

## **Performing Exteriority**

### **An Essay on Virtuality and Mimesis in Spatial and Agential Contexts**

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#### **The Virtual and the mimetic: on the “ideally-real” and its impossible model**

Several recent work processes within the theatre and the performing arts have engaged the concept of virtuality with various technologically generated, enhanced, emphasized, hidden, implicated or simulated phenomena (events, temporal measures, spaces and agents), which operate independently or interact with the human performer through present or telepresent contact surfaces, simultaneously or not. However, even in the given context, virtuality (or the Virtual) is not something that merely structures or widens the practices of creative work or offers it novel (often futuristic) discussion platforms.<sup>1</sup> If one wishes to build up a better understanding of its various contemporary uses and meanings, it must be outlined against a wider conceptual, historical, philosophical and practical background.

Therefore I wish to emphasize here the “ideally-real” composition of the Virtual, which one may encounter on the level of ideologies, religion and ideas – irrevocably devoid of any *explicit* representations: a cross symbol does not correspond to the Christian ethos, etc. –, and, on the other hand, on the level of everyday experience, matter and the social structures related to the former two, without the mediating role of technology (Shields 2006, 285). (It must be noted at this point that in the given context the term *ideally real* refers to an ideally outlined *reality* rather than the *real*, as the latter is later defined as the being/becoming which enables the development of reality but cannot be fully grasped within its framework.<sup>2</sup>) To be sure, the further one moves towards virtual and technologically generated identities, consciousnesses, spaces and agencies (autonomous or semi-autonomous by nature), the more complex their definitions become from the viewpoints of humanity, subjectivity, communality and the performing arts. Yet as Rob Shields (2006, 284; 2003, 28) notes, the essential problematic of the Virtual is already present in all the abstract and intangible phenomena, which chart, oblige and, in the end, embody humane, material and cultural *existence*; phenomena such as information, memory/remembrance, economy, knowledge, culture, gender and skill or means (the Greek *tekhnē*). As regards *matter*, this leads to the observation that the “[a]esthetic properties [of an object, an entity, an act or a phenomenon] are not limited to what we can see and hear; they are vitally influenced by what we know or believe” (Saltz 1997, 124; brackets RR).<sup>3</sup> With its way of problematizing the nature of *corporeal information*, the mentioned observation is then prone to dissolve the boundaries between experience, consciousness, and the phenomenal world – i.e., the boundaries often expounded with such terms as *interiority* and *exteriority* when speaking of, e.g., *psychophysical*

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. e.g. Dixon 2007; Causey 2006; Giannachi 2004; Klich & Sheer 2011; Kaye 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Sheridan 1998, 280; Libbrecht 2001, 154-159.

<sup>3</sup> See. e.g. Bryant & Pollock 2010, 15; Shields 2003, 19.

*agency, spatiality*, (transcendental) idealism and their corporeal enactment. Already in 1997, Guillermo Gómez-Peña, the Mexican artist famous for his intermedial/hybrid performances and 'ethno-techno art', described and satirized the psychophysical confusion evoked by virtual activities by saying that

[i]n the past 8 hours, / I've been a man, a woman and a s/he. / I've been black, Asian, Mixteco, German / and a multi-hybrid replicant. / I've been 10 years old, 20, 42, 65. / I've spoken 7 broken languages. / As you can see, I need a break real bad, / just want to be myself for a few minutes. / ps: my body however remains intact, untouched, unsatisfied, / unattainable, untranslatable.<sup>4</sup>

Gómez-Peña's account of virtual interaction and agency speaks both of various ideally real representations of the self (such as age, ethnicity, gender and linguistic identity) and certain psychophysical needs and sensations (of self-identification, desire and the inarticulate existence of the body), which, simultaneously, strive to demarcate and transpose the spheres of virtuality and (corpo)reality. It therefore suggests that the by now much-debated identity politics of technological and virtual communication are indeed rooted in a problematic already present not only in the issues of subjectivity, materiality, language and existence,<sup>5</sup> but also in the mimetic processes which enable the various social and political functions of *imitation* and *representation*. By the same token, one must notice – as below, with the analyses of mimetic processes and the endless *performative* and *scenic* acts of *modelling* they embody – that what might become even more crucial than the soluble essence of corporeal information (also qua *knowledge* or *belief*) in this regard, is all that is *not-known*, *unimaginable* or *not-yet-believed*; the *mimetic appeal of the real*, which steers a sensation or an action towards that which makes the world (more) sensible – i.e., a *reality* that 'makes sense'.

Even so, the concept of the Virtual Shields describes has a role in this process. Following Marcel Proust, Gilles Deleuze and Henri Bergson (among others), he approaches it as a phenomenon which can be distinguished from "the Abstract" (the ideally possible), "the Concrete"/'present' (the actually real) and "the Probable" (the actually possible), but which operates in an organic and dynamic relationship with the latter three through, e.g., "actualization" and "abstraction". (As a concept the Virtual is also an abstract entity and therefore something *ideally possible*.) On the basis of these characterizations, the Virtual can be seen as a capacity or a *tekhnē* (of the phenomenal world) that draws equally from the concrete need and freedom to *do* and *be*, and the need and freedom to *think* – the Deleuzian "site of genuinely creative difference" (Bryant & Pollock 2010, 15). It emerges from the *ecstatic* (non-static) movement of matter, information and thought as a site or a space of *becoming*, which is committed to but not confined to the actual; as a space that – with its capacity to *be* and to be *real*, to *exist* – strives towards something else, something *other*, exteriority

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<sup>4</sup> Cited in Gómez-Peña 2000, 45.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. Dourish 2006, 300, 304-305; Massey 2005, 93-97; Paavolainen 2012, 25.

and 'being-towards' (which also means striving towards the problem of *encountering*). At the same time, the description approaches Josette Féral's (2003, 214) definition of *theatricality*, which "cannot *be*, it must be *for* someone." The ideal aspects of the Virtual are closely related to the Concrete, language, manifestation and the various practical challenges of existence, making it a *performative* phenomenon, a potential/capacity to realize and challenge different cultural, social and artistic practices and ideologies.<sup>6</sup> According to Shields,

[t]he Virtual itself can be said to be a capacity to be actualized as a singular, concrete object. Actualization is performative – the Virtual itself is a multiplicity which can be actualized in different ways. If it is known by its effects, then it is known through a specific instantiation, not as a whole. It thus retains its creative character as an ontological category pertinent to discussions of change, becoming, genesis, development, emergence, autopoiesis, the genetic power of codes as well as of codings themselves. ... [O]bjects wear or bodies age, their concrete materiality changes, but they retain their virtuality – their identity and their coherence with themselves.<sup>7</sup>

The virtuality of existence or an existent (of that-which-is) is defined above via its identity qua something freed from but concerning actuality – the very "coherence" of (its) existence – and therefore as a process or a *tekhnē* of *becoming*, a *performance of exteriority* wherein existence (or an *entity*) becomes structured, *in-formed*, manifested and compounded; *modelled* without the restrictions of matter or a static – and, in itself, *impossible* – form or a model operating in the background, the Platonic *Idea*. (Cf. Lévy cited in Weber 2004, 284-285; *ibid.*, 294.) It also starts to represent a certain mutual 'desire' or an 'incidence' between stability and change, the general and the particular, as well as meaning and expression (later articulated as the movement of *scenicity*). (Cf. Lindberg 2009, 22-23.) These descriptions appear already to approach the concept of mimesis (as both imitation and representation), but they have a larger ontological problematic to bear which concerns the *real* and its 'mimetic gravity'. The transference endemic to the Virtual and the Actual in our everyday endeavours and their ideological/conceptual causes and effects tells us that in their actualization, our (operational) environments express or perform the *withdrawing* essence, movement or character of being/the real (central, e.g., to Heidegger), its simultaneous ability to remain *irrational* or intangible and to force subjective existence into being as reality, form and thought. By becoming observable and knowable in actualization, and thus by affecting the ideally real and corporeal existence of the human animal, being (or the real) already expresses its capacity to remain exterior to its sensible or ideated articulations, and therefore suggests that the essence of its *truth* and *sense* relies largely on its ability to withdraw qua '*non-sensible exteriority*'.

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<sup>6</sup> Shields 2003, 28-29; *ibid.* 2006, 285; see Deleuze 2004; Bergson 2007.

<sup>7</sup> Shields 2006, 285; see *ibid.* 2003, 25.

While explicating the relation between *rhythm* and mimesis in the thought of Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Susanna Lindberg's essay "Olemisen rytmi" [The Rhythm of Being] (2009, 24-26, 28-29, 31-36)<sup>8</sup> conveys the above-mentioned view to a more constitutive direction as regards *entities*. Lindberg describes the relation between interiority and exteriority via the "liminal nature" of being – resounding through the Greek term for "privation", *sterēsis*, and Heidegger's *Entzug*, withdrawal –, which determines existence as a distance or a desire/'thrownness' (characteristic of an entity), an *ecstasy* (cf. the Gr. *ékstasis*) which presumes an *encounter* or a *mutuality* (as/of difference and similarity) and makes the exclusion of *the other* impossible. As regards the present themes, and especially the questions of consciousness, interiority and exteriority, this also means that a certain exteriority operates and manifests itself within the *agency* of subjectivity (or, henceforth, the Subject). At the same time, all the *representations* it generates respond as a sort of desire – and as creation and supplementing, in an Aristotelian fashion – to the withdrawal and "privation" of being qua an exterior or *irrationality* (which, however, concede the very rationality of the representations). One may note how the constant reversion of the Virtual to *tekhnē* (qua 'genesis of existential coherence') resembles this process of supplementing (or compensating for) the privation of being, indicating not only the ecstatic character of virtual representations, but also the fact that their creation is linked to an ontological problematic which already exceeds any straightforward reciprocity between actuality and virtuality. This discovery becomes visible also in the impossibility of reducing the relations between Shields' key concepts to mere analogies or bipolar transitions.<sup>9</sup>

Lindberg's analysis, however, does not settle for discussing the ways in which the mentioned problematic relates to its rational and, in the end, anthropocentric phrasings. It approaches the concept of *rhythm* as the "characterization" of existence qua the "form[at]" of its "movement", while the law/act that establishes rhythm is *mimesis*, dissolving the "self" (or the Subject) as an "elementary trait of existence," inasmuch as it is an "empty capacity for all forms, without criteria – while being nothing in itself." Rhythm embodies a "varying repetition" which transcends the means of reason as a measure (metricity) without a measure (metre), whose very existence, however, requires that the measures it measures retain a mutuality and encounter one another by force of difference and similarity (i.e., as a break, suspension, unexpectedness, anticipation and repetition). At hand is no less than a mimetic "repetition of the other," a *performance of exteriority* always already present. (Taking notice of certain upcoming issues, the described "varying repetition" [of the other] appears to be a central factor – as a *tekhnē* – in Merlin Donald's *rhythmic mimesis* involved in social behavior and learning.<sup>10</sup>) Eventually, Lindberg releases rhythm from the captivity of "logic", accents, periodicity and demarcation by

<sup>8</sup> Translations from Finnish and brackets RR.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Lindberg 2009, 25. Drawing from Heidegger, Lindberg (2009, 25-26) notes, however, that "[a]uto-poiēsis or self-generation exists only because the entity itself is a desire or an ecstasy; it becomes what it is once it excludes that which it is not; moreover, that-which-an-entity-is-not does not manifest itself to the entity otherwise than in its withdrawn state."

<sup>10</sup> E.g. Donald 1993.

observing its manner of 'marking/stamping' human experience with various pre-given "tones [or timbres/tunes]" and "pulses", as well as its "arch-ethical" ability to interrupt the formation and entrenchment of meanings as an experiential "one must" (*il faut*) devoid of representations (especially in the context of artworks). Thus, much like virtuality, the rhythm committed to human experience begins to dissolve in a measureless (or even 'indiscreet') state/process of becoming, a *timbre* of the experiential world, wherein neither consciousness nor the world may set their mutual pace. Instead, they are 'stamped' (cf. the French verb *timbrer*) and compelled by an exteriority, which does not belong to the (political) sphere of comparing, negotiating and verifying individual rhythms or viewpoints, but to a "one must", a gravity marking existence without an accent that appoints or terminates it, without the spheres of life and death as *human totalities*. Whether one talks about representation, manifestation, meaning or experience, there is a rudimentary timbre that compels each of them as the possibility of the *end of all*, an *exterior* possibility (or a threat) of interrupting or deconstructing *all* – even the movement of the Heideggerian *alētheia* (truth) and of the divinely and mythically inspired mimetic arts in Plato (both described below). In Lacoue-Labarthe this rudimentary timbre is embodied (or displaced) by rhythm and "pure speech" (Lindberg 2009, 33-34).<sup>11</sup>

The above views resound through many of the research issues that define the relations between virtuality, scenicity and the performing arts. For those who wish to trace the influence of anthropocentric performance and human experience on the question of virtuality, and vice versa, Samuel Weber's thoughts on the interaction between theatricality, actuality and virtuality provide a multifaceted starting point. Explicating Antonin Artaud's theatrical visions, Weber's *Theatricality as Medium* (2004, 278-279, 281-286, 290-292) speaks of theatrical action and *gesture* as something "singular" – devoid of perfect repetition/reproduction and, therefore, as something always positing an other, the other. Weber thus reopens the millenia-old scheme between theatrical – or, generally speaking, *performing* – activity, the *varying repetition* of mimesis, the problematic of the *general* and the *particular*, as well as the ecstatic desire of/for *exteriority* and *mutuality* described above. Moreover, from Artaud's theatre emerges a strong demand for deconstructing the psychological (i.e., the anthropocentrically stabile) world view and conception of theatre: as far as theatre's duty is to teach us that "the sky can still fall on our heads," it has to appeal – with its *singularity* and its 'one must' – to the (rhythmic and exterior) possibility of the *end of all* (encompassing all that fumbles for the world as a humane and/or artistic vision of interiority and exteriority); to the virtual and, in the end, *non-performative* "gratuitousness" of an action or a gesture, their departure from the actual. (See also Artaud 1970, 15.) This leads to a vision of a theatre inhabited by potential, risk and, if

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<sup>11</sup> Lindberg 2009; see also Luoto 2009, 44. According to Lindberg (2009, 29) "[m]imesis resembles *sterēsis* inasmuch as neither of them is able to subsume the other but rather collides with the other's withdrawal. Yet the other manifests itself, if only in a withdrawn manner, and is preserved as the only source of self-identification – therefore, self-identification cannot amount to pure ecstasy." (Translation from Finnish and brackets RR.)

you may, mere *virtual coherence of existence* (detached from but concerning the actual); to theatre's potential as an exterior measure without measure, "that momentary pointlessness" which results in "useless acts without immediate profit" (ibid.). (Here, Artaud's theatre starts to resemble some of the definitions of rhythm above.) From this configuration one may extract a strong *virtual* aspect,<sup>12</sup> and for Weber it is, inter alia, Pierre Lévy's notion of the virtual as a dynamic "[d]etachment from the here and now" and as a transition from the actual and the present to their inspection in general terms (but not to the sphere of 'pure possibility'). This means treating the actual not as a "solution" (or a representation), but as a factor of a "problematic field" and, therefore, as an element of redefining the actual through an exteriority it, in itself, produces – Weber notes that this is Socrates' strategy in Plato. (Lévy cited in Weber 2004, 284-285.) Another notable point intertwining virtuality and the performing arts in Artaud's theatrical subtext is his way of deepening the problematic of mimesis (and art theory) audible in Plato and Aristotle by defending the (rhythmic) potential of "a language of *signification*," the expressive force of "gesture, intonation, attitude, and movement," while verbal/literary (or, in other words, *stabile* and consciousness-oriented) meaning is treated as a far too pivotal element in Western theatre tradition (ibid., 286). For the present inquiry the latter theme is of central interest, as it opens up a passage through which to communicate with Weber's phenomenology of the virtual and its views on anthropocentrism, reality, meaning and consciousness; a passage formed by the radical but organic interaction between thought, reality, meaning and the real.

While discussing Descartes' theses on the consciousness and its (absolute) certitude and stability, Weber (2010, 72-74) contemplates whether the virtual strategies of the "Self" (or here, the Subject) stem already from the former's effort of enforcing a "singular" and "self-contained" (virtual) consciousness – not just as a human consciousness, but as (self-)assertion of "a thinking thing" (*res cogitans*), "a thinking thing thinking nothing but itself thinking." (See also Descartes 1994, 90-99.) At hand is no less than the *thinking of thinking*, a transition from situational and historical subjectivity and its peculiarity to the category of the general, and from spatio-temporal transience and instability to the "*gerund*" and the "*present participle*"; to a 'self-sufficient' repetition of the certitude and stability of thought, a *sameness* without variation or *otherness*, "a subject which is also its own object[.]" Yet, inasmuch as this is an impossible endeavour for the spatio-temporal, actual and *ecstatic* Subject – always determining and falling subject to an *exteriority* –, the Virtual must also revert from it to 'that-which-the-Subject-is-not' (qua sameness); it must yield *reality* as an 'orchestration' of subjectivity and the *real*, as a (virtual) reality which dispels the boundaries between interiority and exteriority. One may

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<sup>12</sup> Artaud himself coins the term "the virtual reality [la réalité virtuelle] of theatre" in the essay "The Alchemical Theater" (brackets RR). See Weber 2004, 287 and Artaud's *The Theater and its Double* (1958), 48-52. Transl. Mary Caroline Richards. Grove Press: New York, NY.

pursue Weber's configuration by suggesting that the Subject, which exists within the fluctuating and indefinite time-space of the real – retaining its *sameness* and certitude (its self-evidence) only through pure or 'purely impossible' *repetition* and thinking of itself (thinking itself thinking itself etc.) –, perceives and encounters the world *virtually*, at the (possibly) sensible/meaningful intersection of its (hypothetical) subjective sameness and the ambiguity implicit in the real, the anticipated and experiential 'here and now' of virtuality – or (the) virtual (*of*) *reality* – which, essentially, does not distinguish between the Subject and the real. Therefore, the Subject must also assimilate the *foreign* nature of the repetition of sameness it leans towards, its immanent inability of becoming comprehensible. The repetition is delineated and directed only by a reference to exteriority and its capacity to intervene. All virtual hypotheses anticipating or assessing the experiential world (be they cultural, ideological, practical or religious), posit that some subjectivity – on its way to becoming neutral, self-certain and objective somehow – passes through the obscurity of the real and is able to throw at least an assumption of that subjectivity (and its reality) ahead of itself in all its activity.<sup>13</sup> The exteriority that interrupts and dissolves the Cartesian Subject is also its own immanent trait, the 'standing forward' – the very *existence*<sup>14</sup> – of its ambivalent reality, a simultaneous performance of difference, making difference and standing out, something that constantly concerns itself but transforms itself: a *performance of exteriority* generated in and by the Subject.

But how should we relate the concept of *mimesis* and its artistic or performative implications to the definitions of the Virtual above? Inasmuch as the whole spectrum of practical and conceptual relations between these terms is put into operation in early Western theatre/performance theory, its development must be examined relative to the constitutive definitions of *mimesis*. While Aristotle lays stress on the function of artistic *mimesis* as an agent capable of producing pleasure, sense and knowledge, and thus as an elementary trait and an asset of the human animal (the 'most mimetic' of all animals), Plato takes notice of the largely erratic operation of *inspiration*, similarity and difference in all *poetic* imitation and representation. Broadly put, he defines artistic activity as a humane process, which relies heavily on an *autonomous* and creative – plus, in the end, *divine* – view or rendition of existence and the possible. Art participates in the construction of reality from a position, which does not look on *truth*, its representation or the *rational* worldview as principal necessities of existence or (its) depiction, yet without excluding them altogether. (The "inevitable" and the "probable" elements of tragedy central to Aristotle decades later are thus predefined as articulations of artistic inevitability and probability, not necessarily as epithets of

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<sup>13</sup> Here, my reading of Weber appears to approach *pragmatic* philosophies, which acknowledge the function of beliefs in the very structure of reality.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Weber 2010, 74. In this connection, the term *existence* must be perceived via its etymology – which, incidentally, is Socrates' strategy in unearthing the *meaning* of phenomena or knowledge in Plato's *Cratylus* (see below): it must be studied as 'standing outside of oneself,' a constant process of adopting an exterior position which determines being as/through a subjective relation with the world. Cf. e.g. Kirkkopelto 2005, 22-23.

truth, reality and representation.) Already in his early works, such as the *Apology*, *Euthyphro* and *Ion*, Plato differentiates between (truth-related) knowledge and artistic expression by implicating – at that point with no reference to mimesis – that an artist (or art itself) is, in the end, unable to analyse or control the unearthly knowledge and truth involved in her creative work processes (by “divine dispensation” and “influence”, and not by “art”), although her capacity to appeal to her audience, relying on *inspiration*, is beyond dispute. Lyric poets “do not indite those fine songs in their senses, but when they have started on the melody and rhythm they begin to be frantic,” i.e., “under possession”. While “inspired”, a reciter or an actor is “put out of his senses” and thus his rational/subjective position – “his mind is no longer in him” (cf. *ékstasis* above) –, transmitting this inspiration also to his audience. (*Ion*, 534a-c)<sup>15</sup> A skilled reciter of Homer – that is, the rhapsode Ion – considers himself an astute warlord on the basis of his reciting skills, and an artist’s vision of the antics of the gods is seen as justified while similar actions among humans are often reprehensible. (Aristotle’s later view of art’s universal status/substance is thus introduced in Plato with reference to its transcendent/divine and unchallengeable origin.) The *Cratylus*, for its part, explicates the relations between nature (*phusis*), reality/existence (*ta onta*, ‘things that are’), language and representation by distinguishing between verbal naming of things and their depiction or imitation via *movement*, *gesture*, *music* and even *poetry* (i.e., via the *tekhnē* of the mimetic arts). While verbal naming approaches the essence of things and being qua truth or untruth (*pseudos*), the media of the mimetic arts lend themselves to depiction and pursuit of the *general* and *particular* features of *real*, being thus capable of producing a generic and specific representation of the structure of the real simultaneously.<sup>16</sup>

The logocentric musings of the *Cratylus* remain highly significant for Western theatre, performing arts and actorship, as the traditions and various media of the latter three rely heavily on the epistemological and representational problematic it strives to highlight. The actor’s art – or, more generally, the scenic/performing art – roams through the sphere where things (or truths) are named, but at the same time it operates with the general and particular features of being/existence, exposing a relationship with the world that is not unambiguously linguistic, full of meaning, or logical: it exposes the structure of what one may call a *world view*, an experiential realm that interweaves information and matter (Cf. Kirkkopelto 2009b, 236; Lindberg 2009, 26-27). The relation of theatrical means to the world and to theatre itself (its performers, performances, spectators and literary elements) is based on this dynamic interweaving

<sup>15</sup> In [Plato in Twelve Volumes](#), Vol. 9 (1925). Transl. W.R.M. Lamb. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA. Accessed online via Perseus Digital Library, 1 March 2012.

<sup>16</sup> See Aristotle’s [Poetics](#), 1448b, 1460b (originally published in *Aristotle in 23 Volumes* [1932], Vol. 23. Transl. W.H. Fyfe. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA); Warry 1962, 103-107; Spariosu 1991; cf. Plato’s *Ion*; Plato’s [Republic](#), 376c ff.; see Kirkkopelto 2009b, 234-235; Halliwell 2002, 39-48; Plato’s *Apology*, 22a-c; *Ion*, 533e-536c, 539d-541c; [Euthyphro](#), 6a-c; see Plato’s *Cratylus*, 422a-424b, 428e-432d. All works by Aristotle and Plato accessed online via Perseus Digital Library (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>) in February/March 2012. Editor-in-chief Gregory R. Crane.

of expression, observation/experience, text/writing, interpretation, meaning and thought that develops – qua verbal and non-verbal (or, in short, mimetic) communication and language – among its various social and political components. If theatre capitalizes on mimesis as *imitation*, it does this as a complex *prospect* of imitation, as a linguistic/expressive ability and endeavour “to be *otherwise*,” a desire “to decipher, deconstruct and reconstruct established meanings.” (Roihankorpi 2011, 78 [transl. from Finnish RR]; cf. Kirkkopelto 2005.) According to theatre philosopher Denis Guénoun (2007, 35-37), the “visible” of/in/as *writing* is determined by the fact that its speaker – i.e., the speaker of the text – refuses “to articulate her speech in the time and the space where the writing inducts one into.” Instead, “theatre requires a body and a voice. It desires speech itself in the very act of its vocalization. And it desires to see speech. [...] Words are doubly non-displayable as both voices and meanings. And theatre desires to display them.” (Transl. from Finnish and brackets RR; see also *ibid.*, 34-41.) It is thus simultaneously moored to naming and the very act of naming, to their subjective and shared *enunciation* – in gesture, speech, scene, voice, sensation, writing and their mutual *dynamics* or *tekhne* – and, in the end, to the unattainability (characteristic) of the meaning and authority of naming, the problem of naming *truth* positively. Such dynamics bear an echo of Socrates’ etymological explanation of the word truth itself: “And ἀλήθεια (truth) is like the others; for the *divine motion of the universe* is, I think, called by this name, ἀλήθεια [*alētheia*], because it is a divine wandering θεία ἄλη [*theía alē*]. But ψεῦδος [*pseudos*] (falsehood) is the *opposite of motion*; for once more that which is held back and forced to be quiet is found fault with” ([Crat., 421b](#); transliterations in brackets and italics RR). Socrates’ account, and certain views on *alētheia* in Heidegger, outline truth as a pre-given and irrefutable movement, which, as a question concerning spatio-temporal existence and one’s experience of it, reveals and develops a mutual motion between a consciousness and the world (as well as the *rational* and the *irrational*): to be true – or *to be*, on the whole – the world must move, *externalize* itself as a movement at and as oneself, qua *existence* (see Blanchot 1995, 94-95; cf. Heidegger 1998; *ibid.* 2000, 64, 107, 205).<sup>17</sup>

All in all, the above discussion deals with a *tekhne*-oriented process of distinguishing between inspiration – or, on the other hand, ecstasy, *ékstasis* – drawing on the various *irrational* elements of existence, and the logico-lingual reasoning relying on a rational world view. In Plato’s *Republic*, this process becomes a central political, educational and ethical issue. The difficulty of integrating the means and effects of the performing (or, more generally, mimetic) arts wholly into truth-oriented reasoning plus the ethico-political thought committed to the latter, starts to exhibit a more extensive human problematic. With its pervasive and constantly transforming – but still situational – subjectivity, the communal function of a performer is to occupy all the professional, cognitive, skilled and even non-human subject positions of a given community (or the world), and at the same time none of them. A subjective

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<sup>17</sup> See Lindberg 2009, 27 note 3 (Lacoue-Labarthe 1998, 139-140); cf. Guattari 1995, 90; cf. Heidegger 2000, 182.

consciousness (the Subject), reality/existence, other consciousnesses (or *otherness* in general) and the potential of truth involved in them begin to merge with one another – in the performer, qua the *scene* of this process –, to produce the world through a ‘neutral human frame,’ which is simultaneously (and hypothetically) objective and subjective, generic and singular, demonstrative of similarity and difference – at once like a consciousness and its surroundings, *mimetic* (cf. Lacoue-Labarthe 1998, 258-259; Kirkkopelto 2011, 185-196). What emerges is one of the touchstones of the art theory combining Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies: is creative/poetic mimesis, eventually, a trait of the world or the human animal, or a potential necessitating their mutual co-operation – an intuitive but analytic ability/possibility, a non-situated performative viewpoint, which – qua a rhythm or a plot (*muthos*) – both interweaves them and drags them apart?<sup>18</sup>

On the basis of *Cratylus*, its Aristotelian derivatives, and certain views in Heidegger, one may discuss *creative mimesis* as an infinite, anthropocentric and manifold process of *modelling* (devoid of stable ideals) – a process concerned with and made possible by the interplay between human *consciousness*, the *real/reality* and the *possible*. Despite (and because of) its functions as *imitation* or *representation*, mimesis qua modelling describes quite effectively the consciousness-oriented – and thus still anthropocentric – capacity of art, creativity, learning and representation to participate in depicting, questioning, supporting and deconstructing (notions of) *truth*. At the same time, one must note that this definition of mimesis corresponds rather well to the concept of *performativity*, widely used in performance and theatre research – even in the context of feminist research, which has vigorously strived to deconstruct the Platonic-Aristotelian approach. Attempts at discussing mimesis as a creative performance or movement generative of ‘nonidentically similar’ realities/fictions (strategically important also to discussions on mimesis in Benjamin or Adorno) without representations qua ‘results’ – which, in turn, embody hierarchical models – are troubled by their own mimetic stance(s), that is, the creative but analytical mindset(s) required of any deconstructive or transgressive move (see Diamond 1997/2006, *passim*; Shepherd & Wallis 2004, 217-218).<sup>19</sup> The analytical transference of creation and becoming to/from the sphere of politics and knowledge must pass through selective (mimetic) processes, which determine the ultimate ‘nonidentity’ of the becoming or creation they deal with. Otherwise, one must consider the described analytical and anthropocentric schemata and their ethico-political aspects and consequences – not to mention the concept of *truth* itself – as *qualitatively integral* or, alternatively, *irrelevant* to the unsettled morphology of creation. (This transition from truth to its possible irrelevance or unhistorical becoming (qua ‘non-substance’) is, perhaps, the most astringent and effective element of the feminist

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. Havelock 1963; Hayles 2000; see e.g. Plato’s *Republic*, [604d-606d](#), [394d-396e](#), [398a](#), cf. [595a-603b](#); *Ion*: [535a-542b](#); Halliwell 2002, 51-55; cf. Potolsky 2006, 77, 82, 84, 89; cf. Melberg 1995, 10-12; Feltham 2006, 238; Roihankorpi 2010, 276-277; Hallward 2003, 205; cf. Kirkkopelto 2009b, 235.

<sup>19</sup> See Shepherd & Wallis 2004, 214, 217-218.

critique concerning mimesis.) The issue is of central interest also to Jacques Lacan (1998, vii; brackets RR), who notes that “[t]here is no [anthropocentric] truth that, in passing through awareness, does not lie. But one runs after it all the same.”

As mentioned, Aristotle not only acknowledges the connection between artistic activities and reflection on *knowledge* and *truth*, but grants *artistic mimesis* a role in fashioning (or even improving) the ‘*natural*’ order: the above issues are discussed in the context of creative activity that is able to contemplate the relation between what is and what ought to be (true), and may thus participate in the political, educational and ethical processes of outlining and structuring reality (*ta onta*). This outlook, relying on an ‘*evolutionary mimesis*’ (organic to knowledge and the world), refers to imitation as an operation whose object (and, in the end, subject) is some constantly postponed/withdrawing but *ideal* – and thus, in itself, *impossible* – model (*paradeigma*), *in-formation* or *form* (related to the Platonic Idea), a permanently unattainable paragon of that which acquired or experiential knowledge (at hand) may – also *poetically*, creatively – strive to extract from any observation, sensation or their psychophysical renewal/representation or imitation. (It should be noted that the ancient Roman concept of *imitatio* discusses the mentioned model as a *bygone ideal*, which all imitation in the present pursues and strives to utilize.) Like *virtuality* above, this model or paragon that evades but at the same time conditions all imitation – by being the ultimate (and possibly only) remnant of what embodies or produces *difference* (or novelty, creation of the *new*) in imitation itself – throws itself or is thrown ahead of all that represents knowledge, or all that *poiesis*, art and the means (*tekhnē*) committed to them attempt to improve, process or even transcend. Somewhat paradoxically, the mentioned model would thus not be a sophisticated sketch or a product of reality-centred knowledge or outlook (as something conditioned by the latter two), but the virtual/mimetic *inclination* of the world itself (reminiscent of Adorno’s ‘*expression of expression*’), which is validated by *existence* – above all as the existence of human consciousness<sup>20</sup> – and to which all existence is exposed or must submit; anthropocentrically speaking, it is an oblique and measureless – read: *intangible* – relation between a consciousness and the real (cf. Lindberg 2009, 22-26; Kirkkopelto 2005, 22-23). This way, all that is *not-known* – also as the unimaginable or even as the Benjaminian “*non-sensual similarity*” – may, in itself, serve as a constitutive but constantly receding model not only for knowledge or its analytic orientation but for all imitation/representation and ‘*poetry*’ as well, everything *poetic* (Benjamin 1989, 53). On the other hand, it may present the above-mentioned neutral human frame – that is, human consciousness as the locus and the process (the very *cause*) of imitation/representation – as a model for all poetic phenomena and imitation, enabling the constant postponement of truth(s). By stating that “we must not honor a man [i.e., Homer] above truth,” the 10th book of *The Republic* offers its reader an image of a *creative* (male) individual, who sets a certain *measure* for all mimetic (and virtual) conceptualization by entering into a hierarchical and contentious

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<sup>20</sup> See notes 13 and 14.

relationship that develops between truth and human existence ([Rep., 595c](#)). Esa Kirkkopelto (2009b, 235-237; brackets RR) notes how the foundations of this problematic are set up with the arguments of the 9th book, in which the simultaneous and self-repetitive presence of the exterior and interior reaches of the “human figure” – in “the idea ... of man” – is proportioned to the concepts of justice (*dikē*) and truthfulness by conceiving the creative and logical world view of the human animal as something (always already) predetermined by the mimetic-anthropocentric outlook – and thus as something *scenic*, simultaneously logico-linguistic (*logos*) and transpiring or phenomenal in the sense of *opsis* (a spectacle/performance). One encounters the human phenomenon via “two [parallel] registers”, as manifestation/spectacle and speech, which do not merge into one but *conform* within human existence and the various relationships (with others/the other) it necessitates. The art theoretical problematic that Plato and Aristotle place between the *word/name/writing* and the *spectacle* (by laying stress on the former three) is thus foregrounded also (or already) at the *scene* where the idea of man is disclosed.<sup>21</sup> Yet, despite Aristotle’s emphases on literary expression (or *epic*), the importance of rhythm, manifestation and perception (re)surfaces in his descriptions of the tragic form, as the latter is explained through the manifestation and interpretation of action, events, thought and character, thus establishing a strong connection to life (*bios*) and being – which both transcends and penetrates the human phenomenon – without a literary process of naming. The problem and meaning of manifestation/spectacle is then by no means irrelevant to the theorization of *theatricality*, which presumes that the processes of naming and defining the world, existence, theatre, reality and the interior and exterior horizons of the human phenomenon are participated by “a ‘perceptual dynamics’ of seeing and being seen” – i.e., by a peculiar relation between interiority and exteriority (Féral 2002, 105 cit. in Potolsky 2006, 74).<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Kirkkopelto (2009b, 236) stresses that “[i]n Plato’s case, we are dealing with an anthropocentric scene theory, which is based on the paradigm of the presence of a human figure.”

<sup>22</sup> Warry 1962, 103-107; Aristotle’s *Poetics*, [1451b](#), [1460b](#); Potolsky 2006, 73-74; Heidegger 2000, 196-198; cf. Pender 2009; cf. Luoto 2009; cf. Deleuze 2004, 349-350; see especially Kirkkopelto 2009b, 234-236; cf. Lacoue-Labarthe 1998, 43-138; see *Poetics*, [1448a](#), [1450a](#), [1461b-1462b](#); see Weber 2004, 99-101; Potolsky 2006, 72-73. According to Matthew Potolsky, in Josette Féral’s theory “[t]heatre opens up a ‘cleft in quotidian space’, dividing the spatial and temporal ‘inside’ of the performance from its everyday ‘outside’, and setting certain places and actions apart from the flow of everyday life.” (Féral 2002, 97 cit. in Potolsky 2006, 74.) However, this seems to require that a certain scenic understanding participates in observing the mentioned ‘outside’, and therefore the transference between interiority and exteriority peculiar to the human phenomenon conditions also the communication (of interiority and exteriority) that sets itself between the performance and the everyday. This implies that a performance is (a) mimesis-driven *temporal* (process of) situating/*situation*, in which temporality (temporalization) denotes both an *introduction to* a situation and an *invitation to depart* any situation/situatedness that prevents the performance from becoming a (process of) situation.

### **The scene of theatre and theory: on performing interiority and exteriority**

One may then assume that the described process of ceaseless modelling plays a role in founding the conventions that strive to articulate what theatre and theatricality are; by which I mean the (largely Western) conventions that allow us to recognize everyday phenomena in the theatre (and vice versa) or suggest various scenic/theatrical contracts between performers and audiences – from the politically charged performances of Antiquity to the fourth wall voyeurism of bourgeois theatre and its avant garde demolition by the late 20th century. What emerges is an image of *mimesis qua consciousness*, which, however, is not based on discriminating between a consciousness and a non-consciousness (or the human and the world, the Subject and the non-Subject). Instead, at hand is a pre-given movement or rhythm, with/through which phenomena, consciousnesses and events converge and diverge without a *determinate* authority that is able to ratify meaning – a theory or a theatre as an outlook (*thea*). Inasmuch as this image is embedded in ethics and politics (as it is in Plato's thought), the anxiety for its functions starts to look understandable. The ethical and political problematic of mimesis is articulated already on the level of existence (and its *virtuality*), in the ecstatic and irrational aspiration with which one's 'standing outside of oneself' struggles towards *something else*; the world, the unknown and the *other*. This is the aspiration (whose purpose) theatre and theory wish to stage and discern – in Benjaminian terms, they wish to “[r]ead what has never been written” (Benjamin 1989, 54 [transl. from Finnish RR]; cf. also Heinonen 2011, 43). Both theatre and theory exhibit a continuous deconstruction of stable ideals and models – the former with the unrestrained model of its scenicity and the latter with its ceaseless (self-)substitution – but as human phenomena they seem to imply that this deconstruction should assume a certain stability or a process of stabilization – with all its political consequences – in its actualization (which also relates it to the problematic discussing the pre-given movement of *alētheia*); a stability/virtual “coherence” of existence, which drives all forms and all performance (or expression by form, *per formam*) irrevocably towards the sphere of movement and rhythmicity.<sup>23</sup> Born out of and existing on the *lack* and *impossibility* of a *uniform ideal*, the described process of modelling produces thus a world view instantiating what e.g. Aristotle's *numericality* pursues: ratios and indivisible attributes, which may assume any mutual order whatsoever, as long as their mutuality as (rhythmic) similarity and difference is preserved. It is, of course, a different matter how the mentioned ratios and attributes perform their parts *by form*; how they set themselves within different (rational) equations, communities and scenes. (Cf. Heinonen 2011, 48.) Therefore, the notion of *mimesis qua consciousness* does not require one to ratify or even to explicitly identify any theatrical or scenic version of mimesis, but a certain scenic, theoretical or virtual understanding may make it visible and present.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Later on, Niccolò Machiavelli strives to rearrange the Platonic configuration so that the mimetic and the scenic function as delimiters and conditions of ethics and politics.

<sup>24</sup> See Guénoun 2007, 13-32; cf. Kirkkopelto 2009a; *ibid.* 2005, 15-19. Cf. also Schwab 2010, 24 (on Bollas and Lacan): the *gestalt* (figure) of the mirror-phase in psychogenesis can be

By the same token, this view of mimesis, which prevails (and dispels the borders) between interiority and exteriority plus sets the scenic pace for the rationality and irrationality of human consciousness and reality, is central for the art and theory of theatre. The Platonic theory that pursues the idea/essence of “man” and of that-which-exists (or their joint impossible model) begins obstinately – and, in fact, as something preceding and resisting this theory qua response – to perform the dynamic and organic interrelationship between the mind and the body, the Subject and its environment, as well as a sensation and (its) expression. Its early history motivates the “feigned and scenical passions” of St. Augustine’s antitheatrical analyses (cited in Barish 1985, 53), the actor-ruler of Machiavelli, the self-generative and -transformative identities of the Renaissance, as well as the notion of *theatrum mundi*, the world qua stage/theatre. In the modern era the performative aspects of *theatrum mundi* are then utilized, e.g., by Shakespeare (*As You Like It*, *Hamlet*) and the performance theory/technique of the 18th century that aims at systematic and rational use of the interdependence of the interior and the exterior as the “power to imitate anything” (Denis Diderot), and is equally criticized for it (Jean-Jacques Rousseau). Later, in the 19th and the 20th century, this imitative potential fuels both the psychology of Darwinian realism and the notions of soul peculiar to creationism. The ‘lived’ psychophysical techniques of Konstantin Stanislavski and Lee Strasberg become the most reputed methodological reforms of the Diderotian development and, at the same time, central elements of Western theatre practices. The most demanding political and ethical challenges of the discussed (interior/exterior) scenicity arrive with Artaud and Bertolt Brecht (and fall directly upon the institutional aspects of theatre), as the former advocates a collision or a merger of the stage and the audience and the latter lays considerable stress on the social and political positions of the performer, the performance and the spectator, as well as the performative articulations and ‘phenotypes’ of these positions, *Gestus*. Of course, these challenges do not culminate with the latter two figures. One may still speak of the ‘crisis of psychophysical acting/performance’, whose history is not only long and complex, but constitutive of various new forms and potentials of expression (see Kirkkoppelto 2011). Especially the debates concerning the so called postdramatic theatre have emphasized the mutual diversification and problematization of thought, physicality, manifestation, and various textual elements in all performance (i.e., the aesthetico-political processes radicalized already by Plato and Aristotle above). The most recent Finnish research discussing the problematic of psychophysical performance is still intrigued by the performer’s “protean” capacity to connect with her “psychophysical potential[ity]” and the “attunement” this – by default mimetic – capacity necessitates: both issues represent not only the performer’s ability to expose her existence (or its

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viewed as an *impossible model* whose limits and potentials are (anticipatorily) pursued through the transformational and creative processes of individual and social development. One’s reflection is not a mere self-image to identify with, but an *ecstatic figure* with imaginary and psychophysically variable or contested attributes (related to the self); i.e., not a ‘double’ but the very functioning of one’s *ecstatic subjectivity*.

infinite model) to pure transformation (as difference), but the ways in which the limits and resources of subjective existence are ethced, separated, hierarchized and paced against the phenomenal world, a simultaneous process of expanding the world (view) and 'remaining in existence'. (Tervo 2011, 65-67; transl. from Finnish and brackets RR.) The possible *rhythmicity* of this process, in turn, communicates immediately with the many technological forms of expression utilized by contemporary theatre and performing arts, which, as peculiar 'performance/performing apparatuses' of postdramatic theatre, lead the means of the latter to more *musical* and even *polyphonic* direction (Heinonen 2011, 46, 48).<sup>25</sup>

If one still wishes to examine the above descriptions of scenicity in the light of *life* and *action* (i.e., the abstractions and attributes of tragedy indispensable to Aristotle), one must bear in mind the fundamental mimetic and theatrical aspects of human action/the world – or the “inherent biological drive towards transformation and differentiation” (Potolsky 2006, 88) – discussed by Nicolas Evreinoff, as well as Erving Goffman’s views on the performative elements of social interaction and the various roles it necessitates; i.e., the effects of the above-mentioned “‘perceptual dynamics’ of seeing and being seen” on human activity and identities. Meanwhile, critical Marxist research on the subject has proposed that the relations between basic human needs and the world have developed qua mimetic and performative phenomena, explicit in various primeval and present-day practices and customs, such as the (rational) imitation of prey and the rites/social ceremonies that pursue empowering experiences through (largely irrational and hypnotic) rhythmicity and belongingness. With these theories one moves already at the borders of the institutional definitions of theatre, but as regards the connections between mimesis, rhythm, consciousness and the world established above, this transition to the area of behavioral/cognitive sciences and anthropology is highly relevant. It compels and colours Walter Benjamin’s analysis of the “non-sensual similarity” evoked by the “mimetic faculty” and the various discussions on mimesis that set themselves between cultural evolution, modern ideas of humanity and, e.g., musicology (such as Merlin Donald’s *Origins of the Modern Mind* [1993, 186-187]). In addition, one may say that theatre and actor pedagogy lean heavily on the described transition, as they develop “in a dialogue with the sciences concerning the physiology, behavior and perception of the modern human” (Kirkkopelto 2011, 184; transl. from Finnish RR).<sup>26</sup>

The scenic history of mimesis and related views in human sciences thus guide one quite concretely towards the aspects of interiority and exteriority peculiar to the very problem of mimesis; the aspects, which both arbitrate and contest the relations between consciousness, existence, ideas, thought, language, manifestation and the world. At the same time, one is invited to discover the theoretical and practical

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<sup>25</sup> Barish 1985, 52-65; Potolsky 2006, 71-86 (Diderot cit. 84); Shepherd & Wallis 2004, 213-214; cf. Kirkkopelto 2011; see Dox 2009, 11-42; Diderot 1987; see e.g. Kuritz 1988, 305ff.; Artaud 1958/1994; *ibid.* 1983; Brecht 2001; Lehmann 2009.

<sup>26</sup> Potolsky 2006, 87-90; Shepherd & Wallis 2004, 215-216; see Carlson 2004, 32-38; Benjamin 1989, 51-54 (transl. from Finnish RR).

grounds for the fact that the mentioned relations bear a performative import/influence, which duplicates, transforms and questions thought, practices and existence. Inasmuch as this performative influence can be discussed as a 'performance of exteriority' between the world, phenomena and the Subject – as a rhythm or a movement reliant on but not entirely conditioned by them –, it approaches certain definitions of *virtuality* above, which strived to see the latter not only as an organic part of reality, matter and corporeality, but as a phenomenon that highlights the dialogue between the interior and the exterior and seeks (thus) to dispel the boundaries between them. Consequently, with virtuality – as with the discussed definitions of mimesis – one encounters something that never becomes 'thoroughly performed', i.e., something that cannot be represented as an ideal or a model but rather develops as a creative and rhythmic movement and relationship between its elements.

### **The mimetic space/agency and the Virtual: on the timbre of exteriority**

Insofar as the above discussion still revolves around the terminology that strives to define the human phenomenon, mimesis, rhythmicity, truth and performance, one must pause at the described performance of exteriority and the *tekhnē* committed to it. For Guénoun, the manifestation of *writing* was determined by the withdrawal of its "speaker" (cf. narrator) from the time and the place/space that the writing itself introduces. At the same time, theatre strived to see writing, its speaker, speech, and the time and the place/space they introduce simultaneously, in the shared but asymmetrical moment of their manifestation. (Thus, at hand is also the exposure of the "two registers" at the scene of the human phenomenon, which Esa Kirkkopelto discusses.) On the basis of Guénoun, in/through writing one may think of a textual place/space that its speaker vacates or donates to something/someone exterior (the other), a textual 'habitat' the speaker's withdrawal produces; a place/space where the 'outside' of the text and the speaker – an interpreter or an addressee, an exterior agent – may encounter and inhabit the text as well as the time and the place/space it discloses. However, this kind of process seems to require that some intervention and 'occupation' of the mimetic *tekhnē* take place within it. Occupying and adopting the textual space the writing and its speaker provide necessitate that its interpreter is able to 'perform (her) exteriority', to build up a relationship not only with the writing/text (as an outside) but with her own differentiation and duplication/alteration as a subject of the text/textual subject. As this relationship has already been discussed by Plato and Aristotle as/with a hierarchy between truth and man as well as the word/name/writing and the spectacle, one must note how a similar process of renouncement and adoption (performing the other/otherness) colours also the descriptions of performative and theatrical mimesis, as well as their connection with manifestation and the adoption of the 'manifestation of an outside'. Paraphrasing Guénoun, in a performance the *yielding* of/to an outside<sup>27</sup> takes (its) place not only in

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. Taussig 1993, 45-47.

the time and the place/space – the scene – the performance discloses, but also in the (manifest) positions of the spectator and the performer (qua the speaker of the performance). Michael Taussig (1993, 44-69) and Elin Diamond (1997/2006, i-xvi, 142-181) expound, in somewhat dissimilar contexts, the performer's – and with reference to the above, the spectator's – mimetic ability to step into and lose herself into otherness. The former speaks of the ways in which “*the representation shares in or acquires the properties of the represented*” (ibid., 47-48) and the latter of the process of “*embodying/interpreting the other [or otherness]*” peculiar to “*feminist mimesis*” (ibid. [Kindle ed. 2006], loc. 358 and cit. in Shepherd & Wallis 2004, 218; brackets RR); i.e., of agencies, which produce – or perform, differentiate and question – exteriority at the expense of subjective and truth-oriented certitude. In much the same way, Artaud's theatre – as activity, agency and the ‘one must’ it embodies, devoid of the utilitarian viewpoints of actuality – “*installs itself*” (*s'installe*), “*takes its [virtual] place*” in the world, the place it always already had and has in the actual and the political (Weber 2004: 291-292 and Artaud cit. in ibid.; brackets RR). A world populated and occupied by otherness (e.g. Taussig, Diamond), ‘ecstatic privation’ (Lindberg, Heidegger), gratuitousness and uselessness/pointlessness *qua* ‘one must’ (Artaud, Lacoue-Labarthe, Lindberg) is prone to dispel the rational and instrumental boundaries between (anthropocentric) interiority and exteriority, and it is therefore no wonder that as soon as theatre is born, it consults the *politics* of performing, i.e., the very conditions of coexistence that strive to define – if not defend – the aspects and functions of interiority, exteriority, reason, and truth. As a performance of exteriority (and its rhythm), a performance moves like *alētheia*, brings out the ecstaticity (and irrationality) of existence, the possibility of dividing and sharing the indivisible, and therefore also the ethical and political problematics organic to such processes. At this point, if not before, Plato's concern for the fact that the mentioned processes remain inherently foreign to a reason relying on the logic(s) and dialectics between the interior and the exterior – or on the template/*Gestus* of *good* in all progress and ideation – becomes (politically) validated; only to be problematized, questioned, interrupted and deconstructed e.g. by feminist theory/critique, postdramatic theatre (theory), various virtual/technological performance environments and emergent forms of bio art (cf. Diamond 1997/2006; Heinonen 2011).<sup>28</sup>

Yet, whatever the (substance or non-substance of) truth or its (ir)relevance, the ethical strain of the above configuration is overpowering. The apocalyptic “*gratuitousness*” of Artaud's theatre (of cruelty and plague) suggests that the (useless and irredeemable) essence of theatre manifests truly only at the scene of the ‘end of all’ – when everyone one has ever known or loved is dead, when there is no one to perform to. Meanwhile, the arch-ethical ‘one must’ discussed by Lacoue-Labarthe and Lindberg (2009, 34-36; transl. from Finnish and brackets RR) – and embodied by any given work of art – demands that “*justice be delivered to [all] existing representations and figures, and first of all to the work of art itself.*” It thus serves as a coercive

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<sup>28</sup> Shepherd & Wallis 2004, 216-218; cf. Weber 2004, 292-293.

interruption of the “dynamic/fluctuation of perceptions”, of the flow and the infinite modelling – the *dynamis* (here: cohesive and analytic potential) – of ‘sensible’ creation that strives to restore all representations to the sphere of opinions, continuous signification/deconstruction, actuality and politics. In essence, and read against Artaud’s apocalyptic vision of an ‘ultimate interruption’, the utmost and impossible (non-)scene of pure/gratuitous signification without an audience – where the scene and the auditorium merge into an absolute with no political *Gestus* –, this indicates that, with the means of the mentioned *dynamis*, *one must* deliver justice to that which is irredeemably powerless or ineffectual in existing representations and figures, to the aspect of (their) becoming that is both beyond all hope and devoid of rational or truth-based guidelines. The privation, withdrawal, virtual exteriority and yielding treated (respectively) by Lindberg, Heidegger, Weber and Guénoun above – plus the related analyses of creation, imitation, representation and presence – all seem to vindicate such an outlook, a gratuitous but thus compelling ethos that ceaselessly questions the motives of actuality and politics and therefore serves as an exterior motif for both, the ethical ‘ur-timbre’ of existence. With creation, representation, figures, mimesis, and virtuality – and thus with all theatre and theory – arrives an *ethics of the dead and the not-yet-born*, an arch-agency/commitment that always already transforms their *dynamis* to a ‘one must’ by penetrating all creation, work and interpretation qua the very cause of actuality and politics. If the configuration signals of a constant disappointment in creation, theatre, theory, actuality and (its) politics, it is precisely because their very appointment with the actual is ethically belated or not yet valid.

If one still wishes to maintain that a certain idea of a *model* (or vice versa) and a ceaseless process of *modelling* take part in the above operations, the only anthropocentrically stabile model would be the discussed (subjective) framework of consciousness, assumed to be neutral by the Subject itself; the void and open-ended model of conscious existence as a phenomenon capable of structuring and producing the world. Yet, the persistent recurrence of the Aristotelian, scenic and rhythmic mimesis (or virtuality) as a creative trait of existence materializing through an impossible/unobtainable model and the difference it entails – plus its entanglement in all existence and subjective activity – remains equally significant. Just as the many-sidedness, complex interweaving and the (innate) disagreement of the above viewpoints in their relation to anthropocentric thought and the performing arts, the implicit *rhythmicity* of virtual and mimetic processes is based on their polyphonic (and sometimes cacophonous) disposition. They are not necessarily commensurable or unambiguously harmonious (‘soulful’ in the Aristotelian sense)<sup>29</sup> or ‘tactful’ in any way, but contain and produce variations, interruptions and friction: i.e., inconsistency,

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. Aristotle’s *Politics*, [1340b](#) (*Aristotle in 23 Volumes* [1944], Vol. 21. Transl. H. Rackham. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press and William Heinemann Ltd.); Plato’s *Phaedo*, [p. 93ff](#) (*Plato in Twelve Volumes* [1966], Vol. 1. Transl. Harold North Fowler. Introduction by W.R.M. Lamb. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press and William Heinemann Ltd.) Both accessed via Perseus Digital Library in May 2012.

the persistent touch, echo, timbre and imprint of the irrational (*ékstasis*) on the rational (the knowable and the familiar).<sup>30</sup>

Largely by the same token, I see that the proposed characterizations of mimesis and virtuality offer no theoretical solution – or even a radical theoretical opening – for the problem of material or temporal being (cf. e.g. Thrift 2006, 139-140) as regards performing or a performance (in the sense of *opsis* or representation), but intertwine with them in an ecstatic movement that participates in the “labor and desire” described by Wolfgang Sohlich (1993, 50; brackets RR), the “[ideally real, virtual] forces” from which “representations are drawn” but “which are not reducible to representations”. “[C]onsequently”, says Sohlich, “thought is trapped in the density of materiality and time.” This way, mimesis/the mimetic and virtuality/the Virtual begin to approach and even to signify the thinking of the *real* (thinking itself), where thinking, thought and information – or the *modell/idea* they pursue plus the *difference* this pursuit, in itself, produces as difference from the real qua something unknown and subjectively unthinkable – are not primarily (or even to begin with) properties of subjectivity or reason, but the “labor and desire” of being itself, the irreducible (virtual) forces that manifest themselves in/as all spatiality and agency.

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<sup>30</sup> To the extent that one may measure irrationality against the real and speak of the mimetic as a cohesion between the internal and the external, one must note how for Taussig (1993, 44) mimesis indicates precisely “the sensate skin of the real”.

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