

BETRAYAL

Joshua Simon

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

Curatorial / Knowledge

Department of Visual Cultures

Goldsmiths College

University of London

I certify that the work presented in this thesis is my own.

Signed Joshua Simon. _____ Date 07.12.2015 _____

Joshua Simon

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my fellow participants at the Curatorial/Knowledge PhD program at Goldsmiths College and the various visiting lecturers who conducted seminars with us. The conversations and exchanges we had extended outside the seminar room into my practice and my research. My thanks also goes to my teachers Dr. Jean-Paul Martinon who supervised this dissertation in its forming stages and to Prof. Irit Rogoff who provided me with inspiration and support throughout this long process. I am indebted to both of them for letting me take part in this program which had an immense influence on me and had enabled me to propose my own understanding of our practice. To my wife Elisheva Levy, my children Eliav and Margot, who were born during this long period of study, I would like to thank for their support and encouragement. As well, I would like to thank my mother Ahuva, and my sisters Jackie, Liat and Keren for their support and encouragement. As much as this dissertation is dealing with questions of politics and the political it was a very personal process, of meeting one's own limits and finding ways to work through them – my family contributed a lot to this. In addition, my thanks goes to the Kirsh Family Foundation and to Ms. Wendy Fisher for her generous support of my research throughout this long period of study and writing, and to Mr. Mark Rosenberg of the Kirsh Family Foundation for his attentive care and availability. In addition I would like to thank Ms. Joanne Dodd, postgraduate coordinator at the Visual Cultures department at Goldsmiths College whose cooperation and persistent follow up enabled me to finalize my work on this dissertation, and to Michelle Speidel who helped me with the copy and proof editing of this dissertation, making the ideas in it communicate much better. Lastly, I would like to thank Dr. Stefan Nowotny, my advisor for this PhD dissertation, and to mention his unique engagement and guidance. I consider his supervision over my dissertation a true act of solidarity and commitment. Dr. Nowotny's feedback and analysis enabled for a set of ideas to become a claim that can be put out into the world.

Abstract

Betrayal is proposed in this dissertation as a concept that is informed by political theory and by curatorial concepts. Betrayal is conceptualized here as an entanglement of antagonistic relations. It is proposed as an engagement with an antagonism while withdrawing from its underlying logic. Betrayal is presented as a variety of approaches through a set of proposals which include exhaustion, anachronism, fictionalism, demonstration and acting.

Written in the context of curatorial work in Israel-Palestine, this dissertation proposes several qualities of the field of the curatorial and applies them to political theory. Betrayal is considered operational through the field of the curatorial as the curatorial provides a setting for activating potentialities. In the three chapters of this dissertation, Betrayal is developed through an active reading of the lives and work of several figures as method: Alcibiades son of Cleinias, a fifth century BC Athenian politician; the last book published by Sigmund Freud during his lifetime *Moses and Monotheism*; and Bertolt Brecht's notion of Acting in relation to Hannah Arendt's political Action.

Informed by the curatorial ability to articulate connectedness and activating potentialities, this dissertation deploys Betrayal as a set of strategies that include formation, narrative and agency. The way these entangle antagonisms involves different ways of articulating practices that can move inside-out, can destabilize inwards and can shift the site of articulation of politics itself. The curatorial and Betrayal are thus the centre of this dissertation as it aims to provide a tool for operating in politics.

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INTRODUCTION

One cannot avoid the negative connotation of the term Betrayal. It has come to carry the meaning of an individual act of abusing trust. Betrayal is widely used in stories of espionage in its meaning as treason, and many times in fiction, it is the key element that drives the plot of either disintegration or restoration. This setting relies on an antagonistic structure by which the traitor moves from one side to the other, or playing both sides at the same time. This mapping of power relations and possible actions in them, will here be called treason and not Betrayal.¹

Betrayal, as developed in this dissertation, addresses firstly the abusive nature of the trust that is demanded from all parties along the antagonistic setting. My aim here would be to use this term as a political tool which enables the emergence of new collective subjectivities. Betrayal's negative meaning is suggested here to be an engagement with oppositions through a withdrawal from their logic, for the opening up of new positions and alignments. As much as it is a personal analytical tool, Betrayal aims to provide political mappings to be formulated as new categories and gestures come into the political and operate in politics.

¹ Despite this antagonistic framing, on some level it is never really possible to narrow it down to this either/or setting. For example, the charges that Julian Assange, founder of Wikileaks, could be facing follow the logic of treason as he is accused of being unauthorized to publish the documents Wikileaks has obtained through whistleblowers. Assange has named himself a "Spy for the People," revealing state secrets in the name of the general public. He proposes himself as an agent of an open form of spying, not concealing but revealing. His form of espionage does not entail only changing sides between rivaling governments but between every government and its citizens. In its narrow sense, we could say that his form of treason might still engage with a direct changing of sides (treason), but it performs something else – and that thing is a loyalty to a horizon of new subjectivities – an open society of knowledgeable citizens actively participating in freeing information.

The motivation for instigating an investigation of Betrayal is informed by my continuous work in various fields of cultural and political production – organizing and collaborating on curated exhibitions, editing and publishing literary works and producing and putting together films and film screenings, staging political documents, organizing and participating in poetry readings and demonstrations. Betrayal is used here in a political sense. This is done through an exploration of the field of the curatorial and its qualities of articulation, demonstration, narration and making relations sensible. For this dissertation I am also taking from my practice, therefore, suggesting Betrayal as taxonomy of strategies, tactics and performances that can be developed and demonstrated through the curatorial and proposed for acting in politics.

In this dissertation, Betrayal is proposed as a political tool of engagement. My aim is to describe and experiment with this political tool through different concepts, fictions, gestures and materials. The conceptual framework of Betrayal does not operate so much as a mere tool for the analysis of these materials, fictions and gestures, but rather Betrayal comes together through them. Betrayal is proposed in this dissertation as a way of problematizing a set of notions that define the given situation. Betrayal is an entanglement that allows to think *with* the situation while operating *against* it. Betrayal operates between positions and oppositions. It is a gesture of enacting refusal by the plurality of negations that are available already by a defined conflict. Betrayal here stems from the contexts from which it is written. Working mainly in Israel-Palestine, the selected materials I present here offer a variety of trajectories through which to open up the withering setting that is Israel-Palestine.

Betrayal will be outlined in this dissertation through a set of modes that involve activating histories, deploying strategies of entanglement, inhabiting fictions and embodying narratives. All these generate a move from politics to

culture and the political and then back to politics. These modes are all informed by the curatorial, and the way a practice can produce concepts that can then be used outside of it. This roaming of meaning between fields, between practice and concept, invites the curatorial to operate between politics and the political.

This movement of inside-outside, push-pull, changing of sides, leaving the scene and reappearing in another form, can be found in Chantal Mouffe's critique of Paolo Virno's notion of exodus which he put forward in his *A Grammar of the Multitude*.² Mouffe suggests her and Ernesto Laclau's description of antagonism in their book *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*³ as a way to distinguish between two approaches. One would be that put forward by Virno which entails "Critique as Withdrawal From" and the other, her and Laclau's, entails "Critiques as Engagement With." For the strategy of exodus supposes the possibility of "a redemptive leap into a society, beyond politics and sovereignty, where the Multitude would be able to immediately rule itself and act in concert without the need of law or the state and where antagonism would have disappeared." This she contrasts with her and Laclau's approach of the hegemonic strategy which recognizes "a fully

² Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude: For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life*, Trans.: Isabella Bertolotti, James Cascaito and Andrea Casson, Semiotext(e), 2004

³ Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, London and New York: Verso, 1985

inclusive consensus and an absolute democracy are never available.”⁴ Mouffe’s own methodology is performed in this text which highlights antagonism and contrast.

Betrayal does not only conflate terms. Betrayal would be located between “Withdrawal From” and “Engagement With.” It opens up and densifies the contrast that Mouffe is describing. Betrayal here is a contingent becoming that is potentially in any antagonism. It is a re-alignment, a shifting of the lines and the search for another setting – it is a modification of the conditions while engaging with the antagonisms at hand. Working with exodus and antagonism Betrayal oscillates between “Engagement With” an antagonistic setting or situation and a “Withdrawal From” its paradigms and formations. Betrayal’s methodology is therefore, an entanglement – a withdrawal from the assumed objectivity of the antagonism and an engagement with it from another perspective. The notion of Betrayal allows to think an antagonism against itself. It offers politics a form of interrogation that the curatorial formulates and elaborates.

On some level, the deployment of arguments in this dissertation performs this move as claims are made with trajectories that cut through an antagonism in other points than the linear and direct ones this antagonism is narrated through. The curatorial involves setting up relations between ideas,

⁴ Chantal Mouffe, “Critique as Counter-Hegemonic Intervention”, in: *transversal: The Art of Critique*, EIPCP, June 2008: www.eipcp.net/transversal/0808/mouffe/en. Exodus is actually conceptualized by Virno as political engagement. For example when he writes: “Nothing is less passive than the act of fleeing, of exiting. Defection modifies the conditions within which the struggle takes place, rather than presupposing those conditions to be an unalterable horizon; it modifies the context within which a problem has arisen, rather than facing this problem by opting for one or the other of the provided alternatives. In short, *exit* consists of unrestrained invention which alters the rules of the game and throws the adversary completely off balance.” Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude*, Semiotext(e), 2004, p. 70. Betrayal also aims for this unconstrained off-balancing invention.

this informs this dissertation as the methodology used here is not of reading a text or a narrative through another one. It is not analysis in the sense of an object on which critical tools are applied. Following this logic of the curatorial, it is the bringing together of ideas and the setting up of relations between them that provides the driving force for the way this dissertation is written. As the curatorial entails orchestrating polyphony as polyphony, it lends itself to Betrayal a multiplicity of compositional strategies that can be further elaborated in politics.

Politics and the Political

“Alors, Comment agir sur un instrument qui vous echappe, qui vous est adverse même?”

Trotskyist Michel Grandville to German refugee
Erna Wolfgang in Alain Resnais' film *Stavisky*, 1974

How do you operate a device that escapes you, that resists you? This is the question the French Trotskyist poses outside Leon Trotsky's temporary residence in France. Trotsky just exiled from the USSR and was still looking for a way to take over the communist international. But how could he control a party that was no longer subjected to his authority?

The question of power and agency holds many dilemmas and reflections. In a way, the ones we are faced with today revolve around the recognition that we are powerless and lack access to any influential agency. With this, recent projects have emerged attempting to find ways to work with these devices that escape us. This is a sensibility that has informed many dissident projects in the past and found its way into contemporary art practices. The wave of re-enactment and simulation works of the previous decade can give

an account for the array of strategies developed in order to work within this melancholic mood.

The dissertation here articulates Betrayal as a term to work with when ‘writing with a pen that is not in your hand.’ The preface to this dissertation will include a basic introduction to Betrayal and the curatorial and their interrelations, and will include the contexts, practices and materials the dissertation engages with. The project that Betrayal suggests is further elaborated in this introduction through a brief description of the chapters that make up the dissertation.

The chapters of this dissertation revolve around a traitor, Alcibiades of Athens, exiles such as Sigmund Freud and Bertolt Brecht, and Hannah Arendt who developed a whole discourse of the political in relation to refugees. These chapters circle around the different ways they themselves or their writing can help us conceptualize power as a question – where is it and how does it operate? These chapters explore the potentialities of betrayal in art, cinema, literature and theatre, politics and history. The proposal of Betrayal here relates to the question of power and agency in a moment dominated by a sense of powerlessness. Circulation and withdrawal are the two strategies we see in activism and autonomism that have proliferated in recent years in the left. These present use with limits as they delineate the ways we can and cannot access politics and history as we constantly experience through them a conversion of politics and history into dilemmas of morality. Under right wing political domination, until recently, one could observe how many political projects did not find a place to operate in politics, and therefore found refuge in art and academia. Now that austerity policies are also closing in on them in these fields of practice, we notice many cultural and political projects are invested in “engagement through withdrawal” – from the autonomist leadership of the Occupy

movement in the US to cultural boycotts. These present a very early form of association around an exit from the circulation of evils (by states, corporations etc.).

But to make it political, any movement has to enable new subjectivities to appear. For it to politicize, this emerging phenomenon can be organized around the question of the French Trotskyist in “Stavisky.” ‘How do you write with a pen that you are not holding?’ would be a way to paraphrase this.

In Mouffe and Laclau’s Gramscian vocabulary we would say that most of these movements for social justice around the world were not able to produce a historical bloc. As the dissertation will discuss further Mouffe’s and Laclau’s proposition, what will be developed here is a critique of the setting they propose as it also proved to operate in a contradictory way than they have envisioned. A counter use of their notion of chain-of-equivalence appeared in real existing politics, wherein hegemony feeds off the variety of struggles that make society.

Curating provides a practice from which to examine this operation-in-uncertainty (navigating through authorship, institution, market, canonization etc.). Betrayal would be a move between the political and politics in the form of “withdrawal through engagement,” meaning that the concrete reality (politics) is being addressed through renegotiation/re-articulation of the concept that inform it (the political). By oscillating between different levels by “engagement with the situation” and “withdrawal from paradigms” Betrayal offers new ones.

‘Writing with a pen that is not in your hand,’ invites a critique of hegemony as much as it proposes a form of exit, it develops a concrete setting while proposing a speculated reality. This proposes an analysis that is also an

account of the state of affairs. It recognizes antagonistic conditions of conflict and works parallel and in between its inscription.

The Curatorial and Curating

This dissertation is written in the framework of a practice that is trying to understand its own concepts. The curatorial has been developed to propose a space of knowledge production that has been achieved through curatorial practice, but is not limited to the field of visual art solely. With the curatorial, practices of articulation, actualization, contextualization and editing, are expanded into a field that is not limited to the event or narrative of the exhibition or artworks. The curatorial proposes these practices as they are elaborated and enacted outside the field of visual art and activated on philosophical, political, social and historical levels.

It might sound unfair to describe curation as the art of working with other people's ideas, on a limited budget and a nonexistent audience. But this somewhat derogatory definition of curating as a managerial practice, might explain the current crave for a one-stop-shop curation – mega-shows and biennials engage curators who operate as agencies responsible for the total look and marketing (employing art magazine editors, designers, artists or online promoters to produce the whole package: concept, artists list, design, online presence, commentary, etc.). This form of curation reduces the unpredictable elements we always encounter, and seduces us into envisioning an exhibition as a dynamic search for ideas, funding and people. But this perception can be read differently – making curating not a managerial practice, but rather a structural one of organizing; constantly negotiating the material and intangible meanings that are at stake, devising

new resources by reconsidering the value of things, and all this for people who are missing: those yet to come and those who are forever absent.

So curation as an organizational practice involves political acting rather than asset management, education rather than public relations, history rather than market analysis. It is a practice that is attempting to understand its own concepts – coming from different contradictory fields that include art history and management, critical theory and the development of control apparatuses. This setting of curating makes clear its direct link to value and history, forms of articulation and contextualization, which can be either administrated or organized.

In something of a discursive vacuum, which curating is in, the curatorial provides a methodology of constellations. These are performed by the different actors, human and non-human, that take part in the scripted and unscripted setting that the curatorial provides. The curatorial comes into being by the overlapping and contesting features of its reference materials. It offers its own use of ‘inside-out’ knowledge – bringing materials from outside the field, examining them with the tools we have (induction, deduction, de/re-contextualisation etc.) and then rearticulating them to then reactivate them outside the field. While curating mainly considers the exhibition or the event of display, the curatorial as knowledge involves a set of contingent actual things moving towards a notion or gesture, and in turn grouped, charged and performed by it. Display, as one of the basic gestures of curating, can be seen as a moment of actualizing potentialities, by which a portal opens for the infinite histories that are not present. Through display the curatorial is actualizing potentialities.

In this dissertation, I will follow this methodology and will propose *Betrayal*, as it evolves from the potentialities the curatorial offers. The dissertation is

therefore informed by the projects I have been involved with as well as with those of peers from the region, whose work I see relates to Betrayal.

Coming back to the lived experience that informs my notion of the curatorial, I can mention several entry points which led me to take interest in this form of critical theory and visual cultures. One such entry point which I can give an account of was a modest publication made by Israeli artists, curators, journalists, poets, critics and writers in memory of a ten year old Palestinian boy, Hilmi Shusha, who was killed by an Israeli settler.⁵ At the time when the book came out, the trial was still taking place. My encounter with the publication was during that time, and in retrospect, this encounter had a huge impact on me. It was not only that the facts of the case unveiled for me the reality I was living in. This modest compilation of texts and images shifted the lines of alliance and loyalty, it elaborated and expended the practice of judgment beyond the jurisdiction of the court, it did not debate solely the evidence of the case, but proposed a politicized mode of investigation – interrogating the conditions that enabled for such an event to occur, it named names and most significantly, gave a face and a name to one of countless victims of the Israeli military rule over the Occupied Palestinian Territories – Hilmi Shusha. Re-charting a map, re-aligning the loyalties, criminalizing the political setting that enabled for the individual's

⁵ "Hilmi Shusha was ten years old in 1996 when he *found his death* (my italics)," was literally the description by the Israeli district court that acquitted Nachum Korman, a Jewish settler who clubbed the Palestinian child to death with a rifle butt. Reports from the trial proved that Korman, the chief of security at the Hadar Beitar settlement, descended on Shusha's West Bank village in October 1996 to hunt down a group of children who had been allegedly pelting Jewish cars with stones. Cousins of Shusha, who saw the assault, said Korman pinned him down with his foot before delivering the fatal blow. Korman claimed he never intended to kill the child, and said he tried to revive him. After an appeal by the state, the Israeli Supreme Court found Korman guilty of man slaughter by negligence and sentenced him to six months' community service. See: Ariella Azoulay and Aïm Deüelle Lüschi (Eds.), *Hilmi Shusha – the Silver Platter*, Self-published, Tel Aviv-Jaffa, 1997 [in Hebrew]

actions, providing a platform for solidarity – all these were the achievements of this modest publication. For a brief moment, this publication allowed Israelis to grieve over him. It demonstrated a relation, made it sensible, while operating through engagement with the antagonism and a withdrawal from its premise.

The ability to articulate such a moment is one of the qualities of the curatorial; this is not a universalist-liberal guilt, but a politicized emotion. This moment might have been limited in time but it holds much more as it resonates with me as well as with others, since. It does so because of the space it opened for feeling, thinking and acting. This publication negotiated the specificities of the context from which it came out, and politicized them through the model of the event, the lived experience and their reflection. Many notions of the curatorial are bundled in this brief moment; a series of acts that the book performed, have informed my understanding of the possibilities the curatorial enables for. As a publication, the book constituted, even for a brief moment, new subjectivities, as it proposed to betray the denial of connectedness that is at the heart of the conflict. It since became a point of reference that since has been developed by the participating authors. It entails a different political project in Israel-Palestine than that of separating the two communities. It involves affinities and trajectories that provide long distance solidarities. These solidarities challenge the allegiance that an antagonism would demand of us.

This book is just one example of a project that not only poses a problem, but engages in observing its conditions. Therefore, it is not engaged in solution making but in problematisations. Betrayal is proposed exactly as a deployment of problematisations that we face; these include the ways we can and cannot access politics and history as we constantly experience a conversion into moral and conscience dilemmas. The potentiality in this

mode of interrogation through deploying the problematics can help us break through the extremely limited mode of contemporary progressive politics which is manifested mainly through reasonable achievements gained by temporary partnerships of individuals. This problem needs to be observed and interrogated in relation to economic, political, social and psychological conditions that dominate our ability to conceptualize the problem to begin with.

Betrayal

“Intellectuals and politicians rush back and forth across the stage while the political and economic structures crumble beneath them,” explains Susan Buck-Morss in the afterword to her book *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West*.⁶ Buck-Morss’s afterword focuses on the conditions which lead to the writing of her book which took place during the collapse of the Soviet Union. Applying Marx’s *18th of Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* observations on the post-Soviet condition from which she wrote the book, Buck-Morss concludes that:

“History structures human action even if it lacks a rational purpose; humans chose freely even when they do not control the meaning of their acts. In the history told here, actors seized the chance, but missed their lines”.⁷

⁶ Susan Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West*, MA: MIT Press, 2000

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 213

The tragic tensions between the scripted and the performed, between acts and lines, between purpose and meaning, seem appropriate descriptions for the setting of what is proposed in this dissertation as Betrayal.

Buck-Morss adds in her afterword that it was written in order to: “demystify the book as knowledge-production by exposing the lived experience behind its pages.”⁸ Following this proposal made by Buck-Morss, in this PhD dissertation I take the lived experience of curatorial practice in Israel-Palestine, present it and debate it, not only in order to demystify the proposal here as knowledge-production. I do so in order to present what conceptual moves are possible and what ones are needed within the constraints of the political and social reality. With this I hope to explore the various positions that emerge: the potentialities present already within the horrific context of this lived experience; the conceptual frameworks under which claims are made, the positions from which these claims are articulated, the actions that are made in support or against these claims; the new collective subjectivities and additional entry and exit points that might present themselves as potentialities to be further explored.

The terms and contexts which this dissertation works with, the materials it involves and the project it is invested in, the embodied and enacted histories which inform it are varied. On the one hand, they find their way into this dissertation in the form of narrative that performs tensions experienced within the logic of Israel-Palestine. On the other hand, they are evaluated and studied as trajectories that help undo this current moment and specific space of Israel-Palestine. A way to introduce the contexts, perspectives and imaginary this dissertation proposes would be to discuss a bit the times and places in which my father, Eliav Simon lived in. My father was a

⁸ Ibid.

Jerusalemite of Jewish descent who was born in 1913 and died in 1990. He lived most of his life in Tel Aviv-Jaffa and for the most part was a foreign correspondent involved in journalistic work in Israel (among other things, he served as chief bureau for a US news agency, United Press International). During his lifetime, the piece of land he lived in changed hands several hands – from the Ottoman Empire, to British rule, to the state of Israel and Jordanian Kingdom. My father himself travelled the region extensively as long as it was possible. He went to study in the American University in Beirut in the 1930s, although the Hebrew University, one of Zionism’s great achievements of the time, was already established in Jerusalem in 1925. My father’s lifetime years correspond almost perfectly with Eric Hobsbawm’s “short twentieth century” (1914-1989).⁹ And therefore, his life story can be somehow useful in describing this period and its effects on Palestine – the land where he lived, between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

My father’s lifetime hence corresponds with the time of modernization, of nation building, but also a time in which Arab urban life was under constant attack (from the British destruction of Gaza in WWI, to the British 1936 dissection of Jaffa, the Palestinian Nakba in 1948, the occupation of Palestinian territories since 1967, and the recent yearly Israeli attacks on the biggest refugee camp in the world – the Gaza Strip).¹⁰

⁹ See: Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914–1991*, Vintage Books, 1994. The term Hobsbawm uses refers mainly to the history of Europe, but a shift of the territory opens new meanings for an investigation of the history of the twentieth century. In this dissertation, I look for the way the application of one structure of knowledge can inform another.

¹⁰ In this context, the US wars in Iraq (1991 and 2003), and the destruction of ancient Syrian cities since the civil war began in 2011, show an intensification of urbicide patterns throughout the region, patterns that seem to have begun parallel to the discovery of oil in the Persian Gulf in 1911.

I allow myself to mention my father's biography as an entry point to this dissertation which proposes the notion of Betrayal, so it will help to chart the spatial and temporal long distance solidarities that Betrayal allows for. With this embodied narrative, different inhabited fictions present themselves, fictions that work with and against those fictions that came to narrate the region. One of these, is the seemingly impossible identity of a Palestinian-Jew.

In his investigation of the construction of enmity between Jews and Arabs, Gil Anidjar poses the question:

“Beyond the horridly all too familiar and inescapable ‘cycle of violence,’ what is it that maintains the distance and kindles the enmity between the Arab and the Jew? What purposes are served by, what are the reasons for, the naturalization of this distance, the naturalization of the opposition, of the enmity between Arab and Jew, one that, as prominent narratives would have us believe, goes back to ancient biblical times, the ineluctable legacy of ‘the Middle East,’ a region and a land eternally ravaged by war and conflict? How did the ostensible markers of Arab (an ‘ethnic’ marker) and Jew (a ‘religious’ one) come to inscribe themselves so forcefully on modern discourses of the most varied kind – political, religious, cultural, and so forth – even when accompanying distinct or even opposed political agendas, caveats and sophisticated critiques and debunkings?”¹¹

¹¹ Gil Anidjar, *The Jew, The Arab: A History of the Enemy*, Stanford University Press, 2003, p. xiii. Anidjar extends on this enmity in a long footnote in which he provides a genealogy of the dichotomy. He explains that in Israel, nationality (‘Arab’ or ‘Jew’) is a category distinguished from citizenry (‘Israeli’) – both Arab and Jew are divorced from religious meaning here and come to denote an ethnicity. See: Anidjar, pp. 163-164.

Eliav Simon's story, therefore, is but one example that provides a perspective on how exactly under conditions previous to the nation-state, a much richer and contaminated array of potential identities was available in this land. Under these conditions, the logic of 'partition' of land or 'separation' of communities, which dominates contemporary discourse – from Apartheid policies to Two State solution proposals – was not something to consider; many sides were touched constantly and this proximity and contact created new (and old) identities that now seem contradictory to the extent that they negate each other.

When we think of a French Jew, an American Jew, and a Jew who lives in Israel-Palestine (an Israeli) as different kinds of Jews (as religion, but also recognized as ethnicity), we also think of Canadian-Palestinians, Palestinians in the West Bank, and Palestinian citizens of Israel as different kinds of Palestinians (not as a religion but as a nationality that cannot be expressed fully). Therefore, we can propose that being an Israeli is actually a process of becoming Palestinian; this Israeli may be in denial of the fact that he or she are a kind of a Palestinian, or he or she may not understand the fact that they are Palestinians, but they nevertheless are Palestinians. The connectedness and inter-dependence that defines the situation shows how these identities entail constellations of relatedness, affinity and proximity. In this respect, being anti-Palestinian is being anti-Israeli.

Israel is not in-dependent. It is part of a process of "becoming" as Gilles Deleuze suggests the term – "One and the same becoming. A single bloc of becoming."¹² To give an example from another context, we usually accept that

¹² "The wasp and the orchid provide the example. The orchid seems to form a wasp image, but in fact there is a wasp-becoming of the orchid, an orchid-becoming of the wasp, a double capture since 'what' each becomes changes no less than what 'that which' becomes." Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II*, Trans.: Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007, p. 2

Algerian is a kind of French (think of Zinedine Zidane, for example). It is obvious that Algeria changed with the French rule and also after it ended. But at the same time France of course changed, too, by occupying and holding Algeria; and it changed again when it withdrew from it – the French changed their political system and formed the Fifth Republic because of Algeria. So we can also say that French is a kind of Algerian. Therefore, the question “Who is French?” can be converted to the question “Who is Algerian?” and now we can consider someone like Le Pen as a self-hating Algerian.”¹³

In these constellations of affinities and connectedness, there is no France without Algeria, and there is no Algeria without France. The notion of becoming here unbalances the political, economic and cultural scales of domination and power that we were used to when approaching the question of France/Algeria. With regards to Israel-Palestine, becoming enables for an existence of an Israeli-Palestinian that cannot be defined exclusively as nationality, nor as religion or ethnicity – categories through which the conflict understands itself – but through the expression of connectedness. In a way, one can already observe how the longer Israel exists through and with its connectedness to Palestine the more it finds the need to deny this fact. So an Israeli today would be a self-denying Palestinian. Someone who rejects the affinity and blocs the proximity he or she already has to becoming Palestinian.

Betrayal will be suggested in this dissertation as a way to engage with formations such as these. Betrayal will be the invitation to betray the denial of becoming. Betrayal follows the curatorial in that it actualizes potentialities. It does not actualize one potential by merely executing it, but rather enables

¹³ See Joshua Simon, “Introduction,” in: Joshua Simon (Ed.), *Solution 196-213: United States of Palestine-Israel*, Sternberg Press, 2011, pp. 15-16

potentialities to present themselves. To bring forth new horizons by way of reconstituting them and constructing them. In this, Betrayal offers long-distance and sometimes retroactive solidarities. This is makes Betrayal a strategy through which to enact the curatorial and its knowledges for new collective subjectivities to emerge.

For the Middle Eastern context for example, Betrayal would mean a self-regioning. The last decade saw the emergence of work and projects from artists from the region which address parallel histories of communism and nation building, pan-Arabism and pre-Muslim identities, as an attempt for a kind of self-duration – to be in histories that are unattainable to us today. This variety of projects that have taken place in relation to the Middle East in recent years within the field of contemporary art include the work of Palestinian, Lebanese and Israeli writers, artists and curators like Roe Rosen, Emily Jacir, Yossi Atia and Itamar Rose, Yael Bartana, Scandar Copti, Walid Raad, Rabih Mroue, Ariella Azoulay and others (some of whom I had the privilege of working with). Their work has formed my understanding of Betrayal as a project of self-regioning while turning from the antagonistic situation. By self-regioning, I mean that Betrayal entails a shift of the positions and orientations – inside and outside, back and forth – without being chained to the scripted positions of the various religious, economic, national and ethnic conflicts. These projects propose Betrayal as a possible field of inquiry which in these projects seems to circle around a project of self-regioning.

Through the process of writing this dissertation, I came to realize how different notions and practices of Betrayal are being articulated by colleagues and peers throughout the region. My dissertation therefore, might use different terms than projects such as Jack Persikian's "Exhaustion," exhibition at the Jerusalem Show IV (2010), Rasha Salti's "Plot for a

Biennial” for the Sharjah Biennial 10 (2011) and Murtaza Vali’s “Manual for Treason” project for this same biennial, but it shares these recent projects’ drive for charting new lines and alliances, surpassing the ones already given to use here in the Middle East. Looking at these projects now, it seems that while proposing different histories of the Middle East, they were putting forward an urgency that they have sensed, but only now becomes clear to us – that the Middle East is actually ceasing to exist in front of our very eyes.

These artists’ projects form a re-constitution of horizons. These are perspectives that have been lost and seemed unattainable as potentials. Sometimes, these perspectives were never attainable, and therefore have to be also fictionalized. It is imperative to explain that the use of horizon here does not aim to depict a goal that constantly escapes us, one that we thrive for but can never reach. Horizon denotes an organizing perspective which provides a point of reference that enables for things to be seen, to appear and be present.

The practices I refer to here give a somewhat provisional working definition of betrayal, as they show how it allows us to think through reality with concepts that betray this reality. These projects might in themselves not be so explicitly about Betrayal but they enable me to think of Betrayal in a political and historical context. A variety of emplotment strategies for example are present in the works of Rosen, Jacir, Atia and Rose, Bartana, Copti, Raad, Mroue and Azoulay. They enable the injecting of counter-speculations, inventions and plots as a critical tactic of Betrayal for destabilizing identities aligned along an antagonism. In this dissertation, I will present a tapestry of Betrayals, a series of tactics by which histories are re-charged and injected with fictions providing leaps to the unimaginable to be proposed. Betrayal, therefore, offers different ways of imagining vantage

points that are either not-yet or no-longer available for us at a present antagonistic political setting.

The template of proposals for Betrayal in this dissertation suggests temporal maps to perceive the way the powers are aligned and offers the possibility for new alliances to form. By this, not only a shift from a spatial conceptualization to a temporal one takes place, but also a move from set antagonisms that produce political meaning to evolving and shifting alliances takes place. A move from us/them to a constellation of us becoming everything that could be otherwise seems to better describe the political mapping of Betrayal, this at a moment which seems to have defeated any notion of the future as an emancipatory project.

Betrayal therefore, would be a tool to use in problematizing a set of notions that define the given antagonistic condition. Betrayal allows to think *with* rather than only *against*. What the antagonism presents as an objectivity of “what there is” is a denial of connectedness and rejection of becoming. Betrayal is a way to work from within becoming vis-à-vis the antagonism.

The Chapters of the Dissertation

The chapters of this dissertation revolve around notions of Betrayal that can be developed through the actions and writing of several figures. The two authors and the historical figure I am focusing on – Sigmund Freud, Bertolt Brecht and Alcibiades – provide various strategies of entanglement. Each one has found his own way to activate history by acting in it, enacting it and inhabiting counter-currents in it. These characters perform Betrayal as a re-entry into the political through various ways: exhaustion of antagonisms, fictionalizing political traumas, surfacing of “dead-ideas” that are either not-

yet or no-longer available to us (i.e. anachronisms), and shifting the site of politics.

These chapters focus on instances of Betrayal which unfold this concept as one which provides further possibilities for political potentialities. Through recurring consideration of the curatorial and the tools it provides, these chapters frame Betrayal in relation to formation, narration and agency. The curatorial informs these chapters as they propose an operative concept for Betrayal as an extreme form of politics.

The first chapter of this dissertation “Betrayal and Treason – Alcibicades,” is dedicated to Betrayal as it is performed through crossing the lines outward. Using Mouffe and Laclau’s deployment of the antagonism and hegemony, Betrayal is presented as an entanglement of these. Focusing on Alcibiades son of Cleinias, who time and again performed treasons, Betrayal is proposed in relation to exhaustion. Betrayal is proposed in this chapter as a category which differs from treason or desertion. While these two legal and military terms (treason, desertion) refer to a changing of sides within an antagonistic situation or conflict, Betrayal would be a turning from the antagonistic situation. While treason and desertion are still loyal to the antagonistic situation itself (although desertion does not entail a reunion with the other side, it still operates within the polarity), Betrayal betrays the trust that this situation asks from those on conflicted sides. Being situated in a conflict, it is constituted in a series of agreements between the antagonistic sides. Committing treason and changing sides follows a spatial understanding of the political which still leaves us within the logic of the said conflict. In this way it would simply reaffirm it. Betrayal of the conflict opens up new and different ways for operating. By this, and here lies the entanglement of Mouffe and Laclau’s proposal, Betrayal proposes an

engagement with the conflict, while withdrawing from its self-perpetuating logic.

Alcibiades is proposed as method for Betrayal through a spatial positioning, in which unity is exhausted by moving from one side to the other. His Betrayal would be therefore considered as loyalty to Athens as an open ended question. The story of the fifth century BC Athenian politician and pupil of Socrates, Alcibiades, provides the possibility to propose a form of Betrayal – one that commits serial treasons. Alcibiades has changed sides from the Athenian camp to the Spartan to the Persian and back to the Athenian, all in one conflict – the Peloponnesian War. His serial treasons exhausted the available antagonisms of his time, to the extent that they performed a Betrayal, offering a new formation for the alliances and antagonisms to emerge. Grounding one form of Betrayal, that of exhausting antagonisms through serial treasons, on the model of Alcibiades, suggests it as a loyalty that is not expedient and does not submit to mere protocols of allegiance – a loyalty that is Betrayal.

The second chapter of this dissertation “Anachronism and Fictionalism – Freud,” It presents Betrayal through the examination of emplotments and the political currency they hold for Betrayal. Fictionalism comes to play through Sigmund Freud’s formulation of the story of Moses in *Moses and Monotheism* (1936); its relation to the moment it was published and the genealogy which stems from it, with the debates and traditions it has formed. In this book, the last to be published in his lifetime, Freud is proposing that the biblical character of Moses, the forefather of the Jews and of monotheism, was not Jewish but an Egyptian prince, following a tradition of proto-Monotheism that pre-dates Judaism.

As it is concerned with narration and history, this chapter includes contemporary discussions of conspiracy and transparency, reenactment and parafictions. Being that narration calls for a process of editing, a certain form of editing, namely montage, will be emphasized, by looking into structures that move from transparency/collision to addition/repetition. With the aim to further develop the notion of Betrayal, this chapter includes an application of Jean-Luc Godard's late montage methods and their articulation by Gilles Deleuze, to propose a form for narrating Betrayal. In addition, a set of contemporary proposals for operation beyond a given antagonism is explored through Ariella Azoulay's ongoing pursuit of potential histories that suggest a fruitful use of anachronism and fiction through photography.¹⁴ In both Freud's and Azoulay's proposals, new alliances emerge as other are dismantled. This is done directly in relation to both thinkers' contemporary political reality, through a narration of histories that seemed unavailable. In this chapter Betrayal is performed through a consideration of Freud's *Moses* as a way of destabilizing a division inwards. Freud is proposed as a method for Betrayal by making structures of destabilization, in which a dichotomy is destabilized by unsettling one of its components. The metaphor of the pyramid, as a structure that is a collapse, will be developed as a reference to Freud's Betrayal as loyalty to Jewishness as an open ended question.

The third chapter aims at addressing actual acting in politics by considering Hannah Arendt's notion of Action in *The Human Condition* (1958) with Bertolt Brecht's concept of Acting (both in his learning plays and Epic theatre). This conflates Betrayal as an operative notion of external and internal, public agency and secret agency, aimed to be performed in the realm of politics. Through Brecht's proposal of demonstration rather than

¹⁴ See for example: Ariella Azoulay, *Civil Imagination: A Political Ontology of Photography*, London and New York: Verso, 2012

representation, Betrayal is performed here through expanding political action onto acting in politics. Brecht is proposed as method for Betrayal as acting by moving from the political back to politics and constructing it outside the arena or the scene. Here Arendt's formulation of spaces of appearance as a site that is created by people equally sharing words and deeds, creating a political sphere by their own terms, is replaced by sites of articulation, where this coming together of people is orchestrated and performed as it demonstrates the power relations that exist already and works its way through them. The Betrayal Brecht brings forth is considered as loyalty to acting as an open ended question.

CHAPTER ONE: BETRAYAL AND TREASON - ALCIBIADES

Introduction

The introduction to this dissertation deploys a template of proposals for Betrayal through critical tactics for destabilizing identities aligned along an antagonism through emplotments, counter-speculations and acting. Betrayal therefore is proposed not as a negative concept but as the contingent becoming that is potentially available in any antagonism, against its own logic. It is a re-alignment, a shifting of the lines and the search for another setting – it is a modification of the conditions while engaging with the antagonisms at hand.

One method of Betrayal is discussed in this chapter through the actions of Alcibiades, son of Cleinias. Alcibiades problematizes the setting of the problem at hand. By observing the way one form of Betrayal performs itself through his series of re-positionings, we will try to better understand the relations between political antagonism and Betrayal. While Alcibiades's motivations are less of an interest for this dissertation, their effects, ripples and the movement they chart are the focus here. Alcibiades was an Athenian who brought Athens to its knees. Nevertheless, his continuous movement from one side to the other in an antagonistic setting such as the Greek and Persian worlds of the fifth century BC, portrays Betrayal as loyalty to Athens as an open ended question.

The Betrayal Alcibiades proposes is performed through the exhaustion of territorial leaps between inside and outside. As proposed in this chapter, moving from one side to the other within an antagonism would be treason, but doing so a number of times, the lines of antagonism ever-changing,

already constitutes Betrayal. This is Alcibiades's method as presented in this chapter.

In order to elaborate and investigate this method of Betrayal, this chapter incorporates the discussion around antagonisms as developed by Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau, in addition to references using knowledge from artistic practice and curatorial work in the Middle East and especially Israel-Palestine.

Betrayal will be explored here as an engagement with politics while it is a withdrawal from a given antagonism. Betrayal is both a moment and a movement that has no one subject through which it comes into play, but rather it is a mode of action, being enacted by the various parties implicated in the event. The political drive at the heart of this investigation could be summed up by the statement: "Everything can be otherwise". To this, Betrayal provides an actualization. By this I mean that Betrayal enables the potential for "Everything to be otherwise" to appear. Of course everything can also "remain the same", and the powers that be are as they are (and producing constant change exactly for that), yet with Betrayal the potentiality for everything to be otherwise is actualized. The potential to have potential for "Everything to be otherwise" opens with Betrayal. Betrayal, therefore, provides an actualization of potentiality.

This might seem paradoxical, yet by actualizing potentiality I do not mean capitalizing on a certain potential (something shows potential and comes to be a reality by following this potential to the end – these all refer to maximizing value). Actualizing potentialities in the plural, is the enabling of potentialities to appear – the "can be" in "Everything can be otherwise". The actualization of potentialities appears through Betrayal. As will be elaborated in this chapter, the curatorial is of key importance for proposing Betrayal

especially because of its ability to individuate a plurality, neither by reducing it to a quantitative divisibility, nor by leaving it in a qualitative homogeneity. In the following pages of this chapter, I will aim at emphasizing the offer of Betrayal as one of positionality. A mode of acting politically through political antagonisms, which provides a re-orientation in relation to them, altering them by moving away from them.

This chapter follows some of the key concepts developed by Mouffe and Laclau, namely hegemony, antagonism and articulation. Through the story of Alcibiades and his actions, which is synthesized through various sources, Betrayal emerges as a set of serial treasons. Betrayal exhausts the antagonisms as it engages with them while withdrawing from the logic that contains them. Alcibiades's form of Betrayal as exhaustion of antagonisms is discussed as a method in this chapter, suggesting the curatorial as a technique of articulation through the exhaustion of antagonisms.

Betrayal and the Curatorial

What the curatorial enables, and this will be further discussed in the upcoming chapters as well, is a format for demonstration rather than representation. The curatorial can be conceived as political engagement and strategy on the level of a model. This is not so much a scale issue as with the use of models in architecture or planning. Rather it is a model in the sense that provides a setting to explore and trace interrelations. The curatorial operates as a model as it makes relations sensible, demonstrating them, not representing them.

The most immediate (but in no way exclusive) curatorial gesture is the exhibition. The exhibition provides a model that can be used for the relation between the concrete and the abstract, the circumstantial and the

conceptual, the political and politics. It includes a syntax of induction, deduction, multi-stable oscillation, and other polyphonies that are orchestrated.

With politics moving more and more towards the administration of society through policing, when we discuss politics, it has come to carry very little political meaning. While the political has to be constantly invented, engineered and produced, politics has come to mean the exact opposite, especially under real existing democratic regimes. And so, politics has become a narrow field of meaning, separate from life (for example, the common phrases of not “going into politics” as if one is not already in it when speaking, when using language, when voicing an utterance).

Today, we can see how so many contemporary proposals that deal directly with politics find their place of articulation outside politics, seeking refuge elsewhere. With the decline of politics as a political sphere,¹⁵ the curatorial finds itself hosting more and more political projects. As it operates within a larger aesthetic economy of appearances, the joy of the political which the curatorial offers has invited in recent decades many projects which aim unequivocally at politics. In this sense, the curatorial offers itself as an exceptional practice for the joy of the political.

To the drive that runs through the curatorial’s mode of expanding what is to be negotiated and articulated, we can call this Betrayal. The curatorial is both a process through which a conceptual framework arises from specific instances, and the project that weaves different singularities together. It combines induction and deduction and operates through continuous

¹⁵ With this I am thinking of Claude Lefort’s idea of modern democracies separating out politics from other fields of social life, making them prone to totalitarianism. See: Claude Lefort, “On Modern Democracy”, in: *Democracy and Political Theory*, Trans.: David Macey, Polity Press, 1988, pp. 9-44

transduction. In addition to this somewhat mechanistic portrayal, the curatorial has an abductive logic that runs through it – allowing for intuition and charisma to play in the syntax of the exhibition. While the narrative of the exhibition might demand a consolidation of meaning, the event of the exhibition operates separately, allowing for affinities to be staged.

Returning to the exhibition as the basic curatorial gesture, it is characterized by a suspended duration of being among objects. And as a retinal and non-retinal viewing mechanism, the exhibition as a way of looking but also as a much wider aesthetic experience allows us to consider display as a moment and a movement which opens trajectories, traces and horizons which entail the potentiality for everything to be otherwise. The curatorial as a practice of conceptualizing singularities, produces for the exhibits the viewing tools through which to be seen. Betrayal is the drive that runs through the curatorial as it actualizes potentiality.

Beyond the relative quality of the exhibition as narrative (I see one thing in this while you see another thing in it), and the relational nature of the event of the exhibition (by which there are scripted and unscripted relations between the various authors of a piece, the worlds it connects, and the ones of the space and its context, the curated syntax and that which the viewers bring forth) – within the context of the curatorial, Betrayal occurs first and foremost through display. It is the apparently definite claim of the displayed exhibit which provides this. Of course it is not the exhibit that is definite, nor its authorship, neither is the web of meanings it carries and readings it calls for. It is through its definite appearance, that the claim for everything to be otherwise is displayed.

Betrayal and Treason

Alcibiades's Betrayal as a model demonstrates a different relation than mere treason or desertion. To make the use of the term Betrayal more clear, this chapter suggests Betrayal as differing from treason or desertion. While both desertion and treason refer to a change of sides within an antagonistic situation or conflict, Betrayal does not answer to the spatial conceptualization of "us/them" or "here/there." Betrayal leaves these questions for another positioning – that of conceptualizing the story from a speculative perspective at the end or at the beginning, involving historical fictionalization and political imagination. As an antagonistic setting demands from those on opposite sides to bestow their trust in it, treason and desertion do so by their acceptance of the constitutive element of the antagonism – 'that there is an "other side"'. Even when one is deserting from the ranks without collaboration with the proclaimed enemy, he or she would be considered deserters according to their relations with the dichotomous logic of the antagonism.

For conceptualizing Betrayal we need to accept that the trust the antagonism demands from the different antagonistic sides has to be disposed with. Betrayal offers various tactics to do that while engaging with politics. As desertion and treason are still true to the antagonism and to the setting it provides (both "us" and "them" are trusted by the antagonism to keep it going), Betrayal literally betrays the trust of the antagonism.

Treason and desertion define a change of sides within an antagonism/conflict, but they still follow the logic of the antagonism/conflict. As the antagonism/conflict constitutes our identities, it constantly demands us to trust in it – our vocabulary and gestures, our imagination and motivations are all operated through it, perpetuating it through belief and resistance, solutions and dissent. In this sense, treason and desertion

remain faithful to the conflict, as they still operate within the logic of its antagonisms – they appear as a mere changing of sides within an antagonism. Betrayal enables a way for things to be otherwise – beyond the antagonisms and the realities they are offered through.¹⁶

Betrayal and Politics

Before delving into what Alcibiades did and what was done to him, we would need to figure out exactly on what field his actions are proposed as Betrayal. The political vocabulary developed by Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau around notions of antagonism and hegemony, the multiplicity of struggles and chains of equivalence, as they call it, is where we will locate this discussion. These authors propose an inherent potential for political emancipation in the inability to achieve objectivity and totality of society. Their work, as Mouffe has described it in a later text, envisioned the activity of ‘critique as engagement with,’ the political.¹⁷

The work of Chantal Mouffe on politics and the political and her definitions of antagonism and agonism, beginning with her book together with Ernesto Laclau *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (1985)¹⁸, and in her *The Return of The Political* (1993)¹⁹ and *The*

¹⁶ The horizon of “Everything can be otherwise” helps in shift from a solely spatial argument to one that is also temporal. With this I am following Derrida when he writes: “That is why we always propose to speak of a democracy *to come*, not of a *future* democracy in the future present, not as a regulating idea, in the Kantian sense, or of a utopia – at least not to the extent that their inaccessibility would still retain the temporal form of a *future present*, of a future modality of the *living present*.” See: Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, Trans.: Peggy Kamuf, Routledge, 1994, p. 81

¹⁷ Mouffe, “Critique as Counter-Hegemonic Intervention”

¹⁸ Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*

¹⁹ Chantal Mouffe, *The Return of the Political*, London and New York: Verso, 1993

Democratic Paradox (2000)²⁰, provide a conceptual framework through which and against which, Betrayal is proposed here. Together with Laclau, Mouffe proposed a political concept that sets the limit for any claim for objectivity or universality. They call this: antagonism. In *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, Mouffe and Laclau describe antagonism as a setting which extends both real oppositions and dialectical contradiction. They name it 'social antagonism' and explain that there is no 'cunning of reason,' that would realize itself through these antagonistic relations, and no 'supergame,' that sets the rules for these relations. This is why they "conceive of the political not as a superstructure but as having the status of an *ontology of the social*."²¹

Mouffe and Laclau debate the Marxist deployment of the social as a division between *proletariat* and *bourgeoisie*. They ask what, if not this fundamental and universal divide, constitute society. For them the assumed universality of hegemony results from the specific interrelations between what they call "logics of difference" and "logics of equivalence." They describe antagonism as neither an opposition (as it is not based solely on experience), nor a contradiction (for example, holding contradictory beliefs within yourself does not imply you are in an antagonism). Antagonism, is not an objective relation, but a relation in which the limits of every objectivity are shown.²² Instead of class as the key divide at the heart of the social, they propose a multiplicity of particular struggles. Mouffe and Laclau formulate a multiplicity of antagonisms in which the conditions and the possibility of a pure fixing of differences recede: "every social identity becomes the meeting point for a

²⁰ Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, London and New York: Verso, 2000

²¹ Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, pp. xiii-xiv

²² See: *Ibid.*, p. 125. They opt for the Gramscian 'Historical Bloc' rather than class, see: Laclau and Mouffe, p. 42

multiplicity of articulatory practices, many of them antagonistic.”²³ They call ‘Hegemonic Relation’ the ability of one particularity out of many that constitute society to occupy a position of universality.²⁴

In their work together, Mouffe and Laclau find it imperative to debate at length Marxist conceptualizations of the social. Their work, which they named Post-Marxist, is essential to the development of the idea that the left should reject the Marxist tradition by which there is nothing else to society except class struggle. As much as they criticize Rosa Luxemburg for the inconsistency of her idea of spontaneity and class unity, the authors do credit Luxemburg for accepting that class is a symbolic tool for converging struggles, or as they put it: “The unity of the class is therefore a symbolic unity”, making it a political tool of articulation rather than a social fact.²⁵ The recognition of contingency of antagonistic relations makes political work a work of articulation. This notion of articulation is especially productive in relation to the curatorial. The work of the curatorial involves the articulation of potentialities. This characteristic of the curatorial will be further developed in this chapter as an articulation of political relations.

Society is therefore aligned along antagonistic limits, and the political is the contingent framework of social antagonisms. Any articulation of one overarching antagonism which defines society is for Mouffe and Laclau a cause for suspicion. They write of the political logic of unity:

“it may be the result of a politics of the 'left', according to which every antagonism may be eliminated and society rendered completely transparent, or the result of an authoritarian fixing of

²³ Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, p. 138

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xiii

²⁵ *Ibid.*

the social order in hierarchies established by the state, as in the case of fascism.”²⁶

It is the status of the sole possessor of the truth of the social order that is at the heart of their critique, be it in the name of the proletariat or of the nation. For Mouffe and Laclau, from this follows that social division is inherent within the possibility of politics, and as they argue extensively throughout the book, the existence of these antagonistic divisions creates the very possibility of a democratic politics. For them democracy should consist of the multiplicity of social logics and their recognition. The articulation of these antagonisms should be constantly re-created and renegotiated, for there is no final point at which a balance will be definitively achieved between the logic of complete identity and that of pure difference.²⁷

Mouffe and Laclau propose a “chain of equivalence” among different struggles (for example, feminism, gay rights, and anti-racists), in order to define how different groups share and determine their adversary, their “them” to which “we” are opposed. This scheme, in many ways, aims to avoid the master/slave dialectics that constantly reshape power. The chain of equivalence is intended to allow different political projects to be related even if those projects, viewed only through the lens of master/slave or bourgeois/proletariat, do not obviously have anything in common. But the chain of equivalence does so without any of these micro-projects and specific struggles, assuming the vantage point of a universality from which to

²⁶ Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, p. 188

²⁷ Ibid.

offer a change that will also alter each of the given groups and not leave them as they were, loyal to the antagonism that defined them.²⁸

Mouffe's and Laclau's call for a diversity of political struggles has been described as setting the stage, on some level, for a withdrawal from politics by insisting on immanent difference and an absence of any common point of reference for an over-arching political project.²⁹ For them, it is the intensity of a social relation that defines the political. Therefore, the imbalance needed for a permanent renegotiation and re-articulation which they call radical democracy, must operate towards a horizon. Otherwise, we can perceive their project as mere reversed-counter-hegemonic project, wherein political power is the domination of these chains of equivalence (divide and conquer through culture wars and single-agenda political movements).³⁰

While Laclau went on to pursue a post-Marxist path, combining Lacanian insights with Marxist categories,³¹ Mouffe turned to develop the concept of

²⁸ Mouffe and Laclau develop the notion of "chain of equivalence" in chapters 3 and 4 in: Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, pp. 93-193

²⁹ See for example: Jodi Dean, *Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies: Communicative Capitalism and Left Politics*, Duke University Press, 2009, p. 34. Dean's critique should be read in relation to the context of the 1980s when Mouffe's and Laclau's book was published. By then it was apparent that former deals that were made in relation to social tensions in the North Atlantic countries, (i.e. the welfare state), were off, and not only that, but huge sections of the public found themselves outside these deals to begin with: non-white working class, women, minority groups, to name a few. See for example: David Graeber, *Debt: The First 5,000 Years*, Brooklyn: Melville House Publishing, 2011, pp. 372-375.

³⁰ Jodi Dean has written extensively on the malfunctioning of single-agenda political movements which have proliferated since the decline of Socialism as a viable political project in the industrialized countries. She terms "depoliticization," the contemporary left's "inability to raise particular claims to the level of the universal, to present issues or problems as standing for something beyond themselves." See: Jodi Dean, *Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies*, p.16

³¹ For example in: Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, and Slavoj Žižek, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues On The Left*, London and New York: Verso, 2000, and: Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, London and New York: Verso, 2005

“radical democracy,” through civilian republicanism and liberalism.³² Later on in her own writing, Mouffe places political passions (for example, outrage, anger, empathy, and sympathy), as a basis for constructing a collective form of identification. Her question “What makes people crystallize into a ‘we,’ a ‘we’ which is to act politically?” is limited to a pre-revolutionary ‘we’, in the sense that that ‘we’ is not interested in evolution but in limited tactical demands which can be achieved through the liberal rights discourse.

It is interesting to examine how hegemony actually feeds off the chain of equivalence to consolidate its power. We can see this in the fact that right-wing political domination in real existing democracies relies on a multiplicity of struggles, preserving them, by mixing identity politics and lobbying to make a grotesque version of ‘radical democracy.’ What this means is that formulation of the chain of equivalence is not solely operational for emancipatory political projects. In real existing politics, the chain of equivalence we encounter is based first and foremost on organizational abilities. Therefore, whoever has control over infrastructure (communications, juridical, economical etc.), can operate it. That is why we see hegemony consolidating power by feeding the chain in reverse through divide and conquer strategies. This is how we find ourselves with the anti-immigrants, deregulation proponents and market fundamentalists, the military, the clergy, financial market profiteers, regional government and local councils with demands for bureaucratic positions of trust, and also militant identitarians and promoters of recreational multiculturalism. All these are genuinely located on the chain of equivalence of real existing democracies. In this setting, what Betrayal might suggest would be to examine the options we have when we realize that the proposal for a chain

³² See: Mark Wenman, “Laclau or Mouffe? Splitting the Difference,” *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, Volume 29, September 2003, pp. 581-593

of equivalence can be understood quite differently, realizing that hegemony feeds off the different struggles.

It is in this actuality of real-existing politics, that we can trace the field of Betrayal's operation. Mouffe, who played a significant role in the conceptualization of the political in the past three decades, described hers and Laclau's proposal as an 'engagement with' the political. But this 'engagement with' can be also understood as a retreat, or a 'withdrawal from' politics.³³ At the basis of the proposal of Betrayal here lays the re-alignment of politics today. With this reevaluation of the political vis-à-vis politics, Alcibiades can be used as an elaboration and as a critique of Mouffe and Laclau and their understanding of the field at hand.

Here Betrayal can be useful to define the intensification of relations to the extent they become political. Yet, this occurs in relation to other political intensities, and so Betrayal operates in an axis between and around the antagonisms available, and between and around the way they articulate politics, the political horizon and the not-yet-available potentialities which are actualized through it.

Betrayal and Antagonism

Mouffe's and Laclau's notion of antagonism, as it is put forward in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, proposes "engagement with" as taking a position within a given antagonism. Following Claude Lefort, Mouffe and Laclau point out that the democratic revolution opened up a new terrain at the symbolic level which implies a new form of institution of the social – the site of power becomes an empty space

³³ Mouffe criticizes Paolo Virno's notion of 'Exodus' to be 'critique as withdrawal from' the political: Mouffe, "Critique as Counter-Hegemonic Intervention"

in democratic regimes. This opens up an unending process of questioning.³⁴ Unity is no longer able to erase social division, and this division has come to be key in their understanding of *Antagonism*.

Betrayal, as a movement between engagement with and withdrawal from, works with antagonism but goes beyond – it relies on the interdependency of the antagonistic sides, which Mouffe highlights following Derrida in her later writing. Betrayal therefore, seeks to alter the antagonistic equation and throw it off balance. It is in the tradition of performative modes of thinking which try to go beyond antagonism that Betrayal should be conceived.³⁵

For Mouffe and Laclau, for identity to never be “positive” and closed in itself, but rather constituted as transition, relation and difference, they follow Derrida’s articulation of discourse and deconstruction, claiming that “neither absolute fixity nor absolute non-fixity is possible.”³⁶ They use Derrida’s notion of discourse to establish a contingent understanding of politics, by which the centre is a function and not a fixed locus. They quote from *Writing and Difference*:

“It became necessary to think both the law which somehow governed desire for a center in the constitution of structure, and the process of signification which orders the displacements and substitutions for this law of central presence – but as a central presence which has never been itself, has always already been exiled from itself into its own substitute. The substitute does not

³⁴ Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, p. 186

³⁵ From those writings Mouffe and Laclau refer to Hegelian dialectics and Derrida’s notion of the centre and substitution. Mouffe and Laclau refer especially to Derrida’s “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences”, in: *Writing and Difference*, University of Chicago Press, 1978, pp. 278-293

³⁶ Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, p. 111

substitute itself for anything which has somehow existed before it, henceforth, it was necessary to begin thinking that there was no center, that the center could not be thought in the form of a present-being, that the center had no natural site, that it was not a fixed locus but a function, a sort of non-locus in which an infinite number of sign-substitutions came into play. This was the moment when language invaded the universal problematic, the moment when, in the absence of a center or origin, everything became discourse – provided we can agree on this word – that is to say, a system in which the central signified, the original or transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of differences. The absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and the play of signification infinitely.”³⁷

Mouffe and Laclau describe hegemony as the antagonism which is perceived as the foundation of society. Relying on two key terms which Mouffe and Laclau base their analysis on – *Articulation* and *Hegemony*, in real existing politics we do recognize the ability to construct a fundamental-antagonism. A hegemonic relation for Mouffe and Laclau is one of “absent totality” which becomes possible through its articulation as the “representation of a totality that is radically incommensurable with it.”³⁸ In this sense, although Mouffe and Laclau would insist on its arbitrariness, still the moment of political articulation in which an antagonism comes to assume a hegemonic status, makes it to be a fundamental-antagonism in relation to all other antagonisms. It is a particular element which assumes a structuring

³⁷ Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, p. 212. See also: Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, p. 280

³⁸ Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, p. x

function within a certain discursive field, while claiming for itself the status of 'a universality.'³⁹ Hegemony, which is, in Mouffe's and Laclau's view, the central category of political analysis, is therefore articulating all other antagonisms in relation to one which becomes the fundamental-antagonism. This is very true to real existing politics where domination functions somewhat like a reversed prism, through which all other antagonisms are articulated. As for the question of articulation here, it emerges both in the relation between each of the antagonisms but also in the relation between hegemony and each antagonism – this is the fundamental-antagonism. Articulations, in this sense, are re-compositions of tensions and contradictions through the process of politics. And so, following Mouffe and Laclau, if hegemony is order in contingency, we can see how antagonisms are the axes by which political identities and realities are constructed. These are derived and articulated to the most part in relation to the fundamental-antagonism.

As it operates in relation to the moment of political articulation, Betrayal can be located in the relations that run through different antagonisms and that one which comes to assume the status of the fundamental-antagonism. Therefore, if we take into account the notion of horizon that Betrayal addresses by the intensification of relations, we can see how Mouffe's and Laclau's proposition can be re-articulated today, in a way against itself. When faced with contemporary neoliberal hegemony by which class is no longer articulated as a category to operate from in politics, one would have to re-appropriate Mouffe's and Laclau's project, and with loyalty to their project, re-position class of all things, as an antagonism through which other

³⁹ Ibid., p. xi

antagonisms are measured. Betrayal maintains the tensions of articulation in relation to hegemony.⁴⁰

Betrayal and Agonism

When Mouffe goes on to examine the limits of liberal politics in her later writing, she uses Carl Schmitt's *The Concept of The Political* (mainly the second chapter on specific political distinctions operating along the scheme of Friend/Enemy), where he stresses that liberal politics' inclusive drive is always met by a self-created frontier.⁴¹ By that every 'we' that a liberal democratic political project proposes, must be distinguished from a 'them'.⁴² This affirms for her that there is a relational character to every identity, and by that the couple identity/difference is unavoidable. Her proposal for

⁴⁰ One can see how the police cracking down on the Occupy movement in the US, Canada and the UK in November 2011, follows this exact realization – that the mere claim that we are in a class society is politically endangering the ruling classes. With this I am following Jodi Dean's claim that the slogan "We are the 99%" highlights a division and a gap as it asserts a collectivity which is not unified under a race, ethnic, religion or national identity. She writes: "In the setting of an occupied Wall Street, this 'we' is a class, one of two opposed and hostile classes." See: Jodi Dean, "Claiming Division, Naming a Wrong", in: *Theory & Event*, Volume 14, Number 4, 2011 Supplement, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press: http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/theory_and_event/v014/14.4S.dean01.html

⁴¹ See: Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* [1927], Trans.: George Schwabe, University of Chicago Press, 2007

⁴² Susan Buck-Morss explains that Schmitt stresses the collective nature of the enemy "pointing out the difference between the two forms of the enemy, *exthros* compared to *polemos* in ancient Greek, or *inimicus* compared to *hostis* in Latin. Whereas the former terms refer to individual persons, the latter (*polemos* and *hostis*) delineate the political enemy, the public enemy – which, as a collective term, is always an abstraction. You have nothing against this enemy personally. It is a category within sovereign power." See: Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe*, pp.32-33

agonism relies on “the impossibility of a positivity that would be given without any trace of negativity.”⁴³

Her debate with Schmitt’s friend/enemy scheme brought Mouffe to suggest the concept of agonism through Jacques Derrida’s notion of the ‘constitutive outside.’⁴⁴ In her *The Democratic Paradox* Mouffe came to define antagonism as a difference which is perceived within the framework of an ‘us/them’ relation. This relation of difference which is seen as that between friend and enemy, is what she calls the Political. Following Derrida’s notion of the ‘constitutive outside’, Mouffe goes on to claim that although collective identities are established on the mode of an us/them, this mode cannot be reduced to a negation by which any ‘us’ asserts or negates a ‘them’. Therefore, she structures her notion of the Political as that in which ‘them’ is the symbol of what makes any ‘us’ impossible.

She conceptualizes agonism as a solution to antagonistic politics, as a way to further elaborate a move towards an operative proposal for an anti-essentialist politics. In this formation of politics:

⁴³ Mouffe, *The Return of the Political*, p. 114

⁴⁴ Mouffe and Laclau subscribe to Derrida’s articulation of discourse as they follow his description of “centre and substitution” in which a series of substitutions of centre make for centre to take place: “as a linked chain of determinations of the centre”. See: *Jacques Derrida, “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences”*, in: *Writing and Difference*, p. 279. Mouffe’s further use of Derrida’s ‘constitutive outside’ can find its background already in the chapter on *Violence and Metaphysics* in this same book (pp. 97–192). Here Derrida uses James Joyce’s neologism “Jewgreek” to hint on a connectedness and a process of becoming even through a setting that suggests only oppositions: “Jewgreek is greekjew. Extremes meet. Death is the highest form of life. Bah!”, see also interview with John D. Caputo where he explains to Emmet Cole the coupling “Greeks” (Beauty, truth), and “Jews” (Prophetic justice), and the way Derrida proposes that we live in the difference between them. See: Emmet Cole Interviews John D. Caputo, *The Modern Word*, 16 May 2005: http://www.themodernword.com/features/interview_caputo.html [Last retrieved: 15.10.2015]

“the relation between the social agents becomes more democratic only as far as they accept the particularity and the limitation of their claims; that is, only in so far as they recognize their mutual relation as one from which power is ineradicable.”⁴⁵

For Mouffe, every element has inscribed in its very being something other than itself, and as a result, again following Derrida, “everything is constructed as *difference*”⁴⁶ Therefore, as the ‘constitutive outside’ is present within the inside, every identity along the antagonism is contingent, therefore, political. With agonism, the enemy becomes adversary. For her this is the heart of a modern pluralist democratic politics, through which she sees “democracy as ‘agonistic pluralism.’”⁴⁷ This ‘agonistic pluralism’ enables not only for a containment of the antagonisms, but rather it makes possible for the constitutive outside to find its place inside by transforming *antagonism* into *agonism*.” Unlike her work with Laclau which aimed to correct rigid Marxian *doxa* by describing what they saw as the operations of politics, Mouffe moved in her later writing to outline what politics should be, stating that: “In my view the aim of democratic politics should be to provide the framework through which conflicts can take the form of an agonistic confrontation among adversaries instead of manifesting themselves as an antagonistic struggle between enemies.”⁴⁸ But ‘Agonistic pluralism,’ very much like the outcome of ‘radical democracy’ in real existing politics, seems to mean the opposite of what it aimed to achieve. Agonism portrays an even plateau for politics, not taking into account uneven formations of struggle or clandestine operations of power. Therefore, it can be performed by the

⁴⁵ Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, p. 21

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 14

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 117

political elite already today in real existing democracies without carrying the meaning which Mouffe aimed for it to have.

Betrayal and Loyalty in Israel-Palestine

Mouffe's move enables us to think of Israel/Palestine for example through the possibility for the exterior to come inside into the interior, by that the antagonism Israeli/Palestinian can be re-articulated in terms of an agonistic pluralism. Mouffe's Derridean articulation through the constitutive outside helps in further developing the notion of Betrayal as a move inside-out, not only a change of sides from 'here' to 'there' but also a move through other durations of beginning and end, and from protocol to horizon. Our inhabited fictions (be it "Zionism", "The Middle East" or "The European Union"), generate in them a series of conflicts which constitute our political identities – a variety of antagonisms that outline societies, geographies, subjectivities, bodies. These inhabited fictions call for an embodied politics that will offer a way to that no-longer/not-yet available outside. Imagining a vantage point that is unimaginable within the perspectives offered through the antagonism itself.

Hegemony, the antagonism through which all other antagonisms are being perceived and by which collective and political identities are being articulated, cannot be undone through treason. Because treason still operates within its "us"/"them" framework, it still follows the protocol as its political logic, and thus leaves us still within the fundamental-antagonism of Jew/Arab or Israeli/Palestinian.

The narratives in Israel-Palestine since the 1990s all stem from the US doctrines of New World Order and the War on Terror which brought among other things, the US interventions in the Middle East. In Israel, these joint

processes of destruction included privatizations together with new ways of managing the Occupation of the Palestinian Territories through a mixture of agreements and policing technologies. This reality, which was invested in a disavowal of power relations, in actuality served for the perpetuation of disproportionate power relations between Israel and the Palestinians. The neoliberal subjectivity that emerged did not make the antagonism obsolete, if anything it made it a fundamental antagonism exactly by proposing a denial of power relations (for example through the Oslo Accords of 1993).

Betrayal in this context needs to be articulated as travelling between the antagonism and its exterior. We can give as an example for this mapping the notion of 'absolute enemy.' Susan Buck-Morss uses post-Soviet philosopher Valerii Podoroga's concept of the 'absolute enemy' to describe what is at stake when we destabilise the co-dependency of enemies within an antagonism. She explains that Podoroga "distinguishes the 'enemy' both as a term within the political imaginary and, on a metalevel, as a threat to the political imaginary." The first is the normal enemy and the second is considered the absolute enemy. She goes on to contest Karl Schmitt's notion of the enemy, and explains how the enemy for him occupies a position of the 'other' which the 'one' is always dependent on: "in occupying this position – and this is something Schmitt does not see – the enemy loses the absolute character". Buck-Morss concludes that "it is the absolute political enemy that threatens the existence of the collective not only (and probably not mainly) in a physical sense but, rather, in an ontological sense, because it challenges the very notion by which the identity of the collective has been formed."⁴⁹ Betrayal thus engages in the metalevel of the antagonism and instead of playing simply within the logic of the antagonism,

⁴⁹ See: Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe*, pp. 12-34

moving from one side to the other in it, it engages with the antagonism's underlying logic as it withdraws from its confines.

Betrayal can be perceived as a loyalty to the horizon. It is positioned against the logic of allegiance/treason, because Betrayal undoes the us/them dichotomy. Containing in it an unresolved tension, Betrayal is loyalty to a horizon, beyond protocols of allegiance. By that, Betrayal offers a state by which it is always already. As Israeli politics have come to articulate the political as a binary between Palestinian and Israeli, Jew or Arab, a dichotomy that cannot be bridged, a Loyalty Oath law and several laws of allegiance have been legislated in recent years by the Israeli parliament. These laws regard loyalty as a protocol. They demand Palestinians living in Israel to acknowledge the state of Israel, of which they are citizens, as a Jewish state, with them having individual rights as citizens but no rights as a collective.

These laws bring to its peak a fundamental-antagonism through which politics is conceptualized in Israel-Palestine as either/or; either one is Israeli *or* Palestinian, a Jew *or* an Arab. For an analysis of this fundamental-antagonism, one should address also the formats through which the dichotomy manifests itself, in this case, the new Israeli laws of allegiance.⁵⁰ These laws perceive loyalty as protocol – as a list or a set of regulations to follow or to avoid – they supply a manual for allegiance. But, if an allegiance is a fixed protocol, or better still, if loyalty is a protocol, then within it treason exists as its internal-opposite. By this I mean that treason does not break with the protocol itself, it may break each and every clause in the protocol of allegiance but it still accepts the protocol as the rule to determine

⁵⁰ Another very present format is that of differential citizenry as the repeated attacks on Gaza have shown: Biopolitics and the administration of life for Israelis and Necropolitics and the management of death for Palestinians.

loyalty. These constitutive relations between treason and allegiance actually maintain the “status-quo as protocol” and likewise constitute “the protocol as the status-quo”.

The co-dependency of enemies within an antagonism, should therefore be de-stabilized by other means, as Podoroga suggests. The ‘absolute enemy’ constitutes a threat not only within the political imaginary, but it also poses a threat to the political imaginary itself. Betrayal differs from treason not only in its spatial proposal – moving from the “us/them” antagonism, but it also offers a blurring of the constitutive relations that allegiance/treason rely on. Betrayal offers a way beyond the fundamental-antagonism by either intensifying it, bringing it to its limit, or by simply not accepting the protocol as the form through which loyalty is performed. Betrayal, therefore, offers itself as another form of loyalty – one that defines itself as a horizon, not as a protocol. By that, Betrayal goes beyond allegiance/treason for this setting revolves around the status-quo as protocol and the protocol as status quo.

Betrayal would then be loyalty that de-stabilizes the status quo as protocol and undermines the protocol as status quo. For Betrayal stems from the notion that “Everything can be otherwise”, it is a horizon of loyalty beyond protocols of allegiance, it is a loyalty to the horizon. Betrayal displays the possibility for other potentialities to be actualized. To the horizon of these potentialities Betrayal is loyal. Betrayal is therefore the inevitable narrative

and event of true loyalty, beyond protocol; loyalty to the new collective subjectivities that are yet to come.⁵¹

If a concept, a person, a discourse or an act, subscribes to the fundamental-antagonism, they can either perform allegiance or its internal opposite – treason, which would be no more than counter-allegiance. For one to perform Betrayal, a concept, a person, a discourse or an act has to be loyal to the horizons of potentialities beyond the protocols of the fundamental-antagonism.

Therefore, going back to these Israeli laws of allegiance, they are definitely not loyal to any horizon of new collective subjectivities emerging in Israel-Palestine, but rather they fortify the fundamental-antagonism of Israeli or Palestinian. Here Betrayal is loyalty; a two-fold move – away from the us/them framework and away from the protocol as definitive script for loyalty as allegiance.

Loyalty and Non-Belonging

Betrayal as a repositioning and opening to potentialities on discursive, social, spatial and temporal levels, proposes non-belonging as a form of loyalty. At stake here is the attempt to formulate a taxonomy of Betrayal, and not one of betrayers. This is not a proposal for a self-positioning and self-fashioning project by which individual subjects are re-constructed by their

⁵¹ The vocabulary here is very much in the spirit of Derrida's messianicity without messianism, as he developed it in *Specters of Marx* where he speaks of a law of a future that would carry beyond what has up until now been called history: "It is this law that dislodges any present out of its contemporaneity with itself. Whether the promise promises this or that, whether it be fulfilled or not, or whether it be unfulfillable, there is necessarily some promise and therefore some historicity as future-to-come. It is what we are nicknaming the messianic without messianism". Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, p. 91

actions as subjects-facing-an-antagonism. Betrayal is a movement between these subjectivities, between discourses and objects, institutions and meanings.

Given that Betrayal is a loyalty that is not expedient, it offers itself through affinity, not through belonging. Betrayal actualizes the ever-changing potentialities which make the horizon of loyalty by way of non-belonging. New narratives through which to perform politics appear by way of affinity. Non-belonging carries the promise of loyalty by Betrayal. Together with non-belonging as a mode of engagement with an antagonism, affinity provides a positionality that is both spatial and durational in its withdrawal from the confinements of its internal logic. This mapping is in constant relation to the horizon of potentialities, repositioning one in a place and a time that might seem unavailable or unattainable within the existing antagonism, but which is actualized through Betrayal.

Directly in relation to the self-perpetuating deadlock of the fundamental-antagonism in Israel-Palestine, which absorbs all fields of meaning and action, non-belonging emerges as loyalty. Non-belonging as loyalty is Betrayal.

Alcibiades and Betrayal

“...for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular [...] The particular is – for example – what Alcibiades did or suffered.”

Aristotle, *Poetics*, part IX

At this point, we will embark on a reconstruction of Alcibiades, what he did and what was done to him. His voice will be synthesized from various sources, narrating his actions as much as possible from his voice and the

voices of his contemporaries⁵². Alcibiades will be used here because he is perceived as a classic example of a betrayer who abuses trust with his ambitions of power. The notion of Betrayal I hope to propose can be considered through his actions, which betray the trust that the antagonisms he was engaged in demanded. Different authors have described him differently. This person from 2,500 years ago is a prominent character in classical texts that have survived from antiquity. From all the different portrayals of Alcibiades by the different sources, the Alcibiades I will work with is mainly based on what is attributed to him directly. The direct quotes from the different sources (his contemporaries Plato, Thucydides and Xenophon and those who came after him like Plutarch), produce the Alcibiades I choose to work with. What I am hoping to achieve in reading Alcibiades' story is a description of a movement that travels through cultural, religious, political and social antagonisms by engaging with them. The way the movement is done provides one method of Betrayal.

I am working here with Alcibiades' actions although and maybe because of his specific character which in many ways resists modeling. His story involves so much "noise", self-promotion and self-interest, that sharing it as a method of Betrayal seems risky to begin with. And yet, his doings and the story of his deeds has enabled me in an early stage of this research to articulate many of the tensions that Betrayal seeks to address. Therefore, Alcibiades himself is not the model but what he did and what was done to him can be used to demonstrate one method of Betrayal as exhaustion of antagonisms.

⁵² Sources and references to Alcibiades from antiquity abound to the extent that there are fake texts on him that pretend to have been written in antiquity. "Alcibiades II" which was considered to be written by Plato is the most notable of these apocryphal sources. See: Plato, *Complete Works*, Ed.: John M. Cooper, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997, v, pp. 596–608

Born around 450 BC at the very apex of the Athenian aristocratic elite, Alcibiades saw the Polis at its peak: The Parthenon was built on the Acropolis as he was growing up (it was inaugurated in 432 BC); Sophocles' *Antigone* was first staged in 441 BC and the Attic tragedy and the famous Athenian dramatic festival Dionysia reached their zenith in his lifetime; among his contemporaries were Euripides (480-406 BC) and Aristophanes (446-388 BC), the historian Thucydides who wrote of him (Alcibiades is well documented in Thucydides' *The Peloponnesian War* and makes several important appearances in books VI and VII of that work). He had personal relationships with Socrates and his followers Plato and Xenophon who also wrote about him. Alcibiades had lost his father at an early age and moved to live with his maternal uncle, Pericles, who was the leader of Athens in its Golden Age.⁵³

As difficult a character as he may be, I will now examine his story to better understand one of the ways Betrayal is performed. The aim here is to read him, sometimes against himself, sometimes against his authors, and the way that he explains himself. Alcibiades's contemporaries are varied and sometimes contradictory in depicting his character and actions, yet he comes across as an ambitious Athenian, whose main ambition in a way is to be an Athenian, with the greatness this demands and promises. Nevertheless, Alcibiades came down through history to be known as an arch-traitor, the one because of whom Athens was defeated and Socrates was executed.

One of the ways for Betrayal to perform itself, can occur by exhausting treason. By that the either/or structure is entangled. This method of Betrayal

⁵³ This era in the history of Ancient Greek city-states is called the Classical Age and is dated around 479–323 BC. See: Ian Morris (Ed.), *Classical Greece: Ancient histories and modern archaeologies*, Cambridge University Press, 1994

will be explored here through the actions of Alcibiades. The story of Alcibiades is that of a series of treasons: being the pupil of Socrates, he chose political life over philosophy – committing treason against his teacher. This treason is depicted mainly in Plato's *Alcibiades I* where their first meeting is described and in *The Symposium* when Alcibiades enters Agathon's house last. Later on, Alcibiades has brought defeat to Athens, through a series of multiple political treasons – these actions lead writers of his time to accuse him of enabling a tyrant to take over the Polis. In addition, he was also blamed for being the cause for the execution of Socrates.

Yet through this infamous figure, one who even his educator (and lover) Socrates seemed to denounce, Betrayal performed itself as a repositioning in relation to and of antagonisms. By this I do not mean to see Alcibiades's actions as a manual for Betrayal today, yet a reading of these actions can enable for the productions of this method of exhausting antagonisms. One way of summarizing the interpretative articulation of Alcibiades as Betrayal, would be to position him, an Athenian of the Classic Hellenic period, as it came to be called, as someone who performs a Hellenistic logic already, including the non-Greek in his variety of identities. This, while striving to be the 'ultimate Athenian.'

Alcibiades and Socrates: First Circle of Treasons

"I am enamored of two things –

Alcibiades, son of Cleinias, and philosophy."

Socrates in Plato's *Gorgias*

When proposing Betrayal in relation to Alcibiades, Alcibiades is used to explore the potential for a political possibility: for being Hellenistic in an

Athenian world, so to speak. As a singularity, Alcibiades probably does not offer us a fixed manual to implement and deploy today, although the cunning politician might find inspiration in him. What is proposed here is a way to work with his story in order to carve out a proposal for Betrayal.⁵⁴

The story of Alcibiades and Socrates is told here from different sources (mainly Plato's *Alcibiades I* and *Symposium*), in order to trace the first circle of treasons by Alcibiades, namely that of philosophy and politics. The historical figure of Alcibiades was written by different authors, among them Thucydides, Plato, Xenophon and Plutarch. Alcibiades as fiction plays the role of history itself – performing the different positions in a conflicted situation. Labelled as a turncoat and traitor by his contemporaries, his motivations are explained both by Thucydides and by Plato in *Alcibiades I*. This dialogue stands as an extended discussion on the nature of politics. Ascribed to Plato, it is considered to have been written in the later period of Plato's writing around 350-347 BC, when he was back in Athens, reflecting on his own experiences with Dionysius II of Syracuse, who he educated himself.⁵⁵ Many sections of the dialogue demonstrate Alcibiades' views on his contemporaries, but the driving force here is the puzzlement Socrates

⁵⁴ Sigmund Freud used the story of Oedipus to simplify, illustrate and illuminate a complex he identified within the nuclear patriarchal family. When suggesting a 'literary' model for a political action, Freud's modelling based on myth is of course a very charismatic proposal. Freud could have taken other aspects of the story and the play (a social reading, for example, would maybe emphasize the fact that the child is born to royalty and is being bought up by commoners), yet Freud chose to extract and solidify a model of emotional relations. Following this example, we can see how different aspects in Alcibiades's story can be used as models for different things, but here his story is suggested to be a model for one form of Betrayal as a political action.

⁵⁵ Nicholas Denyer makes the connection between Dionysius II and Alcibiades – two ambitious politicians who in an early age found interest in philosophy but went on to disappoint their teachers. See: Nicholas Denyer, "Introduction," in: Plato, *Alcibiades*, Ed.: Nicholas Denyer, Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 1-26

puts Alcibiades in. Several *aporias* are presented to us – Socrates questions Alcibiades about the nature of several notions – doing good, ruling, being free. At each point Alcibiades begins full of confidence and finishes with an insoluble impasse. Socrates’s pedagogical technique of *aporia* proves efficient yet again. Perplexed, Alcibiades declares at the end of the dialogue that he will follow Socrates from now on:

Alcibiades: “I agree; and I further say, that our relations are likely to be reversed. From this day forward, I must and will follow you as you have followed me; I will be the disciple, and you shall be my master.”

Socrates: “O that is rare! My love breeds another love: and so like the stork I shall be cherished by the bird whom I have hatched.”

Alcibiades: “Strange, but true; and henceforward I shall begin to think about justice.”

Socrates: “And I hope that you will persist; although I have fears, not because I doubt you; but I see the power of the state, which may be too much for both of us.”

(Plato: *Alcibiades I*; 135)

But the *aporia* experienced by Alcibiades in the dialogue could be extended to his character being posed as an *aporia* in itself, through its actions, a series of contradictory treasons of inconsistent premises. In this dialogue, which depicts the first encounter of Alcibiades and Socrates, Alcibiades is almost nineteen years old. In this intimate dialogue he lays down his political plan to rule, and explains to Socrates that his competition comes not from

foreign enemies but rather from his fellow Athenians. Socrates challenges him by asking:

Socrates: “Why, you surely know that our city goes to war now and then with the Lacedaemonians (Spartans) and with the great king (of Persia)?”

Alcibiades: “True enough.”

Socrates: “And if you meant to be the ruler of this city, would you not be right in considering that the Lacedaemonian (Spartan) and Persian king were your true rivals?”

Alcibiades: “I believe that you are right.”

(Plato: *Alcibiades I*; 119)

This exchange establishes the setting of enmity in Alcibiades’s and Socrates’s world. As an Athenian, Alcibiades accepts that these are his enemies: the Spartans (Lacedaemonian) and the Persians. After being pressed by Socrates to admit that he is not yet fit for a political career, Alcibiades adds:

Alcibiades: “There, I think, Socrates, that you are right; I do not suppose, however, that the Spartan generals or the great king are really different from anybody else.”

(Plato: *Alcibiades I*; 120)

While they are on conflicting sides of war, still Alcibiades recognizes these enemies to be the same as the people he knows. A monarchy of warriors and an empire are perceived here by Alcibiades to have something in common with the democratic polis of Athens. And if not in common than at least they are not extremely foreign and different as the conflict with them

might suggest. The underlying logic that unites the three enemy states and their leaders is their pursuit of power. They all comply with a similar logic which Alcibiades aims to master – possessing power.

We find already Alcibiades the boy here understanding that the internal politics of the polis are the foreign policy of the polis. Alcibiades embodies a logic that sees interrelations between the inside and outside – he sees in the Athenian adversary an enemy, and in the foreign enemy he sees an adversary. He saw his adversaries to be antagonists and his antagonists to be his adversaries, operating as an agonistic Schmittian (if such a thing can exist – betraying agonism).

In Plato's *Alcibiades I*, a dialogue dedicated to governance, power and governmentality, Alcibiades comes across as ill equipped not only in his perception of the political sphere but also as a citizen produced to fulfill the polis's values and policies. He is ungovernable. One is tempted to read Alcibiades in *Alcibiades I* as someone who challenges the common sense of his time – someone who performs a reversal of that which is acceptable – he chooses victory over heroism, enemies over adversaries, a break from his polis and a promise of royal descendants elsewhere in Sparta over loyalty to his people with a promise to be revered in their history. A reading of his arrogance and charm, his seductive powers and political talents, and a deployment of the tensions between aristocracy and democracy that he embodied are actually not the focus point of the proposal of Alcibiades's Betrayal.

Alcibiades's actual political actions led to anarchy and death. Against his intended actions, which are egotistic and destructive, we can formulate a conceptual framework, which he might not have intended – one that does permit new collective subjectivities to appear as potentialities. The attempt

here is firstly to follow his actions not for the celebration of his political cunning but for the sake of what can be done with the meaning of his actions – namely his serial treasons. By applying a heightened speculative and potentiality-seeking reading, I hope to suggest through his actions an understanding of the realignment of antagonisms and the opening-up of potentialities through Betrayal.

It is not his motivations but what his actions carry; the performance of political action is the center of this investigation – therefore, what Alcibiades did and what was done to him is the story that would interest us here, if only to read in it what it enables for us, rather than what it enabled Alcibiades himself personally.

Alcibiades's relationship with Socrates is that of treason, by which he is choosing political action over philosophy already in *Alcibiades I*. In Plato's *Symposium*, some fourteen years after he first met Socrates, Alcibiades is the last one to speak (Plato, *Symposium*; 212-222). He is now preparing for his entrance into politics, and has just won the horse races in the 91st Olympic Games. He enters Agathon's house drunk and is startled to meet Socrates there. When speaking, Alcibiades praises Socrates, telling stories from the battlefield. Yet a tension is felt between the two, as it is obvious that Alcibiades had left Socrates's flock and he is no longer part of the Socratic school.

But Alcibiades proposes an entanglement here. On the one hand it seems he has forsaken his teacher, but on the other, he continued to follow his teachings. Hannah Arendt explains how Socrates has been revolutionary in that he drew different examples and illustrations for the *polis* from everyday experiences of private life:

“these aspects of the teachings of the Socratic school, which soon were to become axiomatic to the point of banality, were then the newest and most revolutionary of all and sprang not from actual experience in political life but from the desire to be freed from its burden, a desire which in their own understanding the philosophers could justify only by demonstrating that even this freest of all ways of life was still connected with and subject to necessity.”⁵⁶

Alcibiades constantly plays on the tension between his private and public life. Plutarch writes: “renown by public services was equaled by the admiration of his private life.”⁵⁷ This movement between inside and outside that is personified by Alcibiades’s with his blurring of private and public life can be addressed through two different readings. Arendt writes of the *polis* and the household in relation to the public and the private realm that “whoever entered the political realm had first to be ready to risk his life, and too great a love for life obstructed freedom, was a sure sign of slavishness”. Alcibiades’s notorious attraction to ‘the good life’ is seen here as an act taken in the *polis* and not as part of his private life, as the life of the citizen in Athens, as Aristotle put it, has to do with “mastering the necessities of sheer life.”⁵⁸

The borderline between household and polis is blurred by Alcibiades to the extent that his private life was famously suggested by Michel Foucault to propose a politics of ‘care of the self.’⁵⁹ The reasoning brought forth by Plato

⁵⁶ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, University of Chicago Press, 1998, p. 37

⁵⁷ Plutarch, *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans: Volume 1*, Trans.: Arthur Hugh Clough, Digireads Books, 2009, p. 203

⁵⁸ See: Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 36-37

⁵⁹ See: Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of The Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France 1981-1982*, New York: Picador, 2004, pp. 65-82 and pp. 187-205

in *Alcibiades I* in relation to the 'care of the self,' is used by Foucault as a landmark, as he calls it, for an ethics of social conduct. Paul Allen Miller explains that Foucault sought to elaborate an ethics founded on what he referred to as an 'art' or 'stylization' with direct reference to Alcibiades: "the purpose of this stylization was not self-absorption, but to offer new means of resistance" writes Miller, "an ethic and aesthetic of existence, founded on the history of subjectivation, was in part to be a means of resistance to the commodified, sexualized, and normalized subject of capitalist modernity."⁶⁰

Alcibiades in *Alcibiades I* and in the *Symposium* by no means subscribes to an agonistic political project *a la* Mouffe, yet he constantly performs a 'constitutive outside' – any 'us' with him is impossible: Any "Alcibiades" brings forth a radically un-decidable tension of its own constitution.

After the restoration of the Democratic regime in Athens in 404/403 BC, Socrates was put on trial for "corrupting the young" (Plato, *Apologia*, 24b). His prosecutors were accusing him of being the educator of men like Alcibiades, who brought Athens to its demise. The prosecutor is quoted saying: "But to return to Critias and Alcibiades, I repeat that as long as they lived with Socrates they were able by his support to dominate their ignoble appetites" (Xenophon: *Memorabilia*, book I Chapter II; 12).⁶¹ To this affiliation with them Socrates famously answers: "I have never been anyone's teacher, but if anybody desired to listen to me talking and fulfilling my mission, whether young or old, I never rejected anyone" (Plato: *Apologia*; 33a).

⁶⁰ See: Paul Allan Miller, "The Art of Self-Fashioning, or Foucault on Plato and Derrida" in: *Foucault Studies*, No. 2, May 2005, p. 56

⁶¹ Gary Alan Scott writes of this: "It might be concluded from evidence about the later careers of historical characters such as Charmides and Alcibiades that more young men were made worse than made better by this philosopher's counsel". See: Gary Alan Scott, *Plato's Socrates as educator*, Albany: State University of New York Press 2000, p. 1

Alcibiades and Athens: Second Circle of Treasons

“Once being hard pressed in wrestling, and fearing to be thrown, he got the hand of his antagonist to his mouth, and bit it with all his force; and when the other loosed his hold presently, and said, “You bite, Alcibiades, like a woman.” “No,” replied he, “like a lion.”

From Plutarch’s *Lives*⁶²

The story of Alcibiades and Athens is told here from different sources (mainly Thucydides and Plutarch), in order to trace a second circle of treasons by Alcibiades, namely that of private and public life, which involves the Olympic games, the Athenian expedition to Sicily which he led, followed by his defection to Sparta and then to Persia. Rising to power by sponsoring several winning chariots in the Olympic games of 417/416 BC, his speech in the assembly calling for the launching of an expedition to conquer Sicily from the Spartans won Alcibiades the role of joint leadership of the military campaign, together with his political opponent Nicias – in this speech he speaks of his right to speak to the assembly, both by merit and by pedigree, and recommends attacking Sparta in Sicily:

“Remember, too, that the city, like everything else, will wear out of its own accord if it remains at rest, and its skill in everything will grow out of date; but in conflict it will constantly be gaining new experience and growing more used to defend itself not by speeches, but in action. In general, my view is that a city which is active by nature will soon ruin itself if it changes its nature and

⁶² Plutarch, *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans: Volume 1*, p. 196

becomes idle, and that the way that men find their greatest security is in accepting the character and the institutions which they actually have, even if they are not perfect, and in living as nearly as possible in accordance with them” (Thucydides: VI; 19).

One can see how Alcibiades here identifies himself with Athens, speaking of both his and the *polis*' active nature. Yet, on the way to Sicily, he is called back to Athens to stand trial for sacrilege of sacred statues of the Hermae – pillars dedicated to the god Hermes. According to allegations by his political rivals back in Athens, Alcibiades had been in an orgy with friends and they had been mocking religious rituals (Thucydides: Book VI; 60-62).⁶³ Following this incident, we are told, a furious Alcibiades changes sides and turns to the Spartan camp. After campaigning in Athens for an aggressive military action against Sparta, and being a strong opponent to the “soft” Nicias camp that promoted a peace treaty with Sparta, Alcibiades now becomes an accomplice of his sworn enemies. In Sparta, Alcibiades gives another speech in which he attempts to explain his act of treason (Thucydides: Book VI; 88-94) – he speaks of political reasons, of shared ancestors and shared enemies. He also offers valuable strategic information to the Spartans that

⁶³ This incident has been the cause for many speculations and investigations from antiquity to this day. Such is the interest in this event that it has been carefully dated by contemporary historians to around the end of May-early June 415 BC. The basic allegations against Alcibiades include a mocking of holy rituals by dressing up as priests and conducting a religious ceremony. The event, nevertheless, includes the vandalizing of most of the statues of the Greek god Hermes around Athens during one night. The aftermath of this involved Alcibiades's slave, Andromachus, giving testimony, Alcibiades being refused his request for an immediate trial before sailing for Sicily, and him being condemned to death for this incident in absentia. For an investigation into this event, including a comparison with nightly drinking gatherings of upper-class Athenians such as the one depicted in Plato's *Symposium*, as well as unsupported reconstructions of that night which put the blame on women who opposed the Sicilian expedition, see: Debra Hamel, *The Mutilation of the Herms: Unpacking an Ancient Mystery*, Self-published, North Haven, CT, 2012

will push the Athenian army back from Sicily to their *polis*. He concludes by defending his reputation:

“I claim also that none of you should think the worse of me if, in spite of my previous reputation for loving my country, I now join in vigorously with her bitterest enemies in attacking her; nor should you suspect my argument on the grounds that it derives simply from the strong feelings of an exile. I am an exile because of the villainy of the men who drove me out, not out of any wish, if you listen to me, to help you. And the worst enemies of Athens are not those who, like you, have only harmed her in war, but those who have forced her friends to turn against her. The Athens I love is not the one which is wronging me now, but the one in which I used to have secure enjoyment of my rights as citizen. The country that I am attacking does not seem to me to be mine any longer; it is rather that I am trying to recover a country that has ceased to be mine. And the man who really loves his country is not the one who refuses to attack it when he has been unjustly driven from it, but the man whose desire for it is so strong that he will shrink from nothing in his efforts to get back there again” (Thucydides: VI; 92).

For Alcibiades, Athens without him is no longer Athens. His ability to change sides from a democratic deliberative regime to a monarchic authoritative one proves not only his political flexibility but also shows the potential for this antagonism to be negotiated. In this speech Alcibiades presents his treason in the context of his political gain. His changing sides here is directed by personal interest. One can also read in his speech a demand for return, a commitment to his homeland and a yearning for belonging – not at all a turning-away from it. In Sparta, after consulting the military and helping it

bring the Athenian army back to the walls of the *polis*, it is said that Alcibiades seduced and impregnated Queen Timaea while her husband the Spartan King Agis was away in the battle field. Plutarch gives Alcibiades's explanation to this scandal:

“He, on the other side, would say, in his vain way, he had not done this thing out of mere wantonness of insult, nor to gratify a passion, but that his race might one day be kings over the Lacedaemonians (Spartans)”⁶⁴

Alcibiades loses the sympathy of the Spartans and has to flee and change alliances yet again. This time he moves to the Persian satrap of Asia Minor, Tissaphernes. Alcibiades changes sides now from Greek to Persian, proving not only his cultural flexibility, but also showing the potential for this antagonism also to be negotiated. Plutarch recounts that Tissaphernes was a hater of the Greeks, but he enjoyed Alcibiades' company very much.

Wanted both by the Spartans and the Athenians, Alcibiades consulted the Persians to 'sit on the fence' for a while and not to take sides in the war between Sparta and Athens (Thucydides: Book VIII; 46-50). Thucydides does not give us a speech or a monologue by Alcibiades at this point. At this stage he moves to discuss the way Alcibiades's new alliance is connected with the war – the interests of Athens seem now to work in correlation with Alcibiades's own self-interest. As Attica (and Athens, in the heart of it) is right in the middle between the Peloponnese (under Spartan rule) and Asia Minor (under Persian rule), it was strategically important for the Athenians that the Persians did not collaborate with Sparta against them, thus opening up a second front. Plutarch tells the story in a few concise sentences:

⁶⁴ Plutarch, *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans: Volume 1*, p. 208

“Alcibiades was looked up to by the Greeks of both parties, and the Athenians, now in their misfortunes, repented them of their severe sentence against him. And he, on the other side, began to be troubled for them, and to fear lest, if that commonwealth were utterly destroyed, he should fall into the hands of the Lacedaemonians (Spartans), his enemies.”⁶⁵

Here, his country becomes yet again his source of identification. This time, not so much because it is his, but rather because it is its enemy's enemy. Thucydides says that after the Athenians found out that Alcibiades has influence with Tissaphernes, Alcibiades sent messages to their chief men to ask them:

“to make his views known to the best people in the army and to say that, if there were only an oligarchy instead of that corrupt democracy which had exiled him, he was ready to return to his country and take his part with his countrymen, and make Tissaphernes their friend. Thus the captains of the Athenian ships in Samos and the leading men in the army set themselves to the task of overthrowing the democracy” (Thucydides: VIII; 47).

The abolishment of democracy in the polis secured the Persians siding with Athens. Alcibiades promoting the abolishment of the political system in Athens proves not only his moral flexibility, but also shows the potential for the antagonism between private and public to be negotiated. And so the Persian support Alcibiades promised entailed a change of the political regime of Athens, in return for Athens keeping its sovereignty. Therefore, for Athens to become yet again Alcibiades's Athens (as he said to the

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 209

Spartans), Athens had to change. It could no longer be Athens in order for it to be again Alcibiades's Athens. It could no longer continue to be what made it Athens – a Greek democracy.

In his famous Funeral Oration, Pericles, Alcibiades's uncle, names the specific characters that make Athens unique – and at the top of them stands the democratic regime (Thucydides: II; 34-46). But for the nephew, the thing that made Athens unique was his relation to it, and not the political system it developed. Thucydides writes of him when he is called back to Athens after spending time with Tissaphernes:

“Alcibiades, he rightly thought, cared no more for an oligarchy than for a democracy, and only sought to change the institutions of his country in order to get himself recalled by his associates” (Thucydides: Book VIII; 48).

Plutarch adds:

“...among the many strong passions of his real character, the one most prevailing of all was his ambition and desire of superiority [...]”⁶⁶

But the pro-Spartan Oligarchy of the Four Hundred which was formed in Athens, did not invite Alcibiades back after seizing power of the *polis*. As he suspected that they would not call him back, Alcibiades now planned for his radical Democratic party in the city to demand his return with the threat of yet another coup – this time a democratic one of which he would be the leader. The first assembly to reconvene after the fall of the Oligarchy voted for the return of Alcibiades and other exiles (411 BC). On his way back to Athens Alcibiades won the battle of Abydus for the Athenians against the

⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 195

Spartans in Hellespont. He joined the Athenian fleet and led it to a series of victories in Cyzicus, Chalcedon and Byzantium. After eight years in exile Alcibiades returned to the *polis* as its democratic regime was restored. He was received as a savior and was assigned to be the leader of the Athenian army, but an early defeat in Notium cost him his position. The Spartans and Persians formed an alliance and Alcibiades realized that his opponents in Athens were just looking for an opportunity to get rid of him yet again (Plutarch: Volume I; p. 218). Now his fate and that of Athens correlated tragically.

As the Spartans controlled the land and sea, Alcibiades retreated to Phrygia in the inland of Asia Minor where looked for ways to secure Persian support for Athens yet again. By then the Spartans had already taken Athens and established the pro-Spartan government of the Thirty Tyrants. Critias, another one of Socrates' pupils, who was a member of the Thirty, advised the Spartans that Alcibiades was a real danger to their hold of the Polis. The Spartans tracked Alcibiades and in 404 BC, according to one of the accounts of his death, Alcibiades was assassinated in his house in Phrygia.

67

Serial Treason as a Form of Betrayal

"Please, Pericles, can you teach me what a law is?"

Alcibiades in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*

The adventures of Alcibiades, as laid out here, suggest him as a chameleon, a trickster, a 'polytropic' being. In one 'world war' which included the three great powers of the time – Sparta, Athens and Persia – Alcibiades operated

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 218

on all sides of the conflict, changing his position between cultures and regimes, politics and philosophy, private and public. Again, his privileged position and manipulations are not proposed here as a teaching for political cunning. For his contemporaries Alcibiades excited a fear for the safety of the political order – an order that was based on defined antagonisms of monarchy/democracy, Greek/non-Greek, private/public. Alcibiades's series of treasons performed a Betrayal of the different conflicted identities which constituted that world. It is not the horizon he was aiming for that is interesting here, but that which was opened by his Betrayal. His serial treasons constitute a model for Betrayal by exhausting the available antagonisms.

If we move from his self-motivated actions, we see entailed beyond them possibilities of Betrayal.⁶⁸ As he was embedded in the political competition of his time (agonistic and antagonistic), these terms become key references to his actions. Alcibiades was not professing or promoting an all-encompassing universalist vision, from which he acted and committed his serial treasons – he was striving for political power for himself, but at the same time the series of treasons he exercised, performed a Betrayal of the antagonisms available. As much as he was strategically agonist externally and antagonistic internally, his serial treasons propose one form of Betrayal that exhausts the antagonisms through which the world was articulated.

Plutarch describes Alcibiades' ability to change camps as that of a human chameleon:

⁶⁸ "And the fact is that although history has always known those who, like Alcibiades, wanted power for themselves", writes Hannah Arendt in relation to the revolutionary spirit of the last centuries. See: Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, Penguin Classics, 2006, p. 25. But it is not his motivations for acting, but rather the trajectories generated by his actions that are of interest when discussing him in relation to Betrayal.

“The renown which he earned by these public services was equaled by the admiration he attracted to his private life; he captivated and won over everybody by his conformity to Spartan habits. People who saw him wearing his hair close cut, bathing in cold water, eating coarse meal, and dining on black broth, doubted, or rather could not believe, that he ever had a cook in his house, or had ever seen a perfumer, or had worn a mantle of Milesian purple. For he had, as it was observed, this peculiar talent and artifice for gaining men's affections, that he could at once comply with and really embrace and enter into their habits and ways of life, and change faster than the chameleon. One color, indeed, they say the chameleon cannot assume: it cannot itself appear white; but Alcibiades, whether with good men or with bad, could adapt himself to his company, and equally wear the appearance of virtue or vice. At Sparta, he was devoted to athletic exercises, was frugal and reserved; in Ionia, luxurious, gay, and indolent; in Thrace, always drinking; in Thessaly, ever on horseback; and when he lived with Tissaphernes the Persian satrap, he exceeded the Persians themselves in magnificence and pomp. Not that his natural disposition changed so easily, nor that his real character was so variable, but, whether he was sensible that by pursuing his own inclinations he might give offence to those with whom he had occasion to converse, he transformed himself into any shape, and adopted any fashion, that he observed to be most agreeable to them.”⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Plutarch, *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans: Volume 1*, pp. 207-208

Alcibiades's Betrayal constantly confuses polarities.⁷⁰ Ever the trickster, Alcibiades pathologically disobeys his given setting – committing treason on the level of the culture, the regime, the politics. In each of these antagonisms he proves his personal commitment for change and flexibility as the art of the politician; Persian or Greek, monarchy or democracy, private or public, philosophy or action, all are transgressed by him. Alcibiades does not inhabit only one antagonism, changing sides within it. His serial and overlapping treasons amount to a Betrayal. He deserves Plutarch's depiction as being an evolved chameleon. Not only because of his talent of taking opposing sides, but also by what his constant repositioning does to the antagonisms themselves, his treasons accumulate to a Betrayal.

By this, we should not conclude that Betrayal stands for the meaning which he attributes to his own actions. The horizon Alcibiades aims for is very limited and involves solely his political career. The thing accumulated here is not his motivations but his actions that work against them; the overlapping treasons of protocols of allegiance, of political systems, religion beliefs, of nations. His accumulated Betrayal enables another horizon to open in relation to these antagonisms. Betrayal opens new horizons beyond his own, exhausting the given antagonisms, by condensing them, stretching them and performing them to their limit.

⁷⁰ Writing on the trickster's intelligence, Lewis Hyde describes it as "seizing and blocking opportunity, confusing polarity, disguising tracks". One of the marks of the trickster is the ability to alter the appearance of their skin – "sometimes they actually replace one skin with another" he writes (Plutarch's description of Alcibiades as chameleon fits well here, of course). Connecting the idea of skin shifting with the notion of turn, Hyde says there are only three characters in Greek literature who are said to be "turning many ways" – Polutropus in Greek (Polytropic in English) – Hermes, Odysseus and Alcibiades (tropic – means turning – phototropic plants in tropical climate turn to follow light). Anti-polar and polytropic, Alcibiades's serial treasons not only formed him as a singularity but devised us with a tactic for political action. See: Lewis Hyde, *Trickster Makes This World: Mischief, Myth and Art*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998, pp. 51-52

Addressing Alcibiades' motivation opens up a whole different set of ethics beyond 'doing good' which seems to necessarily rest upon insisting on one view of what constitutes a good life. Like the dandy, Alcibiades lives a good life but seems to expose the artifice of it all along the way. This is not some tepid relativism. His constant inversion calls to mind Gilles Deleuze's explanation of the comic mode as the only way to destabilize the law. Deleuze differentiates between irony and humor in relation to the Marquise de Sade and Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's fictions. Sade's fiction proposes a superior principle that subverts the law with irony – putting against it an institution of upside-down laws, one of wickedness and evil, says Deleuze. Masoch's fantasies, on the other hand, propose a downward principle of humor – that which reverses the law's absurdity as a punitive contract system, and takes pleasure in its consequences.⁷¹ Inverting Socrates's notion of "knowing good and doing good" would make Alcibiades here ironic according this Deleuzian scheme. Portrayed as a human chameleon – disguising himself as the different people he collaborates with (and then committing treason against them) – Alcibiades externalizes the internal contradictions of each of his escapades.

Accepting and operating for the position of a privileged, masculine master warrior, it is also obvious that at the same time Alcibiades's actions have strengthened other antagonisms that were articulated politically in the world he inhabited. Yet, I wish to use what his actions enable us, even contrary to his interests, to use as a model to think of ways for new collective subjectivities to emerge.

⁷¹ See: Gilles Deleuze, "Coldness and Cruelty", in: *Masochism*, New York: Zone Books, 1991, pp. 81-90.

Alcibiades as Method: Exhaustion

“And if I say anything which is not true, you may interrupt me if you will, and say ‘that is a lie,’ though my intention is to speak the truth. But you must not wonder if I speak any how as things come into my mind; for the fluent and orderly enumeration of all your singularities is not a task which is easy to a man in my condition”

Alcibiades to Socrates in Plato’s Symposium

The suggestion to see beyond Alcibiades’s motivations for his serial treasons, as an exhaustion of the antagonism of his time, makes his actions already propose the time to come. He was a product of the classical age in Athens, whose actions prefigure the formations of power and the antagonisms that were yet to come. His serial treasons performed a proto-Hellenic journey. The model of Betrayal Alcibiades proposes is that of exhaustion of antagonisms. His Betrayal was one that swept the rivaling sides that constituted his world. His story offers one tactic of Betrayal – that of a series of treasons spiraled through the various antagonisms, bringing them down. What his world experienced almost one hundred years later, after the conquests of Alexander the Great – with its own antagonisms – cosmopolitan identities within the great Hellenistic empire, Alcibiades experienced in his life-time; an Athenian turned Spartan, turned Persian, turned Athenian again. If Betrayal displays the possibility for other potentialities to be actualized, then we can argue that Alcibiades’s serial treasons can be regarded as Betrayal.

The method of this Betrayal is by exhaustion of the antagonisms. This entails exhausting oneself as well. Discussing the works of Samuel Beckett, Gilles Deleuze uses the term ‘the exhausted’ as a mode that “exhausts the possible” through what he calls ‘inclusive disjunction’. In this disjunction

“everything divides, but into itself.”⁷² Beckett can present a set of variables of a situation, but without any order or preference, any relation to a goal or any signification, explains Deleuze. This description cannot be furthest from Alcibiades, the highly-motivated and goal-oriented politician. But the accumulation of his actions (that do not accumulate to the goal he set for himself), provides a very different setting. Alcibiades exhausts the identities of Athenian, Spartan, Persian with his movement between them. His Betrayal enables us to use Deleuze’s formulation of Beckett’s exhausted – which relies mainly on language – in relation to politics. According to this proposal, the exhausted remains active, not for something, but for nothing. In this sense the exhausted might be self-defeating, but actually holds a very optimistic proposition – “to exhaust the possible,” meaning that something new will come out of the nothing; something which was not there in the different combinations of the already existing something.⁷³

Although it is hard to ‘digest’ Alcibiades’s proposal beyond what he testifies to himself, his spiraling series of treasons formulate a Betrayal in the form of the exhausted. His very distinct goal-oriented actions accumulate into a lack of preference. He exhausted that which, in the possible, is not realized. But this lack of preference that emerges beyond his personal interest, this Betrayal, has its own direction. His exhaustive series of actions indeed divided Athens into itself. It also divided Alcibiades himself, making present the dependency on the outside that it constitutes. When examining his actions in relation to Betrayal, one finds in exhaustion a creative realm for

⁷² Deleuze draws four ways in which Beckett ‘exhausts the possible’: “Forming exhaustive series of things, drying up the flow of voices, extenuating the potentialities of space, and dissipating the power of the image” (p. 161). Forming exhaustive series of things, resonates on some level the exhaustion enacted by Alcibiades’s Betrayal. See: Gilles Deleuze, “The Exhausted,” in: *Essays Critical and Clinical*, Trans.: Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco, London and New York: Verso, 1998, pp. 152-174.

⁷³ Gilles Deleuze, “The Exhausted,” p. 156

political action. The Betrayal we extract from his actions constitutes new knowledge for unattainable potentialities to appear. Working with established narratives of conflict and antagonism, the Betrayal of Alcibiades opens up possibilities not only as a metaphor but also for rethinking the political horizon and action.

Athens is the horizon which is in fact what grounds his Betrayal. No matter his narrow self-interest seeking, he never ceases to be an Athenian, in the sense that he looks for greatness, as Socrates would put it: "...you are of the most gallant family in your city, the greatest city in Greece..." (Plato, *Alcibiades I*; 104). For Mouffe, antagonism is an irreconcilable conflict. Her way of re-establishing a dynamic of conflictuality goes through acknowledging the divide. Operating on both the agonistic and antagonistic level against themselves, Alcibiades suggests one practice of Betrayal. By literally exhausting the antagonisms through serial treasons, changing sides several times, in what was then a 'world war,' The Peloponnesian War, Alcibiades performed a Betrayal of the conflicts that were at hand. While being in the conflict, the accumulation of his actions performed a non-direct strategy of challenging the conflict. He was a conflictual participant in each of the antagonisms, but his actions generated that inclusive disjunction, wherein they spiraled from the fundamental distinctions of the conflict, and while engaging with them, already offered a withdrawal from the logic of antagonism the conflict offers itself through.

We can see with Alcibiades how Betrayal is not reduced to the act nor the aim of the act, but an interpretation made by it in relation to other actions and settings. It is the meanings we can take from the actions. On a certain level it is in the acts as a series, in the sense that it is the way through which we can consider the acts in relation to one another. Deleuze makes an important point for us when he considers the exhausted in relation to *aporia*,

that Socratic pedagogical tool. The exhaustive series puts that which can be done in *aporia*. Deleuze is saying that: “the *aporia* will be solved if one considers that the limit of the series does not lie at the infinity of the terms but can be anywhere in the flow.” So the series is exhausted already between two terms; “between two voices or the variations of a single voice.”⁷⁴ So exhaustion comes out of *aporia* but it is not *aporia*.

Alcibiades’s Betrayal enables the exterior to come inside into the interior, by that the antagonisms can be re-articulated outside their own terms. This is achieved through the exhaustion of antagonisms. When we examine the idea of fundamental-antagonism and Mouffe’s move from enemy to adversary or from a politics of antagonism to agonism, in relation to Alcibiades, we must consider the specific Betrayal we articulate through serial treasons – this form of exhaustion, passes through the various available antagonisms and one by one it undoes them.

Describing Alcibiades's actions as a method to differentiate Betrayal from treason and desertion, has been the aim of this part of the chapter. Like the stories of characters such as Oedipus or Antigone, this (non)-fictional character from antiquity enables us to extract a radical political tool. As treason still operates within the antagonisms, we need to betray them. As states of political antagonism actually demand us to bestow our trust in them and to believe in them in order to participate in their conflict and to actually make them happen (through a variety of practices – from collaboration, complacency and apathy, to critique and direct resistance), the model we can extract from Alcibiades is that of turning from these antagonisms. This is not a model for political resignation but rather for ‘secret’-agency of potentialities of new collective subjectivities.

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 157-158

Alcibiades's actions contaminate clear distinctions of us/them, by performing an entanglement of inside and outside. His Betrayal makes present their connectedness and interrelation. The Betrayal he performs through exhausting the existing antagonisms moves between a discourse of a 'historical bloc'⁷⁵ to a practice of a 'single bloc of becoming.'⁷⁶ Instead of being confined to the antagonism's logic – like Mouffe and Laclau map the logic of antagonism – his Betrayal re-aligns, and shifts the lines of struggle. By moving from one side to the other, crossing the lines outward time and time again he engages with the antagonisms by repeated exits. These exits though, never leave him outside Athens but always in relation to it.

If we were to ask what Betrayal is a symptom of, we could argue after Mouffe that it is to the political need to always re-articulate the antagonisms in order for 'everything to be otherwise.' This 'otherwise' is done through the exhaustion of the antagonisms themselves. Alcibiades has exhausted treason and made the exterior interior – directly engaging the antagonisms of his time, his actions gave way to surpassing them. The re-articulation of antagonisms, is at the heart of the proposal for actualizing potentialities for new collective subjectivities. By committing a series of treasons (against philosophy, Athens, Sparta, the Persians and the regime from which he gained his power), Alcibiades betrayed the political antagonisms of his time, proposing new positionalities that were yet to come. Mouffe's use of the constitutive outside in relation to antagonism, helps in understanding the meaning of Alcibiades's Betrayal as a move inside-out, that does not only subscribe to a change of sides from within ('here' to 'there'). By that his Betrayal is re-politicizing the ability for action to engage with the emergence of new collective subjectivities.

⁷⁵ See: Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, p. 42

⁷⁶ See: Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II*, p. 2

Alcibiades and the Curatorial

As method, Alcibiades's Betrayal can be instructive in enhancing, intensifying and expanding what can be done in relation to the fundamental-antagonism. Unlike Mouffe's agonism and Mouffe and Laclau's antagonism, Alcibiades brings forth the presence of the outside that is not only the one constituting the political equation, but also that which is external to the political system – in this way his actions challenge the somewhat hermetic logic that both agonism and antagonism propose. The circumstances of a functioning empire such as Athens in the fifth century BC, allow for its privileged political class to conduct its matters by way of agonism, and in many ways Alcibiades takes advantage of that when he makes his enemies adversaries for his own gain. But with Betrayal, there is always an outside to that. This external political entity is not conceivable within agonism. At one point, the internal contradictions of the upper classes no longer allow them to conduct politics through agonism and the rupture of the antagonism surfaces. Alcibiades seems to enact this rupture time and time again, and by that he not only performs different antagonisms, but the repetition of antagonisms his activates undermines each of them, and the logic that makes them.

Alcibiades's actions defy monolithic allegiance to Athens as they propose paradoxical loyalty to Athens as a series of treasons instead. This is loyalty to Athens as an open question, problematizing its fundamental quest for political and philosophical greatness. By that he enhances, intensifies and expands Athens beyond the *polis'* territorializing logic. This meaning of his actions suggests an inclusive disjunction of Athens. Alcibiades's actions perform a Betrayal that proposes engaging with the antagonisms at hand while modifying their conditions. Through his serial treasons, his actions hint

that this is a contingent becoming that is potentially in any antagonism. His actions actualize this contingency by way of Betrayal.

Going back to the curatorial, we could say that in relation to the notion of the series, the curatorial would be a reading of each element in relation to the other (“between two terms, between two voices or the variations of a single voice”). The formation of a conceptual framework these elements suggest for reading them emerges from an inductive reasoning if you like, by which each relation between the elements informs the others. The exhausted is key for the curatorial because what the curatorial aims to achieve is the emergence of something which was not there in the different combinations of the already existing something.

In this respect, when considered in relation to the curatorial, Alcibiades’s form of Betrayal seems useful. In the curatorial, we work with notions of inhabited fictions that call for an embodied politics that will offer a way to that no-longer/not-yet available outside. We are constantly imagining a vantage point that is unimaginable within the perspectives offered through the antagonism itself. Embodying Betrayal contains the painful and liberating tension of unresolved subjectivities. Performing potentialities through an expanded understanding of the curatorial (involving publishing, screening, organizing, setting up and putting together art exhibitions, readings, demonstrations and more), does not immediately entail the formation of new subjectivities. While claiming for political validity, this way of operating might seem too loose, too fragmented, yet it has become a form for performing and practicing Betrayal as a loyalty to a horizon, beyond protocols of allegiance. While moving away from given antagonisms, Betrayal is a political project which engages with collective and personal motivations. The curatorial involves the constant labor of politics – of renegotiating not only within different fields and discourses but also in between these fields and

discourses. Assuming not-yet-available and no-longer-available standpoints – sometimes simultaneously – makes Betrayal a proposal to be applied in the present tense. Therefore, political agency and political power is not merely sought after through scenarios of Betrayals but is also constituted, produced and proposed through Betrayal.

This contingent complexity is part and parcel of the curatorial – it is the complexity of the charted and the explored, and the uncharted and unexplored, the narrated and analyzed, and the unnarratable and that which resists analysis. The curatorial engages with given circumstances and with publics that are yet to come, and operates through interdependency and connectedness between separate and contradictory categories. Alcibiades's Betrayal therefore, is a potential curatorial strategy of exhausting antagonisms and actualizing connectedness outwards, one which has political validity.

CHAPTER TWO: FICTIONALISM AND ANACHRONISM - FREUD

Introduction

Men make their own history; but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past.

Karl Marx's 18th of Brumaire of Louis Napoleon

The Curatorial seems to lend itself to Betrayal. The curatorial undoes dichotomies and binaries as it involves movements between things and fields rather than solidifying meanings. By this, the curatorial demonstrates the possibilities of Betrayal. The movement, the relations and the connectedness of the concrete and the abstract, the material and immaterial, the present and the absent, allow for a set of different approaches towards meaning, the production of meaning and its interpretation.

In this chapter I will address fictionalism and anachronism as forms of Betrayal. To do this I will describe these proposals as ways to reenter historical and political narratives. Therefore I will first outline a set of relations in contemporary political narratives which fictionalism and anachronism aim to challenge.

But in order to do that, we have to first address some questions regarding history. Emancipatory projects used to circle around an escape from the clutches of the given reality, an exit away from real existing circumstances, a leap beyond history. Paradigmatic shifts, revolution, “making everything new” – were all proposals that the avant-garde embraced.

But today we experience a counter-movement when it comes to the traditions of emancipatory struggles. A variety of reasons, including the proliferation of creative destruction⁷⁷, the failed outcomes of the successful critique of alienation⁷⁸, and the reality of debt which freezes time and power relations⁷⁹, have all brought us to a point where it is actually the reactivation of history, of historical projects — successful as well as failed ones, existing and imagined — that has proliferated; we find ourselves returning back to it, by reconnecting to what seemed no longer available or was never actually

⁷⁷ A summary of this condensed history of the notion of capitalist accumulation through destruction will include Marx and Engels's *Communist Manifesto* where they observe that "The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society." Then with Marxist concepts such as primitive accumulation and accumulation by dispossession, and as well with Walter Benjamin's constitutive and preservative violence, to Schumpeterian creative destruction, and the more recent iteration in this genealogy of terms — Naomi Klein's "disaster capitalism". See: Walter Benjamin, "Critique of Violence," in: Walter Benjamin, *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, Ed.: Peter Demetz, Schocken Books, 1986; Joseph Schumpeter. *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* [1942], Routledge, 1994; Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, Metropolitan Books, 2007; David Harvey, *The Enigma of Capital and the Crises of Capitalism*, London: Profile Books, 2010

⁷⁸ In his essay "The Flexible Personality: For a New Cultural Critique," Brian Holmes follows Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello in articulating the relation between creativity, subjectivity, spectacle, and labor. Following Boltanski and Chiapello, Holmes defines May '68 as a point where we can see a move from the critique of exploitation ("social critique") by workers' movements to the critique of alienation ("artistic critique"), which gained more presence by the mass cultural education of welfare-state universities. With this shift "the young, aspiring managerial class, whether still in the universities or at the lower echelons of enterprise, became the major vector for the artistic critique of authoritarianism and bureaucratic impersonality." This is how, Holmes explains, "the organizational figure of the network emerged to provide a magical answer to the anti-systemic cultural critique of the 1950s and 1960s—a magical answer, at least for the aspirant managerial class." See: Brian Holmes, "The Flexible Personality: For a New Cultural Critique," in: *transversal: Machines and Subjectivation*, EIPCP, January 2002:

<http://www.eipcp.net/transversal/1106/holmes/en>.

⁷⁹ See: Maurizio Lazzarato, *The Making of the Indebted Man*, Trans.: Joshua David Jordan, Semiotext(e), 2012

available. Artistic practices of the past decade and a half, involving reenactment and simulations, documentary research and media activism seem to propose that this move back to history entails the retracing of politics in cultural production, to later reappear back in politics.

The ambivalence of leaving history/re-entering history characterizes the materials I am dealing with here, and it relates directly to Betrayal operating as both 'withdrawal from' and 'engagement with.' Betrayal provides a withdrawal on some respects and an engagement with others. Fictionalism and anachronism as they are proposed in this chapter, propose different strategies of entanglement of engagement and withdrawal – approaching real existing circumstances from perspectives that are perceived as unavailable to us.

Betrayal as an exploration of the devices that destabilize the fundamental antagonism would have to follow this trail of reactivating history. For this, Sigmund Freud's last book on the biblical figure of Moses seems instructive.⁸⁰ Freud's "Moses" provides a scenario that unsettles the concrete and abstract, myth and science, belief and sacrilege, fact and narrative, Jew and Egyptian. And all this was done in direct relation to real existing circumstances he was facing in Austria when a direct political division was made between Jew and German.

Freud's "Moses" frames the discussion in this chapter and it informs the whole discussion that will be developed here in relation to spectatorship and history, notions of transparency and conspiracy, practices of reenactment and historical narrative, strategies of collision and addition, and the proposition of parafictions, anachronism and fictionalism as political devices in relation to Betrayal. By developing a structure that de-constructs the

⁸⁰ See: Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, Trans.: Katherine Jones, Vintage Books, 1939

fundamental antagonism he was facing, Freud offers in his book about Moses another way for putting into action the building of the destabilized relations between narrative and analysis, science and myth. His “Moses” performs Betrayal as re-entry into history. This late work by Freud was referred to by the German psychoanalyst and researcher of Freud Ilse Grubrich-Simitis as an essay on the psychology of religion, a form of bible criticism, a novel re-writing a myth, a historical essay on the evolution on the concept of psychoanalysis, a monograph on the development of the neurosis of the self and society, a political manifesto and a metaphorical biography. In a word, she calls this work “a daydream.”⁸¹ *Moses and Monotheism* was the last book Freud published during his lifetime. It presents an exceptionally speculative analysis on the biblical figure of Moses and the origins of monotheism, Judaism and anti-Semitism. But its proposal of an origin is directed at the realities of the time when it was published, when the author experienced the unbridgeable tensions of Judaism and anti-Semitism in Europe. At the time of working on the book, Freud himself experienced a dramatic escape from his hometown of Vienna, where he had developed his theory and practice of psychoanalysis. The book can be read simply as an application of several analytical strategies, and even on this level it is an exciting and extremely creative work. But the relevance of Freud’s “Moses” for us here has to do with its proposition in the context of the real existing circumstances of its time. On this level, the inventive strategies provided by its author should be read as potential strategies for entangling dichotomies and unsettling structural divisions.

From all the suggestive qualities of this work, this chapter will highlight its proposition of fictionalism and anachronism as forms of Betrayal. These are

⁸¹ Ilse Grubrich-Simitis, *Early and Late Freud: Reading Anew Studies on Hysteria and Moses and Monotheism*, Trans.: Philip Slotkin, Routledge, 1997, p. 60

two strategies that one can find in contemporary works that are preoccupied with the ambivalence of leaving history/re-entering history. These strategies highlight the tensions that Freud himself was also tackling when faced with the Jew/German dichotomy. Before discussing Freud's work in detail, I will address several issues of historicity and historical narration that are present in contemporary works. This will be done in order to describe the setting in which the concepts that Freud's "Moses" proposes seem most needed.

History and Narrative

"For legends attract the very best in our times, just as ideologies attract the average, and the whispered tales of gruesome secret powers behind the scenes attract the very worst."

Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*⁸²

A philosophy of history that does not question the notion of being in history, is doomed to seem arbitrary. In the field of critical theory, we usually use the attribute "historical" as a way to somewhat refute a category. If we think of human sexuality, economic activity, the family, the body, our notion of seeing — all these have been historicized in the sense that they were made flexible, ever-changing, never-natural or universal.

In an essay on history and narrative, philosopher Noam Yuran explains that:

"Historicity is characterized not only by a thought that becomes possible at a certain moment, but more so by what cannot be thought. [...] It is of course a characterization that can only be attributed retroactively, looking back from a later point in time.

⁸² Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* [1951], San Diego: Harcourt Inc., 2001, p. 209

However, if historical knowing is a particular kind of knowing, it is necessarily entangled with what could be understood retroactively.”⁸³

Yuran shows how both Freud and Marx view history as simultaneously interpreting and hiding itself. This logic, he observes, operates for both on the level of politics and on the level of the subject. “To know about sex means to repress the fact that your sexual identity is formed around ignorance” Yuran paraphrases Freud, “To know means not to know that you don’t know.”

Yuran’s main argument for a reentry into a philosophy of history involves these interplays between knowing, not-knowing and unknowing:

“The limit to thought as defining historicity posits a few simple terms as a focus of a philosophy of history. It allows us to think about terms like “already”, “still”, “not yet”, which in a context of history necessitate philosophical thought. [...] They demand and enable us to think about how a thing isn’t just what it is, but how it is already something else and how it is not something else just yet.”⁸⁴

With “already,” “still,” and “not yet” Yuran’s discussion of historicity moves to the role of narrative. The narrative deployment of history compels him to ask how history can take the form of a story at all. For this reason, he addresses Hayden White’s influential claims on historical text as literary artifact. The historical narrative, White argues, depends on omitted facts no less than it

⁸³ Noam Yuran, “Already, Still and Not Yet: How History Is,” Translated by: Avi Pitchon, *Maarav Journal*, The Israeli Centre for Digital Art, 2013: <http://www.maarav.org.il/english/2013/10/already-still-and-not-yet-how-history-is-noam-yuran> [Last retrieved: 15.10.2015]

⁸⁴ Ibid.

relies on those that are included in it.⁸⁵ If reality contains only fact, then the fact that a story depends on omitting some facts means that every narrative is partial, untrue, says Yuran. Yuran is showing how on a “factual” level this might be a solid argument, but if human reality is organized around a lack – limit to knowledge, the unthinkable, the lack of knowledge – around what was omitted from it, then reality can be given to narrative structure. Historical narratives, therefore, need to be organized around that which is not fact, or around that which is absent from factual reality. What Yuran is looking for, is a way to read in White’s claims on our inability to guarantee that one historical narrative will be closer to the truth than another, an analysis of the conditions of possibility of historical truth:

“If all we have is facts, then there’s no one true story. Were we to combine all possible facts, the story itself would vanish. Yet, the same argument also follows through to say that if what we have are stories,

⁸⁵ See: Hayden White, “The Historical Text as Literary Artifact”, in *The Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978, p. 90. In a series of publications, White developed categories for approaching historical writing through literary devices. For his, any historical narration of facts, chronicles, documents, actions, involves literary preferences. He highlights four genres of historical emplotment: Romance, Tragedy, Comedy and Satire. The first two (Comedy and Tragedy) follow distinct rules and are determined by these rules rather than by the human agency of their protagonists. The second pair (Romance and Satire) are organized around human protagonists and their actions. A comedy is structured around contradicting rules and their collision. The outcome of which is the restoring of order – a happy ending (White relates this to Hegel). A tragedy on the other hand brings the collision of contradicting rules (biological, economic, social etc.) to its bitter end in the form of catastrophe (he relates this to Marx). Romance tells the human story of conquest, perseverance and personal victory (he relates this to the story of Jesus and to Nietzsche). And satire tells the story of human defeat – how attempts to overcome human fate have failed, and amounted to defeat and death (he relates this to liberal writers like Jacob Burckhardt and Benedetto Croce). See: Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973. For a critique of White, see: Carlo Ginzburg, *Threads and Traces: True, False, Fictive*, Trans.: Anne C. Tedeschi and John Tedeschi, University of California Press, 2012

then human reality cannot be formed strictly out of facts. In other words, White's razor-sharp argument in fact presents an acute ontological dilemma about history. If what reality contains is just fact, then narratives have no ontological status. Facing that, if there are narratives, if there is a truth value to a historical narrative, then reality is not only built with fact. If stories exist, then fact isn't all there is. To articulate it more radically, if stories exist, then human reality contains not just what is, but also what isn't."⁸⁶

Yuran hints on a relation between what can/cannot be thought and what is/isn't. Here, it is not only the structural tension between the factual/non-factual and the thinkable/unthinkable and their reversal, as Yuran explains, which makes for a philosophy of history. It is actually in the tensions between these two formations, factual and contemplated, and their internal contradictions, that history takes place. As we will see with Freud's "Moses," anachronism and fictionalism are two strategies of interfering with this quadruple structure of is/isn't-thinkable/unthinkable. Yuran concludes that a historical moment in the fullest sense of the term is a moment "when the unthinkable is thought, and equally so it is a moment when what used to be thought can no longer be. It's a moment when history is. When history appear as a substance."⁸⁷

Spectatorship and Conspiracy

The discursive explosion of conspiracy theories in recent years treats history literally as substance. Yet, it seems to offer the opposite of what Yuran is suggesting. In a way, there is almost no other way to discuss truth in the

⁸⁶ Yuran, "Already, Still and Not Yet: How History Is"

⁸⁷ Ibid.

political sphere today, other than through conspiracy theories and the tracings of deals between elected officials, public servants, big business, the clergy, lobbyists, and other parties of interest. As we are subjected to a politics of representation in two ways – one is the system of political representation (parliamentary regimes) and the other is that of the representation of politics (through media outlets), we find ourselves to be both the sovereign (“The People”) and the audience of viewers (“The Spectators”). This double-bound meaning of representational regimes includes the system of political representation and the representation of the political system.

Historian Benedict Anderson presented a compelling description of the birth of the nation-state out of the invention of the printed press. Imagined communities like nations have come to existence thanks to the invention of newspapers, and their commercial success, he suggested:

“If the development of print as-commodity is the key to the generation of wholly new ideas of simultaneity, still, we are simply at the point where communities of the type 'horizontal secular, transverse-time' become possible. Why, within that type, did the nation become so popular? The factors involved are obviously complex and various. But a strong case can be made for the primacy of capitalism.”⁸⁸

What Anderson proposes is a reversal of perspective in order to historicize the notion of a nation. The experience of simultaneous-distribution-time provided the framework to envision a community that is like-minded on the level of experience, language, habits. It is therefore practice rather than myth that makes a nation. But this practice, Anderson would suggest is not

⁸⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London and New York: Verso, 1983, p. 37

intentional and conscious but rather derives from the repetition of habits and costumes that are in no way explicitly symbolic for the formation of a nation.

This double-bound meaning of the system of political representation and the representation of the political system was further developed by Bruno Latour when articulating what his “object-oriented democracy” attempts to do:

“[...] to bring together two different meanings of the word representation that have been kept separate in theory although they have remained always mixed in practice. The first one, so well-known in schools of law and political science, designates the ways to gather the legitimate people around some issue. In this case, a representation is said to be faithful if the right procedures have been followed. The second one, well known in science and in technology, presents or rather represents what is the object of concern to the eyes and ears of those who have been assembled around it. In this case, a representation is said to be good if the matters at hand have been accurately portrayed.”⁸⁹

In both modes, passivity is our mode of operating. Combining these two passivities, we can argue that the phenomenon of conspiracy theories expresses a hyperactivity of political passivity.

This dual status of representational regimes produces a series of paradoxes that feed a conspiratorial knowledge. We find ourselves reading images from the media – photos, captions, headlines, and news stories – in a paranoid

⁸⁹ Bruno Latour, “From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik or How to Make Things Public,” in: *Making Things Public – Atmospheres of Democracy*, Eds.: Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel, catalogue of the exhibition at ZKM – Centre for Art and Media Karlsruhe, MA: MIT Press, 2005, p. 6

way. The hermeneutics of suspicion expands here.⁹⁰ In its immersion in this double-bound passivity, the critical stand borders here the conspiratorial one, raising questions such as: “Where did this image come from? Who brought it to my knowledge? Why am I seeing this?”⁹¹

Jorge Luis Borges’s short story “Theme of the Traitor and the Hero” (1944), offers a model for reading into (and writing) conspiracy theories. The story begins with a researcher writing a book on the Irish liberation movement of the mid-nineteenth century and its leader Fergus Kilpatrick. Its focus is the story of some Irish rebels, one of whom (Kilpatrick) has confessed to betraying their movement. After confessing, “he and his cabal decided that he should die a hero, a martyr, thus redeeming his traitorous act by furnishing Ireland with a shining example of heroism”.

Taking inspiration in Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar and Abraham Lincoln’s assassination, and using the entire town as a stage, it is decided that Kilpatrick will play the role of a hero and sacrifices himself “in order to preserve his heroic image and the peoples’ passion for the cause”.⁹²

The execution takes place in the theatre with the audience witnessing it as an assassination. The researcher in the story realizes the truth – the assassination was in fact an execution. The role of the audience in the theatre was therefore of constituting and validating the theme of

⁹⁰ See: Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, Trans.: Denis Savage, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970, p. 32

⁹¹ Jodi Dean has written extensively on conspiracy theories, relating them to different media outlets and to psychological circuits of drive. See: Jodi Dean, *Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies*; Jodi Dean, *Blog Theory: Feedback and Capture in the Circuits of Drive*, Polity Press, 2010

⁹² Jorge Luis Borges, *Labyrinths*. Eds. Donald A. Yates and James E. Irby New York: New Directions, 1964, pp. 72-75

assassination of the hero over that of the reality of the execution of the traitor.

Aside from Borges's interest in historical truth here, the role of the audience as participant and even instigator is what makes this short story a template for conspiracy theories. The 'Death of the Author' logic of narration it proposes, by which it is the reader/viewer who actually authors the piece, is taken here to the level of presence and participation. Therefore, conspiracy theories should be read as models of implicated spectatorship. Being politically passive through the mechanism of representatives, we are hyperactive when decoding representations of politics. The role of the spectators is to validate the events as they unfold, as if the regimes of representations and representatives are independent from them.

In these atmospheres of democracy, the deep mistrust in mediated news outlets produced a complementary project to that of conspiracy theories – the growing demand for transparency. Structurally, the demand for transparency in representative-based regimes has its roots in ancient times. The theatre – “a place for seeing” in ancient Greek – embodies already in its structure the tensions of sight and sound that we have inherited from Athenian democracy; its main acoustic feature is the enhancement of the voice of the speaker at the bottom, where the stage is located. While it offers transparency (as all are seen by all, performers and audience), the physical structure of the theatre implies a power relation manifested by visibility and acoustics: as the person speaking from the seats cannot be heard, the speaker represents the listeners, the performer represents the viewers, the politician represents the people.⁹³

⁹³ See: Richard Sennett, *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization* New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994, pp. 31–67

Our recent proliferation of conspiracy theories therefore, has to do with the deepening double-bound passivity at the heart of our representational regimes. The blatant lies about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq by the US government, following the 9/11 attacks in 2001, has placed the politics of lying in the center of the debate on democracy.⁹⁴ Governmental strategies of deception and ongoing questions of accountability generated a demand for a politics of transparency. This demand found its outlet in initiatives such as Wikileaks which began its operations in 2006. Later on these demands took the shape of horizontal modes of organizing used by the Occupy movement and the mass encampments of the movement for social justice around the world.

Transparency and Conspiracy

The way politics is represented is tied to the way we are represented in it. Julian Assange, co-founder of Wikileaks, produced several manifestos to support his cause and lay out his strategy. In these manifestos he describes governance as conspiracy and explains how a systematic exposure of governmental wrongdoings should be done. Assange's formulation of politics not only equates it to conspiracy but displays the way in which the demand for transparency relies on this portrayal. In the first part of his manifesto, titled "State and Terrorist Conspiracies" (dated November 10, 2006),

⁹⁴ In the first Colbert Report TV show on Comedy Central in October 2005, US satirist Stephen Colbert coined the word "truthiness," which later made its way into English dictionaries. Colbert described truthiness as "truth that comes from the gut, not books." The American Dialect Society later defined the word as: "the quality of preferring concepts or facts one wishes to be true, rather than concepts or facts known to be true." This word represented for many in the media at that time, the relation the Bush administration had with the truth.

Assange proposes to see political power as an arithmetic map of links that generate the conspiratorial network of government. He writes:

“Where details are known as to the inner workings of authoritarian regimes, we see conspiratorial interactions among the political elite not merely for preferment or favor within the regime but as the primary planning methodology behind maintaining or strengthening authoritarian power.”⁹⁵

In the second part of the manifesto, titled “Conspiracy as Governance” (dated 03.12.2006), Assange concludes:

“When we look at an authoritarian conspiracy as a whole, we see a system of interacting organs, a beast with arteries and veins whose blood may be thickened and slowed until it falls, stupefied; unable to sufficiently comprehend and control the forces in its environment. Later we will see how new technology and insights into the psychological motivations of conspirators can give us practical methods for preventing or reducing important communication between authoritarian conspirators, foment strong resistance to authoritarian planning and create powerful incentives for more humane forms of governance.”⁹⁶

Here, the ambition to upload information in order to give the public the raw data before it can be filtered or analyzed, stands for idealism. It is perceived

⁹⁵ Julian Assange, “State and Terrorist Conspiracies,” 10.11.2006. See: <http://cryptome.org/0002/ja-conspiracies.pdf> [Last retrieved: 15.10.2015]

⁹⁶ Julian Assange, “Conspiracy as Governance,” 03.12.2006. See: <http://cryptome.org/0002/ja-conspiracies.pdf> [Last retrieved: 15.10.2015]. The interesting thing here is that in turn, this truthiness became the currency used by Fascists in newly introduced democracies, non-liberal democracies, where speaking the truth meant giving license to racism. The common phrase here would be “at least he’s not lying or hiding behind empty politically correct statements.”

as an uncompromising stand for transparency and therefore truth. Media critic Orit Gat has defined this mode of operation as “The Politics of Scanning”:

“The romanticized image of the scanner is based on the assumption that by scanning and uploading we make information available, and that that is somehow an invariably democratic act. Scanning has become synonymous with transparency and access.”⁹⁷

The weakness Gat finds in this mode of political action is that it lacks meaningful analysis. “Because the release of documents is viewed as a positive, even heroic gesture, the analysis thereof may be lackluster,” she writes. In many ways, the assumption that the internet enables widespread distribution, is countered by a more common reality in which scans are facilitated through centralized access, she says.

“The contemporary political imaginary links the scanner with democracy, and so we should explore further the political possibilities, values, and limitations associated with the process of scanning documents to be uploaded to the internet. What are the political possibilities of making information available?”

The scan turns the document into an image. On the one hand, becoming a digital image helps it circulate and gain traction. On the other, in order to find

⁹⁷ Orit Gat, “Unbound: The Politics of Scanning”, *rhizome.org*, See: <http://rhizome.org/editorial/2014/oct/9/unbound-politics-scanning/> [Last retrieved: 15.10.2015]. Gat’s observations should be read in light of the critique of participation as the hallmark of online activity on blogs and social networks. Jodi Dean described these platforms as neoliberal renderings of democratic participation since they rely on political drive rather than desire. Dean herself recognizes that these online platforms are viewed as democratizing society based on the belief that competition and participation are the preconditions for democracy. See: Jodi Dean, *Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies*

it, it now relies on description words for search engines. So we've changed the image back to text for collection and dispersion. Even with OCR text recognition, Gat says, the document as image file still depends on convenient, centralized, easily controlled hosting services, "limiting its potential for political disruption."

Using Yuran's concept of the philosophy of history as the history of not knowing, we can say that information-based activism might be a limited form of political action as it assumes that politics can be summarized with facts and figures. Access to information, through transparency or conspiracy, still lacks critical assessment, which is the basis for political analysis. In addition, and here Freud's "Moses", is of relevance as well, this form of politics lacks the realization that "human reality contains not just what is, but also what isn't."

It seems that the culmination of the demand for this kind of transparency politics was exemplified in 2011 with the encampments of the movement for social justice around the world. In these encampments experiments were made in practicing direct democracy. This form of politics aimed to execute non-representational relations. What the encampments of Occupy share with the operations of Wikileaks, is an ethics of transparency that envisions an open field of politics where lucidity and frequency are tuned in the right pitch and light without any noise or resonance. Representational politics would be for them the noise, the echo and corruption of the clear voicing of demands by individuals to other individuals.

But in reality, the political action carried by the encampments and the Occupy movement was exactly that of representation. Paradoxically, while the model of representation was rejected inwards and the experiments with direct democracy reached a dead end, the movement took it upon itself to

represent the class division outwards as the basis of our society, therefore, representing the divide, the void. As political thinker Jodi Dean and political activist Jason Jones write:

“This new mode of representation doesn’t attempt to reconcile. It doesn’t aggregate interest, extract division, and assert a forced false unity in a different place. Occupy makes this antagonism appear. Asserting division, it represents possibility.”⁹⁸

So the demand for transparency which was at the heart of the worldwide movement for social justice actually produced representation on another level. While attempting to produce internal non-representational political systems, the encampments claimed to represent the 99%, therefore enacting external representation. This means that even those movements that were able to mobilize massive publics were still operating representational politics. If we take the masses in Tahrir square in Cairo, they were still a fraction in number compared to the multitude they claimed to represent.

Eventually, the conspiracy/transparency formulation of politics found itself facing questions of representation. And those questions call for interpretation and articulation, two characteristics of old school political work and contemporary curatorial work.

⁹⁸ Jodi Dean and Jason Jones, “Occupy Wall Street and the Politics of Representation,” in: *The Newspaper of the Platform Chto Delat? Issue 34: In Defense of representation*, March 2012. See: <http://chtodelat.org/b8-newspapers/12-38/jodi-dean-and-jason-jones-occupy-wall-street-and-the-politics-of-representation/> [Last retrieved: 15.10.2015]

The Revolution as Language

Political theorist Ariella Azoulay has been developing in recent years a visual vocabulary for the revolution. Assisted with an ongoing archive of images Azoulay maps the many civil awakenings of our time and through them attempts to shed a new light on the great revolutions of the eighteenth century. According to Azoulay's proposal of the revolution as language, those 'classic' revolutions were immediately replaced by governmental power instead of partnership among members of the body politic. The regimes that came out of those revolutions eventually constituted rulers and those ruled and therefore did not execute the full potential of what a revolution might be:

“Civil language is not new. It is being revived today because all over the world, simultaneously, more and more women and men speak to each other in civil language.”⁹⁹

Azoulay expands the revolution to include a language of gestures rather than an irreversible violent event. Azoulay calls this 'a civil revolution,' and defines it the following way:

“Civil revolution means beginning afresh, returning to starting points, to moments in which another rift can be made. New potential – such as that between the ruling and the civil, and from within the latter – draws on new threads and creates a parallel tradition from which various civil moments interweave anew with events that were not necessarily recognized as 'revolution.' These are part of a rich language, a kind of *lingua franca* spoken by those who do not necessarily share a mother tongue. Civil revolution means correction,

⁹⁹ Ariella Azoulay, “When the Body Politic Ceases to Be an Idea,” *Manifesta Journal*, #16, 2013, pp. 46-47

reparation, repartition, imagination, common experience, possible dreams. This is a language spoken by individuals in different places in the world. When they have had enough of the sovereignty of the nation-state and the capital to which they are subjugated, enough of the evil it produces and its oppression of them and others in the shadow it casts over the horizon of imagination, their gaze, speech, and action, they begin to speak it in public. They seek interlocutors, rubbing against others who speak as they do and resolve to speak with each other in civil language, no matter what. Urgency drives them to imagine and to act, doing so not behind closed doors but rather in the presence of others – foreigners and strangers – like them. The language they speak expresses an imagined partnership with.”¹⁰⁰

Language is the form of being-together of people, Azoulay declares as she defines revolution as a language. The language of revolution is made of a vocabulary, a syntax and grammar – these are gestures that are understood and developed together by all participating parties. As a language it evolves according to those speaking it, creating new vocabularies, dialects and abilities, forming it as they transmit it from one person to the other. This revival Azoulay speaks of operates through recurring excavation. Each iteration of this civil revolution finds its gestures and vocabulary in history.

Not unlike the archive, the curatorial is able to resurface forgotten histories against the logic of their hosting institutions. But the curatorial does so not so much as potential, but more as an actualization of potentialities, that is, as an opening up of potentials. It does not only make a claim by using an

¹⁰⁰ See: Ariella Azoulay, “Revolution,” in: *Political Concepts – A Critical Lexicon*, online platform by The New School for Social Research, NYC: <http://www.politicalconcepts.org/revolution-ariella-azoulay/> [Last retrieved: 15.10.2015]

institution against its own logic (say intervening with the archive of a museum of art or a historical museum). What it does as well is to provide a platform for other claims to be made. By that the curatorial provides a setting for this language to appear.

This realization helps us to appreciate the potentials that are already present. On the most immediate level, the gestures of the revolution are circulated through anti-revolutionary means, namely through commoditized images. One can speculate upon the way advertisements that include signs, symbols, and icons of protest and revolt – risen fists, red flags, burning barricades, and mass manifestations, Che Guevara, Karl Marx, V.I. Lenin, Red Army Faction, and more recently the Guy Fawkes mask of the Anonymous activists, are many times the first encounter people have with images and in that respect to histories of the revolution – to this language of gestures that we are able to speak together.

German art historian Rudi Maier finds that the use of revolutionary iconography in commercials begins – and not by chance – around 1967, when revolution in the decolonized world and the capitals of the West threatened the industrialized powers. The failure of that revolutionary movement was diverted to become a counterculture, which mixes together consumerism, the cultural industries, and notions of creativity, horizontality, and network managerial ideology.¹⁰¹

On the one hand, these ads can be seen as examples for the commodification of authentic political gestures of revolution. On the other

¹⁰¹ The use of a special category of signs, those of anti-capitalist protest movements, the icons of left and alternative protests like Che Guevara, Karl Marx, Ulrike Meinhof, etc., for commercial purposes is the topic of the German anthropologist Rudi Maier's project "That's Revolution – Ads & Revolt." Maier has collected more than 1500 commercial ads from 1967 to present. See: <http://home.bawue.de/~mauss/revo.html> [Last retrieved: 15.10.2015]

hand, we can understand them as some sort of fossils of the revolution kept alive by its enemies. Following Azoulay's formulation, these ads constitute an archive of revolutionary gestures waiting to be revived and activated at any moment. This form of thinking relates to a wider array of attempts for reentering history. To explore these attempts more, demands an investigation into the ways in which political realities are produced by activating images.

Reenactments and Parafictions

The archive of gestures became a key method in contemporary art. Both reenactments and parafictions have been proliferating in the last two decades, exactly as a way to activate history by other means. Sven Lütticken relates this to performative capitalism and to the presentation of the self in commoditized everyday life:

“If one is always reenacting roles partially scripted by others, one might just as well use reenactment against itself by recreating historical events. [...] Historical reenactment may only be as escapist diversion from daily life, but perhaps it is also an anachronistic challenge to the present.”¹⁰²

Lütticken suggests that an age of restoration, in which neoconservatives are reconstituting 'conservative revolutions' was taking place after the dismantling of the Soviet Bloc, and to a greater extent after the 9/11 attacks

¹⁰² Sven Lütticken, “An Arena in which to Reenact,” in: *Life, Once More: Forms of Reenactment in Contemporary Art*, Ed.: Sven Lütticken, Witte de With Centre For Contemporary Art, Rotterdam, 2005. p. 19. The exhibition by the same name, curated by Lütticken at Witte de With included works by Mike Bidlo, Bik Van der Pol, Rod Dickinson, Omer Fast, Andrea Fraser, Robert Longo, Eran Schaerf, Catherine Sullivan, and Barbara Visser.

in New York in 2001. He explains the proliferation of reenactments in contemporary art in light of this and as an opposition to this:

“Art can examine and try out – under laboratory conditions, as it were – forms of repetition that break open history and the historicist returns of past periods; it can investigate historical moments or eras as potentials waiting to be activated, in forms that need not resemble anything [...] It may lead to artistic acts that, while not instantly unleashing a ‘tremendous emancipatory potential,’ create a space – a stage – for possible and as yet unthinkable performances.”¹⁰³

After their forced retreat by the neoconservatives, emancipatory political projects found refuge in the confinements of contemporary art practices. Their way back into history involves artistic reenactments. In this respect, we are like the underground of book-lovers in Ray Bradbury’s dystopian *Fahrenheit 451*, who have each memorized books for an upcoming time when society is ready to rediscover them. Contemporary art’s reenactments provides a hibernation ground, for revolutionary politics, as it waits for its moment to come back.

During this epoch of restoration, another mode of operation has emerged bordering between art and media activism. This was also a performative practice, aiming to reenter history but this time, not so much through repetition but through embodying fictitious narratives. Carrie Lambert-Beatty uses the term ‘parafictions’ to describe an array of practices that combine the field of fiction with that of the real:

“Unlike historical fiction’s fact-based but imagined worlds, in parafiction real and/or imaginary personages and stories intersect with

¹⁰³ Sven Lütticken, “An Arena in which to Reenact,” p. 60

the world as it is being lived. Post-simulacral parafictional strategies are oriented less toward the disappearance of the real than toward the pragmatics of trust. Simply put, with various degrees of success, for various durations, and for various purposes, these fictions are experienced as fact.”¹⁰⁴

Lambert-Beatty’s essay focuses on the years 1998-2008 and it seems to provide a report on that moment’s artistic practices’ political intervention entanglements. That moment, Lambert-Beatty herself admits, preferred ‘intervention’ over ‘resistance.’ Acting disruptively outside the immediate artistic context seemed to provide more political currency than declarative political statements within art contexts. The parafictions she describes, involve a variety of strategies: from injecting fictions into historical settings to mockumentaries, from hyper-identification grotesques to media-hackings by well-crafted masquerading and deceit on network news channels.¹⁰⁵

The credibility of those parafictions, she explains, is based on stylistic mimicry. Experts on the specific field the parafiction deals with, might know it is false (and therefore might enjoy it more, as they take pleasure in their privileged knowledge, and hence won’t tell on the artist). This point, which Lambert-Beatty makes regarding knowledge gaps between audiences, is symptomatic to the meaninglessness of superiority of knowledge we are faced with when it comes to history. Yuran’s formulation provides a useful explanation – history cannot be reduced to the factual, and has to include

¹⁰⁴ Carrie Lambert-Beatty “Make Believe: Parafictions and Plausibility,” *October* 129, Summer 2009, MA: MIT Press, p. 54. Lambert-Beatty paraphrases Rosalind Krauss’s definition of Barthes’s and Derrida’s ‘paraliterary’ when she defines parafiction thus: “It’s not history, but can’t be called not-history.” Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Lambert-Beatty mentions among others Michael Blum, Atlas Group, the Yes Men group, Sasha Baron Cohen, Stephen Colbert, Franco and Eva Mattes and Aliza Swartz. Her examples bring to mind a variety of ironic disguises, from the satirical Eighteenth Century *Persian Letters* of Montesquieu to the pranks of Dada-Berlin in 1919.

the narrative. For the parafictions to work, the authority the speaker is able to obtain is paramount. Nevertheless, Lambert-Beatty sees them to be speech acts that don't take. These are performative utterances that apply only in the fictitious:

“Parafictions in general are performative, where that is understood to mean that they effect or produce something rather than describe or denote it. They are unhappy performatives insofar as they [...], are ‘make-believe.’ But insofar as they make *someone* believe, however temporarily or ambiguously, they trouble the distinction between happy and unhappy performativity.”¹⁰⁶

This means that the questions of performativity in relation to parafictions, is the question of technique. The more believable the role-playing is, the more it becomes effective, and therefore a happy performance, in the sense that it may produce a reality. Here we see how we are drawn back into the logic of conspiracy. “Parafictions train us in skepticism and doubt, but also, oddly, in belief,”¹⁰⁷ says Lambert-Beatty but what she means is that the field of politics is not questioned but the way to engage with it is. Facts are treated as processes by which something becomes truth through debunking or establishing authority.

Anachronism in Israel-Palestine Guerrilla Culture

Faced with an impossible reality, Freud resorted not to history, but to anachronism. He analyzed a myth as an historical factuality, only to make destabilize the fundamental antagonism that factual history presented him

¹⁰⁶ Lambert-Beatty, “Make Believe: Parafictions and Plausibility,” p. 61

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 78

with. Freud was not using historical claims or historical comparisons. He was analyzing myth as history to produce a claim in the political reality he was facing.

Yuran's formulation of what can and cannot be thought at a certain moment, helps to explain why historical comparisons might not be so useful when applied directly at the present, trying to explain it through what past events can say about it. Nevertheless, Yuran's formulation proposes the possibility that historical comparisons enable us to understand better what was going on in the past, through an analysis of what is actually taking place right now in the present – as these events both continue and disavow the past. In this sense, anachronism would be the name for the re-discovery of useful models that have been thrown away or denied, and now appear as we compare the present to past times. Slavoj Žižek enlisted the power of anachronisms as a tool for re-entering our contemporary political predicament. When discussing communism he suggested that:

“instead of asking the obvious question ‘Is the idea of communism still pertinent today, can it still be used as a tool of analysis and political practice?’ one should ask the opposite question: ‘How does our predicament today look from the perspective of the communist idea?’ Therein resides the dialectic of the Old and New [...] The only way to grasp the true novelty of the New is to analyze the world through the lenses of what was ‘eternal’ in the Old”

Žižek gives communism as the example for this and explains: “it is eternal not in the sense of a series of abstract-universal features that may be

applied everywhere, but in the sense that it has to be re-invented in each new historical situation.”¹⁰⁸

The strategies described thus far provide a background for the concerns I wish to present when proposing the notions of fictionalism and anachronism. Varying from questioning historical truths to voicing silenced narratives, these strategies highlight the demand for justice through exposure of hidden networks of domination or the appropriation and re-activation of images and gestures as part of emancipatory politics. Some even go as far as reconsidering the spectrum of the revolution, either as a language or as a hibernating potential to be reenacted.

All proposals seem to consider the currency of rhetorical abilities as a subversive tool; this tool can make a performance become ‘real’ and thus produce a reality, or rather it can make claims that will force a structure of power to collapse by exposing its inner workings. While the notion of the revolution as language and the proposal of reenactment are invested in participatory modes of political engagement, parafiction relates to the conspiracy/transparency drive that portrays the contemporary political entanglement through forms of knowing and not-knowing. The problem they pose was described by Yuran when saying that “To know means not to know that you don’t know.”

The curatorial proposes articulation as its mode of operation. But this form of articulation is not based on truth claims. As much as it relies on rhetorical tools to obtain its authority, the curatorial does not revolve around fact-based utterances. Actually its claims for concreteness are invested in performativity and narration more than fact. This is exactly how the curatorial continuously evaluates the notions through which it operates. Parallel to weighing the way

¹⁰⁸ Slavoj Žižek, *First as Tragedy, Then as Farce*, London and New York: Verso, 2009, p. 6

in which some terms and ideas are available in one moment and are no longer valid in another, it explores how we can use and re-use notions that seem no-longer attainable or not-yet possible.

It can be seen as a form of horizontal history of mapping connections, as Lambert-Beatty might put it. From this perspective, what the curatorial can add to artistic and political performative attempts at reenactment, parafiction and the diachronic gestural revolutionary language, is a reentry into history by means of fictionalism and anachronism.

Anachronism stands for the injection of a perspective that would seem unavailable in a given antagonism. This re-introduction of a perspective operates very differently than what we would call retro or nostalgia. While retro and nostalgia read the past from today – either as a lack to hold on to or as form to revisit – anachronism proposes an overlapping of perspectives; those from the current condition, and those which are unavailable anymore. An example for this would be the communist horizon in the Middle East – from the Syrian-Lebanese, to the Iraqi, the anti-Zionist, the Egyptian to the Palestinian communist parties. While today these might not offer themselves to be very practical in the current setting of political Islam versus military regimes, considering the fact that overlapping internationalisms existed in the Middle East opens up this moment we are in for new and surprising alliances. These might operate in an imaginary level at this moment, but they provide a remodeling of the current condition in ways that promise another reality for the Middle East.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ In recent years, a significant amount of work has been done around the Middle East in an attempt to excavate these communist projects that never matured. Their traces can be found either within the confines of nation state building projects or in anti-imperialist networks that were formed by exiled organizers. See: Leon Zahavi, *Apart or Together: Jews and Arabs in Palestine according to the Documents of the Comintern (1919-1943)*, Tel Aviv: Keter, 2005 [In Hebrew]; Avner Ben Zaken, *Communism as Cultural Imperialism: The*

Operating on a cultural map which is mainly informed by ethnic and religious narration, one finds himself compelled to resist not only the given identities, but more so the mechanisms modelling these identities. Yet, this resistance many times mirrors the operations of these models themselves, applying either erasure or excavation tactics in order to make claims that would prove to have historical grounds. I found myself many times taking part in creating platforms and organizing events which looked to construct a model or map that would enable the production of very different identities from those scripted through the modelling mechanisms. These platforms (exhibitions, screenings, poetry demonstrations, publications), used various tactics of overlap which involved time and space, periodization and fictionalization, historical comparison and spatial realignment. One of these platforms, “Guerilla Culture” (2003-2010), involved the setting up of “poetry demonstrations”. These included the weaving of a network of relations around the country with unions, NGOs, lawyers, poets, journalists, political activists and public officials. The events were set up mainly around workers struggling for collective bargaining through their elected unions – from teachers to constructions workers, from paperless workers to care workers. The demonstrations included speakers from the specific struggle together with poets. This *mélange* attracted not only the media but also politicians who found it useful to endorse a struggle when the poets were there. Somehow, what a decade before could have been envisioned as one front of political activists and unions, now needed poets to bring them together and to enable them to operate, even though for a specific struggle each time, as one front. During those years, as the country was going through rapid privatization processes, with no political opposition presenting itself, this

Affinities between Eretz-Israeli Communism and Arab Communism 1919-1948, Tel Aviv: Resling Publishers, 2006 [In Hebrew]; and: Joel Beinin, *Was the Red Flag Flying There?: Marxist Politics and the Arab-Israeli conflict in Israel and Egypt 1948-1965*, Berkeley: California University Press, 1990.

overlapping of what seemed as two anachronisms – unions and poetry – proved to be a useful combination on a very practical level.

Therefore, the understanding of anachronism here has to do with an injection of perspectives that would have seemed unavailable in the context of the given antagonism. The alliances this forms are unpredictable and provide a re-shuffling of the map of antagonisms itself. This is how Betrayal played out through the anachronism of Guerilla Culture's poetry demonstrations. To give but one example of Guerilla Culture's many actions, in solidarity with the demand of workers in a cement factory in the south of Israel, in a town bordering the Gaza Strip, we came to set up an event with local activists and workers and with poets from around the country. As the people came on to the microphone in front of the factory's gates, either describing their situation or reading their prepared materials – poems and speeches – a realization emerged by all parties involved, including the media reporters and policeman assigned to keep an eye on the crowd. The poetry demonstration articulated this labor dispute in direct relation to the Occupation. Gradually intensifying, the speeches reoriented all parties' positions, to form an alliance between the people on both sides of the border – the Israeli workers and the people in Gaza. The specific workplace was exactly the site for such an articulation – the location but also it being a place for production of building materials. Through the connections that anachronism enables between unionism and poetry, staging the concrete alters its allegorical meaning and thus shifts its original meaning. The curatorial articulates conceptual claims by aggregating concrete utterances; each case remains specific to its circumstances yet at the same time together they solidify a theme or narrative. At that poetry demonstration, something changed in the meaning of that factory and the workers struggle. Suddenly, a long-distance solidarity with those on the other side of the wall

was present. It was not only their dire need for building materials – it was the formation of power relations, of exploitation, class divisions and tactics of intimidation that made it apparent to all participants that realignment of affinities has occurred.

Fictionalism in Israel-Palestine: Yael Bartana

The political retreat that reenactments seemed to respond to in artistic contexts has been replaced by an activism on the level of believability in the case of the media-event parafiction. If the first option wants to repeat the facts so that it can own its own historical narrative, the later wants to inject fake facts to mock and counter hegemonic historical narratives with other truths to replace them. If 'to know means not to know that you don't know,' then the task of history-writing would be that of interpretation. History, according to this formulation, could be considered a kind of a traumatic experience in that it both compels and disallows speech – it demands constant rewording; some things can and some cannot be thought at a certain moment, therefore new words and concepts are invited as much as other words and concepts cease from having meaning.

When proposing anachronism and fictionalism, this is not simply an invitation to voice silenced narratives, that through anachronism and fictionalization, we would light the dark sides of the narratives we already embody. In a way, fictionalism is life-after-parafictions; it is the way we embody and make use of fictions. It is not only an alternative story but a story to live by alternatively. Therefore it is not only a tool for critique but a tool for enabling new collective subjectivities to emerge. Unlike parafiction, fictionalism is not about superiority of knowledge but about negotiating knowledge through

unknowing. It involves an active use of history as substance – participating in it through continuous genealogization of the present.

Yael Bartana is an Israeli artist who has developed several projects that involved reenactments. Some of her projects converted those reenactments into simulations, and those include several that have proposed a fictionalized parallel history. *Summer Camp/Avodah* (2007), documents activists from the Israeli Committee Against House Demolition (ICAHD), re-building a demolished Palestinian house in East Jerusalem, in the manner that Helmar Lersky's Zionist propaganda film *Avodah* (Labour) (1935), documented pioneers constructing houses in Palestine. *Summer Camp/Avodah* even uses the original film's soundtrack and music and follows its framing, in order to draw a comparison between the pioneers and the activists. In its use of anachronism it combines a reclaiming of Socialist heritage from Zionism, together with an ironic take on reconstruction as a starting point.

In her trilogy "And Europe will be Stunned" which is comprised of three films: *Mary Koszmary* [Nightmares] (2007); *Mur i wieża* [Wall and Tower] (2009); and *Zamach* [Assassination] (2011), Bartana not only developed the narrative through fictionalism, but the trilogy literally performed it. The three films center around a movement Bartana has initiated for the return of Jews to Poland. Bartana even designed an emblem for JRMiP – the Polish coat of arms, an eagle and crown on a background of half a Shield of David. Together with Polish curator Sebastian Cichocki she composed a manifesto for the Jewish Renaissance Movement in Poland (JRMiP). The first film in the trilogy is a speech made in an empty stadium by Polish intellectual Sławomir Sierakowski, founder and editor of the Left-wing Polish periodical *Krytyka Polityczna* (Political Critique), in character as leader of the JRMiP, calling the Jews to return to Poland. The second part is set in the heart of Warsaw where a group of pioneers from the JRMiP has come to settle. The film

combines Socialist, Zionist and Polish nationalist tools, instruments and symbols to produce an actual settlement in a park in Warsaw. The third part presents the followers of the movement as they mourn the death of their leader, who apparently was assassinated.

Wall and Tower opens with an extract recalling Sierakowski's speech from the first film:

“Jews, return to Poland, to our land and your land! Heal our wounds and your wounds will be healed! We shall be together again! This is a call not to the dead, but to the living. We want three million Jews to return to Poland, to live with us again! We need you! We ask you to come back!”

A group of men and women in work clothes, the women wearing head scarves and the men wearing hats, march on the heart of Warsaw against a background of the Polish anthem. The group, which looks like a combination of Zionist pioneers, Soviet revolutionaries and members of *Gadna* (the Israeli junior cadet movement) are armed with timber beams and planks, ropes and tools to house the returning Jewish population and to answer the call in *Mary Koszmary*. Against a background of shouts of encouragement from the leader of the group, and while Sierakowski's voice is still echoing round the stadium, construction on the site is gradually takes place. Young Jews are learning Polish in camp again. The type of building they are erecting is what is known as “Wall and Tower”, a kind of Potemkin village developed by Zionist activists in Palestine during the British Mandatory Regime around 1936-1939, at the time of the great Arab revolt. The purpose

of these structures was to maintain a hold on the land as a means of establishing Jewish settlements in Palestine.¹¹⁰

The Jewish settlement in the heart of Warsaw blends not only different styles of dress and different kinds of revolutionaries, but also different narratives. When the Jewish pioneers in Poland string out lines of barbed wire along the wooden walls surrounding their settlement, while Warsaw pedestrians can be seen walking back and forth across the city center, it resembles as well a ghetto or even a concentration camp.

The specific Soviet stadium from *Mary Koszmary* and the Nazi stadiums of propaganda films, the Zionist construction of a house and the pro-Palestinian activists re-building a house demolished by Israeli police in *Summer Camp/Avoda*, the settlement and the concentration camp in *Wall and Tower* – Bartana works with traumatic histories and applies various strategies of simulation, re-enactment and rehearsal when drawing the connections between them. Through the dress and the buildings, the filming and the editing, the narrative and the music, Bartana re-activates anachronisms into the current political sphere, with the aim of imbuing them with new political significance.

The trilogy was made at a time of a solidification of a regime of segregation in Israel-Palestine. During this time, attempts to develop a Jewish superiority in all state levels was intensifying, with the aim to equate Israeli solely with

¹¹⁰ Some Israeli architecture historians claim that “Wall and Tower” has been the archetype of Israeli contracture building up to the present day – from the original “Wall and Tower”, to the establishment of settlements in the West Bank and the erection of the Separation Wall. This type of building has developed from a fear of the outside (the wall) and a need to develop means for controlling it (the tower). This has had a lasting effect on Israeli architecture until this day. See: Sharon Rotbard, “Wall and Tower”, in: *A Civilian Occupation: The Politics of Israeli Architecture*, Eds.: Rafi Segal and Eyal Weizman. Tel Aviv-Jaffa: Babel and London and New York: Verso, 2003, pp. 39-56

Judaism, making all minorities of Muslims, Christians and others, second rate citizens. Bartana was undoing this essentialist political project by proposing another one, which engages a third party – Poland. By that she was actually showing the return of Jews to Poland as a possible proposition for the return of Palestinian refugees to Palestine. Under the antagonistic political realities of competing narratives, Bartana's work with fictionalism offers new access to enter the political. In Israel, Poland and Palestine, these films perform a political act. They demand the examination of political concepts.

The trilogy not only suggests the transformation of Zionist imagery for the struggle against the occupation – it injects speculation into history and traumatic reality. The trilogy shows a readiness to argue against the alignment of the opposing positions, and is already suggesting new alliances. It suggests a fiction through which one can re-enter history, creating the possibility of working within fictitious stories. It proposes fictionalism as an opportunity to delve again into painful history by re-articulating it. Bartana's films suggest recharging in the form of story-telling, and they make it possible to work from the shared archives of Israelis and Palestinians, Jews and Poles. In the antagonistic realities of competing narratives like these, Bartana's work with fictionalism offers new access to reality.

And reality did not wait long. In 2011, Bartana was invited to represent Poland in the Venice Biennale with the trilogy. It was exhibited as the official representative of Poland for the national pavilions in the Giardini in Venice. This fact validated the JRMiP, in a way that actually performed fictionalism in reality. It wasn't the project's attempt to achieve truth-status as a parafiction. Namely, that the JRMiP would be perceived as an authentic movement for some of the people some of the time, depending on their superior access to knowledge in relation to the project. The attempt here was not to launch

something false into quasi-truthfulness, but to speculate on a parallel reality that would then penetrate reality by injecting fictions into history.¹¹¹

Montage: Collision and Addition in Israel-Palestine

“Do you know why we Palestinians are famous? We are famous because you are our enemy.” He answers and explains: “The interest in us stems from the interest in the Jewish issue. The interest is in you not in me. So we have the misfortune of having Israel as an enemy because it enjoys unlimited support. And we have the good fortune of having Israel as our enemy because the Jews are the center of attention. You’ve brought us defeat and renown.”¹¹²

— Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish, to Israeli journalist Judith Lerner (actress Sarah Adler), in Jean-Luc Godard’s film *Notre musique* (2004)

To further explore the projects that suggest Betrayal through narrative means, I would like at this point, to turn to the writings of Ariella Azoulay. As in the case of the revolution as a language, where she proposes a structure that is neither objective, nor subjective, such as language, to describe the revolution as something that is shared, produced and developed between people, here specific writings on Israel-Palestine shift the spatial with the

¹¹¹ See the publication accompanying the exhibition of the Polish Pavilion at the 54th International Art Exhibition in Venice “Yael Bartana: And Europe will be Stunned”: Sebastian Cichocki, Galit Eilat (Eds.), *A Cookbook for Political Imagination*, Sternberg Press, 2011

¹¹² These quotes by Darwish in the film are based on an interview he gave to Helit Yeshurun, publisher and editor of literary review *Hadarim* [published in Hebrew, *Hadarim* 12, 1996]. The interview was translated to French and published in: *Revue d'Études Palestiniennes* (Éditions de Minuit), N° 9 nouvelle série - automne 1996; In English it appeared in: *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 42, no. 1, 2012

temporal. By this move, she is able to convert the prominent discourse of partition into a counter-discourse of being-together. Aligned along the antagonism Israeli/Palestinian or Jew/Arab, one can demonstrate how projects such as those by Azoulay manage to destabilize this antagonism at its core, by injecting speculations and potential histories. Azoulay's ongoing work with photography archives of Palestine in the years 1947-1950, and 1967 onwards, proposes a reshuffle of the camps.¹¹³

Using Walter Benjamin's Critique of Violence and applying its notion of constitutive violence – that which forms the law – she challenges the two competing histories: that of independence for Israelis and that of catastrophe (Nakba) for Palestinians, both aligned since 1947-1948 on the notion of a separation between the two communities. These competing histories are met by a potential history of life together – intertwined. Working with photographs from 1947-1950 (including especially those documenting the deportation of some 700,000 Palestinians from approximately 417 villages), Azoulay betrays this separation and fictionalizes a shared past (and future) of a Jewish-Arab civil society. This enables her to claim that the Nakba did not only happen to “us” or to “them” in the past tense, but that “we” are experiencing it. And that “we” is Israeli-Palestinian.

Through her reading of photographs from the period, Azoulay formulates a civil contract of photography. This proposal embeds the photographer and the photographed, the viewer and the archivist into one community that transcends the “us versus them” narration of Israel/Palestine. She

¹¹³ Azoulay's developed these ideas in several exhibitions, among them: “Act of State”, Minshar, Tel Aviv-Jaffa, 2007; “Constitutive Violence”, Zochrot, Tel Aviv-Jaffa in 2009; and books which include: *The civil contract of photography*, New York: Zone books, 2008; *From Palestine to Israel: A Photographic Record of Destruction and State Formation, 1947-1950*, Pluto Press, 2011; and *Civil Imagination: Political Ontology of Photography*, London and New York: Verso, 2012.

dismantles the unity of opposing identities in Palestine along the divide by fusing a shared past. In Azoulay's proposals, new alliances emerge as other are descending.¹¹⁴

In a film she made in 2012 titled *Civil Alliance*, Azoulay gathers contemporary Jewish and Palestinian intellectuals and activists around a map of Palestine under British rule. They mark the map in order to report on what Azoulay calls "a civil race against the clock taking place in Palestine until the founding of the State of Israel in May 1948." The film is staged like a kind of a séance session, where people stand around a table, mentioning an event from 1947-1948 and marking the map where it took place. As the film explains, intense civil activity was happening throughout the country, mainly in urgent encounters, some short and spontaneous, others planned and carefully laid out in detail – in which participants raised demands, sought

¹¹⁴ With this, Azoulay followed among others, Palestinian historian Salim Tamari who has been researching Palestinian identities of Muslims, Christians and Jews under the rule of late Ottoman empire and early British Mandate, a time when national identities were forming in the region. In his writing Tamari proposes local, regional and spatial trajectories as preconditions which surpass the identities which have solidified with the rise of nationhood in the region under Imperial rule. His historical research includes the memoirs of various Palestinian figures from different backgrounds. Through his reading and weaving of these source materials Tamari is able to draw new maps of the region prior to ethnic and religious identities of the nation state. In his book *Mountain against the Sea: Essays on Palestinian Society and Culture*, Tamari's main claim is that a geographical perception of Palestine suggests a divide of coastal and highland culture and identity, each with its own elites and underclasses. Along this divide he says, Palestine experienced Imperialism and colonization, nationhood and ethnicity, as categories that produced a conflictual modernity, by which groups which were living together, have been separated from each other to the extent that now they have come to negate one another. This has happened along new divides that were not mere geographical distances, but rather operated in intimate proximities. The introduction of the coastal/highlanders divide has a stimulating potential in injecting a no-longer available perspective into the mapping of Palestine-Israel, making it a creative anachronism. See: Salim Tamari, "The Mountain against the Sea?: Cultural Wars of the Mediterranean", in: *Mountain against the Sea: Essays on Palestinian Society and Culture*, University of California Press, 2009, pp. 22-35

compromises, set rules, formulated agreements, made promises, asked for forgiveness, made efforts to reconcile and compensate – and did everything possible not to let violence take over their lives. Azoulay explains that these Jewish and Arab neighbors did their utmost to halt the violence that national and military forces were intending on igniting and negotiated with each other in order to create mutual civil alliances.

What the film is able to do is exactly this mirroring of historical comparison between the times and the actions it describes and the times and actions it documents, between the now of the making of the film, and the historical moment it refers to. Azoulay actively reads facts from the past in direct relation to the contemporary political reality around her. What comes out is a narration and an actual performance of histories that seemed unattainable.

What Azoulay is actually producing is a form of montage that relies not on collision of images but on addition. When Jean-Luc Godard suggested in *Historie(s) du Cinema* (1988-1998) that cinema gave its body to history, he meant to say that the twentieth century was made on film – from the reenactment of the storming into the winter palace in St. Petersburg in Sergei Eisenstein's *October* (1928), to Leni Riefenstahl's stadiums of *Triumph of the Will* (1935) and *Olympia* (1938), to news reels and fiction films, that for him were never fiction, but a reality of another order that refers directly to ours. Later on Godard proposed a relation between history and cinema which, according to him, is embodied by montage. Alan Wright summarizes this notion of montage thus:

“Montage à la Godard constructs an image of history in the light of an extreme variations between a vision of happiness and the sense of catastrophe. Cinema serves as the ideal instrument for representing the ‘dubious’ nature of historical relations. The technical procedure of

montage supplies the formula for a conceptual principle. It contains the promise of a method. For Godard, the capacity of an image to project in two different directions at once, to display two distinct senses of meaning, assumes the status of a rule. His theory of montage depends upon drawing a set of connections from a relationship of looks.”¹¹⁵

But the image does not exist by itself. It is the relation between projection and reflection that circumscribes the look. Godard describes this thus: “the image is the relation with me looking at it dreaming up a relation at someone else. An image is an association.”¹¹⁶ In his film *JLG/JLG: Autobiography in December* (1994), Godard describes the logic of history as montage through the idea of ‘stereo,’ using the shape of the Star of David, the mystical Jewish hexagram symbol of two equilateral triangles:

“Stereo is made for dogs and blind people. They always project like this but they should project this way. Because they project like this, because I, who listen and watch, am here, because I receive this projection as I face it, because I reflect it back, I am in the position described by this figure. [he draws a triangle in a notebook] There was Euclid and then there was Pascal – this is the mystical hexagram. But in History, in the history of History, there was Germany which projected Israel. Israel reflected this projection and Israel found its cross. And the law of stereo continues. Israel projected the Palestinian people and the Palestinian people in turn bore their cross. This is the

¹¹⁵ Alan Wright “Elizabeth Taylor at Auschwitz: JLG and the Real Object of Montage”, in: Michael Temple and James S. Williams (Eds.), *The Cinema Alone: Essays on the Works of Jean-Luc Godard 1985-2000*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2000, p. 52

¹¹⁶ Gavin Smith, “Interview: Jean-Luc Godard,” in: *Jean-Luc Godard: Interviews*, Ed.: David Sterritt, University Press of Mississippi, 1998, p. 190. The interview originally appeared in: *Film Comment*, vol. 32, no. 2, March-April 1996, pp. 31-41

true legend of stereo [he draws another triangle on top of the first one, making the shape of a Star of David]”¹¹⁷

Following this suggestion by Godard, we can examine the way his formulation of montage can be implemented back in history, and thus constitute Betrayal. “The shot and reverse shot are the basics of cinema,” says Godard in his 2004 film *Notre musique*. He is giving a lecture in Sarajevo showing two frames from a film by Howard Hawks – one close-up of a man and another of a woman, “You will see that this is actually the same shot twice.” He continues by saying that truth has two faces, and to give an example, he shows a colour photograph of people getting off boats on the coast: “In 1948, the Israelis walked in the water to reach the Promised Land.” Continuing, he then shows a black-and-white photograph of people marching along the coast: “The Palestinians walked in the water to drown.” He puts the photos one on top of the other: “Shot and reverse shot. The Jewish people have become the stuff of fiction, the Palestinians, of documentary.”

The creation of Israel is the displacement of Palestinians. This can be read as a classic example of shot/reverse-shot, a thesis of hope and an antithesis of pain, together creating a synthesis of history. The rivalling narratives of independence and Nakba focus on 1948. But if Azoulay says that the Nakba happened to both groups, in the sense that the Zionist victory in 1948 is also the tragedy of the Jews who could have been much more, sharing their self-governance with other groups rather than excluding these groups, being more than just a group which defines itself as nation, constituted in negation to others. In Godard’s notion of montage, the practice of partition, which Azoulay tries to overcome, is replaced by a specific logic of addition.

¹¹⁷ Wright, “Elizabeth Taylor at Auschwitz,” pp. 52-53

Following Godard's approach, I wish to use his construction of montage as a conceptual framework from which to find potential histories. In the case of Palestine-Israel, we can examine his and Anne-Marie Miéville's film *Ici et Ailleurs* (*Here and Elsewhere*, 1970-1976), which was originally commissioned by the PLO from the Dziga Vertov Group (Godard and Jean-Pierre Gorin). When Godard and Gorin set out to shoot a film in the PLO run Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan in the summer of 1970, the full working title was *Jusqu'à la victoire (Méthodes de pensée et de travail de la révolution palestinienne)*. The idea was to join the Palestinian revolution and to show solidarity with the Palestinian struggle. The materials they came back with looked not so different from the Zionist propaganda made fifty years earlier (similar to works like those of Larsky who Bartana based her *Summer Camp/Avoda* video on): fighters posing and practicing shooting and drilling exercises, farmers working the fields, children reciting ideological slogans, tented settlements.

After their return to Paris, following the quadruple hijackings of Dawson's Field in September of that year, the Jordanian military entered the Palestinian refugee camps and waged a deadly attack on its inhabitants, massacring many PLO and PFLP fighters. Many of the people shot by Godard and Gorin were dead. Godard did not confront the materials until 1974, as the Dziga Vertov group ceased to exist. Together with Miéville, they reevaluated the materials through the notion of "Here" and "Elsewhere." The film now focused on the complicated the relationship between the place and the way the images had been filmed and the place and the way in which they were edited.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ See: Colin MacCabe, *Godard: A Portrait of the Artist at 70*, Bloomsbury, 2003, pp. 242-247

Through a closer look at the montage strategies Miéville and Godard have developed, we can produce a narration of continuation and repetition rather than mere collision between the negating entities of “Israel” and “Palestine”. We can take Godard’s formulation of history and cinema at its word almost and try to apply a reading of history through the montage technique developed by him and Miéville when attempting to make a film on Israel-Palestine.

As fictionalism and potential histories call for narration strategies, montage becomes an essential consideration. Gilles Deleuze’s description of Godard’s montage method of that time is instructive in proposing montage as a form for narrating Betrayal:

“It is not a matter of following a chain of images, even across voids, but of getting out of the chain or the association. Film ceases to be 'images in a chain ... an uninterrupted chain of images each one the slave of the next', and whose slave we are (*Ici et ailleurs*). It is the method of BETWEEN, 'between two images', which does away with all cinema of the One. It is the method of AND, 'this and then that', which does away with all the cinema of Being = is. Between two actions, between two affections, between two perceptions, between two visual images, between two sound images, between the sound and the visual: make the indiscernible that is the frontier, visible (*Six fois deux*). The whole undergoes a mutation, because it has ceased to be the One-Being, in order to become the constitutive 'and' of things, the constitutive between-two of images. The whole thus merges with what Blanchot calls the force of 'dispersal of the Outside', or 'the vertigo of spacing': that void which is no longer a motor-part of the

image, and which the image would cross in order to continue, but is the radical calling into question of the image.”¹¹⁹

For the most part, Godard and Miéville reflect on the “And,” the “et” in the title *ici et ailleurs*. The connectivity of And is proposed here as an entity by itself. It is not a mere serial addition, true to accumulative capitalist logic adding easily interchangeable unities. Nor is it a connectivity of a dialectic nature, which defines the relations between its unities in the revolutionary logic of mutual negation which provides a synthesis on a higher order. Throughout *ici et ailleurs*, Godard and Miéville demonstrate how both models have failed: they say the world is a “millionaire in images of revolution,” meaning that both models of connectivity have merged – Television, which takes a big part of the film, is exactly this machine of endless additions. The addition their “And” proposes is that of counterpoint – breaking the chain of images and making them a simultaneous collage. The relation between images is not sequenced or linear. Each image actually opens to question the other one. Here we have in addition to the Godardian mismatch between sight and sound, the presence of two voices, that of Godard, who was there, shooting in Palestinian refugee camps in 1970, and that of Miéville who questions the images mobilized for the cause of the revolution.

Miéville’s voice over in the film proposes to read in each of the images Godard and Gorin brought from Jordan, its own internal break and with it the break it produces in relation to other images. “So what’s at stake is the engagement of a filmmaker as a filmmaker,” writes Serge Daney about the film:

¹¹⁹ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, Trans.: Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Caleta. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989, p. 180

“For it’s in the nature of cinema (delay between the time of shooting and the time of projection) to be the art of here and elsewhere. What Godard says, very uncomfortably and very honestly, is that the true place of the filmmaker is in the AND. A hyphen only has value if it doesn’t confuse what it unites.”¹²⁰

The application of Godardian montage onto history plays in surprising ways. We can observe how images travel. For example, the gestures and dress of Second World War anti-Nazi partisans of Socialist inclinations traveled to post-War Palestine where Zionist militia assumed their tropes and symbols, only to be followed by Palestinian fighters, the Fedayeen, who have been active since the Nakba. The second generation of militant Fedayeen were among those documented by Godard and Gorin.

Applying the logic of “And”, by which the cut not only divides but also connects two images together, positions us in a very different place in relation to the antagonism of Israel/Palestine. Addition of a different order, between two images, proposes a new relation in Israel-Palestine. Now the narratives are no longer played one against the other but rather become an archive from which to work from. This proposal performs Betrayal in the most direct way as it highlights the “And” as a productive place from which to operate.

A variety of projects have been made in relation to *Ici et ailleurs*, but more importantly it produced a perspective from which we can evaluate cinematic attempts dealing with Israel-Palestine not as a mere dichotomy but as a

¹²⁰ See: Serge Daney “Preface to *Here and Elsewhere*,” lecture that was written for the US premiere of *Ici et ailleurs* as part of the first Semaine des Cahiers du Cinéma at the Bleecker Street Cinema, NYC in 1977. It was never delivered due to terror threats by pro-Israeli activists: <http://kinoslang.blogspot.co.il/2009/01/preface-to-here-and-elsewhere-by-serge.html> [Last retrieved: 15.10.2015]

spatial and durational setting of overlaps. The fictional stories about run-down places in an occupied city like Jaffa in *The Truth*, by Scandar Copti and Rabih Boukhary (2003), or the speculations on the future Jewish-Arab State in *The Jewish-Arab State* by Yossi Atia and Itamar Rose (2007), involve documentary strategies that undermine the existing reality. As these short films narrate a location as something that it is not (a water tower as the holy grail, for example), and then presenting this fiction to people who are interviewed, they describe the existing reality as an evitable reality. The simulations on a future flag done by Palestinians in Israel in *The Jewish-Arab State* project already on the present a trajectory of a state for all its citizens – two nations becoming one society.

Other, less recent references for these overlaps that Godardian montage provides access to in relation Israel-Palestine are visions of Palestine-Israel reflected from Uganda, as proposed by Ugandan dictator Idi Amin in *General Idi Amin Dada: A Self Portrait* by Barbet Schroeder (1974). Uganda was considered a possible site for Jewish settlement by the British Empire and the Zionists in the early twentieth century, and the outcomes of the anti-imperialist coup there suggest many similarities to Zionism in Israel, where what saw itself as a secular liberation movement turned colonizer and religious fundamentalist. The landscapes of Jerusalem and the Dead Sea so familiar to both Palestinians and Israelis being under the rule of another state – Jordan in Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Sopralluoghi in Palestina per il vangelo secondo Matteo* (1965), and in *Struggle in Jerash* by Eileen Simpson and Ben White (2009), a project using the footage from a 1957 lost Jordanian film of the same name. These are but a few examples that activate this “And” logic formulated by Godard and Miéville, reading the history of Palestine-Israel through cinema, and the history of cinema through

Palestine-Israel, reading cinema through history, and history through cinema.

To these projects in film, I can add artistic projects by artists from the Middle East mainly, that can be grouped around a proposal of fictionalism. When addressing them we are already dealing directly with incorporations of the logic of Freud's "Moses". This group includes artists from Lebanon, Israel, Egypt and Palestine such as Roe Rosen, Akram Zaatari, Rabih Mroue, Emily Jacir, Hassan Khan, Walid Raad, Ariella Azoulay and Yael Bartana who all engage with fictionalism in their work. While they vary in their themes, genres, medium and style, they all propose a fictionalist relation to history and to political trauma. The entanglements they suggest in their works operate on the reality with which they are dealing with.

All of these artists' projects are invested in entangling the dichotomies that make the political reality in which they operate. They do so along the lines of what Gil Anidjar has described in relation to Jewish-Arab enmity in Israel-Palestine. Anidjar explains that in Israel, nationality ('Arab' or 'Jew') is a category distinguished from citizenry ('Israeli') – both Arab and Jew are divorced from religious meaning here and come to denote an ethnicity. Anidjar quotes Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin in saying:

"Palestinian history and Palestinian national identity are part of the discussion of Zionist history, essential parts of the context of responsibility. The definition of Palestinian rights and the definition of Jewish rights are one and the same. This is the context of responsibility that Zionism has created...A bi-national perspective leads to...the definition of a common Jewish-Arab space."

What this means is that in these artists projects conflict and antagonism are approached two another layer of affinity and connectedness by which both

sides of a dichotomy are constituted by it, and by that have something they share.¹²¹

Fictionalism and Anachronism: Freud's Moses

"The poor Jewish people, who with its usual stiff-necked obduracy continued to deny the murder of their 'father,' has dearly expiated this in the course of centuries. Over and over again they heard the reproach: 'You killed our God.' And the reproach is true, if rightly interpreted."

Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*

Freud's "Moses" has been the instigator for this exploration of Betrayal through narration. The potentials of fictionalism and anachronism will be now be further developed through a reading of this final work by Freud. This final part of the chapter is dedicated to the analysis of this work, the circumstances in which it appeared and the contexts which it produced. The reality in which it was developed relates directly to the cut or the hyphen that does not confuse what it unites. Through Freud's "Moses," Betrayal is proposed here as form of fictionalism that undermines an antagonism from within so to speak. To further establish fictionalism and anachronism as strategies of Betrayal, Sigmund Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* is an exceptional precursor for injecting fictions into historical narratives. In the case of Freud's last book, as we will see, fictionalism performs Betrayal in face of the political reality. The presupposition that grants the political conditions the status of unalterable reality is rejected here. This does not simply mean that one's identity will stay stable and coherent while all the rest

¹²¹ Anidjar, *The Jew, The Arab: A History of the Enemy*, pp. 163-164

of the setting will get re-organized. On the contrary, the one applying critique might be the one most implicated. Betrayal means that the conditions within which the struggle takes place are modified, and the context within which a problem has arisen is modified with it. By not opting for one or the other of the provided alternatives Betrayal alters the rules of the game through unrestrained invention. Fictionalism and anachronism are two ways to achieve this proposal for disequilibrium through invention.

Freud's Loyalty

The German-speaking Jews and their history are an altogether unique phenomenon; nothing comparable to it is to be found even in the other areas of Jewish assimilation. To investigate this phenomenon, which among other things found expression in a literally astonishing wealth of talent and of scientific and intellectual productivity, constitutes a historical task of the first rank, and one which, of course, can be attacked only now, after the history of the German Jews has come to an end.

Hannah Arendt¹²²

With Freud's "Moses," Jewishness becomes again an open question. Read from the perspective of contemporary Jewish state in Israel, the anachronism it offers activates the immediate political and social reality. The fact that Freud's "Moses" comes from a time when 'Jewish' could still claim not to converge into a nation, an ethnicity or race, keeps it as a question. Therefore, Freud's Betrayal is performed exactly in this loyalty to Jewishness

¹²² See: 'Preface' to Hannah Arendt, *Rahel Varnhagen: The Life of a Jewess*, Ed.: Liliane Weissberg, Trans.: Richard and Clara Winston, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997, p. 82

as an open-ended question. Historically, we can say that in the Christian world the Jews, unlike the Muslims, were tolerated. But while Muslims were regarded as an enemy on the level of a war on resources, power and control of land and sea, the Jew functioned differently as it was also an internal part of the Christian world (through theology but not only). Jew was that which provoked the world, unsettled it. The Jew reminds us that maybe the messiah did not yet arrive. That we might be wrong about the world – maybe what we know as truth is a lie. This is the basic hermeneutics of suspicion that the Jew proposes. In this respect, writing from today, all these potentials are available only as an anachronism. And Freud's "Moses" provides for a unique unsettling provocation of our world because it is applied to the Jews themselves. It is a study in destabilization on both internal and external levels – both in relation to the anti-Semitic setting of the time it was written and in relation to a stable Jewish identity as nation, religion or race.

Here we encounter the unique function of the Jew within a dichotomy such as that of Jew/German. The uniqueness lies in the fact that Jewishness itself occupies a binary when played out in an anti-Semitic imaginary. Theodor Lessing wrote in 1930 in *Jewish Self Hatred (Der Jüdische Selbsthass)*, that the Jews are always being accused by anti-Semites of certain characteristics and their polar opposites. They are castigated for being calculating and rationalist, on the one hand, and instinctual and physical, on the other; too spiritual and too materialist; excessively primitive and excessively modern. They are accused of being both communists and capitalists; of the crimes of

religion and the sins of secularity. Therefore, they can operate as a basic dichotomy for all the others.¹²³

In his “Moses” book, Freud devises a method of addressing political reality by retrieving history through analyzing a mythical narrative. He opens the book with these words:

“to deny a people the man whom it praises as the greatest of its sons is not a deed to be taken lightheartedly – especially by one belonging to that people”¹²⁴

Moses and Monotheism was the last book to be published by Freud during his lifetime. It is comprised of three essays which Freud wrote between 1934 and 1938: “Moses an Egyptian”, “If Moses Was an Egyptian” and “Moses, His People, and Monotheistic Religion”. The book is an extraordinarily creative speculation on Moses, his life and his death, the origins of monotheism and anti-Semitism, and the making of the slaves in Egypt into a people and the creation of the religion of Moses – Judaism. The book was written in Vienna and in London at a time when Freud, an Austrian-Jew, had to find refuge after the Anschluss – the annexation of Austria into the Nazi Reich in March 1938.

Using a variety of works by Egyptologists, archeologists, geologists and researches of the scriptures, Freud claims that Moses was an Egyptian –

¹²³ See: Sander Gilman, *Jewish Self-Hatred: Anti-Semitism and the Hidden Anti-Semitism and the Hidden Language of the Jews*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986, pp. 300-304. Footnote 139 is dedicated to Freud and Lessing and the way that they are able to accuse each other for Jewish flaws. Gilman writes: “Lessing’s own interest in the psychopathology of self-hatred was understood as stemming from his own fragmented sense of self. Lessing had attacked psychoanalysis as a ‘typically Jewish abortion.’ In 1936 Freud recalled Lessing’s attack on him and wrote to Kurt Hiller that Lessing’s self-hatred was ‘an exquisite Jewish phenomenon.’”

¹²⁴ Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, p. 3

either a priest or a noble man – who lived in the thirteenth century BC. Freud's Moses was not an Israelite, son of slaves found by Pharaoh's daughter on the Nile as the biblical story tells us. Freud's Moses was not adopted by the Egyptian princess and rose to power in the court not knowing he is of the sons of Israel, as the biblical story tells us. For Freud's Moses was a descendent of the proto-monotheistic cult of the Sun God (Aten), which was formed by the Pharaoh Akhenaten who ruled in the fourteenth century BC (there are also claims Akhenaten is the father of Pharaoh Tutankhamun). Akhenaten's religion is noted for abandoning traditional Egyptian polytheism and introducing worship similar to monotheistic. Freud's Moses was one of those who were still practicing this marginalized religion and after finding the slaves of Egypt to be useful for his political and religious goals, he then united them as a people around this religion (Biblical Moses' stammering is explained by Freud as a late literary concealment of the fact that being Egyptian, Moses did not speak the language of the slaves).

Working with the notion of the "Primordial Father", Freud himself admits throughout his book that he is actually applying onto the story of the Jewish people some of his previous theories from *Totem and Taboo* (1913) and his 1921 essay "Group psychology and the analysis of the ego." But to make things more complicated, Freud actually claims that there were two "Moses" – one Egyptian and the other Midianite – who are combined by the biblical text into one. Moreover, Freud claims that the people these Moses formed, the Israelites, killed Egyptian Moses in the desert before entering the land of Israel. Later on, he adds, the figure of Moses merged with that of god as a "volcano-god":

"Jahve [i.e. Yahweh] was certainly a volcano-god. As we know, however, Egypt has no volcanoes and the mountains of the Sinai peninsula have never been volcanic; on the other hand, volcanoes

which may have been active up to a late period are found along the western border of Arabia. One of these mountains must have been the Sinai-Horeb which was believed to be Jahve's abode."¹²⁵

This form of elaborate conjecture makes Freud's *Moses* an inventive and creative text of speculations. Among the traditions inherited by the Religion of Moses was the practice of circumcision, which originates, Freud says, in the Egyptian religion.

Freud's Betrayal

To my knowledge, the nineteenth century saw the birth of two or three children that were not expected: Marx, Nietzsche and Freud. 'Natural' children, in the sense that nature offends customs, principles, morality and good breeding: nature is the rule violated, the unmarried mother, hence the absence of a legal father. Western Reason makes a fatherless child pay heavily. Marx, Nietzsche and Freud had to foot the often terrible bill of survival: a price compounded of exclusion, condemnation, insult, poverty, hunger and death, or madness. I speak only of them (other unfortunates might be mentioned who lived their death sentences in colour, sound and poetry). I speak only of them because they were the births of sciences or of criticism.

Louis Althusser¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, p. 39

¹²⁶ Louis Althusser "Freud and Lacan", in: *Lenin and Philosophy and other essays*, Trans.: Ben Brewster, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971, p. 196. The essay was published originally in French in the Communist Party Journal *La Nouvelle Critique* in 1964 and appeared in English in *The New Left Review* in 1969.

The method of Betrayal in Freud's "Moses" is that of loyalty to Jewishness as an open question. In it, Moses is presented as an Egyptian prince who developed a model of Monotheism and executed it through a multitude of slaves. So the Jewish people did not develop monotheism. But they were still the chosen people, maybe not by god but by another man, an Egyptian prince. We can see in Freud's "Moses" the various dimensions it intervenes in – it is on the one hand a book on history that questions a mythical account about Moses from the bible. It tells a counter story to that which the bible presents, but on another level, it follows the biblical story of a chosen people. It thus performs a move that is both immersed in and oppositional to the biblical story. In this way, we can say that what Freud is proposing is his own myth that he articulates in a historical situation that informs his analysis.

In the last years of his life, when he was forced to leave his home of Vienna and to find refuge in London, Freud returned to Moses to discuss his character and the people and religion he constituted within the framework of the identification of a people with their leader whom they both admire and fear. Working in the context of trauma and memory, Freud addresses the reality and politics in his own time – the rise of the Nazis and the persecution of Jews. When referring to the National-Socialists in the book, Freud explains Anti-Semitism as a reaction to the practice of circumcision and the castration anxiety it inflicts.¹²⁷ This is of course hardly an explanation for social pathologies emerging in front of his eyes and affecting the people around him and himself. But at the same time, it is indicative of the way he uses Moses's story in relation to the political reality of his time. In the book Freud examines something that has to do with the Jews in order to destabilize the Nazi formation of reality. He is compelled to draw the lines that would alter the political conditions, in a way that he too must be altered.

¹²⁷ See: Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, p. 116-117

Freud's idea for operating beyond the given antagonism involves a fictionalization which dismantles the unity of one of the identities. One can read his fiction of Moses in light of what it enabled him as author in the moment of writing. At the backdrop of this book lays the issue of hyphenated identity of German-Jewish and Austrian-Jewish people. National Socialism has institutionalized the antagonistic polarity of "Jewish" or "German," to the extent that superior and inferior would not suffice to describe the divide. Jew was sentenced to death and to a space of extermination in the death camp, and German meant life itself and the living-spaces of territories and stadiums; Jew was sentenced to a body-less and speechless existence; and German was granted an eternal body and the language of action.¹²⁸ As these extreme antagonistic relations were forming under Nazism, different approaches were developing on the "Jewish" side of the equation. Arnold Schoenberg, for example, found the reality he was facing in Vienna compelling him to compose the opera *Moses und Aron* (1930-1932) which was professed as a manifestation of Jewish identity.¹²⁹ Another example for a response within the polarity "German" of "Jew," can be found in an article written in 1932 by Ludwig Holländer, director of the Central Association of German Citizens of the Jewish Faith (CV) (the most prominent organization of liberal Jewry in Germany at that time):

"...We find in Judaism the fulfillment of our personal ideals, religious ideals, familial ideals, social ethical ideals, spiritual and educational

¹²⁸ See: Boaz Neumann, *Nazi Weltanschauung - Space, Body, Language*. Tel-Aviv: Haifa University Publishing House and Sifriat Ma'ariv, 2002. [In Hebrew]

¹²⁹ Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet's adaptation of Schoenberg's opera in their film *Moses und Aron* (1973), which insists on a kind of Semite aesthetics by proposing a Marxian reading of abstract divinity and idolatry performs in itself a beautiful anachronism as it portrays the Israelites as nomadic people of the desert, proposing a Jewish-Arab affinity through the theme of Semitism. In this sense the film follows Freud's "Moses" more than Schoenberg's original work.

ideals and peaceful ideals [...] in its history of sorrow and tears Judaism always protected its ideals against the whole world”.¹³⁰

Opposed to the rise of the particularity of German nationalism, these manifestations of German/Austrian-Jewry saw themselves committed to the project of *Bildung*, identifying Judaism with universalism. They were operating in a moment of nation-state building for which they were designated the role of foreign outsiders. Their identification with universalism was perceived as a threat by some Germans.¹³¹ As these German-Jews and Austrian-Jews were struggling against the polarization of their hyphenated identity, they presented different ways to operate by respecting the polarity – from Jewish nationalism, Zionism, to a disavowal of their Judaism, these various strategies performed treasons that still did not destabilize the dichotomy logic of the either/or order that anti-Semites and later on the Nazis have established vis-à-vis the Jews.

Freud and Kafka

Jewish-German theology scholar and philosopher Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929), coined the term *Bindestrichjudentum* – the Judaism of the Hyphen, to describe exactly this mode of existence. Franz Kafka’s famous letter to Max Brod, in which he describes his relation to writing in German as a Prague Jew, highlights the impossibility that is the hyphenated existence. “Kafka marks the impasse that bars access to writing for the Jews of Prague and turns their literature into something impossible,” say Deleuze and Guattari,

¹³⁰ See: Avner Dinur, “On Both Sides of the Hyphen: Jewish-German-Universal Culture, Nationalism and Post-colonialism” in: *Tabur: Yearbook for European History, Society, Culture and Thought*, Vol. 2: “Crime and Madness in Germany”, Hebrew University Jerusalem, 2009, pp. 127-153 [in Hebrew]

¹³¹ See: Arendt, “The Jews and Society,” in: *The Origins of Totalitarianism* pp. 55-88

“the impossibility of not writing, the impossibility of writing in German, the impossibility of writing otherwise.”¹³² Deleuze and Guattari place this impossibility in relation to experience of Jews in the late Austro-Hungarian Empire, these include among others, Kafka, Schoenberg and Freud, some of whom navigate between four languages – German, Yiddish, Hebrew and Czech:

“Let’s return to the situation in the Hapsburg Empire. The breakdown and fall of the empire increases the crisis, accentuates everywhere movements of deterritorialization, and invites all sorts of complex reterritorializations – archaic, mythic, or symbolist. At random we can cite the following among Kafka’s contemporaries: Einstein and his deterritorialization of the representation of the universe (Einstein teaches in Prague, and the physicist Philipp Frank gives conferences there with Kafka in attendance); the Austrian dodecaphonists and their deterritorialization of musical representation (the cry that is Marie’s death in *Wozzeck*, or Lulu’s, or the echoed *si* that seems to us to follow a musical path similar in certain ways to what Kafka is doing); the expressionist cinema and its double movement of deterritorialization and reterritorialization of the image (Robert Wiene, who has Czech background; Fritz Lang, born in Vienna; Paul Wegener and his utilization of Prague themes). Of course, we should mention Viennese psychoanalysis and Prague school linguistics. What is the specific situation of the Prague Jews in relation to the ‘four languages?’”¹³³

¹³² See: Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, Trans.: Dana Polan, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986, pp. 16. For the letter to Max Brod, see the one from June 1921 in: Franz Kafka, *Letters*, Trans.: Martin Greenberg, Schocken Books, 1949, p. 289

¹³³ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, pp. 24-25

The four languages they mention were proposing different facets of experience; mythical, bureaucratic, literary, rural, official, urban, forgotten, hidden. And each one came with its own relations to territoriality, deterritoriality and reterritoriality. They explain Kafka's dense three impossibilities thus:

“The impossibility of not writing because national consciousness, uncertain or oppressed, necessarily exists by means of literature (‘the literary struggle has its real justification at the highest possible levels’). The impossibility of writing other than in German is for the Prague Jews the feeling of an irreducible distance from their primitive Czech territoriality. And the impossibility of writing in German is the deterritorialization of the German population itself, an oppressive minority that speaks a language cut off from the masses, like a ‘paper language’ or an artificial language; this is all the more true for the Jews who are simultaneously a part of this minority excluded from it, like ‘gypsies who have stolen a German child from its crib.’ [←quote from Kafka] In short, Prague German is a deterritorialized language, appropriate for strange and minor uses. (This can be compared in another context to what blacks in America today are able to do with the English language).”¹³⁴

For this reason, for Kafka Jewish-German literature is impossible; the hyphen cannot be moved or replaced by a gap. The hyphen cannot be included in the German side of the equation. At the same time, the German language cannot be ignored or traded for another language, because the German language itself is not located exclusively on either side of the hyphen. The German language is on both sides of the hyphen, but it does

¹³⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, pp. 16-17

not allow for an “And” or for simultaneity, only an operation between tensions.

Moses the Egyptian

The method of Betrayal that Freud’s “Moses” proposes is that of loyalty to Jewishness as an open question. Freud’s *Moses* is a Betrayal of the antagonism German/Jew, by its attack on one of the essential poles of the polarity – the Jews are not Jewish, he says in it, they are but slaves who were taken by an Egyptian prince or priest and made into a people. The earth shifts with this proposition. When considering it, one finds himself suddenly on the other side of his own story. This rewriting of the myth through an analysis of the text suggests so many new horizons. But for Freud’s contemporaries, the book was perceived as a mistake or an insult. Jewish philosophy scholar Martin Buber opened his 1945 book *Moses* with a footnote which states:

“One should wonder with regret that such an important scholar in his field as Sigmund Freud, has found it in his heart to publish such an unscientific book which is based on ungrounded speculation.”¹³⁵

For Buber, who sees Freud as a ‘man of science,’ this book is an insult as he regards this book as a flawed scientific work. But the entanglement of myth and science that this work suggests stems exactly from anachronism and fictionalism as two strategies of interfering with the quadruple structure of is/isn’t-thinkable/unthinkable that Yuran proposes in relation to history. Freud’s speculative *Moses* turns from the polarity of German/Jew, not ignoring it, but constituting something else. When faced with the antagonism

¹³⁵ Martin Buber, *Moses: The Revelation and the Covenant* [1945], Humanity Books, 1988, p. V

of either “Jew” or “German”, as two distinct negating races, as it was articulated in German politics at the time, Freud is still “Jerman.” He cannot let go of the hyphen. He embodies it. Therefore, he finds a way to undo the polarity by going back to Moses, the founder of the “Jewish People”, and claiming that even he is not Jewish. By this he is performing a betrayal of the polarity itself. Freud’s Betrayal with *Moses* can be used as an example for fictionalism – he is working with a myth, analyzing its text to find the stitches the story conceals, only to come up, not with a simple claim for a historical truth behind the fictitious myth, but with another fiction to be presented in his political present. Fictionalism here is a way of injecting potential histories into embodied narratives, and by that destabilizing identities aligned along an antagonism.

“A minor literature doesn’t come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language,”¹³⁶ say Deleuze and Guattari. They explain how language is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization in minor literature, and how everything in minor literatures is political, and takes on a collective value:

“The three characteristics of minor literature are the deterritorialization of language, the connection of the individual to the political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation.”¹³⁷

Maybe not on a linguistic level, but definitely as a literary project, one can read the operations of Freud’s *Moses* as minor literature. Assuming a position that is no-longer-and-not-yet available is what can be called anachronism here in relation to betrayal. And it becomes an essential part of the promise of Betrayal. This tactic can be applied as a political tool, for

¹³⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 16

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 18

example, in Palestine-Israel today. Articulating affinities rather than belonging shifts the divide. This opens up the possibility for a temporal perspective to emerge, through which we can approach the archeology of the present as potential. Freud's "Moses" involves a deterritorialization of language, it is directed at the political immediacy of its time, and this involves a collective assemblage of enunciation through its subject. It is a minor literature in relation to German, to science, to history, to fiction, to myth, to politics. In this respect, Freud's psychoanalysis as a whole can be considered here as an example of minor literature in itself.

Freud' Method

The "Moses" book is Freud's work which received the least attention when it was published, compared to his earlier works. It almost stands as the odd one out, at least when measuring its presence against its contemporaries. Out of all of Freud's writings, his "Moses" might be the most marginal book with regards to it establishing a school or a paradigm. In addition, unlike other works in which he obfuscates Jewish cultural tropes and universalizes them (for example in his 1905 book *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*)¹³⁸, his "Moses" is the only book to directly addressing Jewish themes. And again it should be emphasized that this is done amidst the rise of the Nazis in Germany and the annexation of Austria.

The specificity of this work nevertheless, generated what we can call a small collection of writing referring directly to Freud's "Moses." These works delve into a variety of topics, from Judaism to orientalism, deconstruction and the archive, but in them we can trace "Moses" and its proposal. Since the 1990s,

¹³⁸ See: Sander Gilman, *The Jew's Body*, Routledge, 1991, especially chapter 5: "The Jewish Genius: Freud and the Jewishness of the Creative," pp. 128-149

a series of publications have come out in relation to the book, borrowing its initial attempt to confront contemporary tensions of identity in relation to history. Many years after Martin Buber attacked the book for its lack of scientific reasoning, Freud's "Moses" came back into the field of cultural critique and historical evaluation through an analysis of what the work attempted to achieve – for its readers as well as for its author – in the time of its writing and publishing.

In this list of books coming out of this marginal school of Freud's "Moses," we can find Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi's, *Freud's Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable* (originally published in 1991)¹³⁹, Jacques Derrida's response to this book in the form of *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (which is based on a talk originally given as a lecture in 1994 and published as a book in 1995)¹⁴⁰, Peter Sloterdijk's short book on Derrida following the philosopher's death *Derrida, An Egyptian: On the Problem of the Jewish*

¹³⁹ Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Freud's Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991

¹⁴⁰ Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, Trans.: Eric Prenowitz, University of Chicago Press, 1998

Pyramid, (originally published in 2006)¹⁴¹, and Edward W. Said's *Freud and the Non-European* (which was given as a lecture in 2001)¹⁴².

Before going into detail in describing the different moves and themes these works explore in relation to Freud's "Moses," it seems relevant to mention first of all the fact that these works do so more than fifty years after the work was published. Not only that, the battle was won by the Nazis in the sense that they managed to create a reality of total antagonism between German (life) and Jew (death), but after the war, Judaism became more and more connected to a state that articulated Judaism not as a cultural identity or history or even religion, but mainly as an ethnicity. Therefore, Freud's "Moses," in which Jewish could still claim not to converge into a nation, an ethnicity or race, is for us still a useful and pressing suggestive anachronism. What we have here is fiction on fiction; writing about Moses as a character that arises from the text and analyzing the text, in order to formulate another text (Freud's book) that is also a manifestation of the conditions and contradictions of the times it was conceived in. This gap in the reception and analysis of the work suggests that Freud's "Moses" offered something unsettling, especially for the time of its writing. Its proposal was such that at

¹⁴¹ Peter Sloterdijk, *Derrida, An Egyptian: On the Problem of the Jewish Pyramid*, Trans.: Wieland Hoban, Polity Press, 2009

¹⁴² Said's lecture has a story behind it that is telling of the tensions which it attempted to tackle. The Freud Institute in Vienna invited Said in 2000 to deliver the annual Freud lecture there in May 2001. Then, after Said, a Palestinian who was born in Cairo to a family from Jerusalem, was photographed throwing a pebble towards the Israeli border from a recently abandoned Israeli military base in south Lebanon, Said was informed that the lecture is cancelled due to "the political development in the Middle East and the consequences expected.". Following this turn of events, the Freud Museum in London offered to host the talk, with Jacqueline Rose as a respondent and Christopher Bollas in charge of the introduction. The fact that this lecture became Edward Said's final book, and that it journeyed from Vienna to London, somewhat resonates some of the circumstances around Freud's "Moses". See: Edward W. Said, *Freud and the Non-European*, London and New York: Verso, 2004

the time of its publication it was presenting an unattainable perspective – an anachronism. With this in mind, we can approach the book itself as an anachronism on this level, of an unattainable perspective that now when being introduced allows for a variety of perspectives and an abundance of potentialities to appear. The little library of books following Freud’s “Moses” includes those above mentioned books by Yerushalmi, Derrida, Said and Sloterdijk. These authors use different measures in order to attribute the radical proposals of the book to its author’s biography or to the field of knowledge he has developed (i.e. psychoanalysis), and include references to Freud’s own mythology. They focus on different aspects of the actuality of his “Moses” – that is, the way he attempted to narrate a story against the antagonism he was facing in Vienna in the 1930s, and by that to destabilize that antagonism. But again, these writers make use of Freud’s “Moses” much later than its original publication, and very late in their own writing. This anachronism demonstrates the temporality of Betrayal, suggesting that it might operate on much longer durations.

The instigator of this list on some level is Yerushalmi’s *Freud’s Moses* which tries to save Freud from denouncing his Judaism with his “Moses”. One senses in Yerushalmi’s book an attempt to include Freud in a diasporic Judaism alongside the Israeli form of ethnic Jewishness. The whole book operates as a series of missed encounters – for Yerushalmi, Freud is either too early with his intellectual proposals or too late with his political realizations. Freud’s own introduction to the first Hebrew translation of *Totem and Taboo* written in 1930 provides an alibi for Yerushalmi’s Freud:

“No reader of [the Hebrew version of] this book will find it easy to put himself in the emotional position of an author who is ignorant of the language of holy writ, who is completely estranged from the religion of his fathers – as well as from every other religion – and who cannot

take a share in nationalist ideals, but who has yet never repudiated his people, who feels that he is in his essential nature a Jew and who has no desire to alter that nature. If the question were put to him: 'Since you have abandoned all these common characteristics of your countrymen, what is there left to you that is Jewish?' he would reply: 'A very great deal, and probably its very essence.' He could not now express that essence clearly in words; but some day, no doubt, it will become accessible to the scientific mind."¹⁴³

Derrida responds to Yerushalmi in *Archive Fever* by way of analyzing Freud through psychoanalysis's own founding myths. Attempting to do what Freud did to Moses, Derrida turns to Freud's archive in order to address the notion of the archive. In the section dedicated to Yerushalmi's book, Derrida explains that while the archive seems to point to the past, it "should call into question the coming of the future." He writes:

"It is a question of the future, the question of the future itself, the question of a response, of a promise and of a responsibility for tomorrow. The archive: if we want to know what that will have meant, we will only know in times to come; not tomorrow, but in times to come. Later on, or perhaps never."¹⁴⁴

This disjunctive time that Derrida proposes calls into question not the past but the future. And it does so through a projection of the inconceivable future that any past has, and a reversal of it back to its past. Derrida's archive therefore relates directly to Freud's anachronism for it makes a connection

¹⁴³ Sigmund Freud, "Preface to the Hebrew edition" [1930], in: *Totem and Taboo* [1913], Trans.: James Strachey, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1961 p. xi. This preface was first published in German in *Ges. Werke*, 12, (1934), p. 385. It was then stated that a Hebrew translation was about to be published in Jerusalem by Stybel. Actually it was not published there until 1939, by Kirjath Zefer.

¹⁴⁴ Derrida, *Archive Fever*, p. 36

through disunity rather than through a processional continuation of past and future.

Edward Said reads Freud's "Moses" as well in relation to the contemporary Jewish state, and as an opposition to it. Said brings the Jew back to its non-European origin. His lecture confronts Yerushalmi's thesis, and sees Freud's "Moses" as a key characteristic in Freud, which preserves and expresses its non-European nature. He writes:

"Quite differently from the spirit of Freud's deliberately provocative reminders that Judaism's founder was a non-Jew, and that Judaism begins in the realm of Egyptian, non-Jewish monotheism, Israeli legislation countervenes, represses, and even cancels Freud's carefully maintained opening out of Jewish identity towards its non-Jewish background. The complex layers of the past, so to speak, have been eliminated by official Israel.¹⁴⁵

As the state of Israel never existed during Freud's lifetime, this direct comparison that Said is doing, should be understood exactly as anachronism in the sense developed here. This is not historical comparison, neither is it nostalgia for other times. What Said is doing is to position a perspective that is unattainable today (Freud's "Moses") and through it to observe real existing political circumstances and realities (the state of Israel).

To continue this triangular movement between the original knowledge Freud produced through his "Moses" (fictionalism), the meaning of that proposal under the conditions Freud was confronting (anachronism), and the potentials this proposal has for us today – how we can use it, so to speak –

¹⁴⁵ Said, *Freud and the Non-European*, p. 44

we turn to Sloterdijk's *Derrida the Egyptian*. In this little book, the author goes through a set of writers who interpret dreams (biblical Joseph, Freud, Derrida), and finds in the architecture of the pyramid the form most suitable to describe Derrida's deconstruction. He equates deconstruction to the ultimate structure of collapse saying:

"'Egyptian' is the term for all constructs that can be subjected to deconstruction – except for the pyramid, that most Egyptian of edifices. It stands in its place, unshakeable for all time, because its form is nothing other than the undeconstructible remainder of a construction that, following the plan of its architect, is built to look as it would after its own collapse."¹⁴⁶

In Sloterdijk's book, the figure of Moses is always in the background as the one who changed divinity itself. He abstracted it, turning idols into laws; he made it mobile, turning the Egyptian temple to the Ark of the Covenant; and he turned the prophet to a philologist rather than an architect when monuments were replaced by scrolls. The pyramid, a structure that is a collapse, is such a suggestive image that one is tempted to relate it directly to Freud and his intentions with this work. It can also be useful for describing psychoanalysis or Freud's own life, but it might be most convincing in describing this triangular relation of anachronism and factionalism that Freud's "Moses" suggests. We have the fantastic analytical approach towards a myth as history and its direct relation to the contemporary political circumstances forming one axis. Then we have the potentials this proposal has for us today in relation to our contemporary political antagonisms forming a second axis. And then the third axis might be the direct relation

¹⁴⁶ Sloterdijk, *Derrida, An Egyptian*, p. 27

between the analysis of a myth as history from the past, and our current political circumstances. Each of these axes undermines an equation.

What is formed here is a kind of a pyramid as Sloterdijk would have it. What Freud's "Moses" provides us here is with a structure of destabilizing, a structure that is a collapse. This genealogy which stems from Freud's "Moses," with the debates and the traditions it has formed – from Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi's *Freud's Moses* (1991), Derrida's *Archive Fever* (1998), Edward Said's *Freud and the Non-European* (2004); and Peter Sloterdijk's *Derrida, an Egyptian* (2009), highlight some of the unique characteristics of Freud's proposal of fictionalism and anachronism in this way.

Freud's "Moses" and the Curatorial

Facing the fundamental antagonism of his time, Freud the man came up with an anachronistic fictionalizing strategy in his book on Moses. Freud's book is extremely valuable as a historical piece. Not that it proves or validates one history or theory or the other, but as a manifestation of what could be thought at that moment against its own internal logic and tensions. When Freud's "Moses" unbalances the negation of Jew/German of its time by using anachronism and factionalism, it approaches this antagonism not by simply engaging with it through direct oppositions that are prescribed as pre-designated positions in it. Instead of being confined to the antagonism's logic, Freud opts to destabilize the opposition itself, and he does so from within the one of the variants of the equation.

Freud's "Moses" performs a Betrayal that proposes a complexity that we can call curatorial in that the complexity of analysis with composition, of concrete circumstances with myth, of internal contradictions that operate within opposite categories of a negation, are all orchestrated in a manner that

allows them to keep separated and contradictory while they operate together. With its anachronism and factionalism, what Freud's "Moses" presents us with, is a potential curatorial strategy of destabilizing divisions inward.

Freud's "Moses" presents us with a Betrayal that destabilizes divisions inwards as a way of maintaining its subject, in this case, Jewishness, an open question.

**CHAPTER THREE: ACTION AND ACTING - ARENDT
AND BRECHT**

Introduction

Part from your friends at the station

Enter the city in the morning with your coat buttoned up

Look for a room, and when your friend knocks:

Do not, o do not, open the door

But

Cover your tracks.

Bertolt Brecht, *Ten Poems from a Reader for Those who Live in Cities*

Betrayal in this chapter addresses Acting as an open ended question. With the curatorial perceived here as a model for performing interrelations, this chapter looks at Brecht's unique proposal for what theatre could be and uses it to work out a form of Betrayal that comes into being through the curatorial. By applying Brechtian Acting to the curatorial, this chapter will consider the event of display, the role of curator and that of artists and critics, modes of viewing and material and immaterial presences, practices and modulations. It will consider ways of Acting in politics through the political forms that the curatorial enacts.

Brecht's Acting allows for a problematizing of Arendt's Action and his formulation of Acting is considered here as a contribution to political theory. As an artist, his various techniques of politicization are instructive for the politicization of the curatorial. His development of a theatre of demonstrations rather than representations provides a precedent for the curatorial as it is proposed here.

Betrayal in this chapter will be contemplated through the demonstrative qualities of Brechtian Acting and the open-endedness of Arendtian Action.

“The unpredictability which the act of making promises at least partially dispels it of a twofold nature,” Arendt writes:

“it raises simultaneously out of the ‘darkness of the human heart,’ that is, the basic unreliability of men who never can guarantee today who they will be tomorrow, and out of the impossibility of foretelling the consequences of an act within a community of equals where everybody has the same capacity to act.”¹⁴⁷

The nature of this Action will be expanded through Bertolt Brecht’s notion of Acting. Arendtian Action holds a political promise that cannot be fulfilled in politics simply because we play political roles in society and in these roles we are not equals. Therefore, human actors can never guarantee who they are today as they are acting in conditions of inequality in the capacity to act. With this in mind, Betrayal is articulated in this chapter through the exploration of Acting in politics. The first of a series of shifts that this realization entails, is that we move from the realm of the political to that of real existing politics. Betrayal here would be proposed as a loyalty to acting in politics as an open question. In this respect, the open question here means the change that the action entails in the actor. Therefore Betrayal here does not solely relate to the nature of the action and its effects, but also to the carriers of the actions and the ways they perform it.

Frederic Jameson opens his book “Brecht as Method” with an evaluation of Bertolt Brecht’s usefulness (*Nützlich*) for us after the implosion of real existing Socialism. He uses this German word “*Nützlich*” for the title of his prologue as direct reference to Brecht’s approach to the real existing politics of his time; namely the dead-end that communists all over the world were faced with after Stalin’s seizing power of the Soviet Union, the treaty with the

¹⁴⁷ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 244

Nazis just before the beginning of the Second World War, and the realities of life under real existing Socialism:

His 'proposals' and his lessons – the fables and the proverbs he delighted in offering – were more on the order of a method than a collection of facts, thoughts, convictions, first principles, and the like.”

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This method, which will be explored further in this chapter in regards to Betrayal, was developed in relation to the need to act under real existing political conditions; it is informed by the reality of acting in politics. By that I mean that this form of acting we can take from Brecht does not only include the Arendtian Action which is comprised of text (true or false claims), and performance (enacting and enunciating). Brechtian Acting involves concrete politics and political conditions (acting-out and actualizing) as well. That third quality of actualizing and acting-out, which goes beyond true or false speech, and happy or unhappy speech-acts, actually precedes them as it relates to the real setting for any action. This is where Betrayal begins. For Jameson the feature which makes Brecht so urgent is exactly his activity:

“because so many people seem immobilized in the institutions and the professionalization which seem to admit of no revolutionary change, not even of the evolutionary or reform-oriented kind. Stasis today, all over the world – in the twin condition of market and globalization, commodification and financial speculation – does not even take on a baleful religious sense of an implacable Nature; but it certainly seems to have outstripped any place of human agency, and to have rendered the latter obsolete.”¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ Frederic Jameson, *Brecht and Method*, London and New York: Verso, 1998, p.2

¹⁴⁹ Jameson, *Brecht and Method*, p.4

This chapter will therefore consider Brecht as method in relation to a series of moves that come out of the elaboration of Action into Acting; from representation to model, vision to alignment, and individual to Dividual. All these will be further discussed throughout this chapter. The Betrayal Brechtian Acting proposes engages with the daily actions outside the construction of the political as arena or scene. This chapter will explore how the shift from the metaphor of the arena and the scene as the site of politics to other visual, physical and textual conceptions, enables us to use Brecht in order to expand Arendt's notion of Action. This is Betrayal as loyalty to Acting as an open-ended question of self and public, actor and role, theatre and exhibition, identification and demonstration. Engaging with politics in the form of Acting, operating with relations of deceit and secret agency rather than transparency and equality. Through an examination of central concepts developed in the work of Hannah Arendt and Bertolt Brecht, this chapter will explore Betrayal as an expansion of political Action onto Acting in politics.

Politics and the Political: "Writing the Truth" and "Lying in Politics"

Many things that cannot be said in Germany about Germany can be said about Austria

Bertolt Brecht¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ Bertolt Brecht, "Writing the Truth: Five Difficulties," in: Bertolt Brecht, *Galileo*, Ed.: Eric Bentley, Trans.: Charles Laughton, Grove Press, 1966, Appendix A: pp. 131-150. The first version of this essay was a contribution to a questionnaire in the *Pariser Tageblatt*, December 12, 1934, which bore the title "Poets Are to Tell the Truth." In it Brecht proposed only three difficulties. The final version of this essay was first published in German in *Unsere Zeit* (Paris), VIII, Nos. 2/3 (April, 1935) pp. 23-24

The two notions of “Action” and “Acting,” have emerged to define almost opposing conceptions of what politics is. While the first suspends power relations as such since it precludes any obstacle or opacity from entering its vision of politics as a space of appearance, the latter encourages elaborate clandestine or masquerade tactics as part of its deployment of politics as the formation of manipulation embedded within real existing power relations.

We can find an example for Arendt’s approach to politics when she applies her critique onto current events of her time. In an interview with her from 1970, she complimented the student movement in the US for its moral drive:

“As I see it, for the first time in a very long while a spontaneous political movement arose which not only did not simply carry on propaganda, but acted, and, moreover, acted almost exclusively from moral motives. Together with this moral factor, quite rare in what is usually considered a mere power of interest play, another experience new to our time entered the game of politics: It turned out that acting is fun. This generation discovered what the eighteenth century had called ‘public happiness,’ which means that when man takes part in public life he opens up for himself a dimension of human experience

that otherwise remains closed to him and that in some way constitutes a of complete 'happiness'."151

In her embrace of some of the goals of the anti-war student movement, and more so their conduct, Arendt repeats her critique of those waging the war, which is basically a critique on the basis of morals. She makes this and not interest a position from which to act. Writing on the Pentagon Papers, the "United States – Vietnam Relations, 1945–1967," she determines from the start that the "basic issue raised by the Papers is deception."¹⁵² This document, which was discovered and released by Daniel Ellsberg and the New York Times in 1971, is an internal study prepared by the US department of Defense on the American role in Indochina from the end of the Second World War until May 1968. For Arendt, The American disaster in Vietnam is one of self-deception. Most of Arendt's essay *Lying in Politics: Reflections on The Pentagon Papers*," revolves around an elaborate explanation of how the image of the state became the sole criteria for the benefit and power of the state. This, she explains, should be blamed on a mode of thinking generated by the rise of public relations managers and the

¹⁵¹ Hannah Arendt, "Thoughts on Politics and Revolution," in: *Crises of The Republic*, Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1972, p. 203. This is an interview Arendt gave to journalist Adelbert Reif in the summer of 1970. Arendt's praises here carry a striking resemblance to Alfred Döblin's "To Know and to Change," (*Wissen und Verändern*, 1931), a text where he formulates a kind of Socialism outside the proletariat movement, as quoted by Walter Benjamin: "Socialism, according to Döblin, is 'freedom, spontaneous association of human beings, refusal of all constraint, revolt against injustice and constraint; it is humanity, tolerance and peaceful intentions.'" Benjamin comments that such a political stand is defined according to "opinions, intentions or predispositions", but not according to any position within the production process. See: Walter Benjamin, "Author as Producer," in: *Understanding Brecht*, Trans.: Anna Bostock, London and New York: Verso, 1998, pp. 92-93

¹⁵² Hannah Arendt, "Lying in Politics: Reflections on The Pentagon Papers," *Crises of The Republic*, Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1972, p. 3. First appeared in: *New York Review of Books*, Volume 17, Number 8, November 18, 1971

acceptance in Washington DC of former communists reborn as conservatives. The core philosophical claim of the essay though states this:

“Truth, even if it does not prevail in public, possesses an ineradicable primacy over all falsehood.”¹⁵³

With regards to politics what this means is that the deceiver wants to believe, making self-deceit the first outcome of this form of politics. Arendt claims that this makes lying in politics counterproductive because there is no point in “confusing people without convincing them.”¹⁵⁴

Here Arendt seems to address what is the property of the political as if it was that of politics. By this I mean that the claim that convincing is the main activity in politics, might be true when conceptualizing it in an abstract manner. But the reality of politics has to do with ways of dominating and consolidating power rather than with doing away with it. This means that the liberal logic of sovereign individual agents, each separated from the others but inseparable from itself, which Arendt follows, might be appropriate when discussing the political in its abstraction; but in reality, when we are playing roles on unequal terms, this mode of action cannot be found anywhere in politics.

What Arendt claims is that through deliberation, exchange, and debate these agents come to conclusions and promote policies. These political agents are perceived as equal amongst themselves, speaking truthfully among themselves in the spaces designated for such speech. The classical setting

¹⁵³ Arendt, “Lying in Politics”, p. 31

¹⁵⁴ Arendt, “Lying in Politics”, p. 31. See also Arendt’s 1967 essay “Truth and Politics,” in which she contrasts the two as antithetic terms: Hannah Arendt, “Truth and Politics,” in: *The New Yorker*, February 25, 1967

for such speech has been the theatre and the assembly, out of which came the institution of the parliament.¹⁵⁵

But what if not only the members deliberating are not equal and transparent to each other – what if the truth cannot present itself, what if there are difficulties in recognizing what the truth might be? Bertolt Brecht's 1935 essay "Writing the Truth: Five Difficulties" seems to address exactly these concerns. In this polemic treatise he depicts the difficulties a writer, and especially a poet of his time would be facing when attempting to write the truth. Brecht first asserts that courage to write the truth demands that those who are good admit that they are weak. This separation between morals (good) and power (weak) is of great significance in our discussion here as it delineates a place for politics that is embedded much more in historical reality than in morality. He writes:

"It takes courage to say that the good were defeated not because they were good, but because they were weak"¹⁵⁶

His second point demands that we come to terms with the difficulty in finding the truth altogether. Although he claims dialectical materialism as the method of finding knowledge in this "age of perplexity and lightning changes," he remarks that:

¹⁵⁵ See: Richard Sennett, *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization*, W. W. Norton & Company, 1996, pp. 31-67

¹⁵⁶ Brecht, "Writing the Truth: Five Difficulties," pp. 131-150. Benjamin provides us with the Brechtian dictum for an intellectual work saying: "He was the first to address to the intellectuals the far-reaching demand that they should not supply the production apparatus without, at the same time, within the limits of the possible, changing that apparatus in the direction of Socialism. 'The publication of the *Versuche*,' we read in the author's introduction to the series of texts published under that title, 'marks a point at which certain works are not so much intended to represent individual experiences (i.e. to have the character of finished works) as they are aimed at using (transforming) certain existing institutes and institutions.'" See: Benjamin, "Author as Producer," in: *Understanding Brecht*, p.93

“method is good in all inquiry, but it is possible to make discoveries without using any method – indeed, even without inquiry.”¹⁵⁷

The third point he makes is that a skill is needed for those who are ready to write the truth and are able to recognize it, so that they will be able to manipulate the truth as a weapon. For him truth “must be spoken with a view to the results it will produce in the sphere of action.”¹⁵⁸ This is very different from Arendtian conceptualization of Action as an open-ended process and of truth as something that cannot be appropriated by a specific party. But Brecht sees truth as a means for a bigger truth, one which does not lie in description but in interpretation:

“If one wishes successfully to write the truth about evil conditions, one must write it so that its avertible causes can be identified. If the preventable causes can be identified, the evil conditions can be fought.”¹⁵⁹

For Brecht, therefore, evil can be fought by Action upon analysis. Morals and power are not divorced in this scheme but are much more entangled in historical reality. Articulation, or the way of “identifying preventable causes,” in his words, is the way to reach the truth. The fourth point he makes relates to the constituency of truth, or as he phrases it:

“...for us writers it is important for whom we tell the truth and who tells it to us”.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ Brecht, “Writing the Truth: Five Difficulties,” p. 137

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 140

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

Here the point is about teaching and learning by selecting those in whose hands the truth will be most effective. This makes truth to be a means for Action by those to whom we would offer our analysis. This point seems to resonate Benjamin's "Author as Producer," an address delivered at the Institute for the Study of Fascism, Paris, on April 27, 1934 (around the time Brecht was writing his "Writing the Truth"), where he introduces the concept of technique as a way of relating the work to the real existing political reality from which it emerges: "the rigid, isolated object (work, novel, book) is of no use whatsoever," writes Benjamin. "It must be inserted into the context of living social relations." For Benjamin, rather than asking, "What is the attitude of a work to the relations of production of its time?" we should ask, "What is its position in them?" This question directly concerns the function the work has within the literary relations of production of its time. It is concerned, in other words, directly with the literary technique of works.¹⁶¹

"Cunning is necessary to spread the truth" Brecht concludes his fifth and final point on the difficulties of writing the truth. Here we arrive at Brecht's own technique. Truth is suppressed and concealed, it is manipulated and coded. The conditions are such that truth is a threat on those dominating real existing political relations, therefore it cannot simply appear within them. Hence, Brecht's technique is the understanding of the language of double-meaning, of irony and role-playing, the usefulness of wit and framing choices, of allusions and allegories.

But these attempts, Hannah Arendt herself claimed, have failed. For her Brecht was:

"first and foremost, a poet – that is, someone who must say the unsayable, who must not remain silent on occasions when all are

¹⁶¹ Benjamin, "Author as Producer," pp. 85-103

silent, and who must therefore be careful not to talk too much about things that all talk about.”¹⁶²

Brecht was therefore supposed to tell the silent truth out loud (He famously wrote in the poem “O Germany, Pale Mother!” (1933): “In your house / Lies are roared aloud. / But the truth / Must be silent. / Is it so?”).

Morals and Power

Arendt argues that the kind of indirect approach towards truth Brecht was practicing brought him to find usefulness even in Stalin no less.¹⁶³ For his politics was a battle with his basic tendency for compassion, she says:

“Compassion was doubtless the fiercest and most fundamental of Brecht's passions, hence the one he was most anxious to hide and also was least successful in hiding; it shines through almost every play he wrote.”¹⁶⁴

But not only compassion shines through his plays. This concealment of compassion, she claims, runs through them as well:

“The leitmotiv was the fierce temptation to be good in a world and under circumstances that make goodness impossible and self-defeating. The dramatic conflict in Brecht's plays is almost always the

¹⁶² Hannah Arendt, “Bertolt Brecht,” *Men in Dark Times*, Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1967, p. 228

¹⁶³ Heiner Müller summarizes briefly the need for fables in relation to Stalin when referring to Brecht's exile in the US: “Hollywood became the Weimar of German antifascist emigration. The necessity of keeping silent about Stalin, because his name stood for the Soviet Union as long as Hitler was in power, compelled the generality of the parable.” Heiner Müller, “Brecht vs. Brecht,” [1981] in: *Germania*, Ed.: Sylvère Lotringer, Trans.: Bernard and Caroline Schütze, Semiotext(e), 1990, p. 125

¹⁶⁴ Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*, p. 235

same: Those who, compelled by compassion, set out to change the world cannot afford to be good.”¹⁶⁵

Here, Arendt claims, Brecht discovered instinctively the compassionate logic behind the murderous modern revolutionaries (which elsewhere she made clear were historical disasters).¹⁶⁶ How not to be good, is then the teaching of Brecht’s plays. After all, being in politics demands doing bad for the sake of a greater good.¹⁶⁷ Arendt demonstrates the tragic price of such logic through one of Brecht’s learning plays (*Lehrstücke*) “The Measures Taken” (*Die Maßnahme*, 1930),¹⁶⁸ which shows how and for what reasons the innocent, the good, the humane, those who are outraged at injustice and come running to help, are the ones being killed. For the measure taken is the killing of a Party member by his comrades, and the play leaves no doubt that he was the best of them, humanly speaking. “Precisely because of his goodness, it turns out, he had become an obstacle to the revolution.”¹⁶⁹

Within the entangled relations of morals and power, Arendt here reveals her commitment to morals over power. We can observe how the way she argues against Brecht, proves more about her reasoning than it does about Brecht’s

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 236

¹⁶⁶ For the Arendtian pairings of the good English and American Revolutions versus the bad French and October Revolutions, see: Arendt, *On Revolution*, pp. 40-41

¹⁶⁷ Lenin describes leftism as the attempt to be good at the expense of taking power. See: Vladimir Lenin, “‘Left-Wing’ Communism: an Infantile Disorder” [1920], in: *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Trans.: Julius Katzer, USSR, 1964, Volume 31, pp. 17–118. See also: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1920/lwc/index.htm> [Last retrieved: 15.10.2015].

¹⁶⁸ The title of Brecht’s play *Maßnahme*, is the same as the term Carl Schmitt uses in his famous tractate “*Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*” [1922], to describe the concept of the state of exception through executive measures (*Maßnahme*) as opposed to the concept of law. See also: Eva Horn, “Actors/Agents: Bertolt Brecht and the Politics of Secrecy” in *Grey Room*, Grey Room, Inc. and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Summer 2006, No. 24, p. 42

¹⁶⁹ Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*, p. 241

own commitments. If politics, as Brecht shows us, involves a constant negotiation between power and morals as the two are entangled together, Arendt seems to make claims from outside politics. She uses a moral standpoint regarding issues of power. The entanglement of politics is resolved by her as she turns the relation between the two into a dichotomy. By presenting it as a dichotomy and by choosing a side in this scheme, Arendt enables us to see the limits of her own proposal when applied to real existing politics.

Brecht would tell us: strategize, organize: “the good were defeated not because they were good, but because they were weak.” He would say that “the truth must be silent”, and therefore “cunning is necessary to spread the truth.” These claims of his we should attend to not as the declarations of a party organizer, but as an artist who developed a technique in politics. Walter Benjamin saw in the form of “The Measures Taken” a peak achievement of both musical and literary technique, by which “a concert transforms into a political meeting.”¹⁷⁰ Benjamin quotes Brecht to explain where he stands in relation to the question of production:

“This confusion among musicians, writers and critics about their situation,’ says Brecht, ‘has enormous consequences, which receive far too little attention. Believing themselves to be in possession of an apparatus which in reality possesses them, they defend an apparatus over which they no longer have control, which is no longer, as they still believe, a means for the producers but has become a means to be used against the producers.’”¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ In this respect we can think of the theatre in Arendtian terms as a possible space of appearance.

¹⁷¹ See Benjamin paraphrasing Hans Eisler and quoting Brecht in: Benjamin, “Author as Producer,” pp. 96-99

So the question is not only of how to say the truth, but how the work itself needs to alter (control) the given conditions of its reception (apparatus). “Sites of articulation” (means for the producers) need to be developed. Sites of articulation will be further developed in this chapter following Benjamin’s proposal here. But already at this stage, we can say that the curatorial cannot amount to mere curating as practicing an administration of meaning and value in the service of the institution (“means to be used against the producers” according to Brecht/Benjamin here). The ability of the curatorial to demonstrate political relations through “sites of articulation,” provides means for the producers not only for practitioners in the field of cultural production but more so for this work to be considered a form of production of political meaning.

Convincing and Confusing

We are much less Greeks than we believe. We are neither in the amphitheater, nor on the stage, but in the panoptic machine, invested by its effects of power, which we bring to ourselves since we are part of its mechanism.

Michel Foucault¹⁷²

The shift from what the political proposes to what is needed in real existing politics invites an elaboration of Arendtian Action by way of Brechtian Acting. The realities we are faced with in politics today demonstrate how the notions of deliberation and linear claim-making fall short. The current convergence of two realities of politics seems to suggest the need for an expansion of Action into Acting; I will present them in a discussion of Surkov’s non-linear political domination and Lazzarato’s a-signifying semiotics which will be discussed

¹⁷² Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Trans.: Alan Sheridan, Vintage Books, 1977, p. 217

later. The first is a form of political domination developed in Russia today and is widespread in contemporary real existing democracies; the second is an analysis of how control and the transmission of signals are intertwined already on the level of pulses, frequencies and pitch, prior to any decipherable meaning. Brecht's method seems to offer a way of working with and against them both.

When Arendt favors convincing your equal peers over confusing your subjects, she claims that lying is inefficient for those who rule. What is missing here is an understanding of the realm of meaning in which a claim is not simply either true or false. What is missing is exactly the political work of curatorial articulation that permits claims to appear as true or false. Unlike Mouffe and Laclau's articulation of chain of equivalence, curatorial articulation provides an internal relation between claims and suggests the claims themselves as relations. At the same time, similar to Mouffe and Laclau's proposal of articulation, it provides a site for a claim to appear, to be presented and critiqued. Brecht's method on the other hand seems useful exactly because he was able to articulate a mode of Acting under conditions which undermine people's perception of the world.

The taunting reality of domination which we are so familiar with today involves a strategy of power that keeps any opposition constantly confused – scattered into identities, any attempt at wide struggles seems to recreate itself as a microcosm of those pre-designated identities and their antagonisms. You never know what the enemy is up to or even who they are – you may be the enemy. That is the basic strategy of political domination we are faced with today and it involves social media and authoritarian control, identity politics and deep privatization processes. Therefore, in order to rule, conflict itself need not be decided for one side or the other but should be regarded as a platform to be used for consolidating power and

establishing a constant state of destabilized perception in order to manage and control.¹⁷³

Coming from business strategy, the terms “disruptive innovation” or “disruption,” present a mode of domination based on constant de-stabilizing. Innovation here is used as a way of controlling the market,¹⁷⁴ but it can also prove efficient for political domination outside of markets. The Israeli disengagement from Gaza in 2005 was a disruptive military move that allowed Israel to keep its disproportionate power over the Palestinians and continue its domination. The looming annexation of the Occupied Palestinian Territories in the West Bank today appears to be in direct continuation with the disengagement. In Russia, the whole ‘managed democracy’ doctrine wherein Putin and Medvedev switched roles as President and Prime Minister, accompanied by the recent ‘non-linear war’ in the Ukraine are all disruptive policies. Vladislav Surkov who was nicknamed ‘Putin’s Rasputin’ has been identified as responsible for all this. Peter Pomerantsev describes the way that Surkov has developed the ‘sovereign democracy’, in which democratic institutions are maintained without any democratic freedoms, as a method of domination by activating conditions of extreme volatility. Pomerantsev described Surkov’s disruptive politics thus:

¹⁷³ Here again, it seems that new technologies embody the logic wherein it is being the platform, rather than producing signals, which guarantees profitability. In a setting of a network it is the infrastructure that dominates. Jodi Dean explains that this is the shift from ‘letting the market be,’ to ‘being the market,’ like Facebook, Youtube, Apple and the likes. See: Dean, *Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies*, pp. 19-48

¹⁷⁴ See: Clayton Christensen *The Innovator's Dilemma: When New Technologies Cause Great Firms to Fail*, Harvard Business Review Press, 1997, and: Geoff Nunberg, “From TED Talks To Taco Bell, Abuzz With Silicon Valley-Style 'Disruption'”, *Fresh Air*, NPR, 27.04.2015: <http://www.npr.org/2015/04/27/401718974/from-ted-talks-to-taco-bell-abuzz-with-silicon-valley-style-disruption> [Last retrieved: 15.10.2015]

“In contemporary Russia, unlike the old USSR or present-day North Korea, the stage is constantly changing: the country is a dictatorship in the morning, a democracy at lunch, an oligarchy by supertime, while, backstage, oil companies are expropriated, journalists killed, billions siphoned away. Surkov is at the center of the show, sponsoring nationalist skinheads one moment, backing human rights groups the next. It’s a strategy of power based on keeping any opposition there may be constantly confused, a ceaseless shape-shifting that is unstoppable because it’s indefinable.”¹⁷⁵

Moreover, this platform on which politics takes place is not merely the skewed and manipulated sphere of public opinion under external corporate and state data mining and control. There is another internal element to it which Maurizio Lazzarato defines as ‘machinic enslavement.’ This is not only our subjugation to any other agent’s manipulation but a systemic activation which operates on an a-signifying semiotic level. This dual subjugation to signifying and a-signifying semiotics determines the realm of meaning itself:

¹⁷⁵ Peter Pomerantsev, “Putin’s Rasputin,” in: *London Review of Books*, Vol. 33 No. 20, 20 October 2011 pp.3-6. See also: Peter Pomerantsev, *Nothing Is True and Everything Is Possible: The Surreal Heart of the New Russia*, Public Affairs, 2014. After a visit to the Soviet Union in February 1990, Jacques Derrida told his translator Peggy Kamuf how his hosts suggested that the best translation for *perestroika*, the translation that they used among themselves, is ‘deconstruction’. “Deconstruction? That’s today’s USSR,” they told him. From a tool of critique, this term seems to offer new forms of control. See: Peggy Kamuf, “The Time of Marx: Derrida’s Perestroika: Remembering Derrida’s ‘Specters of Marx’ lecture,” *Los Angeles Review of Books*, 23.04.2013: <https://lareviewofbooks.org/essay/the-time-of-marx-derridas-perestroika> [Last retrieved: 15.10.2015].

“...sign production machines which have direct, unmediated impact on the real and on the body without being routed through a signification or a representation.”¹⁷⁶

These, Lazzarato explains, include money, radio, television, internet, science, music and so on. These are sign production machines that appeal not to the consciousness, but to the nervous system, the affects, the emotions. Following Walter Benjamin, Lazzarato claims that meaning is organized industrially rather than theatrically, transforming politics into a trans-visual realm:¹⁷⁷

“Language’s power to act, as exercised in the Greek polis and an assumption still implicit in all these theories since Hannah Arendt, is no longer sufficient to describe the ‘political word’. In the contemporary public arena, the production of the world is organized ‘industrially’ rather than ‘theatrically’. The process of subjectivation or of individuation cannot be reduced to ‘social subjugation by completely skipping all reference to ‘machinic enslavement’. Paradoxically enough, all the contemporary political and linguistic theories that refer

¹⁷⁶ Maurizio Lazzarato, “Semiotic Pluralism and the New Government of Signs,” in: *transversal: The Language of Things*, Trans.: Mary O’Neill, EIPCP June 2006: <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0107/lazzarato/en> [Last retrieved: 15.10.2015]

¹⁷⁷ “Since the innovations of camera and recording equipment make it possible for the orator to become audible and visible to an unlimited number of persons, the presentation of the man of politics before camera and recording equipment becomes paramount. Parliaments, as much as theatres, are deserted. Radio and film not only affect the function of the professional actor but likewise the function of those who also exhibit themselves before this mechanical equipment, those who govern. Though their tasks may be different, the change affects equally the actor and the ruler. The trend is toward establishing controllable and transferable skills under certain social conditions. This results in a new selection, a selection before the equipment from which the star and the dictator emerge victorious.” Writes Benjamin. See: footnote no. 12 in: Walter Benjamin, “The Artwork in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” [1935], in: Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, Ed.: Hannah Arendt, Trans.: Harry Zohn, Schocken Books 1969, pp. 219-253

either directly or indirectly to the polis and/or to the theatre, place us in a pre-capitalist situation.”¹⁷⁸

The Exhibition and the Theatre

The plot is a model, not a chronicle.

Heiner Müller¹⁷⁹

With these crucial insights in mind, the curatorial engages with these modalities of seeing and meaning by way of acting-out and actualizing. Here, it is exactly Brecht’s method which proves useful in engaging with politics.

Roland Barthes describes Brecht’s approach to representation as a relation to reality that produces the position of the viewer by which scenes are laid out: “erecting a meaning but manifesting the production of that meaning, they accomplish the coincidence of the visual and the ideal *découpages*.”¹⁸⁰

Barthes describes the theatre away from the acoustics model and as part of the world of geometry, making it less about the arena and about connections:

¹⁷⁸ Lazzarato, “Semiotic Pluralism and the New Government of Signs”

¹⁷⁹ Heiner Müller, “The Geste of Citation: Three Points (On Philictetes)” [1978], In: *Germania*, Semiotext(e), 1990, p. 177

¹⁸⁰ Roland Barthes, “Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein” in: *Image, Music, Text*, Ed. and Trans.: Stephen Heath, The Noonday Press, 1977, p. 71. Barthes describes representation as a relation between reality and a subject: “representation is not defined directly by imitation: even if one gets rid of notions of the ‘real’, or the *vraisemblable*’, of the ‘copy’, there will still be representation for so long as a subject (author, reader, spectator or voyeur) casts his gaze towards a horizon on which he cuts out the base of a triangle, his eye (or his mind) forming the apex.” Barthes, p. 69

“The theatre is precisely that practice which calculates the place of things as they are observed.”¹⁸¹

The place, position, relation of things, as they are observed, considered, present would be the curatorial sensibility that we are looking to define when we speak of alignments. This lends itself to manifest Betrayal as the negotiation on what the situation itself is about. Geometry here leaves the relations between displayed objects in a given space and moves on to suggest affinities and connectedness that undermines any given narrative that would aim to give a definite calculation of the place of things as they are observed. Barthes emphasises the relation between theatre and painting using Diderot’s aesthetic theory which rests on pictorial tableau:

“...the perfect play is a succession of tableaux, that is, a gallery, an exhibition; the stage offers the spectator ‘as many real tableaux as there are in the action moments favorable to the painter’”¹⁸²

The tableau is the form of the scene in Epic Theatre. It is much more about exhibition as the actualization of gestures than it is about theatre as narrative. Unlike Arendt who sees in the narrative the form of political action, Brecht’s Epic Theatre does not “develop actions but represent conditions,” Walter Benjamin explains:

“...it obtains its 'conditions' by allowing the actions to be interrupted. Let me remind you of the 'songs', whose principal function consists in interrupting the action. Here, then – that is to say, with the principle of interruption the epic theatre adopts a technique which has become

¹⁸¹ Barthes, “Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein,” p. 69. Barthes writes: “In the theatre, in the cinema, in traditional literature, things are always seen from somewhere. Here we have the geometrical foundation of representation.” Ibid., p. 76

¹⁸² Barthes, p. 70

familiar to you in recent years through film and radio, photography and the press. I speak of the technique of montage, for montage interrupts the context into which it is inserted.”¹⁸³

So for Brecht it is the setting of a situation rather than the narrative that is his main concern. Instead of convincing by deliberation, politics is perceived by him as performing parts that are assigned from outside as part of the apparatuses of political control. Power relations for Brecht are never suspended. By exploring actions as experiments, Brecht’s notion of Acting performs a Betrayal that engages with real existing politics of deceit and manipulation, cynicism and non-linear control patterns, domination and confusion.

These concerns harken back to the curatorial in an unexpected manner. A whole set of considerations present themselves when applying Brechtian Acting onto the curatorial: from the event of display, the role of curator and that of artists and critics, from viewing to material and immaterial presences, signifying and a-signifying technologies, to practices and modulations – making it imperative to consider not only the political forms that the curatorial enacts but also the ways it is Acting politics. From publics, to meanings, to demonstrative articulations, the presence of the model modulates the reality it depicts.

¹⁸³ Benjamin, “Author as Producer,” p. 99. In her portrait of Brecht, Arendt devotes all of her attention to Brecht as a poet rather than Brecht as playwright, dramaturge and theorist of theatre. For Arendt’s formulation of action and storytelling see: Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 191-192

Action / Acting

Real power begins where secrecy begins

Hannah Arendt¹⁸⁴

By expanding Hannah Arendt's notion of Action in *The Human Condition* (1958) through Bertolt Brecht's articulation of Acting (in his learning plays and Epic Theatre), we engage with Betrayal as a mode of Acting in politics. Hannah Arendt's influential proposal of Action (*praxis*, distinguished from fabrication *poiesis*), as a mode of human togetherness, holding the unpredictable power of promise, is a charismatic proposal she has put forward in her 1958 book *The Human Condition*. As she separates it from work and labor, Arendt proposes Action as the core of human agency. Labor and work have an end and a limit. They show our sameness and the natural constraints imposed on all of us by biological survival needs. For Arendt, these realms cover our behavior, the roles we perform and the functions we fulfil even when the products of our toil bear the mark of their makers. Only in Action and speech, in interacting with others through words and deeds, can individuals reveal their personality and affirm their unique identities, she says. This is an endless, irreversible and unpredictable human capacity:

“The reason why we are never able to foretell with certainty the outcome and end of any action is simply that action has no end.”¹⁸⁵

The performative aspect of Betrayal is related both to Action and to Acting – positioning oneself in the world as a political actor. The open endedness of Arendtian Action (“the impossibility of foretelling the consequences of an act”), relates to Betrayal not because of the ‘darkness of the human heart’ (the basic unreliability of men who never can guarantee today who they will

¹⁸⁴ Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 403

¹⁸⁵ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 233

be tomorrow), but because already the action itself alters its carrier. The political actor performs this knowledge. To be performed in the realm of politics as an external and internal operation, Betrayal has to apply both public and secret agency. By that it re-politicizes the political, bringing it back into real existing politics.

Arendt writes of the way action has to do with actualizing the political: “It is in this insistence on the living deed and the spoken word as the greatest achievements of which human beings are capable that was conceptualized in Aristotle’s notion of *energeia* (“actuality”), with which he designated all activities that do not pursue an end (are *ateleis*) and leave no work behind (no *par autas ergo*), but exhaust their full meaning in the performance itself.”¹⁸⁶ For Arendt, the meaning of these instances of action and speech lies in the activity itself. Arendt’s idea on the meaning of political Action being embedded in the performance itself, envisions an open and transparent space of appearance, of public agency:

“the implicit manifestation of the agent and speaker, is so indissolubly tied to the living flux of acting and speaking that it can be represented and ‘reified’ only through a kind of repetition, the imitation or *mimesis*, which according to Aristotle prevails in all arts but is actually appropriate only to the *drama*, whose very name (from the Greek verb *dran*, “to act”) indicates that playacting actually is an imitation of acting.”¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 206

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 187. We see here how the scheme of imitation for Arendt relates to representation through the presence of the actor, while if we compare this to Barthes (as quoted above in footnote 32), we see that representation has to do with a point of view. See also: Barthes, “Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein,” p. 69

While Arendt claims that playacting is an imitation of Action, Brecht would propose the opposite – that there is no Action without playacting. And since playacting involves staging, rehearsal, simulation, dramaturgy, pronunciation, text, these techniques call for a re-evaluation of Action. No longer is it a spontaneous action to itself, but rather a premeditated, strategic operation that involves a whole set of techniques. In addition, following the insights brought forth by Lazzarato's notion of 'machinic enslavement,' the political capacity of Action can shift drastically and we find that the a-signifying semiotics of machines is acting on us. Already with newspapers and their lines of distribution, there is meaning generated through modulation. The meaning of these modulations is actualized through sites of articulation. For this, Brechtian acting has to internalize the Acting in politics. Brecht writes:

“The public's opinion of the profession of actor as an absurd and outrageous, and by that very outrageousness a noteworthy one – belongs to the means of production of the actor itself. He must do something with this opinion. The actor has then to adopt this opinion of the public about himself.”¹⁸⁸

Brecht instructs us to operate in real-existing politics in which we are not the ones determining our role, even when we're playing actors. We perform our role on various levels, some of which – following Lazzarato – are a-signifying transmissions. Voice, language, gesture, appearance, resemblance, accent etc. all relate directly to the technique of Acting which involves not only a live

¹⁸⁸ Quoted in: Jameson, *Brecht and Method*, p.25. Here we see an interrelation between the playacting and the point of view on it, that calls for another way of Acting. Benjamin explains Epic Theatre's function thus: “It brings the action to a standstill in mid-course and thereby compels the spectator to take up a position towards the action, and the actor to take up a position towards his part.” Walter Benjamin, “Author as Producer,” p. 100

performance with direct and immediate effect, but all sorts of mediated apparatuses.

Representation and Demonstration

The text is pre-ideological; its language does not articulate the fruits of thinking but rather scans the authenticity of the first glimpse of something unknown, the horror in the face of the first appearance of the new.

Heiner Müller¹⁸⁹

What this means is that not only the actor should try to demonstrate to the audience that we are all actors, but that Acting is an inseparable dimension of social and everyday life. While Arendt would claim that acting in drama is an imitation of Action (“the play-acting is actually an imitation of acting”), Brecht opts for an opposite scenario by which action in the world, in real existing politics, is a form of Acting. Play-acting is for Arendt an inferior capacity of man, compared to Action in politics. What Brecht’s method allows us to explore is how Action in politics cannot do without forms of play-acting.

If act and deed are an end in themselves, then drama, the acting in theatre is a mere contained and illustrative reference to this quality. It is a reenactment. An action after-the-fact, out of sync with the political, with reality. But for Brecht Acting holds the meaning of political action in reality. Acting is embodied storytelling, it is the acting-out of real existing politics.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹ Müller, “Brecht vs. Brecht,” p. 131

¹⁹⁰ See: Jameson, *Brecht and Method*, p.27

This makes Brechtian Acting a form of acting without theatre. Brecht's notion of acting as a mode of secret agency, complicates the Arendtian Action as it performs it with the understanding of politics as a field in which positions are being played by actors. Actors therefore demonstrate the knowledge of meaning, as Barthes puts it:

“Since the tableau is the presentation of an ideal meaning, the actor must present the very knowledge of the meaning [...] This knowledge which the actor must demonstrate – by an unwonted supplement – is, however, neither his human knowledge (his tears must not refer simply to the state of feeling of the Downcast) nor his knowledge as actor (he must not show that he knows how to act well). The actor must prove that he is not enslaved to the spectator (bogged down in ‘reality’, in ‘humanity’), that he guides meaning towards its ideality – a sovereignty of the actor, master of meaning, which is evident in Brecht, since he theorized it under the term ‘distanciation’.”¹⁹¹

The actor is the master of meaning in the sense that he presents Acting. Brecht's *Lehrstück-Theorie* in which the actors are speaking their lines not as if presenting their own convictions but “like a quotation” as he says, is therefore a direct engagement with reality, not a mere mimicry of it. Brecht's Acting provides here exactly the way for politicizing the field of politics itself. The learning-play is based on the assumption that the actor can be politically influenced by enacting certain behaviors, performing certain gestures, adopting certain attitudes, repeating certain utterances.

Acting itself is for Brecht a form of political reflection that explores and criticizes political patterns by performing them as a role. This form of indirect speech is exercised through presenting a standpoint without really sharing it.

¹⁹¹ Barthes, pp. 74-75

The subject becomes a political subject to the extent that she/he is able to play-act, to present and perform a certain position and by this performance explore its consequences. Political agency is thus linked to the ability to distance oneself from the position one affirms.

Eva Horn makes the connection between actors and agents in Brecht's scheme of Acting, saying that Brecht focuses on the position and the tactics of the subject in the jungle of secrecy, she explains how he emphasizes the need for tactical clandestinity, instead of naively criticizing this secretive side of politics in the name of authenticity and frankness:

“Brecht links his analysis of the tactics and ethics of secret agitation to a theory of theatricality as an aesthetical and political practice. Brecht's idea of theatricality is not limited to the aesthetic realm of the stage but it exposes the dimension of playacting and dissimulation in all political activity.”¹⁹²

For the politics of change and of justice to be effective, it has to operate as politics, not as morals. Therefore, it cannot succeed without ruses, secret subversion and tactical alliances with the enemy. “Political work cannot dispense with techniques of acting, dissimulating and deception.” Horn adds. The political actor is “caught between truthfulness and play-acting, between self-effacement and heroic commitment, between the idealism of revolutionary change and the ruthlessness of clandestine activity”.¹⁹³ To take Horn's claim about Brecht's point further, we can say that an action that can claim authenticity and transparency, which operates solely on moral grounds, is not an action in politics.

¹⁹² Horn, “Actors/Agents: Bertolt Brecht and the Politics of Secrecy,” p. 42

¹⁹³ Ibid.

This is the complication of the political with politics that Brecht's Acting is suggesting.¹⁹⁴ Brecht's *Lehrstück-theorie* not only implies politics itself as a form of play-acting, but the audience plays a key role as well, as he himself writes:

“At no moment must he go so far as to be wholly transformed into the character played. The verdict: ‘he didn’t act Lear, he was Lear’ would be an annihilating blow to him. He has just to show the character, or rather he has to do more than just get into it; this does not mean that if he is playing passionate parts he must himself remain cold. It is only that his feelings must not at bottom be those of the character, so that the audience’s may not at bottom be those of the character either. The audience must have complete freedom here.”¹⁹⁵

Betrayal as an actualization of political potentialities is suggested here as Action by Acting. Acting therefore would mean engaging with a role in real existing politics, while withdrawing from it through performing it. The already-

¹⁹⁴ When writing on Brecht, Arendt refers to his personal preference of anonymity and ordinariness in his daily conduct. Arendt writes of the freedom this mode of action gave him as she connects this personal trope to his later Communist poetry which she denounces. See: Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*, pp. 222-223. See also Eva Horn on his poem “In Praise of Illegal Work” (“Lob der illegalen Arbeit”). Horn, “Actors/Agents: Bertolt Brecht and the Politics of Secrecy,” p. 47

¹⁹⁵ See fragment no. 48 in: “Short Organum for the Theatre” [1949], in: *Brecht on Theatre: The development of an Aesthetic*, Ed. and Trans.: John Willett, Hill and Wang, 1964, pp. 193-194. In her “Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy,” given originally at the New School in New York in 1970, Arendt makes a remark that seems relevant here: “We – for reasons we need not go into – are inclined to think that in order to judge a spectacle you must first have the spectacle – that the spectator is secondary to the actor; we tend to forget that no one in his right mind would ever put on a spectacle without being sure of having spectators to watch it. Kant is convinced that the world without man would be a desert, and a world without man means for him: without spectators.” Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy*, Ed.: Ronald Beiner, University of Chicago Press, 1992, pp. 61-62. Here she somewhat follows a similar argument to Barthes’s. See also: Barthes, “Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein,” p. 69

embodied political realities in which we act, provide the setting for Acting as a mode of Betrayal. With Brechtian Acting as a mode of Betrayal we can re-evaluate Arendtian Action in real existing politics, and see the usage it might have beyond the declared direct and transparent meaning it might have in the political.

If Betrayal turns Action into Acting in the sense that it makes apparent that there is a role that is being played, an actor who is in character, and a point of view that is part of these, it means that it addresses the question of specificity and generalization, social role and social actor, presence and representation. We can therefore consider how the curatorial can ignite not only the political dimension of a project on display, but also its potential as it actually acts in politics.

Brecht's notion of 'Conceptual intervention' (*eingreifendes Denken*)¹⁹⁶ describes how an intellectual endeavour or an artistic project aims to have consequences, when it is no longer simply cultural or intellectual but it operates as part of a political praxis. Conceptual intervention can be also used in reverse, with a political praxis attempting to have consequences while it takes hiding as an artistic or intellectual project.

With the decline of liberal politics, we have encountered a reality in which the curatorial found itself hosting more and more projects that aimed directly at politics. It is its demonstrative character that allowed the curatorial, which anyway operates within a larger aesthetic economy of appearances, to find its products offering not only proposals, but actually politically effective projects in the realm of politics. A variety of conversions of projects that aimed for political power into cultural proposals marks the lines of retreat from politics to the political. What this enabled was to keep these projects

¹⁹⁶ Jameson, *Brecht and Method*, p. 159

relevant as potentials. We can name this as one of the reasons for the brutal attack on the arts and humanities in industrial countries in recent years. Any hint that these potentialities can be activated in real existing politics is immediately retaliated today. We can see this in the sanctions put on faculty members and artistic directors who embody these links in their work in the academic and cultural fields.¹⁹⁷ The fact that secret agency is developed and that demonstrations on politics are possible in these fields, is exactly why the state cannot allow it to gain real power. These experiments of clandestine agitations, these gestures of a secret-agency performed, apply Brechtian Acting on Arendtian Action. Betrayal thus appears as an ongoing practice of curating political actuality into politics.

Gastus, the gestural which Brecht was preoccupied with, involves demonstration rather than representation. Brecht's theatre demonstrates the unrepresentability of the social and political. In it, acting involves a change in behavior. Changing is a mental mode which includes the joy of learning. We enjoy seeing the actor change. The recurring change in modes from farce to drama in Brecht involves our own joy of change in itself. That is why Brecht would use peasants as those who always anticipate the next season, says Jameson. For the stirring of historical evolution, as he puts it, is worth waiting for, even within defeat. Change, is therefore a main field of exploration for Brecht, explains Jameson:

¹⁹⁷ Examples from recent years are abound: from Ariella Azoulay being denied tenure in Israel, to Jack Persekian being fired from the position of artistic director of the Sharjah Biennial, to Peter Pál Pelbart being threatened with firing by The Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo, to US professor Steve Salaita being fired from the University of Illinois.

“Running abreast of change, catching up with it, espousing its tendencies in such a way as to begin to inflect its vectors in your own direction – such is Brechtian pedagogy”¹⁹⁸

Here Acting takes from Action the embodiment of change. Not merely performing one stage in the process of change (sequential procession), but being the change (divided and repeating, different from its own self). Brecht, Says Jameson, sees change an inevitable:

“...the historical layering of ‘Brecht’ as such – now folds back into the sheerest celebration of change, change as always revolutionary, as the very inner truth of revolution itself. This is what the dialecticians have always understood and clasped to their hearts.”¹⁹⁹

This inevitability of change, which Acting actualizes, requires articulation, which the curatorial provides for through sites and instances.

From Spaces of Appearance to Sites of Articulation

Show that you are showing! Among all the varied attitudes

Which you show when showing how men play their parts

The attitude of showing must never be forgotten.

All attitudes must be based on the attitude of showing

This is how to practice: before you show the way

A man betrays someone, or is seized by jealousy

Or concludes a deal, first look

At the audience, as if you wish to say:

¹⁹⁸ Jameson, *Brecht and Method*, p. 27

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 17

'Now take note, this man is now betraying someone and this is how he does it.

This is what he is like when jealousy seizes him, and this is how he deals with dealing.' In this way

*Your attitude will keep the attitude of showing
Of putting forward what has been made ready, of finishing off
Of continually going further. So show*

*That what you show is something you show every night,
have often shown before*

*And your playing will resemble a weaver's weaving, the
work of a*

Craftsman. And all that goes with showing

Like your continual concern to

Make watching simpler, always to ensure the best

View of every episode - that too you should make visible.

Then

All this betraying and dealing and

Being seized by jealousy will be as it were

Imbued with something of the quality of a

*Daily operation, for instance eating, saying Good Morning
and*

*Doing one's work. (For you are working, aren't you?) And
behind your*

*Stage parts you yourselves must still be visible, as those who
Are playing them.*

Bertolt Brecht, "Showing Has to Be Shown"²⁰⁰

Among its different features, what Brecht's Acting contests, is the belief that truth simply presents itself. What it suggests is sites for articulating the truth, rather than spaces for it to simply appear in. Arendt defines Action in relation to the space of appearance; that space in which we appear together politically:

"It is the space of appearance in the widest sense of the word, namely, the space where I appear to others as others appear to me, where men exist not merely like other living or inanimate things, but to make their appearance explicitly."²⁰¹

Wherever individuals gather together politically, "wherever people gather together, it is potentially there, but only potentially, not necessarily and not forever", says Arendt.

Arendt suggests a transparent, open and free political space that is actualized momentarily. In reality, the space of appearance is available only as a horizon. It can be realized only when the political enters politics and that is exactly when it gets muddled. Moreover, her notion of Action, which at the time of the Cold War when it was conceived, aimed to break away from the stagnated standoff of the politics of the time, today comes off as a much more complicated tool to use. Lacking any of the institutions that then were perceived as blocking political engagement, if one would try to apply Arendt's notion of Action directly to politics today, the outcome will hardly

²⁰⁰ Bertolt Brecht, "Showing Has To Be Shown," from: Five Theatre Poems from 1938-1941, in: *Bertolt Brecht, Poems : 1913-1956*, Eds.: John Willett and Ralph Manheim with the cooperation of Erich Fried, Methuen London, 1987, pp. 341-342

²⁰¹ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 198-199

have any political meaning to benefit those carrying the action (other than purist elation).

This was the case with the encampments of the Occupy movement in 2011, where the long awaited space of appearance had appeared but with no political effect. This is due to the fact that this has been achieved in an already totally different setting, both economically and politically than the one envisioned (i.e. the *polis*).²⁰² The image of the Occupy Wall Street protestors taking over Times Square in New York on 15 October 2011, demonstrates this trap. A few thousands took the square, filling it by standing between the screens of ads and live TV broadcasts, looking at themselves being portrayed on these screens. The news ticker stating: “Occupy Wall Street Movement Goes Worldwide” and the meaning of this is shown to us – people standing together in the square in a feedback loop of their own image standing together in the square. The striking resemblance of this image with that of the celebrations following the assassination of Osama Bin Laden on 2 May 2011, is telling. Here, again, a crowd fills the square, enjoying its images transmitted back at itself. The news ticker states: “Osama Bin Laden Killed; ID Confirmed by DNA Testing.” The pairing of these two images articulates the inability of spaces of appearance to overcome the new media settings of a-signifying semiotics.

Therefore, to read Arendt’s Action in a useful way today, we would need to read her against herself. We would have to conceive the political from the contingency of politics. It is exactly here that Brecht’s Acting is useful for thinking Arendtian spaces of appearance as site of articulation.

²⁰² Again, the organized retaliation by the state and the police was tremendous with huge budget cuts in services and temporary and extended suspension of civil liberties. The anti-party nature of the horizontal and autonomist organizations of the movement are partly to blame in the sense that it was not engaged in politics, therefore direct action was carried just to find itself reinforcing the powers of existing political order.

In his “Short Organum for the Theatre” Brecht proposed the actor as the one learning through the process of Acting – social divides and roles, political antagonisms and positions. Brecht writes:

“this is a way of treating society as if all its actions were performed as experiments.”²⁰³

Brecht’s Acting therefore, serves as both political reflection and Action, exploring and criticizing political patterns by performing them as if they were a role. This form of Acting, this theatre of gestures for political Action, has its performance embedded in clandestine agitation as well as in forms of demonstration. This ‘showing that has to be shown,’ is the Brechtian formulation that sees in theatre a demonstrative rather than representational site of articulation, Jameson explains.²⁰⁴

This is where the curatorial becomes the site of Brechtian Acting. The curatorial holds a demonstrative potential by the fact that it is engaged in creating sets of relations – it produces sites of articulation through exhibitions, educational and other programs, discussions, screenings, conversations, seminars etc. These sites of articulation show how things are shown, they articulate that which can now be contested and critiqued. This is done through their demonstrative potential to create sets of relations. This is how the curatorial brings spaces of appearance into real existing politics as sites of articulation.

Jameson ponders how is it that Brecht, who is considered the theatre figure most identified with the proletariat struggles of the first half of the twentieth

²⁰³ See fragment no. 52 in: Bertolt Brecht, “A Short Organum for the Theatre,” p. 195

²⁰⁴ Jameson sees this as Brecht’s pedagogy: “Brecht’s pedagogy always involves pedagogy itself; that it was self-referential as well as referential.” Jameson, *Brecht and Method*, p. 152

century, actually never staged the working class in his plays. His project involves demonstrative strategies, not representational ones. Therefore, in order to address the proletariat – the revolutionary subject – Brecht turns to the portrayal of businessman, peasants and the unemployed.²⁰⁵

If we take Lazzarato's claim that meaning is organized politically in an industrial rather than theatrical manner, it puts into question the possibility for reflection outside machinic enslavement. This means that the political has to be thought from politics and not from outside of it. Metaphors of theatrical representation seem to have no meaning in this reality. But Acting as a political Action seems to hold a double meaning here; as much as it is practiced as a secret agency, it carries a demonstrative quality. In Brechtian theatrical terms, it is both a learning experience for the actors as it is a re-enactment of real existing politics.

Demonstration and Irrepresentability

What Brecht's Acting tackles is political Action under conditions of extreme abstraction of the social and immense concretization of behavioral patterns in the realm of the mundane. Today, through computing and genetic sciences, our understanding of the social relies on behavioral patterns. The metaphors of "DNA" and "processor" are examples for the way these sciences inform our understanding of the world. The abstraction of social life involves codes and algorithms taking over our imagination of what the social might be. They mark the internalization of surveillance and control as providers of systemic predictability. These models for predictability are required especially by those threatened to be affected by the reality of volatility and precarity. This abstraction is not new. It is simply being

²⁰⁵ Jameson, *Brecht and Method*, p. 157

concretized in different ways each time. The example for the abstraction of the social would be the perpetual transformation of money into capital. This is a key feature of our social and political reality for centuries. Brecht's scenes seem to confront "how to express the economic – or, even better, the particular realities and dynamics of money as such – in and through narrative,"²⁰⁶ says Jameson. In Brechtian pedagogy, Jameson explains, understanding how capitalism works is inseparable from showing how it works.²⁰⁷ Businessman, peasants, and the unemployed, experience economics in the modern sense in which this dynamism circulates through politics. Money as a system of concrete abstractions demands that the proletariat be converted to other groups, for the sake of the demonstration. The irrepresentability of money is key in Brecht's plays as it appears as an absence for the poor and as capital for the rich.²⁰⁸ This is not the idea of representing capitalism, but of acting out its meaning.

The demonstrative quality of the curatorial's sites of articulation raises questions for the relations between the concrete and the abstract. Exploring these relations could be demonstrative when we come to assess *Betrayal* as the move from the political back into politics. Going back to the irrepresentability of money, we can use the Marxian scheme to see money as the commodity of all commodities – that which all concrete things can be

²⁰⁶ Jameson, *Brecht and Method*, p. 13

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 149

²⁰⁸ This is the meaning of the Brechtian technique for demonstrating how people act in real existing politics. The acting articulates all acts as staged ones. These are staged in society and articulated politically through Acting. Barthes writes: "The subject is a false articulation: why this subject in preference to another? The work only begins with the tableau, when the meaning is set into the gesture and the co-ordination of gestures." Barthes, "Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein," p. 76. See also: Müller, "The Geste of Citation: Three Points (On Philicetes)", *Germania*, p. 177

converted into by the power of abstraction. We can even add to this the fact that this abstraction is managed (through credit, loans, interest etc.).

In *Capital*, Marx highlights convertibility as a process of shifts between the concrete and the abstract, writing:

“The circulation M-C-M [Money-Commodity-Money] presents itself in abridged form, in its final result without any intermediate stage, in a concise style, so to speak, as M-M, i.e., money which is worth more money, value which is greater than itself.”²⁰⁹

This process of money-making-more-money is what we call capital. The interesting thing is that today things are literally made of money, meaning that their price defines them (they are valuable because they are expensive and not vice versa).²¹⁰

But once we have finance, we realize that suddenly real exchange money which is used to purchase things and services with, is different. Credit banking money is supposedly doing the M-M on the endless abstract levels of financial alchemy, but money as means of payment is expelled from this system. Those who deal with this daily form of money, which is used for actual things, know that this money is limited. It can never leave the concrete and become abstract – it can never make more money.²¹¹

This irreversible conversion between the two money systems can demonstrate the relations between the political and politics, and the way the curatorial can operate between them. On the one hand of course the two

²⁰⁹ Karl Marx, *Capital, Vol. I*. Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1976, pp. 256-257

²¹⁰ This has a long history which basically relates to the economic shift from value to price. See: David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford University Press, 2005

²¹¹ Lazzarato describes this as figurative and non-figurative money. See: Lazzarato, “Semiotic Pluralism and the New Government of Signs”

fields are related and operate in relation to each other. On the other hand, they behave very differently. When we take the curatorial into account, we see how the concrete deployment of relations, the contingent reality that is the curatorial, demands a set of operations that are political but at the same time are operating against the political. The curatorial would be this potentiality that is demonstrated by making a relation sensible. This is the Betrayal of the curatorial as method; it oscillates between model and event, between concept and reality, but it is embedded in real existing politics (a set time and space, institution, artefacts, publics, staff, etc.).

We can find also here Brecht's method. For Jameson, Brechtian method would be the measuring of ideology through its consequences:

“he does not offer us a positive theory of the consequences and the interests at work in ideology but, rather, a negative one: where the crucial term and leitmotiv [...] is indeed the key word ‘folgenlos’, ‘without consequences’. What is thus ideological about a particular work of art or a philosophical school alike is that it should have no consequences, that it should be designed to avoid having consequences.”²¹²

Here he follows Benjamin who explains Epic Theatre as operating on the level of demonstrating rather than narrative, and the mode of its scenes characterized by actualizing rather than identifying:

“These conditions are, in one form or another, the conditions of our life. Yet they are not brought close to the spectator; they are distanced from him. He recognizes them as real - not, as in the theatre of naturalism, with complacency, but with astonishment. Epic theatre

²¹² Jameson, *Brecht and Method*, p. 159

does not reproduce conditions; rather, it discloses, it uncovers them.”²¹³

The curatorial as method is that which moves between the abstract and the concretized, the concrete and the conceptualized. Therefore its way of operation will always demand a reevaluation of the possibility for the political to be converted into politics. This is the reason why so many times we have curatorial projects that might offer a tremendous conceptual proposal that then collapses when it comes to the actual materials and utterances that are aligned together in it. By way of negation, these instances exemplify this structural quality of the curatorial between concrete and abstract. The political cannot be converted directly into politics. Politics has a philosophy of its own – Betrayal.

Therefore, when we come to describe the sites of articulation, we can use the exhibition as a possible entry point. As much as we would consider it a limited manifestation of the curatorial, we can observe in the exhibition, the underlying formation that the curatorial activates. Its geometry is that of a model of relations. The idea of the model as existing in reality and in relation to reality would be of use here. The exhibition obtains the status of a model, not so much with reference to mere scale but more with regards to the setting of relations that are demonstrated. Therefore the exhibition, enacting strategies and their deployment in the visual field, can be conceived as a model.

This is true to the exhibition’s ability to take thought and inscribe itself in another space by other means. It is also true to the exhibition’s potential to transform a cultural institution into a site where certain actions and reflections of political and philosophical order can be grasped. Being that

²¹³ Benjamin, “Author as Producer,” pp. 99-100

medium of transformation, the exhibition is a model – although one of many (like publishing, screenings, seminars, conversations, performances, readings etc.) – for curatorial sites of articulation.

Actualizing the Potentialities of the Guillotine

Barthes describes Brecht's theatre as scenes which are laid out, the play is a series of tableaux, simultaneously impressive (event) and reflexive (model), or as Barthes calls it "dispensing equally pleasure and instruction".²¹⁴ Following this, rather than searching for its representational meaning, what the exhibition offers for a conceptualization of the curatorial, is its demonstrative quality:

"Brecht indicated clearly that in epic theatre (which proceeds by successive tableaux) all the burden of meaning and pleasure bears on each scene, not on the whole. At the level of the play itself, there is no development, no maturation; there is indeed an ideal meaning (given straight in every tableau), but there is no final meaning, nothing but a series of segmentations each of which possesses a sufficient demonstrative power."²¹⁵

Here, Barthes's formulation of Brechtian Acting considers it as a series of demonstrations. When we relate Action to Acting in this manner, it moves away from the narrative that Arendt locates it in, and into the pictorial, the visual. The scene articulates the geometrical alignment. From my experience with curating, I can offer an example for this. In an exhibition titled *The Rear* for the First Herzliya Biennial, which I was commissioned as

²¹⁴ Barthes, "Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein," p. 78. See also: Barthes, p. 71

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 72

curator and which opened in late 2007, there was an open-air section. It took place in a suburban city center not far from the Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art, part of the Metropolitan of Tel Aviv-Jaffa. As part of this open-air section, we installed a piece by the artist Ariel Kleiner in a roundabout at a junction in the center of the city. This piece consisted of a real-size guillotine. Kleiner was invited to develop and build this piece following the 2006 war against Lebanon. For him, as well as for myself at that time, the guillotine was installed as a symbol for the power of the people – a plasticization of the heritage of the French revolution. At the time, we saw the display of the guillotine as a condemnation of a crazed regime that killed civilians indiscriminately the previous summer.

When we opened the show, we were ready for questions from city officials regarding the specific political gesture against the government. We saw a direct relation between the political and politics being performed by the piece right at the center of the city. The reaction was not what we expected. The city officials, as well as the general public, reacted excitedly at the presence of an ancient artefact. People were photographing themselves with the sculpture using their mobile phones. For them, it seems, the object did not invite a reestablishment of popular judgment and a reconstruction of the rule of the people. It was merely a spectacle. Politically, it was akin to an archaeological exhibit. This is how it operated for them.

A few years later, Kleiner's guillotine was shown again – this time its meaning changed again. On 10 August 2011, three weeks into the biggest popular protests Israel had known, with one hundred and twenty encampments for social justice around the country. We installed Kleiner's real-size guillotine on the first and biggest of these encampment, on Rothschild Boulevard in the financial district in Tel Aviv. The piece was installed in the middle of the encampment facing the head offices of the

biggest banks in the country. Hours after it was installed on site, the guillotine was suddenly taken by the police and confiscated. The next day, images of the guillotine appeared on the front pages of all daily newspapers and was debated on TV and radio news shows.

The permitted scope of conversation on Israeli media is narrow and this incident proved it again: no one protected the right for freedom of speech in relation to the guillotine and no one supported its proposal. Most commentators were alarmed by the fact that the piece had “crossed the line” so to speak. The interesting thing was though, that all commentators accepted the fact that it did something – it resonated with a symbolic violence. The work of articulation made by the social justice movement in the weeks prior to installing the guillotine on Rothschild Boulevard, contextualized the guillotine as a potential political proposal.

It is not a mere change of context that produced new meaning to the guillotine. What happened between 2007 and 2011 is that an object suddenly became an idea. From a historical point of view, it became actively political. But there were other things as well that appeared through the actualization of potentiality here – suddenly the guillotine evoked something we knew we did not have in the nation state – a revolutionary past. This act of mounting the piece informed the whole vocabulary around the proposition of the guillotine. Unlike physical violence, which seems for the movement to be counter-productive (especially under the conditions of hyper-violent state apparatuses), it was obvious that symbolic violence can be a powerful tool in the hands of the social justice movement. It highlighted the fact that the guillotine is a symbol and a device that belongs to the people. With all its crimes, and against the logic it operates upon, the state of Israel, through the silencing actions of its police, made us aware of the revolution we did not know we were part of.

Legality and violence are plasticized in the guillotine as it restaged a set of structures of judgment – the tribunal, the constitution, citizenry and the revolution. Kleiner's guillotine superseded the protocols of its making as an art object and triggered an unattainable perspective, which its removal only amplified. This perspective is the revolution we were already part of, but never had gone through. We in Israel did not originate from a revolution, we do not have it in our political heritage. Our notion of citizenship does not come from the fight for citizenry, for the construction of civil society. The state of Israel came first and it granted citizenship based on ethnic background – a state for the Jews. The guillotine is loyal to citizenry, beyond the protocols of allegiance to the Israeli nation state. It constitutes a loyalty to the republic to come – that of Jews and Arabs. The republic that was already born in the revolution we did not yet have.

The encampments of the movement for social justice aimed to ignite those Arendtian spaces of appearance, and in a limited and temporary manner so they did. But no new order emerged out of them. And if there was one, it was not to the better. They were not able to change real existing politics. Being an autonomist and reformist mix, the encampments of the movement were incompetent when it came to real existing politics. Lacking organizational tactics (means, ends), they were only effective in generating a tremendously fierce backfire from the state and the police. And yet, as much as these spaces might have been a failure in this respect of political effectiveness, their failure makes them effective sites of articulation for the potentials and the shortcomings of social movements that reject Acting in politics.

The main tension these sites articulated was that of universality and more specifically its lack therein. By that I mean that the movement was basically too entrenched in the logic enforced by real existing politics under neoliberalism, to propose a universality (such as that of the proletariat, for

example), and at the same time it was too detached from real existing politics in that it did not aim and did not manage to mobilize and organize in real existing politics (through institutions, unions, parties). In their failure, what was articulated by these sites was exactly the need to return from the political back to politics. This is the knowledge of meaning that they demonstrated for the participants who acted in them.

By exploring actions as experiments, Brecht's notion of Acting performs a Betrayal that engages with concrete politics of deceit, cynicism, non-linear control patterns and confusion. The move from vision, from things simply showing themselves, to demonstration – the construction of a knowledge of meaning, a geometry of relations – is the move that Acting makes in relation to Action. With it, it constructs a politics outside the metaphors of the arena or scene, one which is present in our daily activities under concrete conditions in which we perform our assigned roles.

For Brecht, the mechanism which needs attention is that of the reproduction of power. What is being learned in Brecht's learning plays is the knowledge of what it means to act. Considering Brecht's Acting in relation to Arendt, means transporting Arendt's Action in the world of the visually present into Acting on and in relation to the visual but also to that which is not visible to us. By agitating these two concepts one against the other the metaphor of the arena and the scene as the site of politics, shifts to other trans-visual, physical and textual conceptions.

Re-politicising the Mesoscopic Field

If we return to Lazzarato's a-signifying semiotics, it explains to us how both technologies of control and financial abstraction operate on sub-visual levels. The microscopic and the telescopic have been dominating our

political imagination for a long time now; the common use of DNA and networks as metaphors for coded world systems and galaxies, suggests a world in which human scale is simply irrelevant. Today, it is common to discuss the sensation that the political and economic forces either operate on large or tiny levels, but on no account do they fit the world perceived by us. Our inability to correlate the direct effects of these forces on us (somatic, mental, social), with a visual field perceivable by us, make for one of the key obstacles of our political imagination. Jonathan Crary explains this:

“To be preoccupied with the aesthetic properties of digital imagery, as are many theorists and critics, is to evade the subordination of the image to a broad field of non-visual operations and requirements.”²¹⁶

From genetic manipulation to algorithm domination and image meta-data, one would be right to assume that what we see does not tell us much about the world around us today. And yet, while constantly considering non-visual operations, we are compelled to perform and produce analytical, poetic and political actions exactly by insisting on the mesoscopic – that visual scale between the micro and the macro, the one we also inhabit, the one in which the exhibition takes place. The ways in which we articulate the meaning of what we see in the mesoscopic field today relate directly to those invisible things called finance and surveillance, economy and politics.

Mark Hayward calls ‘neoliberal optics’ the meshing together of entertainment and surveillance to a degree that makes them inseparable. The underlying logic of this mesoscopic optical reality produces images through distributed

²¹⁶ Jonathan Crary, *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep*, London and New York: Verso, 2013, 47. Even before smartphone cameras, Giorgio Agamben wrote that “Today there is not even a single instant in which the life of individuals is not modelled, contaminated or controlled by some apparatus.” Giorgio Agamben, *What is an Apparatus?*, Trans.: David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella, Stanford University Press, 2009, p. 21

and networked technologies that constrain and manage forms of subjectivity conducive to neoliberal governance. As Hayward put it “neoliberal optics operates through technologies of subjective affective engagement and subjective extension fragmentation.”²¹⁷

When bringing this understanding into the curatorial we see how there needs to be, even on the level of the exhibition itself, a move from representation to demonstration. Thus exploring the ways in which the exhibition operates as a model of relations between the concrete and abstract, material and immaterial, allegorical and practical, and how these relations operate within its different elements themselves. By moving from visualizing the political as a scene to articulating new techniques for politics, we can conceive of what Brechtian Betrayal might mean.

We see already that Arendt together with Brecht provides us with an implicated model of politics and the sites for its articulation. But unlike Arendtian conception of Action as a breaking through from power relations, what Brechtian Acting suggests is learning and operating within power relations as an inevitable element of politics.

²¹⁷ See: Mark Hayward, “ATMs, Teleprompters and Photoboosts: A Short History of Neoliberal Optics,” in: *New Formations: Journal of Culture/Theory/Politics*, Volume 80-81, 2013, pp. 194-208. The precursors for these technologies of semiotic pluralism include the weapons/video-game interface of the flight simulator, the security/entertainment apparatus of the photo-booth, the transparency/manipulation mechanism of the teleprompter and the self-service/surveillance apparatus of the ATM.

From mere play-acting through appearance, we move to acting-out in politics through sites of articulation.²¹⁸ To give an example of Brechtian articulation through Acting we can take the scene in Jean-Luc Godard's *La Chinoise* (1967), where Jean-Pierre Léaud is being interviewed as Guillaume, a member of a summer-break Maoists students' cell in Paris. Behind him in the scene is a wall with posters and newspaper clips, as he is shown in close up, answering an inaudible question:

"An actor? It's hard to say. (Silence. An inaudible question) Yes. Yes. I'm an actor. (Guillaume pauses and looks down. He picks up his head). I'll show you something. It will give you an idea of what is theatre. (Guillaume picks up a roll of bandages and starts covering his head). Young Chinese students protested in Moscow and of course the Russian police beat them up. (Guillaume continues to cover his face with the bandage. His eyes are already covered by it). The next day, in protest, the Chinese met in front of their embassy with all the Western reporters, guys from 'Life', 'France Soir' and so on. (Now Guillaume's whole face is covered with the bandage). And a young Chinese student came up, his face covered with bandages, and started yelling (Guillaume begins to shout with his covered face aimed directly at the camera). 'Look what they did to me. Look what the dirty revisionists did'. (Guillaume turns his covered face to the interviewer). So the reporters rushed over and began taking photos as he removed

²¹⁸ These techniques resemble those of the 'spect-actor' of the Theatre of The Oppressed. Relevant here are also the techniques which were developed by Augusto Boal with various collaborators and include in addition to Theatre of The Oppressed also Invisible Theatre and Newspaper Theatre. These are all projects that do not aim to reconstruct a public space or sphere, but rather to develop the learning in life of what is politics. These techniques demonstrate and reflect politics, not represent politics. See: Augusto Boal, *Theatre of The Oppressed* [1979], Trans.: Charles A. McBride. Theatre Communications Group, 1993.

his bandages. They expected a cut face, covered with blood or something. (Guillaume starts taking the bandage off). And he carefully removed his bandages as they took photos. (Slowly Guillaume's face is uncovered). When they were all off, they realized his face was alright. So the reporters began yelling 'this Chinaman's a fake. He's a clown, what is this?'. But they hadn't understood. They didn't realize it was theatre, real Theatre; A reflection on reality like Brecht or Shakespeare."

From the beginning of the scene Guillaume, the fictional French Maoist student, and Jean-Pierre Léaud, the actor, are both present in the interview ("An actor? It's hard to say. Yes. Yes. I'm an actor"). So there is a role being played here and that role is not only that of Guillaume, the French student, but of Léaud as actor as well. Guillaume/Léaud's performance of the actions of the Chinese student in front of the camera presents us what Acting might mean. The power of demonstration rather than representation is being highlighted by Guillaume/Léaud and the Chinese student himself in the story. Acting is demonstrating, it operates within a site of articulation (the presence of the foreign media in the story and the interviewer/director of *La Chinoise*). It is not a representation in a space of appearance. Acting here is the demonstration of a relation to truth, and acting-out of a role. But this truth, when regarded as representation (the foreign media's expectations)

equates to a lie, a deceit, and the person playing the role is perceived a fake (the foreign media's response).²¹⁹

Refusal After the Fact

"...Over time the movement of the yielding water

Will overcome the strongest stone.

What's hard – can you understand? – must always give way."

Bertolt Brecht, from the Svendborg poems, 1936-1939

A key element in Arendt's notion of Action as well as that of spaces of appearance, which was already hinted at, is that they both suggest the possibility of freezing power relations, or acting outside of a set of given power relations. These concepts allow us to assume that we are not always already subjected to power mechanisms.

²¹⁹ Deleuze described what later on happened to Godard's cinema thus: "Man is in the world as if in a pure optical and sound situation. The reaction of which man has been dispossessed can be replaced only by belief. Only belief in the world can reconnect man to what he sees and hears. [...] Belief, even in the case of holy characters, Mary, Joseph and the Child, is quite prepared to go over to the side of the atheist. In Godard, the ideal of knowledge, the Socratic ideal which is still present in Rossellini, collapses: the 'good' discourse, of the militant, the revolutionary, the feminist, the philosopher, the film-maker, etc., gets no better treatment than the bad. Because the point is to discover and restore belief in the world before or beyond words. Is it enough to go to live in the sky, be it the sky of art and painting, to find reasons to believe (*Passion*)? Or shouldn't we invent a 'medium level' between earth and sky (*First Name Carmen*)? What is certain is that believing is no longer believing in another world, or in a transformed world. It is only, it is simply believing in the body. It is giving discourse to the body, and, for this purpose, reaching the body before discourses, before words, before things are named, the 'first name', and even before the first name." Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, pp. 172-173

Arendt's judgment of Brecht regarding his convenient (to her mind) choice to move to the DDR, present us with the limits of this possibility for action outside power relations. When writing about Brecht's life she describes how his later years were a derailment from his former days as someone who was able to say 'No!,' at least in his writing:

“This was the wisdom of his ‘Mr. Keuner,’ who, however, around 1930 was still a bit more fastidious in the choice of his means than his author twenty years later. In dark times, so one of the stories goes, there came an agent of the rulers to the home of a man who ‘had learnt how to say no.’ The agent claimed the man's home and food as his own and asked him, ‘Will you wait upon me?’ The man put him to bed, covered him with a blanket, guarded his sleep, and obeyed him for seven years. But whatever he did, he never spoke a single word. After the seven years were over, the agent had grown fat with eating, sleeping, and giving orders, and he died. The man wrapped him in the rotten blanket, threw him out of the house, washed the bed, painted the walls, sighed with relief, and answered, ‘No’.”²²⁰

Arendt is reading this story literally as a story of refusal (unlike the author who complied with power, his storyteller Herr Keuner was “more fastidious in the choice of his means”). But the purist ‘No’, that can be uttered outside the contingency of power relations (after the agent is already dead), is exactly what Brecht's Herr Keuner is ridiculing in this story. Only after the fact, the man can say ‘No’ out loud. It might be that this was his sentiment and plan all along, but according to the story it was the fact that the agent “had grown fat with eating, sleeping, and giving orders,” which killed him. Complacency (to the extent of smothering), and not refusal (passive or active), is what the

²²⁰ Quoted in Arendt's portrait of Brecht which appears in: Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*, p. 213

man in the story is actually executing towards the agent. Him uttering the 'No!' at the end, positions the possibility of a final, direct and transparent action, as something possible only after the fact, outside power relations, therefore outside politics.²²¹

While Brecht suggests working with opacity, Arendt proposes transparency. This very charismatic proposal by Arendt had immense influence on groups and organizations that have operated outside of politics, opting for 'direct action.' This can be found in the increase in interest in her work especially around humanitarian projects that faced the need to work with government, and by activists who were challenging traditional political forms of organizing.²²² Especially since the rise of networked online platforms in the last decade, this option seemed effective in bringing together people, a phenomena that culminated with the world wide movement for social justice.

²²¹ Arendt's reading of the short story as way to judge Brecht, seems in this context to actually justify his actions. In this respect, this reading brings this short Herr Keuner story closer to Herman Melville's story of "Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street," and especially to the influential reading of it by Deleuze. In "Bartleby; or, The Formula," which was written as an afterward for the then new French edition of the story in 1989, Deleuze emphasized the passive resistance and non-conflictual politics in Bartleby's famous words "I would prefer not to." See: Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, pp. 68-90

²²² See for example the use of Arendtian formulations of "the right to have rights" (Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 296), by "Medecines Sans Frontieres" regarding the political dilemmas they were facing in Ethiopia in the 1980s, in: Eyal Weizman, *The Least of All Possible Evils: Humanitarian Violence from Arendt to Gaza*, London and New York: Verso, 2011, pp. 27-64; and: Ariella Azoulay, "Palestine as Symptom, Palestine as Hope: Revising Human Rights Discourse", *Critical Inquiry*, Volume 40 Issue 4, Summer 2014, University of Chicago Press, pp. 332-364. References to Arendtian terminology of public happiness, spaces of appearance and political action can be found in relation to Occupy Wall Street and political activism, in: April Carter, *Direct Action and Democracy Today*, Polity Press, 2005; and: Roger Berkowitz, "The Politics of Anti-Political Protest: What to Make of OWS," in: *Democracy: Journal of Ideas*, 20.10.2011: <http://www.democracyjournal.org/arguments/2011/10/ows-and-the-politics-of-anti-politics.php?page=all> [Last retrieved: 15.10.2015]

But Betrayal does not subscribe to ‘direct action’ as the only mode of political action (which is somewhat implicated in Arendt’s stand). With its imagined transparency and suspension of power relations, this form of activism has proven to be politically limited and ineffective. Once an action engages with politics without withdrawing from the logic of the setting with which it engages, this action finds itself trapped with reinforcing existing power. On the tactical level, direct action may prove to be efficient to some extent, but on a strategic level, the outcome would be very different from the cause it aimed for. This is a symptomatic condition to the direct action mode of neoliberal political engagement. Being that there are objective conditions (resources, employment, judicial system, media, military and so on), which the direct action has no control over, we see how time and time again the result of a tactical victory is a strategic defeat (be it in Israel, Egypt or the Ukraine). It comes from a long tradition of the Left wanting to dispense with power altogether. ‘We’ll take power to decompose power’ the saying goes. The idea that we can do away with power relations contributed among other things to the embrace of ‘networked’ system. These in turn proved to be systems for the consolidation of control by those already in power.²²³

The Violence of Disavowing Power Relations

The implosion of the Soviet bloc brought a new political paradigm which was presented as an inevitable conclusion of world events and entailed a denial of power relations – no longer dialectical negations, antagonisms and contradictions. Yet, this scheme proved not only to be untrue, but to be extremely harmful. The upheavals since the end of the Cold War – from the

²²³ See for example: Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*; and: Jodi Dean, *Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies: Communicative Capitalism and Left Politics*, Duke University Press, 2009

Balkans to Afghanistan, from the Twin Towers to Tahrir Square, from Kyiv to Gaza – prove that the denial of power relations which was suggested by the new paradigm unleashed extreme violence. The paradigm that prevailed was that the collapse of the Soviet Union meant that the good won. This formulation mixed together power and morals to such an extent that it made them inseparable. With morals and power being one and the same, a new paradigm was proposed which perceived an order devoid of power relations. Some of these atrocious conflicts that reemerged in the 1990s did not begin at the end of the Cold War, but had long histories that simply took new forms. What was unique was the sudden lack for political context and vocabulary to explain them. One of these is the Israeli Occupation of Palestinian territories in the West Bank and Gaza. The key transitional post-Cold War event in relation to this conflict was the Oslo Accords. These were bilateral agreements between two disproportional entities – the state of Israel and the PLO. The agreement fueled the belief that power relations – historical, economic, political, cultural and military – can be suspended rather than addressed directly and re-organized. The Occupation was going to be managed from now on.

When this scenario exploded with the continuation of the Occupation and settlements, and with the attacks of suicide bombers in the mid 1990s and mid 2000s, left politics seemed to have retreated further from politics and into forms of direct action, the main one being humanitarian discourse. Here, there was no longer a political project anymore. Even Palestinian self-determination, a political project which in itself was a retreat from the Palestinian revolution that aimed for a total change of power relations within Arab societies (for women, workers, religious and ethnic minorities), was pretty much forgotten by the Israeli left in favor of Humanitarian reasoning (which actually allows for the continuation of the Occupation by managing

the level and amount of wrongs); instead of ending the Occupation we have tactics to manage the conflict. The traditional patterns of class struggle and joint Jewish-Arab politics were renounced willingly in favor of social movements, of lack of organization as a way of avoiding totalitarian threats, of excessive political skepticism, of realpolitik in the form of de-politicized human rights discourse.²²⁴ These all left us with refusal and withdrawal as the only viable tools to be executed by individuals, not publics.

The current activist move in relation to Israel-Palestine – the call for cultural, academic and economic boycott, disinvestment and sanction of Israel (BDS), seems to express these tensions. We can identify with the demands of the call to end the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land and to enable the return of Palestinian refugees, but still find the BDS to be a symptom of post-Oslo dependency on the International community, or better said, individuals with international stature. “Gone are the days when solidarity formations worked with Palestinian communities in the diaspora, the PLO, and kindred Palestinian political parties.” write Mezna Qato and Kareem Rabie “Instead, and in part because there is no longer a Palestinian representative body” they explain:

“Palestinian solidarity now almost exclusively interfaces with large civil society umbrella groups and NGOs in Palestine, and with only a few exceptions – including the US Joint Struggle Delegation to the World Social Forum Free Palestine in Porto Alegre, and student collaborations with other campus movements – they do not have a sufficiently direct relationship with progressive formations in Palestine or Palestinian communities in exile. Such disconnects are linked to other problems. Increasingly, the movement seems composed of

²²⁴ See for example the humanitarian management of the Gaza Strip as described in: Weizman, *The Least of All Possible Evils*, pp. 81-86

constellations of well-known figures – academics, artists and poets, journalists, activists, Twitterers – who generate thinking and rhetoric that becomes associated with them as individuals. In the past, this kind of thinking was collectively deliberated and determined. Such people clearly contribute to advancing the Palestinian cause, and there is much to laud in the decentralized work of countless Palestine organizers. But the way the abundance of voices maps onto the wider strategy of public engagement here has had the unintended consequence of crowding out collective work.”²²⁵

Because it is actually based on individual moral positions and not on a political project of strategizing new Jewish-Arab subjectivities in Palestine, the BDS reflects the destruction not only of a Jewish-Arab common political project, but also the collapse a Palestinian project of solidarity. The Oslo doctrine which opted for a regulated partition with total disregard of the disproportion in power, generated a devastating effect in actual politics for both Israelis and Palestinians. Instead of resolving the conflict, the aftermath of the Oslo accords followed the lines of the Friend/Enemy formation with intensifying hostility. Due to lack of influential organization in politics, refusal, therefore, seems today to be the option most available for individuals.

The strategy of withdrawal was explored by Paolo Virno in his *A Grammar of the Multitude*, as he was looking for a way to activate the divide that exists today between labor and politics. But this withdrawal he speaks of already promises a ‘new alliance. Virno formulates his aim in the form of a question

²²⁵ Mezna Qato and Kareem Rabie, “Against the Law,” *Jacobin*, Issue 10, Spring 2013, pp. 75-78

asking whether it is possible to “unite that which today is divided, that is, Intellect and political Action”²²⁶

Brecht seems to suggest a different way of engagement, one that embodies the divide rather than withdraws from it. If we take Benjamin’s question of technique as presented in his “The Author as Producer,” we will see that when we contemplate a work in relation to its own position within the production relations of its time, Brecht provides a striking reference also for us today. Benjamin writes:

*“A writer who does not teach other writers teaches nobody. The crucial point, therefore, is that a writer's production must have the character of a model: it must be able to instruct other writers in their production and, secondly, it must be able to place an improved apparatus at their disposal. This apparatus will be the better, the more consumers it brings in contact with the production process – in short, the more readers or spectators it turns into collaborators. We already possess a model of this kind, of which, however, I cannot speak here in any detail. It is Brecht's epic theatre.”*²²⁷

A Community of Divided Subjects

As we have observed, this theatre relates not only to the performance of the self but also to the general performance of immaterial labor under the supremacy of machinic enslavement. As it is imbued with collaborative work and is operated as a social demonstration for a political gathering so to speak, Brecht’s theatre provides, as Jameson himself hints, an opening to a

²²⁶ Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude*, p. 68

²²⁷ Benjamin, “Author as Producer,” p. 98

realm in which “individuality is not effaced but complemented by collectivity.”²²⁸ This mode of operation is a level of being which is not the caricature of faceless and monolithic anonymous crowds and is neither the icon of individual genius author. This is what Gilles Deleuze called ‘Dividual’ when writing on the cinema of Sergei Eisenstein. Deleuze explained that in his films, Eisenstein was able “to reach the Dividual, that is, to individuate a mass as such, instead of leaving it in a qualitative homogeneity or reducing it to a quantitative divisibility.”²²⁹ Cinema does not have the individual as its subject, nor a plot or history as its object, Deleuze says. Its subject is the masses, the individuation of mass.

The *in-dividual* holds a double meaning – it refers to something being indivisible, a singular thing that cannot be divided, but it also indicates separateness, as in the term *individualism*: at the same time inseparable from oneself and separated from the rest. Therefore, the individual, the cornerstone of liberal, deliberative representational worldviews, is in itself a negation – but a negation of what? We can say that the actual thing that is already there is the *dividual*. That which is always already part of something else, which is not separated from the rest but is separable from itself. The dividual maps a whole different possibility for subjectivity and for politics.

We would claim that through its various operations of technique, Brechtian theatre does constitute the Dividual. For the demonstration by the *Gestus* itself already proposes that any action is divided in itself (self/society), and Acting in both the learning play and Epic Theatre demonstrates this divide through its own division (actor/character). This knowledge of meaning performs Betrayal as loyalty to Acting in politics. These divides of

²²⁸ Jameson, *Brecht and Method*, p. 10

²²⁹ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, p. 162

self/society, and actor/character are experienced by us all political actors as we operate as divided-subjects. John Rajchman sketched out a community of divided-subjects as sharing an unrest, a discomfort:

“How we might be brought together not by prudence, abstract duty or calculated interest alone, but in our sharing the ‘structure’ of repression or the law which each makes his or her own according to the contingencies of his or her fortune – the structure of the ‘decentered’ subject and its response to the real. What sort of community can we have as divided subjects?”²³⁰

Brecht’s famous saying that the important thing in politics is not private thinking but “the art of thinking inside other people’s heads,”²³¹ seems to suggest this shift from spaces of appearance that are provided by individuals for individuals, to sites of articulation that are produced by and produce the Dividual. The disintegration of performer/spectator relations, is here a Betrayal of display and vision that is articulated as loyalty to demonstration as political Action.

Deleuze went on later to describe the Dividual in more detailed (and mainly in negative terms) as a new level of being in machinic enslavement under capitalism. In “Postscript on the Societies of Control,” he outlines the Dividual to denote the collapse of the individual. Deleuze describes it as a product of societies in which:

²³⁰ John Rajchman, *Truth and Eros: Foucault, Lacan and the Question of Ethics*, Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1991, p. 70. Mouffe concludes *The Democratic Paradox* with this quote from John Rajchman as he depicts Freud’s ethical concern which does not revolve around duty and obligation, but rather around this shared discomfort. This, for Mouffe, constitutes the ethics of a pluralist democracy. See: Mouffe, *Democratic Paradox*, pp. 138-139

²³¹ Quoted in: Benjamin, “Author as Producer,” p. 92

“the key thing is no longer a signature or number but a code: codes are *passwords*, whereas disciplinary societies are ruled (when it comes to integration or resistance) by *precepts*. The digital language of control is made up of codes indicating whether access to some information should be allowed or denied. We’re no longer dealing with a duality of mass and individual. Individuals become ‘*dividuals*,’ and masses become samples, data, markets, or ‘*banks*.’”²³²

In this late text, Deleuze describes a shift from the Foucauldian *disciplinary societies* of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This order, which Deleuze explains is analogical to the prison, proposed itself through the organization of vast spaces of enclosure: Individuals are always going from one closed site to another, each with its own laws: first of all the family, then school (“you’re not at home, you know”), then the barracks (“you’re not at school, you know”), then the factory, hospital from time to time, maybe prison, the model site of confinement.²³³

With the shift to the societies of control, Deleuze says the crisis that occurs involves all environments of enclosure: prison, hospital, factory, school, and family. These environments of enclosure seep into one another – you never finish school, you never leave the family, you never finish the army, and you are never out of the hospital, never out of prison, never out of the factory. The Dividual is this dissected entity, roaming through networks. He continues:

²³² Gilles Deleuze, “Postscript on the Societies of Control,” [1990], in: Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations*, Trans.: Martin Joughin, New York: Columbia University Press, 1995, pp. 177-182. Originally published in a slightly different translation in *October*, Vol. 59 (Winter 1992), pp. 3-7

²³³ Deleuze, “Postscript,” p. 177

“Félix Guattari has imagined a town where anyone can leave their flat, their street, their neighbourhood, using their (dividual) electronic card that opens this or that barrier; but the card may also be rejected on a particular day, or between certain times of day; it doesn’t depend on the barrier but on the computer that is making sure everyone is in a permissible place, and effecting a universal modulation.”²³⁴

Converged through production protocols and the debt economy, the Dividual is in constant negotiation. A non-fixed and mobile flow, always partial, the Dividual is in the process of subjectivation. As an open form to all sorts of hybridizations, the Dividual is a matter of constant production, a polyphony. Not an entity unto itself apart from all the rest, but rather already in relation, always part of something. The Dividual is a subjectivity that is always already part of a presence.²³⁵

The autonomy that was lost already by the individual through its processes of subjugation, is not reasserted by the Dividual. The Dividual lets go of any such attempt to reconstruct an autonomy. Rather it operates as a relation. It is a mode of being that is produced by the current economic and political conditions. Therefore, the question it raises for any project of cultural production is: where is it positioned in relation to it? The curatorial seems to

²³⁴ Deleuze, “Postscript,” pp. 180-181

²³⁵ Structured under the conditions of the society of control, the Dividual actually holds a resistive potential within its logic, as it offers itself to be an open subject. Fred Moten and Stefano Harney quote Édouard Glissant when they propose “to consent not to be a single being.” See: Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study*, Wivenhoe / New York / Port Watson: Minor Compositions, 2013, p. 154. In the USSR, claims Boris Groys, for the Soviets “only that which is contradictory in itself may be regarded as living, and as capable of life. The living being itself is understood as a certain logical figure – namely, the figure of paradox”. See: Boris Groys, *The Communist Postscript*, Trans.: Thomas H. Ford, London and New York: Verso, 2009, pp. 63-96.

lend itself to the Dividual for a number of reasons which would be outlined now.

Brecht and the Curatorial

The curatorial entails orchestrating a polyphony as a polyphony. This is neither an orchestration of a polyphony as a unity, nor is it random circumstances repeated or replayed. This is how the Dividual becomes a relevant reference for us; a level of being generated through our production relations and processes, it demands a technique to embody it. The curatorial relies on a composition of sources, a model of relations and interrelations between ideas, between materials, between contexts, between subjectivities – all held by each of the elements and between them, as is the case with the Dividual.

For Brecht all this is not self-evident. Working with his technique of Acting we can find hints for the level of being that involves the different parties (actor/character; self/society; gesture/performance and so on). A cluster of being, a being in plural, a contingent polyphony of divided-subjects. Brecht's *Betrayal* is therefore a loyalty to this mode of politics. Brecht's method entails a technique of the Dividual which I would suggest should inform the curatorial.

The demonstrative power of curatorial sites of articulation makes sensible a relation that is the Dividual. This is done beyond mere display, beyond direct analogy, beyond illustration of concept in artefact or materiality in gesture. "The whole forms a knowledge, in the Hegelian fashion," writes Deleuze, "which brings together the image and the concept as two movements each

of which goes towards the other.”²³⁶ The curatorial activates potentialities mixing the concrete action in politics and the acting in the realm of the political. It might therefore have insights to offer to our understanding of politics. This chapter aimed to denote the ways Brecht provides a method relevant to the curatorial. This was done in an attempt to position the curatorial as a rich and useful means for the rearticulating of politics.

²³⁶ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, p. 161

CONCLUSION

This dissertation is informed by a variety of claims that were made regarding the political, but it wishes to insert these back into politics. The potentiality of this mode of interrogation is presented throughout this dissertation as a deploying of problematizations.

Through an exploration of exhaustion of antagonisms, fictionalizing political traumas, the surfacing of “dead-ideas” that are either not-yet or no-longer available to us, and the extension of political action into Acting in politics, Betrayal is offered as an operative concept for politics today.

This dissertation frames Betrayal in relation to a variety of curatorial strategies, namely formation, narration and agency – all qualities that have been discussed in this dissertation through a selection of historical figures. Written in the context of Israel-Palestine and the field of the curatorial, it proposes Betrayal through the field of the curatorial as the curatorial provides a setting for activating potentialities. In the three chapters of this dissertation, Betrayal is developed through an active reading of the lives and work of these figures as method: Alcibiades son of Cleinias, a fifth century BC Athenian politician; the last book published by Sigmund Freud during his lifetime *Moses and Monotheism*; and Bertolt Brecht’s notion of Acting in relation to Hannah Arendt’s political Action.

Alcibiades presents the formation of antagonism and its exhaustion, as a strategy for Betrayal that can move inside-out. Freud’s *Moses* proposes narration through anachronism, fictionalism as a form of Betrayal that can destabilize a dichotomy inwards, providing a structure that is a collapse. Brecht’s concept of Acting problematizes agency through demonstrative Acting which shifts the site of articulation of politics itself. All these strategies of Betrayal make it a proposal for an entanglement.

This dissertation is informed by Betrayal's ability to formulate distant solidarities through the process of self-regioning. Contextualizing the proposal and discussion of Betrayal here in relation to the practices in the Middle East, implies a possible field of inquiry which opens up at this moment together with the demands it brings. As the curatorial is suggested here as activating potentialities, Betrayal becomes in itself an entry point for the curatorial as a site and event of demonstrating relations, making them sensible.

From the Political Back to Politics

"To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it 'the way it really was.' It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger"

Walter Benjamin, thesis VI, "Theses on the Philosophy of History"²³⁷

Historical knowledge is always uncertain knowledge ("the true picture of the past flits by," Walter Benjamin writes in thesis V).²³⁸ There is a moment of understanding in the contemporary moment itself that relates to the past ("Origin is the goal," he quotes Karl Kraus in thesis XIV).²³⁹ The curatorial proposes a model of actual politics for reactivating history. By constantly reactivating the relations of the concrete and abstract, the material and

²³⁷ Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," [1940] *Illuminations*, Ed.: Hannah Arendt, Trans.: Harry Zohn, Schocken Books, 1969, p. 255

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

²³⁹ Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," p. 261

immaterial, the present and the absent, the curatorial provides exactly for that demonstrative setting for politics to be reactivated.

Considering Betrayal through Alcibiades, Freud and Brecht provides us with a movement between the Aristotelian framing of history as “what he did and what was done to him,” in relation to Alcibiades, to a Derridean ‘paraliterary’ where “It’s not history, but can’t be called not-history,” as Freud’s *Moses* might suggest, and Müller’s proposal that “the plot is a model,” with regards to Brecht’s theatre. This accumulation of relations which the curatorial explores, bares a direct meaning to history and politics.

Betrayal and Political Power

Through the explorations of this dissertation, Betrayal emerges as a set of strategies for providing possibilities for the actualizing of political potentialities. It makes actual the connectedness that is already in the given antagonisms, thus finding ways of destabilizing inwards and contaminating outwards these antagonisms. Hence, it is shifting the site of politics and the ways for Acting in it. Betrayal would be acting with no implied stage or arena – a force that operates through our actions.

As the introduction of this dissertation set out to explore Betrayal as loyalty, we can consider what Betrayal would be loyal to. The chapters of this dissertation consider a loyalty to an open question of Athens and Jewishness and politics. This brings us already very close to a charismatic articulation by Alain Badiou who speaks of the fidelity to the fidelity. Badiou writes:

“When you see that a sequence of politics of emancipation is finished, you have a choice: you can continue in the same political field, or you

can find the fidelity to the fidelity. It's the same thing here: If the idea of the working class as a generic group is saturated, you have the choice of saying that there are only identities, and that the best hope is the revolt of some particular identity. Or you can say that we have to find something much more universal, much more generic. But probably without the representative generic group."²⁴⁰

The curatorial proposes constellations that activate potentialities. As a form of interrogation it seems to be offering new entry points which sometimes rely on expanded and abbreviated periodizations and territorializations. Betrayal operates within it between positions and oppositions. It is a gesture of enacting refusal by the plurality of engagements that are available already by a defined setting. Betrayal can be understood in the tradition of performative modes of thinking which try to go beyond antagonism, and deploy a set of entanglements. These manifest a fidelity to the fidelity. Betrayal provides us with a set of re-positionings from which to embark in this secret agency by which we are acting as agents of an order that is already gone and at the same time is yet to come.

²⁴⁰ See: Interview with Alain Badiou, "The Saturated Generic Identity of the Working Class," in: *The Newspaper of the Platform Chto Delat? Issue 15: Reactionary Times*, February 2007, See: <http://chtodelat.org/b8-newspapers/12-59/the-saturated-generic-identity-of-the-working-class/> [retrieved 15.10.2015]

APPENDIX Alcibiades: his life and related dates

450 BC	Alcibiades is born
446 BC	Alcibiades's father Cleinias, is killed in the battle of Coronea. Alcibiades moves to live with his maternal uncle Pericles
431-404 BC	The Peloponnesian War
432/431 BC	The encounter between Alcibiades and Socrates which is depicted in Plato's <i>Alcibiades I</i> supposedly takes place around this time and the encounter between Alcibiades and Pericles which is depicted in Xenophon's <i>Memorabilia</i> supposedly takes place around this time
430 BC	The battle of Potidaea; Alcibiades fights in the infantry together with Socrates and receives a medal for his courage
425/424 BC	Alcibiades is appointed member of the committee inspecting the taxes Potidaea is obligated to pay to Athens
424 BC	The battle of Delium; Alcibiades fights in the cavalry
421 BC	The Peace of Nicias between Athens and Sparta
420 BC	The treaty with Argos, Elis and Mantinea which Alcibiades has promoted
418 BC	Sparta wins the battle of Mantinea
417/416 BC	The Ostracism of Hyperbolus; Alcibiades wins the horses races in the 91 st Olympic games; Athens conquers Melos and the assembly votes to massacre all the men and sell the women and children as slaves; Plato's <i>Symposium</i> supposedly takes place around this time
415 BC	The Sicilian Expedition headed by Alcibiades, Nicias and Lamachus; Sacrilege of the statues of Hermes; Alcibiades is called back to Athens to stand trial

414-412 BC	Alcibiades in Sparta
413 BC	The Athenian expedition to Sicily is defeated
412 BC	Encouraged by Alcibiades, Chios, Miletus and other subordinate cities of Athens revolt
412/411 BC	Rumors of Alcibiades impregnating the Spartan Queen Timaea. Alcibiades finds refuge in Sardis with Tissaphernes the Persian governor of Asia Minor
411 BC	The Oligarchy of the Four Hundred in Athens; Alcibiades is called back to lead the Athenian fleet in Samos; Athens wins the battle of Abydus
410 BC	The Peloponnesian fleet is destroyed in the battle of Cyzicus
408 BC	The battles of Chalcedon and Byzantium
407 BC	Alcibiades returns to Athens
406 BC	Alcibiades is removed from his position after the battle of Notium and leaves to Phrygia in the island of Asia Minor
404 BC	In Athens: Critias and the constitution of the Thirty Tyrants in Athens; Thucydides finishes <i>History of The Peloponnesian War</i> , Alcibiades is murdered
399 BC	Socrates is trialed and sentenced to death
385-380 BC	Plato writes <i>The Symposium</i>
371 BC	Xenophon finishes his <i>Memorabilia</i>
350-347 BC	Plato writes <i>Alcibiades I</i>
70-80 CE	Plutarch writes <i>Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans</i>

(Sources: Walter M. Ellis, *Alcibiades*, Routledge 1989; Edward Frederic Benson, *The life of Alcibiades: The Idol of Athens*, New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1929; Debra Hamel, *The Mutilation of the Herms: Unpacking an Ancient Mystery*, Self-published, North Haven, CT, 2012; David Gribble, *Alcibiades and Athens: A Study in Literary Presentation*, Oxford University Press, 1999; Nicholas Denyer, "introduction", in: Plato, *Alcibiades*, Ed.: Nicholas Denyer, Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 1-26)

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