of the subject as responsible actor is essential not only for the subjecthood of women themselves who have been historically deprived of such subjecthood, but also for the perpetuators of patriarchy who must be considered acting, intending, initiating subjects in order to be held accountable for themselves.[277]

Questions of agency, self-determination, transformation, empowerment, as well as of accountability and reflection, are essential in much participatory performance practice. In the case studies, I also locate agential positions and possibilities in Weaver's, the Kalleinens', and Bosse's projects, and their transformatory potential.

Participatory art as a de-alienating practice

The current debates about participatory art and its assumed social and political efficacy are often paired with inclusive and democratisizing goals. Much of this debate and its underlying assumptions can be traced back to Karl Marx's theory of alienation. Marx saw the alienation process as the "history of labour, in which man creates himself by creating his world, but in class-society is alienated from this essential nature by specific forms of alienation in the division of labour, private property and the capitalist mode of production in which the worker loses both the product of his labour and his sense of his own productive activity, following the expropriation of both by capital."[278] In Bojana Kunst's words, the "bodies of the industrial workers are usually described as machines and their automatic work as alienated. Lurking behind such alienation is an interiorisation of movement so radical that the body of the worker actually becomes alien to the one who works with it [--] We are not dealing with the alienation of movement from the body, but with radical interiorisation of movement in the body, so that the body becomes a space of constant quantitative division upon minimal and highly effective moves."[279]

A more recent version of the alienation theory is Guy Debord's view of the "society of the spectacle" in which, as Jen Harvie puts it, "social relations are diminished as people increasingly engage through and with images and mediations rather than directly with each other, though the spectre of interaction may feel palpable [--]."[280] Claire Bishop goes so far as to claim that

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[277] Nyman 2014, 206.

[278] Williams 1985, 35. Emphasis omitted from the original. See also Harvie 2009, 19.

[279] Kunst 2015, 103-104. Marx's theory can be criticized for several reasons. For instance, from a genealogical viewpoint, there cannot be any "natural state" from which we – or anyone – would have been alienated. In addition, if we take that our views of reality are based on our heterogeneous everyday experiences, there cannot be any universal human experience horizon, either. For the definition of genealogical approach, see Pulkkinen 2000, 182-183. For the problematic relation between Marx, universalism, theatre and the everyday, see Read 1993, 107, 145-146, 175-176.

[280] Harvie 2013, 42. In Guy Debord's own words, "AN EARLIER STAGE in the economy's domination of social life entailed an obvious downgrading of *being* into *having* that left its stamp on all human endeavor. The present stage, in which social life is completely taken over by the accumulated products of the economy, entails a generalized shift from *having* to appearing: all effective 'having' must now derive both its immediate prestige and its ultimate raison d'être from appearances. At the same time all individual reality, being directly dependent on social

"[f]or many artists and curators on the left, Debord's critique strikes to the heart of why participation is important as a project: it rehumanises a society rendered numb and fragmented by the repressive instrumentality of capitalist production. Given the market's near total saturation of our image repertoire, so the argument goes, artistic practice can no longer revolve around the construction of objects to be consumed by a passive bystander. Instead, there must be an art of action, interfacing with reality, taking steps – however small – to repair the social bond."[281]

Alienation can also concern individuals' assumedly "distorted" views of themselves and their agential positions within the relations of power prevailing in the society. In the Marxist view of alienation, such processes can be described with the term "false consciousness" that Cressida Heyes describes as follows:

> Sometimes the meaning attributed to a particular experience will diverge from that of its subject: thus, for example, the woman who struggles desperately to be thin may think that she is simply trying to be a better person, rather than understanding her experience as part of the disciplining of female bodies in a patriarchal culture. Making sense of such disjunctions relies on notions such as false consciousness – the systematic mystification of the experience of the oppressed by the perspective of the dominant [--] individuals' perceptions of their own interests may be systematically distorted by ideology and must be somehow freed of their misperceptions by group-based transformation.[282]

Distorted perceptions, both concerning individuals and the organization of power relations in society, may be counteracted with consciousness-raising efforts through self-reflection that, in their turn, may provoke resistance or protest activity. Critical Theory can be seen as a prominent example of intellectual de-alienative practice, or intellectual emancipation based on reflection; Amy Allen writes that:

> In Max Horkheimer's classic statement, the goal of critical theory is not merely the theoretical aim of understanding what constitutes emancipation or the conditions under which it is possible but also the ambitious practical aim of 'man's [sic] emancipation from slavery' (Horkheimer 1972, 246). Although the hopes for actual emancipation and for critical theory's role in bringing it about have been chastened by historical events of the intervening years, the *idea* of emancipation nevertheless remains central to contemporary understandings of critical theory. [--] Central to the explanatory-diagnostic task of critical theory is the analysis of power relations in all of their depth and complexity, for it is relations of domination and oppression that enslave human beings, block emancipation, and generate social crises and pathologies.[283]

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power and completely shaped by that power, has assumed a social character. Indeed, it is only inasmuch as individual reality *is not* that it is allowed to *appear*" (Debord 1994, 16, capital letters and italics in the original). See also Lloyd and Thomas 1998, 31-58.

[281] Bishop 2012, 11. See also Chapter 2.8 below.

[282] Heyes 2016, Chapter 2: Philosophy and Identity.

[283] Allen 2015, 513, 514. Italics in the original. Allen quotes Horkheimer's "Postscript", published in the compilation: Horkheimer, Max (1972): *Critical Theory: Selected essays*. New York: Continuum, 244-252. For critiques of Critical Theory and its premisses such as the eurocentrist view of emancipation, European-Enlightenment values, and teleological underpinnings, see Allen 2015, 521-523; Lettow 2015, 505-508.

Bertolt Brecht's "epic theatre" with the "distancing effect", "alienation effect", or "V-Effekt" [Verfremdungseffekt] can be viewed as a prominent example of intellectual de-alienation or emancipation within theatre and performance that, to an extent, also informs contemporary participatory performance practices. Brecht first described the "V-Effekt" in 1936 as "playing in such a way that the audience was hindered from simply identifying itself with the characters in the play. Acceptance or rejection of their actions and utterances was meant to take place on a conscious plane, instead of, as hitherto, in the audience's subconscious."[284] In Shannon Jackson's words, with his V-Effekt, "Brecht sought to provoke astonishment and critique by foregrounding the apparatus of the art and disrupting 'culinary' theatre conventions through unexpected juxtaposition, cessation, non-cathartic durationality, and textual didactics."[285] While Lois Weaver, Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen, or Claudia Bosse do not characterize their practice in terms of "de-alienation", I locate rather significant "de-alienating" tendencies in their projects and discuss them in the case study analyses.

Affirmative action, relationality and community-building through participatory art

The transformatory potential of participatory art practice has often been located in its striving towards the promotion of visible bodily activity among the participants, the aim of which is to re-negotiate and challenge conventional or hegemonic ways of "being together" and of "proper" social interaction both in the art context and beyond. Bojana Kunst claims that today, "every communal form of collaboration is already supposed to be political and connected with ethical issues of being together, referring, establishing communal atmospheres, sharing, exchange etc."[286] Indeed, especially since the late 1990s, social relations have been a key topic not only among artists but also for debates in the critical discourse. Nicolas Bourriaud's "relational aesthetics" and its subsequent critiques belong to the most well-known instances of this debate. Bourriaud claimed that certain participatory artworks can "re-stitch the relational fabric" and that "[t]hrough little services rendered, the artists fill in the cracks in the social bond."[287]

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[284] Brecht 1964, 91. For John Willett's discussion on the writing and first publication dates of Brecht's essay "Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting", see his "NOTE" in ibid., 99. For a critical discussion on Brecht's V-Effekt and the epic theatre, see e.g. Bleeker 2008, 42-44; Fortier 2002, 29-33; Jackson 2011b, 49, 105-106; Lahtinen 2006; Worthen 1992, 148-158. I discuss Brecht's relevance to Lois Weaver's alter ego character Tammy WhyNot in Chapter 3.6, and for Claudia Bosse's and theatercombinat's *dominant powers. was also tun?* in Chapter 5.6.

[285] Jackson 2011b, 106.

[286] Kunst 2015, 55.

[287] Bourriaud 2002, 36. See also Bishop 2004. Bishop subsequently accused Bourriaud of intrinsically relying on the "ideal of subjectivity as whole and of community as immanent togetherness" (Bishop 2004, 67) instead of recognizing the antagonistic dynamics of democratic process, and of a rather formalist understanding of "relations" that does not pay attention to the diverse material, financial and socio-political power relations that were and are at play in the participatory projects he discusses (ibid., 64-72). For detailed accounts about "relational aesthetics" and the subsequent debate, see Bishop 2006, 179-180; Harvie 2013, 6-10; Jackson 2011, 45-59; Kunst 2015, 53-59.

Apart from Bourriaud, other prominent theorists and critics such as Shannon Jackson, Grant H. Kester, as well as Irit Rogoff and Florian Schneider have also granted "relationality" a role in their thinking. In her recent work, Jackson has argued for "systemic relationality", "inter-dependency", "support" and "infrastructural awoval" that might offer an alternative to the system-critical and anti-institutional ethoses in art-making and research that all too easily – unwantedly – comply with Neoliberalist policies.[288] Jackson concentrates on "art forms that help us to imagine sustainable social institutions" and on the ways in which "art practices contribute to inter-dependent social imagining."[289] While being wary of the risk of "aesthetic evangelism"[290] in participatory practice, Kester, too, sees positive relational possibilities both in its its site-specific urban, local and global forms. "Dialogical art", a term elaborated by Kester, aims to "replace the 'banking' style of art [--] in which the artist deposits an expressive content into a physical object, to be withdrawn later by the viewer, with a process of dialogue and collaboration."[291] Recently, Kester has paid analytical attention to a "rearticulation of aesthetic autonomy" in participatory artistic practices that "parallel, overlap with, and challenge the organizational and ideological protocols of urban planning, political activism, and other fields of cultural production"[292] and that might intervene in and counteract the "mixture of cultural and geopolitical forces"[293] at play in the contemporary neoliberal economic order.

Rogoff and Schneider, for their part, shape a novel approach to participation, a conceptual shift, that they call "productive anticipation". Breaking with the representationalist mode of perceiving power and subject positions, "productive anticipation" would "allow audiences and publics to set out the questions and to invent modes of participation, and would allow us to take part also at the level of the unconscious [--]."[294] Drawing on Agamben's, Deleuze and Guattari's, and Nancy's thoughts, Rogoff and Schneider employ the term "singularity" that posits "another mode of relationality, another possibility of building community, not around a shared set of claims but rather around the sharing of momentary proximities and affiliations" that, "in relation to issues of 'access' and of 'participation' [--] proposes another relation between subjects, one of being."[295] Rogoff and Schneider highlight the political, resistive and social

[288] Jackson 2011a, 10-12.
[289] Jackson 2011b, 14.
[290] Kester's term refers to the "prevailing logic of community-based art [which] reproduces a reformist ideology that, like Victorian-era evangelism, envisions personal inner transformation and growth as the key to the amelioration of social problems such as poverty, crime, homelessness, unemployment, and violence" (Kwon 2004, 142. Kwon paraphrases Kester 1995).
[291] Kester 2004, 10. Kester refers to Paulo Freire's term "banking education" that Freire describes as follows: "Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the 'banking' concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits" (Freire 2006, 72).
[292] Kester 2011, 14.
[293] Kester 2011, 5.
[294] Rogoff and Schneider 2008, 353.
[295] Rogoff and Schneider 2008, 354.

currency that the "unforseeable, unpredictable, uncalculable"[296] can have in that they provide us new possibilities to "have access" and intervene in the production of meaning and agency.[297]

The terms "community" and "collective" are used – often interchangeably – in much contemporary participatory practice. As Raymond Williams has put it,

> [c]ommunity can be the warmly persuasive word to describe an existing set of relationships, or the warmly persuasive word to describe an alternative set of relationships. What is most important, perhaps, is that unlike all other terms of social organization (*state*, *nation*, *society*, etc.) it seems never to be used unfavourably, and never to be given any positive opposing or distinguishing term.[298]

While the term community implies, as George Yúdice puts it, "a connection – such as kinship, cultural heritage, shared values and goals – felt to be more 'organic' or 'natural,' and therefore stronger and deeper, than a rational or contractual association of individuals, such as the market or the state", collective action, in my use, primarily refers to individuals who take part in temporary collective action with or without previous ties to each other, and with or without a goal to render a longer-lasting community with "deeper" ties between them; the focus here is on the momentary group-based action.[299]

Participatory practices that aim at community-building or consciousness-raising efforts are yet one more variant of the affirmative ethos. These practices aim at creating a feeling of ideological and political unity among likeminded people, and, as Jill Dolan might put it, reiterate and strengthen "passionate" perspectives and "utopian performatives": moments of hope and belief in social change through performance, "imagined or experienced affectively, through feelings, in small, incremental moments that performance can provide."[300] Also, many rally- and protest-oriented performances that gather amounts of people at a public site rely on affirmation and harmony among the participants. As I will show through the case study analyses, the affirmative ethos plays a crucial role especially in Weaver's and the Kalleinen's projects.

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[296] Rogoff and Schneider 2008, 350.

[297] See Rogoff and Schneider 2008, 350-352.

[298] Williams 1985, 76. Italics in the original, emphasis omitted. While I agree with Williams that "community" mostly evokes positive connotations, his claim about the absence of critical views on "community" does not hold completely anymore. Among others, Iris Marion Young and Miwon Kwon have discussed the problems and dangers linked to the idea and practice of "community", see Kwon 2004, 147-155. Kwon discusses Young, Iris Marion (1990): "The Ideal of Community and the Politics of Difference", in Nicholson, Linda J. (ed.): *Feminism/Postmodernism*, New York: Routledge, 300-323. For the etymology and history of the term "community", see Williams 1985, 70-72, 75-76; Yúdice 2005. For a discussion of the *Complaints Choir's* potential to create collectives without a "predefined community" see Chapter 4.9 of this study.

[299] Yúdice 2005, 51. See also Williams 1985, 69.

[300] Dolan 2001, 460. See also ibid. 478-479; Dolan 2007, 214-216; Dolan 2015. Dolan borrows the term "passionate audience" from Sarah Schulman, in Schulman, Sarah (1998): *Stagestruck: Theater, AIDS, and the Marketing of Gay America*, Durham: Duke University Press, 69. I discuss the "passionate audience" in relation to Lois Weaver's *What Tammy Needs to Know* performances in Chapter 3.9.

2.9 Theatre Images and Research Ethical Considerations

Subjectivity of analysis and self-positioning

Performance analysis is always bound to the bodily experiences of the researcher, as well as to the ways of paying attention, of using language, and of using one's body in social situations – informed by collective body techniques – that he or she has learned by living within a certain distribution of the sensible and police order, and as a member of a certain household. These affects and experiences guide the researcher's views and inform the choices he or she makes within the sensory field of the performance, both consciously and subconsciously. Basing on Niels Bohr's idea of the "inseparability of objects and agencies of observation"[301] – that the research object is created through research practice – I do not have any positivist intention to "reveal" any "final meanings" of the case study performances I analyse in this study; I believe that "truth" is a discursive and genealogical phenomenon.[302]

Needless to say, I, too, am entrenched in Foucauldian relations of power and knowledge, particular "modes of thought", and have particular experiences and cultural conceptions about reality and myself.[303] I do have a certain authority position as an academic scholar, and through this position I inevitably come to authorize my views of my research topics and of reality; my research involves choices about "what matters", that is, what I consider important to discuss, and what I do not. I recognise that there are many people and institutions that have influenced my thoughts; my research process; and the writing of this study, some of which I am not even aware.[304]

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[301] Barad 1998, 96. Barad summarizes Bohr's ideas and refers to Bohr, Niels (1963): *The Philosophical Writings of Niels Bohr. Vol. III. Essays 1958–1962 on Atomic Physics and Human Knowledge*. Woodbridge, Conn.: Ox Bow Press, 3, 4.

[302] See Pulkkinen 2000, 81, 182-183. See also Chapter 2.3.

[303] While I do not wish to over-emphasize the impact of "identificatory" or "representational" attributes of my identity on my work as a researcher – I am most interested in the political currency of *destabilizing* such representational assumptions and the roles, parts, and places these assumptions may lead us to adopt in the sense of Foucauldian governmentality – I do think that my identifications, affiliations and life experiences have informed my PhD research process and guided my attention in crucial ways. While all identities are processual and fluid, I might be described as a white heterosexual and educated "cisgender" male – I experience a match between the gender I was assigned at birth, my body, and my personal identity (see Schilt and Westbrook 2009, 461 (endnote 1)) – in his mid-thirties who has only lived in European capital cities; who has grown up in an upper middle class academic homeowner family; who votes for the Leftists and the Greens but is sceptical of the representational party political system; and who has lived whole his life in affluent and consumerist European countries – Finland, Austria and the U.K. – that can be considered, at least to some extent, to be (or to have been) "welfare states". I strongly back up the welfare state ideology, yet I recognize the exclusionary nature of any "state" and "nation" ideology and would like to see viable alternatives to them.

[304] Throughout the period of writing this study, I have been working professionally as performance researcher and as a performance and installation artist. My experiences as a scholar inform my work as artist, and vice versa. Since 2017, I have held the full-time position of Researcher-Lecturer (Universitätsassistent) in Art and Education at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. During my studies at the University of Helsinki and at Queen Mary, University of London, I encountered and assumed mostly poststructuralist, cultural materialist, feminist, and postcolonial perspectives on identity and politics, as well as materialist, performative, semiotic

I believe that "change" has major relevance for critical research on participatory practices. I wish to emphasize – as the title of my dissertation suggests – that this study is about horizons of change that my case study performances may *evoke* and *bring about* either intentionally, explicitly intended by the artist, *or* unintentionally. In the end, it is me, the researcher, who identifies horizons for change in these performances within the scope of this dissertation. I share Bojana Kunst's interest in the question: "What is it, then, that would make collaboration transformative and how do collaborative subjects really inflict change?"[305]

Theatre images, narratocracy and the limitations of language

Writing about a performance is always "translational" activity in which bodily experiences are verbalized.[306] This "translational" activity takes place on many levels: first, "my" body perceives other bodies and elements in the performance situation and translates them into my conscious experience and feelings; then, I reflect on my experiences, that is, I try to make sense of what they might mean, how, why and in which contexts; and, finally, I try to translate certain experiences and reflections into propositional, logical sentences accessible to others, according to certain academic writing and argumentative conventions, these conventions constituting yet another form of translation.

If we agree that bodily experiences cannot be fully grasped through propositional language, and if we still want to do research that uses propositional language, I consider it crucial to have an approach that recognizes this only partially attainable nature of experience through language. My framework is a move in this direction: I suggest that the sensory field(s) and collective body techniques of a performance can be grasped and addressed through "theatre images". In my use, this term refers to the written descriptions of specific sequences, scenes and spatial arrangements of the performance that have left strong memory traces in the researcher, as well as ambiences, affections and feelings that the performance has aroused in him/her as a participant of the live event; as a viewer of video documentation; or as a reader of newspaper reviews. That is, theatre images are a way for the researcher to describe his or her impressions, bodily experiences, notions and thoughts about the performance event and its participants – about oneself, about other

and phenomenological approaches to performance analysis. As an umbrella term, approaches that can be seen as part of "Continental philosophy" – especially those of Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, Jacques Rancière, Jacques Derrida, Doreen Massey, Immanuel Kant and Martin Heidegger – have formed the bulk of my theoretical and philosophical interest in the course of my studies, leading up to the development of the analytical framework that I employ in this study. In addition, even though I have indeed been interested in participatory performances for many years, one of the grounds for starting a PhD project about participation is that it is a "hot topic" prevalent in many art and culture related debates and policies both in Finland and internationally, and I therefore expected that research on participation would have good chances of getting funding – an expectation that proved to be right. I have also studied in the "MA Performance" programme at Queen Mary, University of London in 2008-2009, during which I attended Lois Weaver's performance class. My experiences as her student may well have influenced my PhD research process, even in ways I am not aware of.

[305] Kunst 2015, 77.

[306] See Silde and Tervo 2014, 35.

participants, as well as about non-human elements of the performance. Thus, they are a way to "organize" one's bodily and cognitive experiences of the performances so that they can be employed in the analysis.

I do not restrict the participatory possibilities of performance to the "live" event but, instead, think that "mediated" acts of encountering a performance are also participatory by nature. Different modes of encountering the performance, or its "remnants", provide different kinds of sensations, feelings, and pieces of information for the researcher but they are all, nevertheless, participatory acts between him or her and the artistic project, and as such they can bring about theatre images.[307] To sum up, in this study theatre images serve as the "interface" between the performance events or their "remnants"; my experiences as a participant; and the analytical framework.

Both Alan Read and Joe Kelleher have crucially elaborated on the idea of "theatre images". For Read,

> [t]he theatre image is composed of material elements – bodies in action and speech articulated in places, and a receptive audience for that action and speech. The images of other arts are constituted in quite different ways. This engagement has a metaphysical aspect in that the image between the performer and the audience adds up to more than the sum of its various parts. A materialist criticism that does not recognise these 'metaphysical' qualities of theatre is lacking critical force. For the 'beyond physical', the numinous, the spirit, the aura of art, however it is described is a material response to art not just ideological or 'imagined'. This 'something more' than the thing itself is attested to by too many people without deference to gender, race or class. [--] This 'something more' of the image does not disconnect the experience of theatre from its place of performance, nor from the everyday. Theatre remains bound by its context precisely through the unique relationship images create between audience, performer and everyday life.[308]

For Read, theatre images are "part of an economy of symbolic exchange" and "produced by the relationship between bodies in place, made space, and the presence of more than a seeing eye; they are regarded by a perceiving audience."[309] As Bruce McConachie puts it, Read's theatre images "combine bodies, props, and light that form material images onstage and the mental pictures and sounds in the heads of spectators regarding them."[310]

Joe Kelleher, for his part, writes about theatre images that

> 'image' no less than 'theatre' becomes a rather fluid thing, and maybe not even a thing at all but a term that we use to speak about something that, as Hans Belting remarks, defies our attempts at reification, 'even to the extent that it often straddles the boundary between physical and mental existence.' [--] I do not consider theatre images as the fixed contents of a stage picture – if such contents could ever be considered fixed, or indeed 'contents' – but as sort of impression (it may already be fading or in flight, while still smarting from the blow) taken from what the spectator sees and hears on stage. The image then, once fabricated and perceived [--] can seem to function as a sort of operator of relations, or a kind of pre-verbal – or post-verbal – currency circulating between the stage and the auditorium, between spectators and others beyond the show,

[307] For my take on the Auslander-Phelan-debate on the "live" as to performance and documentation, see Chapter 1.3.
[308] Read 1993, 53-54.
[309] Read 1993, 58, 94.
[310] McConachie 2001, 39.

> and also circulating for oneself, between the sensed and the imagined, the felt and the understood, mutating as it passes in transmission from body to body, between the on and the off, the all gone and the still to come.[311]

Theatre images are also connected to the political dimension of theatre and performance; as Kelleher suggests, the political potential of theatrical events

> is not something that can be explained or critiqued simply through the play's [or through the performance's] potential messages or the production's formal structures. It also depends [--] upon the unpredictability of the audience's response to what goes on in the theatre: what they are able to make for themselves out of what the theatre gives them to think and feel. This unpredictability of theatrical events is also tied up, I argue, with whatever happens to *remain* of the event, for example in the thoughts and feelings of the audience, as it is passing before us. These remains can be the most trivial and seemingly insignificant thing. Any politics of theatre will have to negotiate this tangle between the unforeseen and the repeating, between the live and the scripted, between what was going to happen and what ends up happening after all.[312]

It is through theatre images that I also aim to address such unpredictable responses, trivial remains, and my personal experiences in the hope of shedding light on what I have termed the politics of the sensible and horizons of change in each of the case study performances.

While my view of theatre images is more "practical" or "functional" – after all, it serves as the basis for my systematic case study analyses – as well as more bound to conventional semiotic analysis and, to an extent, to the "fixing" of meanings than Kelleher's or Read's accounts, it draws on both as to putting emphasis on impressions, indeed, to "the persistence of first impressions that 'touch' us and which continue to leave a mark long after"[313]; as to understanding "image" in this context specifically as a situational moment both material, bodily, intellectual and affective between (some of) the participants of the event with latent political relevance; and as to recognising the spatial affective situationality in performances that – at times, or, to an extent – escapes propositional language and exhaustive verbal descriptions.[314] Research based on theatre images does not aim at an all-encompassing and objective description of the research "object", that is, the performance; instead, it recognizes the subjective and, to a certain extent, fragmentary nature of performance analysis. It allows, and requires, the researcher to pay explicit attention to his or her subjective experience of the performance. It rests on the premise that the experiences and memories of the researcher can be used as productive starting points for critical analysis.

In the case study theatre images that I present below, I both observe my reactions and the reactions of other participants of the specific situation in question; needless to say, my interpretations of the reactions and behaviour of the other participants are filtered through my research interests and my analytical lens. Instead of always systematically addressing the same aspects – such as my affective responses or those of the other participants; the

[311] Kelleher 2015, 5. Kelleher quotes and refers to Belting, Hans (2011): *An Anthropology of Images: Picture, Medium, Body*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2, 3, 9.
[312] Kelleher 2009, 22. Italics in the original.
[313] Kelleher 2015, 137.
[314] See Kelleher 2015, 137; Read 1993, 61, 170.

constellation of bodies at the performance site; or the atmosphere in the situation – in each and every theatre image in the same manner and intensity, I focus on the specific features and characteristics that each memory trace yields. While I pay continuing attention to my own experiences, in some theatre images my focus is on observing other participants, and in some others I concentrate on my introspection. That is, the theatre images that I present provide the starting point for systematic analysis but they are not systematic or commensurable as such.

It is important to note that, here, theatre images are not completely free from academic conventions as to the argumentation, structure and dramaturgy of research publications. As analytical "tools", theatre images are not "direct" accounts of one's past experiences but, instead, structured descriptions and verbal constructions potentially affected by the temporal and spatial distance between the event and the act of its verbalization and reflection for research purposes. As such, they include the possibility of "composite (mis)remembering"[315], as Joe Kelleher has put it. I can only second Kelleher who, regarding his performance analytical procedure including the use of theatre images, writes that: "I am aware too of the limits of such a dramaturgical endeavour, aware that the question of what can be brought to mind for others of one's own experience will remain contestable. I have at least aimed to offer enough material to open my own analyses to contestation, for others who will be inclined to see things differently (I hope indeed that they do)."[316]

My analytical framework can also be viewed as a modest step towards an "anti-narratocratic" research ethos. According to Davide Panagia, "narratocracy" defines our ways to reflect on the world, that is, phenomena become noticed, defined and authorized through narratives and narrativization. Panagia claims that:

> Narratocracy, or the rule of narrative, is the organization of a perceptual field according to the imperative of rendering things readable. Narratocracy refers both to the governance of narrative as a standard for the expression of ideas and to the rules that parse the perceptual field according to what is and is not valuable action, speech, or thought. That an event may be rendered readable thus gives it a value and enables its mediatic circulation and access to the conditions that constitute its political legitimacy [--] In short, our ability to generate story lines determines our representational skills as well as our specific capacities for making sense of the heterology of political life.[317]

Due to narratocracy, our self-understandings and our views of the nature of politics are very strongly based on propositional, categorizing and representationalist language and linguistic signification. This makes it difficult for us to pay attention to the impulsive and "uncontrollable" sides of sensory experiences that cannot be described "clearly" (enough) and that cannot be "taken into our control". Panagia claims that it would be essential for us to recognize the limits of representationalist language. For example, politics should not be attributed and bound to representationalism but – in Rancière's

[315] Kelleher 2015, 147.
[316] Kelleher 2015, 12.
[317] Panagia 2009, 12.

footsteps – to the conditions of and ways that guide our perception, attention and reasoning within a certain distribution of the sensible: "before we may speak either of the meaning or qualitative value of any political claim, identity, or subjectivity, we habitually take as given certain perceptual assemblages that render a claim or subject available to our attentions."[318] According to Panagia, "the emergence of a political appearance requires an act of admission: an appearance advenes upon us, and we admit to it [--] the advenience of an appearance is a political event not because it is meaningful but because it acts upon our perceptual competences and invites a turning of our attentions and a reconfiguration of those correspondences that mediate our wordly interactions." [319] If we agree with Panagia, we should certainly develop performance analytical methods and tools that recognize this dynamic. My approach is but one suggestion in that direction.

I begin each case study analysis – after a "prelude" of selected artist and other key statements – by presenting theatre images – specific situations and impressions – that have left strong traces in my memory, and proceed to show what they may reveal about the sensory fields, experience fields, and collective body techniques used in each performance.

[318] Panagia 2009, 153.
[319] Panagia 2009, 151, 154.

3 CASE STUDY I: *What Tammy Needs to Know* (Helsinki, 2006) and *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* (London, 2008)

I feel you're not all that interested in what people say. I think what you're mostly interested in is in getting people to say it, and getting the act of conversation going is the thing that gives you the most pleasure. And of course within that act of conversation a lot of things get exchanged. Information, emotions, affinities get established or differences become celebrated [--].[320]

Tammy's own expertise is in asking questions, specialising in questions other people might be afraid to ask, because they seem too basic, or personal, or not well enough informed.[321]

Lois Weaver's alter ego, Tammy Whynot, is a former famous country music singer turned lesbian performance artist. With this playful persona, Weaver directly engages community groups, and gets involved in advocacy for social and economic justice and experimental forms of democracy.[322]

Tammy [--] has a remarkable openness articulated through curiosity, warmth, fun, and effervescent friendliness. This openness provokes her interlocutors to respond with tolerance at least, and usually with affection and delight. She provokes and engages in genuine dialogue, conversation, and enquiry. She never fills a show or scene with her own opinions or ideas but always coaxes input and wisdom from her collaborators through a combination of gentle teasing, humour, and tenderness.[323]

[320] Weaver 2015b, 226. Here, Lois Weaver conducts a fictitious interview with her alter ego character-persona Tammy WhyNot. Italics added to the original.
[321] Public Address Systems, Performing the Persona. Italics added to the original
[322] Public Address Systems, Performing the Persona. Italics added to the original.
[323] Harvie 2015d, 237. Italics added to the original.

Photo 4. Lois Weaver in *What Tammy Needs to Know* in the seminar room (Seminaari-tila) of the Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art Helsinki, 2006. Photo: Finnish National Gallery/Nea Helsto.

Photo 5. Lois Weaver as Tammy WhyNot interviews an elderly London woman onstage in *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*, John Ellis Lecture Theatre of the Royal London Hospital Whitechapel, 2008. Screenshot of the video trailer filmed by Leo Lee. Screenshot by Joonas Lahtinen.

Photo 6. Lois Weaver as Tammy WhyNot and the other participants watch an elderly London woman dance onstage in *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*, John Ellis Lecture Theatre of the Royal London Hospital Whitechapel, 2008. Screenshot of the video trailer filmed by Leo Lee. Screenshot by Joonas Lahtinen.

Photo 7. A group of elderly co-performers present the song "Be Sexual, Be You" in *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*, John Ellis Lecture Theatre of the Royal London Hospital Whitechapel, 2008. Screenshot of the video trailer filmed by Leo Lee. Screenshot by Joonas Lahtinen.

3.1 Theatre Images of Weaver's Performances

Intimate setting and division of stage and audience in small windowless rooms

A constant gabble filled the air, I heard laughter and speaking in many languages, echoing in the high-ceilinged main lobby of Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art. I could recognize many IFTR Theatre Research World Congress participants and Finnish arts professionals among the dozens of people waiting for Weaver's *What Tammy Needs To Know* to start. A side door opened and we were guided to the seminar room next to the lobby. It was easy for us participants to know where to sit; the division between the seating area and the stage area was conventionally and clearly indicated by the audience seats set in in straight rows and the small stage with props and a chair was in front of them, lit by spotlights. I had not been in that space before; the room did not have any windows and it felt small as it is packed with rows of chairs, and in a contrast to the main lobby, the ceiling seemed to be extremely low. The gabble, still present, seemed somewhat "muted" in that smaller room; the situation seemed intimate.

To reach the John Ellis Lecture Theatre for *What Tammy Needs To Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*, I had to enter the Royal London Hospital Whitechapel – a massive public hospital complex located at the busy thoroughfare Whitechapel Road in East London – through a normal hospital entrance, follow the metal sign plates on the walls, and descend to the basement. The makeshift lobby area was very small, just a few a square metres, and we were offered complimentary wine while waiting, standing close to each other. In the low-roofed lecture theatre, we were placed in half-moon shaped rows of wooden chairs, tightly placed behind each other, each row except the front row having a long writing surface that emphasized the separation between the dimly lit audience and the strongly lit stage area in the front of the room. In spite of this separation and the fact that we were in institutional premises, the spatial setting created some intimacy: we were sitting in the darkened room next to each other on chairs with little legroom, watching Weaver-Tammy perform only a few metres away on the floor-level stage area. Here, too, it was easy to gather where it was assumed we would sit; where our places were.

Main protagonist and focus of attention: autobiographical drag femme Tammy WhyNot

In the beginning of *What Tammy Needs to Know*, Weaver came to the stage from the back of the room and started her show by talking about her life: she said that she is a 59-year-old lesbian performance artist from Virginia, United States. Then she told us that the performance has a strong personal relevance. Weaver put on an enormous white wig, dark clothes, fake eyelashes, glittering trinkets and shoes with high heels, thereby adopting, in my view, "ultra-feminine" – femme – gestures, appearance, and a Southern US dialect.[324] While attaching the

[324] By the term *femme*, I refer to Weaver's "female-to-femme drag"; to a "female-marked body" that "consciously and critically drag[s] 'femininity'", as Deanna Shoemaker puts it (Shoemaker

eyelashes, Weaver said that: "You know and I know that these are not the real thing" and that "you are announcing the fact that you know your eyelashes are inadequate."[325] And, there she was, Tammy WhyNot, a semi-autobiographical drag queen, a country singer who told us that she wants to change her identity into a radical lesbian artist.

Weaver made it clear that Tammy WhyNot has the same background as her creator: both Weaver and Tammy grew up in the Mount Pleasant Baptist region in Virginia, and are of the same age, and country music and radical lesbian performance plays a role in their lives. However, throughout the performance, Weaver drew the distinction between performing as herself and performing as Tammy by changing her clothes, by a dialect change to a deep Southern accent, and always saying "Tammy wants to…" as Tammy but using "I want to…" when performing as herself. Weaver recited lines from letters that she had sent to her – real or fictional – father: letters from "basements in Kentucky, Sheila's house in Stanford, Thelma's loft on Broadway…"

At the end of the performance, Weaver took off the Tammy-clothes through a strip act: she counted from one to fifty-nine, telling about her own or fictitious sex acts and fantasies, and urged us to try to think back to our own experiences. She took away armbands and earrings; unbuttoned her shirt and took it away slowly too, revealing a sleeveless T-shirt with the text "GIVE BUSH THE THING"; threw away her sandals, grabbed a brightly red bathrobe and turned her back to the audience. She took off her underpants and the bra – clumsily, grunting, and rather comically – followed by the wig and pins. Then she turned back to us, naked. After a few seconds, Weaver closed the bathrobe and turned her back to the audience again.

Tammy WhyNot was unmistakably the main protagonist of both performances. She reminded me of an "MC" or "host"; she orchestrated the course of events and used a microphone to bolster her – and, at times, other participants' – speech. In all sequences in which Weaver performed solo in both performances, I had the feeling that it was assumed we would pay undivided attention to what she does, talks about, and asks us to do; as if we were a school class following our teacher's actions with utmost concentration. I remember having enjoyed the role of a "pupil", and was fascinated by Weaver's ability to catch and hold my attention throughout the performances. Weaver-Tammy often held direct eye-to-eye contact with us and addressed her words to individual participants. In addition, the rather small performance spaces were lit in such a way as to allow Weaver to see us and us to see each other all the time.

2007, 319.) For *femme*, ultra-femininity and the performativity of gender, see Chapter 3.3 of this study.

[325] Regarding Weaver's speech in *What Tammy Needs to Know* I rely on my recollections and my notes from the performance that I saw on 09.08.2006 in the seminar room of the Kiasma Museum. I have also viewed the video documentation of the second performance of *What Tammy Needs to Know* on 10.08.2006 at the Kiasma Theatre, see: Video recording of *What Tammy Needs to Know* at Kiasma Theatre on 10.08.2006.

Informal and homely stage designs: contrast to the institutional settings

In *What Tammy Needs to Know*, there were some thirty cheap-looking shopping bags made of plastic – some of them with brown dots on pink background, some with colourful stripes, and some portraying women posing in bikinis on a beach in the 1950s pin-up style – a clothes-line wired up above the stage, and a generic chair for Weaver, the main protagonist. In front of the first row of audience chairs, there was an informal row of pillows to sit on; I sat in the front row and had people in front of me, at my feet. The set design reminded me slightly of a homely stand-up club.

For me, the set design of *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* connoted an old-fashioned TV talk show studio that stages interviews in a seemingly "homely" setting: in the lecture theatre with its half-moon shaped seating area, there were warm, yellowish spotlights directed at the stage area; a small sofa on top of which there lay tea mugs and a pink bottle of champagne; a tiny rug under the table; and a set of a well-worn green sofa and armchair with cushions with the word "Tammy" embossed on them. On the back wall, there hung a big stretched white sheet – with a few wrinkles – that functioned as a screen on which we saw live video footage from the event. To sum up, I noticed a strong contrast in both performances: between the homely furniture and the rather sterile and institutional hospital lecture theatre, and between the DIY aesthetics and the dull Kiasma seminar room respectively.

Laughing allowed: Weaver-Tammy and the informal clubby ambience

Many of the participants, me included, giggled and laughed at Weaver-Tammy's remarks, jokes, anecdotes and sexual innuendos in both performances. For example, the text "GIVE BUSH THE THING" printed on Weaver's t-shirt in *What Tammy Needs to Know* can be interpreted ambiguously: both as an offence towards the president George W. Bush, as the term "bush" in slang refers to a person "who uses patriotism and immense propaghanda [sic] to gain support for illegal unjustified brutal acts upon oppressed people for own gains"; and as referring to pubic hair ("bush" in slang) and, thus, to sexual penetration.[326] Also, when she was talking about fan post, Weaver-Tammy said that: "I like getting things in my box" that, again, can be interpreted in sexual terms: the term "box" does not only refer to mailboxes and such items but also to female genitals.[327] Weaver had built a number of such innuendos into the show. Weaver-Tammy did not try to stop us laughing – as if that were disturbing the performances – but vice versa; it seemed that our laughter and positive affirmation was approved. In my experience, the ambiences of the performances were very similar; relaxed, DIY, humorous, clubby, and, strengthened by the set designs, even cosy.

Weaver-Tammy communicated with the participants and the tech staff in the shows in a relaxed way: just as Weaver-as-Tammy was about to start to sing a song that mocks the conservative values of the extremist Right in the United States in *What Tammy Needs to Know*, she – loudly – posed a question about the volume of the microphone to the sound technician in the back of the room.

[326] Urban Dictionary, Definition of "bush".
[327] Urban Dictionary, Definition of "box".

Likewise, in the middle of *What Tammy Needs to Know About Getting Old and Having Sex*, Weaver-Tammy asked the stage manager if they could give another drink to an elderly male spectator-participant who had asked for it in a question-answer-session earlier in the performance.

While the spectator-participants enjoyed the complimentary wine on the vestibule before the start of *What Tammy Needs to Know About Getting Old and Having Sex*, Weaver casually poked out of the lecture theatre door, wearing the Tammy-wig and asking something from the staff. Weaver seemed to have a "down-to-earth" approach to performing: she was not a distant "star" only to be seen on the limelight; it didn't seem to matter if we saw her before the beginning of the actual show. In *What Tammy Needs to Know*, Weaver-as-Tammy also sang a song about "fucking more and fighting less" slightly off-key, with a playback tape, as if it hadn't been rehearsed much but was still worth performing.

As we had taken their seats and calmed down to await the start of *What Tammy Needs to Know About Getting Old and Having Sex*, Weaver-Tammy, walking back and forth in the space, urged the audience to continue talking to each other and said: "The performance doesn't start yet". She repeated this sentence several times. The performance was not to start exactly as it has been announced but, in the manner of a rock concert, only when the performer feels like it; when the "ambience suits" and the audience has "warmed up".

Religious vocabulary and provocative non-conservative talk: sex comes easy to those who pray!

Little by little during *What Tammy Needs to Know*, I noticed that Weaver-Tammy used a lot of religious rhetoric and vocabulary. She described her identity change from a Western country singer into a lesbian performance artist as a "revelation", as the moment of "being born again", alluding to a personal religious rebirth. Weaver also talked about "starting a little crusade" in order to get conservatives to have more sex, and sang a mock country gospel that made fun of the conservative values of the extremist Right in the United States: the message of the song seemed to be to tell them that if they had more sex, they would be happier. Weaver-Tammy also talked about religion directly: "I grew up Southern Baptist [--] God is love [--] God is supposed to love everybody [--] they don't like us because we're having so much fun". In this context, I understood that with "they" Weaver was referring to Conservative Christians, and with "us" to lesbians or, more broadly, to LGBTQ+[328] individuals and communities as well as sexually liberal people, among whom I wish to include myself. Weaver-Tammy also provocatively stated that: "I think it's alright to have sex with your brother or your sister, if you want to. I also think that sex comes easy to those who pray."

[328] The term LGBTQ+ generally refers to communities and persons who identify themselves as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Two-Spirit, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, or Ally (see: OK2BM, What does LGBTQ+ mean?). However, I discuss the potentially problematic relation between Weaver's ethos and asexuality in the chapter 3.8.

Weaver-Tammy as a sex toy saleswoman with a discreet approach to nudity on stage

While Weaver talked provocatively about sex, I was surprised to notice that she had a considerably more moderate approach to nudity in the performance situations. After the strip act in *What Tammy Needs to Know*, Weaver flashed at us for a very brief second before the lights were turned off. In *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* in the Royal London Hospital Whitechapel, Weaver-Tammy held a sex toy presentation for us. She put on a homespun-like apron with fake breasts and an embossed "vagina", and took up a suitcase full of sex toys. With her large suitcase and her eagerness about the sex toy products, Weaver-Tammy immediately reminded me of an old-fashioned "door-to-door" sales(wo)man. She touched herself on the genital sketch on the apron, and then circulated the toys among the spectator-participants to let us try them out, telling us that the tip of the nose is a good place for getting to know how the vibrator feels like on our intimate areas. That is, we were not encouraged to try those sex toys on our intimate body areas but to familiarize ourselves with them somewhat "decently" – and "hygienically". The vagina on Weaver's apron was not realistic; it reminded me of a rather simple and referential handicraft work made at a school class. Perhaps because of the refential and "low-key" quality of this sequence I did not find it intimidating but rather funny and touching.

Elderly women, a sexologist and a medical student were invited to the limelight

While Weaver-Tammy was the main protagonist of *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*, in the beginning of the performance she invited a voluntary spectator-participant to come onstage and start the show. She chose a young female medical student among several volunteers who had raised their hands, and said that she should talk about "anything" for a while. As the student started to talk about her everyday routines and life – drinking coffee and immunology – Weaver-Tammy went to the sofa to lie down and have a rest.

The performance also allowed elderly London women to visit the limelight. Weaver-as-Tammy invited some ten women onstage to sing and dance an energetic group number "Be sexual, be you" that was choreographed and rehearsed beforehand. In the course of the performance, these women also shared some of their personal views and memories of sex and sexuality with the audience. In addition, one of the women – an 80-year-old fragile-looking lady – performed a Charleston dance number with Weaver-Tammy. When Weaver-Tammy jumped on the sofa to have a rest, apparently exhausted by the dance, the woman continued dancing with a swinging solo number.

What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex also included a discussion sequence with the sexologist Ali Mears, hosted by Weaver-Tammy. In this part, the spectator-participants were encouraged to ask the sexologist about issues that trouble them. For instance, an elderly man asked her about the effects of cigarettes and alcohol on sexual performance, and another man about the possible side effects of the impotence medicine Viagra. Female

spectator-participants were interested, for instance, in finding out why the sexually transmitted diseases that especially plague women are not widely discussed in the media.

"I heart Tammy": we were positioned as country singer Weaver-Tammy's "fans"…

In *What Tammy Needs to Know*, Weaver-Tammy gave us postcards with a "posing" photo portraying Weaver-Tammy naked, and postal address so that we could write her greetings and also pieces of advice also after the performance.[329] I remember thinking about this as a way of encouraging us to send "fan post" to Weaver-Tammy. Indeed, both performances connoted "fandom" in my mind. As we were about to choose seats in *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*, Weaver-Tammy walked among us asking individual spectator-participants if they wanted to "be Tammy's friends" and handed them simple thread bracelets with a piece of paperboard which read "I love Tammy"[330]. Weaver-Tammy was not pushy in offering us the bracelets but, instead, went to the end of each row of chairs, asked a few near-sitting participants for friendship, and handed the bracelets to them to pass them on to others sitting on that specific row. Most of the participants took the bracelet. In that situation, the "I love Tammy"-bracelets that Weaver handed out reminded me more of "fan items" than genuine expressions of friendship. Weaver-Tammy also gave us ex librises that portrayed a photo of the retired burlesque performer Dixie Evans, including her quote: "I wouldn't worry about age one iota!". I thought of these ex librises as an expression of Weaver's own fan-attitude towards Dixie Evans who is proud to continue her work even in "ripe old age".

… and as her pupils and aides who interact via a question-answer structure

In both performances, most of the communication between Weaver-Tammy and the other participants was based on a question-answer structure, initiated and regulated by her. This was the case with Weaver-Tammy asking us questions in *What Tammy Needs to Know*, and with her interview with the sexologist and her dialogue with the elderly women and with other participants in *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*. Weaver-Tammy also used the microphone to "fortify" and repeat our answers so that everyone in the room would hear them and she urged us to ask questions of the sexologist.

In *What Tammy Needs to Know*, Weaver-Tammy asked us about, for instance, what she should know in order to become a radical lesbian performance artist; about the annual "Herring market" in Helsinki; and if we ever had written a letter without actually sending it. Whenever there were many people willing to answer a question, Weaver-Tammy chose those

[329] The address on the card exists: 151 First Ave., Suite 59, New York, NY 10003 USA. For examples of postcards and messages sent to Tammy, see Harvie and Weaver 2015, 231.
[330] There was a hole cut out in the form of a heart between "I" and "Tammy" in each piece of paperboard.

individuals who were given the possibility to tell their thoughts or stories aloud. Most of us, as participants, showed our willingness to answer by raising our hands or making eager facial gestures. Weaver-Tammy also instructed us to raise our hands to know, for example, how many of us had been to a "Tupperware party" at some point of our lives. We were also positioned as a kind of aid; for instance, Weaver-Tammy asked a woman to assist her by opening one of the Minigrip bags and check if she could see the date printed on the soap that was inside it.

Hugs, applauses and thanks: we got "rewarded" for answering Weaver-Tammy's questions

After answering Weaver-Tammy's question about what the term "DNA" stands for in *What Tammy Needs to Know*, Weaver-Tammy was delighted and ran to the front row of seating to hug me tightly. This came as a complete surprise to me as I had not personally experienced such a crossing of the theatrical "fourth wall" by a performer before – I can still recall the bodily shock and the power of Weaver-Tammy's squeeze, as well as my thought of being the "valedictorian" in that specific moment of the performance, getting the hug from Weaver-Tammy as the "reward" for my answer and my courage to speak aloud. Weaver-Tammy also hugged other people who answered her questions and encouraged us to applause each other's comments and answers. In *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*, Weaver-Tammy did not hug us but she held the hands of the special guests – the elderly women – as they shared their memories and thoughts with the other participants on stage. Weaver-Tammy also urged us to applaud to each other's answers and commented convivially on some participants' answers. For instance, as one woman revealed she masturbated once a week, Weaver-Tammy commented that that is the "right amount" and that she masturbates once a week, too.

Suddenly, Weaver-Tammy forced a shy participant to talk aloud

In *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*, Weaver-Tammy gave every spectator-participant a piece of paper, each of which has an unfinished sentence relating to sex, such as "If I had a secret sex life...", and then started to go around the audience to ask individual spectator-participants how they would continue the sentence intuitively, watching them directly in the eye. The overall relaxed and affirmative ambience and Weaver-Tammy's accompanying behaviour encouraged me to voluntarily answer her question; I wanted to "join the game" after seeing the affirmative and encouraging reactions to other participants.

While most of us, spectator-participants, wanted to answer right away, some stayed quiet or hesitated, looking embarrassed. Weaver-Tammy went to at least one such participant, smiled a bit naughtily and waited by her until she said something aloud, and, as the person did not answer her question, came back to her after a while to ask the same thing again. In my experience, this short sequence suddenly changed the ambience, turning it in a slightly intimidating and troubling direction. While I myself had been voluntarily active, I could strongly sense her state of visible bodily distress – due in part, I think, to mirror neurons, and due to my own previous experiences of similar situations

in other social contexts. Although Weaver-Tammy had created an encouraging and informal atmosphere with the other participants during the performance all the way until that point, she seemed to purposely harass an individual who did not want, or who was too shy, to interact in a way she had wished. Weaver-Tammy's behaviour in this situation was reminiscent for me of a teacher quizzing a shy pupil about answers to homework.

3.2 Collective Body Techniques and Experience Fields: School and Therapy Setting Based on Confessional Talking

The central participatory body technique in the performances was verbalizing, sharing and talking about sex- and identity-related issues upon Weaver-Tammy's request. Both performances emphasised our mouths and voicing acts: the acts of sharing information, and verbalising sensations, feelings and desires related to sex and sexuality through rational and meaningful speech based on precise contents and claims. All communication between Weaver-Tammy and the other participants was based on a straightforward question-answer structure, initiated and controlled by her; she asked questions, which she expected us to answer.

Both performances reiterated the conventional spatial theatre setting with a clear division between the stage and the audience areas. In *What Tammy Needs to Know*, I identify three participant positions: that of Weaver, of the technician, and of us i.e. the other participants. Apart from the relaxed ambience that promoted giggling and similar reactions and the clearly instructed and contained participatory sequences orchestrated by Weaver-Tammy, it was assumed that we would adopt the body technique familiar from conventional drama theatre performances; that is, to sit next to each other and attentively watch Weaver perform on the small stage in front of us.[331] The technician was at the back of the seminar room, ready to take orders form Weaver regarding sound and other technical adjustments. Weaver-Tammy was the only participant who moved back and forth freely between the stage and audience seating areas. In the sequel *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*, there were two more participant positions: that of the "special guests" – elderly London women and the sexologist – who were invited onto the stage, and that of the student who helped out by opening the performance with her improvised speech. Their actions were also initiated and orchestrated by Weaver-Tammy.

The experience fields of both performances strongly connoted a school-like character, more so than my initial impression of a DIY stand up club setting in *What Tammy Needs to Know*[332] and of a TV talk show set in *What Tammy Needs*

[331] For the conventional spectatorial setting in theatre, see Chapter 1.3 of this study.

[332] The DIY (Do-It-Yourself) and "homely" aesthetics in Weaver's performance can also be seen as continuing the tradition of "poor people's theater", as Sue-Ellen Case puts it in her discussion about Weaver and Peggy Shaw's group Split Britches (see Case 1996, 3). Also Sue-Ellen Case has located a "club-type atmosphere" in Weaver's performances as Tammy WhyNot (Case, Sue-Ellen (2000): "Lesbian Performance in the Transnational Arena", in Aston, Elaine and Reinelt,

to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex. The seemingly informal ambiences with continuous giggling and laughter, the rather small rooms with low ceilings and modest lighting, the strict stage-audience divisions and the focus on one centre stage area, the DIY and homely aesthetics of the set designs, the squeaking chairs in *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* and the colourful pillows to sit on in *What Tammy Needs to Know*, the fact that everyone was visible to others as if in a classroom, the affirmative question-answer-format as the main participatory strategy, hand-raising as a means to indicate that one wants to answer, and Weaver-Tammy's dominant position made me feel as if I were taking part in a school performance. Weaver-Tammy's sex toy presentation and the interview with the sexologist in *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* resembled a sex education class at a school. This feeling was strengthened by the rather modest approach to nudity during the scene.

Moreover, Weaver-Tammy's insistence on making us talk lent a therapeutic tone to the experience field of *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*, as if we were taking part in a meeting whose primary goal was to trigger us to open ourselves up by putting our thoughts, however spontaneous they might be, into words and telling them to the other participants. Remembering Weaver-Tammy's religious word choices and rhetoric from *What Tammy Needs to Know* that I had seen two years earlier, *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* also reminded me of a queered revivalist religious meeting: Weaver-Tammy being a liberal and progressive "charismatic preacher" who had sovereign control over the course of events, who goes around in the audience to collect "testimonies" or "confessions" from individual participants, and affirmatively comments their answers and repeats them through the microphone, thus granting them a sort of "remission".

Next, I analyse the performances based on these notions: what can the school- and therapy-like and testimony-bound experience fields, and the central participatory body technique based on verbalization reveal about the underlying assumptions and about the horizons of change, and about the potential exclusions and limitations that these performances entail?

3.3 Pedagogical Undercurrents in Weaver's Performances

Reflecting on stereotypes and myths related to sex and the elderly

Both performances revolved around sexuality and sex: the loose plot of the first performance was about Tammy WhyNot who wants to change her identity from a heterosexual country singer into a radical lesbian performance artist, and the sequel was about Weaver-as-Tammy wanting to find out about the effects of ageing on having sex.

Janelle (eds.): *The Cambridge Companion to Modern British Women Playwrights*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 253-267 (256), quoted in Harvie 2015d, 237).

While Weaver-as-Tammy was undeniably the host of the performances, her actions were focused on the other participants: it seemed to be of utmost importance that we reflect, verbalize, and share thoughts and experiences about sex and sexuality – about issues that "are often burdened by social assumptions and myths"[333], as Jen Harvie puts it. Especially in *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting old and Having Sex*, we were treated as being "in need" of "opening up" about and reflecting on our views and experiences and reflections about identity, sexuality and sex practices. We were treated as inhibited individuals; individuals that should be made more extrovert; individuals who could make use of more openness about these issues by reflecting on and talking aloud about them. Firstly, Weaver offered us the possibility of approaching a sexologist of whom we could ask any question about sex and sexuality. First interviewed by Weaver-Tammy, the sexologist seemed to be relaxed and friendly; she seemed not to judge but truly to try to help the participants who asked questions, and to answer thoroughly and help solve their problems.

I remember that seeing the old woman dance her Charleston solo in *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* triggered a reflection process in me about my preconceptions and stereotypical views of elderly people as "tired", or "calm". By stereotypes I refer to Stuart Hall's view: stereotype is a "one-sided description which results from the collapsing of complex differences into a simple 'cardboard cut-out' [--] Different characteristics are run together or condensed into one. This exaggerated simplification is then attached to a subject or place. Its characteristics become the signs, the 'evidence', by which the subject is known."[334] Onstage, I saw active and energetic elderly individuals, not representatives of a passive, monolithic group of population. Even though these women may look and act differently from the younger people due to their age, they also move about and have sexual needs and desires.

Tammy WhyNot as a "resistant femme" and stereotype-busting facilitator

At first sight, as Tammy WhyNot, Weaver seemed to embody an exaggeratedly curious and naïve character, someone who does not know or care about the codes of conduct when talking to strangers, to people one doesn't know. Tammy brought the "dumb blonde" stereotype of the Anglo-American popular culture to my mind. According to Tessa Perkins, this term does not only refer to the "hair colour and intelligence" of the person in question but also to "*her* sex, which refers to her status in the society, her relationship to men, her inability to behave or think rationally, and so on."[335] However, I second Jen Harvie who writes that Weaver actually challenges this "misogynist myth of the dumb blonde."[336] Weaver's femme is a "'resistant femme' [--] who occupies, enjoys and deploys femme attractiveness and its inherent power while refusing any

[333] Harvie 2015d, 239.
[334] Hall 1992, 308. Hall refers to the definition of "Stereotypes" in Abercrombie, Nicholas, Hill, Stephen and Turner, Bryan S. (eds.) (1988): *The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology, 2nd edition*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
[335] Perkins 1997, 76. Italics in the original.
[336] Harvie 2015b, 83.

intimations of subordination that are conventionally attribute to femme [, that is,] 'a highly competent woman who just *looks* like she needs a little help'."[337] Weaver's femme "uses others' perceptions of her as dependent as a subterfuge to get what she wants.'"[338] And she, Weaver-Tammy, wanted us to reflect and share our thoughts. Indeed, seeing Tammy leading the situation as the dominant MC or host of the performances challenged that stereotype.
Jen Harvie suggests that

> [e]specially as Tammy Whynot, Lois also often adopts a tone of cheerful naivety that cunningly allows her to treat social taboos with acute irreverence. In the ongoing performance series *What Tammy Needs to Know*, Tammy asks all kinds of 'inappropriate' questions, regarding, for example, *What Tammy Needs to Know… about Getting Old and Having Sex*, first staged in 2008. Tammy's apparent naivety allows her pass under the radar of propriety to ask difficult, often neglected but crucially important social questions, here about intimacy in older age, while also massaging those questions' difficulty with the grease of wonder.[339]

Indeed, Weaver-Tammy's seemingly unrestricted curiosity, "naïve courage" and her affirmative gestures – commenting on our answers and applauding them – encouraged me to become active in the performances; Weaver-Tammy seemed to work as a peculiar "stereotype-breaking" facilitator or device; she functioned as kind of a "lightning rod" or "catalyst"[340] for talking about sensitive sex-related issues with each other. Weaver – and Weaver-Tammy – were presented as an example, as an example to us.

Social passing and identity as a process

Weaver's line *"You are annoucing the fact you know that you know your eyelashes are inadequate"* during the drag act in *What Tammy Needs to Know* is easy to see as a manifestation of the performative nature of gender in Judith Butler's sense. Weaver calls Tammy WhyNot a drag queen because she has to "get all dragged up" in order to embody Tammy onstage.[341] I agree here with Emily Underwood; when Weaver performs as Tammy, she "becomes more like a woman than any *real* woman can ever be."[342] Following Judith Butler's thoughts, the Tammy-drag can be seen to point at the costructed and performative nature of gender identity. For Butler, drag is one of the ways of showing that gender is "an 'act,' as it were, that is open to splittings, self-parody, self-criticism, and those hyperbolic exhibitions of the 'natural' that, in their very exaggeration, reveal its fundamentally phantasmatic status."[343] For Butler, drag

[337] Harvie 2015b, 84. Harvie quotes Weaver, Lois (2008): "Still Counting", in Volcano, Del LaGrace and Dahl, Ulrika: *Femmes of Power: Exploring Queer Femininities*. London: Serpent's Tale, 140-145 (144).
[338] Harvie 2015b, 84. Italics in the original.
[339] Harvie 2015c, 138.
[340] Jen Harvie writes that "[e]specially as Tammy WhyNot, Lois also uses femme as a catalyst for the social empowerment and inclusion of others who, like her, are often sidelined from positions of cultural authority" (Harvie 2015b, 84).
[341] See Story 2009, 12. See also Weaver 2015b, 222.
[342] Underwood 2007, 29. Italics in the original.
[343] Butler 1990, 146-147.

is one of the ways to show that the body is not something static and "ready" but a spatio-temporal process. Indeed, as James Loxley claims,

> [a]n important implication of Butler's argument here is that if this ontology of gender goes, the parallel ontology of theatrical performance goes with it. If our identities offstage are the product of various acts through which we become who and what we are, then the notion of an essential person underlying those acts turns out to be merely a socially dominant dissimulation of that process of performative constitution."[344]

In *What Tammy Needs to Know*, Weaver-Tammy asked about the history and idea of the annual "Herring Festival" in Helsinki. By connecting her performance to local events, Weaver-Tammy made me think about the fact that knowledge of cultural customs and festivities that may seem self-evident to spectator-participants from Helsinki may not be familiar at all to people from other cultures; that knowledge is discursive, spatiotemporal and historical, not universal. Weaver-Tammy also asked the audience for suggestions on what she should know in order to become a radical lesbian performance artist. Before asking the participants, she listed issues that other audiences had told her already; she should learn something about, for instance, Marcel Proust, feminism, animal rights, estrogen, grammar, and modern philosophy.[345]

In *What Tammy Needs to Know*, Weaver-Tammy was eager to learn the performative and discursive techniques and skills that she would need in order to perform her new identity position or role credibly within the social dramaturgy of the culture and society in question – in Helsinki, in Finnish society. The performance made the link between identity and recognition apparent: having a recognized identity, being accepted in society, requires that one performs one's identity "credibly" – or, in Butler's terms, "passes"[346] – within one's social environment. In *What Tammy Needs to Know*, identity was not presented as something on which an individual can decide alone but as something embedded in networks of social knowledge and power which give rise to acts of recognition and misrecognition. I interpreted the performance as pointing to a grounding view that is reminiscent of Butler's ethos: before a human being can create an identity, the social world that surrounds her, including other people and institutional structures of the society, has to recognize her possibility of becoming a subject.[347]

Talking about sex as the key for personal and social transformation

The performances suggested that our views and experiences of identities, identifications and "normality" are social and societal process, not carved in stone; they are inevitably related to knowledge, power and representations. The performances conveyed the belief that we can re-think and expand our views on identities, desires, normality and related imaginations: we may understand that they can change; that they are, to a degree, changeable. Indeed, as a participant, I had the impression that the belief it is possible for everyone

[344] Loxley 2007, 142-143.
[345] Video recording of *What Tammy Needs to Know* at Kiasma Theatre on 10.08.2006.
[346] See Butler 1993, 20, 124-127, 167-185, 241-242; Rottenberg 2003; Salih 2006, 61-66; Chapter 2.3 of this study.
[347] Butler 2004, 3-4, 32-34.

to become whatever he or she wants to in an affirmative ambience was being instilled in me. One should not be ashamed of sexual desires or of being old and having sex problems; to play with one's imagination and to share one's thoughts with other people can both enhance one's quality of life and contribute to the busting of stereotypes and repressive assumptions in society more generally. Talking was the primary means facilitating these changes among the participants in the performances. Having the courage to talk about one's private issues to others was presented as the precondition for such changes to take place in one's life.

Weaver's ethos echoes with the grounding views presented in the influential *Our Bodies, Ourselves* informational book about women's health and sexuality, first published in 1971 by the feminist Boston Women's Health Book Collective. In the Preface of the 1973 edition, the team states that

> For us, body education is core education. Our bodies are the physical bases from which we move out into the world; ignorance, uncertainty – even, at worst, shame – about our physical selves create in us an alienation from ourselves that keeps us from being the whole people that we could be. Picture a woman trying to do work and to enter into equal and satisfying relationships with other people when she feels physically weak because she has never tried to be strong; when she drains her energy trying to change her face, her figure, her hair, her smells, to match some ideal norm set by magazines, movies and TV, when she feels confused and ashamed of the menstrual blood that every month appears from some dark place in her body; when her internal body processes are a mystery to her and surface only to cause her trouble (an unplanned pregnancy, cervical cancer); when she does not understand or enjoy sex and concentrates her sexual drives into aimless romantic fantasies, perverting and misusing a potential energy because she has been brought up to deny it. Learning to understand, accept, and be responsible for our physical selves, we are freed of some of these preoccupations and can start to use our untapped energies. Our image of ourselves is on a firmer base, we can be better friends and better lovers, better people, more self-confident, more autonomous, stronger and more whole. [348]

Indeed, for Weaver, *What Tammy Needs to Know* is above all "a celebration of wonder and belief in the power of sharing knowledge."[349] The performances left me with the impression that transformation begins with recognizing and formulating one's needs and desires, making claims of them, and telling others about them, even if one's claims might be viewed as being radical and polemical.[350]

3.4 Therapeutic Undercurrents in Weaver's Performances

Making a sensible project of sex and sexuality through language

Especially in *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*, Weaver-Tammy encouraged – and forced – us to verbalize our feelings and emotions and to clearly and consciously articulate them in speech. An urge to make a "sensible" project out of sexuality and sex practices seemed to underlie

[348] Our Bodies, Ourselves website, Preface to *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (1973 edition).
[349] Sundqvist 2006, 5.
[350] I discuss the subject assumptions conveyed by Weaver's performances in the chapter 3.7.

the performance; to recognize and understand one's bodily experiences, feelings and desires through language. This is reminiscent of the Freudian psychoanalytical tradition, and of a "therapeutic aesthetic" whose objective "is to mobilize and modify consciousness, to create a sustainable and self-regulating psychic project out of very complicated human feelings."[351] As Fintan Walsh concisely puts it, the Freudian tradition "centralises the unveiling of desires, conflicts and their negotiation in language." [352] While Weaver's performances do not operate within a Freudian framework, especially *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* certainly puts language, self-reflection, and the unveiling of desires into focus.[353]

Patrick Campbell states that "[i]n making the hidden visible, the latent manifest, in laying bare the interior landscape of the mind and its fears and desires through a range of signifying practices, psychoanalytic processes are endemic to the performing arts."[354] Indeed, the theatrical setting of, and the speech-based communication, in Weaver's performance can be seen as a practical example of such a close relation between performing arts and psychoanalysis.

In my experience, the significance of language was strengthened through the difference between Weaver-Tammy's provocative talk and the rather modest approach to nudity in the performances: while Weaver-Tammy continuously made ambiguous and indecent jokes and remarks and, for example, talked about sex between siblings, there was only a very short "flash nudity" moment in her strip act in *What Tammy Needs to Know*, and no nudity at all in *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* except in the form of the embossed vagina on an apron during Weaver-Tammy's sex toy introduction. Even though sex is highly bodily practice, the performances approached this theme primarily through language.

While the individual participants could, in the participative performance sequences of *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*, basically invent and say anything they wished – however light-heartedly and

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[351] D'Ambrosio 2011, section 6. See also Butler 2005, 50-60; Greenberg 2008, 94; Lewis 2008, 312; Nicholson 2008, 47-49; Walsh 2013, 15.

[352] Walsh 2013, 15. In psychoanalytic approaches, according to Gillian Rose, "'subjectivity' entails the acknowledgement that individuals are indeed subjective: that we make sense of our selves and our worlds through a whole range of complex and often non-rational ways of understanding. We feel, we dream, we fantasize, we take pleasure and are repulsed, we can be ambivalent and contradictory, panic-stricken and in love; and we can react to things in ways that feel beyond words. Psychoanalysis addresses these sorts of emotional states (and indeed would argue that rationality too is a kind of emotion often secretly dependent on these other non-rational states of mind)" (Rose 2001, 103).

[353] Weaver's strategy can also be seen as an example of what Jean-Marie Pradier describes as "techniques of rationalization, objectification and elaboration which [--] aim at transforming emotional events into intelligible objects (verbal or written expression; artistic practices; private or public 'admissions', confession, private journal, dialogue)" in order to help individuals and groups control their emotions (Pradier 2016, 197). Pradier also identifies two other sets of cultural techniques that share this goal: "techniques of integration" (e.g. hatha yoga, meditation) and "techniques of activation" (e.g. trance, psychedelic experience) (ibid., 196).

[354] Campbell, Patrick (2001): "Introduction", in Campbell, Patrick and Kear, Adrian (eds.): *Psychoanalysis and Performance*, London and New York: Routledge, 1-17 (1). Quoted in Walsh 2013, 16. See also Pradier 2016.

impulsively – it seemed nevertheless to be a given that each of us talked as ourselves. Both Weaver-Tammy's way of addressing us with the term "you" without any hint of imaginary roles or identities offered to us, and the autobiographical anecdotes that the elderly women told us signalised the feeling that it was not assumed that the participants, apart from Weaver herself, would take a fictitious role.

What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex can be seen to adhere to therapeutics that, in Valerie Walkerdine's description, "suggest the possibility of the rational overcoming of unhappiness, so that the possibility of a fulfilling and contented life is understood as operating on the basis of a set of norms and practices of self-improvement. In this way, we could be understood as existing within a culture in which therapy forms a central trope through which we are invited to understand ourselves and our everyday relations and practices."[355] Also, Weaver's performances that, indeed, emphasize the social dimensions of identity construction, might be seen as a creative form of "narrative therapy" that is "founded in the idea that people's lives and relationships are shaped by the performance of meanings that are not reflections of some inner reality but are expressions of hierarchies of cultural knowledges (discourses)."[356]

Participants as a confessional psychotherapeutic group

During the sequence in *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* in which we were supposed to answer the question "If I had a secret sex life...", Weaver-Tammy reminded me of a therapist-preacher in a revivalist meeting, who, instead of praising God, praised sexuality in its diverse forms. She gave recognition to desires, ideas, and impulses that we voiced and approved of them, as if they were personal testimonies. Here, it seemed that voicing was not about "relieving our conscience" from sinful thoughts but, *vice versa*, about letting supposedly "joyful thoughts" – sexual fantasies that our imagination can produce – into the open. From a genealogical perspective, Weaver-Tammy's "therapist-preacher" behaviour goes well together with the practice of confession since – leaning on Foucault – both modern psychotherapy and modern Christianity rely on confession and exercise "pastoral power"[357] that "cannot be exercised without knowing the inside of people's minds, without exploring their souls, without making them reveal their innermost secrets. It implies a knowledge of the conscience and an ability to direct it."[358] As Peter Fletcher puts it, while "pastoral power was once found only within the Christian church it is now commonly found in more secular forms. In the church it offered salvation of the soul in the next life, but in Western society it promises secular salvation through taking care of a person's health and well-being." [359] Psychotherapy is a clear example of that kind of activity.

[355] Walkerdine 2005, 351.
[356] Byrne-Armstrong, H. (2002): "Narrative therapy", in *International Journal of Critical Psychology*, 7/ 2002, 21-22 (22). Quoted in Walkerdine 2005, 350.
[357] See Foucault 2002c, 332-335; Chapter 2.3 of this study.
[358] Foucault 2002c, 333.
[359] Fletcher 2010.

The "confessing" acts in *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* seemed to rely on the therapeutic assumption that "the closer you get to someone, the more empathy you develop"[360]; as if the participants would automatically become affirmative and emphatic[361] towards each other as they hear about each other's "secret thoughts". It did not seem to matter whether the thoughts voiced by individual participants were genuine, impulsive or invented altogether; the assumed status of these thoughts as "secrets" made those who voiced them and those who heard them into "complices".[362] Indeed, as I have pointed out, the ambience of the performance was, most of the time, affirmative, approving, and, relaxed. Weaver-Tammy's accompanying behaviour and our position as her "fans" made that "being together" feeling grow stronger. In psychotherapeutic terms, this ambience can be seen as striving for a "safe, validating, supportive, and empathic environment" that is supposed to help each participant "strengthen the self."[363]

What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex can be seen as relying on a psychotherapeutic logic but turning it "upside down". While psychotherapeutic practice – especially psychoanalysis – operates on the premise of a "trauma"[364] or a "wound" that flaws or haunts an individual, Weaver-Tammy makes the point that having non-hegemonical sexual desires does *not* mean that one has a wound or a flaw even if he/she or other people would think or claim so. Weaver's agenda revolves around taking away one's possible feelings of being abnormal and making the participants more open, courageous, and supportive of each other. In *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*, it is the society with its "social myths" and stereotypes, that is implicitly portrayed as "wounded" insofar as it cannot accommodate and celebrate the multiplicity of sexual desires, identifications, imaginations, and sex practices that people have.

What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex seemed to function on the premise that each participant could feel "empowered" and "accepted" through revealing her or his thoughts and desires in an affirming ambience, with Weaver-Tammy and the other participants who testified to the "legibility" of one's feelings and desires. This affirmative ambience also had a slightly "spectacular" character through Weaver's use of the microphone and the D-I-Y set design that reminded me of an old-fashioned talk show TV studio; our confessions seemed to gain in importance through this "homely"

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[360] Miessen 2010, 45.

[361] I use the term "empathy" in this context in Martin L. Hoffman's sense who defines it as "an emotional state triggered by another's emotional state or situation, in which one feels what the other feels or would normally be expected to feel in his situation" (Hoffman 2008, 440).

[362] See Skolnik and Messler Davies 2015, 221-222.

[363] Greenberg 2008, 92.

[364] As Deirdre Heddon points out, the "work of psychoanalysis [is] precisely to enable comprehension, achieved through the means of narrativisation, a 'therapeutic process' by which history (and the story) will be reconstructed and transmitted, thereby enabling the event to be externalised. Further, the process of narrativisation itself enables a sense of subjective agency, inserting it retrospectively into the event where that very agency was destroyed [--] It is also through constructing a narrative from the fragmented memory of trauma that the traumatic event is given a place within the life-story, and to that extent the trauma becomes 'mastered'" (Heddon 2008, 56. Heddon refers to Oliver, Kelly (2001): *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 93). See also Butler 2005, 50-60.

spectacularity that, like talk shows on television, cultivated a form of affirming and supposedly empowering "emotional discharge".[365]

3.5 Relation to Post-Fordist Labour: Weaver as Service Provider-Reseacher Training Us to Work on Our "Potential"

Extrovertism, sociality and spontaneity were at the core of the participatory mode of the *Tammy WhyNot* performances. These are qualities that are also essential in the post-Fordist mode of work. Potentiality, another key feature in post-Fordist mode of production, was also essential in *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*. I was expected to "work on myself", and to engage "the processes of the constant transformation of bodily states and affective powers" that Bojana Kunst sees as paradigmatic to post-Fordist work.[366] I felt that I was portrayed as a "resource" that can be deliberately trained towards gaining self-control over my sexuality and sexual needs and desires through participatory tasks, the Question-and-Answer session with the sexologist, and the sex toy presentation.

Weaver's attempts at making us talk openly about sexuality and sex issues can be seen as a form of post-Fordist "service provision": Weaver, a seasoned extrovert performer and activist, visited public institutions in order to activate us and facilitate our opening up, in order to realize our "potential" by her special interactive skills and the persona Tammy WhyNot.[367] We were trained to become participants who can react promptly and provide spontaneous, "efficient", clear and understandable answers to quick questions. In addition, the elderly women could manifest their "energy" or "vitality"; that they are alive and can think sharply. While they may not be "productive" citizens in worklife anymore, they still possess attributes and they still master body techniques that are valued by the post-Fordist society: bodily vitality, word-wit, capacity to impress and entertain others; to be skilled in Charleston dance, for example. That is, through the performance, the elderly participants could perhaps make themselves valued in the eyes of the post-Fordist society.

Thus, indeed, Weaver's performances can be seen as exemplars of post-Fordist work situations in which, according to Bojana Kunst, "[c]reative, linguistic and affective work becomes the centre of production. Work is no longer organized in an instrumental and rationalized manner, behind the factory door, but becomes part of the production of sociality and the relationships between people", and in which the "[c]reative, spontaneous, expressive and inventive moment [is] at the core of production", calling for "creative and potential individuals, with their constant movement and dynamism", constantly demanding us to "reveal and topicalize our potential abilities."[368] Besides speech, in *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old*

[365] See Walsh 2013, 4.
[366] Kunst 2015, 32.
[367] See Kunst 2015, 32; Lazzarato 2006, 142-143; Ridout 2013, 115, 120-124.
[368] Kunst 2015, 30, 111.

and Having Sex sex toys were also presented to us as a way to assist us in the realisation of these potential abilities.

In line with post-Fordist economy, Weaver's performances also blurred the division between "production" and "consumption".[369] In *What Tammy Needs to Know*, we paid for our tickets in order to engage with Weaver-Tammy; we provided immaterial[370] labour and worked through our participative input that was an integral part of the ethos of the performance, but we were not paid for our efforts. In *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*, for its part, we did not have to pay for our tickets but were expected, in my view, to be even more active and to provide even more content and subject-matter input than in *What Tammy Needs to Know*. One could say that this urge for more active participation was, in a sense, our "return service" for the free-access policy. That is, in *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*, we gave our input, worked "for free" in monetary terms, and in *What Tammy Needs to Know* we even paid to do our work.[371]

Public Engagement, that Weaver defines as a framework for the *Tammy WhyNot* performances, also complies with the post-Fordist logic: Public Engagement relies on the capitalization of immaterial – and unmunerated – work on behalf of the "public". In the academic context, in which Weaver works as a Professor at the Queen Mary College of University of London, Public Engagement describes "the myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of higher education and research can be shared with the public. Engagement is by definition a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit."[372] That is, Public Engagement practices aim to make specialist knowledge accessible and relevant to the public – "the laymen" – and to let the public take an active role in the research process through discussions with the specialists. In this way, the specialists may also improve their research practices and get fresh perspectives on the issue at hand. In the *Tammy WhyNot* performances, Weaver, a "specialist" of performance and identity politics, and the other participants, "the laymen", would create new knowledge and interaction about sex-related issues.

Weaver also states that she "experiments with performance as a means of public engagement"; Tammy WhyNot is also a research-driven public engagement project.[373] Weaver's form of artistic research based on public

[369] See Alston 2016, 16; Lazzarato 2006, 138; Ridout 2013, 121-124; Chapter 2.8 of this study.

[370] Maurizio Lazzarato uses the concept of "immaterial labor" to refer to "*two different aspects* of labor. On the one hand, as regards the 'informational content' of the commodity, it refers directly to the changes taking place in workers' labor processes in big companies in the industrial and tertiary sectors, where the skills involved in direct labor are increasingly skills involving cybernetics and computer control (and horizontal and vertical communication). On the other hand, as regards the activity that produces the 'cultural content' of the commodity, immaterial labor involves a series of activities that are not normally recognized as 'work' – in other words, the kinds of activities involved in defining and fixing cultural and artistic standards, fashions, tastes, consumer norms, and, more strategically, public opinion" (Lazzarato 2006, 133, italics in the original). See also Ridout 2013, 121-124.

[371] The "working for free" practices are also common in the participatory development processes of art-related electronic networks. See Kunst 2015, 83.

[372] The National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE), section "NCCPE Definition". See also Thorpe 2010.

[373] Department of Drama, Lois Weaver.

engagement fits well with the paradigm of post-Fordist and knowledge economy. Knowledge production, creative input and economic relevance are central in all forms of artistic research; Estelle Barrett proposes that "[t]he innovative and critical potential of practice-based research lies in its capacity to create personally situated knowledge and new ways of modelling and externalising such knowledge while at the same time, revealing philosophical, social and cultural contexts for the critical intervention and application of knowledge outcomes"; artistic research practices can help us design "alternative methods of research capable of generating economic, cultural and social capital [--]."[374] Public Engagement about identity- and sex-related issues and problems offers Weaver's research practice a "socially relevant", "inclusive", service-oriented and "facilitative" focus that, as I have pointed out, is favoured by current arts policy in contemporary Great Britain and beyond.

In *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*, Public Engagement can be seen as a post-Fordist framework "by means of which creativity is regulated and made to fit transparent 'moulds', whose effectiveness must be open to verification at any given moment."[375] The outcomes of Public Engagement processes are supposed to be clearly identifiable – in terms of propositional language – and they function as immaterial resources and knowledge capital. Weaver's emphasis on propositional speech and the straightforward and clear question-answer structure in the performance is understandable from the viewpoint of the Public Engagement ethos.[376] On the other hand, as Kim Solga suggests, Weaver problematizes and challenges "academic assumptions about what constitutes useful knowledge, about who gets to be in charge of that knowledge, and about where that knowledge should live."[377] Her research can be seen as both "serious and subversive", as a practice that does not confine itself to providing conventional scholarly dossiers and reports.[378]

3.6 Relation to De-Alienation: Social Myths, False Consciousness and "V-Effekt"

The *Tammy WhyNot* performances functioned on the premise that our contemporary "Western" society brings about "social myths", and represses certain thoughts and feelings, as well as certain bodies and stereotyped groups

[374] Barrett 2007, 2. See also Hannula, Suoranta and Vadén 2005, 5, 21-22.
[375] Kunst 2015, 212 (footnote 186). See also ibid., 174-175.
[376] Two research assessment reports that include the *Tammy WhyNot* project have been written about Weaver's work, see Chapter 3.9. See also Solga 2015, 247; Research Excellence Framework 2014.
[377] Solga 2015, 247.
[378] Linsley 2015, 251. See also Solga 2015, 247. For instance, Linsley offers a vivid account of Weaver's performative research report *What Tammy Found Out* in which Weaver "counts the years of her life, and traces a journey into feminism, activist politics, and queer identity", punctuating "crucial moments and events" by tossing "cupcakes into the crowd". For Weaver's other research formats such as the "Long Table", "Porch Sitting" and "Tourist Information Wanted", see Chapter 3.10 of this study.

of people in the public realm – the elderly women, for instance. The performances strive to help us "delve into ourselves" and let us see ourselves, and the others, in a different light; in a light that challenges social myths imposed upon us by society.[379] In the performances Weaver-Tammy seems to function as a precursor of emancipation from these repressive assumptions and helps us redefine our individual relation to sex and sexuality.

The performances did not operate with reference to social class and did not suggest that we would be "alienated" from any previous or more "natural" state, but they indeed referred to the possibility of a "fuller" or "richer" sex life that might be possible for us to reach if we followed Weaver-Tammy's instructions and suggestions. Thus, the *Tammy WhyNot* performances can be seen to have echoes of the assumption of a "false consciousness" in the Marxist view of alienation: "the view that individuals' perceptions of their own interests may be systematically distorted and must be somehow freed of their misperceptions by group-based transformation."[380]

The character-persona Tammy WhyNot is constructed according to the specific character-building "method" of Weaver and of the group "Split Britches" that relates to the idea of Brechtian "distancing effect", or "V-Effekt".[381] I agree with Emily Underwood that – like the actors in Brecht's plays – Weaver does not lose her own personality as the performer in the character Tammy WhyNot; instead, she draws attention to her playing at being the character rather than her "adoption of a role in the usual theatrical sense".[382] Through the drag act and the exaggerated feminine habitus and behaviour of Tammy WhyNot, Weaver clearly hindered us from simply identifying ourselves with the character. Weaver's and Split Britches' characters are a combination of several coexistent "layers" of identity that draw, for example, from the performer's autobiographical experiences and her (dis)identification with a popular culture star. That is, the performer builds a character which has traits from both a person that she loves or who she would like to be in real life, and from a person whose behaviour or opinions she doesn't accept. Often there are also traits of some artist from popular culture towards which the performer has ambivalent feelings.[383] Weaver's Tammy WhyNot refers to Tammy Wynette,

[379] See Harvie 2015d, 239.

[380] Heyes 2016, Chapter 2: Philosophy and Identity.

[381] See Brecht 1964, 91. For Brecht's V-Effekt and the epic theatre, see also Bleeker 2008, 42-44; Fortier 2002, 29-33; Jackson 2011b, 49, 105-106; Lahtinen 2006; Worthen 1992, 148-158; Chapter 2.8 of this study.

[382] Underwood 2007, 31. See also Armstrong 2005, 207; Case 1996, 9–11; Weaver 2015b.

[383] While working in the Spiderwoman Theatre, Weaver learnt to appreciate things she hated, to set them in new contexts and, thus, to change their meanings. Split Britches continues this practice. The characters in Split Britches' performances are a combination of the biography of their performers, opinions and fantasies of the performers and fictitious characters and events. As Weaver stated in the *Tammy WhyNot* performances, both Weaver and Tammy grew up in the Mount Pleasant Baptist region in Virginia. In addition, Tammy's fascination with radical lesbian performance art and country music has its roots in Weaver's biography. Weaver and Tammy WhyNot are also of the same age. Weaver has said that: "I grew up in a world of country and western music and hated it, I felt like it was something that I needed to get away from. And when working in Spiderwoman, we learned to embrace these things that we hated, re-appropriate it and turn it into something else" (Story 2009, 12). See Armstrong 2005, 206–207; Aston and Harris 2008, 104; Case 1996, 9–11; Harvie 2015d, 236-237; Lahtinen 2012, 106-107.

one of the most successful country singers in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s.[384] That is, instead of a Brechtian staging of a clear opposition between "theatre" and "reality", the *Tammy WhyNot* performances, and especially the character Tammy WhyNot, blur this opposition through the use of autobiography.[385] Weaver-Tammy also cherishes and plays with emotions, feelings and affections in a non-Brechtian – or, perhaps, "postmodern" Brechtian – way.[386] That is, I regard Tammy WhyNot *both* as a distancing *and* an affective "tool" that breaks up psychological realism in order to open horizons for imagination and to make us reflect on the idea of identities as processes.

3.7 Views of Participants and Community Conveyed by Weaver's Performances

Psychosexual subjects governing themselves through language

While Weaver-Tammy pointed at the process and social nature of identities in the performances, her focus was on individual participants and what they said. The emphasis on the individual's voice adheres to the assumption about a psychological "self" who can speak reflectively and scrutinize oneself, as well as, importantly, formulate wishes, accounts of one's feelings, and claims. Ian Hunter links the idea of a "self" to that of "personality". Personality in its modern sense appeared as a result of modern "psy-disciplines" such as "psychology, psychotherapy, educational psychology, psychological counseling and guidance", as an entity through which

> individuals could formulate their own aspirations and anxieties in terms of the norms of the institutions they inhabited. It has thus become routine for us to articulate an inner self in such terms as the wish for job satisfaction, the fear of communication failure in our relationships, the concern for a child's low self-esteem, or the desire for self-empowerment. Whether consumed voluntarily in private or administered by human relations 'facilitators' at work, the discourses and practices of the 'psy-complex' now permeate public and private lives, allowing the norms governing conduct to be acknowledged as those by which we seek to govern ourselves.[387]

[384] See Case 1996, 9; Dolan 2015, 155. In her songs, Tammy Wynette addressed the problems in heterosexual relationships, which is in a contrasting relation to Weaver's *What Tammy Needs to Know* performances that focus especially on lesbian life. Tammy Wynette had a rural working-class background, she grew up on her grandparents' the cotton farm in the state of Mississippi and got used to working hard from a very young age. After her first marriage ended in divorce, Wynette decided to realize her dreams of becoming a country singer. See Country Music of Fame, "Tammy Wynette".

[385] According to Mieke Bleeker, Brechtian epic theatre explicitly demonstrates "the difference between actor and character and explicitly show[s] things to be 'mere theatre' [which] constructs an opposition of theatre and reality. This opposition helps the audience to recognize what is shown on stage as 'mere theatre', while at the same time the opposition of 'mere theatre' to something supposedly more real guides the audience in making the right interpretation" (Bleeker 2008, 43).

[386] See Harris 2002, 213; Shoemaker 2007, 321-322.

[387] Hunter 2005b, 318. See also Hunter 2005a; Mauss 1985; Parekh 2015.

As I pointed out, while we could answer Weaver-Tammy's questions in any way we liked, it seemed to be a given that each of us talked as ourselves, and that what we said would reveal something about us as individuals. We were not encouraged to reflect on the roots or grounds of our answers and imaginings but only to state them by verbalization and voicing. Verbalization appeared in the performances as a means of manifesting the possessive relation between "my" psyche and "my" body through speech; as though I might "get hold" of my body and emotions through self-reflection and words. Language – verbalization and the naming and uttering of feelings and desires – functioned here as a performative way to discursively "produce" my self-understanding and assumptions about myself. As Brandon LaBelle has put it, "the mouth is so radically connected to both language and the body, desire and the other, as to provide an extremely pertinent education on what it means to be – *and to create oneself as* – a subject. [--] The voice [--] *promises* a subject; it excites or haunts a listener to recognize in the voice a 'someone.'" [388] That is, the performance conveyed the view that individuals can create ownership of themselves through propositional language; it seemed that the performance reiterated possessive individualism. Despite pointing at the process nature of identities and identification, the performance signalled an assumption of a representationalist Carthesian cogito: that there is a mental unity, the nexus of all our experiences and processual identities and knowledge. And it is this "I" who is able to reflect and bring about personal and social change, together with other individuals.

Indeed, Weaver herself has said that she aims to challenge "the fear of actually being our own true, authentic, divine, incapable selves, and just putting that out there without feeling judged."[389] It is also essential to note that Weaver does not "lose" her own personality as the performer in the character-persona Tammy WhyNot; as Weaver says: "With persona, I think you can actually see the outer characteristics of an outrageous, utterly different, or an extreme personality, but deep inside those characteristics you can actually see the personality of the performer who's carrying, developing, or dressing-up in those characteristics [--] I think or at least hope that you can always see Lois inside the pink and orange chiffon, blonde wigs and sling-back heels."[390] That is, while pointing to the social and performative nature of identities, Weaver and the *Tammy WhyNot* performances rely on the assumption of a core or unity behind an individual's experiences and self-understanding.

In both performances, sexual desires were brought to the fore as something that change and that can, to an extent, be consciously changed and learnt. However, we were interpellated as if we were always-already "sexual" individuals. It is through conscious reflection, verbalization and naming that we are supposed to be able to "locate" and imagine "forms" of sexual desires and sexuality that potentially reside in each of us. That is, the forms of sexuality and sexual identities were presented as changeable processes but sexuality itself was taken for granted.

[388] LaBelle 2014, 2, 6. Italics in the original.
[389] Weaver 2015b, 222.
[390] Weaver 2015b, 223-226.

Moreover, discursive production of our self-understandings is, of course, bound to techniques of governing and biopolitics.[391] I agree with Bojana Kunst that in contemporary society, it is through confession – through "uttering what is hardest to say" – that we establish our singularity and perceive ourselves as capable of change.[392] As Foucault famously stated,

> [w]e have [--] become a singularly confessing society. The confession has spread its effects far and wide. It plays a part in justice, medicine, family relationships, and love relations, in the most ordinary affairs of everyday life and in the most solemn rites; one confesses one's crimes, one's sins, one's thoughts and desires, one's illnesses and troubles; one goes about telling, with the greatest precision, whatever is most difficult to tell. One confesses in public and in private, to one's parents, one's educators, one's doctor, to those one loves; one admits to oneself, in pleasure and in pain, things it would be impossible to tell anyone else, the things people write books about. One confesses – or is forced to confess.[393]

Further, following Foucault, sexuality has become one of the main parameters with and within which we make sense of ourselves:

> In the space of a few centuries, a certain inclination has led us to direct the question of what we are, to sex [and] to bring us almost entirely – our bodies, our minds, our individuality, our history – under the sway of a logic of concupiscence and desire. Whenever it is a question of knowing who we are, it is this logic that henceforth serves as our master key [--] the matrix not only of the living, but of life itself [--] Sex [becomes] the explanation for everything.[394]

Thus, I conclude that *What Tammy Needs to Know About Getting Old and Having Sex* not only encouraged us to "produce" knowledge about ourselves through introspection but, importantly, also "trained" us to govern our (assumed) inside by ourselves; to perceive ourselves as psychosexual and desiring individuals. Here, confessional speech became a dispositive of subjectivization and a technique of both self-control and self-governance.[395] Weaver-Tammy's striving to help us break stereotypes and social myths around sex and sexuality can indeed be seen to be about uttering issues that are "hardest to say"; the belief in transformatory, life-changing potential of the performance lies in those utterances and vocalizations that might remove "secrecy" and, thus, help us enhance our life quality and help us "gain control" over ourselves.

Participants as an affirmative therapeutic group

The *Tammy WhyNot* performances – moderated by the dominant Tammy WhyNot character-persona – did not encourage antagonistic action among the participants; rather, the performance situations conveyed the idea that we were "getting trained" to become more like Weaver and Weaver-Tammy: exhibitionist and positively taboo-breakers who cherish sexuality and its diverse forms. That is, Weaver did not initiate possibilities to discuss her agenda in detail, or the ideas and assumptions on which the performances'

[391] For biopolitics, see Wallenstein 2013, 11-13; Chapter 2.3 of this study.
[392] Kunst 2015, 29.
[393] Foucault 1978, 59.
[394] Foucault 1978, 78. See also Przybylo 2011b, 15-16.
[395] See Kunst 2015, 29, 33.

subject matter was built. It seemed to be a given that we accept our position and her leadership in the performances, as well as the view that identities are processes and can be changed.

While, in principle, Weaver-Tammy offered the participants the possibility of saying what they wanted – after all, she could not predict how exactly people would answer her questions – nobody made comments that would have been antagonistic to an overall affirmative ethos in the performance. It seemed that either all of us were sympathetic towards the ethos of the performance; did not want to obstruct or disturb the affirmative ambience and be identified as a potential "trouble-maker"; or did not have courage to challenge Weaver's authority. Indeed, as I pointed out above, I felt that we were positioned as Weaver's collaborators and fans, like pupils who do not challenge their teacher or question her authority.

I suggest that the performance site and the ambience conditioned us to behave affirmatively and respect Weaver's authority. Especially *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* aroused strong connotations of a school class and a group therapy situation; we sat close to each other on our seats in a rather small room with a low ceiling, whereas our "teacher-preacher" Weaver-Tammy moved around and sovereignly led the course of events. That is, the performance positioned us as clearly defined "whole", a harmonious group without internal disputes or "disturbances", as a group in which all participants are supposed – or persuded – to share Weaver-Tammy's views.

As part of this temporary "whole", each of us could let our thoughts and feelings out and talk about them with the others, who – following the example of Weaver-Tammy – affirmatively accepted and cheered at them. It was the participants as a "whole" who were supposed to give each of us individuals acceptance and the feeling that my feelings are "OK" and legitimate, and that it is a good thing to bring my thoughts out, to talk about them. In a broad sense, this dynamic seems to follow the representationalist logic: we were like a "people" who were supposed to grant "acceptance" to each of its members; as if we were a tribunal whose verdicts were pre-planned, that is, positive, full of acceptance. The question of why exactly I would need acceptance from this specific composition of people, this "whole", was not addressed or discussed in the performance.

Features of ideal participation in Weaver's performances

In this case study, I have analyzed Weaver's *Tammy WhyNot* performances, starting from the central body technique – verbalization and talking aloud – and the experience fields that reminded me both of a school performance, a group therapy session, and a revivalist religious meeting. Both performances relied on affirmative action and ambience, extrovert behaviour, and clear speech. Especially in *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*, the highest virtue seemed to be to verbalize one's sexual imaginations, desires and potential sex problems, and to have the courage to share one's experiences aloud.

That is, the ideal spectator-participant would believe that it is possible to remove our psychological and social inhibitions, and bust myths and stereotypes with the help and lead of Weaver-Tammy and the other

participants. She would view herself as a self-reflective psychosexual individual who can "work on herself" and can, together with the others with whom she formed a spatial and discursive "whole", bring about personal and social change. The ideal participant would accept Weaver-Tammy's role as the sovereign leader in the performance situation. Weaver's Public Engagement performances relied on affirmative, "positive" dialogue; the ideal participant would not need antagonistic or questioning action but be happy to "get trained" to become more like Weaver and Weaver-Tammy: exhibitionist taboo-breakers who cherish sexuality and its diverse forms.

The student who opened the performance *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* with her improvised speech embodied some of the desired qualities for participation: she was an extrovert, quick-witted and courageous young student who voluntarily stood up and took her place in the focus of attention to talk before the audience, without any time to prepare. Indeed, she could be viewed as the "valedictorian" of that performance situation.

3.8 Potential Exclusions and Limitations in Weaver's Performances

Affirmative ambience and contained setting discouraged critical responses

In the *Tammy WhyNot* performances, we were positioned as a contained, supposedly affirmative "whole" as if we were at a voluntary class or in a therapy meeting. *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* in particular positioned us both cognitively and spatially as a clearly defined "whole" in which everyone of us had a proper and clear "part" and a place in the performance situation: a concrete place – a seat – to sit on, and a behavioural role predefined and orchestrated by Weaver to be carried out in the performance. That is, we were taken to form a situational group-"whole" that was not expected to "spill over" its pre-planned frames and course of events in any way. It seemed to be taken for granted that all the participants accept their position and Weaver-Tammy's leadership in the performances.

Weaver-Tammy did not encourage critical discussion about the underlying assumptions that *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* relied on. I had the feeling that all the participants were supposed to share – or should become convinced they should adopt – Weaver-Tammy's views about sexuality and identities, and transformation. It was assumed we would remove our psychological and social inhibitions with the help of a "therapist-facilitator-performer" and of our peer spectator-participants.

On one hand, the affirmative emphasis is understandable insofar as the performance was partly a community-building and consciousness-raising effort. On the other hand, however, the performance seemed to foreclose the possibility that antagonism and challenging responses might bring about positive changes as to the subject matter of the performances: sexuality,

identities and social power. Helen Freshwater writes that audience participation

> requires [--] an acceptance that genuine participation has risks as well as potential rewards. Theatre practitioners need to acknowledge that participation can be profoundly disturbing; that it may involve making ourselves vulnerable as we open ourselves to unexpected experiences and outcomes. They surely also need to give participants the space to reflect upon the limitations of creative or political agency.[396]

Weaver's *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* – at least the performance I took part in – did not seem to actively open up such possibilities. Below, I outline and discuss underlying assumptions that were not addressed in the performances and that posed limitations and potential exclusions.

Introvertism portrayed as incapability and naïve belief in talking aloud

The desired mode of participation preplanned for us in *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* seemed to be to adopt Weaver-Tammy's extrovert behaviour; to verbalize one's imaginations and desires and to share them with others through speech. Weaver's emphasis on extrovertism – on talking out loud – is potentially exclusionary; what could the performance offer to introverted people? Weaver's participatory strategy seems to deprive participants of their right to be silent, and it identifies introvertism with incapability, with an inhibition that needs to be cured and "worked on". Introvert participants were positioned as yet more-to-be-therapized than the other participants. Here, Weaver's claim that "everyone deserves a voice"[397] seemed to be equated with another claim: that "everyone *has to use* her voice". Weaver precluded one's right *not* to talk and, generally, refuse to participate in the desired way.

The performance seemed to suggest that verbalizing and talking about one's desires, experiences, and views are a precondition for a "healthy" and "satisfying" sex life. While, as I have pointed out, it can indeed be necessary to challenge social myths and stereotypes and talk about difficult issues, this may arouse feelings of inferiority and even traumas in introverted participants. In the performance, no attention was paid to the question: why could we not enjoy sex and have a satisfying sexual imagination *without* talking about it in public, or without talking about it altogether?

What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex seemed to cherish the assumption that "talking aloud" about taboo issues is *per se* a transformative act; but in a performance situation whose participants have not signed up for a group therapy meeting, why – and for whom – would it be a positive transformative act to voice, or to hear about desires and wishes that are widely considered, say, illegal or racist? What would Weaver-Tammy have

[396] Freshwater 2009, 76.

[397] Lois Weaver in Weaver, Lois and Caoimhe McAvinchey: "Lois Weaver: Interview and Introduction by Caioimhe McAvinchey" in McAvinchey, Caoimhe (ed.) (2014): *Performance and Community: Commentary and Case Studies*. London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 21-32 (29). Quoted in Heddon 2015, 203.

said if some participant had answered her question about secret sexual fantasies that he/she fantasized about, say, children or animals?

Tammy WhyNot as an exclusive cover for Weaver

Also, Weaver's demand for extrovert talk can be viewed as unfair towards the other participants since only she had a "cover" or "helping device" – the character-persona Tammy WhyNot – in practicing that talking. Weaver has said that she can perform as the naïve TammyNot in any situation and ask questions and say aloud things that people usually do not ask.[398] She has stated that for her as a performer, Tammy WhyNot is a certain kind of "cover"; performing as Tammy, she can ask questions that she would not have the courage to ask as herself, without the persona Tammy WhyNot.[399] While Weaver granted herself the possibility of this "cover", we, the other participants, were not given such an opportunity but were supposed to talk in an extrovert manner – how intuitively, spontaneously, playfully or "authentically" as it then may have been – as ourselves. The set design, reminiscent of a TV talk show with its "homely spectacularity", contributed to the differences between the participatory positions of Weaver-Tammy and of the other participants: as in a TV therapy talk show, Weaver-Tammy was the host, a public figure, who delved into the psyches of individuals in the audience who were assumed to talk as themselves.

Naturalization of sexuality risks pathologizing sexually inactive participants

Although Weaver challenged normative assumptions about sex, sexuality and sexual identities in the *Tammy WhyNot* performances, she did not address the "meta-category" of sexuality; she did not point to the discursive, power-related and normative aspects that the very concept "sexuality" and its genealogy has entailed, as Michel Foucault has shown.[400] So, what could Weaver's performances offer to people in whose life sexuality and sex do not play a significant role? Weaver interpellated all participants as if we were always-already "sexual" and as if sex and sexuality would be as important for us as they are for her personally. Thus, *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* can be seen as exclusionary from the point of view of the spectator-participants to whom sexuality and sexual identities are not central; as participants they, like introverted participants, may feel alienated.

Weaver's performances can be seen as reiterating the "sexual imperative", which means that "sex and sexual identity have become a cultural imperative, and an integral part of understanding the self."[401] The performances can also be viewed as manifesting the underlying assumption that "sex is *compulsory*, for without it one apparently remains deficient in some sense; in-complete; un-

[398] Story 2009,12.
[399] Notes from Lois Weaver's lecture "The Continuing Diary of a Domestic Terrorist: A Long Table on Performance as Public Engagement, Hosted by Tammy Whynot and Others (with a little help from Lois Weaver, Professor of Contemporary Performance Practice)", Queen Mary, University of London, Pinter Studio, 25.02.2009. See also Weaver 2015b, 222.
[400] See e.g. Foucault 1978, 3-35; Przybylo 2011b.
[401] See Przybylo 2011b, 15.

healthy" as a person.[402] This assumption is a symptom of what Ela Przybylo calls the "sexusociety", that is, "a massive conglomerate of tangentially repeated sexual language, deeds, desires, and thoughts" that we cannot escape in our lives, and in which "there are always forms of language, deeds, desires, thoughts that are suggested above others, that are coded as better, more exact, more 'natural'."[403]

I saw *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* at the Royal London Hospital Whitechapel in the programme of "Performing Medicine" project that "exists to support health professionals to provide high-quality, compassionate care [--] through arts based training and courses, research, advocacy and public events."[404] The views of sex and sexuality conveyed by the performance may have a significant impact on how today's and future doctors view sexuality. In *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*, people who are asexual, or just not especially interested in sex, were indirectly portrayed as "in-valids", as "dis-abled" – or, indeed, "impotent" – persons who might, at best, "wake up" their supposedly "sleeping" or "latent" sexual drive and imagination through Weaver-Tammy's participatory tasks. That is, the performance may have increased "the pressure to have sex" and it risks "pathologizing those individuals who do not sufficiently enjoy sex or who engage in it infrequently"[405] as "unhealthy" and "abnormal" and might even pass on these pathologizing assumptions to future generation of doctors.

Reliance on clear speech over-emphasized our self-control

In the performances, one's self and body were portrayed as a "resource" that can be deliberately developed and trained into a more "optimized" or "efficient" individual.

In particular, we were supposed to "get hold" of our bodies and emotions through self-reflection and verbalization. To me, the *Tammy WhyNot* performances seemed to reiterate possessive individualism through language. Within the frames of *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex,* silence and confusion were not appreciated but seen instead as a "disturbance".

The emphasis on clear speech dismissed the fact that we do not and cannot verbalise everything or get "hold" of or "master" ourselves completely; our thoughts wander, we cannot always control them, and, what is more, our bodies are not completely in "our" own control; we only need to think about ourselves in frightening situations and the involuntary affects they may arouse. Also, our life is full of social situations that we cannot foresee or master completely; life is

[402] Potts, Annie (1998): "The Science/Fiction of Sex: John Gray's *Mars and Venus in the Bedroom*", *Sexualities*, 1.2 (1998), 153-173 (156). Emphasis in the original. Quoted in Przybylo 2011, 16.

[403] Przybylo 2011a, 447.

[404] Performing Medicine website.

[405] Przybylo 2011b, 17. Przybylo summarizes Kristina Gupta's views presented in Gupta, Kristina (2011): "'Screw Health:' Representations of Sex as a Health-Promoting Activity in Medical and Popular Literature", *Journal of Medical Humanities*, 32:2, 127-140. For the relationship between pathology, normativity, psychocentrism and neoliberalist governmentality, see Chapter 2.8 of this study. See also Canguilhem 1991; Mills 2013, 83; Rimke and Brock 2012, 182.

full of surprises, randomness, chance factors, and insecurity. It was surprising that despite the bodily theme – sex and sexuality – the performances relied so strongly on language; Weaver did not address the question whether all bodily experiences can adequately be described through representational language; and whether we can ever "grasp" all our emotions and feelings through language. Even though Weaver's performance ethos relied on instinct, impulses, intuition and fragments, there seemed to be no room for obscurity and vagueness regarding our talk in *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*.[406] This might well have alienated some participants, especially introvert ones; not only were they expected to talk aloud but to do that in a clear and precise manner.

Assumptions about affirmative democracy and commensurable reality

The performances give rise to a characterization of an "undesired" participant: a curled-up and critical introvert who wants to criticize, challenge or protest the underlying assumptions of the performance, and who does not want to – or is unable to – take part in its affective, post-Fordist-compliant economy. This is the "constitutive outside" or the "surplus" that does not fit in to Weaver's "calculation" and ethos and that embodies the border of her participatory strategy and the "democratic practice" in the performances.[407]

With Tammy WhyNot, Weaver "gets involved in advocacy for social and economic justice and experimental forms of democracy."[408] However, instead of practicing democracy that essentially entails conflict and critical debate, Weaver's "democratic practice" in the *Tammy WhyNot* performances only accommodates people who share, or are persuaded to adopt, her ethos and assumptions: that there is a self-conscious psycho-sexual subject; that sexuality is an important part of one's life; that transformation is needed; and that speaking out loud has emancipatory power. The *Tammy WhyNot* performances rely essentially on, and demand from their participants, a liberal worldview. While Weaver aimed at transformation and empowerment – and is well aware of social norms and myths – she can be seen to be imposing her view and experience of reality on all participants.

In Rancière's terms, it might be said that Weaver takes reality to be commensurable while it is not. Weaver-Tammy can be seen to function as a "police" in Rancière's sense, expecting and forcing all participants to share her beliefs and behave accordingly, and unwantedly; to participate in a post-Fordist-compliant mode of participation. Those who did not manage to "survive" in the social dramaturgy of the performances may potentially have become excluded and subjectivized as "misfits" or "in-valids". That is, while *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* can be seen to have promoted democracy by giving visibility to the elderly women and thereby enhancing their chances of being heard in the medical discourse, it simultaneously marked the constitutive outside – the "misfits" – of its

[406] For Weaver's performance strategy, see Armstrong 2005; Harvie 2015c, 128; Harvie and Weaver 2015a, 48, 50; Weaver 2015b, 226-227; Weaver 2015c. See also Chapter 3.6 of this study.
[407] See Mouffe 2006, 155; Rancière 2004a, 12.
[408] Public Address Systems, Performing the Persona.

supposedly democratic ethos. The impossibility of a "fully inclusive consensus, a consensus without any exclusion"[409] became embodied already in and through this "training session" based on Weaver's agenda.

Consumerist underpinnings of the ethos of "improving" sex life were not addressed

As I have pointed out, *Tammy WhyNot* performances conveyed the underlying assumption of the individual as a "resource" that can improve his/herself and his/her life with the help of the facilitator-service provider Weaver-Tammy in a rather post-Fordist manner. In a sense, we were trained to become "managers" of our own sexuality and sex life and unleash our "potential" in that sphere. In *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex,* Weaver did not reflect on the impact of consumer culture and neoliberalist capitalism on the "vocabularies"[410] about sex; rather, sex and sexuality were solely presented as a means to reach and lead a satisfied and active individualist life. And, sex toys – most of which were industrially manufactured products – were presented as "helping tools" for that purpose.

While Weaver-Tammy encouraged us to experiment on our sexual imaginations, the sex toys that she presented as a "solution" for improving our sex life were market-compliant. Indeed, echoing what has often been termed as a neoliberalist "therapeutic culture" that constantly urges us to "engage in activities designed to keep ourselves emotionally healthy"[411] and to search for help from (often) cultural industry products, *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* can be seen to assume, or generate, the need or the "problem" that we are supposed to have – that our sex lives need improvement – and it offers a partially consumerist "solution" to that problem.[412] Weaver's product-centredness is not surprising in light of the historical link between sexual emancipation and consumerism: as Elsbieta Przybylo points out, sexual liberalization and "the gluing of sex to pleasure was influenced widely by consumer capitalism, and the marketing of sex and sexual lifestyles" in the 1960s and early 1970s.[413]

In *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*, sex and sexuality were portrayed as both joyful and active issues, and something that has to be worked on and enhanced. Weaver-Tammy's primary goal was to activate us in the sphere of sexuality; fragility, loss, and incapability were indirectly portrayed as bodily and mental states that can be – and should be – overcome, or at least alleviated. Also due to this stance towards "weakness", the

[409] See Mouffe 2005, 155.

[410] Here, I refer to "vocabularies" in Annie Potts's terms as "the stock of representation and ideas, the terminologies, the modes of talking about, and the ways of understanding or making meaning of sex" (Potts 2002, 4).

[411] Rimke and Brock 2012, 195.

[412] See Rimke and Brock 2012, 194-198. See also Furedi 2004, 21-22; Walsh 2013, 4-5.

[413] Przybylo 2011b, 84. Przybylo draws here on D'Emilio, John and Freedman, Estelle B. (1988): *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*. New York: Harper & Row; Gavey, Nicola (2005): *Just Sex? The Cultural Scaffolding of Rape*. London and New York: Routledge; and Gerhard, Jane (2000): "Revisiting 'The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm:' The Female Orgasm in American Sexual Thought and Second Wave Feminism", *Feminist Studies*, 26:2 (Summer 2000): 449-476. See also Rimke and Brock 2012, 196-197.

performance seemed to comply with post-Fordist ethos that favours and demands bodily vitality, improvement, and activity from individuals.[414]

3.9 Horizons of Change Opened Up by Weaver's Performances

Challenging sex negativity and stereotypes about "the elderly"

If we adhere to the Rancièrean view that politics is about (re)negotiations and fights for "getting a part", a say and visibility in the current distribution of the sensible, and that some artistic projects can "disturb the way in which bodies fit their functions and destinations"[415], Weaver's performances can be seen to do that: through the talk-inducing, myth-busting and stereotype-challenging efforts, the performances aim to challenge and re-think our ways of sensing and making sense of sexuality and sex.

What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex encouraged the participants to reflect on their preconceptions and views of elderly people. The women – members of AGLOW[416] and the Blackfriars Settlement[417] – who performed with Weaver gained creative co-agency in the form of the possibility of co-creating and contributing to the performance; visibility and the possibility of breaking stereotypical attitudes imposed on them. Onstage, they could show that they are active and energetic individuals, not a passive, monolithic segment of the population. They could point out that even though they may look and act differently from the younger people because of their age, they also move about and have sexual needs and desires. That is, I agree with Jen Harvie that "[i]n societies which are ageist" Weaver "works repeatedly with older people to bust myths about their presumed ignorance or obsolescence."[418] The big white sheet hanging on the back wall on which we saw live video footage of *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* may have helped participants with weak eyesight – both old and young – and especially those sitting in the last row to see in detail what happens on the stage area, thus enhancing accessibility in the performance situation.

In *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*, Weaver offered the participants direct contact with a sexologist, and at least the active spectator-participants could notice that the expert did not judge but truly tried

[414] See Rimke and Brock 2012, 198.
[415] Rancière 2008b, 11.
[416] AGLOW is the shortening of The Association of Greater London Older Women whose mission is to "[c]ampaign for improved status, rights and services for older women [--] [c]hallenge ageism, sexism, homophobia, racism, disableism and much more [--] [h]old conferences and workshops on health, social care and education issues [--] [u]se drama based on [the] members' experiences to raise awareness and promote good practice [and] [p]erform at conferences, festivals, workshops, forums, day centres, schools, and colleges" (AGLOW London website). See also Public Address Systems, Performing as Methodology.
[417] The Blackfriars Settlement is a "registered charity based in London SE1 for nearly 130 years that aims [at] promoting the achievement of individual aspirations [--] promoting physical and mental well-being and independence for all [--] promoting learning and development - formal and informal [--] promoting digital inclusion [and] being a focal point in the community" (Blackfriars Settlement website).
[418] Harvie 2015d, 239.

to help them solve their problems. The personal experiences shared during the performance may also have helped the medical students attending the event to improve their skills, especially in the area of forming a well-functioning doctor-patient relationship with older patients. That is, the performance may have encouraged participants to change their ways of talking about sexuality and sex in various situations: with the doctor, with one's family members and friends, and so on.

While, on one hand, Weaver's performances can be criticized for naturalizing sexuality, on the other hand they can be seen as instances of counteracting what Gayle Rubin describes as "sex negativity" in "Western" cultures that "consider sex to be a dangerous, destructive, negative force."[419] Sex negativity has its roots in Christian thought that "holds that sex is inherently sinful" and "always treats sex with suspicion."[420] Within this frame of mind, Weaver-Tammy functions as a "precursor" of transformation because, as Foucault puts it, "[i]f sex is repressed, that is, condemned to prohibition, nonexistence, and silence, then the mere fact that one is speaking about it has the appearance of a deliberate transgression. A person who holds forth in such language places himself to a certain extent outside the reach of power; he upsets established law; he somehow anticipates the coming freedom."[421]

According to Jen Harvie, Tammy WhyNot "shares her cloak of visibility with her collaborators, supporting them not only to speak but to do so in front of audiences and in public fora, where others will not only hear them but might be affected by them and might act to change their own behavior and to support Lois's collaborators too."[422] Indeed, *What Tammy Needs to Know* and *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* are supposed to be the starting point of a transformation for the participants that can continue and spread throughout their daily lives and society.

Highlighting identities as processes and busting the "stupid blonde" stereotype

The performances, especially *What Tammy Needs to Know*, may also have affected the world-view of some participants by highlighting the relation between identity and social power; identity was not presented as something that an individual can decide on alone but as processual and performative acts embedded in networks of knowledge and social "passing".[423] This was especially brought to the fore through Weaver's semi-autobiographical drag; through Weaver-Tammy's performative construction and eagerness to ask and learn pieces of knowledge from and with other participants that might help her become credible in her new identity position.

As I suggested in Chapter 3.3, I second Jen Harvie in that performing as Tammy WhyNot, Weaver challenges "the misogynist myth of the dumb blonde"

[419] Rubin 1993, 11.
[420] Rubin 1993, 11.
[421] Foucault 1978, 6.
[422] Harvie 2015d, 239.
[423] See Butler 1993, 20, 124-127, 167-185, 241-242; Rottenberg 2003; Salih 2006, 61-66; Chapter 2.3 of this study.

and "uses others' perceptions of her as dependent as a subterfuge to get what she wants."[424] According to Harvie, Tammy WhyNot's

> exaggeration liberates her from having to fulfil expectations about psychologically realistic behavior, so she's free to challenge assumptions about what's realistic anyway, to try out fantasies, and to erase boundaries of (gendered) expectations and protocols [--] as a poor, white southern 'trailer trash' belle, Tammy does occupy and invoke slightly uncomfortable categories of class, ethnicity and gender [--] But her wit, charm, and downright attractiveness demonstrate that neither the categories nor Tammy herself are wholly or inherently *bad*. Furthermore, her exaggeration foregrounds her social construction, and her active, direct engagement with the audience and its gaze interrupts visual economies that fetishise women.[425]

Indeed, in the performances, I could not interpret Weaver's performance of Tammy WhyNot as a simple stereotype carved in stone. Weaver-Tammy can be seen to be bringing the socially constructed and performative nature of identities to the fore.

Weaver-Tammy and the voluntary student as transformatory role models

I regard Weaver's *Tammy WhyNot* performances as attempts to move towards a society in which one can be open about any issue concerning sex and sexuality, and in which the heterogeneity of sexuality would be accepted. The performances can be seen as a "training sessions" in which the participants are either introduced to and possibility of such a state of affairs, however utopian it may be, or are affirmed in their ideas about the same.

Weaver-Tammy and the voluntary student who opened *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* show us exemplary behaviour in the direction in which Weaver – in line with the pedagogical and therapeutic undertones of the performances – suggests we should strive to go through working on our identities and identifications. Laplanche and Pontalis describe "identification" as "the psychological process whereby the subject assimilates an aspect, property or attribute of the other and is transformed, wholly or partially, after the model the other provides. It is by means of a series of identifications that the personality is constituted and specified."[426] I see the communicative, extrovert and myth-busting Weaver-Tammy, as well as the extrovert and quick-witted student who opened the performance, as identificatory and transformatory role models that might be partially adopted by some of the performance participants.

Performances as feminist and LGTBQ+ community-building events

In *What Tammy Needs to Know* that I attended at Kiasma, I could recognize that there were many international IFTR[427] Theatre research congress participants and Finnish people who work in the arts sector. From the beginning on, I felt

[424] Harvie 2015b, 83, 84.
[425] Harvie 2015d, 236-237. Italics in the original.
[426] Laplanche and Pontalis 1973, 205. See also Diamond 2007, 405.
[427] The 15th World Congress of the International Federation of Theatre Research (IFTR/FIRT) took place at the University of Helsinki on 7-12 August 2006. Weaver's performance was part of the performance programme of the congress.

that I had come into a "fan community meeting" of Weaver-Tammy that was very favourable – laughing and giggling – toward the performance. It is easy to view *What Tammy Needs to Know* partly as community-building or consciousness-raising effort: it seemed to create a feeling of ideological and political unity among likeminded people.

Indeed, *What Tammy Needs to Know* premiered at Dixon Place in New York in 2004, funded by The Arts Council of England and the New York State Council on the Arts. It has also been seen in GLASGAY! Festival in Glasgow in 2006, in the Theatre Institute of Warsaw in 2006, as part of the URB 06 Urban Art Festival and the IFTR Theatre Research World Congress at the Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki in 2006, and in the Drill Hall in London and in the Nuffield Theatre in Lancaster in 2006.[428] All of these venues are arenas for experimental theatre and performance art that address questions of identity and identity politics. The performance may have gathered progressive academics, artists and representatives of sexual minorities together and strengthened the sense of belonging among LGBTQ+ individuals, and identity political activists, and academics; "passionate audiences" as Jill Dolan might put it.[429] Sarah Schulman, born in 1958 in the U.S.A., has stated that her generation – that, broadly taken, also includes Lois Weaver and many other renowned feminist and lesbian artists and scholars based in the United States and in Europe – is

> a confused group of queers. In many ways, we are the ones who have experienced the most dramatic and traumatic shift in public depiction of homosexuality. We had such profound oppression experiences in childhood that they qualify as trauma. We are the last of the dirty-dark-secret generation. We are the last group that came of age in a time in which homosexuality was never mentioned, had no public representation [--] we have experienced changes that are too huge to digest and often too confusing to fully comprehend. So, when we walk into a theater and see two women kissing on stage after we've been humiliated and vilified by our own families for doing the same thing, we're thrilled. But in the context of contemporary culture [--] that kiss does not have the meaning we once dreamed it would. It does not mean that we are full human beings whose lives can now be truthfully represented among the selection of lives that make up the American experience.[430]

What Tammy Needs to Know might give strength to this kind of "passionate audience"; for identity political activists in the pursuit of their goals, and for lesbian and gay minorities at least a momentary sense of being accepted and represented in public.

What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex has been performed in the Chelsea Theatre in London (2008), at the Klovićevi dvori Gallery in Zagreb (2013), and at La MaMa E.T.C. in New York (2014) – but also outside the exclusively academic or artistic environment, in the Royal London

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[428] Harvie and Weaver 2015b, 302; Underwood 2007, 37; Lois Weaver's Resumé.

[429] Dolan 2001, 478. Dolan borrows the term "passionate audience" from Sarah Schulman, in Schulman, Sarah (1998): *Stagestruck: Theater, AIDS, and the Marketing of Gay America*, Durham: Duke University Press, 69. See also Chapter 2.8 of this study. For the definition of LGBTQ+, see Chapter 3.1.

[430] Sarah Schulman: *Stagestruck: Theater, AIDS, and the Marketing of Gay America*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1998, 149-150. Quoted in Dolan 2001, 465.

Hospital Whitechapel (2008) where I saw it.[431] In the performance Weaver-Tammy explicitly played with "fandom" as she asked us be her "friends" and gave out bracelets stating "I love Tammy". The overall ambience of the event was similar to that in *What Tammy Needs to Know* two years earlier – affirmative, with lots of laughter – but the participant base seemed to be broader; there were the elderly female co-performers, medical students, and many elderly people in the audience who asked very practical questions of the sexologist and who I did not associate with academic research or identity political activism. As the performance was free of charge – unlike *What Tammy Needs to Know* that I saw in Helsinki – it was in principle possible for anyone interested to attend it and, possibly, to start a personal or social transformation inspired by it.[432]

Performances and the possibility of coalitional feminist identity politics

I find that the *Tammy WhyNot* performances are relevant to the debate about identity politics in two ways. They may *both* create and strengthen community spirit among like-minded progressive performance participants and activists, *and*, simultaneously, hint at a novel way of understanding identity politics. In the general sense, identity politics refers to "a wide range of political activity and theorizing founded in the shared experiences of injustice of members of certain social groups [--] identity political formations typically aim to secure the political freedom of a specific constituency marginalized within its larger context. Members of that constituency assert or reclaim ways of understanding their distinctiveness that challenge oppressive characterizations, with the goal of greater self-determination."[433]

The processual and social view of identities promoted by Weaver may avoid some of the problems evident in identity politics that traditionally lean on a separatist logic. Above all, identity politics has been criticized for its "alleged reliance on notions of sameness to justify political mobilization. Looking for people who are *like* you rather than who share your political values as allies runs the risk of sidelining critical political analysis of complex social locations and ghettoizing members of social groups as the only persons capable of making or understanding claims to justice."[434] If political perspectives "gain legitimacy by virtue of their articulation by subjects of particular experiences", that is, based on experiences shared by a group of individuals, then there may not be any "possibility of critique of these perspectives by those who don't share the experience, which in turn inhibits political dialogue and coalition-building."[435]

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[431] Harvie and Weaver 2015b, 302; Stari Kontejner website, What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex.

[432] However, as I have pointed out in Chapter 2.3, there are many factors related to issues such as cultural capital at play as to who takes part in which performance and who does not. The majority of participants in *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* were likely interested in the issues about sex and ageing; likely to follow media that advertised it; and simply had time to take part in the performance.

[433] Heyes 2016, Section Introduction.

[434] Heyes 2016, section 3. "Liberalism and Identity Politics". Italics in the original.

[435] Heyes 2016, section 2. "Philosophy and Identity". See also Nicholson 2008, 176-186.

In principle, Weaver's participatory practice in the *Tammy WhyNot* performances can be seen as an attempt to craft coalitions; to bring people with various backgrounds and of various ages together. Indeed, for Weaver, participation in her performances is above all affirmative activity that can bring about "coalitions" based on "kinship"; for Weaver, a coalition is "a group of individuals who come together for a specific amount of time to achieve a common goal", and kinships – in theatre but, I assume, not restricted to it – are based on "diverse individuals who achieve a closeness without necessary affinity or family resemblance, who come together without ownership and separate without anxiety and who commit ourselves not just to the potential of our extraordinary imaginations but to the careful articulation and fulfilment or our common goals."[436]

If we assume that, as Weaver's performances suggest, identities are social processes and something that we cannot avoid in our lives, then there is no logical ground for making insurmountable political oppositions or antagonisms that base on some "authentic" divisions between persons and groups with different identities. Instead of being a separatist ideology, a process-based account of identity politics should promote dialogue and openness between individuals and groups with different identities in order to locate points of shared convergence and differences, that is, possible grounds for alliance making and co-operation. As *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* was free of charge for the participants, it was, in principle, possible for anyone to attend it. The performance may have eschewed the problem of the homogenic audience basis, especially relating to the practice of "preaching to the converted" that describes the situation in which "political [performance or other] work reaches a too narrow audience of people already persuaded to think progressively", thereby potentially leading to the "performance and its potential for social change [becoming] ghettoized far from the notice of those who perhaps need to see it most."[437]

Weaver's persona Tammy WhyNot and the performances have been influenced by the so-called "second-wave" feminism of the 1960s and 1970s, whose consciousness-raising activities focused specifically on women's experiences under the banner of "the personal is political". The "personal", here, "equated with the experiences of women, experiences which up to this moment had been typically hidden behind domestic doors. The radical feminist act was not only the publicising of the personal but also the insistence that the personal was never only personal since it was always structural and relational."[438] Like the second-wave feminist performance practitioners, Weaver can also be seen to be "walk[ing] a consciously thin line between using performance to uncover and forge an identity [, that is, to] work with, but simultaneously to make

[436] Weaver 2015a, 215.

[437] Dolan 2001, 465. Dolan, herself seeing positive possibilities in "preaching to the converted", refers specifically to Tim Miller and David Román's article "Preaching to the Converted" that appeared in *Theatre Journal*, 47:2, "Gay and Lesbian Queeries" (May, 1995), 169-188, and to Vicki Patraka's interview with Robbie McCauley, in Carol Martin (ed.) (1996): *A Sourcebook on Feminist Theatre and Performance: On and Beyond the Stage*, London and New York: Routledge, 205-238. See also Dolan 2007, 215-217.

[438] Heddon 2008, 161. Heddon refers to Whelehan, Imelda (1995): *Modern Feminist Though: From the Second Wave to Post-feminism*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 13.

problematic experience and identity [--]."[439] However, as Jen Harvie suggests, in its wittiness and exaggerated femininity, Weaver's "femme drag" can be seen as challenging the common second-wave feminism's assumption that "femininity inevitably capitulates to heteronormative patriarchy."[440] Weaver continues the Split Britches performance-making ethos that "focused on the collective devising and use of personal story as political text, embracing the principles of feminism but resisting the dogma."[441] Indeed, Harvie aptly describes Weaver's passion and her politics, quoting bell hooks, as "challeng[ing] the ways that 'all too often our political desire for change is seen as separate from longing and passion in our daily lives [--].'"[442]

Participants gained merits useful in post-Fordist economy and academia

While the ambiences of the performances were rather informal, the institutional locations lent them institutional credibility and legitimacy; we were like a pedagogical or therapeutic "training group" within public institutions – in a national art museum and in a public hospital – as contributors to Weaver's Public Engagement research. These institutions approved of the *Tammy WhyNot* performances and what happened in them, including the strategies of participation. That is, the institutional support has given Weaver the possibility to gain merit and profile ever stronger as an artistic researcher. Hannula, Suoranta and Vadén write that in Great Britain – where Weaver is academically active – "the formation of the character of artistic research is linked with the whole development of the university institutions, and in particular with the systematic quality assessment initiated by the central state. These latter reports on educational standards strongly control the allocation of research money."[443] Weaver works as Professor in Contemporary Performance Practice at Queen Mary, University of London; it has been an institutionally and financially beneficial move for her to devise the *What Tammy Needs to Know* performances within the frameworks of Public Engagement and practice-based research, thereby "institutionalizing" her research-oriented artistic practice and the intrinsic "research input" therein.[444] Through the *Tammy WhyNot* performances, Weaver has gained experience in working as an artist-facilitator within post-Fordist and creative economy and, to a degree, gained legitimacy, recognition, and funding for her work.

As I have pointed out, Weaver-Tammy can talk about anything, however embarrassing or sensitive the issue may be; she does not worry about making

[439] Heddon 2008, 13.
[440] Harvie 2015b, 83.
[441] Hemispheric Institute, Artist Statement.
[442] Harvie 2015a, 13. Harvie quotes hooks, bell (1996): *Reel to Real: Race, Sex and Class at the Movies*, London: Routledge, 29.
[443] Hannula, Suoranta and Vadén 2005, 15-16. See also Harvie 2013, 12-16, 75, 86, 95-96; Public Agenda 2008, 1–2; Rowe et. al. 2005, 331-332; Rogoff 2013, 69-72; Thorpe 2010.
[444] See Harvie 2013, 75, 86; Solga 2015, 247; Linsley 2015, 251. Two research assessment reports that include the *Tammy WhyNot* project have been made about Weaver's work: "Transforming Publics and Participation through Performance" (Research Excellence Framework, 2014), and "What Tammy Needs to Know: Using Persona to Facilitate Public Engagement" (Research Assessment Exercise, 2008). See Research Excellence Framework 2014.

herself look ridiculous in the eyes of other people or about making the "wrong shift" in any situation.[445] Jen Harvie suggests that Weaver uses Tammy as "a catalyst for the social empowerment and inclusion of others who, like her, are often sidelined from positions of cultural authority." [446] Thus, Weaver's performances can be seen to function as an innovative Public Engagement strategy for social empowerment and the gathering and dissemination of knowledge.

The spectator-participants of the *Tammy WhyNot* performances, for their part, became "trained" in reacting spontaneously, promptly and "efficiently" to Weaver's questions, as well as in thinking about identities in terms of potentialities; as re-fashionable and changeable processes. All of the aforementioned features are essential in post-Fordist working life and thus, may indirectly contribute to the success of participants in working life, especially in the knowledge-based and creative sectors. The elderly female co-performers in *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* may have gained by making themselves valued in the eyes of post-Fordist society through making visible their capacity to impress and entertain, their bodily vitality, and their wit.

3.10 Ideas for Further Development of Weaver's Performances

In what follows, I outline ideas that my research has elicited regarding the possible further development of the *What Tammy Needs to Know* performances. I regard these ideas as speculative thought experiments, not as concrete and potentially patronizing instructions. Firstly, what effects would the performances have if – instead of institutional and closed indoor performance spaces – Weaver took them to the public space, for instance to a square or to a park, perhaps performing even unannounced? The performances might gain a broader participant basis and open them up for multi-vocal reception and discussion and for conflict potential that resides in the issues about politics, identity, sexuality, and participation. This move might also challenge the rather affirmative, concise, and "housebroken" modes of communication underlying the Public Engagement ethos. Weaver's newer format *Tourist Information Wanted* might provide a productive starting point for this kind of experiment.[447]

It is very difficult to change cultural assumptions concerning identity with only the power of a small group; in order to have wide-ranging effects, identity-political changes need many people from different backgrounds. Tuija

[445] Story 2009, 12.
[446] Harvie 2015b, 84.
[447] "On the occasion of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, Tammy WhyNot collaborated with performance artist Stacy Makishi to re-frame the event as a peoples' jubilee. The project asked people to map their own timelines in order to arrive at the present moment – the moment of their 'own jubilee'. It was a gently subversive democratisation of this national event, and an opportunity for exploration of memory and community. Tourist Information Wanted was commissioned by Home Live Art, and was part of the Alternative Village Fete, Battersea Park Jubilee Festival" (Public Address Systems, Performing the Persona). However, this project did not explicitily thematize sexuality or sex practices.

Pulkkinen writes that the continuity of a culture is based on reiteration on a massive scale: that its members constantly do the same things and reiterate the practices, ways of behaving, and models of thought of the specific culture. Wide-ranging identity-political changes need huge numbers of people and acts to take place.[448] Weaver has said that the persona Tammy WhyNot was inspired by her "desire to occupy the space, of possibility if not reality, that I [Weaver] imagined lay beneath the fake exterior of the female country and western singer [--] I [Weaver] had seen glimpses of the fierce mind, strong will, and murderous sense of humour of certain Southern women who dressed themselves in synthetic hair and plunging necklines."[449] Just as a thought experiment, what might religious and conservative female country music fans get from the *What Tammy Needs to Know* performances? Would there be any real points of convergence and productive dialogue between them and Weaver-Tammy?

Furthermore, what possibilities, and yet more inclusive potential would open up if the performances gave more room for vulnerability and fragility not implicitly portrayed as something to be "alleviated" or "cured" but as accepted and cherished states of the body? Could a seed of resistance reside therein against post-Fordist and neoliberalist order with its exclusionary tendencies? Would this move destroy the optimism that Weaver promotes and believes in, *or* could it be engaged in – with the help of Weaver-Tammy – in a non-sentimental and appreciative way?

Also, what new horizons for change might become possible if the performances gave up the centrality and the leading position of Weaver-Tammy? As part of her research practice, Weaver has indeed developed such participatory formats: *Long Table* and *Porch Sitting*. The former is a "an aestheticized social practice for prompting dialogic interaction and public debate" accompanied "with 'The *Long Table* Etiquette', a sheet of 'instructions' placed on each chair around the *Long Table* offering reassurance by making the protocols of participation explicit. The performers in the *Long Table* are simply those who choose to take chair at the table and contribute to the discussion."[450]

In the *Porch Sitting* events, the participants "sit in irregular lines facing the same way as if on a porch (or a balcony, or the space in front of any kind of shelter) [and] Lois suggests a series of prompts for the conversation" that function as starting points for improvised and spontaneous dialogue.[451] Could these formats perhaps be applied to *What Tammy Needs to Know* performances? Indeed, since 2012, Weaver has been further developing *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* in a potentially more egalitarian direction "in collaboration with older people in Croatia, New York and the UK, drawing on their stories and experiences."[452] Weaver characterizes this new endeavour as "[p]art performance, part chat show, all comeback tour"

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[448] See Pulkkinen 1999, 33.

[449] Weaver 2015b, 221.

[450] Heddon 2015, 200. Italics in the original. See also Harris 2015; Public Address Systems, Long Table. In my MA dissertation, I suggested that the format *Long Table* can be seen as an indirect further development of the democratic participatory strategies used in the *Tammy WhyNot* performances. See Lahtinen 2010, 74-77.

[451] Harris 2015, 205, 207. See also Public Address Systems, Porch Sitting.

[452] Split Britches, What Tammy Needs to Know. See also Teaser of *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex - NYC*.

that "initiates dialogue and workshops with women over sixty in order to create an interactive performance that addresses sex and the ageing woman."[453]

I was delighted to find out that Weaver-Tammy has "gone viral" recently; Weaver has established a Youtube channel on the Internet to serve "us oldies", that is, people over 50. In the channel, Weaver-Tammy continues the Public Engagement work virtually – about getting older, sexuality, and community-building efforts among other themes – that she has been doing onstage and in workshops before; she aims to become an "Internet sensation".[454] Weaver-Tammy's channel includes, for instance, a series called "Ask Dr. Ali" – featuring the sexologist Ali Mears who was part of *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* – whom viewers can ask questions in writing and which she then answers through video. Also, Tammy's channel hosts informational videos about age- and health-related themes such as "How to recognize the signs of a stroke", and about sexually transmitted diseases. The Youtube channel may potentially reach a very broad audience and encourage people to watch and participate without coercion, physically where and when they want to. In my view, the Youtube channel develops the participatory ethos underlying the *Tammy WhyNot* performances further in a productive and intriguing direction. Also, *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* has given rise to a long-term co-operation with the Association of Greater London Older Women (AGLOW) with which Weaver and her students at Queen Mary, University of London devised a "series of performance workshops" named *All Aglow with Desire* about "ageing bodies and continuous desire". The workshops aimed at "multi-generational perspectives" and culminated in a "direct public performance" that was held at Queen Mary in 2010.[455]

3.11 Relation to Previous Research: Challenging Affirmative Readings

In the Anglo-American feminist performance discourse, Weaver's and Peggy Shaw's group Split Britches and their performances have gained much attention both in research and popular publications and other media. However, Sue-Ellen Case's *Split Britches. Lesbian Practice/Feminist Performance* (1996) about the history, performances and working methods of Split Britches is, to date, the only publication entirely dedicated to Split Britches' work. It includes the performance scripts between 1982 and 1992, interviews and Case's openly emotional and engaged reflections on her relation to the group and her work as a researcher. Until the publication of the major monograph *The Only Way Home Is Through the Show: The Performance Work of Lois Weaver* edited by Jen Harvie and Lois Weaver in 2015, Lois Weaver's solo work had not been extensively

[453] Split Britches, What Tammy Needs to Know. See also Teaser of *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex - NYC*.
[454] Tammy Whynot's Youtube channel, "Welcome to my channel" video, 00:56-01:03; 01:40-01.52.
[455] Public Address Systems, Performing as Methodology.

researched and only moderately written about in general. Jen Harvie lists plausible reasons for the lack of writing about Weaver's work:

> Even though Split Britches generated a still-snowballing amount of criticism [--] little has focused specifically on Lois's work. [--] Lois directs deliberately collectively, as a matter of preference and principle, and in ways related to her democratic, enabling approaches to teaching. But because she doesn't direct in the domineering mode of the (frequently male) *auteur*, her directing hasn't pressed for recognition. [--] And it is not only Lois's directing which lacks visibility – or, more correctly, lacked attention. She is fundamentally committed to making work *for* marginalised audiences – especially of women, lesbians, and older people – and with groups who are socially marginalised – most often by their gender, sexuality, class, and/or age. Her work is not, therefore, habitually staged with the biggest budgets, at the most high-profile venues, for the largest audiences, for long runs, garnering masses of press attention. On the contrary, she often deliberately seeks audiences who are not 'regular theatre-goers', and she makes work in 'non-theatre spaces', for short runs or targeted one-offs, and uses the modest-but-enabling 'beg, borrow, or steal' methodologies of the School of Thrift. [--] Lois tends to work outside of places where her work might get most attention and recognition. This is not because her work lacks ambition or, indeed, is afraid to fight; it is ambitious and up for a fight. Lois makes work where and how she does because she is principally committed to exploring social and political topics that are socially repressed, and she seeks out people whose stories and priorities are socially neglected. [--] And her global wayfaring means she and her work are seldom directly in the eye of any particular interested party for a sustained length of time.[456]

Most texts and analyses about Split Britches' and Weaver's work are based on affirmative and "passionate" perspectives onto which Jill Dolan projects world-changing possibilities through the passionate live relationship between performer and audience.[457] Dolan suggests that the passionate perspectives may bring about "utopian performatives" that are moments of hope and belief in social change through performance, "imagined or experienced affectively, through feelings, in small, incremental moments that performance can provide."[458] That is, texts on Weaver's work have focused on the promising Lesbian and feminist identity political possibilities that their work might provide. In the analyses of Weaver's and Split Britches' performances, much attention has been paid to drag and representation, and they have focused on the constructive and positive sides of Weaver's and Split Britches' practices. The new monograph does not make an exception to that tradition; it is a compiled history of Weaver's work and life, written by and for "passionate" audiences and colleagues. [459] Also, drag and the politics of representation is, understandably, a major theme running through the texts in the book.

Geraldine Harris has claimed that the unambigous relation between "truth" and "fiction" has led some feminist scholars – Jill Dolan included – to interpret and analyse Split Britches' performances all too directly through their knowledge of, and empathy with the personal life of Weaver and Shaw, ending up with seeing possibilities "to transform 'reality'" that are linked rather to

[456] Harvie 2015a, 10-11.
[457] See Dolan 2001, 478-479; Dolan 2007, 214-216; Dolan 2015.
[458] Dolan 2001, 460. See also ibid. 478-479; Dolan 2007, 214-216; Dolan 2015.
[459] The texts in the monograph can be viewed as "testimonials" to, and accounts of the positive influence that Weaver's practice has had on the writers' lives and more generally.

these knowledges and investments than to the performances themselves.[460] Partly, this might be due to Split Britches' semi-autobiographical characters – or personas – that are based on juxtaposition and contrasts; as I pointed out in Chapter 3.6, they are a combination of various layers of identity that draw, for instance, from the performer's autobiographical experiences and her identification with a popular culture star. In Split Britches' performances, the performer does not lose her own personality as the performer; instead, she draws attention to her play at being the character.[461]

While I do share an admiration for Weaver's practice, and recognize and acknowledge the political potential and currency of drag and re-representations, as well as of busting stereotypes, both in general and in Weaver's work and ethos in particular – in Weaver's case, *femme* drag – I also find it important to leave the "comfort zone" and to critically interrogate these practices. In my analysis, I have tried to reach beyond the representational frames of reference to offer notions about the chosen participatory strategies and their limitations and assumptions underlying them.

For instance, Jen Harvie writes that Weaver's work "includes love for her audiences, to whom her work extends a range of intimate engagements, from riotous flirtation, by way of good-humoured teasing, to the gentle *tête à tête* sharing of secrets" and that "however reticent about performing or singing in public audiences might be when they initially see Lois's persona Tammy WhyNot, once they are exposed to their hostess's persuasive charm and coquettish coaxing, she soon has them joining in."[462] In Harvie's view, Weaver-Tammy has "a remarkable openness articulated through curiosity, warmth, fun, and effervescent friendliness. This openness provokes her interlocutors to respond with tolerance at least, and usually with affection and delight. She provokes and engages in genuine dialogue, conversation, and enquiry. She never fills a show or scene with her own opinions or ideas but always coaxes input and wisdom from her collaborators through a combination of gentle teasing, humour, and tenderness."[463]

In this case study, my analysis has pointed to the underlying assumptions of this "gentle" or "good-humoured" teasing by Weaver-Tammy, and its potentially exclusionary tendency; not all participants automatically find Tammy's interrogative acts funny, gentle or non-intimidating. The dynamic between the performer and other participants in Weaver's *Tammy WhyNot* performances – and the "passionate" research about them – rely on the logic of "fandom", on the belief in the affirmative extrovert talk as a means of transformation, and on the assumption of a self-mastering psychosexual individual. These are non-explicated and, perhaps, partly unconscious assumptions on which Weaver's *Tammy WhyNot* performances and many researchers operate. Participants who do not share these beliefs risk becoming excluded or feeling genuinely harassed in the performances.

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[460] Harris 2002, 212-213.
[461] See Underwood 2007, 31.
[462] Harvie 2015b, 85, 127.
[463] Harvie 2015c, 237. Here, Harvie does not specifically refer to the performances that I analyse in this study but to Tammy WhyNot's performances in general.

Unlike previous research, my study has also pointed to the compliance of Weaver's participatory strategies and ethos in the performances with a post-Fordist mode of work and explicitly analyzed their "educating" and "therapy" dimensions. As to the mode of participation, Weaver's question-answer format and dominating position in the "contained" school or therapy-like spatial setting and ambience may compromise or hinder the "genuine dialogue, conversation and enquiry" that Harvie refers to.

According to Jill Dolan, "[i]n her own persona as 'Lois Weaver', and in her built character 'Tammy WhyNot' [--] Lois's on-stage aspect always presents as something of a teacher. She's not at all didactic in her presentations of self; on the contrary, she's almost casual in how she instructs spectators and fellow performers about what it means to be present together and different yet similar to another in space and time and history. Lois is *there*, as the facilitator, co-conspirator, [--] master- and mistress-mind [--]."[464] To Dolan, the performance *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* is "personal and public, asking audiences to meet her [Weaver] more than halfway in their willingness to be vulnerable to the effects of time on bodies. And as always, she is fearless about how she's willing to expose of herself, physically and emotionally."[465] While Weaver (and Weaver-Tammy) may not be didactic in their "presentations of self", I have shown that there are potentially exclusionary underlying assumptions regarding extrovertism and sexuality that Weaver conveys to – and imposes on – us in a school-like spatial and behavioural setting that does not encourage critical reflection. Further, the participants can indeed be seen to be required to meet Weaver "more than halfway" as to what is demanded from them, but without any "cover" such as the Tammy WhyNot persona that Weaver grants herself, and, in addition, participants are being expected to concentrate on the "ameliorating" and "activating" ethos regarding bodily vulnerability.

Kim Solga claims that Tammy WhyNot is "savvy"

> because she is thoroughly unashamed of what she does not know. Tammy loves questions and will bombshell into any room in order to ask the assembled experts what makes them so special. She will gladly turn her microphone on any audience in order to ask spectators what they think *she* needs to know: about being a lesbian, about sex and ageing, about joy and pleasure, about philosophy, about politics, and about the way art and culture works (or doesn't work) to allow ordinary people to see themselves, their own smarts and know-how, reflected on stage or screen or canvas [--] Tammy never cares if she's not yet well enough informed; she knows she will get there in the end.[466]

I agree on the savviness and multifaceted usefulness of Weaver-Tammy but, based on my analyses, I also wonder whether her participatory strategies could possibly be developed to become even more inclusive; open to challenging responses; or explicitly pointing at their own potential limits and limitations.

[464] Dolan 2015, 151-152. Italics in the original.
[465] Dolan 2015, 155.
[466] Solga 2015, 245. Italics in the original.

4 CASE STUDY II: Complaints Choirs of Helsinki (2006), Singapore (2008) and Vienna (2010–)

Complaints Choir emerged from an ideas game; what if all the energy individuals put into complaining about small things could be transformed into something grand and collective.[467]

To find a balance between individualism and collectivism is quite a challenge in human life [--] Collectiveness is a value that is not celebrated much in our culture. I personally believe that many people in our society feel uneasy because of the absence of the collective feeling. This topic seems to fuel endless works for me.[468]

Since we don't have any prior relationship with the people who might respond to the invitation – there is no pressure in play – people can ignore, reject or accept the invitation. But when they accept we are sure they have their own motivation, a personal agenda which lets them overcome all the little hurdles and which brings them to the first meeting.[469]

DO YOU ACTUALLY NEED TO BE ABLE TO SING TO BE IN THIS CHOIR?
Absolutely not. The only important thing is that you sing loud and proud.[470]

[467] Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 12. Italics added to the original.
[468] Tellervo Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 5-6. Italics added to the original.
[469] Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 27. Italics added to the original.
[470] A question and an answer to it at the "faq" (frequently asked questions) section of the Complaints Choirs website. See Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "faq". Capital letters in original, italics added to the original.

Photo 8. Complaints Choir of Helsinki performing for camera at Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, 2006. Photo: Petri Summanen.

Photo 9. Performance of the Complaints Choir of Helsinki at the Railway Station of Helsinki, 2006. Photographer unknown.

Photo 10. Complaints Choir of Vienna performing at Museumsquartier Wien, 2011. Screenshot of the video uploaded to Youtube by the user PAKnope (Philipp Knopf). Screenshot by Joonas Lahtinen.

Photo 11. Live footage from a private performance of the Complaints Choir of Singapore in the former parliamentary chamber of the Old Parliamentary House, 2008. Screenshot of the video uploaded to Youtube by the user Atomipommi (Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen). Screenshot by Joonas Lahtinen.

4.1 Theatre Images of the Complaints Choirs

Complaints Choir of Vienna: power of the group and harmony that rules out deviations

As a singer in the performances of the Complaints Choir of Vienna, I always had a feeling of being amidst an immersive harmony; I sang in the rhythm and felt that I was in a sense part of the rhythm, my voice fading into the other tenor voices and other registers – soprano, alto and bass. I was just one of the many singers standing very close to the others in rows, concentrating on our common task: on singing harmoniously and on rigorously following the choir conductor's instructions, based on the weekly training sessions we had had. I could sense the voices of the other singers, their body warmth, muscular tensions, and the noises of the body – such as breathing – of my fellow singers and my body automatically "attuned" to them and started to mimic them.

While performing at an inner-city streetcorner, as a bunch of people standing closely together focusing on our efforts and attention, I felt that if we had wanted to direct our common effort and energy to something else, say, blocking a walkway or a street, we would have managed to do it. We, the choir, as a kinaesthetic and bodily formation were not only able to to catch attention of passers-by but also affect their routes in public places.

On one hand, it was a relaxing experience for me to just "follow the rules i.e. the score" but, on the other hand, during our rehearsals and performances[471] I sometimes had a slightly disturbing feeling of being "suffocated" in the choir, and even a feeling of a minor "stampede"; as if I were immersed in an energetic group action that was, in my experience, very strongly based on uniformity and inner cohesion among us singers, and that ruled out all deviations. Indeed, we were not encouraged or allowed to unexpectedly diverge from the score on our own. The song was devised and sung in German and included sequences in Viennese dialect – I, a non-native German speaker, also remember stressing a lot about the right pronunciation and "keeping in tone".

Complaints Choir of Helsinki as an imposing, skilful and united group

Viewing the video presentation of the Complaints Choir of Helsinki for the very first time, online on my computer in a late autumn night more than a decade ago, I remember feeling uncomfortable about not being able to discern individual voices or relate them to the specific mouths, faces, or bodies of the singers, and yet I heard and saw dozens of people sing "as one", their gestures synchronized but slightly individual.[472] Due to the composition of close-up and wider framings of the lens of the camera I was able to look in detail at the individual gestures of individual singers at close range but also view the whole choir at a glance. In addition, the video had one continuous and edited

[471] Besides open air performances and interventions, I took part in indoor performances e.g. at Salzburger Kunstverein (Salzburg Art Association) on 21.04.2010; at Konzertcafé Schmidl Hans on 18.12.2010; at Museumsquartier (MQ) Ovalhalle on 18.06.2011; and in the TV programme "Bürgerforum" (channel ORF 1) live broadcast on 27.11.2011.

[472] For the definition of "synchronicity", see Chapter 4.2 below. For the video, see Video recording of the Complaints Choir of Helsinki.

soundtrack that was synchronized with the performance sequences; my listening experience was probably quite different from that of live audiences of the choir. In all of the sequences of this video – some of which was live footage before an audience and at public sites, some sequences recorded in a studio setting, for the camera, as I later came to learn – the choir struck me as an imposing group: the singers stood very close to each another and voiced complaints synchronically and harmonically. There was no intra-choral disharmony or controversy to be seen or heard; the choir performed as if it was a "united kinaesthetic front", with a few solo sequences that, nevertheless, did not break the harmonic tone of the song. In the sequences filmed for the camera, most of the singers also had dark clothes and similar red sheet holders, which further minimized their visual individuality. The choir left a strong "commensurable" impression in my memory; all singers seemed to be completely focused on their common singing effort, directing their attention at the conductor who stood in front of them, meticulously leading the action. The Helsinki choir – like the Complaints Choirs of Vienna and Singapore too – sounded good in my ears; the singers managed to keep the tone and follow the score and the conductor's instructions.

Project website as a promotional and archival hub with selling appeal

The extensive project website "Complaints Choir Worldwide" has fascinated me from the very beginning of my research; with just a few button clicks and mouse scrolls, I am able to take a look at each performance video uploaded there and to compare thirty-seven Choirs and their performances – their complaints and lyrics, the songs, singers and their outfits, and the environments in which the video shooting took place – as well as follow the "news", that is, updates about new Complaints Choirs, their performances and related events.[473] The global scope of the project already becomes clear through the world map on the main page, showing some twenty cities on four continents in which Complaints Choirs have been constituted. The website also includes information about the background of the project; a voting survey for choosing the favourite choir; and media features of Complaints Choirs. In my eyes, the website has both archival and promotional qualities and it seems to have been devised for big audiences right from the start; the word "Worldwide" already suggests a broad scope and a large number of visitors. The website also offers rather simple instructions for setting up a D-I-Y Complaints Choir:

> Invite people from your city to join the Complaints Choir. Distribute flyers, spread posters and write a press release. Everybody can join, no singing skills required! The more diverse the participants the better. [--] The people that sign up for the choir send in their complain before the first meeting. [--] Group all the complaints that were submitted into apropriate categories, for example: complaints about the city, about neighbours, about technology, about life in general, about things that can't be changed etc. and print them on separate papers. [--] Introduce the categories you have choosen and read the best complaints from each category to the choir [in the first meeting]. Ask the people to choose any of the categories they feel most excited about. The choir now

[473] Most of the videos accessible on the website are linked to Youtube. The first news update was posted online on 07 September 2006 and the latest on 01 April 2016; there is no regularity as to the frequency of updates. See Complaints Choirs Worldwide.

> divides into small 'expert teams' that go through all the complaints within their favourite category and edit them, combine them, reformulate them. The results of each team are glued to cardboard. In the end of the meeting every team reads their suggestions to the other teams. [--] The musician and a few volunteers from the choir combine the ideas of the expert teams and finalize the lyrics. The musician fits the song and the lyrics together.[474]

These instructions make the song-composing process seem simple, smooth and straightforward; it has selling appeal, as if anyone could establish a local choir without any obstacles or problems. The choir members seem to be assigned with a clear division of work – the local initiators and artists lead the course of action, while the ordinary choir members are, in my eyes, portrayed as "content-providers" and "workers" who do the singing based on the artists' vision.

Composing the lyrics in Singapore: collective decision-making hosted by the artists

In Ada Bligaard Søby's documentary film *Complaints Choir* (2009), the process of composing the lyrics of the song of the Complaints Choir of Singapore seems to rely on a collective decision-making process "hosted" and facilitated by the artist-initiators:

> (AT THE REHEARSAL OF THE SINGAPORE CHOIR AT THE FORMER PARLIAMENTARY CHAMBER OF THE OLD PARLIAMENTARY HOUSE OF SINGAPORE.[475] OLIVER KOCHTA-KALLEINEN INSTRUCTS THE SINGERS VIA MICROPHONE:)
> So I would like to give you still about 15 minutes to take a piece of paper – and choose one of these amazing chairs – where your former government have made all of the decisions – over which you are now complaining. So please go into yourself and ask the question 'what I really, really want to complain about'. Write it down. You don't have to write a name on it, and just put it here in the middle [of the room in a pile]. [--] You'll have to make the decision on which complaints [go into the song] – so we need six to ten of your favourite complaints – and then maybe when you are sure you just write them in the corner –
> --
> (PARTICIPANTS READ COMPLAINTS FOR THE CAMERA:)
> WOMAN 1: Public transportation and no taxies.
> WOMAN 2: How do we get transport?
> WOMAN 3: No bubble gum, no fun.
> --
> (A GROUP OF SOME 10 PEOPLE VOTES ON THE BEST COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE THEME "SINGAPORE" BY RAISING THEIR HANDS. A PARTICIPANT COUNTS THE VOTES:)
> WOMAN 2: One, two, three four, five, sIx, seven. If it's more than a half [percentage of the group?]
> --
> (WOMAN 4 READS COMPLAINTS FOR THE CAMERA:) All good-looking guys are gays. Men changing their identity to become women. Fat girls in miniskirts should be against the law.[476]

[474] Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "do it".
[475] The Old Parliamentary House functions today an arts and heritage centre. See Chang 2007, 71; The Arts House Singapore, section "Venues"; Chapter 4.8 of this study.

Performance in Singapore: mundane and socio-political complaints voiced cheerily in the catchy song

There is an intriguing discrepancy between the subject matter and the mode of performance in many Complaints Choirs, especially in Singapore; while complaints are – by definition – negative issues, the singers of the Singapore Complaints Choir seemed to perform rather cheerily for the camera[477], with a semi-smile at least; the performance conveys a positive and humorous atmosphere. Due to the choir performance mode, I cannot know the "originators" of singular complaints. The complaints of the song varied from petty everyday annoyances to complaints that explicitly refer to wider socio-economic, ecological and political problems:

> We get fined for almost everything
> Drivers won't 'give chance' when you want to 'change lane'
> The indoors are cold, the outdoors are hot;
> And the humid air, it wrecks my hair
> Those answering machines always make you hold
> Only to hang up on you
>
> When a pregnant lady gets on the train
> Everyone pretends to be asleep
> I'm stuck with my parents till I'm 35
> Cause I can't apply for HDB[478]
> We don't recycle any plastic bags
> But we purify our pee
>
> *chorus:
> What's wrong with Singapore?
> Losing always makes me feel so sore
> Cause if you're not the best
> Then you're just one of the rest
>
> My oh my Singapore
> What exactly are we voting for?
> What's not expressly permitted
> is prohibited"[479]

The melody of the Singapore Complaints song is catchy; I notice myself automatically tapping my fingers against the computer keyboard and stomping

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[476] The quoted sequences viewable in: Bligaard Søby 2009 between mins. 12:54-15:24. There are slight differences between the subtitles and what is said on the video; I have tried to provide as accurate a notation of the discussions as possible.

[477] The Complaints Choir of Singapore was censored by the Singapore authorities and only performed privately for live camera. I discuss this below in Chapter 4.9. There is unedited live footage of one of the performances accessible on Youtube, see Unedited video recording of the Complaints Choir of Singapore.

[478] HDB stands for Housing and Development Board that builds and manages public housing projects in Singapore, including making rules as to who is eligible for applying for such housing. HDB flats "are home to over 80% of Singapore's resident population" of which about 90% own their home. See Housing and Development Board Singapore, section "About Us".

[479] Excerpt of the Complaints Song of Singapore. The complete lyrics of the Complaints Songs of Singapore, Helsinki and Vienna can be found on the project website (Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "choirs", tab "TEXT" below each Choir).

my feet to the rhythm of the song while viewing the performance video online. The song reminds me of blues and boogie-woogie, and it is based on a clear verse-refrain structure with additional sung interlude parts as well as short solo sequences by individual singers.

4.2 Experience Fields and Body Techniques: Groups Yielding Attention through Harmonic and Synchronic Action

As to the experience fields of the performances of the Complaints Choirs of Helsinki, Vienna and Singapore, the most conspicuous features were harmony, synchronicity[480] and cohesion.[481] Besides the harmonic singing, the bodily constellation of the singers – which involved them standing very close to each other, able to listening to their fellow singers' voices, and facing the audience or the camera as a united front – also seemed to be essential in these performances. As a singer in the Complaints Choir of Vienna, I sometimes felt as if I were immersed in an action that strove for and imposed uniformity on me. When singing before live audiences at performance sites and also for the camera, these Complaints Choirs seem to yield attention due to their auditory and visual qualities: as groups of many people standing next to each other and singing loudly, they automatically engage the viewers' – or, at public sites, by-passers' – senses and attention.

In my experience, the project website gives rise to an experience field too; it brings various Complaint Choirs together through videos, photos, and textual documentation and functions as an archive that allows visitors with access to the Internet to compare – and to scrutinize – different choirs and their performances through audiovisual documentation anytime, anywhere. The site visitor is required to master the basic body techniques and have the basic computer and web navigation skills.

The medium of film has inevitably framed and affected my viewing experience. Especially the close-up shots and wider shots in the Helsinki Choir video as well as their edited soundtrack may have strengthened my impression

[480] I rely here on Kai van Eikels's definition of synchronization: "Synchronization is a process of attuning different rhythms of movement or action, which is mutual and can never be traced back to a single origin (unlike one-way forms of influence, like resonance) [--] Whereas in its conventional use the word 'synchronicity' refers to an idea of timelines' exact maching, [--] self-induced synchronization never leads to perfect uniformity but always retains a difference between the rhythms, although these differences can be fine and below the threshold of our perception" (van Eikels 2011, 9). Van Eikels draws on Pikovsky, Arkadi, Rosenblum, Michel and Kurths, Jürgen (2003): *Synchronization: A Universal Concept in Nonlinear Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[481] In this study, I analyze the song of the Complaints Choir of Helsinki (composed, conducted and accompanied by Esko Grundström in 2006), the song of the Complaints Choir of Singapore (composed and conducted by Chong Wai Lun in 2008) and my experiences of rehearsing and performing the first two songs of the Complaints Choir of Vienna, *Wien, wir beschwerden Uns!* (Vienna, we're complaining!) composed by Sir Tralala and conducted by Stefan Foidl in 2010. For video and audio documentation, see: Video recording of the Complaints Choir of Helsinki; Unedited video recording of the Complaints Choir of Singapore; Video recording of the Complaints Choir of Vienna at MQ; Audio recording of the first Complaints Song of Vienna.

of that choir as an impressive and harmonious united front; the possible disturbances at live performance situations – such as mistakes as to singing or choreography, or problems with echo and surrounding noise at public performance sites – were not present on the video.[482] My experience of the "impressiveness" of the choirs may also have been strengthened by the framing of those shots in which the whole choir cannot be seen as a whole but "continues" beyond the frames of the camera lens. Further, the documentary film sequence about the song composition process of the Complaints Choir of Singapore has been edited and does not document all the social interaction and dynamics of that workshop situation.

Choir singing that relies on harmony and synchronicity is a skill- and attention-requiring activity, and similarly in these Complaints Choirs. There were three major participant roles in the choirs: that of the choir singer, of the conductor-composer, and of the initiator-artists.[483] The key body techniques of the singers were to voice the correct words and tones at the right moments and to count bars or pauses, being simultaneously attentive to other singers and the conductor; to follow the conductor's instructions rigorously; to remember the score by heart, or to be able to read the notation and the words while singing; and to stay in one's place according to the predefined pattern, or move according to a choreographed plan. In addition, to sing in the Complaints Choir required the members to rehearse the song together.[484]

While the conductor-composer had to employ signs to convey his directions to the choir and train them to follow it and keep in tune, the artist-initiators took care of "hosting" the *Choir* meetings and of leading the song composition process in a friendly and motivating but also decisive manner, in verbal and gestural interaction with the singers and the conductor-composer.[485]

The song composition process was conducted and the Complaints song was sung in English in Singapore, in Finnish in Helsinki, and in German in Vienna; the participants were assumed to be fluent in these languages. The song composition method used in the choirs relied on the participants' willingness and ability to formulate their complaints into sentences, write them down, and give up authority over them as they were collected and made into a song. In Singapore and Helsinki, the devising process also required that the participants

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[482] As to the video recording of Complaints Choir of Helsinki, on the Complaints Choir website it reads: "Filmings and audio recordings were made at KIASMA theatre. The song was repeated about 10 times to get it perfect. Apologies to the staff which had to listening [sic] our complaints over and over" (Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "choirs", tab "PICTS" under the Helsinki Choir, photo legend).

[483] From the beginning on, the Complaints Choir of Vienna has employed external composers; the co-initiator Stefan Foidl functions as the conductor and leads the rehearsals but does not compose. The Choirs of Helsinki and Singapore involved one artist – Esko Grundström and Chong Wai Lun respectively – who took care of both composing and conducting.

[484] For voice opening exercise of the Singapore Choir, see Bligaard Søby 2009 between mins. 16:53-17:21; for voice opening exercises of the Helsinki Choir, see Video recording of the second rehearsal of the Complaints Choir of Helsinki; Video recording of the rehearsal of the Complaints Choir of Helsinki in Suomenlinna.

[485] I remember clearly that this was the case in the Complaints Choir of Vienna and, according to documentary material, also in the Complaints Choirs of Helsinki. See Video recording of the second rehearsal of the Complaints Choir of Helsinki; Video recording of the rehearsal of the Complaints Choir of Helsinki in Suomenlinna.

make up their mind and announce their preferred complaints in the presence of other singers and the artists.[486] Also, Complaints Choirs required a consensual approach from the participants; they were supposed to accept the final selection of complaints to be included in the song, and the leading position of the professional artists. In addition, the participants were assumed to be willing to perform for the camera, and to agree to the distribution of the video material of their performance on the Internet.

What can the skilful and rehearsed group performances; the emphasis on harmony and synchronicity; the attention-raising power of the performances; the Internet presence of the project; and the participatory song-devising processes reveal about the underlying assumptions and about the horizons of change and limitations that these Complaints Choirs, and the project concept generally entail?

4.3 Therapeutic Undercurrents in the Complaints Choirs

Group therapy atmosphere: letting individuals' negative thoughts out

The singers of the Complaints Choirs of Singapore, Vienna and Helsinki often smiled, and sometimes even held back bursts of laughter while performing their songs. This indicates that despite the subject matter being inherently negative – if complaints are understood as utterances of dissatisfaction – expressing complaints as a Complaints Choir is, ultimately, experienced as a joyful activity by the singers. In part, this may be due to the "patchwork" Complaints songs in which completely different kinds of annoyances follow each other, creating surprising and funny combinations that amuse the singers, too.

The choirs seem to offer their participants a way to "channel" their negative thoughts in public and to turn negative energy that complaining entails into a positive – joyful and enjoyable – collective experience. Indeed, Tellervo Kalleinen has claimed that "[p]eople have a lot of complaints, and if they keep them inside, this will cause health problems" and that people have to let these complaints out, in the case of Complaints Choirs through a creative way of complaining. [487] This we can see as echoing the Freudian-based psychotherapeutic tradition according to which the utterance of thoughts and feelings in public, or to other people, enables the subject to "change" or "free" himself or herself.[488]

However, the project *Complaints Choir* focuses on group formation and the collective expression of the choir, not on the individual singers and their reflective activity; the emphasis is on collective acts of enunciation. The individual complaints are turned into vocalisations of the choir so that the spectators cannot know the "originator" of each complaint. Thus, the responsibility for the subject matter of the complaints is also transferred to the

[486] See Bligaard Søby 2009 between mins. 14:28-15:24; Complaints Choir Worldwide, section "choirs", Tab "PICTS" of the Helsinki Choir.
[487] Bligaard Søby 2009 between mins. 02:40-03:00.
[488] See Greenberg 2008, 94; Lewis 2008, 312; Walsh 2013, 15. See also Butler 2005, 50-60; D'Ambrosio 2011, section 6; Nicholson 2008, 47-49; Chapters 2.8, 3.4 and 3.8 of this study.

choir as a group. As a singer, one does not need to present one's complaints alone in the performance – there is no fear of getting embarrassed or criticized for one's complaints as an individual singer in public. In my experience as a member of the Complaints Choir of Vienna, this collective responsibility contributed to creating an easy-going and relaxed atmosphere both in the song composition process and in performance situations.

That is, in the Complaints Choirs, the therapeutic "change" or "freeing" is not only – and not primarily – about making oneself as an individual heard in public but about making the choir as a group, and what it has to say, heard in public. According to Tellervo Kalleinen, "[c]ollectiveness is a value that is not celebrated much in our culture. I personally believe that many people in our society feel uneasy because of the absence of the collective feeling. This topic seems to fuel endless works for me."[489] Indeed, the *Complaints Choir* can be seen as a project that not only offers a way to channel negative feelings but that also aims to bring about "collective feelings" among its participants. Indeed, as Saara Liinamaa puts it, people "voice complaints not only to express personal dissatisfaction, but also to search for agreement – complaining is a social form that tends to seek out agreement rather than tension or conflict (you complain to be agreed with, not to be proven wrong)."[490]

Embodied therapeutic feeling of collectiveness through singing

While singing in the Complaints Choir of Vienna I noticed that an embodied collective experience could arise through the collective singing act, no matter whether I knew my fellow singers personally or not. Through harmony, synchronicity and "contained" expression, the choir participants acted in unison. Each singer lent their body, energy and concentration to have the possibility – for a few minutes at least – of being in the same rhythm with the other singers; we shared a common way of behaving i.e. singing. As a choir singer, one is physically and kinesthetically connected to the other singers, standing next to each other and actively tuning one's voice and movements to those of the others, adjusting to a common rhythm.[491]

Indeed, rhythm is a powerful means to create collective experience and feelings. Raymond Williams has argued that

> rhythm is a way of transmitting a description of experience, in such a way that the experience is re-created in the person receiving it, not merely as an 'abstraction' or an emotion but as a physical effect on the organism – on the blood, on the breathing, on the physical patterns of the brain [--] it is more than a metaphor; it is a physical experience as real as any other.[492]

Wayne Koestenbaum, for his part, has stated that

> [t]he singer, through osmosis, passes through the self's porous membrane and discredits the fiction that bodies are separate, boundaried packages. The singer

[489] Tellervo Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 6.
[490] Liinamaa 2009, 132. See also Complaints Choirs Wordwide, section "faq".
[491] This activity is partly rooted in "mirror neurons". See Hurley 2010, 30; Chapter 2.2 of this study.
[492] Williams 2001, 40-41.

> destroys the division between her body and our own, for her sound enters our system. [--] A singer's voice sets up resonances in the listener's body. First, there are the physiological sensations we call 'hearing'. Second, there are gestures of response with which the listener mimics the singer, expresses physical sympathy, appreciation or exaltation: shudder, gasp, sigh; holding the body motionless, relaxing the shoulders, stiffening the spine. Third, the singer has presence an expressive relation to her body – and presence is contagious. I catch it. The dance of sound waves on the tympanum, and the sigh I exhale in sympathy with the singer, persuade me that I have a body [--].[493]

I believe that the affective "entering" of listening and singing acts can be felt within a choir among the singers too. Koestenbaum's and Williams's descriptions verbalize rather well what I often felt when singing in the Complaints Choir of Vienna and have described above as getting automatically bodily "attuned" to other bodies – with its affirmative and coercive dimensions, through the singing act. While, as Elisabetta Bertolino suggests, "all voices are unique insofar as they spring from different throats"[494] the harmonic singing can strengthen the singers' sense of being a collective.

Tellervo Kalleinen suggests that because, principally, everyone is welcome to send in their complaints to be included in the songs, "the viewers might sense that they themselves could be there singing their complaints with others [--] through this the voyeurism, which is often part of the viewing experience of such works, is changed into a spontaneous feeling of collectiveness."[495] That is, Tellervo Kalleinen suggests that Complaints Choirs may be capable of creating such a feeling not merely among the choir members but also between the choirs and their audiences. While Kalleinen refers to the subject matter i.e. the complaints as the primary bonding "vehicles" between the singers and the viewers and listeners, Koestenbaum's and Williams's accounts suggest that the acts of hearing and feeling singing and rhythms can be also viewed as such vehicles.

That said, in my view the therapeutic dimensions of the *Complaints Choir* are not restricted to "live" collective singing action; acts of watching video documentation of a performance can also evoke bodily and mimical affects in the viewer that are similar to affects that participants and viewers experience at the performance site, as part of the live performance. Indeed, upon viewing the video of the Complaints Choir of Singapore online, I started – automatically – to tap my fingers and stomp my feet to the rhythm of the catchy melody; a certain affective "bond" formed between my body and the choir as a performing

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[493] Koestenbaum 1993, 42, 43. Quoted in Risi 2011, 51, 52. While I am sympathetic towards the idea of singing and listening as vehicle for physical sympathy, I do no agree with Koestenbaum as he claims that a singer's voice "makes me [the listener] a 'me', an interior, by virtue of the fact that I have been entered" (Koestenbaum 1993, 43, quoted in Risi 2011, 51). I find this assumption too simplistic, and bipolar in terms of entering and receiving, and over-emphasizing the power of singing and hearing in the formation of self-consciousness.

[494] Bertolino, Elisabetta (2008): "Beyond ontology and sexual difference: An interview with the Italian feminist philosopher Adriana Cavarero", *Differences*, 19:1,128-167 (131). Quoted in Myers 2011, 62-63.

[495] Tellervo Kochta-Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 7. As planned by Kalleinen and Kochta-Kalleinen, the invitation flyers include instructions about how to send one's complaints to be included in the song even before the first choir rehearsal, as in Birmingham. See Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "do it", link "flyer"; Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "choirs", Helsinki Choir, tab "PICTS".

collective. Moreover, the Complaints Choir website can be seen as a platform in which a "virtual collective" of anyone interested in the project can take form. First, the online viewers and their bodies may become affected by the songs, rhythms and corporeal movements of the choirs they see performing on video. The online viewers can also relate their own complaints and annoyances to those of the choirs they see perform, or vote for their favourite choir performance online. That is, the project website allows anyone, in principle, to take part in the global Complaints Choir "community". The website also includes simple instructions about organising one's own Complaints Choir; thus, anyone can create a collective-forming choir on their own.[496]

Indeed, Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen who grew up in Dresden in the GDR (DDR) considers the Internet to have community-building relevance. Kochta-Kalleinen encountered "community building" on the Internet, after moving to Hamburg, at the time in West Germany (FRG/BRD) where he studied under the guidance of the artist Kurd Alsleben, the developer of the *Netzkunst-Woerter-Buch.*[497] Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen says: "By the end of the 90's you could literally sit and watch web-communities growing in real time. Isn't it revealing how we have to create a new territory, a new space, a virtual world in which community is enabled and supported? If we look into the physical world we encounter blockades and barriers to community everywhere. Consider architecture as an example: why are roofs of houses not used as communal spaces for the tenants for example?"[498]

4.4 Pedagogical Undercurrents in the Complaints Choirs

Community-building and democratic decision-making led by the artists

The focus of the *Complaints Choir* project is on the group, on the "working together".[499] The choirs bring individuals who do not necessarily know each other beforehand together and, through the song composition process, rehearsals and performances they become a collective gathered around choir singing. Thus, Complaints Choirs can be seen to be tryouts for, and to engage their participants in an experimental community-building process. As a concept, *Complaints Choir* is based on an open invitation policy: the participants first get involved "through a response to an offer, for instance an invitation to a workshop."[500] However, as a concept, *Complaints Choir* does not rely on any "target group" thinking or demographic representation; Tellervo Kalleinen says

[496] Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "do it".
[497] See Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 10-11, 36-37.
[498] Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 10-11.
[499] "A choir is a good metaphor for working together because it's not about being a superstar. People just need to try to listen to each other and work together and if they do this they can create something quite powerful" (Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen and Stephansen 2014).
[500] Lene Crone Jensen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 27. See also Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "do it" (10.02.2018).

that, carried out by them, the distribution of the call for participants was not "a cleverly constructed marketing campaign with exact data on target groups etc. Instead it was an improvised distribution of newspaper ads, flyers in neighbourhoods and a wild e-mailing session."[501] The Kalleinens generally distribute the calls for participation "through websites and listservs, in the local weeklies, and on the radio. This call is usually facilitated by local contacts who have knowledge of the city's media outlets."[502]

The Kalleinens employ Harrison Owen's ideas in the participatory projects that are also reflected in the *Complaints Choir*. Having started in business management, Owen has been developing frameworks for participative events in various fields since the 1980s.[503] According to Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen, Owen simply asked what makes a party host a good one and came to the conclusion that a good host "'opens up a space' in which guests can organize themselves."[504] The barriers to this self-organization are often related to "hierarchies and barriers" regarding "power, position, merit, age, knowledge" and so on; according to Kalleinen, "Open Space" is the "simplest and most reduced form that one can think of how people can interact and work together."[505] Tellervo Kalleinen says that one of the fundamental principles of Open Space is that "'[w]hoever comes are the right people'. It sounds simple but is hard to achieve. This approach shifts the focus to the people that actually came to the first meeting or replied to our letter instead of thinking of all those that should have been involved but never made it. In the party analogue it is the same: if you worry about those who did not come, the chances are small that it will be an enjoyable experience."[506]

Indeed, the focus of the *Complaints Choir* project is not on *who* takes part in the project – on the identities of the participants – but on the process of creating a choir, on the fact that there *are* people who want to join the project and be part of the choir. The formal requirements for participants are that they have to be willing to sing complaints together, to rehearse, and to commit to the project timetable. Also, the participants are implicitly assumed to be fluent in reading and speaking the majority language of the city; the advertisement-invitations were written, the composition process was conducted, and the Complaints song was sung in English in Singapore, in Finnish in Helsinki, and in German in Vienna.[507]

The method of choosing the complaints for the Complaints song as suggested by Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kohta-Kalleinen relies on

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[501] Tellervo Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 29. I first read about the Complaints Choir of Vienna from a weekly *Falter* magazine that focuses on arts and culture, urban life in Vienna and political analysis, and primarily caters for readers with political sympathies towards "Leftist" and "Green" thought.

[502] Liinamaa 2009, 129.

[503] See Open Space World, section "Open Space Technology".

[504] Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 30.

[505] Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 30-31.

[506] Tellervo Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 31-32.

[507] See e.g. Bligaard Søby 2009; Complaints Choir of Vienna; Video recording of the rehearsal of the Complaints Choir of Helsinki in Suomenlinna.

democratic principles. First of all, everyone is welcome to suggest complaints to be included in the song even before the first choir rehearsal; the instructions for doing that are given in the invitation flyer.[508] Saara Liinamaa has concisely described the usual song composition process: the artist-initiators "group the submitted complaints into categories. At the first rehearsal, after some warm-up exercises and a group complaint session to generate more ideas, participants then organize into groups, with each group responsible for editing and choosing the specific complaints for each category. [--] Those particularly interested in the lyrics usually work on fine-tuning the entire final text."[509] In Helsinki, the complaints were grouped under twelve categories such as "Neighbours", "Friends", "Machines" and "things one cannot change".[510] More complaints can be gathered in the rehearsals among the participants.[511]

That is, as in Helsinki and Singapore, the participants divided into small "expert teams" around each category to find out which complaints get the most support among them. Each participant can choose which category – and which "expert team" – he/she wants to be involved in. The expert teams are also supposed to make the raw edit of the complaints of a specific category into verses and to present their selection to the others. Then, a professional musician arranges the lyrics together with a few volunteers and finally composes the song.[512] On the Complaints Choir website, there are no suggested guidelines as to dealing with discriminatory, racist or overtly polemical complaints, should such complaints become chosen in the expert groups.[513] According to the composer and conductor of the Helsinki Choir Esko Grundström, first, all singers of the Helsinki Choir selected and discarded complaints in small teams, after which he and the Kalleinens continued the selection work. Grundström has also pointed out that he would not like to compose complaints that are ethically at odds with his values.[514] That is, despite the emphasis of collective decision-making, the artists and especially the composer, can be seen as having the "final say" about the lyrics.[515]

It seems that there was an underlying majority-rule principle at work in the decision-making process at the level of the "expert teams": in Singapore this manifested clearly through the "voting by hands" practice captured in the film by Bligaard Søby.[516] Through the process of selecting the complaints in "expert

[508] See Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "do it", link "flyer"; Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "choirs", Helsinki Choir, tab "PICTS".
[509] Liinamaa 2009, 130.
[510] Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "choirs", Helsinki Choir, tab "PICTS".
[511] See Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "do it".
[512] See Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "do it". See also Bligaard Søby 2009 between mins. 12:54-15:24; Complaints Choir Worldwide, section "choirs", Tab "PICTS" of the "Helsinki" Choir.
[513] For instance, there was at least one discrimitory suggestion presented in the Singapore Complaints workshop documented by Bligaard Søby: "All good-looking guys are gay. Men changing their identity to become women. Fat girls in miniskirts should be against the law" (Bligaard Søby 2009 between mins. 15:10-15:24). These complaints were not included in the song.
[514] See TV program: Helsingin Valituskuoro 21.03.2006.
[515] About the modification of complaints in the Complaints Choir of Chicago (2007) led by the Kalleinens, see Liinamaa 2009, 133.
[516] See Bligaard Søby 2009 between mins. 14:26-15:01.

teams", not everyone's complaints necessarily become included in the song; it was assumed all participants would accept the decisions made by the "expert teams" and everyone could, likewise, also assume that the other participants would accept the decisions made by one's own "expert team". Tellervo Kalleinen has also hinted at popularity – essential to the majority rule principle – as a decision-making criterion in the Helsinki Choir: she said at a rehearsal of the Helsinki Choir that if many participants complain about one and the same issue, that issue should be included in the song.[517]

Pursuing a different policy from that of Kalleinen and Kochta-Kalleinen in Helsinki and Singapore, the artists behind the Complaints Choir of Vienna retained control over the composition of the lyrics of the first Complaints song, *Wien, wir beschwerden Uns!* [Vienna, we are complaining!] in 2010. The initiator Oliver Hangl together with the composer Sir Tralala were in charge of making the lyrics, based on the complaints brought up through the website of the Complaints Choir of Vienna.[518] However, we, the singers as well as the conductor Stephan Foidl, could comment on the lyrics drafts and suggest changes throughout the rehearsal process. Later on, the lyrics of the song were also often slightly modified to include context-specific complaints regarding each performance venue. Further, this long-lasting choir has considerably changed its lyrics-composition policy during the years by involving the singers more intensively in the process from the first song draft onwards.[519]

Training choir skills: voice, concentration, obedience and choreography

While Complaints Choirs do not require their participants to be able to sing, the Complaints songs of Singapore, Helsinki and Vienna sounded rather good to my ears – the singers could sing polyphonically and follow the conductor's instructions.[520] These choirs also employed common voice-opening exercises in their rehearsals. The singers were introduced to and "trained" thoroughly in the choir singing practice; the choirs undoubtedly strived for musically high quality performances. Besides voicing the right words and tones at the right moments, counting bars or pauses, and reading the score or remembering it by heart, it was also essential that each singer learns to be simultaneously highly attentive

[517] See Video recording of the second rehearsal of the Complaints Choir of Helsinki.

[518] Since the beginning, everyone – both Choir members and the general public – has been able to suggest complaints to be included in the Complaints songs through the website of the Vienna Choir, see e.g. Complaints Choir of Vienna website, section "Beschweren", subtab "Unzumutbar". It is mentioned on the Choir website that the local initiator Oliver Hangl edits the complaints together with choir members, see: Complaints Choir of Vienna website. The wish to add complaints to the song during rehearsals is also mentioned in the DIY guidelines on the Complaints Choirs website, see: Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "do it".

[519] During my time as a rather active choir member 2010-2011, I could clearly notice this change myself.

[520] For the invitation instructions, see Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "do it"; Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "faq". For recorded performances, see Video recording of the Complaints Choir of Helsinki; Unedited video recording of the Complaints Choir of Singapore; Video recording of the Complaints Choir of Vienna.
While the Helsinki song video is edited and decidedly presents the "best take" – "Filmings and audio recordings were made at KIASMA theatre. The song was repeated about 10 times to get it perfect" – as it reads on the website, the video nevertheless testifies to the singing skills of the participants. See Complaints Choir Worldwide, section "choirs", Helsinki Choir, tab "PICTS".

towards to their fellow singers, to obediently follow the conductor's instructions and to keep to the physical arrangement – where each singer is placed and how he/she is to move according to a predefined choreography.[521]

The singers of the Complaints Choir of Vienna were also trained at inventing and performing individual "offending" facial and other bodily gestures that were then included in the choreography. Between uniform and harmonic singing parts and short solo sequences, the first song contained a sequence in which all singers performed their gestural insults simultaneously before the audience. However, these insults were never meant to be directed at the audience but, rather, persuasively performed "with" the audience, as humorous attacks on public figures such as the long-term Mayor of Vienna Michael Häupl, and his policies. Also, the singers were trained in synchronised kazooplaying that was employed as an "Intro" for the performance of first Complaints Song in several venues.[522]

The songs of the Complaints Choirs of Helsinki, Vienna and Singapore reiterated features common in "European-American", or "Western" popular music.[523] The songs of the Singapore and Helsinki Complaints Choirs songs were based on a clear verse-chorus structure and they had so-called "intro", "primary bridge" and "transitional bridge" sequences.[524] While having a more complex structure, the first Complaints Song of Vienna included these sequences too and moreover, it employed all of the conventional four vocal registers in classical music: soprano, alto, tenor and bass. The Complaints Song of Singapore, for its part, also employed the extremely popular "twelve-bar blues" form.[525] Thus, the participants of these choirs were rehearsed, and gained experience in singing in the "Western", or "European-American" music tradition.

Attention-raising power, website and open source ethos

The *Complaints Choir* project can be seen as an experiment in creating and documenting "grand" collective actions with and through the singers. Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen suggests that the Complaints Choirs might transform "the energy individuals put into complaining about small things [--] into something

[521] See Bligaard Søby 2009, 16:54-17:23; Video recording of the rehearsal of the Complaints Choir of Helsinki in Suomenlinna. For instance, as the conductor took up a call in the middle of the Helsinki Choir performance as part of the pre-planned theatrical mini-act, the singers covered their heads with their note sheet folders choreographically as if to to express "embarrassment". See Video recording of the Complaints Choir of Helsinki between mins. 02:22-02:36.

[522] See e.g. Video recording of the Complaints Choir of Vienna at MQ between mins. 00:54-01:52.

[523] For the history of the "European-American Stream" in US-American popular music, see Starr and Waterman 2007, 6-9. The term "Western music" refers here to music "produced in Europe as well as those musics derived from the European from ancient times to the present day" (Daniel 2017).

[524] For the definitions of "verse","transitional bridge" (also known as "pre-chorus"), "chorus/refrain", "primary bridge" (also known as "release" or the "C-part"), see e.g. Perricone 2000, 87-90.

[525] The "twelve-bar-blues" is "the standard form of blues song, consisting of three parts that are each four bars long" (Cambridge Dictionary, Definition of "twelve-bar blues").

grand and collective."[526] Tellervo Kalleinen, for her part, refers to choir as "a metaphor for a community where the outcome is more than the sum of its parts."[527] According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the term "grand" can mean, for instance, something that is "large and striking in size, scope, extent, or conception"; something "fine or imposing in appearance or impression"; something "lavish" or "sumptuous"; as well as something "having more importance than others [--]."[528] Indeed, Complaints Choirs can be seen to have "grand" appearance: through their performances, Complaints Choirs highlight the attention-raising power that resides in them as groups of people who have come together for a common singing action and who carry it out in a concentrated way, resolutely and skilfully.

The "grand" appearance becomes strengthened through the clothing policy: the singers of the Helsinki and Singapore Choirs wore mostly dark clothes and held similar sheet holders which minimized the visual individuality of the singers and signalled their apparent "unity". Complaints Choirs show that basically any minor or mundane issue, such as one's tights that slip while one is walking[529], can be made heard and noticed in public when many people, many bodies join together to voice it. The "entering" of the singer's sound into the listener's system as suggested by Wayne Koestenbaum and discussed above, also applies to choir performances in general and Complaints Choir performances in particular.[530] In choir performances, it is not one singer but many singers who "enter" into each others' and the listeners' systems. While, following Elisabetta Bertolino, "all voices are unique insofar as they spring from different throats"[531], in choir singing these unique voices can get a "grand" collective and aural appearance through harmony, even to the extent that the singers appear to "sing as one". The Complaints Choir songs and performances that bring together the heterogeneous complaints and the individual participants who voice those complaints "as one", might indeed be described as creating something "more than the sum of its parts", that is, arousing "more" spectacular, meaningful or "grand" experiences and affects among the participants and listeners than any singular complaint or singer could do alone.

The project website adds to the "grand" appearances and effects of the project, especially when it comes to making the project well-known or "grand" on a global scale. On the website, I am able to compare Complaints Choirs and their performances – their complaints and outfits, and the environments in which the video shooting took place – and, thanks to English translations of the featured Complaints songs, locate similarities and differences between the complaints of singers around the world and compare them to my personal irritations and my own daily living environment. Further, using the D-I-Y choir devising instructions presented on the website, I could start a new choir. As I

[526] Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 12.
[527] Tellervo Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 11-12.
[528] Merriam Webster e-Dictionary, Definition of "grand".
[529] See Video recording of the Complaints Choir of Helsinki, between mins. 2:53-2:56.
[530] Koestenbaum 1993, 42, 43. Quoted in Risi 2011, 51, 52.
[531] Bertolino, Elisabetta (2008): "Beyond ontology and sexual difference: An interview with the Italian feminist philosopher Adriana Cavarero", *Differences*, 19:1,128-167 (131). Quoted in Myers 2011, 62-63.

pointed out above, the project website may extend the possibilities for arousing collective feelings both among the singers, live audiences, and visitors of the Internet website. The featured choir performance videos and photos also contribute to creating an impression of "grand" choirs for Internet viewers in that they offer the viewers edited visual and audio material as well as camera angles and shots that may make some of the choirs seem (even) more impressive than they might appear to be in a live performance situation.[532]

The project website seems well-designed and professionally representative; for me, it has both archival and promotional qualities and I think of it as having been devised for big audiences right from the beginning. The still active Complaints Choir of Vienna, established in 2010 and thereby the longest-running Complaints Choir, has even created its own, visually impressive website with its own custom-made logo – kind of a "brand identity" – an extensive photo section, a section about press and media coverage, and a banner with information about upcoming actions and concerts.[533]

The project promotes the "open source" ethos through the Do-It-Yourself-instructions on the project website, so that it is possible for anyone to create their own Complaints Choir. As Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen puts it, the project "stays dynamic when people take the Complaints Choir as a tool and make use of it in their own context and modify it [--] if you follow the open source philosophy, then we are not in charge of controlling how this process is used."[534] That is, the artists consciously open up the concept for free use, thereby also opening up a horizon of non-predictable outcomes and modifications of the initial project idea, as well as an unlimited lifespan for the project. In my experience, this adds yet another aspect to the "grand" or spectacular dimension of the project.

4.5 Relation to Post-Fordist Labour: Service Provision, Immaterial Labour and Feelings of Collectiveness

In line with post-Fordist work as described by Bojana Kunst, Complaints Choirs operate on expressivity, creativity and employ affects and affectivity.[535] Through the highly affective group singing performances and the song composition process, the Choirs are intended to create "feelings of collectiveness" and affirmative sociality among the singers. Extrovertism, too, plays a part in the project as the singers perform the song in public; however, as a singer in a Complaints Choir, one does not have to perform alone, or to "reveal and topicalize" one's "potential abilities" in the manner of post-Fordist work.[536] Instead, the focus is on the choir as a group, not on the individual singers. That

[532] See Chapter 4.2 in which I briefly discuss my viewing experience of the Video recording of the Complaints Choir of Helsinki.
[533] See Complaints Choir of Vienna.
[534] Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen and Stephansen 2014.
[535] See Kunst 2015, 19, 32, 111-112. See also Chapter 2.8 of this study. For affects, see Chapter 2.1.
[536] Kunst 2015, 30.

is, in Complaints Choirs, affects and extrovertism are not primarily geared towards self-marketing of the individual singers but, instead, they work to create feelings of collectiveness and for making "grand" performances at public sites.

Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen can be viewed as "service providers" as they have brought Harrison Owen's group-building and decision-making techniques and ethos originating in management and business coaching to their projects in the participatory art field. As part of the preparations for their film project *Making of Utopia* (2006) the Kalleinen couple took part in the "Open Space" workshop led by Harrison Owen with twelve Nokia managers.[537] Kochta-Kalleinen says that Open Space was for them a practical tool for working together; "[i]t was my experience that while many people – particularly artists – talked about collaborative practices, they do not have any skills or tools to actually do it."[538] In the *Complaints Choir*, Owen's influence and principles can already be seen in the project's focus on those people who actually came to participate, i.e. "whoever comes are the right people", as well as in the role that the artist-initiators ideally have in the song composition process.[539] The artist-initiators function like good "party hosts" by "opening up a space" in which the choir participants "can organize themselves", that is, the artists set the practical framework for the song composition process and then let the singers take an active role in the process of collectively selecting complaints to be included in the song and co-making the lyrics and thereby connect with each other.[540]

While the project *Complaints Choir* promotes the "open source"[541] ethos, the Kalleinen couple want to retain their author position as the creators of the *Complaints Choir* concept: all Complaints Choirs are advised to openly credit the Kalleinens as the originators of the concept.[542] The *Complaints Choir* can be seen as a "brand" developed by the Kalleinens, strengthened and distributed through the project website.[543] Thus, in Complaints Choirs, the artist-initiators can be seen to function as "managers", both in the song composition process as "hosts", and with regards to the organizational and promotional efforts regarding the project. Broadly taken, they can be viewed as belonging to the "Professional-Managerial Class" in post-Fordist working life and the entrepreneurial creative economy ethos.[544]

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[537] Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 33-36.

[538] Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 38.

[539] See Tellervo Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 31-32. The Kalleinens had acquainted themselves with Owen's ideas as they were organizing the first *Summit of Micronations* in 2003. See Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 30; ibid., 33.

[540] See Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 30-31. See also Tellervo Kalleinen in Bligaard Søby 2009, between mins. 21:01–22:15.

[541] I discuss the open source ethos in Chapter 4.4 of this study.

[542] See Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "do it".

[543] See Liinamaa 2009, 131.

[544] I discuss post-Fordism, creative economy and the "Professional-Managerial Class" in Chapter 2.8.

However, unlike service providers, the Kalleinens do not focus on the identities of the participants or try to find out their individual needs. The *Complaints Choir* project is not intended to operate on any measurable "input-output" logic of assessment; the artists do not talk about any specific "target group" that should be included in the project, nor do they have any quantifiable goals or means to assess the "outcome" of their project.[545] Since the focus of the *Complaints Choir* is not to make the individual participants talk about themselves but to gather and voice complaints as a group, the project does not immediately lend itself to the participative knowledge-transfer ethos between individuals and groups that underlies the creative economy ethos.[546]

That said, through their therapeutic or "soothing" undercurrents that I discussed in the chapter 4.3, Complaints Choirs may, indirectly, contribute to enhancing the participants' productivity in their everyday life and work performance. That is, the choirs may provide their participants with experiences that help them manage and thrive in individualist, hectic and results-oriented capitalist society by offering them "feelings of community"; by training them in collective decision-making practice; and, possibly, by making them feel more energetic, extrovert, creative, innovative and bold through the singing acts. All of these features are appreciated in post-Fordist working life.[547]

Moreover, Complaints Choirs blur the division between "production" and "consumption".[548] While Complaints Choirs depend on the voluntary singers and their input, their names are not easy to find on the project websites.[549] The local initiator-artists receive fame and visibility, and may receive financial remuneration in the form of artist fees through an art institution or a festival that cooperates with them, whereas the choir singers do not get paid for their immaterial[550] labour efforts and input in the project.[551]

4.6 Relation to De-Alienation: Alleviating Urban Loneliness

Complaints Choirs are a predominantly urban phenomenon; the majority of the choirs have taken place in cities.[552] Also, all choirs are named after the localities in which they take place. As Gieseking, Mangold, Katz, Low and Saegert have put it, urban experience can be seen as

[545] See Tellervo Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 29.
[546] For knowledge transfer and creative economy, see Chapter 2.8.
[547] See Kunst 2015, 19, 32, 111-112. See also Harvie 2013, 12-16, 67-72; Chapter 2.8 of this study.
[548] See Alston 2016, 16; Lazzarato 2006, 138; Ridout 2013, 121-124; Chapter 2.8 of this study.
[549] For details about announcing the participants and about authority positions in the project, see Chapter 4.8 of this study.
[550] Lazzarato 2006, 133. See also Ridout 2013, 121-124; Chapter 2.8 of this study.
[551] Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen says that in the projects, they are able to compensate the participants "with a unique experience plus a DVD" (Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 28).
[552] I refer to the Complaints Choirs mentioned on the Complaints Choir website. See Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "choirs"; Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "news".

> diverse and dynamic, changing often with advances in technology, shifts in capital investment, and migrations of people. They are shaped by power and wealth, as well as ingenuity and labor. Urbanity is layered with cultural and social histories, and the demands of day-to-day living. Getting from place to place puts a city dweller in contact with a stimulating variety of people and material conditions. At the same time, these experiences can be exhausting and tend to render the urbanite anonymous within the crowd.[553]

Indeed, while many dwellers enjoy the possibility of anonymity in cities, some others may experience it as something negative, as social isolation or loneliness; echoing Jean-Jacques Rousseau's line of thought, cities might be seen as sites that alienate human beings from their supposedly "natural" or "original" nature, sociability and "transparency".[554]

Through their emphasis on encouraging their participants to "connect to each other" and "get friends", Complaints Choirs can be seen as countermeasures to the (supposedly) anonymous and to some people lonely and uprooted city life.[555] Since the choirs are – or should be – based on an open call, in principle anyone is welcome to join the choir. As suggested by the Kalleinen couple, the Complaints Choirs should not have any preconditions for the participants except their will to take part in the project; their ability to come to the rehearsals; and to commit to the project timetable. Furthermore, the website "Complaints Choir Worldwide" – that hosts video documentation and text scores of dozens of choir performances – multiplies both the audience basis of the choirs and their potential to internationally link people who are concerned about similar issues.

4.7 Views about Participants and Community Conveyed by the Complaints Choirs

Reliance on psychological "self" without interest in individual psyches

Due to its therapeutic undercurrents, the *Complaints Choir* project clearly conveys the assumption about a psychological unity: each participant is assumed to be a psychological "self", an individual who can reflectively recognize issues that annoy him or her, formulate complaints concerning these issues, and turn them into positive experiences through the collective song composition process and performances.[556] As to the motivations of the individual participants, Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen states that "[s]ince we don't have any prior relationship with the people who might respond to the invitation – there is no social pressure in play – people can ignore, reject or accept the invitation. But when they accept we are sure they have their own motivation, a

[553] Gieseking, Mangold, Katz, Low and Saegert 2014, 219. See also Etchells 2009, xii-xiv; Harvie 2009, 6; Williams 1985, 34.
[554] For Rousseau's view of "original transparency" and of the juxtaposition between estranging city life and the desirable village life, see Lloyd and Thomas 1998, 35-37; Williams 1985, 34. See also Rousseau 2007. Needless to say, Rousseau's foundationalist and binary premises are not tenable from my perspective.
[555] See Tellervo Kalleinen in Bligaard Søby 2009, between mins. 21:57-22:15.
[556] For psychocentrism and subject assumptions, see Chapters 2.8 and 3.7.

personal agenda which lets them overcome all the little hurdles and which brings them to the first meeting."[557]

However, apart from short "solo sequences" in the performances of the choirs of Helsinki, Singapore and Vienna, the complaints of the individual choir members are voiced in a group performance mode.[558] Complaints Choirs are not meant to delve into the psyches of individual singers or to bring their personal biographies out in the open; while each participant has a motivation to participate, the Kalleinens do not have the need to explicitly find out what these motivations are.

Affirmative non-conflictual communities of city dwellers

Complaints Choirs are based on a highly affirmative ethos concerning the goal of turning negative feelings into collective positive activity; being decidedly open and welcoming for anyone interested in the project; and counteracting (the assumed) loneliness experienced by the singers by forging "friendly" contacts among them. Tellervo Kalleinen's characterization of Complaints Choirs as "communities in time" connotes to affirmative action too.[559] Although it is, historically, a complex term, "community", when used in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, arouses strongly positive and affirmative connotations, as Raymond Williams has stated.[560] Similarly, following George Yúdice, the term also evokes affirmative connotations of "unmediated" relationships that are "stronger and deeper" than "contractual associations of individuals [--]."[561]

All Complaints Choirs bear the name of the city or locality in which they were realized, and on the project website it is stated that the initiators of each choir should invite "all citizens of a city" to complaint.[562] The specific cities can be seen as the formal predefined "binding elements" for each choir; broadly taken, each choir positions the participants – many of whom presumably live or work in the particular city – as representatives of the dwellers of the city and

[557] Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 27.

[558] There were short solo sequences in all Complaints Choir performances that I analyse in this study: e.g. in the Complaints Choir of Helsinki by Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen; in the Complaints Choir of Singapore by a female and a male singer; and in the Complaints Song *Wien, wir beschweren Uns!* performance by the Complaints Choir of Vienna at the Museumsquartier by the initiator Oliver Hangl. See: Video recording of the Complaints Choir of Helsinki between mins. 04:05-4:11; Unedited video recording of the Complaints Choir of Singapore between mins. 05:29-06:40; Video recording of the Complaints Choir of Vienna at MQ, between mins. 04:06-04:17. The Complaints Choir of Vienna has included solo parts in most of their subsequent songs too. It is not stated anywhere whether the solo interjections were originally brought up by the individuals who voiced them in the performance; there may not be any personal link between the complaints and those individuals.

[559] Tellervo Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 11.

[560] Williams 1985, 76. See also Chapter 2.8. of this study.

[561] See Yúdice 2005, 51. This assumption is rooted in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's thinking, see Lloyd and Thomas 1998, 35-37; Rousseau 2007; Williams 1985, 34.

[562] Complaints Choir website, section "FAQ", subsection "How does a Complaints Choir come into existence?".

their complaints.[563] Indeed, themes such as city planning policy and public transport were prominent in the songs of the Complaints Choirs of Helsinki, Singapore, and Vienna.[564]

Tellervo Kalleinen also talks about the possibility of a "spontaneous feeling of collectiveness" among viewers of a Complaints Choir performance; that is, the spectators are portrayed as potential "allies" of the singers, not as addressees of aggressive protest action.[565] While the subject matter of the choirs – the complaints – could offer potential for conflictual and aggressive stagings, both the song composition process and the performances rely on positive collaboration and harmony. Thus, the *Complaints Choirs* project does not have "friction" as a goal, not even when it comes to temporary performance-interventions on public sites. The *Complaints Choir* is not geared towards staging dissonance or chaos but it relies on a "smooth", supportive, non-conflictual action and atmosphere among the choir singers and viewers.

Features of ideal participation in the Complaints Choirs

While Complaints Choirs rely on an open access policy and the motto "whoever comes are the right people"[566], based on my findings it is possible to locate features that make up a desired way of participating, and by extension, an ideal form of participation conveyed by the project. The ideal spectator-participant of a Complaints Choir would seek affirmative and harmonious collective action and be troubled by specific complaints that he or she can verbalize and that he wants to voice and share with others. He would be willing to act synchronically, "in the same rhythm" with the other singers during the performances; conform to the predefined way of behaving, standing next to each other and actively attuning one's voice and movements to those of the others according to the score and choreography led by the conductor. The ideal spectator-participant would also accept the song-composition method envisioned and ultimately controlled by the artists and initiators, and be happy to be part of the project without financial remuneration. Furthermore, he would be willing to and capable of communicating in the majority language spoken in the city. He would also not wish to stage any kind of intra-choral conflicts in the performances but participate affirmatively and govern his or her conduct according to the codes of conduct set by the Kalleinens or the local initiator.

[563] I discuss the representative and demographic undertones of the Complaints Choirs in Chapter 4.8.

[564] The complete lyrics of the Complaints Songs of Singapore, Helsinki and Vienna can be found on the project website (Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "choirs", tab "TEXT" below each Choir).

[565] Tellervo Kochta-Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 7.

[566] Tellervo Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 31-32.

4.8 Exclusions and Limitations of the Complaints Choirs

Spectacular and uniform performances risk proto-totalitarian dynamic

As I have pointed out, Complaints Choirs do not stage dissonances; instead, they present themselves as commensurable, ordered, and contained units, conveying an impression of inner coherence and unity. The harmonic scores and choreographies highlight the group as a "whole" and push, in my experience, the individuality of each singer into the background.[567] Also, where the subject matter – that is, the different complaints – of the songs is heterogeneous, the performances in which the subject matter is presented are based on synchronicity and homogeneity. While the choirs may have spectacular force in their making visible of the attention-raising power of a group of bodies gathered together – or "something grand and collective"[568] and "something more than the sum of its parts"[569] – they can also be seen as embodying uniformity and subtly coercive consensus. Indeed, as a member of the Complaints Choir of Vienna, I sometimes felt the energetic yet contained and homogeneous mode of performing as disturbingly immersive and, at times, even suffocating.

On one hand, the energetic, immersive, homogeneous and "grand" collective singing in the Complaints Choirs can be experienced as affirmative action to create collective feelings and a fleeting "whole" for the singers in which to participate and become immersed. On the other hand, the contained and homogeneous mode of performing can cause uneasy feelings in some of the singers. In light of the history of choir singing, and fuelled by the at times slightly disturbing experiences I had as a singer of the Complaints Choir of Vienna, I suggest that the Choirs can also be seen as reminiscent of the use of choir in early 20th century political movements in Europe both on the totalitarian Right and on the Left to represent the community and manifest its unity, vitality and power. For instance, for the Fascist movement in Italy from the 1920s to the 1940s, "*art of human movement and group gathering"* and "*great choral celebrations*"[570] on public places in cities were essential as a tool to manifest the (alleged) unity and mass power of the (alleged) people.[571] Also

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[567] Tellervo Kalleinen says that they "film the choir in such a way as to try and draw portraits of the individual members as distinct 'characters', and to show their different expressions and emotions" (Tellervo Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006 , 12). While I, as a viewer of the videos of the Complaints Choir of Helsinki and Singapore, could also notice individual faces potrayed in close-up shots, my attention was immediately drawn to the "denseness" of the group of bodies standing very close to each other. This focus may have been strengthened by the framing of the shots in which the choir could not be seen as a whole but "continued" beyong the frames of the camera lens, as in the Video of the Complaints Choir of Helsinki. See also Chapter 4.2.

[568] Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 12.

[569] Tellervo Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 11-12.

[570] Gentile 1996, 76. The quotes, which are from the article "Le opinioni degli altri sul fascismo", appeared in the newspaper *Il popolo d'Italia* on 5 May 1922 that Gentile has translated into English. Italics in the original.

[571] See Gentile 1996, 76-79. See also Falasca-Zamponi 1997, 4-5, 17; Gentile 1990, 242; Gentile and Mallett 2000, 20.

the National Socialists in Germany employed collective movement choirs as well as speech choirs in their venues to represent the (alleged) German "Volksgemeinschaft" (People's community) and unity.[572]

In the German labour movement through the 1910s until the 1930s, choirs were part of the "Arbeiter-Massenspiel" (plays for the working masses) and community-building efforts of working-class festival celebrations in which, according to Matthias Warstat, they "were to be regarded as 'representatives of the masses' and seen as a model of solidarity, unity and vitality by the audience at the representative function."[573] The performances of Complaints Choirs can also be seen as bearing resemblance to the Communist "Political singing movement" (poliittinen laululiike) in Finland in the 1960s and the 1970s, which embodied the Leftist agit prop tradition by presenting openly politically-motivated and agitative lyrics through songs in which choir formations were a commonplace.[574] Bands such as the quartet Agit Prop were closely attributed to the radical Marxist-Leninist "class reform" Militancy movement [Taistolaisuus] that, according to Andrew Nestingten, "attacked the parliamentarian compromises of the Finnish Communist Party and sought to reinvigorate proletarian internationalism and commitment to Marxist-Leninist dogma as promulgated by Moscow."[575]

While it would be extremely far-fetched to link the *Complaints Choir* directly to the aforementioned histories – the Kalleinens emphasize that the Complaints Choirs are neither meant to create any political programme or agenda, nor to be "agit prop" choirs of any kind[576] – Complaints Choirs, like choirs in the service of totalitarian ideologies, can nevertheless be viewed as operating on ideas such as the community; collective expression; affirmation; as well as impressive appearances within a framework, that is, choir form that is based on obedience, uniformity and the idea of a clear-cut "whole".

Following this line of thought, the desired "grand" effects of Complaints Choirs can be seen as spectacular events. The term "spectacle" refers to that which, having a "'striking or unusual character,' exceeds the normative or habitual character of visual experience [and that] implies an organization of appearances that are simultaneously enticing, deceptive, distracting, and superficial [--]."[577] Thus, the attention-catching power of the Complaints Choirs can be viewed as being mere surface, aesthetic wonder or pleasure that, to echo Walter Benjamin's famous formulation of Fascism[578], allows the singers to

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[572] After Joseph Goebbels' withdrawal of Rudolf von Laban's mass choreography *Tauwind und der neuen Freude* from the side programme of the Berlin Olympics in 1936 presumably on the grounds of the lack of synchronicity, the use and function of Nazi choirs were changed into a more monumental, ornamental and abstract practice. See Annuß 2011, 138-140, 142-144.

[573] Warstat 2005, 269. However, Warstat points out that there were also critical voices among the labour educational activists who warned "that the people's play encouraged the development of an over-sentimental, romantically harmonized community spirit" (ibid., 271). See also ibid., 166-169.

[574] E.g. Koiton laulu, KOM-teatteri, and Agit Prop used choir formation and practice in their music and performances.

[575] Nestingten 2013, 65-66.

[576] Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "faq".

[577] Crary 2005, 335. See also Debord 1995, 16; Harvie 2013, 42.

[578] Benjamin argued in 1935 that "Fascism attempts to organize the newly created proletarian masses without affecting the property structure which the masses strive to eliminate. Fascism

"express themselves" by creating "feelings of community"; by emulating the appearance of a "protest rally"; and by "letting one's steam off" without, however, offering them actual possibilities for changing the state of affairs. The *Complaints Choir* project might be seen to function as a "channel" for the singers to bring up and experience collectiveness but, in a similar way to the Fascist logic formulated by Walter Benjamin, the project does not aim to change the relations of production in capitalist society that, for instance, "sidelines people because they are of no use in the production cycle", as the Kalleinens themselves put it.[579]

Participation requires cultural competence and singing and language skills

Complaining is a rather accessible theme for a participatory art project, as "most people recognize what it means to complain."[580] One does not need be an art connoisseur to understand the idea of the *Complaints Choir*; complaining is a popular theme. Thus, complaining may function as a way to engage various people from various backgrounds interested and involved in the project. However, in order to take part in the choir, one is has to be positive about art and participative art projects, and to want to sing in that choir. In Bourdieu's thought, both the appreciation of art and of choir singing, the music traditions and styles reiterated by these choirs, as well as choir singing body techniques and skills, are predispositions acquired culturally and socially.[581] Choir singing – and the ability to read notation and scores – is a culturally learned skill that not everyone is familiar with. That is, the choirs may have intrinsically and unintentionally favoured participants possessing much cultural capital, leading to the stark representation of well-educated participants and to exclusiveness regarding the sociocultural backgrounds of potential participants.[582]

As I have suggested in Chapter 2.1, our daily experiences inform the parameters of our world-views and our ethical and social standpoints. Thus, also the complaints of the singers in the Complaints Choirs of Helsinki, Vienna and Singapore are rooted in, and reflect, their everyday experiences. All of the Complaints songs were performed, and the composition process was conducted in the official language: in Helsinki in Finnish; in Vienna in German; and in Singapore in English, one of the four official languages. Apart from the short solo sequence of Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen in the Complaints song of Helsinki – he shouts "and the Finnish language is bloody difficult to learn!"[583] in a megaphone – none of the songs thematized language-related complaints or

sees its salvation in giving these masses not their right, but instead a chance to express themselves [--] Fascism seeks to give them an expression while preserving property. The logical result of fascism is the introduction of aesthetics into political life" (Benjamin 2007, 241).

[579] Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "faq".

[580] Lene Crone Jensen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 6.

[581] See Oxford Reference, Definition of "cultural capital". See also Bourdieu 1984, 13-19, 22-23, 66-67, 114; Jeannotte 2003, 38; Chapter 2.3 of this study.

[582] Tellervo Kalleinen herself says that "we have observed that it's the more educated people that take part more than others" and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen, for his part, points out: "And more women than men. Women between 40 and 60 who are interested in culture are the most common participants" (Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen and Stephansen 2014).

[583] Video recording of the Complaints Choir of Helsinki, between mins. 04:06-04:12.

problems. I was also surprised to notice that neither the Complaints song of Helsinki, Singapore, nor Vienna, included complaints about racism or intolerance. This and the absence of language-related complaints may also be partly due to the backgrounds of the participants many of whom were likely to have good command of the language used; as well as a high sociocultural capital and position in the society in which issues such as racism are not present at a day-to-day, personal level. It has to be noted that addressing racism – and religion, for that matter – in public is prohibited in Singapore and thus a major reason for the Singapore Choir not to include these topics in their song.[584]

It might be said that, in order to participate in a Complaints Choir, one has had to understand the official language used, be willing to train for songs based on specific Western musical traditions, and, obviously, have time to take part in the rehearsals and the possibility of travelling to the rehearsal location.

The Complaints Choirs of Helsinki and Singapore took place just weeks before the performances, whereas the Complaints Choir of Vienna, established in 2010, has become a long-lasting project with a rather fixed choir body. While the original concept ethos was to be as inclusive as possible, the Complaints Choir of Vienna has turned into a musically ambitious and versatile choir that pays much attention to the members' singing skills and follows a rather rigorous training ethos under professional choir-leader supervision.[585] Through this "up-skilling" of the Vienna Choir, the original idea of the Kalleinens to simply gather interested people together, form a community, and offer a platform to speak out in a humorous way may become compromised. Furthermore, as implied above, due to its ambitious training the Vienna Choir may also have mainly attracted participants with much cultural capital.

Potentially exclusionary authority position of the artists

In Complaints Choirs, professional artists are in charge of composing the song and of fine-tuning the lyrics. In Helsinki, the Kalleinens worked with the professional musician Otto Grundström; in Singapore with Chong Wai Lun; and the local initiator and media artist Oliver Hangl and the conductor and composer Stefan Foidl were the *primus motor* and main agents of the Complaints Choir of Vienna. That is, even though the initiators and organizers of these Choirs functioned as "hosts", making room for the choir group to be active, the song composition process still emphasized the artists' authority position and input. On the website of the Complaints Choir of Vienna, Oliver Hangl is even announced as the author of the song lyrics of the first complaints song.[586]

Furthermore, in the video of the Helsinki Complaints Choir, Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen shouted in a loudspeaker: "and the Finnish language is bloody difficult to learn!"[587] On one hand, it was logical that this complaint was voiced by a non-native Finnish speaker but it can also be seen as manifesting the

[584] One of the Singapore Choir singers states this in Bligaard Søby 2009, between 39:22-39:40.
[585] The songs of the Complaints Choir of Vienna draw on various sources ranging from Wiener Walz and Wienerlied to Pop and contemporary electronic music. See Complaints Choir of Vienna.
[586] Complaints Choir of Vienna, section "Medien", sub-headline "Musik".
[587] Video recording of the Complaints Choir of Helsinki, between mins. 04:06-04:12.

special position that the artists had in the project; he, the artist, received some time "in the limelight" of his own, unlike most of the singers. Also the composer and conductor Esko Grundström had a short theatrical solo sequence as part of the performance. Similarly, Oliver Hangl had a short solo part in the first Complaints Song of Vienna, lamenting the death of the 1980s Austrian pop superstar Falco. However, in the Singapore Complaints song and in the following songs of the Vienna Choir, "ordinary" singers have also had major solo parts.[588]

While the voluntary singers are a precondition of Complaints Choirs, their names are not easy to find online; the bodily input of the singers seems to matter more than their names. Instead, the choirs are identified with initiators, that is, with Tellervo Kalleinen and Kochta-Kalleinen in Helsinki and Singapore, and with Oliver Hangl in Vienna. On the "Complaints Choirs Worldwide" website, the singers of the Helsinki and Singapore Complaints Choirs are listed in a popup window that only opens when the visitor clicks the tab "Text" below each Complaints Choir video but their names are not listed on the main site that solely names the "art professionals": the "Organizer" and the "Composer" of each Complaints Choir. On the main page of the Complaints Choir of Vienna website, the initiator Oliver Hangl is clearly evident whereas the current choir participants are only to be found through a hyperlink "Und: Der Chor sind wir" [And: we are the Choir], as well as on the page "Mitmachen" [Participate].[589] Also, the Kalleinens wish each Complaints Choir to openly announce the originators of the concept in public, thereby strengthening their authority position.[590] That is, the *Complaints Choir* project may potentially alienate or exclude people who would be interested in such a participatory project but who do not agree with the authority position of the professional artists and the compromised democratic song composition process linked with it.

Performances on public sites impose a spectatorial position on passers-by

Tellervo Kalleinen has suggested that Complaints Choir performances can bring about a "spontaneous feeling of collectiveness" between the singers and the viewers.[591] However, had I passed through the entrance hall of the Helsinki Railway Station during the live performance of the Complaints Choir of Helsinki – stressed and in a hurry, speaking into my mobile phone, wishing to walk through the station as fast as possible without any auditive or spatial disruptions, I might have found the performance annoying.[592] Complaints Choir

[588] See: Video recording of the Complaints Choir of Helsinki between mins. 02:22–02:36 and 04:06-4:12; Unedited video recording of the Complaints Choir of Singapore between mins. 05:29-06:40; Video recording of the Complaints Choir of Vienna at MQ between mins. 04:04-04:14; Complaints Choir of Vienna (Wiener Beschwerdechor) website, section "Medien".

[589] See Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "choirs"; Complaints Choir of Vienna; Complaints Choir of Vienna, section "Mitmachen".

[590] Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "do it". The names of Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kallenen do, however, not appear on website of the Complaints Choir of Vienna that only includes a hyperlink to the Complaints Choir Worldwide website. See Complaints Choir of Vienna.

[591] Tellervo Kochta-Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 7. See also Chapter 4.3.

[592] See Video recording of the Complaints Choir of Helsinki.

performances with their attention-drawing loud singing and their potentially route-blocking spatial formation, can be experienced as unwished-for annoyances that force a spectatorial position on the by-passers, whether they want it or not. Indeed, Kalleinen's belief in the affirmative power of the *Complaints Choir* project – that the spectator-participants would sympathetically relate to the singers and complaints voiced out – can be viewed as slightly naïve.[593]

Confusing and potentially exclusionary references to demographic representation

All Complaints Choirs are named after the localities in which they take place, and the project website states that the initiators of each choir should invite "all citizens of a particular city" to complain.[594] Indeed, cities lend the choirs the primary attribute on which they can be identified online and in public. Cities can also be seen to function as the lowest common denominator for each choir group that brings – potentially heterogeneous – participants together within the frames of the project.

The term "citizen" refers to people who have the right to live and practice their profession in a city or in a nation-state; to individuals who are recognized by the city or state authorities, who belong and obey the city legislation and who are able to vote, that is, in Jacques Rancière's terms, people who are "taken into the count" of the whole. Along this line of thought, the *Complaints Choir* can be seen to primarily address individuals who are granted the right and the status of an "accepted", "proper" and "welcomed" inhabitant of the city, thereby excluding illegal immigrants and other people who do not "count" as full members of the city or society.[595]

That is, the *Complaints Choir* project might be seen to primarily address people "within" the socio-bureaucratic order of the city or state that is based on representation and representative democracy. The use of recognized majority languages in the Complaints Choirs of Helsinki, Vienna and Singapore can be seen as symptomatic of such thinking: these choirs seemed to operate on the assumption that all participants manage to communicate in the majority language. Thus, the choirs may have appeared more welcoming and attractive for people with much cultural capital than for individuals speaking minority languages and other minorities with potentially precarious living conditions.

The *Complaints Choir* project has been criticized for its participants not being "representative of the social texture of the respective cities."[596] From such a perspective, Complaints Choirs are thought to function as groups that strive to include *all* the inhabitants, or representatives of different identities and interest

[593] I discuss the potentially productive dimensions of the attention-drawing power of Complaints Choir performances at public sites in Chapter 4.9.
[594] Complaints Choir website, section "faq", subsection "How does a Complaints Choir come into existence?".
[595] See Corcoran 2010, 11; Rancière 2010, 31-32, 152; Rancière 2008a, 31-32. See also Appiah 2006, xiv-xv; Donald 2005, 32-35; Harvie 2009, 76-77; Rancière 2011a, 3; Rockhill 2004a, 3-4; Turner 2005, 29-32; Žižek 2004, 71-77.
[596] Tellervo Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 28-29.

groups of the city, in order to voice their concerns and demands in public.[597] While Complaints Choirs, as envisioned by the Kalleinens, do not strive towards an all-encompassing demographical representation, the aforementioned accusation is comprehensible: through the naming of the choirs and through the use of the specific word "citizen", the choirs can be seen to have a demographic representative function. Each choir can be seen as a city "constituency" and to function like a "parliament" whose members decide by voting which complaints – suggested by the public i.e. the active co-citizens and by the choir singers themselves – will be included in the Complaints song, based on an underlying majority rule principle as outlined in the chapter 4.4. The songs, then, can be viewed as demographically representative of the complaints of the citizens of the cities. Indeed, the Complaints Choir of Singapore even composed their song at the former Parliamentary Chamber of the Old Parliamentary House, thus strengthening the association with demographic representation.[598] Also Tellervo Kalleinen has hinted at the logic of demographic representation in a rehearsal of the Complaints Choir of Helsinki in 2006: she asked for 20 volunteers to feature in the upcoming cultural TV program "K-Rappu" and noted that, should there be too many volunteers, the selection would be based on representativity and "quotas" as to gender, age, and variety of personalities.[599]

To sum up, the use of the city as the main attribute of the Complaints Choirs and as the lowest common denominator of the members of each choir, may have appeared as alienating from the perspective of individuals living as not-fully-recognized members of society in precarious situations; it may have contributed to the potentially exclusive use of the majority language; and it may have caused confusion as to the demographic representativeness of the Choirs and as to the ethos behind the *Complaints Choir*s project.

Above, I have outlined possible exclusions and critique of the *Complaints Choir* project. However, the project can open up vital positive horizons for change that I discuss in the following chapter.

4.9 Horizons of Change Opened Up by the Complaints Choirs

Political relevance of voicing mundane complaints as a choir at public sites

Complaints Choirs do not perform their songs solely in institutional art spaces but also on public sites such as squares, street corners, and, as the Complaints Choir of Helsinki, at the Central Railway Station. In such places, the complaints will also be heard by people who just happen to be there, for instance by commuters on their daily route to or from work. At public sites, the complaints that the choirs voice are also likely to reach a much broader audience –

[597] About the connection between demographic representation and the legitimacy of complaints in the Copmlaints Choir of Chicago (2008), see Liinamaa 2009, 136 (endnote 8).
[598] The Old Parliamentary House of Singapore was in use until 1999 and reopened as an arts and heritage centre in 2004. See Chang 2007, 71; The Arts House Singapore, section "Venues".
[599] See Video recording of the second rehearsal of the Complaints Choir.

including people who do not visit art events – than in dedicated art spaces and institutions. Complaints Choirs bring the attention-raising power that resides in them – as gatherings of people singing in a pre-planned formation at public sites – to the fore; they can make any issue visible and audible through their song, through the group that concentrates their energies on the same action. In addition, performing as a kinesthetic singing group at public sites such as the railway station in Helsinki, the choirs break with the normative body techniques associated with behaviour in such functional places: going efficiently from place A to place B; doing one's shopping; or consuming one's coffee without disturbing one's fellow passers-by and travellers.[600] Thus, the choirs can be seen to disturb "the way in which bodies fit their functions and destinations" that Jacques Rancière sees as a precondition for the political effects of aesthetic experiences.[601] Indeed, I view this as a way to make "breaches" in the distribution of the sensible through participatory performance.

Contrary to the impressive appearance that I felt the choirs had in performance situations, many of the complaints sung were mundane in subject matter. According to my approach and analytical framework, even those complaints that might not have any agenda-based political content as such, are still connected to the parameters of "political issues". Namely, if our world-views and our ethical and social standpoints are based on the particular distribution of the sensible we are part of, it follows that what we encounter in our daily life within that particular distribution of the sensible, including the minor annoyances, crucially contributes to what appears to us as problems to be solved or corrected, often through formal politics. Complaints Choirs also make such issues sensible and audible.

For instance, the complaint about the pee smell in the tram expressed in the Helsinki Complaints song might lead the listener to reflect and ponder on it and its connotations and contexts: to whom is this kind of complaints worth expressing in public? What are the reasons for the smell in the tram? Aren't there enough cleaners? Or might the smell come from homeless tram passengers addicted to alcohol or drugs? Why are there homeless people in one of the world's richest cities and states?

That is, minor everyday complaints can be symptomatic of, and trigger us to ponder on larger questions about organizing life and power relations in a city and a society. The choirs also point to the heterogeneity of everyday experiences through the mixing of various complaints – mundane, small and directly political – and staging them in public. These complaints bring about, or make visible, the heterogeneity of issues that the singers, most of whom live in the same city or region, feel are problematic or negative and makes it possible to locate both differences and shared experiences, worries and interests among them.

Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen hint at such an understanding of the proto-political relevance of "mundane" and personal

[600] See e.g. Choudhary and Pipralia 2017.
[601] Rancière 2008b, 11.

complaints, that is, their relevance and links to structural societal problems. On the project website it is stated that

> Complaints Choirs are not intended as protest choirs or an agit-prop revival. The political complaint is only representing a small margin of the wonderful world of complaints. Why should such important issues as broken underpants, boring dreams or spying neighbors be excluded? On the other hand the private, the personal, can be very political at the same time. If somebody complaints 'I have too much time!' it can be seen just as a personal tragedy, but it also points to a major defect of the capitalistic society, which sidelines people because they are of no use in the production cycle.[602]

The Kalleinens point to the relation between the "personal" and the "political", thus alluding to the "second-wave" feminist ethos and the motto "the personal is political" that underlies Lois Weaver's practice and her *What Tammy Needs to Know* performances.[603] Instead of formulating any thematically or rhetorically coherent political programmes, the choirs can be seen as offering a platform for making a multiplicity of different complaints based on mundane and personal experiences visible and audible in the public space that, in Rancière's line of thought, may affect the ways we encounter and sense reality around us, including our conceptions about what is "worth" addressing and complaining about in public. While being reluctant to link the Complaints Choirs to any protest tradition, Kalleinen and Kochta-Kalleinen do believe in the political potential of complaining: "behind most of the complaints there is an idea or a belief or a value that a person is committed to. Complaints have therefore inbuilt the potential of being a transformative power."[604] Indeed, Complaints Choirs may empower and encourage their participants to reflect on negative issues of personal importance in their daily life and voice them publicly as part of the choir group. The singers also have the possibility of remaining partially anonymous since the listeners of the song performances do not know the "originator" of each complaint.

The non-thematic mixing of complaints in the Complaints songs – that is, putting completely different kinds of annoyances to follow each other in the lyrics – often creates surprising and funny combinations and thus lends a humorous undertone to the songs. As Selvaraj Velayutham suggests in his article about everyday dissent in Singapore, complaining and the use of humour can be seen as an "indirect and ambiguous means of expressing dissatisfaction [--] in that, while they do not directly challenge authority or the social order, their persistence constantly calls into question the status quo."[605] Indeed, contents rooted in everyday experience, the humorous "patchwork"-like lyrics, and the choral form of presentation in Complaints Choirs may disrupt the common public forms of critical and political debate and what is understood as "political speech" – such as political rallies, professional politicians' public speeches, and topical TV debates – that are often based on thematic rationality,

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[602] Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "faq". For Kalleinen and Kochta-Kalleinen, "it is important not to present the project as a 'protest choir,' as this would change the character and dynamic of sociability and risk becoming more exclusionary and less thought-provoking, in addition to causing more internal tension" (Liinamaa 2009, 137, endnote 15).
[603] See Chapter 3.9. See also Heddon 2008, 161.
[604] Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "faq".
[605] Velayutham 2009, 95.

clarity and coherence, abstraction, and professionalism as to who speaks, in which setting, and how.

In the following subchapters, I suggest that the complaints may function as a springboard for long-lasting collective protest and community-building activity linked, especially, to the right to free speech, interventions at public sites, and of voicing resistance.

Internet presence: potential for distribution, networking, initiating choirs and fighting censorship

The Internet presence of the *Complaints Choir* project extends the potential audience basis of the performances, as well as the project's potential relation-network. While the choirs are local, in principle anyone anywhere with an Internet access can watch the performances on the Internet. For instance, the publics of the Complaints Choir of Helsinki were multiple: on one hand, there were the people who – intentionally or by chance – saw the choir performing at the Central Railway Station in Helsinki and outdoors, on the Senate Square, and on the seashore. Furthermore, an edited sample video clip of the Helsinki song portraying the choir performing in the places listed above can still, after more than ten years, be viewed anytime on the Internet, both through the "Complaints Choir Worldwide" website and on Youtube.

As I have suggested in Chapters 1.3 and 2.9, "mediated" acts of encountering a performance, of which the online viewing act is an example, are also capable of forming relations between the viewer and the choir. The performance videos can convey – and strengthen – the affective potential of the choirs. For instance, while watching the video about the Complaints Choir of Helsinki I experienced a sense of "impressiveness" or "mass power" in such a way that I might not have experienced had I seen the performances "live" at the performance site; online I can re-view the performance of the Complaints Choir of Helsinki as many times as I want to, and notice details such as people's faces, selected by the camera lens that people in the live performance situation probably could not discern.[606]

The uploaded performance videos on the Internet makes it possible for any given choir member and for any spectators of a given locality to easily encounter complaints, group choreographies, music styles, and also landscapes of other localities and cities that have had a Complaints Choir. The viewers can reflect on their lives – especially the everyday life experiences from which the complaints originate – to those of the choir singers in other parts of the world. While the video clips of the choir performances are edited and they portray staged performance situations not everyday life situations, they can nevertheless convey to the possibly geographically-distant online viewers some aspects of the singers' lives in the locality.

The project website "Complaints Choir Worldwide" hosts video documentation and text scores of dozens of performances as well as specifications as to the choirs and the dates of their performances, everything structured neatly and clearly, as if in a virtual archive. Thus, the website can be seen to function as a site through which the "genre memory", a project archive, of the *Complaints Choir* as an artistic project, has started to evolve. This archive

[606] See Video recording of the Complaints Choir of Helsinki between mins. 00:51-02:29.

shows the site visitor differences and similarities between the choirs from different cities and different parts of the world. It might even be said that the *Complaints Choir* project has given rise to a sub-genre of choir singing, with its own "canon", that is, the documented performances of Complaints Choirs around the world.

Each specific choir can be viewed as a sample of the framework or "format" called *Complaints Choir*. While the idea of a temporary collective based on singing complaints can be seen as the globally relevant topic of the project, the actual complaints primarily serve as the "locational" aspect, rendering the annoying issues visible that were or are relevant to the local complainers. As Saara Liinamaa claims, "the complaints format allows for a unique comparative study of urban life, one that does not hold to rigid categorizations but takes the play and performance of complaining to make possible a distinct analysis of urban experience in different cities."[607]

Through the project website and the Internet presence, the *Complaints Choir* project can be seen as having an international character. The website also directly relates to the idea and possibility of creating communities: the Internet presence of Complaints Choirs multiplies the possibilities for sharing negative experiences – or making them seen and visible – to people living in different parts of the world. Although I view videos of Complaints Choir performances alone, the virtual dimension of the Internet makes it possible for me to imagine – and to connect – my thoughts and feelings to a rather undefined or open community. Furthermore, the website that hosts video documentation and English translations of the text scores of multiple Complaints Choir performances multiplies both the audience basis of the choirs and their potential to link people who are concerned about similar issues beyond the frames of national and local politics.

Indeed, following the "open source" ethos, one can "bump into" the choir in Youtube, get inspired and establish a new Complaints Choir in one's neighbourhood. The project website even encourages this activity by offering "D-I-Y" (Do It Yourself) instructions and a "faq" (Frequently Asked Questions) page. The *Complaints Choir* does not rely on the identity or presence of the "originator"-artist; there can potentially be an unlimited amount of active Complaints Choirs around the world simultaneously. However, we should bear in mind that the "expanding" effect of the Internet presence of the *Complaints Choir* is mainly limited to those people who have an access to the Internet and who have a command of the English language.[608]

The Internet presence also offers opportunities to combat censorship, as was the case in the Complaints Choir of Singapore. The choir was devised as part of the M1 Singapore Fringe Festival in 2008. The Singapore Complaints song included both mundane complaints about issues such as the weather and answering machines, but also references to the state policies such as the issue

[607] Liinamaa 2009, 130.

[608] Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen points to "community building" on the Internet, indirectly also regarding the *Complaints Choir* in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 10-11.

of freedom of speech.[609] Indeed, Singapore is widely regarded as a state that limits the freedom of speech of its inhabitants and the media.[610] The Singapore state authorities first allowed the project but, one day before the performance was due, ordered that only Singapore citizens would be allowed to sing in the choir "because foreigners might not know why things are done in a certain way in Singapore"[611] and because the lyrics "touched on 'domestic affairs' [--]."[612] That posed a major problem to the choir since six of its members were foreigners, including the conductor Wai Lun from neighbouring Malaysia, and the choir did not want to exclude them.[613] In the end, the choir only held private viewings for "friends" and put live footage as well as an edited performance video on the Internet.[614] At the time of writing of this dissertation, both an edited and an unedited record of the live Singapore Choir performance could be accessed anytime on the Complaints Choir website and on Youtube, where both have been viewed more than one hundred thousand times by July 2019.[615]

Selvaraj Velayutham states that in Singapore that is "a highly regulated and rigid society – driven by a disciplinary and modernistic rationality where the emphasis is on efficiency, cleanliness, orderliness, civility, conformity and obedience – the practices of complaint and humour disrupt the monopoly that the government has over its citizens' lives. Through complaining and humour Singaporeans are engaging with policies and government decision-making processes." [616] The Complaints Choir of Singapore can be seen to have influenced, at least, briefly, the political system: the Singaporean parliament subsequently held a debate about why the local Complaints Choir wasn't allowed.[617] Indeed, as the case of the Complaints Choir of Singapore shows, gathering and performing complaints as a Complaints Choir can have political

[609] The song included the following strophe: "My oh my Singapore / What exactly are we voting for? / What's not expressly permitted / is prohibited". See Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "choirs", tab "TEXT" of the Singapore Choir.

[610] See Velayutham 2009, 92-95. See also Freedom House Report on Singapore; Bligaard Søby 2009 between mins. 34:30-36:20 and 37:14-40:00.

[611] "One day prior to the planned performances, authorities (from our understanding decisions came directly from the Ministry for Information, Communications and the Arts (MICA)) told that they would only issue a license for the public performances if 6 choir members that were not citizens of Singapore would step out of the choir. The argument was that only Singapore citizens are allowed to complain about Singapore, because foreigners might not know why things are done in a certain way in Singapore. This conditional license was a de facto ban of the choir performances, since conductor Wai Lun was a Malysian citizen studying in Singapore, and one just can wonder how the Ministry imagined that a choir performs in a reasonable fashion without its conductor" (Complaints Choir Wordwide, section "choirs", Tab "TEXT" of the Singapore Choir).

[612] Velayutham 2009, 92.

[613] Complaints Choir Wordwide, section "choirs", Tab "TEXT" of the Singapore Choir; Bligaard Søby 2009 between mins. 40:10-42:22; 42:45-43:07; 48:04-49:32.

[614] See Complaints Choir Wordwide, section "choirs", Tab "TEXT" of the Singapore Choir; Bligaard Søby 2009 between mins. 52:10-52:20; Unedited video recording of the Complaints Choir of Singapore; Video recording of the Complaints Choir of Singapore.

[615] See Unedited video recording of the Complaints Choir of Singapore; Video recording of the Complaints Choir of Singapore.

[616] Velayutham 2009, 107.

[617] See Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen and Stephansen 2014.

relevance and it can be interpreted as a potentially destabilizing political threat – and, conversely, as having political power.[618]

Possibility of creating collectives without a "predefined community"

While the *Complaints Choir* concept includes problematic demographical and representational tendencies, and while the choirs may be more welcoming for participants with much cultural capital, they are nevertheless based on the principle of open invitation, not on targeting and including specific groups of people.[619] As the Kalleinens have pointed out, they "don't have any prior relationship with the people who might respond to the invitation", nor do they organize "cleverly constructed marketing campaign[s] with exact data on target groups" to gather participants for the choirs they convene.[620] They also "never ask, 'Who are you? What do you represent?' or try to box people in during rehearsals."[621] That is, everyone is welcome to join the choirs but there is no need to involve representatives from specific groups of people, and the group identity of each choir only takes its form during the song composition and rehearsal process and performance situations. The Complaints Choirs do not claim to be able to include or represent every inhabitant of the city. Neither do they aim to provide any statistically representative overview of the issues that bother the citizens in each city, nor to form programmatical and structured agendas.

Thus, I suggest that *Complaints Choir*s can be seen as shaping a form of participatory art practice that operates on a set of assumptions and goals that crucially differ from participatory projects and theorizing that rely on what I term here as "predefined community". Miwon Kwon argues that "community" in art discourse is often understood as a coherent "group of people identified with each other by a set of common concerns or backgrounds, who are collectively oppressed by the dominant culture, and with whom, in the context of community-based art, artists and agencies seek to establish a collaborative relationship (to address if not to challenge this oppression)."[622]

Such a view of community – like the view of the ideal community as a small-scale harmonious living environment that privileges, in Iris Marion Young's words, "unity over difference, immediacy over mediation, sympathy over recognition of limits of one's understanding of others from their point of

[618] Kalleinen and Kochta-Kalleinen believe that "behind most of the complaints there is an idea or a belief or a value that a person is committed to. Complaints have therefore inbuilt the potential of being a transformative power. The truth about the revolution in East Germany is, that it only happened because a critical mass of people was dissatisfied with and complained about everyday life issues" (Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "faq").

[619] "In your works a group of people is involved primarily through a response to an offer, for instance an invitation to a workshop. This offer doesn't address a specific community but rather a wide cross-section of society" (Lene Crone Jensen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 27).

[620] Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 27; Tellervo Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 29. See also Liinamaa 2009, 129.

[621] Tellervo Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen and Stephansen 2014.

[622] Kwon 2004, 145. Kwon discusses here especially Grant Kester's and Martha Fleming's views of community-based art. See also ibid., 146.

view"[623] – easily leads to an essentializing process in community-based art projects. By this, Miwon Kwon refers to a process in which

> the isolation of a single point of commonality [is used] to define a community—whether a genetic trait, a set of social concerns, or a geographical territory—followed by the engineering of a 'partnership' with an artist who is presumed to share this point of commonality. A logic of transparency based on the presumption of unified subjects guides such programming. The resulting collaborative art project based on this reduced point of identification or affiliation is then presented as conveying the identity of the community itself. Put another way, the identity that is *created* by the art project is viewed as a self-affirming, self-validating 'expression' of a unified community (of which the artist ostensibly is now an integral a part), as if the community or any collective group (or any individual subject) could be fully self-present and able to communicate its self-presence to others with immediacy.[624]

Instead of identifying any specific pre-existing "target group" community or a set of pre-defined issues to tackle through the project, Complaints Choirs make visible and audible the heterogeneity and fragmentariness of complaints and everyday lives of the choir members who are not assumed or required to share common concerns or backgrounds. That is, the choirs are not expressions of any – supposed – already-existing community that would be expected to address its concerns through the song. Instead, the possibly politically-charged subject matter appears in and through details, through the singular complaints that the individual singers bring about. Through the open-access policy, Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen also eschew the problematic assumption of "delving into" or "becoming part" of such an assumed predefined community as a participatory artist. Indeed, the project *Complaints Choir* does not rely on the presence of the originator-artists but encourages anyone to establish and convene a local Complaints Choir without their participation.[625]

Due to the history and functions of the choirs in Ancient Greek tragedies, the *Complaints Choir* project is prone to be linked to that tradition, as the Kalleinens themselves somewhat humorously do.[626] However, while the Complaints Choirs can also be seen to have a "reflective or a commentary function"[627] in a broad sense, the logic behind the open access policy of the projects crucially differs from the ethos of the Greek choirs. The choruses in Greek tragedies have been associated with demographic and tribal (re)presentation; they have been viewed as civic educational vehicles and linked to military training; and they were composed of representative groups of

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[623] Young, Iris Marion (1990): "The Ideal of Community and the Politics of Difference", in Nicholson, Linda J. (ed.): *Feminism/Postmodernism*, New York: Routledge, 300. Quoted in Kwon 2004, 149. See also Kwon 2004, 147-155.

[624] Kwon 2004, 151. Italics in the original.

[625] See Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "do it". See also Chapter 4.4 of this study.

[626] "IN ANCIENT GREECE, THE CHORUS HAD A REFLECTIVE OR A COMMENTARY FUNCTION. WHAT GOAL HAS THE COMPLAINTS CHOIR? The comparison with a Greek chorus is helpful: 15-50 amateur singers comment on the progress of the tragedy, the vox humana in the rumble of the gods. As a side affect we believe that a few of the notorious whiners that are exposed to a Complaints Choir will achieve a somewhat self-ironic distance to their own complaints culture and start to smile at their neighbors occasionally" (Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "faq", capital letters in original).

[627] Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "faq". See also Rehm 2005, 56.

the city population – with distinctions as to gender, age and function of their members and as to the geographical setting of the play – that commented on the events and actions of the main characters of the play.[628] Complaints Choirs do not rely on such a demographic representativeness. On the contrary, Complaints Choirs can be viewed as eschewing the presumption of the "community" as a predefined entity in which everyone and everything can and has been taken into account, and in which anybody should "be at its *own place*", as Jacques Rancière characterizes the ideal organization of society that Plato presents in *Republic*.[629] Following Rancière, any social organization – be it a community, a society, or a choir – is based on, and gives rise to exclusionary processes.[630] While, having an affirmative undertone, Complaints Choirs do not focus on problematizing the idea of "community" or of demographic representation, I nevertheless view the choirs more as a productive "breakaway" from the tradition of the Greek chorus than as their contemporary counterpart. This is due to the Complaints Choirs' open access policy and their initial disinterestedness concerning the identities and societal positions of the individual singers.

While most Complaints Choirs have only devised and performed one song within a short timespan of a few days or weeks, the concept also has also functioned as a springboard for long-lasting collective action and community-building activity. The Complaints Choir of Vienna, established in 2010, has been in existence for more than nine years already. It started with an open call for participation and, in June 2019, it had some 65 regular members.[631] As a group formed through the composition process of the first Complaints song of Vienna, *Wien, wir beschweren uns!* in 2010, the choir soon agreed on their approach as to protest and activism. In 2010, the choir carried out an intervention in a meeting of the 7th District Representation of the Vienna City Council (Bezirksamt Neubau), and performed at a protest event organized by a citizens' initiative against the building of a large private concert hall on the grounds of the public and historically significant Augarten park.[632] After an intra-choral discussion, it was soon decided with the veto of the initiator Oliver Hangl that the choir should not take part in such politically motivated citizens' initiatives so as not to risk instrumentalization. However, the songs of the choir would be open to include also directly politically motivated complaints. That is, the Complaints Choir of Vienna includes socio-critical complaints in their songs without compromising the potential heterogeneity of political affiliations and sympathies of its members, and without being associated with or reduced to a single-identity and programmatic protest choir. Through the 2010s, the choir has often performed in art contexts, as an invited guest of festivals and so on,

[628] See Foley 2003, 4-5, 11-14, 20-21, 24-25; Rehm 2005, vi-vii, 3-4, 14-19, 25, 28-29, 56, 59-60; Weiner 1980, 205-211.
[629] Rancière 2011a, 7. Italics in the original.
[630] See Rancière 2011a, 2-3; Chapters 2.4 and 2.5 of this study.
[631] Complaints Choir of Vienna, section "Mitmachen".
[632] See Complaints Choir of Vienna, section "Bisher".

and also organized many of its own concerts and interventions on public sites.[633]

Participants gain skills, experience and kudos

Most Complaints Choirs have been created within art institutions or with support from them.[634] The *Complaints Choir* can be seen as a "brand" developed by the Kalleinens and strengthened and distributed through the international project website. The Kalleinen couple gains merit and recognition as participatory artists through each local Complaints Choir performance, also through choirs that they have not been personally part of, since each choir is supposed to credit them as the initiators of the project. Thus, the long-term success of the *Complaints Choir* project is likely to have contributed to the broad international recognition and reputation of Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen as artists "specialized" in participatory projects; they have been invited to talk about, present, devise and facilitate participatory artistic processes internationally in various art and educational institutions.[635] Kalleinen and Kochta-Kalleinen were also granted the prestigious *Ars Fennica* award in 2014.[636]

Besides promoting extrovert and bold behaviour and cooperation skills appreciated in post-Fordist work, especially in Vienna the *Complaints Choir* project has brought about a process of "professionalization", too: the Complaints Choir of Vienna, established in 2010 by Oliver Hangl without the Kalleinens, has developed into a choir that has its own, professionally-designed website and it regularly performs in well-known music venues with professional musicians and singers.[637] The Vienna Choir has received an extensive amount of media attention; some of the singers have been interviewed for TV features and the performances of the choir have featured in various TV programs in Austria, Germany and Switzerland.[638] That is, the Complaints Choir of Vienna has become a "phenomenon" that may also benefit the career of those choir singers who have professional artistic ambitions. Instead of financial remuneration, the singers gain – at least sometimes – media and other public visibility as a reward for their participation, as is often the case with post-Fordist unremunerated – or immaterial – work.

While Complaints Choirs may include potentially exclusive tendencies regarding accessibility as I have pointed out, it is important to note that,

[633] See Complaints Choir of Vienna, section "Bisher". As to the decision about the approach regarding protesting and activism in the Complaints Choir of Vienna, I rely on my own memories and those of my partner Luzie Lahtinen-Stransky, who was part of the Choir at the same time.

[634] See Complaints Choirs Worldwide, section "choirs".

[635] See Ars Fennica award 2014, section "Curriculum Vitae"; Tellervo Kalleinen's website; Tellervo Kalleinen's website, section Bio/Cv; Studio Kalleinen, tab "CV".

[636] See Ars Fennica award 2014.

[637] See Complaints Choir of Vienna, section "Bisher".

[638] The numerous media that has featured the Complaints Choir of Vienna include e.g. the international German-speaking TV station 3sat, ORF (the Austrian Broadcasting Company), as well as well-known Viennese newspapers. See Complaints Choir of Vienna, section "Presse". According to Tellervo Kalleinen, *Complaints Choir*s "almost always get a lot of media attention too. The media loves this project" (Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen and Stephansen 2014).

generally speaking, these choirs do offer their participants the possibility of trying out choir singing and performing in various contexts for free, and without requiring any previous singing experience from them, thus letting them rehearse their singing skills.[639] Also, choirs such as the Complaints Choir of Vienna also obviously have the ability to give rise to communities and bring people together, thereby offering them positive collective feelings and, potentially, having a therapeutic and empowering function too.[640]

4.10 Ideas for Further Development of the Complaints Choirs

Above, I have located potentially exclusive and problematic tendencies in Complaints Choirs: the reliance on uniformity and harmony in the performances and the songs; cultural competence as a potential precondition for participation; the authority position of the artists; the partially naïve assumption of affirmative audience reception of the performances; and the partial reliance on the logic of demographic representation. Below, I outline speculative suggestions and ideas for further development of the *Complaints Choir*s project that my case study research has given rise to.

First, what would happen if future Complaints Choirs explicitly staged intra-choral disharmonies and thematic disputes in the performances both on the level of lyrics, score, and performance choreographies? These stagings might include, for instance, overtly disharmonic tonal sequences in the song; individual singers having solo parts in which they disassociate themselves from specific complaints they personally do not agree with; individual singers having solo parts in which they voice their discontent with the song composition process should there be something specific to complain about from their point of view; or pre-planned sequences that disassemble the spatially monolithic choir formation and replace it with smaller groups spread unevenly across the performance site, challenging or attacking each other verbally or choreographically.[641]

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[639]Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen says: "And then of course you can take part without having had singing experience. For some this is also a very powerful experience… just thinking you can't sing but then you're suddenly in a choir and you can actually create nice sounds together" (Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Tellervo, Kochta-Kalleinen, Oliver and Stephansen, Hilde C. 2014).

[640] I discuss the therapeutic undercurrents in the *Complaints Choir* project in Chapter 4.3.

[641] The first Complaints song of the Complaints Choir of Vienna included disharmonic sequences and loud sequences in which the singers also humoristically "attacked" well-known politicians verbally and through offending gestures (see Chapter 4.4). In their subsequent songs and performances, the Vienna Choir has also played with spatial arrangements and groupings of the singers, and divided into smaller groups who playfully "threatened" or "attacked" each other choreographically. These experiments and sequences have, nevertheless, been rather contained and they have fit the overall conventional song structures employed by the choir. Also, the singers have not addressed potential problems or power relations in the song-devising or decision-making process in the choir in these sequences. See e.g. Video recording of the Complaints Choir of Vienna performance at Mariahilferstraße; Video recording of the Complaints Choir of Vienna Performance at Public Art Festival; ARTE TV feature on the Complaints Choir of Vienna Aktion LX.

Second, what might happen if the *Complaints Choir* project were taken towards a more "non-centrifugal", multifocal direction through opening up the decision-making and song-composition process, for instance by scrapping the leader-position of the local choir initiators and professional artists and, instead, letting all interested members take active part in the process of composing the song and making the lyrics without the professional artists as the "gatekeepers"? What if the names of all choir members were consistently included in the PR of the choirs instead of highlighting the status and the names of the initiators or professional artists?

Third, might it be possible to establish a "global" multiperspectival Complaints Choir through the Internet and the Complaints Choir website? That is, would it be possible to locate and include complaints that many interested people share in different countries and continents in one Complaints song? Could this choir rehearse internationally, at the same time, through, say, Skype or another virtual real-time communication platform and then organise well-coordinated collective actions, performances, or protests simultaneously in several places and countries?

That is, I see vital possibilities in the Internet-dimension of the *Complaints Choir* project; the virtual possibilities already present in the initial project concept by Kalleinen and Kochta-Kalleinen could be further developed. Through the Internet, the Complaints Choirs concept might avoid the aforementioned exclusionary or problematic tendencies, and be able to point to the partial incommensurability and heterogeneity of the singers' everyday life experiences and of reality.

In more philosophical terms, it is worth asking whether these suggestions for development might even lead Complaints Choirs to become seedbeds for novel forms of subjecthood and of political and activist communities. Might some of the future Complaints Choirs function as try-outs for suggesting new ways of "being a part" of collective social and political processes? Might some of the future choirs hint at new forms of "what is common to the community, the forms of its visibility and of its organization", as Rancière puts it?[642]

4.11 Relation to Previous Research: Significance of Internet Presence and Problematic Sides of Affirmation, Authority and Uniformity

Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen's projects have gained a relatively high level of attention in the popular press, especially in the wake of the long-term international success of the *Complaints Choir* project. However, their works have not been widely analyzed in academia, either in Finland or internationally. Selvaraj Velayutham briefly discusses the Complaints Choir of Singapore in his article "'Talking Cock': Everyday dissent through complaint and humour in Singapore" (2009). He considers complaining and the use of humour – especially in authoritarian Singapore – as a political currency on similar

[642] Rancière 2004a, 18.

grounds to those of mine: complaining has its roots in everyday experiences and dissatisfaction that is, in Singapore, mainly publicly voiced online as well as in certain TV sitcoms and films. It is the public expression of dissatisfaction that the authorities in Singapore see as a threat to the status quo.[643]

Angela Myers analyses the *Complaints Choir* project in her article "Now Everybody Sing. The voicing of dissensus in new choral performance" (2011). The article focuses on three recent choral projects – including the *Complaints Choir* – and explores how they may form "communities" in Jean-Luc Nancy's sense "through a focus on incompletion, indetermination, interruption and fragmentation, instead of production and completion."[644] She suggests that the *Complaints Choir*, *The17 choir*, and Phil Minton's *Feral Choir* might "provide opportunities for heterogeneous and discordant voices to come together [and to] redraw the professional/amateur distinction away from the singularity of virtuosity and to attune our ears to the uniqueness of each voice going through the participatory efforts of communicating […]."[645]

My findings are partly consonant with Myers's suggestions: I, too, find that Complaints Choirs can challenge conventional parameters and the process of creating communities and making social art based on bodily affections, synchronicity and collaboration; and that the choirs can voice and stage dissensus. However, unlike Myers I have shown that the distinction between "professional" and "amateur" is rather strongly present in the Choirs and lends more authorial power to the artists than to the ordinary singers; that participation in Complaints Choirs may require already-acquired cultural competence from the singers; that the choirs do not renounce demographic representation altogether – in a way that Nancy's view of "being-in-common"[646] suggests; and that the dissenting power of the choirs becomes compromised through the conventional homogenic and harmonic singing and performance acts that do not stage any intra-choral or audience-related tensions. At the end of her article, Myers raises the question about the point when "the uniqueness of the voice becomes inaudible or its harmonies homogenized" but does not discuss it further.[647] I have suggested above that the homogeneity and harmony, in combination with the aim of creating "something grand", may –

[643] See Velayutham 2009, 92-101, 106-107. Selayutham especially referst to the website Talkingcock.com; to director Jack Neo's flms; and to the TV sitcom *PCK*. According to Velauytham, "'Talking cock' is a colloquial term commonly used in Singapore to refer to either nonsensical or idle bantering" (Velayutham 2009, 107, endnote 1). See also Talking Cock website; Chapter 4.9 of this study.

[644] Myers 2011, 62.

[645] Myers 2011, 62.

[646] According to Christopher Watkin, Nancy tries to avoid "any substantial notion of being together"; Nancy's "being-in-common", according to Watkin, "does not depend in any way on *what* its participants share, but rather *that* they are exposed to each other. That way there is no subsumption of the individual under a collective essence, and being-together is not contingent on securing some shared property among all singularities" (Watkin 2007, 60, italics in original). That is, Nancy tries to search for a notion of "being together" or the "in-common" that does not become a body of identity, an "us" in opposition to "them"; his view of being together is not a community of essences. The idea of city-based demographic representation, present in the *Complaints Choir*s project, is not quite consistent with Nancy's views.

[647] Myers 2011, 66.

unintentionally – link Complaints Choirs to a proto-totalitarian dynamic in choir singing practice.

In her analysis, Myers concentrates on the song composition process and performances. I find it crucial to pay attention to the *Complaints Choir* project website as it broadens the sphere of influence of the project. In principle, the website makes it possible for anyone to connect with the choirs and familiarize him/herself with their songs, and to create communities that would not necessarily be based on shared experiences but might, instead, have the "project archive" on the Complaints Choir project website as their starting points. My findings challenge the assumption that it would mainly be the shared "live" situation that matters; instead, one can take part in the project through online documentation, too.

In her article "Complaining Communities: Complaints Choir Worldwide" (2009), Saara Liinamaa discusses the political and community-building relevance of complaining regarding Complaints Choirs. She sees complaining as "a way of expressing experience that is also a call for recognition; complaining is a way to cultivate belonging and create community" as well as "a social practice that navigates the complexity of urban communities, positions and investments" that has political relevance.[648] Liinamaa also points out the significance of the DIY instructions and the Internet presence to the project's international breadth.[649] Furthermore, she discusses the problematic of diversity regarding singers and audiences that relate to "issues of class, race and ethnicity" as well as to "the logic of cultural capital"; and refers to the grounding principle of "'everyone is the right person,' even while it is still important to acknowledge when participants do not represent the diversity of the city's population."[650] While I agree with Liinamaa's analysis our reasoning is similar, my scope of interest is broader: Liinamaa does not discuss the uniformity and harmony regarding the performance mode of the choirs and their potentially proto-totalitarian dynamic; the bodily and affective dimensions of choir singing that contribute to creating feelings of collectiveness; the political relevance of the online accessibility and the extensive documentation of the choirs; or the possibility of creating a "global" protest or activist Complaints Choir with the help of real-time virtual communication technology.

While Liinamaa points out the possible capitalist commodification and "branding" of the project concept so that it is "widely accessible and recognizable" anywhere, she also ponders on whether projects such as the *Complaints Choir* might, at least partially, also be seen as a way of "disarming the capitalist ethos of the circulations of goods through a process that demands engagement rather than blind consumption."[651] I do not see such radical anti-capitalist possibilities in the *Complaints Choir* project in its current form. As I have outlined above, the issues of non-remunerated work input, the promotion of extrovert and bold behaviour and of cooperation skills, the ethos of creating "feelings of community" seen as a therapeutic measure that helps the

[648] Liinamaa 2009, 132, 133.
[649] Liinamaa 2009, 129.
[650] Liinamaa 2009, 131.
[651] Liinamaa 2009, 132.

participants thrive and survive in individualist capitalist society, and the potential process of "professionalization" regarding the singers who gain experience and receive media publicity as part of the project especially in Vienna, make the project conform rather neatly to the ethos of post-Fordist economy.

5 CASE STUDY III: *dominant powers. was also tun?* (Vienna, 2011)

theatre is the sharing of time, a place for methods and questions. a confrontation of bodies, biographies, techniques, convictions, ways of life. I think in another way and with others while rehearsing, during theatre works and in times of performance than while talking with friends gathered around a table or reading behind my apartment doors.[652]

different spaces are different. what exactly makes strange, them creates their otherness? I perceive spaces only when they do not match my expectations, but when they create problems – problems by aberrations, by resisting familiar procedures, expectations and perceptions. yes, spaces which resist. the space is a cultural memory of my perception and my practices of life. search, deviation, disturbance organise my spatial perception.[653]

dominant powers. what is to be done then? starts with the narration of political changes in northern africa and ends in central europe. a collision of three performers, a chorus assembled of two generations and different nations with a chorus of media and texts from antiquity world up to today. orientations, identities, doubts, dialogues with different acoustic objects. one`s [sic] *own voice, which comes from a strange body. dominant powers. what is to be done then? is a contemporary tragedy, an installation, a concert, an archive, a choreography, a journey through situations, through space and a lot of questions...*[654]

[652] Claudia Bosse in DOMPOWjournal (English version). Capital letters omitted in the original, italics added to the original. DOMPOWjournal was the equivalent to an evening programme; the participants could take a personal copy upon coming to the performance site. There were differences as to the contents between the English and the German version; the German version was considerably longer that the English version and also included text passages in English. In this study, I always state clearly which version I refer to.

[653] Claudia Bosse in DOMPOWjournal (English version). Capital letters omitted in the original, italics added to the original.

[654] Theatercombinat's website, dominant powers in Vienna. Capital letters omitted in the original, italics added to the original. Emphasis omitted from the original.

Photo 12. *Dominant powers*, interior photo, DOMPOW Palace, Vienna, 2011. Photo: Alexander König.

Photo 13. *Dominant powers*, interior photo with three performers and the "loudspeaker skirt", DOMPOW Palace, Vienna, 2011. Photo: Alexander König.

5.1 Theatre Images of *dominant powers*

Coming to the performance site and waiting in the lobby

Dominant powers. was also tun? was performed in an empty old industrial building, a former printing house in the 15th district of Vienna, some four kilometres and a ten-minute underground ride from the old town in the city centre. The building was located on a quiet side street next to one of Vienna's busiest roads, Linke Wienzeile – there were just passing cars, no shops or cafes for passers-by on foot; from the underground station I still needed to walk some ten minutes on the roadside pavement to reach the performance site. From the Wienzeile road I could already see a bright neon display of some three by two metres in front of the venue that read: "DOMPOW PALACE". Visually, this display instantly reminded me of billboards stating messages such as "Jesus saves you" that one finds near churches on the U.S. roadsides. The display was in stark contrast with the surroundings; it looked like a "visual alien" to me.

To reach the performance premises, I had to go through a gate and walk up the stairs to the performance lobby, that is, a makeshift ticket desk on the staircase and a bar made out of a few wooden boxes in a small side room. The staircase area looked like it had never been renovated; there were signs that read "no smoking!" and "keep the sound-damping helmet on!" and old notices pinned to the pale yellow-painted walls and orange steel doors. The ticket-seller told us that we would have the chance to move freely on the performance site and one can go to bar, have a cigarette or go the toilet whenever one wished to. While waiting for the performance to begin, I browsed through the folding handout programme: it contained various fragmentary texts in various font sizes: reflective commentaries and starting point questions by Claudia Bosse and the artistic team, as well as the list of credits that, besides the team, included philosophers such as Jacques Rancière, Antonio Gramsci, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Slavoj Žižek, and Karl Marx as reference points for the performance.

Navigating on the abandoned office site without guidance

The strongest memory and impression I recall from the performance is about the all-encompassing atmosphere of "being on one's own" as a spectator-participant; in the premises, there was a lot going on simultaneously, and no guidance was offered as to how to move about on the site. Every spectator-participant had to decide for herself what stimuli to focus on, and, thus, to a degree, she encountered different things, objects, situations, and performance acts during the event. Throughout the evening, I was in a state of constant and thrilling uncertainty about what I would experience next.

Dominant powers began with a young female performer dressed in a white overall walking slowly to the lobby area, reciting what sounded to me like an emotional Romanticist text.[655] She walked down the staircase and opened the

[655] Later, I found out that this opening text was "Die Revolution" (1849) written by Richard Wagner: "Sehen wir hinaus über die Länder und Völker, so erkennen wir überall durch ganz Europa das Gähren einer gewaltigen Bewegung, deren erste Schwingungen uns bereits erfasst

door to the premises and led us inside, into a rather small centrally located room. Continuing her recital, she opened doors to neighbouring rooms, one after another. The spectator-participants began, little by little, to leave the tight the group-like formation and peek into the smaller rooms to see what they contained. From now on, each spectator-participant seemed to be on their own.

The walls of the rooms were mostly white, with occasional philosophical text fragments and questions taped on certain spots by theatercombinat, and the ceilings were covered with panels. There were a few unspectacular plants placed around the performance site in flowerpots, and a few rambling plants hung from the ceiling panels. It was as if the rooms had been abandoned after the University of Technology had moved out and only brought into temporary use again by *dominant powers*. The performance employed a central loudspeaker system and loudspeakers in many of the rooms. Besides bigger loudspeakers standing unmasked on the floor, there were also several small loudspeakers hidden behind wall and ceiling panels. I could also hear live talk from the performers when I was not in the same room in which that act took place, and also without knowing where that action was taking place.

While all the acts and pieces of information I encountered on the site seemed to be utterly fragmented to me, especially at the beginning of the performance, and there seemed to be no plot or narrative thread to follow, I soon noticed that I automatically started to link those fragments and my experiences to each other into networks; to fabricate potential causal and thematic relations between them. Wandering through the performance site, every now and then bending down to contemplate a text sheet on the floor or attending to a loudspeaker hidden in the wall, I thought of myself as taking part in a strange adventure park experience.

Everyone was potentially on show: observing each other as a network of bodies

All of us participants were potentially on show throughout the performance; all scenes and acts took place in the rooms, which were accessible for everyone. There were no separate spaces for performers and other participants but everyone had, in principle, the same opportunity to move around at the site. Throughout the evening, it was interesting to observe and be part of small groups of spectator-participants that formed spontaneously in places where something loud was taking place; at times, spectator-participants came together for a moment. Likewise, every now and then a couple of people happened to enter the same room. There were transparent glass window panels between some of the rooms, through which I could observe what was happening on the other side and what other spectator-participants were doing; their reactions, what they looked at, how they walked and so on. That is, it was possible to observe the other spectator-participants' individual routes in the performance space. I could also notice the director Claudia Bosse wander around the site among the spectator-participants, observing the course of events.

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haben, deren volle Wucht bald über uns hereinzubrechen droht." Quoted in DOMPOWjournal (German version).

Of course, I also had the feeling I was possibly observed by others as I wandered around the site, becoming conscious of my body movements and facial gestures, my clothing, and my "routes" on the site. More than a couple of times I caught myself thinking about what the other participants would think of me just by watching me and observing my behaviour. Indeed, there were moments in which I found it more compelling to ponder on "us", all the participants, as a group, as a partially arbitrary gathering of just this collection of people in this specific situation, than to concentrate on the performers and their actions. Often during the evening, I thought of us, the participants in the performance, as a temporary and fleeting network of bodies, each of us reacting separately to the stimuli we encountered and making our own routes, every now and then coming together and soon parting again, but throughout connected to each other via the architectonic space, sensing each others' presence.

As the evening grew longer, some participants began to sit on the windowsills while watching the events, or while talking to each other. The performance space offered small corners or "nooks" for us spectator-participants to have a rest or to "step aside" for a while so that we would not be viewed by other people so easily. Towards the end of *dominant powers* I also noticed that many people had left and that the performance site was growing colder and colder; there were radiators but they did not heat up the big and relatively high-ceilinged rooms. I and many other spectator-participants who were still on the premises were shivering from cold, wearing our scarves tightly wrapped around our necks. It seemed that these spectator-participants, me included, were determined to see the performance until the very end, no matter the circumstances.

Recorded interview of a woman in Egypt on video: "displaced" feeling

In a small side room I saw a video portraying a young woman projected onto the wall; more precisely, her face was framed in a close-up. Due to the large image, I could observe her facial expressions in detail: how she moved her facial muscles as she talked. I could hear her voice from a loudspeaker; I thought this might have been a record of a Skype video call. However, I could not hear any other people talk in the video. It seemed to be a videoed interview whose answers I heard but whose questions I was unaware of. The woman talked in English; I gathered that she was talking about her views of democracy and the future of Egyptian society. She did not seem to be playing any fictitious role or character.

This setting aroused an awkward "displaced" feeling in me that I could not quite verbalize; here I was in an old industrial building on the outskirts of Vienna, taking part in a performance, watching this woman talk from somewhere else… she was as if in another "reality" yet, at the same time, vividly "there" with us, if only through a video or Skype recording, through the large-scale projection that highlighted her individual facial features and expressions. Consulting the programme handout, I noticed a set of questions:

> script: a short introduction of yourself; your name; your age; your nationality; your occupation; since when do you live here?; questions: how would you describe the

> egyptian state?; How do you see the egyptian democracy?; what is democracy for you?; what is the state for you?; please tell me your personal chronology of the events from january 25th to february 11th 2011.; what are the actual political conditions and changes?; did your personal life change? and how?; what function had the media in respect to the changes?; the national, international, social media?; please describe yourself in ten short sentences: how do you define "freedom"?; what is "capitalism"?; what is for you "revolution"?; please describe the egyptian society. do all have the same rights? and who doesn't?; is democracy the ideal model of the state? why?; is there an alternative? which one?; which voices are heard in public life? which not?; what does it mean for you to live under the laws of emergency?; who are "foreigners" for you?; how is history produced?[656]

I gathered that the woman projected onto the wall was one of the "activists, artists, observers, the Austrian ambassador, journalists, members of NGO's as well as with non-nationals living for a long time in Egypt, a university lecturer, architects and writers" whom Claudia Bosse and Günther Auer had interviewed in Egypt.[657] I later noticed that there were old-fashioned telephones on the floor in one of the rooms; upon lifting the receiver, one could listen to these interviews too.

Encounters with bodies and violence: Muammar Gaddafi, covered body and budgies in a cage

In the main entrance room, there were lots of A4 sized sheets on the floor, blank side up; they had many shoeprints on them, showing that several people had tramped upon them and passed that room. Also I stepped on them many times during the evening. Without any instruction to do so, I bent down and took one of the sheets to see whether it would be blank on both sides. On the other side, it had the text: "Muammar Al' Gaddafi 22/02/2011" and a Youtube address on it, as well as some kind of an interview transcription below. It seemed to be a transcript of Gaddafi's manifest talk. The paper sheet had handwritten marks on it: "this country", as well as brackets around certain words and sentences. A few sentences were struck through. This text had obviously been used in the composition process of *dominant powers* in some way.

In another room I spotted a cubic TV on the floor; it showed something filmed by hand; the image was unclear, fuzzy and moved frantically all the time. After a few seconds, I noticed a news channel logo at the bottom corner; this had to be a fragment from a news feature. A van on a desert, many loud and distressed voices as if they were discussing what to do… with what? And, then, I spotted Muammar Gaddafi's head, covered in blood; he had been caught and was being taken to somewhere... he, the one-time dictator, begged for mercy. The transcription of Gaddafi's speech – a manifest and pledge for solidarity of Libyans for him and his troops – on the A4 that I had found was in stark contrast to this man now being handled like a piece of meat.

As I walked around a corner to have a look at one of the small rooms, I almost stumbled on something under a quilt. To my initial shock, that

[656] DOMPOWjournal (German version). Capital letters omitted in the original. 25 January 2011 was the starting day of the protests in Egypt, and on the 11 February 2011, the President Hosni Mubarak resigned and handed power to the Army Council. See e.g. Rodrigues 2013.
[657] See DOMPOWjournal (German version).

something was a human being; I could see her or him breathing under the quilt whose colour reminded me of military grey; he or she was silent and still. While this act was obviously staged by a performer, I was troubled by this uncanny and unexpected encounter; it was an extreme antipode to my active bodily engagement with the stimuli on the site.

In a room on one side of the entrance hall, I spotted two budgies in a birdcage. I tried to check if they would imitate my speech: no chance. The budgies made noises: "chirp chirp", and something that might have been an imitation of human syllables; cleaned each other, ate, and took short flights. The sight of the birds in such a confined caged environment, exposed to our gazes and tryouts for communication with them, seemed violent; their function seemed to be on show for us spectator-participants. The birds, like me as a spectator-participant, seemed to be "displaced"; instead of their natural habitat, pet shop, or a home, they were there with us at the former print factory on the outskirts of Vienna.

Machine-like horny female main performers

The recital of the performer who fetched us from the lobby in the beginning of *dominant powers* sounded unnatural in my ears; she emphasized odd syllables, took breath at seemingly unnatural moments and rhymed the text awkwardly, as if she were an alien or computer trying to learn and speak German. It turned out that there were two more female performers who seemed to be on the move for the whole duration of the performance and were granted much visibility. Also these other two main performers had mainly an artificial, or technical way of uttering their speech throughout the performance. They did not seem to represent "realistic" behaviour or any psychological characters in the sense of "psychological realism"[658]. Instead, I thought of them as bodily "voicing channels" and "surfaces" for the various texts they uttered in the performance, all of which sounded like quotes and fragments of articles, books, stories and interviews.

These performers moved and talked like their every single movement and syllable had been minutely choreographed and rehearsed beforehand. Indeed, these three performers seemed more like machines or cyborgs than "persons" or "characters" to me; this impression was strengthened through loudspeaker boxes attached to their bodies, on the genital and waist areas and on their back. Towards the end of the performance, one of the main performers even dressed up in a skirt-like construction made out of loudspeakers attached to a custom-made rack.

In the final scene of *dominant powers* at a hall-like large room, the three performers bent down, their bottoms facing the audience, and started to move their bottoms in a fast pace. One of them recited, almost as if she were yelling instructions on a construction site, an unsettling fantastic story fragment featuring a deformed baby being shown around in order to raise money as it was such a strange creature. The other performers breathed heavily, like in a porn film. All three main performers were physically trained, which could be

[658] For psychological realism, see Benedetti 2007, 99-108; Williams 1985, 262.

seen because they were wearing tight costumes that emphasized their body shapes, breasts, and muscles.

Then they moved around the room, bottoms first like crabs, in a choreographed constellation; spectator-participants stepped aside as this humping formation came towards them. It looked as if the performers would "chase" the spectator-participants who retreated closer to the sides of the room; some of the spectator-participants looked worried, some thoughtful, and some amused. The three performers stood up and walked to a pillar, one of them still talking, or yelling, looking as if getting more and more ecstatic or excited by every sentence, while all of them made gestures that reminded me explicitly of sexual intercourse. One of the three humping performers went to stand in front of a male spectator-participant – one of the few of us who had not "retreated" to the side by now – and "fucked" him figuratively, but without touching him. The man did not show any visible reaction, certainly not pleasure, but stayed seemingly calm, or, perhaps, became slightly annoyed. It seemed as if the main performers tried to force the man to step back; to leave the middle area of the hall and leave the performers more room. Indeed, while the explicitly sexualized bodies and behaviour of the performers might have appeared as seductive in another context, in my experience they were uncanny here, disturbing and aggressive in a way that did not encourage such responses. Apart from this "harassing" act, the performers did not encourage us to participate in the action. At times, they directed their words to individual spectator-participants but did not encourage us to reply.

Choir playing a "supporting role" and presenting biographical content

As we entered the performance site at the start, I noticed people uniformly dressed in black, as if they were a choir, standing silently and calmly next to each other behind a glass window in a side room, looking at us. This choir would perform group scenes, solo acts and fragments of dialogue during the performance. The chorus brought quite a lot of biographical content to *dominant powers*; I particularly remember a scene that played out in one of the small rooms, in which an older female singer talked about, possibly, her personal views on emancipation and abortion rights to a younger female choir member. We were, however, not offered information about who those specific performers were nor whose views they were conveying – that is, whether their speech was autobiographical or not. The calm and soft voice of this older choir singer contrasted with the loud and "machine-like" speaking style of the main performers. I also remember encountering a choir singer reciting something in a language foreign to me; I only understood the word "ljubov", that refers to "love" in many Slavic languages; she might or might not have been singing in her first language.

Like the main performers, the choir members seemed to follow a predefined choreography, or "routes" on the site. To me, they constantly seemed to play a "supporting role"; throughout *dominant powers*, they moved at a slower pace and talked more quietly than the energetic main performers who immediately caught the spectator-participants' attention, whatever scene or action they were performing.

5.2 Experience Field and Body Techniques: Navigating on a Displaced Island among Scattered Fragments

My experience field of *dominant powers* was dominated by the enduring feeling of "being on my own" and that I could not get an overall picture of what was going on; I had to constantly decide anew where I would move to next and to what and to whom I would pay attention. While wandering on the performance site with the other participants I felt like an adventurer, without a proper "map" or guidance other than my reactions to the various stimuli that I encountered there. In my initial experience, all the textual materials relating to the performance themes seemed to be fragmented and fragmentary, and presented as such.

Dominant powers did not reiterate the conventional spatial theatre setting with a clear division between the stage and the audience areas.[659] The performance did not offer us one clear focus of attention but, instead, it fragmented the acts, scenes and stimuli around the site; many actions took place at the same time. One could simply not see, or "take in" everything that was part of the performance. The architectural room plan made this "centrifugal" setting and dramaturgy possible. Also, traces of the former office and factory use of the premises were to be seen. This lent the site an "abandoned" atmosphere that, together with the neon display "DOMPOW PALACE" on the street and the non-theatre location on the outskirts of the city made me think of *dominant powers* as a lonely displaced "island", or a visual and spatial "alien" in the urban Vienna cityscape that we would visit – and make sense of on our own – as participants.

There were four distinct participant positions in *dominant powers*: the spectator-participants; the three main performers; the choir members; and the budgies. For us, the spectator-participants, the main participatory body technique was to "navigate" on foot and to create our own routes in the performance site without guidance. There was a lot going on simultaneously, and each of us had to decide what to follow and concentrate on. For those spectator-participants who did not arrive in a car, on a bus or on a bicycle, the "walking activity" began even before the performance began, as they had to reach the site from the nearby underground station or bus stops by foot.

Due to our navigating of the site, and due to the visibility of all participants to each other, we were also bound to adopt a performative role in the performance and take part in the instant flows of movement – moments of people gathering and going apart again – on the site, forming a sort of fleeting network of bodies together with the performers. Many of us, as spectator-participants, also used the possibilities of the performance site to sit down on a windowsill to rest our feet, or to retreat to semi-dark room corners and nooks to be out of the view of the other participants for a while.

While we participated by navigating the site and becoming part of the performative constellation of moving bodies, we were not asked to provide verbal input in the performance; the performers did not talk with us. During the

[659] For the conventional spectatorial setting in theatre, see Chapter 1.3 of this study.

last scene by the main performers, we were even assumed to adopt a conventional spectatorial position, that is, to watch the performers act in the middle of the room from the side of the room; the spectator-participant who had not retreated to the side was "harassed" by the main performers as if to force him to join the others standing and observing the scene farther away.

In *dominant powers*, a pro-active approach and curiosity led to "discoveries" that may otherwise have remained unseen: for instance, I only found the transcription of Muammar Gaddafi's speech by lifting an empty A4 sheet from the floor and turning it. This also applied to reading the handout programme of *dominant powers* that offered quite a lot of information about the themes, reference points and used text materials; for those spectator-participants like me who longed for background information and contextualization of the text fragments voiced in the performance, browsing through the programme was worthwhile.

The three main performers seemed to follow a strictly predefined choreography and script and had minutely rehearsed, artificial ways of uttering their speech as to intonation, breathing and emphasis. Equally, their central body techniques were those required from contemporary dancers, performers and actors in more conventional productions: trained and vigorous movement and uttering skills throughout the two-hour-performance; and the utmost concentration with regard to timing of actions and acting with the fellow performers. The actions of the choir members, too, seemed to be scripted, rehearsed and timed, but they were nevertheless subordinate to the acts of the three main performers who, in my view, in the scenes I saw, "took" the focus of attention through their energetic and intensive appearance. For their part, the primary function of the budgies in a cage seemed to be on show for us, human spectator-participants, without their consent. The birds also provided yet one more facet to the "displaced" and "island"-like ambience of the performance.

Why did *dominant powers* denounce one focus and did not offer any one thematic "thread" for the spectator-participants? What can the scenographic characteristics of *dominant powers* – the denial of guidance, the emphasis on fragments, and the "island"-like performance site – intertwined with the performing and viewing network of bodies, say about experiencing reality, knowledge and revolutions? Which participatory positions and inclusionary and exclusionary horizons can they bring about and lead to?

5.3 Pedagogical Undercurrents in *dominant powers*

Encouraging pro-active navigating and making connections between fragments

We, the spectator-participants, were not positioned as a group to be held together, gathered up and made to concentrate on one action on one stage. Instead, *dominant powers* urged us to become pro-active navigators on the performance site. That is, the performance put us as spectator-participants in a position that resists the conventional mode of viewing and artistic performances that offers one stage and one clear plot or storyline to focus on.

Each spectator-participant had to navigate the overwhelming amount of sensory stimuli with fragmentary information about the "Arab Spring" revolutions, philosophical standpoints about democracy, and poetic content. The information fragments in the performance did not form a coherent "whole" for us to reflect on, as the concise and edited daily features on television, the Internet, the radio and in the press – as well as plots in traditional dramatic plays – do.

Depending on the "route" that the spectator-participant created for herself – and on her pro-activeness in picking up a sheet of paper from a floor without an external prompt to do so, for instance – she was likely to encounter more text and speech fragments than if she had just stayed in one place for the whole duration of the performance. Reading the handout programme in depth at will may have opened yet other points of reference as to the presented text fragments in *dominant powers*. While the performance denounced any clear and unambiguous messages and statements about its themes, it indeed urged us, as spectator-participants, to reason about the contents and to make our own connections, conclusions and speculations as to the multifaceted fragments. That is, instead of subjecting us to a one-way linear teaching logic, the performance nourished and rehearsed personal involvement, consideration and reflection of each spectator-participant.

Encouraging doubt about the order of reality

As a spectator-participant of *dominant powers*, I had the enduring feeling of being "dislocated" both physically and intellectually as a performance-goer, and as a person trying to make sense of the performance themes. While I very soon understood that I would not be able to see and take in everything that was taking place in the performance, every now and then I noticed myself doubting and pondering my position as a participant in the performance: what was I expected to see? Why were there so many different and at least seemingly incommensurable fragments of information on show?

In the DOMPOWjournal – equivalent to an evening programme – Claudia Bosse writes that

> for me, the political in theatre at the moment seems to be the doubt. to doubt reality, to doubt our surrounding realities and to question history and how it is produced [--] maybe theatre is a laboratory to learn the techniques of composing reality and the place to collectively shape the doubts necessary. perhaps this is the only possible of political of theatre at the moment. a time of doubting and questioning: maybe the only anarchy left within the relations of value and exploitation and the manipulations of meaning: the deprivation of meanings, which permanently instruct you how the world is to be consumed, morally considered, to be experienced.[660]

Bosse's text conveys the idea that the political potential and relevance of *dominant powers* might lie in its capability to de-stabilize, or subvert assumptions about and experiences of the order of reality and its sensory dimensions, as well as the power relations and networks they bring about. Bosse's thoughts about the need for "doubts" through performance suggest that we participants do not have the chance to – or we just do not – doubt reality in

[660] Claudia Bosse in DOMPOWjournal (English version). Capital letters omitted in original.

the same way or to the extent that *dominant powers* allows and encourages us to do. That is, the performance strove to offer us experiences that might lead us to question some taken-for-granted assumptions about reality that we may have adopted in our daily life.

5.4 Therapeutic Undercurrents in *dominant powers*

Non-therapeutic setting: absence of affirmative group action and ambience

My experience field of *dominant powers* and the main participatory body technique, that is, the imposed need on the spectator-participants to decide for themselves what to do and where to go on the site, did not signal therapeutic undercurrents or goals. The performance did not rely on one clear thematic focus or spatial and auditory harmony as did Lois Weaver's *What Tammy Needs to Know* performances and the *Complaints Choir* project but, on the contrary, on sensory distraction, fragmentation and the renouncing of one focus of attention. Further, *dominant powers* did not encourage the participants to perform affirmative collective acts but left everyone on their own. While the participants created a kind of moving temporary network of bodies during the evening, we did not form any kind of clear-cut momentary collective that would have addressed any of the performance themes together. I felt that I, as a spectator-participant, often got "lost" in the performance and was not encouraged to communicate with the other spectator-participants in any way by the performers. Also, we, the spectator-participants, were not urged to reveal anything about ourselves to others; *dominant powers* did not delve into our psyches or identities at all.

Provoking doubt as a therapeutic measure

However, the goal of urging the spectator-participants to doubt can be seen to have therapeutic undercurrents: *dominant powers* can be seen to encourage intellectual criticism and the challenging of taken-for-granted assumptions about reality, the power of media, and revolutionary activity in the spirit of Critical Theory that I discuss in the chapter 5.6 below.[661] In a broad sense, this can enhance one's understanding about her position and role in the local and global networks of power/knowledge, material and cultural resources, and warfare. While such intellectual efforts should not be confused with therapeutic processes in the conventional sense, they too may bring about personal change and affect how individuals act in their daily lives.

[661] See also Chapter 2.8 of this study.

5.5 Relation to Post-Fordist Labour: Entrepreneurial Participation, Authorship and Research-Orientedness

On the performance site, I felt like being an adventurer; new encounters would open up to me if I decided to go and walk around, and, for instance, take a look at the A4 sheet featuring a transcription of Muammar Gaddafi's speech lying on the floor, or lift telephone receivers and listen to recorded interviews with individuals living in Egypt. Claudia Bosse and her team had created parameters and pre-selected fragmentary material within which the spectator-participants made their own decisions about how to navigate in the highly affective environment. *Dominant powers* can be seen as training the spectator-participants' self-guidance skills among the flux of various stimuli and affects, proactivity, and – as the pieces of information did not form any compact message to be embraced and processed but required interpretation and individual reflection – one's reasoning skills too. These skills are of value in today's post-Fordist economy; *dominant powers* may have indirectly provided us, the spectator-participants, with experiences and skills that help us thrive in contemporary working life.[662]

The promotion of personal responsibility and the rewards of proactive behaviour by individual spectator-participants in *dominant powers* can also be viewed in Adam Alston's terms as "entrepreneurial participation" that "is premised on the 'freedom' of being able to roam at one's discretion"[663] in immersive performances "through a range of spaces, discovering the hidden secrets of the performance. By taking risks, not following the crowd, being savvy, taking responsibility for one's actions, and so on, the entrepreneurial participant is able to increase their chances of discovering these hidden secrets [--]."[664] Indeed, following Alston, "entrepreneurial participation" in immersive performances as manifested in and through *dominant powers*, too, can be seen as fitting into "experience economy" that offers "personalized and experiential forms of consumption" and the neoliberal ethos with its emphasis on affective and immaterial labour, and the "haziness between modes of production and consumption [--]."[665] In *dominant powers*, we, the spectator-participants paid for our tickets and provided immaterial labour in the form of being on show for the others, and of being part of the spatial and bodily constellation of the performance. However, we were not asked to provide inputs or contribute to the course of the events of the performance but, instead, we were explicitly encouraged to come and go as we wished. Thus, *dominant powers* did not strongly blur "consumption" and "production" on our part but, despite the emphasis on proactiveness, we were assigned a rather spectatorial position.

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[662] See Kunst 2015, 19, 32, 111-112. See also Harvie 2013, 12-16, 67-72; Chapter 2.8 of this study.
[663] Alston 2016, 11. See also Alston 2013.
[664] Alston 2016, 10. See also Alston 2013. I discuss the immersiveness of *dominant powers* in Chapters 5.6, 5.8 and 5.9 of this study.
[665] Alston 2016, 16. See also Kunst 2015, 110-112; Lazzarato 2006, 133, 138; Ridout 2013, 121-124; Chapter 2.8 of this study.

The choir of *dominant powers* consisted of volunteers.[666] On the project website, their names are listed under the sub-headline "chorus participants", but in both versions of the evening programme DOMPOWjournal only under a sub-headline "also with" in the list of Credits, without a specification of their role in the performance.[667] On one hand, the choir members neither got paid for their immaterial[668] labour efforts, nor were their names prominently visible in PR materials. On the other hand, the fact that their names were listed before the director Claudia Bosse on the website can be interpreted as a signal of their importance for the project.[669]

The three main performers, for their part, were trained performing arts professionals.[670] Their role in the project was broader than performance only, involving composition work too: their names were listed above the director Claudia Bosse and they were referred to with the expression "by/with" [von/mit] both online and in both versions of the DOMPOWjournal.[671] When it came to Claudia Bosse, in the PR about *dominant powers*, her name was always mentioned as the author in combination with the group name: "Claudia Bosse/theatercombinat". This highlights the fact that theatercombinat is above all her project and she functions as the *primus motor* of the group's productions. Indeed, Bosse is not a director who jumps into another performance process after the premiere. I spotted her on the performance site, walking around among the spectator-participants and performers, yet keeping a low profile; she could not be told apart from a regular spectator-participant. Needless to say, *dominant powers* is likely to have contributed positively to Bosse's ongoing career as a renowned director and artist, as well as to the careers of the main performers.

Dominant powers was produced within a four-year concept funding scheme of the City of Vienna Department for Cultural Affairs, as part of the series that Claudia Bosse calls "political hybrids" about the broad theme "what is to be done then?"[672] The concept funding scheme of the City of Vienna requires that the recipients present a preliminary concept and plan for the whole duration of the funding period. In the DOMPOWjournal, Bosse lists starting point questions that have informed the composition process of the project; these questions can be seen as manifesting a research-based approach.[673]

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[666] See Theatercombinat's website, dominant powers in Vienna;

[667] See Theatercombinat's website, dominant powers in Vienna; DOMPOWjournal (English version); DOMPOWjournal (German version).

[668] See Lazzarato 2006, 133. See also Ridout 2013, 121-124.

[669] See Theatercombinat's website, dominant powers in Vienna.

[670] See Nele Jahnke's Bio; Nora Steinig's CV; Catherine Travelletti's Bio.

[671] See Theatercombinat's website, dominant powers in Vienna; DOMPOWjournal (English version).

[672] See Theatercombinat's website, Chronicle (English); Gutachten der Wiener Theaterjury. Konzeptförderung 2009–2013 (in German).

[673] Claudia Bosse writes: "theatre for me is an instrument to approach reality. theatre for me is a place of public questions. theatre for me is a place for shared public questions which deny simple answers. I wonder what relationships we can generate between the struggles of our individual and the general survival. are we the avantgarde of a flexible precariate? philosophers of action? are we consumers of aesthetics? what scope of actions do we have? in which frame do we pose our questions towards political theatre? in terms of modes of production? the distribution of means? the ethics of working? the treated contents, texts, subjects? the chosen

Indeed, Bosse and her team have obviously familiarized themselves with a variety of philosophical and theoretical texts and standpoints during the composition process of *dominant powers*, and conducted interviews with residents of Cairo and Alexandria.[674] *dominant powers* was also preceded by the site-specific installation *dominant powers – landscapes of discomfort* [landschaften des unbehagens] at the old Cartographic Institute in Vienna that functioned as a "dialogue of working methods and an applied research" for the upcoming performance *dominant powers*.[675] Thus, in a broad sense *dominant powers* can be seen as a research-oriented project.

However, *dominant powers* was not result-oriented and it did not adhere to any measurable "input-output" logic of assessment. It did neither obey any formal knowledge transfer ethos, nor comply with the post-Fordist ethos in which "creativity is regulated and made to fit transparent 'moulds', whose effectiveness must be open to verification at any given moment."[676] Indeed, the performance can be seen to have explicitly renounced simple question-answer-structures. We, the spectator-participants, were not expected to provide any kind of predefined expressive participatory input such as vocalizing our sexual fantasies in Lois Weaver's *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* or composing and performing a choir song as in the *Complaints Choir* project. Apart from the potential visibility and the resulting performative position of the participants to each other, *dominant powers* did not put us, the spectator-participants, into the position of co-producers or collaborators.

Dominant powers was produced by theatercombinat alone; the team did not have art institutions such as museums or performance centres as their partners – including the spatial, marketing, and technical resources such institutions could have provided – during the composition process and performance period. On one hand, Bosse and her team can be seen to have worked extremely entrepreneurially – in the fashion of the "professional-managerial class"[677] – as they took care of all aspects of the production and were alone responsible for the outcomes and success of the production. On the other hand, they can also be seen as extremely self-determined and independent of the dramaturgical, production, PR and marketing machineries of art institutions that might have compromised the complexity of the performance and how it was communicated in public.[678]

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aesthetic? how are facts associated, coupled and bolted to form realities?" (Claudia Bosse in DOMPOWjournal (English version)). Capital letters omitted in original.

[674] See DOMPOWjournal (German version).

[675] Theatercombinat's website, dominant powers – landscapes of discomfort.

[676] Kunst 2015, 212 (footnote 186). See also ibid., 174-175. See also Chapter 2.8 of this study.

[677] See Kwon 2004, 143-145; Chapter 2.8 of this study.

[678] See e.g. Theatercombinat's website, dominant powers in Vienna. The text of the first paragraph on the site circulated widely in the media before the premiere of the performance. Especially as to form and "style", it was rather unconventional as a "PR text" for a performance project.

5.6 Relation to De-Alienation: Feeding Doubt through Fragments and Distanced Performing

In formal terms, *dominant powers* can be seen as an immersive performance with its "through-designed environment which surrounds audience members and in which they are generally invited to move about."[679] While, following Adam Alston's line of thought, immersive theatre can be seen as promoting "entrepreneurial participation" as part of the "experience economy"[680], and as a form of capitalist spectacle – as events that "exceed the normative or habitual character of visual experience" and that produce "an organization of appearances that are simultaneously enticing, deceptive, distracting, and superficial"[681] – the goals of *dominant powers* were contrary to such practice. Claudia Bosse writes in the handout programme of *dominant powers* that

> again and again I try to return to theatre. but the current politics overrun me with an incredible speed, which renders orientations, re-positionings of strategies impossible and which produces, on the other hand, an ever hastier breathlessness. do we need manifests, like the coming insurrection by the invisible committee? or parables? or real people, antique tragedies or learning plays by brecht? I have no answers, and there is none, because the questions [sic] remains: to what end? or is it education, enlightenment, empowerment, indignation, insurrection, change? or is it about aesthetic education to initiate at least doubts facing those well-mended scenarios of reality by the media?[682]

Indeed, the emphasis on doubting and intellectual criticism links the performance to the tradition of Critical Theory that, historically, has emphasized the critical analysis of the power structures or relations that hold up and reiterate and define our sense of reality and our agential possibilities to act in it.[683] *Dominant powers* used fragments and allowed the spectator-participants to reason and make interpretations on their own, thereby refusing to give any clear guidelines or answers. Contrary to spectacles, *dominant powers* did not offer its participants an easily consumable and digestible "product" to immerse themselves in but exposed us to a broad variety of sensory stimuli and information fragments that defied easy interpretations and did not seem to form any closed "whole" in a thematic sense.

Due to the machine-like and highly artificial manner of the main performers' speech and movement, I did not see them as playing psychological characters in the tradition of "psychological realism"[684]. Instead, the speech that the performers voiced, and the origins of that speech, were not clearly identifiable. What the performers conveyed were fragments of histories, of archives, of imagination, of philosophy, of various discourses; their lines seemed like quotes without a directly announced author. In the scenes I saw,

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[679] Harvie 2013, 30. See also ibid., 31-32.
[680] See Alston 2016, 16. See also ibid., 10; Kunst 2015, 110-112; Lazzarato 2006, 133, 138; Ridout 2013, 121-124.
[681] Crary 2005, 335. See also Debord 1995, 16; Harvie 2013, 42. See also Chapter 2.8 of this study.
[682] Claudia Bosse in DOMPOWjournal (English version). Capital letters omitted in original.
[683] See Allen 2015, 513, 514; Chapter 2.8 of this study.
[684] See Benedetti 2007, 99-108; Williams 1985, 262.

these performers did not arouse any potential for identification in me. Instead, this "alienated" manner of presentation brought about the materiality and embodiedness of speech and led me to ponder on issues such as the authorship of speech and of stories, and to focus my attention on the contents – what was being said – and to the movements of the bodies that said those things.

This reminded me of the Brechtian "distancing effect", or "V-Effekt".[685] While *dominant powers* also included short dialogue scenes by choir members in which they talked about seemingly biographical experiences and voiced stances on issues such as abortion, we were not offered information about who those specific performers were, and whose views they uttered; whether their speech was autobiographical or not. Also this uncertainty about the correlation between the speaker and the contents functioned as a distancing vehicle in my experience, feeding questions and doubts in my mind as to the performativity of speaking: whose words and views was I hearing; how to assess the truth value in these acts? On the project website it is stated that the performance employed "auto-fictions of the performers and the chorus participants"[686]; these – possibly – semi-autobiographical speeches contributed to my doubt-stimulating reflections that intuitively arose in my mind during the performance.

Dominant powers did not initiate any community-building and affirmative therapeutic process among us, the participants. Instead, the performance can be seen as challenging simple assumptions about the authorship, origins and the truth value of speech and stories, and as counteracting the capitalist spectacle – including its "image repertoire" and narratives about revolutions and democracy distributed through mass media in an easily digestible form – and the (assumedly) stultifying effects it has on our capacity for critical thought.[687]

5.7 Views about Participants and Community Conveyed by *dominant powers*

Curious, corporeal, reflective and vulnerable human beings with biographies

The emphasis on individual experiences and on doubting in *dominant powers* signals reliance on possessive individualism; towards an assumption about a psychological unity, a Cartesian cogito, an individual who experiences, and reflects on what he/she has been exposed to during the event.[688] *Dominant powers* relied on each spectator-participant's ability to think for herself and to make decisions; we were assumed to be capable of thinking, reasoning and navigating on our own, without clear guidance. The performance can thus be

[685] See Brecht 1964, 91. For Brecht's V-Effekt and the epic theatre, see also Bleeker 2008, 42-44; Fortier 2002, 29-33; Jackson 2011b, 49, 105-106; Lahtinen 2006; Worthen 1992, 148-158; Chapter 2.8 of this study.
[686] Theatercombinat's website, dominant powers in Vienna.
[687] See Bishop 2012, 11; Chapter 2.8 of this study.
[688] For possessive individualism and subject assumptions, see Chapter 2.8.

seen as adhering to Rancière's view that there is an "equality of intelligence"[689] among all human beings – that everyone is capable of thinking, asking and learning – and that spectators and audiences are always active, independent of the form of participation employed in the performance.[690] According to Rancière, each spectator "observes, selects compares, interprets. She links what she sees to a host of other things that she has seen on other stages, in other kinds of place. She composes her own poem with the elements of the poems before her. She participates in the performance by refashioning it in her own way [--]."[691] While there were, presumably, differences as to "terms of the ways in which the event is constituted by the cognitive, energetic, physical, or emphatic strains of the audience"[692], *dominant powers* treated every spectator-participant as an active participant from the start.

Moreover, *dominant powers* points to the sensory and kinaesthetic dimensions of human perception, conveying the view that we navigate, focus our attention, and start making sense of the reality around us based on the sensory stimuli we encounter. However, while *dominant powers* relied on proactive behaviour on the spectator-participants' part – walking, looking, reading, and so forth – it also presented and pointed to the potentially violent sides of revolution and to the vulnerability of the human body; to the human body's constant threat of becoming what Petri Tervo has termed a "bodypiece"[693]. Following Tervo, the human body is vulnerable and thus, always at risk of becoming mimetically incapable, that is, at risk of losing the characteristics that make the person recognisable to others as a "normal" human being. Tervo calls the state of being cut off from the mimetic and gestural community as the state of being a "bodypiece". These states can result from acts of violence and political repression, and from illnesses and accidents.[694] In my experience of *dominant powers*, the vulnerability of the human body and the risk of becoming a "bodypiece" became especially perceptible as I watched the news clip about Muammar Gaddafi getting caught and tortured, and as I almost stumbled on a person lying under a quilt on the

[689] Drawing on the views of the French teacher and educational philosopher Joseph Jacotot (1770-1840), Rancière calls for "the self-equality of intelligence in all its manifestations [--] The human animal learns everything in the same way as it initially learnt its mother tongue, as it learnt to venture into the forest of things and signs surrounding it so as to take its place among human beings: by observing and comparing one thing with another, a sign with a fact, a sign with another sign"(Rancière 2009b, 10. See also ibid., 1,9, 14). In *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (1991), Rancière writes that "[t]here is inequality in the *manifestations* of intelligence, according to the greater or lesser energy communicated to the intelligence by the will for discovering and combining new relations; but there is no hierarchy of *intellectual capacity*" (Rancière 1991, 27. Italics in the original).

[690] See Rancière 2009b, 13; Rancière 2007; Kunst 2015, 60.

[691] Rancière 2009b, 13. See also ibid., 12.

[692] Kunst 2015, 60.

[693] Tervo 2006, 15 (in Finnish). See also ibid., section Dissertation Abstract. Tervo uses the Finnish word "ruumiskappale" that translates as "bodypiece" in this study. Tervo especially builds on Eleanor Scarry's *Body in Pain. The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 1985); Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), and François Roustang's *L'Influence* (Paris: Les Éditions Minuit, 1991).

[694] See Tervo 2006, 15 (in Finnish).

floor. These moments highlighted the difference between my possibilities for action both on the performance site and in my daily life and the individuals and groups – both protesters and the regime – risking violence and their life amidst the Arab Spring; the risk of becoming injured and killed is indeed not equally probable or present for everyone.

While the main performers of *dominant powers* did not operate in terms of psychological characters, the scripted video interviews with the individuals living in Egypt provided a psychological and biographical layer to the performance. That is, besides the emphasis on doubt and reflection, *dominant powers* also made individual personal histories, experiences and worldviews visible. Many of the questions addressed to the interviewees required a reflective approach; most of them were formulated in rather abstract terms – such as "what is democracy for you?" – and they could not be answered with a short "yes" or "no".[695] For their part, these interview questions also signalled Claudia Bosse's and theatercombinat's reliance on the reflective capacity and the "equality of intelligence" of each human being.

Not an affirmative community but a rhizomatic formation

Dominant powers neither strove to create a spatially gathered group of us, the spectator-participants, in order to realize any pre-planned affirmative collective act, nor did it hint at a community-building ethos. While wandering around the site on my own, I felt that I was just one small part of the situation composed of human participants and other elements, reacting to stimuli and, every now and then, briefly gathering together with a few other participants to view an act, then leaving the spectatorial formation again. Instead of forming a spatial or interest-based "group", I would describe our changing spatial positions and engagements with the fragmentary materials and acts on show on the site as a fleeting "rhizomatic" formation. In the words of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari,

> unlike trees or their roots, the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states. [--] Unlike a structure, which is defined by a set of points and positions, with binary relations between the points and biunivocal relationships between the positions, the rhizome is made only of lines: lines of segmentarity and stratification as its dimensions, and the line of flight or deterritorialization as the maximum dimension after which the multiplicity undergoes metamorphosis, changes in nature. These lines, or lineaments, should not be confused with lineages of the arborescent type, which are merely localizable linkages between points and positions. [--] Unlike the graphic arts, drawing, or photography, unlike tracings, the rhizome pertains to a map that must be produced, constructed, a map that is always detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, and has multiple entryways and exits and its own lines of flight.[696]

While *dominant powers* had a pre-planned site design and a dramaturgical structure as to the order of the scenes and the performers' actions, this structure was not the defining logic of the performance. Instead, the

[695] For the interview questions, see DOMPOWjournal (German version); Chapter 5.1. of this study.
[696] Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, 21.

performance offered "multiple entryways" for us as spectator-participants to encounter the elements and fragments of the performance both spatially and intellectually; to choose our routes through the site; and to make intellectual connections between the various fragments we encountered. It was up to each spectator-participants what kind of "modifiable" intellectual and spatial mapping she would create for herself during the performance. We were a kind of rhizomatic formation connected to each other by our presence and visibility to each other; we could observe each other as a network of bodies and were likely to affect each other's experience of the performance even if we were not addressed as a "group" by the performers. Each participant took part in the rhizomatic formation whose progress on the site depended on the reactions of each spectator-participant to the variety of stimuli and thus could not be completely planned beforehand by the artistic team.

In *dominant powers*, the identities and views of the participants were not essential; it did not seem important whether the human participants of this rhizomatic formation shared any common viewpoints, agendas, or convictions or not. The binding feature of the rhizomatic formation was the performance site: each participant, object and element present at the former print house with its "displaced" and island-like ambience, were part of it. I discuss the political relevance of this "rhizomatic" feature in the chapter 5.9 below.

Features of ideal participation in *dominant powers*

In a grounding sense, *dominant powers* operated on the premise that spectator-participants would be curious, willing to move about, and interested in the various stimuli that they encountered at the performance site. The performance left much room for each participant to be as proactive as she wished; *dominant powers* did not force participants to follow a single predefined route or aim to make them see and grasp everything that was on offer.

That is, the ideal spectator-participant would enjoy the absence of a single central stage and being in a proactive participant-position. She would also like fragmentary and intellectually challenging performances in which she can reason on her own and make her own associative connections between the textual materials, bodies, elements and objects she encounters. She would not long for facilitated participation in form of instructions, guidance, composing something together with others as a group, or direct personal address from the performers. The ideal spectator-participant would also be able to notice when she needs a break from the performance and could act accordingly, for instance by fetching refreshments from the bar. Also, she would not intervene in the performers' course of action and movements on the site but be happy to watch them from a spectatorial position.[697]

[697] For the conventional spectatorial setting in theatre, see Chapter 1.3 of this study.

5.8 Potential Exclusions and Limitations in *dominant powers*

Performance geared towards aficionados with much cultural capital and "endurance"

In *dominant* powers, the reliance on proactivity, navigating on one's own, and personal decision-making may have led to a somewhat "exclusive" ambience. Firstly, these activities – and the predisposition towards them – are both body technical and socially acquired "skills" bound to cultural capital.[698] *Dominant powers* may have disappointed or caused feelings of aversion among spectator-participants who were not familiar with such situations and demands; who had expected or wished for clear instructions as to the mode of participation; who were looking for clear messages; or who had hoped to become involved in affirmative group action. Secondly, if one was to stay on the site until the end of the performance, one had to have endurance: not everyone has the physical stamina for, nor the ability to concentrate for two hours spent on the performance set that became colder and colder as the evening progressed, without guidance and proper seating and not knowing what will happen next, even if he were interested in doing it.

The performance location on the outskirts of Vienna was not central, either; the spectator-participants of *dominant powers* had planned to and really wanted to take part in it. Indeed, as the evening grew longer and there were fewer and fewer spectator-participants left on the rather chilly performance site, I began to think of us who remained as "hardcore spectator-participants" in my mind; as if only the aficionados fond of theatercombinat's work and the scenography had the strength to stay on the site until the end. Following Adam Alston, without a degree of proactive "entrepreneurial participation" that *dominant powers* also encouraged, "the participant is likely to reduce, probably inadvertently, the number of opportunities that are available to them."[699] That is, those spectator-participants who did not act proactively and/or did not stay on the premises until the end of *dominant powers*, were likely to miss out on much that the performance could have offered.

Immersive adventure park for narcissistic art elite

While wandering on the performance site with the others, every now and then bending down to contemplate a text sheet on the floor or stopping to listen to a loudspeaker hidden in the ceiling, and momentarily joining somebody to watch a performance act, I had to be "adventurous", proactive and navigate by my senses; as if I were a visitor of an immersive adventure park. Indeed, *dominant powers* can be seen as part of the "experience industry"; and my position was that of an "entrepreneurial participant" who "follows her nose and reaps the rewards of discovery and adventure [--] who takes risks and goes it alone [and] who embraces an individual journey", as Adam Alston puts it.[700] Thus, *dominant powers* can be seen to promote "narcissistic spectatorship", a term coined by

[698] See Oxford Reference, Definition of "cultural capital". See also Bourdieu 1984, 13-19, 22-23, 66-67, 114; Jeannotte 2003, 38; Chapter 2.3 of this study.
[699] Alston 2016, 133. See also Chapter 5.5 above.
[700] Alston 2016, 133. See also Chapter 5.5 above.

Keren Zaiontz, in which "the spectator's attention is drawn to his or her own affective response to being part of the performance event" and in which "the self is not simply the point from which a performance is perceived or felt but a driving force for the spectator to accumulate and pay attention to experiences [--]."[701]

Dominant powers allowed us to "peek into" the thoughts and experiences of the interviewed Cairo and Alexandria residents as rather distant observers. While we were able to reflect on their views, and on the issues of vulnerability and violence in relation to revolutions from a distance, this was not the case with people who were interviewed for the performance and those who risked their lives, died or were injured in the violent outbursts of the revolutions, or under the regime of Gaddafi and other oppressive regimes. *Dominant powers* might indeed be viewed as an odd adventure theme park about the Arab Spring events and the cultural histories of revolution for the Viennese art scene; as a "creative staging" that primarily served the reflective purposes – and the desire for stimulating experiences – of the European art elite and connoisseurs.

Confusing relation to demographic representation

While *dominant powers* did not claim to be based on representative demographic research – on the contrary, the performance staged fragments and de-stabilized the idea of representing any "whole" – the interviews were connected to demographic representation: basic questions related to age, nationality and occupation are standard classificatory fare in demographical surveys.[702] According to the *dominant powers* handout programme, many of the 24 people interviewed in Egypt were academically educated and/or worked in the arts sector; there were no views or perspectives of, say, a taxi driver, a Muslim Brotherhood member or a religious Muslim woman presented in the performance. That is, *dominant powers* established a slightly confusing relation to demographic representation: it employed classificatory demographic interview questions yet the performance only presented us with a rather small number of biographical perspectives, most of which were of educated and culture-oriented individuals.[703]

Further, on the project website the choir in *dominant powers* is referred to as a "chorus assembled of two generations and different nations" whose members are "volunteers from the city where the performance takes place."[704] This links the choir to demographic thought; as if the choir could and would represent – however allegorically – representative groups along such clear and neat lines of classification as "generations" or "nations" – or, indeed, "demoses".[705] All singers of this choir were white; in Vienna, "the young" and

[701] Spence and Benford 2018, 5. Spence and Benford summarize here Keren Zaiontz's view on "narcissistic spectatorship" as presented in Zaiontz, Keren (2014): "Narcissistic Spectatorship in Immersive and One-on-One Performance", *Theatre Journal*, 66:3 (October 2014), 405-425. See also Alston 2016, 8.

[702] See Gesis Survey Guidelines; DOMPOWjournal (German version).

[703] See DOMPOWjournal (German version).

[704] Theatercombinat's website, *dominant powers* in Vienna.

[705] The *Complaints Choir* project evokes similar problematic as to choir, representation and demography, see Chapter 4.8.

"the old" generation did not include persons with another skin colour. This can be seen as problematic with regard to demographic representation; the POC (persons of colour) inhabitants of Vienna were invisible in the performance. Further, if we interpret the choir of *dominant powers* in more abstract terms – as, say, a representation of "humanity" – its all-whiteness seems yet more problematic as it excludes non-white persons on a symbolic level. That is, why even hint at demographic representation in a performance that questions easy classifications?

Objectifying the main female performers

The three main female performers wore tight costumes that emphasized their breasts and bottoms. I could see their underpants under the semi-transparent whole-body suits. The final scene in which these performers simulated sexual intercourse raised in particular the question of objectification: they were young female performers on show, under our gaze, performing for us, the spectator-participants. In Laura Mulvey's terms, they can be seen as "sexual objects" – "with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*" – thereby catering to the "scopophilic instinct", that is, "taking other people as objects, subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze" that forms "the erotic basis for pleasure in looking at another person as an erotic object."[706] Following this strand of thought, the three main performers can be seen to represent, or embodied, objectified female bodies; indeed, it might be said that they were objectified to the degree of being "machines", "horny cyborgs", sexualized female bodies whose identities did not matter.

Chris Standfest, who provided dramaturgical consultation for *dominant powers*, has characterized the performance as

> a choric installation of permanently present voices and bodies; an endless promenade without an uprising; an act of some weird threesome of young women, or maybe hybrid coppelias, or replicants overlooked by the blade runner. they went underground, masked and veiled, and wintered in archives, libraries, signs, letters, on soundtracks or hard drives or in the synapses of the www. in dominant powers what is to be done then? they materialise, lusting for life, out of an urge to embody and negotiate all those real- and virtualities, to invest their knowledge, desires, resistances and needs. acting. acts. they come from our history and our future.[707]

Standfest's view goes well together with my experience of the three main performers as "voicing channels" and "surfaces" for various text and bodily materials that evolve sexual connotations, without playing any psychological characters. On one hand, the actions that these three performers showed in the final scene – as they aggressively and uncannily "harassed" a male spectator-participant, thereby acting as active agents claiming space, not as passive objects – might be read as "returning the gaze" in Mulvey's sense.[708] On the

[706] Mulvey 1999, 835, 877. See also D'Alleva 2005, 106-108; Rose 2001, 101-116. For critique on Mulvey, see Rose 2001, 115-116 and D'Alleva 2005, 108.
[707] Chris Standfest in DOMPOWjournal (English version). Capital letters omitted in the original.
[708] See Amad 2013, 55. Paula Amad refers to Mulvey, Laura (2007): "Compilation Film as 'Deferred Action': Vincent Monnikendam's *Mother Dao, the Turtle-like*", in Sabbadini, Andrea

other hand, by ripping any psychological traits or personality from the performers, they seemed to be reduced to their body and made my impression of their objectification stronger, as if they were pieces of moving flesh, defined to a large extent by their body.

Birds as props – anthropocentric violence

The budgies – living beings – had been brought in to be part of *dominant powers*, for us as human participants to view and observe. Taking the theme "revolution" of the *dominant powers* into consideration, putting budgies in a cage on show could easily be interpreted as an allegory of human beings being caught and oppressed by dictators. However, the act of putting the birds in a cage can be seen as a violent and anthropocentric one: as a demonstration of power and violence by theatercombinat upon these animals whose life has "worth" and that can be bought for a few euros in a pet shop. While the human performers and spectator-participants took part in the performance at their own will and could move around on the set, the budgies seemed to me like "props" – they were confined to "being on show", making just short sprints, chirps, and being exposed to the at times loud soundscape and the flow of spectator-participants staring at and trying to communicate with them.[709]

5.9 Horizons of Change Opened Up by *dominant powers*

Heterotopic simulation showing the heterogeneity of experiences of reality and revolution

The discrepancy between the former factory premises, the "DOMPOW PALACE" sign on the street, and what I encountered in those premises, lent *dominant powers* a heterotopic atmosphere in Foucault's sense; *dominant powers* might be described as a performative and theatrical archive of documents and fragments about the Arab Spring and the cultural histories of revolution that were "in themselves incompatible".[710] Indeed, while I was wandering around the set I felt that I was far away from my everyday experience of reality, taking part in a situation of which I could not make coherent sense; and which seemed to combine sensory elements and information fragments that did not seem "belong" together, to one and the same reality. The fragments that *dominant powers* presented to us also opened up different timespans and time distances, or, "slices in time" that opened onto "what might be termed [--] heterochronies."[711] Typical of heterotopias, the location of *dominant powers* can be seen as an isolated site – in my experience as an "island" in suburban Vienna – not as "freely accessible like a public place", and whose entry required us to

(ed.): *Projected Shadows: Psychoanalytic Reflections on the Representation of Loss in European Cinema*, London: Routledge 2007, 109-118 (117). For critical accounts of the "return-of-the-gaze trope" especially as to postcolonial studies and film studies of the 1970s and 1980s, see Amad 2013, 61-64.

[709] For anthropocentrism and the violence in human-animal binary, see Kleinhans 2016.

[710] Foucault 1986, 25. See also ibid., 24-27; Chapter 2.7 of this study.

[711] Foucault 1986, 26.

"have a certain permission and make certain gestures": to enter the staircase, walk the stairs, buy our tickets, and so on.[712]

In *dominant powers*, I felt that we, all participants of the performance, became a temporary agglomeration, a fleeting "rhizomatic" formation. In my experience, *dominant powers* made perceptible how sensory stimuli and perceptions and fragments of thought processes cross, bounce around, and connect to other fragments at certain times and in certain locations, without forming a "whole" or a "totality" that we could fully grasp. *Dominant powers* did not allow us, the spectator-participants, to "take over" the performance as a "whole" in the sense of presenting a piece with coherent subject matter and actions. Instead, we were faced by the simultaneous presence of many different perspectives, claims and bodies that strove to become heard and noticed by us. Such fragmentariness and simultaneity of different views and of heterogenic and competing claims for visibility is characteristic of situations in revolutionary events and their "afterlives", as Kristin Ross might put it.[713] Thus, *dominant powers* might be seen as a kind of "simulation-heterotopia" about the sensory and experience fields, controversies, and relationships between authorship, power and violence that are present in revolutionary events.

Through the simultaneous multiplicity of various perspectives and fragments of information, *dominant powers* also pointed to the fact that people's experiences of reality and what and who have part in it, vary. Following Rancière's line of thought, one's experiences of reality are not commensurable, universally and automatically shared by everyone, but all experiences – including feelings and emotions – are bound to one's sensory, bodily and cultural experiences within a distribution of the sensible, a certain social body and household.[714] For instance, my experience and understanding of the Arab Spring – as an EU citizen, researcher and artist living in, at the time of writing this study, a rather stable democracy in Austria – may drastically differ from the experiences and views of, say, someone who has been socialized in and who leads her life in Cairo, and who has personally taken part in the protest actions.

That is, *dominant powers* might give us participants in Vienna – many of whom presumably lead our lives in relatively stable societies and learn about the "Arab Spring" events through media – a vague kinaesthetic and intellectual glimpse of the situational dynamics or chaos of the "Arab Spring", and of local residents and their views and experiences about the protests in ways that differ

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[712] Foucault 1986, 26.

[713] "By 'afterlife' I do not wish to invoke a catalog of May's errors and accomplishments or to demonstrate the 'lessons' that the May movement might hold for us now. I use the term rather to mean simply that what has become known as 'the events of May '68' cannot now be considered separately from the social memory and forgetting that surround them. That memory and that forgetting have taken material forms, forms whose history I trace in this book. The management of May's memory – the way in which the political dimensions of the event have been, for the most part, dissolved or dissipated by commentary and interpretations – is now, thirty years later, at the center of the historical problem of 1968 itself" (Ross 2002, 1). See also ibid., 3-7, 65-79. In her book *May '68 and Its Afterlives*, Kristin Ross discusses and analyses the events of 1968 in Paris and France, especially in relation to social memory, forgetting, and subsequent representations of those events. See also Heinz 2012, 51; Schausberger 2011, 21.

[714] See Panagia 2009, 6-7; Rancière 2011b, 242; Rockhill 2004, 85; Chapters 2.1 and 2.2 of this study.

from the "condensed" and compact news stories on the television, Internet, radio and the press about these events. The information we gather from these sources is edited and, for the most part, based on the logic of producing a "whole", that is, rationalized and "well-packaged" articles and features for easy consumption and apprehension. *Dominant powers* emphasizes the heterogeneity of perspectives on the "Arab Spring"; revolutions – and the heterogeneity of lived realities they give rise to locally – can never be contained in clear-cut narrative frames or stories distributed overseas through the media. *Dominant powers* premiered in Vienna just days after the Tahrir Square events began in November 2011; as a spectator-participant, I related its themes strongly to the contemporary, ongoing protests in Cairo.

Giving visibility for individual views and challenging media narratives

Dominant powers puts us, as spectator-participants, in a position of experiencing, receiving and reading information about revolutions and the Arab Spring in particular that differs from our daily positions as news consumers. For instance, in *dominant powers*, the woman interviewed on the video was given much room – both in spatial and metaphorical terms – to be viewed and listened to. If the interview had been a news story, it would have been edited; it would have become shortened and the questions would probably have been made simpler to make it faster to answer them. That is, the video allowed this woman to speak if not for millions of people then at least for some dozen participants of *dominant powers*; it allowed us, as spectator-participants, to see Egyptian individuals during the revolution who differed from the descriptions that news clips and press photos often convey: she was not just a "body", one head in the mass protest at Tahrir Square, or one body doing something hectically, or under stress as are the individuals in most news clips about the Tahrir Square protests that I remember seeing at the time.[715] Indeed, she seemed very calm and reflective in formulating and articulating her answers to the interview questions. The interview highlighted the fact that the individuals who took part in the revolution and who were mostly portrayed as part of a protesting "mass" through the media have a life, a biography, and their own views.

That is, the "doubting" activity promoted by *dominant powers* was manifested here in the form of an appeal to us as spectator-participants to reflect on the role of official media in producing, authorizing and distributing certain views about the Arab Spring and the events in Egypt while ignoring others. We gain much of the knowledge about the world and its events through technological media which are not just about "mediating" knowledge but also sites of ideological and discursive production and control.[716]

Dominant powers urged us, the Vienna spectator-participants, to face our own position as media consumers with access to a wide variety of official and unofficial sources reporting about the Arab Spring; because of our limited capacity to register and process information, we cannot but continuously make

[715] For an exemplary televisual representation of protesters as a "mass" in the news media, see eg. AlArabiya news feature, "Egypt: A year of protests".
[716] For discourse and power/knowledge, see Chapter 2.3 of this study.

choices about which sources – and the voices they publicize – we pay attention to and which we ignore in the contemporary "information overload". The overflow of stimuli and information fragments, as well as the self-navigation and proactivity demanded from us in *dominant powers*, can be seen as pointing to this dynamic.

To sum up, instead of presenting us with any single clear-cut narrative, *dominant powers* made visible and perceptible the power- and sense-related role of both the media, and of us, as media consumers, in representing, informing ourselves about and making sense of the "Arab Spring" and the protests in Egypt.

dominant powers as a novel form of critical immersive performance practice

Dominant powers employed immersive strategies but it did not function as an easily digestible spectacle to immerse oneself in; instead, it triggered the reflective and critical capacities of the spectator-participants, encouraging us "to doubt reality, to doubt our surrounding realities and to question history and how it is produced", as Claudia Bosse suggests.[717] That is, the performance was based on the belief that the political relevance of performance lies in its capability to de-stabilize and "subvert" assumptions about and experiences of the "order of reality" – its sensory dimensions, and the power relations and networks that come with them.

According to my experience and interpretation, the performance invoked such critical activity through leaving us, the spectator-participants, "lost" and having to navigate on our own through its thought- and doubt-provoking scenography and dramaturgy, through our inability to "get everything under control" or to see and experience everything that the performance offers, and through its renunciation of the provision of neatly packaged answers for the spectator-participants. *Dominant powers* led me to ponder on the particularity and subjectivity, as well as the partial incommensurability of any sensory perception, experiences of reality, and descriptions of reality distributed by the media. In Rancière's terms, *dominant powers* can be seen to have political relevance as it disturbed "the way in which bodies fit their functions and destinations" and to have produced "a multiplicity of folds and gaps in the fabric of common experience that change the cartography of the perceptible, the thinkable and the feasible." [718] *Dominant powers* also aligned with the Rancièrean idea of the "equality of intelligence" and that spectators should not be treated as passive but always as active, reflective agents.[719] In spite of the potential exclusions and limitations that I have discussed above, I view *dominant powers* as an example of novel critical immersive performance practice of Bosse and theatercombinat that, to my knowledge, is unique in the contemporary European performance arts landscape.

[717] Claudia Bosse in DOMPOWjournal (English version).
[718] Rancière 2008b, 11.
[719] See Rancière 1991, 27; Rancière 2009b,1,9-10, 14.

Team gained skills and experience through the performance

Theatercombinat has been one of the most renowned experimental performance groups in German-speaking Europe since the early 2000s. After the premiere in Vienna, *dominant powers* was subsequently realized at the festival *Journées théâtrales de Carthage* in Tunis, Tunisia (2012) and at the Museums for Contemporary Art Zagreb MSU as part of the *EUROKAZ* festival in Zagreb, Croatia (2012) with local residents as choir members.[720] That is, *dominant powers* gave the core team international performing opportunities and is likely to have benefited Claudia Bosse's, theatercombinat's and the main performers' careers and their possibilities for international networking. Besides her artistic work, Claudia Bosse has also written essays, held workshops and taught at several universities and art institutions internationally after *dominant powers*.[721] During the composition process, the choir performers of the Vienna version of *dominant powers* received "physical and speech training"; for them, *dominant powers* offered the possibility of being part of the rehearsal process an of gaining skills and experience in performing in an experimental performance project under Claudia Bosse's artistic direction.[722]

5.10 Ideas for Further Development of *dominant powers*

In this case study, I have shown that *dominant powers* was geared towards aficionados with much cultural capital and "endurance", and this exclusive tendency was strengthened by the rather peripheral performance site. How would the performance change if the performance were staged at a more lively location with flows of passers-by such as, say, in an empty shop or office premises on a busy pedestrian street, or in a shopping centre? While the possibility of unexpected interventions of participants and random passers-by in the course of events might be higher at such sites and the site-related connotations would probably be different, *dominant powers* might become more accessible and attract a broader audience basis there than it did at the site of the premiere on the outskirts of Vienna – without losing the heterotopic ambience altogether. As the concept of *dominant powers* allows the spectator-participants to come and go as they like, the potential fluctuation of audience in a busy environment – for instance, some spectator-participants just dropping in for a few minutes – might not pose a major problem, either.

I have also pointed out the problematic demographic connotations evoked by the interview structure and the naming of the choir in the performance. How would the performance change if it were adapted to and performed in a non-European country? And how would *dominant powers* change if the choir members were not all white, and if the choir were given another name? There has been movement in this direction: *dominant powers* was adapted and performed at the *Journées théâtrales de Carthage* festival in 2012 in Tunis,

[720] Theatercombinat's website, dominant powers in Tunis (in French); Theatercombinat's website, dominant powers in Zagreb.
[721] See Claudia Bosse's blog, section "BIO".
[722] Theatercombinat's website, dominant powers in Vienna.

Tunisia, with locals forming the choir that was not all-white, and also having locals in the audience.[723]

The performance in Vienna employed a video interview format but it did not explicitly address informal communication through electronic platforms such as Skype, Facebook or Twitter, all of which have become important sources of exchange of information within the last few years, including during the Arab Spring and Tahrir Square events. What if the choir were not be physically present on the performance site but were composed of, say, individuals who perform live via Skype or via another live video platform, presented on screens and Ipads, and/or projected on the walls and ceilings around the performance site? In the spirit of provocation of doubt so essential to the ethos of the performance, this might both challenge the idea of the choir as a physical gathering of bodies in one place, and highlight today's non-mass media forms and platforms of communication.

Lastly, should the animal welfare law and restrictions allow it, what would change in the sensory fields and ambience of *dominant powers* if the living were allowed to fly freely around the performance site? Could such a decision open up new horizons for engagement – and encounter – with non-human agency within the frames of the performance? The budgies might indeed make noise, intervene in scenes, and defecate on people, thereby perhaps showing human participants more species-specific behaviour than by being kept in a cage under our gazes. Such a measure might add yet another layer to the sensory field and soundscape, and to the interrelated themes of politics, violence and power addressed in the performance.

5.11 Relation to Previous Research: Significance of Proactivity, Making Choices and the Ambience of Revolution

Claudia Bosse has written a relatively large amount about her agendas, philosophical and political interests, goals, and performance composition processes. Her works, including *dominant powers*, have also gained much attention in the German-speaking popular press.[724] However, *dominant powers* has not yet been analysed within an academic research frame. The Austrian Leftist-Green cultural and political weekly *Falter* reviewed the *dominant powers* premiere in Vienna; the critic Sara Schausberger writes that the performance conveyed a sense of what revolutions and turmoil "feel like" but did not elaborate further on this notion. My analysis, based on experience fields and collective body techniques, offers an explicit tentative reading of such an "ambience" of revolution. Schausberger also points to the strongly installational character of the performance – the headline of the article even states that the performance site was the "main character" ["Raum als Hauptdarsteller"] of the performance – and asked whether the performers were necessary; according to

[723] See Theatercombinat's website, dominant powers in Tunis (in French).

[724] See e.g. Theatercombinat's website, Kritiken (in German). I do not summarize or discuss all newspaper reviews of *dominant powers* here but concentrate on articles that raise issues relevant to my findings.

her, the performance would have worked better without performers than with them.[725] Indeed, my analysis also suggests that the performance site itself was an essential element in the performance. However, I have pointed out in my analysis that without the performers there would have been many encounters and features that I would have missed, to mention just the person under the quilt who I almost stumbled upon, and the main performers' machine-like performance, both of which contributed essentially to my experience of *dominant powers*.

In the major German theatre magazine *Theater der Zeit*, Andrea Heinz wrote a review about *dominant powers*, characterizing it as "not a children's birthday party"[726] and as an event about "dialectics of perception and knowledge [Dialektik der Erkenntnis] that only functions through pain"; in her reading, the performance was about a process of opening one's eyes and examining the performance themes in a way that can break our "convenient" routines of perceiving reality.[727] Heinz states that the overload of stimuli and information fragments makes it impossible to see and consume everything that *dominant powers* has to offer, and that the performance urges us to make decisions about what to concentrate on; about what to look at. She locates a possibility of "relief" in this demand for the spectator-participant to make choices as she moves about the site freely. Heinz also claims that the major question that *dominant powers* poses to each participant is: "what do I actually want to know (about)" [Was will ich eigentlich wissen]? According to her, this question has contemporary relevance since we live in an omnipresent overload of information and knowledge.[728]

While my reading of *dominant powers* is in many respects convivial to that of Heinz, my study has pointed out that we were not altogether "masters" of our experiences at the cacophonic site but were also bombed, or harassed with stimuli that may have breached our experience horizons within the distribution of the sensible that we are part of; thus, I find that the crucial questions of the performance were not solely "what do I want to know?" but: how do I sense and make sense, recognize, acknowledge and dismiss information? What things and issues, connections and realities are there that I did not know about before participating in the performance and that the mass media does not tell me about? Does the renunciation of a "whole", of a single clear narrative and one plot change my view and experience of reality, of myself and of the limits of my perception? In short, I do not relocate the "relieving" potential of *dominant powers* to my "freedom" to become the "director" of my experiences but, almost *vice versa*, to the possibility of *questioning* my views of the performance themes that *dominant powers* gives rise to. In addition, I have also pointed to the possible limitations of the performance that were not addressed by Heinz or by Schausberger.

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[725] Schausberger 2011, 21.

[726] "Nun ist aber Claudia Bosses Theater kein Kindergeburtstag" (Heinz 2012, 51). Free translation by the author of this study. Here, Heinz also alludes to Claudia Bosse's other productions.

[727] See Heinz 2012, 51. Free translations by the author of this study.

[728] See Heinz 2012, 51. Free translations by the author of this study.

The saying "not a children's birthday party" used by Andrea Heinz is an indirect reference to the allegedly "difficult nature" of *dominant powers* and Claudia Bosse's other productions.[729] Indeed, I have pointed to the exclusive tendencies in the performance. However, I have also pointed out that the abandonment the offer of any one clear "answer" or "view" for the participants to see and consume is at the core of the transformatory potential of the performance. The "difficulty" and the renunciation of one focus in the performance helps Bosse avoid a straightforward and simple pedagogical ethos and makes room for each participant to respond and reason in whatever way he or she wishes. Moreover, even though *dominant powers* has a rather extensive theoretical and philosophical background it might very well be thoroughly and enjoyably experienced without delving into the theoretical discourses that informed the performance.

In his article "Wie? Womit beginnen?" in the special yearbook issue of *Theater der Zeit* about site-specific performance and theatre in the Ruhr region of Germany, Moritz Hannemann discusses theatercombinat's work, especially the precedent of *dominant powers* and part of theatercombinat's series of "political hybrids"[730] titled *vampires of the 21st century oder was also tun?* that premiered in 2010 in Dusseldorf and Vienna. Hannemann contextualizes the performance ideologically and historically through its vital question "what to do, then?" that was made popular by Lenin. Hannemann's analysis concentrates on the political, ethical, philosophical and historiographical challenges that this question opens up, and on how the performance might address these. Hannemann points out theatercombinat's alienating, multi-layered and fragmentary way of using speech by and through the performers and audio recordings in non-theatre spaces, and seems to suggest that theatercombinat's performances might make the "silence" around this vital question noticed and tangible, even though there are lot of political delegates, experts and commissions trying to answer it. Hannemann also suggests that theatercombinat's works can offer us some space in which to try to imagine answers to that vital open question that are neither totalizing nor naïvely utopian.[731] While I agree on Hannemann's analysis and it resonates with *dominant powers*, my study takes a much more body-based approach to analyzing theatercombinat's work than Hannemann does. My approach has also helped me to address the exclusive tendencies and limitations of *dominant powers*, as well as to link the political relevance of performance to the human perceptual apparatus. Unlike previous analyses, I have also pointed out the relation between proactive behaviour, personal responsibility and "entrepreneurial participation"[732] in the performance.

[729] See Heinz 2012, 51. The "difficult", "complex" or "uncomfortable" audience experiences at the performances of *dominant powers* in Vienna were mentioned or hinted at in several other newspaper reviews too, see Kurz 2011, Müller 2011.
[730] See Theatercombinat's website, Chronicle; Gutachten der Wiener Theaterjury. Konzeptförderung 2009–2013 (in German).
[731] See Hannemann 2012, 4-6. Free translations by the author of this study.
[732] See Alston 2016, 10, 11, 16, 133. See also Alston 2013.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Revisiting the Goals of This Study

This study has had two major goals: first, it has aimed to offer a novel analytical framework for making sense of and addressing the ways in which artistic performances engage and affect us, and for understanding the culture-bound dynamic of perception, power, knowledge and the body both in participatory performance situations and in our everyday lives, thereby providing a detailed account of the material-performative human perceptual apparatus, a theme less explored within the field of theatre and performance studies. The main concepts in my framework are "sensory fields", "experience fields" and "body techniques" that draw especially on Jacques Rancière's idea of the "distribution of the sensible"; Marcel Mauss's view of the "body techniques", and Michel Foucault's thoughts of the relations between the body, knowledge, power and discourse; as well as on recent research on affects.

Secondly, based on the analytical framework, I have interrogated Lois Weaver's *What Tammy Needs to Know* and *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*, the Complaints Choirs of Helsinki, Singapore and Vienna based on the *Complaints Choir* project concept by Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen, and *dominant powers. was also tun?* by Claudia Bosse and her group theatercombinat. My key interest has been to locate "politics of the sensible" – that is, modes of participation, underlying assumptions regarding the participants and the efficacy of the chosen participatory strategy, potential inclusions and exclusions, and horizons of change – in these performance projects.

My case study analyses have based on the premise that each society gives rise to and reiterates a certain hegemonic "order of reality" with the reigning ideology or ideologies that govern the organization and functioning of that society and its members. In the performance context, "politics of the sensible" refers to the relation that each performance project has to the current "order of reality" and the hegemonic ideologies that reign in the society.

6.2 New Insights for Performance Theory and Analysis

Relation between body, perception and consciousness

In this study, I have attempted to shed light on the grounding human capacities for perception that our meaning-making, experiences and analyses of a performance rely on, thereby tackling the difficulty of connecting "our theorising, spectating and acting with our cultural and scientific understanding of the shape and form of the body"[733], and responding to the lack of explicit accounts of our "perceptual apparatus" that I identify in the field of theatre and

[733] Conroy 2010, 4-5, 7-8. See also Read 1993, 9-11.

performance research. Below, I outline convergences and differences between my framework and recent approaches to perception, power and the body within our field.

While, for instance, the recent volume *Theatre and Cognitive Neuroscience* (2016) resonates with my research questions and grounding assumptions as to the view of consciousness, as Gabriele Sofia suggests therein, not as "a product of the brain but [as] emerg[ing] from the relationship between one's own body and the environment" and of perception not as "a passive process" but as "the result of a continuous interaction between the individual and the world" in which the actions perceived are "translated" corporeally and sensomotorically, informed and influenced by "our biographical baggage, our learning systems, and our cultural conditioning", the articles presented in the volume do not offer detailed insights into the overall functioning of our perceptual apparatus.[734] I suggest that my framework can shed light on the issues outlined by Sofia: in my view, the "continuous interaction" and "translation" that Sofia writes about concern the process of turning affections on the sensory field into conscious experience, that is, into an experience field, as outlined in the chapter 2.1 of this study. This process is inevitably "informed and influenced" by our experiences as part of a certain social body and household within a certain distribution of the sensible, and the body techniques we have learned and assumed.[735]

Visuality, focalization and scopic regimes

Maaike Bleeker, for her part, offers an extensive historical and genealogical account of the modes of visuality and viewing in the theatre, showing "that visuality does not exist as such", and "how visuality consists of an intricate intertwining of the one seeing and what is seen as a result of which we always

[734] Sofia 2016, 51, 52. Sofia draws especially on Francisco Varela's and his collaborators' views as presented in Varela, Francisco, Thompson, Evan and Rosch, Eleanor: *The Embodied Mind. Cognitive Science and Human Experience* (Cambridge (MA): Massachusetts Institute of Technology 1991); in Francisco Varela: *Connaître. Les sciences cognitives, tendances et perspectives* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil 1989); and in Varela, Francisco: "Neurophenomenology: A Methodological Remedy to the Hard Problem" in the *Journal of Consciousness Studies 3* (1996).

[735] Bruce McConachie, too, has provided seminal inputs in the study of performance - both in theatrical contexts and beyond - through the lens of cognitive science, drawing significantly on e.g. the "Enaction" paradigm and the work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (see e.g. McConachie 2008, 13, 39, 80, 151-153; McConachie 2015, 21-32, 46-52). While McConachie strives to "get at what actually happens in interactions among the brain, the body, and the environment when people learn, practice, and enjoy performances and similar kinds of events" (McConachie 2015, 4) and sketches a "spectating system of performances" drawing here also on DST (dynamic systems theory), he does not provide any clear and detailed account of the human perceptual system (see McConachie 2015, 131-167). Certain aspects of, and premisses in McConachie's thought are problematic, requiring thorough critical analysis; they culminate in his provocative and generalizing view "that 'performance' is the foundational activity from which theater, rituals, sports, and other performative activities emerged in the course of our biocultural evolution and upon which a coherent performance studies should be built" (McConachie 2015, 18). Regarding McConachie's vehement critique of social constructivist and poststructuralist thought (see e.g. McConachie 2008, 4-14; McConachie 2015, 8-19; see also Hart 2006, 29-32), my analytical model might be seen as showing that it is, indeed, also possible to shed light on the operations of our cognitive-biological-material-performative apparatus within such a conceptual and theoretical framework.

see more, and always see less, than what is there to be seen."[736] Bleeker employs the narratological concept "focalization" to "expose how these ways of showing respond to viewers marked by particular presuppositions, experiences, fears, and desires; to viewers marked by ideas and presumptions characteristic of a particular world view" and to grasp "the precise relationship between the subject viewing and the object viewed, as it is given within the particular construction of the visual, verbal or multimedia text."[737] According to Bleeker, "[f]ocalization points to the relationship between ways of showing people, situations, and events, and the subjective point of view from where they are seen this way."[738] Employing the influential term "scopic regime"[739], Bleeker notes that the

> [g]rowing awareness of the inevitable entanglement of vision with what is called *visuality* – the distinct historical manifestations of visual experience – draws attention to the necessity of locating vision within a specific historical and cultural situation. This is a situation in which what we think we see is the product of vision 'taking place' according to the tacit rules of a specific scopic regime and within a relationship between the one seeing and what is seen [--] What seems to be just 'there to be seen' is, in fact, rerouted through memory and fantasy, caught up in threads of the unconscious and entangled with the passions.[740]

In a manner that echoes Jacques Rancière's view of the "distribution of the sensible", Hal Foster has grounded this approach as follows:

> Although vision suggests sight as a physical operation, and visuality sight as a social fact, the two are not opposed as nature to culture: vision is social and historical too, and visuality involves the body and the psyche. Yet neither are they identical: here, the difference between the terms signals a difference within the visual – between the mechanism of sight and its historical techniques, between the datum of vision and its discursive determinations – a difference, many differences, among how we see, how we are able, allowed, or made to see, and how we see this seeing or the unseen therein. With its own rhetoric and representation, each scopic regime seeks to close out these differences: to make of its many social visualities one essential vision, or to order them in a natural hierarchy of sight.[741]

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[736] Bleeker 2008, 7.

[737] Bleeker 2008, 10, 28. See also Johnson 2012, 21.

[738] Bleeker 2008, 10.

[739] For critical discussion on the "scopic regime", the term coined by Christian Metz and elaborated on, among other scholars, by Jonathan Crary, Martin Jay, and Hal Foster, see Bleeker 2008, 199 (footnote 3); Crary, Jay and Rose 1988; Foster 1988; Grayson and Mawdsley 2019; Jay 1988.

[740] Bleeker 2008, 1-2. Italics in the original.

[741] Foster 1988, ix. Here, Foster's account resonates with Rancière's formulation of "distribution of the sensible" as "the play of relations between the visible, the sayable, the thinkable and the doable at the heart of which gazes operate, things are named, discourses produced, actions undertaken. From one perspective, the forms of distribution of the sensible are like a datum, more or less accepted, more or less conscious – which forms and limits the capacities of perceiving and thinking. But on the one hand this datum defines a plurality of different articulations between its elements, a multiplicity of possibilities that combine together in different ways" (Rancière 2011b, 242). Kyle Grayson and Jocelyn Mawdsley suggest that "[w]hereas scopic regimes establish the parameters for what may constitute a field of view and the information that can potentially be gleaned from it, distributions of the sensible influence what can be acknowledged as present within them; this acknowledgement encompasses both

The idea of the scopic regime has been criticized for its alleged reliance on "an ocularcentrism that fails to accord senses such as the auditory and the haptic a constitutive place in observant practice" and the related underlying assumption that the visual would be "a discourse distinct from all other senses."[742] As for Bleeker, while she uses case studies to shed light on her views and points out that the processes of seeing and meaning-making "depend on how the body has learned to perceive itself and the world around it according to culturally specific parameters, how the body has learned to behave, [and] how it is marked by experience and the address of others"[743], she does not present an explicit and detailed account of the human perceptual apparatus that makes the acts of viewing and focalization possible. My analytical framework can be seen to explain, at least in part, how focalization, scopic regimes and the distribution of the sensible might be connected to, and operate based on, the human perceptual apparatus.

Autopoietic feedback loop and transformative power of performance

My analytical framework also resonates with Erika Fischer-Lichte's influential concept "autopoietic feedback loop" that describes performance as a "process of self-generation" that "comes into being by the interaction of actors and spectators, thus transforming them all into participants of the performance [which] opens up the possibility for them to experience themselves as subjects able to co-determine the actions and behavior of others and, at the same time, whose actions and behavior are determined by others."[744] Fischer-Lichte emphasizes the difference between "performance" and "staging" or "mise-en-scène"; the staging comprises "the planned and intended performative process of bringing forth the materiality of a performance" whereas in every performance, "[a]ll participants act as co-creators of the performance which, in many respects, remains unpredictable and spontaneous to a certain degree."[745]

I share Fischer-Lichte's grounding assumptions about the co-creating agency and mutual impact of all participants of a performance event and about its partial unpredictability that, in my view, results from the impossibility of anyone ever getting total control of the sensory field of an event; of the impossibility of predicting the particular experiences and feelings that the sensory field of the event arouses in participants; and of the impossibility of foreseeing how the participants react to the body techniques suggested by and employed in the performance.[746] However, Fischer-Lichte's account of the "autopoietical feedback loop" and the case study examples presented in *The Transformative Power of Performance* (2008) strongly focus on the analysis of

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the recognition of a presence (material and/or representational) as well as possible meanings associated with that presence" (Grayson and Mawdsley 2018, 18). In broad terms, we might say that specific "distributions of the sensible" make the emergence of specific scopic regimes possible.

[742] Campbell and Power 2010, 168-169. Campbell and Power refer to MacDonald, Fraser (2008): "Visuality", in Kitchin, Rob and Thrift, Nigel (eds.): *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, Amsterdam: Elsevier, 151-156.

[743] Bleeker 2008, 175.

[744] Fischer-Lichte 2009, 4.

[745] Fischer-Lichte 2009, 3.

[746] See also Fischer-Lichte 2009, 4.

artistic events and partly rely on rather opaque and thus problematic terminology such as "the reenchantment of the world"[747] and, as Paul Rae has noted, "ecstasy", "transfiguration", and "energy" that signal an "unexamined religious undercurrent."[748] My framework aims to explicitly and systematically connect the embodiedness of perception and experience in performance situations to the dynamic of perception, behaviour and power in our daily lives. Thus, it can be seen as shedding light on the sensory preconditions of "autopoietic feedback loops" in Fischer-Lichte's sense, without such (proto)religious imagery. Instead of locating the political or transformatory power of performance in acts of transformation on a rather symbolic level, I suggest that it is through the (participatory) performances' capacity or potential to induce material or intellectual "breaches" into the "order" of reality, that is, to create and play with sensory fields and collective body techniques, that they may have transformative power and political relevance.

Materiality and reciprocality in the analysis of hybrid art practices

Also Amelia Jones has provided vital insights into embodied performance analysis that takes the researcher's sensory experiences and affections into account. In her article "Material Traces. Performativity, Artistic 'Work,' and New Concepts of Agency" (2015), Jones ponders what new materialism, especially Karen Barad's thinking, might offer to research on performance and contemporary art, regarding "a new mode of hybrid practices that draws on a legacy of body, conceptual, and installation art to render new complex art experiences that are performative yet exist in various material forms"[749] in particular. Putting "the neo-Marxist emphasis on labor as relating solely to the circuits of capital in the background"[750] and using Heather Cassils's project *Becoming an Image*[751] as a case study, Jones develops a hybrid interpretative model that addresses "the interrelations among thought, action, and materiality for the artist as well as subsequent experiencers. Such interrelations not only draw out the interpreter's awareness of previous physical actions in relation to materialities; they call forth our sensitivity to the artist's previous thought processes as connected to choices that resulted in actions affecting

[747] Fischer-Lichte 2008, 181-182, 189, 206-207.

[748] Rae 2011, 162. See also Fischer-Lichte 2008, 56-59, 67, 85-88, 96-105, 116-120, 127, 166.

[749] Jones 2015, 20. Jones's article is part of the special issue of *The Drama Review* (TDR), "New Materialisms and Performance Studies" (59:4, 2015) that offers novel insights into the relations and convergences between performance studies and new materialist thought (see Schneider 2015). However, while the articles presented in the volume engage with modes of perception and with the affective, material and performative dynamic between participants – both human and other – in performance situations, they focus on the artistic events and processes, that is, they operate within the art context; detailed views or discussions on the human perceptual apparatus are not offered. While I do not wish to categorize my approach as new materialist, my view of the affective, situational and performative-material relations between the participants of the performance situation echo with new materialist grounding assumptions. See Chapter 2.6 of this study.

[750] Jones 2015, 33.

[751] Jones discusses Cassils's live performance at the Edgy Women Festival, Montreal (2013) and the "remnants" of several *Becoming an Image* performances presented as an installation in the Ronald Feldman Gallery, New York, also in 2013. Beside Cassils's project, Jones also analyzes Paul Donald's installational works in her article.

materialities, the signs of which are visible to us in the present as we view the work."[752]

Jones argues against the mainstream tendency to view any artwork "as simply a trace of *human* agency with no agential force of its own"[753], delves into the embodiedness and materiality of experiencing art and asks in which way the piece of clay, beaten and formed by Cassils in her performance and later shown as an exhibition object,

> produces phenomenological effects relating to the previous creative action of an artist's laboring body. The clay presents itself as having been made, having been formed by an intense artistic labor; as I engage it, it enacts and enlivens my own sense of embodiment. These materialities affect my sense of being in space (as do Minimalist sculptures) but also, through the signs of their having been made, speak a body having been in motion – in this case, violently so [--] I'm 'in' the clay and it's 'in'me. We reciprocally define each other, both of us relating back to 'Cassils' as a previous materiality, a previous embodiment, as well as an agential force of making.[754]

While Jones's elaborations are highly engaging through their ability to connect Karen Barad's rather theoretical considerations to concrete – and embodied – case study analyses, the article does not extend the scope of Jones's model or considerations beyond the context of art; it does not offer insights into the functioning of our perceptual apparatus and how this apparatus organizes our experiences and encounters with art.

In my view, both the "enlivened sense of embodiment" and "reciprocality" between the beholder and the object, as well as the idea of "relating back" to the artist in a variety of ways, can be connected to "sensory fields", "experience fields", and "body techniques". I briefly suggest that the different modes of engaging with Cassils's project – her hybrid practice – are likely to give rise to different kind of experiences: the sensory field and the experience field(s) of Cassils's live performance, I suggest, crucially differ from those of seeing the piece of clay in a gallery environment. In the performance, the audience, sitting on their seats, witnessed Cassils's labor with the piece of clay, mostly in the dark, hearing smashes, body sounds, and perhaps, smelled Cassils's sweat while she was "flailing and beating"[755] the piece of clay, as Jones puts it. For its part, the (de-formed) piece of clay presented later in the exhibition as a stationary installation shows the beholder traces of having (previously) been an object of a violent act and of a specific body technique – beating – employed by Cassils in her performance.[756] While the visitors can move freely in the gallery, they are – I assume – expected to obey the rules, to adopt the conventional body technique of not touching it. It might be partly due to the discrepancy between the visible violent traces that the piece of clay bears on its surface, and the policy of not being allowed to touch it in the well-lit, "white box" gallery environment, combined with the memory traces that the researcher has obtained from the live performance; with her knowledge of Cassils's practice, biography,

[752] Jones 2015, 29.
[753] Jones 2015, 26. Italics in the original. Here, Jones specifically criticizes Gell, Alfred (1998): *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 14-15.
[754] Jones 2015, 20-21.
[755] Jones 2015, 18.
[756] I rely here on the exhibition photo that Jones has included in her article (see Jones 2015, 21).

motivations and background as a personal trainer, stuntwoman, bodybuilder and boxer; and with the associations that elements such as clay, fists, and boxing evoke in the researcher, that produces such momentary "enlivened sense of embodiment" and "reciprocality" as described by Jones.[757]

Dramaturgy of the spectator and body techniques

I view Marco de Marinis as one of the forerunners of systematic interrogation of the relationships and interaction between performers and spectators in theatre and performance from a rather semiotic perspective, which nevertheless pays attention both to historical developments in theatre, to the physical and the spatial aspects of participation, as well as to the dynamic of the various expectations and modes of activity of the partakers in a performance situation.[758] One of De Marinis's key concepts is the "dramaturgy of the spectator" that refers both to the "sense in which we conceive of the audience as a dramaturgical object, a mark or target for the actions/operations of the director, the performers, and, if there is one, the writer" and to "the various receptive operations/actions that an audience carries out: perception, interpretation, aesthetic appreciation, memorization, emotive and intellectual response, etc."[759] De Marinis relies strongly on the assumption about "the intrinsically active nature which makes up the spectator's reception of the performance."[760]

Further, according to De Marinis, "the spectator, no less than the actor, is equipped with a body, a mind and an encyclopaedic and intertextual competence. It is with and in his body that the spectator experiences the performance, this is how he perceives, lives, understands and responds to it. (One could perhaps speak of 'body techniques' as conceived by Marcel Mauss, in view of the work that the spectator truly carries out at the theatre)."[761] However, De Marinis does not further elaborate on the body techniques regarding the spectators' behaviour, or discuss sensory preconditions for perception and experience that underlie the "dramaturgical" dynamic and interaction in performance situations. In his analyses, De Marinis also focuses on the intended actions and conscious strategies of the artists. The framework that I have presented in this study also pays attention to accidental stimuli in performance situations, as well as to the unintentional effects they might produce. That is, the concepts "sensory fields", "experience fields" and "body techniques" might be seen as contributing to the discourse on the "dramaturgy of the spectator" in De Marinis's sense, ideally facilitating detailed analyses of the dynamic of inclusions, exclusions and body techniques in performance situations, for instance along the lines of the case study analyses that I have presented in this study.

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[757] See Video "Who is Heather Cassils?".
[758] I refer here to De Marinis's article "Dramaturgy of the Spectator" (De Marinis 1987) and his book chapter "Body and Corporeity in the Theatre: From Semiotics to Neuroscience. A Small Multidisciplinary Glossary" (De Marinis 2016).
[759] De Marinis 1987, 101.
[760] De Marinis 1987, 102.
[761] De Marinis 2016, 63.

6.3 Politics of the Sensible in the Performances: Convergences and Differences

Pedagogical undercurrents: focus, instruction and (non-)facilitation

In my analysis I showed that in Lois Weaver's performances *What Tammy Needs to Know* and *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*, the participants were encouraged to reflect on stereotypes and myths related to identities, sex and the elderly. In these performances, Tammy WhyNot functioned as a "resistant femme" and stereotype-breaking facilitator. We could learn from Weaver-Tammy that identity is a process and bound to social acceptance and "passing". Talking about sex and identities to others in an affirmative ambience was portrayed as the key for personal and social transformation.

In practical terms, the Complaints Choirs of Vienna, Helsinki and Singapore trained their participants in choir-singing skills as to the use of voice; concentration and attentiveness; choreography; and obedience towards the conductor. Through the song composition process and the performances, the singers – who did not necessarily know each other before the project – were also part of experimental community-building and democratic decision-making processes, led by the artists and local initiators. Moreover, the Complaints Choirs functioned as a way to train the singers to make "grand" collective choral actions: the choirs showed the participants how they, as a group performing in public, can draw attention to their complaints; and that the project website with performance documentation and DIY instructions essentially add to the overall public impact, adaptability, and lifespan of the project.

For its part, *dominant powers. was also tun?* left its spectator-participants to navigate on their own at the performance site, amidst the overwhelming amount of sensory stimuli with fragmentary information about the "Arab Spring" protests and about philosophical views of democracy, thereby encouraging each spectator-participant to navigate pro-actively and make their own connections between the various incommensurable fragments. Furthermore, through its fragmentariness and several acts taking place at the same time in different parts of the site, the performance did not offer a coherent "whole" for the spectator-participants to reflect on; this urged us to doubt and question some taken-for-granted assumptions about reality that we have adopted in our daily lives.

To sum up, Weaver's both *What Tammy Needs to Know* performances had a clear pedagogical-political ethos based on the presentation, verbalizing and sharing of identity- and sex-related views, experiences, and desires, while the pedagogical undercurrents in the *Complaints Choir* are tightly linked to gaining choir singing skills and to the participatory song-composition and performance process. In Weaver's pedagogy, the individual participants – their imaginations, desires, and verbalizations – were in focus, whereas the *Complaints Choir* emphasized the group as a collective or community that devise an artistic event together. Complaints Choirs also necessitated interaction between participants who might not have known each other beforehand. In both projects,

professional artists were in charge of the course of action and essentially facilitated the potential learning processes.

In my reading, the pedagogical undercurrents of *dominant powers* differed considerably from those of the *Tammy WhyNot* performances and of the *Complaints Choir*. While both of the latter-mentioned projects had a clear-cut focus – thematizing identity, sexuality and sex practices in a performance setting, and composing a choral song of complaints collectively – *dominant powers* relied on *not* offering such clear frames to its participants but, instead, on exposing them to a variety of stimuli and fragments of information, thereby encouraging doubt and critical reflective activity. While Weaver's and Kalleinens' projects relied on specific and predefined participatory inputs from the participants – for instance in the form of speech, or of choosing complaints, and singing – *dominant powers* did not pose such demands on its spectator-participants but urged them to decide for themselves about what to do at the performance site. It did not have a professional artist to lead and facilitate participation or any pre-planned pedagogical process, either.

Therapeutic undercurrents: different approaches to individual participants

Both *Tammy WhyNot* performances and the *Complaints Choir* had clear therapeutic undercurrents. In *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* we, the spectator-participants, were positioned as if we were a confessional affirmative group psychotherapeutic community "working on" our sexuality through propositional speech. For its part, the project *Complaints Choir* aimed and aims to channel the supposedly "negative" energy of complaining into "positive" and affirmative collective action. Choral singing, both as bodily and affective activity, was portrayed as essential in this undertaking; the choirs can be seen as tryouts to create embodied therapeutic and joyous feelings of collectiveness among the singers.

Nevertheless, Weaver's and Kalleinens' projects differed significantly from each other as to their approach to the psyches of individual participants: while *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* aimed at making each participant reflect and talk about her own desires, Complaints Choirs did not strive at delving into the psyches or identities of their singers; the Kalleinens do not have the need to explicitly find out what their motivations are. *Dominant powers*, for its part, neither relied on affirmative group action and ambience, nor on the verbal inputs of its participants. Yet, here, the ethos of provoking doubt can be viewed as a (proto)therapeutic measure as the performance may have led some of its participants to enhance their understanding about their position and role in the local and global networks of power, knowledge and resources that, potentially, may have also resulted in personal therapeutic recognitions.

Relation to post-Fordist labour: service-providing, extrovertism and proactivity

I located tendencies symptomatic of the post-Fordist mode of work in all of the performances. I have shown that especially in *What Tammy Needs to know about Getting Old and Having Sex*, Lois Weaver can be seen to have functioned in

four roles all of which are paradigmatic to post-Fordist labour: as performer, facilitator, service provider and practice-based reseacher who trained us to realize our "potential" as to our sexuality and identities. Also in line with post-Fordist economy, extrovertism, sociality and spontaneity were conveyed in both *Tammy WhyNot* performances as desirable qualities, and the division between "production" and "consumption" was blurred.

Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen, as well as the other local Complaints Choir initiators and artists, can be viewed as service providers who facilitated cooperation and singing practice; trained the singers in collective decision-making practice; and created feelings of collectivity among the choir singers. The Complaints Choirs of Helsinki, Singapore and Vienna also operated on affectivity and extrovertism but, unlike Weaver's performances, they did not place emphasis on individual acts of extrovert behaviour but instead on collective action.

Dominant powers trained the spectator-participants' self-guidance skills, proactivity, and reasoning skills, all of which are of value in today's post-Fordist economy. It promoted personal responsibility and the rewards of proactive behaviour, thus, in Adam Alston's terms embodying "entrepreneurial participation"[762]. However, apart from the potential visibility and the resulting performative position of the participants, *dominant powers* did not require expressive inputs from the participants in the fashion of Lois Weaver's *Tammy WhyNot* performances or Complaints Choirs. In broad terms, *dominant powers* can be viewed as an applied artistic research project but, importantly, it did not conform to a formal knowledge transfer ethos or comply with the post-Fordist ethos that favours measurable and verifiable research processes.

De-alienating tendencies: challenging stereotypes, urban loneliness and the order of reality

Weaver's *Tammy WhyNot* performances thematized and interrogated myths and stereotypes as to sex practices, sexuality, desires, identities and the elderly that are supposedly imposed on us by contemporary "British", or "Western", society and that negatively affect our lives. Thus, these performances can be seen as instances of counteracting alienation and as consciousness-raising efforts, thereby also echoing the logic of "false consciousness"; the participants were urged to challenge – and to "break free" from – such repressive stereotypical views through imagination, verbalization and collective sharing.[763] Also, Weaver's character-building process of the character-persona Tammy WhyNot can be taken as an echo of the Brechtian tradition and the V-Effekt; in the performances, Tammy WhyNot functioned *both* as a distancing *and* as an affective "tool" that, instead of relying on psychological realism, might open up horizons for affirmative and playful reckonings as to identities, desires and sexualities through her communicative and seemingly friendly MC function, thereby also urging us to view all identities as processes inevitably entangled in biographies, imagination, and relations of power and knowledge.

[762] See Alston 2016, 10, 11, 16, 133. See also Alston 2013.
[763] See Chapters 2.8 and 3.6.

In *dominant powers*, the main performers' machine-like way of acting, the fragmentary textual subject matter they voiced – fragments of histories, of archives, of imagination, of philosophy – as well as the denunciation of psychological realism linked the performance to the Brechtian "V-Effekt" and the tradition of Critical Theory: the performance challenged simple assumptions about the authorship, origins and the truth value of speech, of stories and of narratives about revolutions and democracy distributed through mass media in an easily digestible form. Instead, *dominant powers* encouraged its participants to doubt and question the order of reality.

In the *Complaints Choir*, I located an underlying goal of counteracting alienation – here understood broadly as feelings of loneliness among the participants; Tellervo Kalleinen has talked about "the absence of the collective feeling" in our contemporary society as a key motivation for her artistic work.[764] Most Complaints Choirs, including those I have analyzed in this study, have been realized in cities. Due to their open access policy and the emphasis on communicative and affirmative action in the song composition process, the Complaints Choirs can be seen to counteract the anonymous and, for some individuals, lonely and uprooted urban life.

That is, concerning the main performers, both Weaver's *Tammy WhyNot* performances and Bosse's *dominant powers* denounced simple psychological realism and employed distanced acting that can be linked to the Brechtian tradition instead. Both performances also seemed to be based on the assumption that the current hegemonic order of reality – and anyone's experience of reality, for that matter – is always bound to power relations and visibility, and that dissemination of knowledge is processual and thus can be challenged and doubted. The Complaints Choirs, for their part, did not operate on such premises; the choirs can be seen to counteract "urban alienation" by affirmative action that might bring about "collective feelings".

Participants and communities: possessive individualism, therapeutic affirmative groups and a rhizomatic formation

Both Weaver's, the Kalleinens', and Bosse's projects relied on an assumption about a singular individual identity and agency of each participant. They did not aim to offer alternatives to the possessive individualism understood here as the grounding "equivalence between 'being a person' and 'having a body'"[765]; in each project, the participants were treated as singular self-conscious, psychological and bodily unities from the outset. However, there were differences as to how the projects approached and treated the individual participants and groups they formed within the event through their participatory strategies.

In Weaver's performances, the participants were assumed to be psychosexual individual subjects, "selves", who can govern, own and conceive of themselves through language. We were requested to verbalize and reveal our individual dreams and desires to the other participants. The project *Complaints Choir* also relied on the psychological "self" of the individual singers but there

[764] Tellervo Kalleinen in Kalleinen, Kochta-Kalleinen, Crone Jensen and Deblauwe 2006, 5-6.
[765] Cohen 2008, 103-104.

was no interest on the part of the Kalleinens to delve into the participants' psyches, wishes, biographies, or motivations for taking part in the project. The participants were not required to voice their complaints aloud during the performances but, in the song-composition workshops, to first write them down and then process them in groups. *Dominant powers* did not delve into our psyches or identities, either; the performance did not require the participants to reveal anything about themselves to other participants. The participants were treated as corporeal, curious and reflective individuals; through its subject matter, *dominant powers* also pointed towards the vulnerability of the human body and the individuality of perspectives and experiences of each person.

In Weaver's performances, the participants were treated as affirmative temporary groups unanimously sympathetic to Weaver's agenda, inputs, and participatory demands. We were positioned, especially in *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*, as a clearly defined "whole", as a harmonic group, in which all participants were supposed to share – or persuaded to share – Weaver-Tammy's views as well as to lend acceptance to each others' revelations as if in a group therapy situation or, sitting rather closely next to each other, as if in a school classroom. That is, in my reading, the participants of this performance formed a proto-therapeutical community led and trained by Weaver-Tammy.

Like Weaver's performances, the Complaints Choirs of Helsinki, Singapore and Vienna also relied on harmonic co-operation and can be seen to have the proto-therapeutic goal of turning the negative energy – inherent in complaints and complaining – into positive collective action. The singers of each choir were positioned as an affirmative group consisting of inhabitants of each city. Complaining functioned in the choirs as a social bond; as Saara Liinamaa puts it, "you complain to be agreed with, not to be proven wrong."[766] The individual complaints were turned into vocalisations of the choir so that the spectator-participants of the performances could not know the "originator" of each complaint; the focus was strongly on collective bodily expression and group formation through singing and the song-composition process. As in Weaver's performances, also in these choirs the spatial proximity and containment among the individual singers contributed to the group appearance and ambience. Through singing, the choir members formed temporary kinaesthetic, spatial and aural "wholes" for the duration of the song.

In contrast, *dominant powers* did not initiate such spatial proximity among the participants, nor did it suggest a specific mode of predefined group action among them. Instead, the performance urged its participants to move around the site – and even leave it during the performance – as they wished. While individual spectator-participants came together every now and then to view scenes at certain locations on the performance site, we did not form any clear-cut grouping that would have addressed or discussed any of the performance themes collectively. It was up to each spectator-participant what kind of intellectual and spatial mapping and what connections she was to create for herself during the performance. In my experience and reading it was the architecture – the walls and the division between the inside and the outside of

[766] Liinamaa 2009, 132. See also Complaints Choirs Wordwide, section "faq".

the building – and the abundance of stimuli and of acts taking place at different points, that "gathered" the participants or "defined" them as a very loose group. I viewed us, the spectator-participants and the performers, as a kind of a rhizomatic formation connected to each other by our presence and visibility to each other; we were likely to affect each other's experience of the performance even if we were not addressed as a monolithic "group" by the performers. The spatial progress of this rhizomatic formation depended on the reactions of each spectator-participant to the variety of stimuli at the site and could not be planned in advance.

Features of ideal participation: affirmation, expressivity and proaction

Based on the analysis of the body techniques and of the experience fields of each performance project, I have identified specific qualities that each performance demands from its participants; how they were, or would be ideally, supposed to play their part "properly", as suggested by the artists and the situation. In the *Tammy WhyNot* performances, the ideal spectator-participant would be sympathetic to Weaver's views and ethos; she would believe in the transformative power of affirmative action and therapeutic ambience, and contribute affirmatively to the performance. She would show extrovert behaviour and be willing and able to verbalize her sexual imagination, desires and potential sexual problems, to share them aloud, and to react convivially to the inputs of other active participants. The ideal participant would accept Weaver-Tammy's leading role and enjoy "getting trained" to become like Weaver and Weaver-Tammy: an exhibitionist taboo-breaker who cherishes sexuality in its diverse forms.

The ideal spectator-participant of a Complaints Choir would be troubled by specific complaints that he can verbalize and that he wants to voice with others. He would seek affirmative and harmonious collective action and, in rehearsal and performance situations, be willing to act synchronically and according to the score and the instructions of the conductor – to tune his voice and movements to those of the fellow singers. He would adhere to the song-composition process led by the artists and initiators, and be happy to be part of the project without financial remuneration. He would also be able to communicate in the majority language, enjoy performing as part of the choir in public and for camera, without wishing to stage any kind of intra-choral conflicts in the performance situations.

The ideal spectator-participant of *dominant powers*, for her part, would be curious, willing to move about, and interested in the various stimuli at the performance site. She would enjoy the absence of one central stage and being in a proactive participant-position, yet be happy with not intervening in the scenes or the performers' course of action and movements. She would not long for facilitated participation in the form of instructions, guidance, or facilitated forms of collective action. Instead, she would like fragmentary and intellectually challenging performances that urge her to make her own associative connections between the various textual materials, bodies and objects on show. The ideal participant would also notice when she needs a break from the performance and could act accordingly.

In other words, all of these projects required proactive participation, yet with different emphases. The *Tammy WhyNot* performances focused on the expressive speech of the individual participants, whereas in the *Complaints Choir* the emphasis was strongly on the expressive, harmonic and unified group singing and on the collective song-composition process. Both in the *What Tammy Needs to Know* performances and in the Complaints Choirs of Helsinki, Singapore and Vienna, it was essential to conform and adhere to the predefined form and procedure of participation developed by the artists beforehand. *Dominant powers*, for its part, focused on the proactivity of the individual participants; on their attentiveness and on their choices as to how to navigate and move about on the site and what stimuli to follow. Unlike Weaver's and Kalleinen's projects, Bosse's *dominant powers* did not suggest explicit guidelines or procedures as to participation for its spectator-participants.

Exclusionary tendencies: harmonic and expressive cooperation, demographic representation and previously acquired skills as key problems

My analyses have shown that both the *What Tammy Needs to Know* performances, the *Complaints Choir*, and *dominant powers* were prone to potential exclusions and limitations. In Weaver's performances, the affirmative ambience and the "contained" spatial setting discouraged critical responses. In them, introvertism was portrayed as incapability and the transformative potential of "speaking aloud" was taken for granted. In addition, Weaver's character-persona Tammy WhyNot can be seen as an exclusive "cover" to address myths and potentially embarrassing issues that the other participants of the performances did not have; it was assumed we would participate as ourselves. Especially in *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex*, the implicit naturalization of sexuality – the assumption that sexuality and sex are central issues in everyone's life – risked pathologizing sexually inactive participants. Moreover, the unquestioned reliance on clear speech in the performances over-emphasized our capacity for self-control. Weaver did not address the consumerist underpinnings of sex toys and of "improving" our sex life, either, thereby neglecting the possibility of potentially empowering critique of commodification of sexuality.

I have suggested that in Complaints Choirs, the contained, homogeneous and subtly coercive and uniform mode of performing may risk a proto-totalitarian dynamic and a tendency to the "spectacular"; the performances – and the artists – emphasize "collective feeling" and "grandness", that is, spectacularity in the performance situations that, on one hand, may bring about an appearance of a "protest rally" and allow the singers to "let off steam" collectively in public but, on the other hand, do not offer them actual programmatic possibilities for changing the state of affairs. I have also shown that participation in a Complaints Choir requires cultural competence and favours one's pre-existing singing and language skills; and that while the choirs are open to everyone, the preconditions for participation – the initial interest in such art projects and the will to sing in a choir – are to a degree tied to cultural

capital in Bourdieu's sense.[767] Thus, the choirs may have favoured participants possessing much cultural capital in Bourdieu's terms and led to the exclusion of potential participants with other sociocultural backgrounds and language deficits; in the Complaints Choirs of Helsinki, Vienna, and Singapore, the participants had to understand the local official language.

Further, in Complaints Choirs, the artists and local initiators had an authority position in relation to the song composition process, marketing and PR; these issues may have compromised the democratic goals of the project. In contrast to the belief in the affirmative power of the project – that the spectators would sympathetically relate to the singers and the complaints voiced – when performing at public sites, the choirs can be seen as forcing some passers-by to become spectators against their will. Lastly, the use of each city as lowest common denominator of the members of each choir, as well as the use of the term "citizen" in the project PR blurs the relation of the choirs to demographic representation and to the open access policy of the project; this lack of clarity may have appeared as alienating from the perspective of some otherwise potential participants living as not-fully-recognized members of the society in precarious situations, or who did not wish to be associated with demographic representation in any way.

When it comes to *dominant powers*, I have suggested that the performance was especially accessible to aficionados possessing much cultural capital, and previously acquired skills as to navigating on one's own in a performance situation, and also possessing "endurance": not everyone can physically or mentally commit to spending two hours on the performance site without guidance and proper seating, without knowing what will happen next. Indeed, *dominant powers* may have disappointed or alienated some spectator-participants who were not familiar with such situations and demands. The rather peripheral performance location further strengthened the exclusive tendency of *dominant powers*. The performance allowed us to "peek into" the thoughts and experiences of the interviewed residents in Egypt as distant observers and reflect on the subject matter within the art context of a safe European city; thus, *dominant powers* can also be viewed as an immersive "adventure park" on the topic of the Arab Spring events and the cultural histories of revolution for the Viennese art scene, as a "creative staging" that primarily served the reflective purposes – and the desire for stimulating experiences – of European art elite.

Dominant powers also had a slightly confusing relation to demographic representation: on one hand, it clearly de-stabilized the idea of representing any society as a "whole" yet, as to the interviews with Egypt residents, the performance employed classificatory demographic interview questions related to age, nationality and occupation. The performance presented us with a rather limited number of biographical perspectives through these demographically connoted interviews, most of which were of educated and culture-oriented individuals; there were no views or perspectives – such as that of a taxi driver or of a religious housewife potentially uninterested in liberal arts and culture –

[767] See Oxford Reference, Definition of "cultural capital". See also Bourdieu 1984, 13-14, 22-23, 114; Jeannotte 2003, 38; Liinamaa 2009, 131; Chapter 2.3 of this study.

to be heard or seen. The "chorus assembled of two generations with participants of different nationalities"[768] whose members were "volunteers from the city where the performance takes place"[769] that performed in *dominant powers*, also bears problematic links to demographic representation, as if this choir – or any choir – could represent individuals or groups along such neat lines of classification as "generations" or "nations". By employing such terminology, *dominant powers* entangles itself with the problematic issue of "demos" and demography which it challenges and deconstructs in other respects. The performance may also be seen to objectify the main female performers who wore tight costumes that emphasized their breasts and bottoms throughout the show: by stripping the characters of their psychological traits or personality, the performers can be seen as being defined mainly by and reduced to their body, (re)presenting sexualized female bodies whose identities do not matter. Lastly, *dominant powers* might be criticized for anthropocentric violence: as part of the performance, the budgies – that can be bought for a few euros in pet shops – were confined to "being on show" in their cage as if they were living "props", be exposed, at times, to the loud soundscape and the flux of spectator-participants staring at them and trying to communicate with them. While the human participants could move freely about the site, these birds could not.

While, as I have shown above, there were significant differences between the potential limitations and exclusions of the *Tammy WhyNot* performances, the *Complaints Choir*, and d*ominant powers*, it is nevertheless possible to identify certain convergences and similarities between them. First, Weaver's performances and the *Complaints Choir* rely on a strong, problematic assumption about affirmative, harmonic and therapeutic participation as well as on the authority position of the initiator-artists. Secondly, both the *Complaints Choir* and *dominant powers* have a confusing relation to demographic representation; they operate on demographic concepts yet simultaneously seem to renounce clear demographic representation, thereby entangling themselves with the issue of "demos" and the exclusions it may bring about. Further, the primary forms of performance participation in the *Complaints Choir* and *dominant powers* – choir singing and proactive navigation at the performance site respectively – may have been more accessible to individuals with much cultural capital and previous experience with art than for those without.

Horizons of change: different ways of challenging the order of reality and what is sensible within it

In my case study analyses, I have located vital horizons of change in all of the three performance projects. Weaver's performances may indeed have contributed to changing our ways of talking about sexual problems and sexuality in various social environments, for instance, with our partners, families and, importantly, with medical professionals. In addition, the performances dismantled stereotypes of "the elderly" and the "stupid blonde",

[768] Theatercombinat's website, dominant powers in Vienna.
[769] Theatercombinat's website, dominant powers in Vienna.

and counteracted "sex negativity" in our "Western" cultures. The performances also highlighted identities as social and performative processes and may thus have affected the world-view of some participants and helped us to understand our own position in the processes of social passing. Weaver-Tammy and the voluntary student who opened *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* with an improvised speech can be seen as potential role models. These role models might inspire some spectator-participants to adopt behaviour in their daily life that is myth-busting, extrovert, quick-witted and courageous – in other words, willing to step up and express themselves.

Both *What Tammy Needs to Know* performances can be seen as feminist and LGTBQ+ community-building events that contribute to creating a feeling of ideological and also political unity among likeminded people. What is more, Weaver's performances also hinted at the possibility of coalitional feminist identity politics that emphasizes dialogue between individuals and groups with different identities to locate grounds for alliance making and co-operation. Lastly, the participants in Weaver's performances gained merit and skills appreciated in the post-Fordist economy: Weaver as an artist-facilitator in the creative economy and academia; the spectator-participants in reacting spontaneously and promptly as well as in thinking about identities in terms of potentialities and processes that are essential features in post-Fordist work life; and the elderly female co-performers in *What Tammy Needs to Know about Getting Old and Having Sex* by showing their capacity to impress and entertain, bodily vitality, and word-wit in public, thus potentially gaining appreciation in the eyes of post-Fordist society.

As to Complaints Choirs, I have suggested that they have political relevance in voicing mundane complaints as a choir at public sites. The choirs bring to the fore the attention-raising power that resides in them as a spatial, kinesthetic and auditive group formation focused on a common effort, and make these accessible to broad potential audiences. If, as I have suggested, all complaints, including minor annoyances, are seen as politically relevant as they point to issues of dissatisfaction that form the basis for formal politics, then also making complaints audible and visible through choral singing in Complaints Choirs can be seen as political activity. The wide Internet presence of the project contains much potential for the distribution, networking, and initiating of new choirs. The Internet presence of Complaints Choir performance videos, especially on the project website and on Youtube multiplies the possibilities for sharing negative experiences – and making them seen and visible – to people living in different parts of the world. Potentially, the choirs can link people who are concerned about similar issues beyond the frames of national and local politics. In the long run, the project might function as a springboard for long-lasting collective protest and community-building activity; in principle anyone can be inspired and establish a new Complaints Choir in their neighbourhood with the easy DIY instructions presented on the project website. The Internet dimension of the project also offers possibilities for fighting censorship, as was the case with the Complaints Choir of Singapore.

What is more, as a concept the *Complaints Choir* can be viewed as shaping a form of participatory art practice that eschews the problem of the "predefined

community"[770]; it does not rely on any specific pre-existing "target group" community or a set of pre-defined issues to tackle through the project but, instead, brings people together who are not assumed or required to share common concerns or backgrounds from the outset.

Consequently, the heterogeneity and fragmentariness of complaints and everyday lives can become visible and sensible. In addition, as I have pointed out, the *Complaints Choir* can be seen as a format, or as a "brand", that has strengthened the Kalleinens' reputation as artists specialized in participatory projects. The Complaints Choir of Vienna, initiated by Oliver Hangl, has in particular gained wide media coverage and public visibility. This may also have benefitted also the careers, as a well-known project to include in one's artistic CV, of some of the singers who have professional artistic ambitions.

In my analysis I suggested that *dominant powers*, as a heterotopic site and event with different fragments of information and stories on show, gave participants in Vienna a vague kinaesthetic and intellectual glimpse of the situational dynamics of the "Arab Spring" that differ from the condensed and compact news stories about these events on the television, Internet, radio and in the press. The performance emphasized that revolutions – and the heterogeneity of lived realities they give rise to locally – can never be completely contained in clear-cut narrative frames or stories distributed through the media. The performance gave visibility to individual views of Egyptian residents and challenged media narratives and common media imagery on covering revolutions and portraying "protesting masses" of people on the streets. The overflow of stimuli and information fragments, as well as the self-navigation and proactivity demanded from us in *dominant powers*, can also be seen as pointing to the daily choices we have to make about which sources – and the voices these sources publicize – we pay attention to and which we ignore in the contemporary "information overload". That is, *dominant powers* made visible and sensible, and urged us to reflect on, the power- and sense-related roles of the mass media, and of us as media consumers, in representing, informing ourselves about and making sense of the "Arab Spring" and the protests in Egypt.

I have suggested that in *dominant powers* we, the participants, formed a kind of fleeting "rhizomatic" formation; the performance made sensible how perceptions and fragments of thought processes cross, rebound, and connect to other fragments without forming a "whole" or a "totality" that we could fully grasp. That is, *dominant powers* can be seen as a novel form of critical immersive performance practice; it employed immersive strategies but did not offer the participants any easily digestible consumerist spectacle to immerse themselves in. Instead, it triggered our reflective capacities in a way that may echo in our daily lives; it may affect our ways of viewing and interpreting news stories and, more broadly, media representations of revolutions as critical media consumers and art audiences. Also, as a strongly artist-driven project, *dominant powers* has likely contributed to Bosse's ongoing career as a renowned director and artist, as well as to the careers of the main performers. For the voluntary choir performers, *dominant powers* offered, at least, the

[770] See Chapter 4.9 of this study.

possibility of performing and gaining skills and experience in physical and speech training under Bosse's artistic direction, as part of the experimental project by the internationally renowned company.

As I have stated above, I believe that all artistic performances can potentially play with and challenge our experience of reality; what it consists of, and who and what have a part in it. They may bring about – at least momentarily – interruptions in the reigning "order of reality" and the "police order"; in the distribution of the sensible; and in normative body techniques and subjectification. They can also suggest, or just happen to bring about, novel sensory fields, body techniques, and subjectifications. This is why artistic performances can be seen as having political currency and being potentially capable of opening up horizons for change. In spite of their differences, all of the three projects I have analyzed in this study can be seen to have disturbed "the way in which bodies fit their functions and destinations" that Jacques Rancière sees as a precondition for the political effects of aesthetic experiences.[771]

Weaver's *Tammy WhyNot* performances challenged "social assumptions and myths"[772] and taboos around and about the elderly, sexual problems, sex toys, and the process nature of (sexual) identities, whereas the *Complaints Choir* both highlighted the potential political relevance of mundane complaints and petty annoyances that are usually not audible in public fora, showed the attention-raising power of singing choir groups whose members did not necessarily share any group identity in advance, and hinted at the community-building and anti-censorship potential of the project's Internet presence. *Dominant powers*, for its part, challenged common mass media narratives and imagery about the "Arab Spring", thereby urging the participants to reflect on their own position as media consumers; and forced them to adopt a proactive position by depriving them of any clear unilinear narrative, a "totality", or instructions that are common in much participatory practice.

Opening up the projects for potential development

I have also outlined possible directions in which the case study projects might be developed. These ideas should be understood as speculative thought experiments, not as concrete and potentially patronizing instructions. The *Tammy WhyNot* performances might be adapted to and performed in public spaces such as parks or squares to gain a broader participant basis, and to open up the multi-vocal reception, discussion and conflict potential that resides in the issues about politics, identity, sexuality, and participation discussed in the project. In this way the project might also challenge the affirmative and "housebroken" modes of communication underlying the Public Engagement ethos. Furthermore, giving up the centrality of and the leading position of Weaver-Tammy in the performances, perhaps in way similar to the procedures of Weaver's other concepts *The Long Table* and *The Porch Sitting*, might open up new horizons for change. Moreover, the Youtube channel opened by Weaver may further develop the participatory ethos underlying the *What Tammy Needs to Know* performances further in a productive and intriguing direction. Finally,

[771] Rancière 2008b, 11.
[772] See Harvie 2015d, 239.

Weaver's performances might gain more inclusive potential if they allowed more room for bodily vulnerability and fragility not implicitly portrayed as something to be "alleviated" or "cured" but as accepted and cherished states of the body, thereby potentially also challenging the post-Fordist and neoliberalist order with its exclusionary tendencies.

To challenge the potentially problematic reliance on uniformity and harmony in the Complaints Choirs, future choir songs might include overtly disharmonic tonal sequences; individual singers having solo parts in which they disassociate themselves from specific complaints they personally do not agree with, as well as parts in which they voice their discontent with the song composition process if needed. Also, future choir performance choreographies might include pre-planned sequences that disassemble the spatially monolithic choir formation and replace it with smaller groups spread unevenly across the performance site, perhaps challenging or attacking each other verbally or choreographically. I have also suggested that the decision-making and song-composition process might be taken in a radically democratic direction; for instance, scrapping the leader-position would let all interested members take an active part in the process of composing the song and making the lyrics without the professional artists as the "gatekeepers", or the initiators could consistently highlight all the singers in the PR of the choirs.

Furthermore, the Internet dimension of the project could be used more extensively by establishing a "global" Complaints Choir, gathering interested people living in different countries and continents through the project website. This choir might rehearse internationally, at the same time, through a virtual real-time communication platform and then organise well-coordinated collective actions, performances, or protests simultaneously in several places and countries. This kind of experiment might help detach the *Complaints Choir* from demographic representation and cater for the protest possibilities I have identified in the project.

For its part, *dominant powers* might be adapted in locations with flows of passers-by such as an empty shop or office premises on a busy pedestrian street, or a shopping centre to make it more accessible yet without losing the heterotopic ambience. As the performance concept allows the spectator-participants to come and go as they like, the potential fluctuation of audience in such a busy environment might not pose a major problem. To challenge the underlying anthropocentrism of and power over the budgies in *dominant powers*, in a potential future adaptation of the performance, it might be interesting to let the budgies fly freely around the performance site making noise, intervening in scenes and so on, thereby showing the human participants more species-specific behaviour than by being kept in a cage under our gaze, and in so doing add yet another sensory and sensible layer to the interrelated themes of politics, violence and power addressed in the performance.

The potential future adaptations of *dominant powers* might also employ electronic platforms such as Skype, Facebook or Twitter that have become important sources for exchanging information in the 2000s, including during the Arab Spring and Tahrir Square events. For instance, what if the performance choir were composed of, say, individuals who perform live via Skype or via another live video platform instead of being live at the

performance site, and presented on screens and Ipads, and/or projected on the walls and ceilings? This might challenge the idea of the choir as a physical gathering of bodies at one place, and highlight today's non-mass media forms and platforms of communication. Lastly, to challenge problematic demographic connotations, *dominant powers* might be adapted to and performed in a non-European country; the choir might be renamed and also include non-white performers. As I pointed out, there has been movement in this direction as *dominant powers* was adapted and performed at the festival *Journées théâtrales de Carthage* in 2012 in Tunis, Tunisia.

To sum up, while each project opens up specific possibilities for further development, these possibilities revolve in all three projects around the selection of a performance site; and electronic platforms for communication. With regard, especially, to the *Tammy WhyNot* performances and the *Complaints Choir,* there would also be much room for inclusion of non-affirmative and challenging responses, and for renegotiating the authority position of the artists.

6.4 Concluding Remarks: Relevance of This Study for Performance Research and Beyond

In this study, I have operated on the premises that experiencing and researching performance – sensing and making sense of it – is always an entanglement of bodily and cognitive, material and performative processes, and that the ideological assumptions and the processes of exclusion and inclusion of a performance can be located through the analysis of the modes of bodily participation employed in it. The term "politics of the sensible" highlight this experiential entanglement and its significance for understanding the relationship between power, perception and the body in performance situations.

The analytical framework that I have developed and employed in this study shows ways in which Jacques Rancière's, Marcel Mauss's and Michel Foucault's views may resonate with each other; with Pierre Bourdieu's and Judith Butler's thoughts; and with recent research on affects, both in performance analytical contexts and in making sense of our daily lives. I have also outlined points of convergence and difference between the framework and other recent accounts regarding perception and participation within performance studies, thereby responding to the lack of explicit accounts of our "perceptual apparatus" in our field and providing new insights in this regard.

I have suggested that theatre images are a plausible "interface" for grasping and bringing together the relationships between the performance events; my experiences as a participant; and the analytical framework. While, as I pointed out in Chapter 2.9, theatre images are not commensurable with each other, it is possible to locate a few common features or currencies among many of the case study theatre images that I have employed in this study. These include the spatial setting and the relation between participants in that setting, and the

tension between what I have described as the affirmative ambience of the event and my momentary personal feeling of unease as a participant.

My case study analyses have brought about critical perspectives and notions that have not been addressed in previous research on Weaver's, the Kalleinens' and Bosse's projects. First, as to the *What Tammy Needs to Know* performances, I have located potentially exclusive tendencies in Weaver-Tammy's participatory strategy based on verbalization and extrovert behaviour, and thereby offered an alternative to the prevailing affirmative readings. My study has also addressed the compliance of Weaver's participatory strategies and ethos in the performances with a post-Fordist mode of work, and explicitly analysed their "educating" and "therapeutic" dimensions as well as their reliance on the psychosexual subject assumption.

As to the *Complaints Choir*, unlike previous analyses I have thematised the problematic sides of affirmation, authority and uniformity inherent in the project. I have also pointed to the significance of the website and the Internet presence of Complaints Choirs; to the political relevance of the online accessibility and extensive documentation of the choirs; and to the possibility of creating a "global" protest or activist Complaints Choir with the help of real-time virtual communication technology. Instead of seeing anti-capitalist possibilities in the project in its current form, I have located issues – such as unremunerated work input; the promotion of extrovert and bold behaviour and of cooperation skills; the ethos of creating "feelings of community" seen as a therapeutic measure; and the potential process of "professionalization" of the singers – that make the project conform rather neatly to the ethos of post-Fordist Capitalist economy.

Compared to previous research on *dominant powers*, my analysis has taken a decidedly body-based approach to analysing the performance. Instead of locating a possibility of "relief" in the demand for the spectator-participant to make choices as she moves about at the site, as critic Andrea Heinz suggested, my analysis has pointed out that we as spectator-participants were not altogether "masters" of our experiences but were also "bombed", or "harassed", with stimuli that may have breached our experience horizons within the distribution of the sensible that we are part of.[773] Instead of locating the "relieving" potential of *dominant powers* in the spectator-participant's "freedom" to become to a certain extent the "director" of her experiences, my analysis – an almost polar contrast to Heinz's reading – has shown the "therapeutic" or relieving possibility of *questioning* my views of the themes that *dominant powers* gives rise to. Further, based on my analytical framework I have also been able to describe the "ambience" of turmoil, and the sense of what revolution may "feel like", in more detail – and in relation to the functioning of the human perceptual apparatus – than Sara Schausberger who only hints at this issue in her review.[774]

While my analysis recognizes the partially "challenging" nature and exclusive tendencies of *dominant powers* hinted at in several analyses and reviews, I have also pointed out that the refusal to offer any one clear "answer"

[773] See Heinz 2012, 51; Chapter 5.11 of this study.
[774] Schausberger 2011, 21.

or "perspective" for the spectator-participants to consume is at the core of the transformative potential of the performance. Like Sara Schausberger's, my analysis also recognizes the significance of the performance site itself but, instead of viewing the performers as "unnecessary" altogether, I have addressed several encounters with performers that contributed essentially to my experience of *dominant powers* and its transformative potential.[775]

Although I have devised my framework primarily for analysing participatory performance projects, it does not lend itself solely to retrospective analysis; it can also be seen to suggest relevant questions, for instance, for artists devising participatory projects, for practice-based researchers in the performing arts, for exhibition curators, and for theatre and art educators planning their projects and reflecting on their aims, assumptions and strategies. While each participatory project, each artistic research project, each exhibition and each educational project has, of course, its specific rationale and is embedded in specific institutional resources and procedures, questions such as the following, arising from this study, might serve as useful reference points:

- What kind(s) of body techniques does the project employ, challenge, interrogate?
- What kind(s) of spatial setting and participatory positions are planned?
- What kind of ambience is striven for? Why?
- What strategies are employed to direct the participants' attention in the project?
- What assumptions about "ideal" or "desired" participation might the project rely on?
- Does the project allow or encourage questioning and spontaneous, potentially subversive action by the spectators, listeners, co-performers, exhibition visitors? Why? Why not?[776]

As for the relevance of my framework beyond contexts in the arts, it might provide productive inputs in areas such as epistemology, semiotics, and political science, especially as to making sense of how our perceptional apparatus informs the signification process; of how knowledge and experience "take form" both bodily, cognitively, materially and performatively; of the ways in which power relations and the dynamic of inclusions and exclusions are bound to perception, knowledge and behavioural patterns; and of how the habitual dimension – what we encounter in our everyday lives – informs and structures our world-views and our ethical and social standpoints.

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[775] See Schausberger 2011, 21.

[776] I briefly discuss the potential relevance of my framework for practice-based researchers in the performing arts in my text "What Should the Body Do? On Perception, Normativity and Artistic Research" (Lahtinen 2020). As I have pointed out in Chapter 2.6, sensory fields and experience fields that performance situations give rise to include features and elements such as the actions of performers and other participants; what is visible and audible; where the participants are supposed to sit, stand or move about; and the atmosphere of the event. However, sensory fields and experience fields are always situational and depend on the specific bodily constellation, expectations, moods and reactions of each participant that cannot be fully predicted in advance.

For instance, the framework might contribute to the discourse on "ephemeral politics" in the field of International Relations which, following Xavier Guillaume and Jef Huysmans, aims to imagine "political life that does not fall back on essentialised accounts of politics"[777]; through paying special attention to the concept of the everyday, "ephemeral politics" posits that "the order of politics [should not be understood] in terms of an order of mastering the political but as an immanently precarious succession of situations and practices in which lived political lives remain inherently aleatory, momentary and emergent [--]."[778] The concepts "body techniques", "sensory fields" and "experience fields" might be useful in addressing this dynamic both conceptually and, possibly, through particular case study analyses of mundane situations that show how the "political significance of fleeting practices"[779] might be understood on a practical level.

Instead of reiterating strict binaries or dichotomies such as those between "biological" and "cultural", or between "bodily" and "intellectual"; or between "material" and "performative", my framework has aimed to shed light on the intertwinedness of these in human perception, meaning making and power relations. Furthermore, the framework shows how Jacques Rancière's, Marcel Mauss's and Michel Foucault's insights, inputs from the affect theory, and Pierre Bourdieu's and Judith Butler's thinking can be plausibly and productively amalgamated in this undertaking. Thus, my framework might also be useful for fellow scholars doing research on the relations and intersections between the concepts and ideas of the aforementioned key theorists and philosophers.

This study has revolved around the processes of making sense – to conclude, I hope that the considerations that I have presented will contribute to our understandings of the complex dynamic of perception, power, materiality and performativity in performance situations, in our daily lives, and in the formation of reality.

[777] Guillaume and Huysmans 2019, 293. Guillaume and Huysmans refer to Walker, R.B.J.: *After the Globe, before the World*, Abingdon: Routledge 2010.
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[779] Guillaume and Huysmans 2019, 278.

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Photo credits

Photo 1 (page 30): Screenshot of the video trailer filmed by Leo Lee, screenshot by Joonas Lahtinen. Source: https://vimeo.com/77787827 (30.06.2019)

Photo 2 (page 31): Petri Summanen, detail of the original photo cropped by Joonas Lahtinen

Photo 3 (page 33): Alexander König

Photo 4 (page 84): Finnish National Gallery/Nea Helsto

Photo 5 (page 84): Screenshot of the video trailer filmed by Leo Lee. Screenshot by Joonas Lahtinen. Source: https://vimeo.com/77787827 (30.06.2019)

Photo 6 (page 85): Screenshot of the video trailer filmed by Leo Lee, screenshot by Joonas Lahtinen

Photo 7 (page 85): Screenshot of the video trailer filmed by Leo Lee, screenshot by Joonas Lahtinen. Source: https://vimeo.com/77787827 (30.06.2019)

Photo 8 (page 130): Petri Summanen

Photo 9 (page 130): Photographer unknown

Photo 10 (page 131): Screenshot of the video uploaded to Youtube by the user PAKnope (Philipp Knopf), screenshot by Joonas Lahtinen. Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dunvqsUNKbs (30.06.2019)

Photo 11 (page 131): Screenshot of the video uploaded to Youtube by the user Atomipommi (Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen), screenshot by Joonas Lahtinen. Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x0ZY4Bn6q2s (30.06.2019)

Photo 12 (page 175): Alexander König

Photo 13 (page 175): Alexander König