REPETITION AS THE PERFORMATIVE SYNDROME OF DYING

KETI CHUKHROV

NATIONAL RESEARCH UNIVERSITY HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS (MOSCOW)/MARIE CURIE FELLOW AT WOLVERHAMPTON UNIVERSITY (UK)

A well-known Moscow conceptualist, Andrey Monastyrsky, gives a wonderful example of the performative syndrome of repetition in his diary notes of 1981. While once reading an article by Boris Groys (1981) on the autonomy of art, the artist suddenly felt certain audial discomfort. Something was distracting him. He stopped reading and heard the sounds of someone vomiting. It happened to be a drunken man. Monastyrsky went on reading, but twenty minutes later discovered that the sounds persisted, only now they were completely changed: they had stopped being physiological and had become musical. Listening closely to them again, Monastyrsky discovered that now there were two creatures emitting sounds. One type of sound seemed to be the cawing of a crow and the second sound accompanying the first turned out to be that very drunken man—only this time quite consciously mimicking the sounds of the bird's cawing. The concerted cawing of the crow and its repetition by the drunken man lasted for quite some time. As Monastyrsky comments: "It all sounded harmonized and musically interesting. The sounds of human cawing were full of sobriety. In them one could discern the tender and almost loving gratitude to the original" (Monastyrsky 1997).[1]

What is interesting in this example is not at all mere imitation or mimicry; but rather the two manifestations of two temporalities, or the two modes of reality. The first, mundane mode of reality, in which the man vomits and the bird caws, is transposed into the second mode of extra-reality as it unfolds as a performative and aesthetic excess and complement in relation to the first, mundane one. The main thing in this transposition is not merely the repetition of the bird's sounds

by the man, but the man's leap out of the temporality of existence, out of his mundane "being"; this happens by means of performing the excessive act of cawing—the act that turns the drunken man into a grotesque and humorous performer. Performing as a bird in such a condition might not be the best way to survive. What is abnormal and pathological here is the transposition from the mundane mode of reality (act of vomiting) to the repetitive performance of cawing (excessive mode of reality that we therefore refer to as a second reality). Instead of following the dictates demanded by self-preservation (dealing with the procedure of vomiting), the drunken man, conversely, indulges in the nonsensical practice of aesthetic play through repetition (mimicking the cawing)—conduct that contradicts and hampers his life. This brings us to the second reality of repetition that mocks the self-preservation instinct of the "first" mundane reality. Thus the second reality of performative repetition is in a way counter to life and is ontically perilous to it. However, this second reality of repetition, within its own temporal anthropometry and the performative singularity, happens to be life's aesthetic pleroma,[2] plenitude. So, from the point of view of the first, normal, mundane reality and its ontic conditions such pleroma of play approximates death, the threshold of life, and is directed towards it. In the dimension of the second performative temporality, however, the pleroma of play, on the contrary, evolves and unfolds as the pushing forward of a certain excessive sequence of acts. It is because of this aporia—ebbing of life in the ontic dimension, but accelerating it aesthetically and performatively—that Gilles Deleuze claims that such a mode of performative repetition is torn away from any chronic temporality, remaining without any semblance to the original (2001, 15–30).

I. Disjunction of Time

Despite the disjunction of temporalities, however, the regime of the second, aesthetic reality of performative repetition and play quite paradoxically preserves its bond with the "first," "normal" one. To recall a claim made by Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition*, repetition is not an analogy: it is a paradox of a situation and is therefore *solitary*. There can only be a repetition of repetition: i.e., the second reality of performing is always already torn away from whatever happens in life (Deleuze 2001, 23). On the other hand, however, in *Logic of Sense,* Deleuze insists on the genetic tie of the repeated with what happened in the first reality, in reference to which the performative act of repetition becomes the syndrome (Deleuze 1990, 109–118, Ch. 2. "Repetition in Itself"; 148–154, Ch.3. "The Image of Thought"). As we see from the example of the drunken man, the triggering moment—the drunken man's feat and the cawing of the crow—resides in the first reality: the repetition is triggered by those conditions. But at the same time, the paradox of repetition unfolds somewhere and somehow in such regime that the connection with this first reality is nevertheless lost.

Deleuze explains this paradox by the impossibility and incapacity to know what happened, unless one leaps out of what happened towards transposing it in repetition. As he states: "When the consciousness of knowledge or the working through the memory is missing, the knowledge in itself is only the repetition of its object. It is played, repeated, enacted instead of being known" (Deleuze 2001, 14). So it is this test of not knowing that instigates the character to repeat. The less one knows

or remembers, the more one repeats. (Let's imagine here Oedipus, Lear, Hamlet. Their becoming the theatrical characters, as well as their acting and excessive performative conduct within the plot is instigated by an event that paralyzes comprehension of its reasons and shuts out the world, in which transparency and knowledge had been possible.) Repetition endeavors to anchor the unknown, the happened; it serves to grasp that which has happened; but the more one repeats, the more one ousts what has to be anchored and grasped; the more what has to be grasped unfolds, the more the performative repetitive disguises it.

I will mention two eloquent examples, which, with almost mathematical precision confirm this aporetic bond between the first chronological temporality of being and the second excessive temporality of performative repetition, torn from the first, but at the same time tied to it. Dramatic plays have numerous examples of such disjunctions between the "first" time and the "second" excessive time of performative repetition. In this case, the act of performing takes place as a mimicry, by means of which it attempts to repeat the event, the trace of which had been lost. The act of repetition functions as the arrogant dismissal of some, presumably traumatic event; and, on the other hand, in its performative zeal to subvert some traumatic incident into aesthetic humorous play, the act of repetition becomes simultaneously a transformation into something counter to trauma. The following two examples are taken from Shakespeare's *Othello* and *King Lear*. I introduce them here, because they demonstrate in an excellent fashion the fracture in the Subject: the subject of *the active voice* of the first reality becomes the altered subject of the *passive voice of the second performative reality*, in which the subject can only speak on behalf of the Other, on behalf of some protagonist of imaginary playful performance, invented by him.

For example, in Shakespeare's *Othello,* the main protagonist is a moor of Venice in the "first" reality. Yet, when the truth is exposed, the culprits are punished and the outcome irreversible, Othello attempts suicide, but he performs this act in a role of an imaginary character invented by him precisely for this occasion. At the very end of the play he pronounces:

> In Alepo once,
> Where a malignant and a turbaned Turk
> Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
> I took by th'throat the circumsized dog
> And smote him – thus.
>
> He stabs himself (Shakespeare 1975, 1057)

In this case, Othello, the moor of Venice, discards his subjectivity and performs an act of death as another character—i.e., not on behalf of himself, but in the role of a turbaned Turk, whom he himself once stabbed in Alepo. Othello is mimicking both himself as the murderer, and the Turk, murdered by him. Only this is not to simply imitate another person, but to die in the specific regime of repetition, in which one inevitably performs somebody else.

Similarly in *King Lear*, when Lear is abandoned in the midst of the storm after being evicted by Regan and Goneril, he seems to lose his mind and tries to hang himself. But while doing that, Lear

enacts his own suicide via hanging as the humorous trial over his daughters. He thus plays simultaneously his daughters and the prosecutor who hangs them (Shakespeare 1975, 1087–88). Ontically this is an act of suicide (in the play Kent saves Lear from it). But Lear's conduct—an attempt to hang himself as if he were his daughters—unfolds in the excessive regime of repetition as a performing act (Shakespeare 1975, 1087–88). The scene contains mimicry, but what one mimics (punishment of daughters by enacting their execution in person) is not at all the exact contents and intention of the scene of repetition; rather, what is repeated and performed is the leap out of the "first" time of existence into the "second" sublime time of performative repetition, torn away from what had happened.

A very important thing to emphasize in relation to the performing act as repetition is the following: it is not that, when an actor is rendering the written score, such an act of repetition of the score automatically presupposes simply enactment of some life-story, the enactment of the first, normal, mundane reality by means of the second, performed, staged and scored one. Looking upon the logic of performative repetition in the scenes from Shakespeare's tragedies mentioned above, we could emphasize, that the performing act exists not in simply reproducing some contents from life; it subsists in performing only those moments of "normal' life, those moments of the first reality, that could have triggered the syndromatic performative conduct of enacting someone else. Thus into a play would go not simply a drunken man's usual conduct, but the drunken man's specific instigation to enact the crow; not simply a suicide of a person, but Othello's motivation to die by means of mimicking the victim once executed by him; not simply despair of a father with his merciless daughters, but Lear performing his despair by enacting the death of his daughters.

In other words, an actor mainly plays those who had already, in their own turn, been subject to play in real life (Lear and Othello are such characters); the actor plays someone who already underwent the syndrome of launching oneself into repetition and performing while still residing in the first reality. In other words, the actor plays an actor, and only in this case can the regime of repetition and performing be launched. Performing can only perform performing. Repetition repeats repetition. Acting and drama can only repeat something that had already failed to exist in the normal ontic conditions of life, shifting towards the edge of life, manifesting the syndrome of transposition into the conditions of abnormality of performative repetition. So returning to our initial example of the drunken man mimicking the crow, provided by Monastyrksy, the actor would not be interested in playing merely a drunken man vomiting, but would play *only that* drunken man who started to emit the sounds of a crow *despite* vomiting.

As stated above, one can repeat something that has already been brought to the necessity of repetitive subversion in relation to chronic time and mere life. Precisely because the prototypes of Shakespeare's theatrical characters might have fallen into the feat of acting, into the syndrome of repetition, there appears the form of dramatic score that can enact these feats of repetition. This is the reason why performing and acting are not narrative. They can only render reality, which in itself has already become an "abnormal" performative reality.

II. Pleroma of Performing

I will now turn to the title of this paper, to why performative repetition can be considered in light of the syndrome of dying at all. As mentioned above, the second reality in which performing unfolds mocks the self-preservation instinct by repetition and play and is counter to life, even ontically perilous to it. But this second reality of repetition within its own temporal unfolding and anthropometry (topology and ergonomics of distributed action), happens to be an aesthetic pleroma (plenitude). Ontically (in mundane conditions) such pleroma (performative acceleration) approximates death for the performer, the threshold of life, and is even directed towards death. This is because the temporal regime of performing, immersion into the conditions of performative acceleration contradicts self-preservation, both psychophysically and topologically. Yet in the dimension of the second performative temporality, it, on the contrary, unfolds as an ultimate effectuation of a certain excessive sequence of acts. Performative zeal as the excess of existence and a complement to it neglects the necessities of existence. If a performing act were not a limited temporary episode, it would be impossible to survive acting out this performative temporality for longer than a short period of time.

Thus, the accelerative modus of performative repetition (the second reality) happens to evolve in its own right as a form of dying, even independently of any possible story with the topic of death that might form the contents for the performance procedure. Actually we might have the theme of death as a narrative to be played. But the syndrome of dying is caused not simply by enacting the narrative about death, but by the form and regime of performative excess itself. As mentioned above, this is because performing presupposes such a degree of accelerated effectivity that it subjects life to its own expenditure. Performative repetition itself engages the death instinct in addition to any concrete peril or ruin that might be inscribed in the evental contents or a plot to be performed. It happens due to the specific quality of temporality of the second reality. (This could provide a good answer to the following question: how can the regime of repetition be tied to dying, if the situation or the happening—something to be repeated—is not necessarily exceptional or fatal?)

In the regime of the repetition's unfolding, the actor rushes towards the deadly precisely by virtue of performing instead of self-preservation; this happens by virtue of the complete exhaustion of forces instead of their economization. As Lacan puts it in his seminars on tragedy (in which he analyzes Sophocles' *Antigone*), the tragic hero always faces a certain threshold of ruin (*Atè*), which he cannot help but strive towards, given the demands of his own internal, unwritten code of ethics; he voluntarily overcomes this threshold with a decision that is "beyond life." This is not simply a striving towards death, but a striving towards a so-called "second death"—a death that knows neither fear nor self-pity, a death that is already inhuman, in which the ethical act and the aesthetic beauty of this act are fused. Lacan argues that this ethico-aesthetical performance of the striving towards death and overcoming it with an otherworldly act by a tragic hero are manifestations of the beautiful (Lacan 1997, 273–290).[3] What Lacan implies here is that a radical ethical gesture coincides with the performing act, which exceeds life and goes utterly beyond it. It is in this sense that performative acts embody life's "utmost inhuman beauty."

Thus ontically (i.e., in the physical form) the performative regime of repetition approximates death and aggravates mere life, but as performative, aesthetic eventality it exceeds life's chronic temporality. It is only in this directedness towards death that the performative mode or repetition can acquire the due aesthetic dimension, and it is this dimension that Nietzsche calls "aesthetic play."[4]

But let's look again at the temporal construction of performative repetition. Such eternity of the unfolded is constructed out of pure anthropometry of moving forth, of executive evolving "without any mediation" as Deleuze insists (2001, 13). In *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze actually puts forth his critique of Hegel's abstract logic and mediated generality by suggesting instead the unmediated mode of temporality. He talks about the logical movement conditioned by mediation in Hegel's philosophy, and another kind of movement—the discreet one without any mediation—which is actually repetition as against representation, repetition as the discreetness and physicality of movement without abstracted generalizations or "augmentation of comprehension" (Ibid.). Repetition's semiological discreetness should have no generality of semantic breadth and should be ontically different from conventional propositions and their semantic and linguistic conditions (which presuppose temporal conventionality as well).

What Deleuze describes here is quite pathological—pathological from the ontic point of view. Such discreetness is impossible and cannot be accomplished in the regular conditions of time and space; it is *out of* being and time. This mode of repetition unfolds as unmediated actualization (accomplishment), coining anthropometrically one segment with the other. These movements are taking place in ordinal, indexical, numerical time; not the time of "one, two, three," as in counting, but the temporality of "the first, the second, the third," as in enumerating (88–91). It is the temporal mode of verbs and acts, not of qualities and attributes. Such movement is then a pleromatic evolving, a self-replenishment. Charles S. Peirce's semiology has in fact similar traits in terms of its fugitive anthropometry. In it the most important thing is the will of accomplished sequence: the verb, the doing, the itinerary from A to B and then inevitably and irreversibly to C. No introspection, only the trajectory of movement. As Peirce writes in *How to Make Our Ideas Clear, "*This activity of thought by which we are carried, not where we wish, but to a foreordained goal, is like the operation of destiny" (Peirce 1878, 300).

Acting in such conditions means to be *rhythmic,* rather than chronic, metric, or even iterative. Rhythm is the quality that makes time uneven, anthropometric and irreversibly moving towards an end. Non-rhythmic cardinal time stands still; the rhythmized ordinal time moves unevenly, rushes and ends. Consequently, the rhythmic time is the one that exerts the peril of mortification.

The strange converse effect of all this is that not only is an act of repetition the syndrome of dying, but the dimension of death and dying then automatically qualifies performing arts, becoming the attribute of the performative procedure**.** Hence if one formally exerts repetition and its poetics and intonation as a performing act, one automatically acts up dying.

An interesting case in this connection is the influence that the invention of a new musical key—the diminished seventh degree—had at the end of the 16th century on the origin of opera in order to

signify the death drive. This case shows that the syndrome of dying was embodied in the performing style and intonation itself, not simply in the plot. In the musical harmony of Modern Time, its structure of keys since the end of the 16th century has been based on the diminished seventh degree. This change was entailed by the secularization of the church and sermon polyphony and was initiated by the pioneers of opera composition (like Jacopo Peri and Claudio Monteverdi) to establish a special key of tragic musical drama that would literally unfold the procedure of grief and dying even regardless of any contents, simply by formal means of intonation. After the decline of the great polyphonic tradition,[5] since the beginning of the 17th century music was grounded upon the key of the diminished seventh degree right up to the beginning of the 20th century. Hence a syndrome of aestheticized *Thanatos* permeated music, became its syndrome. Interestingly, the so-called "classical" music which we identify more with order and harmony is actually biased by the elements of perilous thanatography, is constructed around the mournful acceptance of death and consequently engages various, more or less grotesque mimicries and performings of the modalities of dying. Thus the invention of opera epitomizes the syndrome of dying. A performer in this case, even regardless of what s/he performs engages in the trope of dying by the token of enacting the procedure of performing.

An appropriate metaphor for the condition in which a performer finds him/herself would be a rope-dancer; a well-known Nietzschean example. The rope-dancer is in no way jumping into an abyss; on the contrary s/he is implementing the most balanced, composed, refined, rehearsed and subtle movements to reach from the beginning of the procedure to the end. That said, its refinement only makes sense above the abyss, only in confronting the peril of death. According to Nietzsche: only the moment that reached its utmost intensity, that leaped out of being and became the climax of life deserves to be repeated innumerable times (Nietzsche, 2011). Interestingly, what is overlooked by the versatile critiques of vitalism is that this utmost intensity of performative reality is not simply the vitality of life and its conatus; hence it is not in any way livable and vital. Such utmost degree of intensity is, on the contrary, unlivable. But paradoxical as it seems, being unlivable, it is nonetheless repeatable in the regime of the abnormality of performing.

III. Three Regimes of Performativity

It is only now, after having said all this, that I will list three main semiological paradigms of performativity. The difference between these three modes deserves broader attention and a separate paper, but let's cite them in the form of a short description in order to specify the modality of repetition I have been accounting for.

One of the main theoretical, social and ideological treatments of performativity and its emancipatory impact is based on John Austin's (Austin 1962) and Judith Butler's critique of ontology (Butler 1988, 519–531) by means of performative acts. According to this logic, what matters is the transformative power of the accident of a performative act, be it an *enoncé*, a social agency or a subversive gesture. According to John Austin's theory, the illocutionary force of speech acts is more important than any constant meaning. This force exists in implementation, in executing a certain

act, a juridical verdict or a ceremony. Examples might be: "From now on I forgive you"; "My jewelry I bequeath to you"; "I swear to do it", etc.

As known from Austin's work, what is crucial here is the success of the pronouncement. Yet such success, as Austin explicitly insists, is about law-making, about juridical legitimation. Such enoncé remains in the domain of mundane conventionality. Austin even insists that nothing that is emitted in the regime of theatre, music, or any other artistically biased performance, can be treated as an illocutive act, because its successfulness is fictitious and imaginary. Fictitious enunciations cannot be truly implemented (Austin 1962).

At first sight it seems that Judith Butler's critique of ontology is more substantial and truly undermines the regime of ontology—the regime of the perpetual metaphysical basis of events and phenomena. But in the end her idea about emancipatory transformation also remains in "being," in the mundane "regular," non-fictitious reality of existence (i.e., in the first reality). Performative behavior for Butler presupposes *hubris* and its accidentality—the contingent, subversive and accidental occurrences as against ontological permanence. But in a similar respect to Austin, for Butler hubris and its accident reside in conditions that are conventional to daily existence. As she claims in "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution," there is no transgressive or subversive act that would be irritating or would be out of place on the stage or in prescribed conditions of an artistic gesture. For example, someone in drag can only be noticed as something extra-ordinary in an everyday, normal situation—in a bus or a subway; not on a stage, in an exhibition, or in a film (Butler 1988, 526–528). In other words, the frames of artistic conduct de-realize and neutralize protest. In fact, Butler's approach represents the tendency of the last 15 years in both art and activism, which depart from the performative potentialities of the everyday and locate any subversive gesture in "mere" life while treating the hubris of performance as a democratizing agency of this everydayness. It is true that performative acts—be they speech acts, social interventions or gender performance—subvert the constants of ontology. At the same time, however, they remain in the frame of mundane life; in fact, they retain ontology, because they are stuck in this very "first" mundane reality; and even if reality is modified by means of performative agency, its ontic data remain identical to the temporality of the daily being. Evolving the semiological data in everyday conditions has nothing to do then with the regime of the excesses of performative repetition we have discussed above. This is because a performative procedure does not transpose in both cases (Austin, Butler) mere life into any *other, excessive kind* of temporality. And, hence, it is not able to acquire the syndrome of repetition and does not even attempt to do so. Performativity in this case remains in the "first," non-artistic, mundane reality.

The majority of contemporary performative practices of various kinds (dance, activism, post-dramatic theatre) reside within this first reality in their hope of transformative agency (Fischer-Lichte 2008).

In the *second* mode of performativity, which is rather an anti-performativity—in works by Derrida and Agamben—there is a substantial critique of the transformative power of any performance in general. In this critique, performance or any performative act, including mimetic repetition does

not at all manage to divert from the essences of ontology. Moreover, performative conduct and its accidentality are considered to be mere auto-affection that rather exert the pretension of sovereignty and power than implement any transformation or manifest any agency. Performativity is but an illusion of democracy that the politics of precarious being generates. Derrida's point is not only that performative speech acts or utterances are not able to exert any agency and success of the law, but the doubt that any effectuation can be completed at all ontically. For Derrida there is no sign that could verify that which has happened, the choice, or the act of will. The sign can only trace the difference. All choices are constantly deferred and hence remain secret, clandestine. Derrida dedicates numerous texts to the caesura of repetition: "La Parole Soufflée" and "The Theatre of Cruelty and Closure of Representation" on Artaud (Derrida 2005, 212–45; 292–317), several chapters in *Of Grammatology* (Derrida 1997, Part II "Nature, Culture, Writing").

It should be noted in this connection that Derrida's term *iteration (iterability*) that he uses in "Signature, Event, Context" is not at all a repetition (Derrida 1988, 1–25). On the contrary, his iterability deals with such signification, when the sign does not end or exhaust itself in inscription and therefore can only be dispersed or disseminated, rather than repeated. Such a sign is not implementing the act of repetition either semantically or semiologically. Derrida's iterability undermines the performativity that might be contained in a judgment. As Catherine Malabou emphasizes, for Derrida, "the incapacity of performativity pertains to its iterability." There is an absence in the continuous modification of presence, break in presence, the signature within the performative, which "prevent the return of life or meaning to themselves" (Malabou 2017, 135). Such disruption in life cannot bring it to any point of replenishment.

Iteration is the functioning of the sign as trace that, even when all contexts are lost, allows the sign to be recognized, as iterable. It is the form of polysemy, of the blurriness of any context, which enables the very making of a context out of any syntagm. Iteration then is about reformatting the event into a context. It presupposes the evading of presence, the singularity of presence by means of the polysemy of a grapheme. Whereas the radicality of repetition presupposes that, paradoxically, the repeated can only be something unrepeatable; repetition, despite being repeated, can take place only as something unfolding for the first and the last time.

Thus, Derrida insists on the caesura and termination of the performative and of the repetitive. For him, if anything can be repeated or performed, it is the *impossibility* of repetition or performing.[6]

What is clear from the standpoint of both (Derrida's and Agamben's) paradigms is that the pleroma of repetition in performing is treated as a redemptive claim for sovereignty, as the assertion of power and will, as the illusion and optimism of accomplishment.

Meanwhile, performative repetition—the *third* type of performativity (that we have been describing above)—concerns neither the general transformative power of the everyday, or the juridical success of the statement, nor the Derridean performance of the caesura of performance.

The third mode of repetition surmounts the teleology of the immediacy of transformation—as seen in performativity as the critique of ontology. It surmounts the conventionality of illocution

and is anything but conventional, since it is fictitious by definition. In this case the performed meaning is *not* expected to be sustainable ontically or semiotically but is repeated in the regime of the "as if"—as if it might have been what it means. The regime of repetition allows such semiological magic—when the effectivity of logical judgments, or even the accidentality of hubris in a performative act are subverted by the variabilities of those "as if" acts, including semantics, rhythm, choreography, pitch, modes of resonation. Then, the enoncé, which might literally mean one thing—e.g., "I forgive you," "From now on you are my servant or master, or friend, or brother, or accomplice"—could acquire continuous variability (Deleuze 2000, 245–250). Theatre directors know this condition very well, when one and the same enoncé can be inscribed into such versatility of choreography and intonation that it acquires variable and at times opposite meanings dependent on the maneuvers of action. Such variability is part and parcel of the specific altered temporality of the fugitive anthropometry of performative repetition.

The reason for this is that the modus of playing in repetition treats language as a score, as notated signs, which are performed and played rather than implied to signify, communicate and denote in the regime of logical judgment. Language and judgment are but a small part of the performative semiology of repetition, which incorporates for its implementation pitch, interval, choreography, and rhythm.

For Derrida it is impossible to believe in the "now" of the speech act, an emitted phrase, e.g., the phrase "I forgive you." For Austin, one would need law and the consensus of all agents to make this phrase sustainable. For the continuous variability of performing (Deleuze 2000, 245–250) the logic of the phrase "I forgive you" might mean ten various and controversial things, depending on performative design. Only this design is not about semiotic contingency and relativity: it is about the semiological conditions of transposition from the "first" temporality into the "second" temporality of repetition with its leap out of being.

This pleroma of performative repetition (second reality) unfolds in an ontically different temporality, which Deleuze calls "empty" (Deleuze 2001, 85–103). This is the reason why it (the second "empty" temporality) is amplified only by the anthropometric and discreet sequence of performed segments. As Deleuze argues in *Difference and Repetition*:

> The future and past here are not empirical and dynamic determinations of time: they are formal and fixed characteristics which follow a priori from the order of time. No future or past, but before and after. (89)

As stated above, Derrida discards this third (Deleuzean) type of performativity, since in it the rupture of being, difference and caesura are ignored in favor of the assertion of a sovereign will. Exceptionality of the present moment, the here and now as the recurrent present of a performing procedure is nothing other than the pretension of a sovereign power for Derrida**.**

Definitely, there is a strong reliance on the will of what has to be accomplished in the regime of repetition. However, the pleroma, the irreversibility of accomplishment evolves there as a paradox

in the form of playful subversion, accepting the rupture and caesura as fate, but exceeding it as well—i.e., paradoxically evolving *despite* the caesura, *despite* the abyss.

This is the reason why the time of such acting is kinetic: it consists of the semiology of physicality, almost as in gymnastics; since no contents can fill it except this repetition of the acrobatics of repetition, which turns even dying into a gymnastic trick, or a pitched, variegated and intonated *ritournelle*.

Such temporality does not supersede rupture in a vitalistic way or catastrophe with *conatus*, as is the main accusation of performance by Derrida. The rupture is accepted in this case as fate. But the act of accepting fate (fatality of death) presupposes at the same time an indifference to it. And such indifference and acceptance become performative and grotesque. Such acceptance of fate does not stick to loss and lack, to the causality of catastrophe, but rather humorously mocks the rupture and the abyss.

If Derrida restrains himself in caesura, the third type of performativity—repetition as the performative syndrome of dying—on the contrary, goes askew from caesura; it does not supersede or ignore catastrophe, but evolves distinctively despite it. The rupture is a negative degree of being, but it still resides in being with all its negativity; it is formatted by means of being. Repetition as the second time of performing transcends ontology. In such a logic of excess Christ's one cheek would be slapped in the format of *being* and the second one would be protruded for Pontius Pilate after the caesura, in the act of performing. This act then takes place already in an aftermath of catastrophe, as an excessive *supremacy of being*, the temporal and semiological logic of which does not belong to mere life.

As Deleuze writes, it is not that repetition contains something new, but the regime of repetition is itself the main news (Deleuze 2001, 6–7). Then it becomes clear how the condition of rhythm in the temporality of pleromatic repetition can at once approximate dying and accomplish itself in performing despite death and dying. This happens by virtue of indifference to death whereby dying transcends into the acrobatics of performing, which, although ontically remains to be dying, now accelerates aesthetically in the "second reality," evolving as "aesthetic play."

Such a form of temporality is characteristic for tragic dramaturgy. Oedipus, Hamlet, Lear, and Beckett's characters exert their play in this emptied (second) time of repetition superimposed on the temporality of mere life. Deleuze says that in this form of time it is not that the Subject dies, but whatever is there at all dies, or rather "it dies," together with the subject at play, quite like "it rains" or "it snows." So the regime of performative repetition demands that one is passively subject to dying to be able to play, to be susceptible to repeating and acting, as a "passive" subject, in the *passive voice* of the verb. Only in the passive voice can a Subject expose herself to the utmost vulnerability and most extreme plasticity in order to launch into the becoming-*other*, into signifying any judgment or enoncé in the variability of the "as if."

But isn't there a contradiction when we say that a passive Subject in a passive voice exerts the pleroma of accomplishment? Why in a passive voice? How can the excess of performing evolve as

passive? The reason is that the subjectivity of the regime of performing is drastically different from the subjectivity of being and existence. The performing procedure presupposes recession of the Self—recession, which is in fact epitomized by the artifice of an actor—so that it is not the active Subject of a logical judgment, but a passive Subject who permits something to befall her or him. Since without this befalling—when something external had been done to "me," then became internalized, and then again the "I" casted this something outward performatively repeating it—no transposition into the performative form of temporality would be possible.

In *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze shows in an excellent fashion the angle from which even a logical judgment can be approached as a performative phrase uttered as the performed repetition. He does this when he analyses Descartes' *cogito, ergo sum* (Deleuze 2001, 85–96). He first mentions Kant's discovery according to which the logical leap which Descartes exerted from *cogito* to *being* is seen as impossible and merely semantic, since this leap would not be possible without the temporal component. But what Kant overlooks here from the point of view of Deleuze is that this phrase is not merely in time; it takes place after caesura, in the new "empty" temporality. It is emitted as the result of the collapse into the specific temporality intertwined with the passivity of the Self. The above-mentioned passage from *Difference and Repetition* is very programmatic in demonstrating what is meant by "empty time" in which nothing happens except performative repetition; why it presupposes the passive voice for a subject, and what makes the sentence the *cogito ergo sum* tied to dying. As Deleuze manages to show, the *cogito ergo sum* is uttered as the played "as if" phrase, in a passive voice, and not as an assertive logical judgment on behalf of a monolithic thinking Subject. One cannot mount the "I" of *cogito* as a horse but can only be an actor that performs the utterance of the "I think, ergo."

Hence "cogito" is seen as the performative outcome of a certain event, which will never be known. Thus, a phrase looks like a logical judgment, but can just as well be seen as a performed repetition.

Such is the temporality in which Oedipus finds himself after his blinding, or Hamlet after staging his play. Such temporality is without content, since it is the force of rhythm itself that forms it.

Within these conditions any phrase, even "cogito, ergo sum," or "to be or not to be," is uttered in the passive voice, in the empty temporality of repetition and after the caesura of the event that intensifies the threshold of dying and transforms whatever follows after that threshold into a playful acrobatic trick.

Notes

[1] I would like to thank artist Victor Alimpiev for sharing with me this text of Monastyrsky.

[2] Pleroma (gr.)—the fullness of divine powers. The term was used in the Christian context, e.g. by St. Paul in Colossians. 2:9. In this precise case, pleroma means striving to utmost performative effectuation.

[3] Lacan (1997), Chapter XXI, "Antigone between Two Deaths."

[4] "The pathological discharge which Aristotle calls catharsis, and which leaves the philologists uncertain whether to count it amongst the moral or medical phenomena, is reminiscent of a curious premonition of Goethe's. He

says, 'I have never succeeded in treating any tragic situation artistically without some lively pathological interest, and I have therefore chosen to avoid them rather than seek them out. Could it be yet another merit of the ancients that even subjects of the most intense pathos were merely aesthetic play for them […]?' […] Anyone who can still speak only of the kinds of surrogate effect which derive from extra-aesthetic spheres, and who does not feel himself raised above the pathological-moral process, can only despair of his aesthetic nature." Nietzsche 1999, 105–106.

5 These were the composers of the so-called Netherlandish School that originated and developed in the 15th and 16th centuries and spanned over five generations. Most of these musicians were born in the "Low countries" in the Burgundian provinces of Flanders, Brabant, Limburg and wrote ecclesiastical choir music for the cathedrals and churches in Antwerp, Bruges, and Ghent. Quite a number of musicians moved gradually to the courts of Italy, Spain, Germany, France, as well as other parts of Europe—Poland, Austria, England—so that by the end of the 16th century the focal point of the Western musical world had moved from the "Low countries" to Italy. The renowned representatives of the Netherlandish polyphonic school are Guillaume Dufay, Agricola, Ockeghem, Obrecht, Isaac, Josquin Deprez, Lassus and many others.

6 In fact, if we were to define the place of contemporary art performance, it would be exactly such a place of negative caesura, when whatever the body or the voice enacts, it is but litera, a hieroglyphic suspense that is then reified. I would connect such caesura of performativity with performance in contemporary art, with its temporality of time's arrest, total spatialization of time and its caesura. Meanwhile I would in no way place here any contemporary dance, or transdisciplinary performance creativity, social activism, or post-dramatic theatrical practices.

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Biography

Keti Chukhrov is ScD in philosophy, an associate professor at the Department of Cultural Studies at the National Research University Higher School of Economics. Her post-doctoral research was run at the Philosophy Institute of Academy of Sciences headed by V. Podoroga. In 2012-2017 she was the head of Theory and Research department at the National Center of Contemporary Art, Moscow, where she founded research platform Theoretic Inquiry in Cultural Anthropolgy (TICA). Chukhrov is the translator of C.S. Peirce into Russian. She has authored numerous texts on art theory, culture, politics, and philosophy. Her postdoctoral dissertation dealt with the anthropology and ontology of performativity. Her full-length books include: *To Be—To Perform. 'Theatre' in Philosophic Critique of Art* (Spb: European University, 2011), and *Pound &£* (Logos, 1999) and a volume of dramatic writing: *Merely Humans* (2010). Currently she is a Marie Sklodowska Curie fellow in UK, Wolverhampton University. Her present research interests and publications deal with 1.the impact of the Soviet economy on the epistemes of historical socialism 2. Performance studies, 3. Art-systems and 3. Neo-humanism in the conditions of post-human theories. With her video-play "Love-machines" she participated at the Bergen Assembly and "Specters of Communism" (James Gallery, CUNY, NY, 2015). Her Latest video-play "Communion" was in the program of the Kansk video film festival (Moscow, 2016) and at the Ljubljana Triennial U-3 "Beyond the Globe (2016, cur. B. Groys).