Introducing Neo-Surrealism:
The Social Science of Performance Art

By

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Brunel University London

Submitted November 2017

For my family

Abstract

This study is concerned with the obscurity surrounding the boundaries of a socio-political context and a metaphysical context, especially as it correlates to Contemporary Performance Art. This dichotomy seemingly results in symbolic conflation and therefore necessitates the inclusion of social science as part of Performance Studies discourse. The intersection of these disciplines aligns with respect to the significance of context: the role of communication when considering the phenomenon of interpreting the perspective of other individuals. In this study, the various layers appropriated to the contextualisation of Performance art are explored: how it pertains to the theatrical framework, audience, art, social order, and the sublime. To this end, the influence of the socio-political construct of reality on the theatrical framework of a performance is examined. The premise is that a socio-political context both precedes and follows a performance and likely affects

how a performance is experienced. This investigation relies upon the methodological approach of Grounded Theory that allows the freedom of exploring this phenomenon in conjunction to the development of a communicative model. To delimit the scope of this study, I primarily focus on the symbolic, insofar as it affects the context of a performance.

The analysis of this study supports the development of a theorisation that introduces an approach to the theatrical framework, defined as Neo-Surrealism. Drawing upon Immanuel Kant's philosophical work on judgement, a precept is introduced for a theatrical framework: Neo-Surrealism is a platform that constitutes the demarcation of sacred space, where the signification of the aesthetic has symbolic authority over the signification of the socio-political construct. In the present study, the term transgression as situated in a metaphysical context of sacred space, changes its symbolic signification from a complicit act against the socio-political construct to a complicit act against the limitations of perception, positioning this semiotic sign to constitute an aesthetic infinitude. This theorisation serves to support a philosophical dialectic that incorporates performative methods from Ritual Studies. This aspect of the dissertation acts as a counterpart to the documented artwork aimed at reinforcing the specific purposes as outlined through the research.

The practical portion of this study consists of three performances that rely upon the platform of Neo-Surrealism. Each performance strategically responds to the influence of the socio-political construct in separate ways. *Neo-Surrealism: What is Performance art?* (2015) contains a fictitious narrative that is integrated in an academic context. I portray several different archetypes; this theoretically makes my identity impalpable to an audience comprised mostly of students that are unfamiliar with my work. *Neo-Surrealism: The Audition* (2016) is centred on the site specificity of the performance, challenging the application of the communicative model in an unfamiliar socio-political context, Anchorage, Alaska. *Neo-Surrealism: The Rehearsal* (2017) is aimed at asserting the relevance of the platform of Neo-Surrealism by expanding the symbolic boundaries of Performance Art.

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Introduction

The purpose of this study is to develop a theorisation in support of my performance practice. My goal coincides Lyotard's view that art should always aim to present the sublime (1988: 166). I will later explore the parameters of the term sublime, but from a performative standpoint, I loosely use the term to denote a space that elicits an epiphany about reality- either subjective, objective, or both. Here, a problem emerges concerning the perspective of the performance practitioner: namely, the ambiguity pertaining to the context of their work, especially regarding the underlying assumption that performance is a form of communication. Context would therefore play an understated role for interpreting its symbols. Peter Brook, an influential theatre director who has received several distinguished accolades in his field, writes in Empty Space, signaling the ambiguity surrounding the context of performance:

> All this brings us back to the same problem. The word theatre has many sloppy meanings. In most of the world, the theatre has no exact place in society, no clear purpose, it only exists in fragments: one theatre chases money, another chases glory, another chases emotion, another chases politics, another chases fun. The actor is bundled from pillar to post- confused and consumed by conditions outside his control. (1996:31)

Peter Brook's account of theatre is seemingly aimed at diagnosing the tension underlying the disconnect between the ubiquitous way in which the term theatre functions, how it is used, and how it is understood. From a critical standpoint, the cause or the 'conditions outside of the actor's control,' seems to signal the underlying the problem corresponding between the boundaries of a theatrical framework and a socio-political context. As a performance practitioner, this problem alludes to a necessity surrounding the theorisation portion of this thesis: seeking to ground the

ambiguity pertaining to the context of a performance, bringing clarity to vague artistic ideals and impulses, such as the sublime, art, and reality. This necessity, also follows from the underlying assumption that performance is a form of communication, and context is therefore necessary to interpret the symbols ascribed to a performance. This becomes important when considering the presentation of the sublime, especially with its connotations that seemingly correlate to an infinitude. My aim for this research will modestly seek to explore the anomalies that could theoretically prevent the audience from experiencing the sublime. My hypothesis is such that the socio-political construct, as the framework that governs social reality, is a central factor for preventing the presentation of the sublime. I recognise that my own biases and Westernized prejudices may play a contributing factor for developing this view. However, this is precisely the purpose of my investigation. To develop a theorisation that accounts for the biases and prejudices of a performance practitioner into a universal and objective theatrical framework where the presentation of the sublime adapts to the site specificity or socio-political context of the performance. I define socio-political, as the intersection between civilization and culture (Lemm: 2009). The former denoting the relationship between structure and social order, the organisation appropriated to incorporating laws, rules, and boundaries that govern society and the latter with how the individual and collective negotiate consensus- the values, beliefs, and attitudes that underpin judgement, authority, and exclusion. From a performative standpoint, a socio-political context relates to site specificity, corresponding to both the physical setting and invisible influences that affect how social order is conducted; and therefore, also alludes to the audience's varying relationship to this context. This research is consequently centred upon investigating the implications and extent that a socio-political context influences a theatrical framework. By theatrical framework, I mean the communicative model that establishes the context that precedes a theatrical performance; and functions to mediate artistic impulses through symbols. This would also include the assumptions and expectations that the audience has about the context of a theatrical or performative experience. My hope is to develop a theorisation that adapts artistic and performative impulses to the seeming influence of a socio-political context. This view also implicitly begs the question surrounding the function or socio-political utility that performance art has for an audience. To further expound upon the tension between the intersection of a socio-political context and theatrical framework, I will quote extensively from Ronald Beiner's work

titled *Political Judgement* that also takes into consideration my own assumptions pertaining to a Westernized socio-political construct:

> In a political world that is everywhere dominated by technological imperatives, where the intrusion of technology and technological ways of thinking into ever sphere of life, even the most private and intimate, continues to gather pace, and where everything–cultural experience, religion, sexuality- is, accordingly, reshaped in uncomprehended ways, the simple exercise of reflective judgement comes increasingly to be regarded as outmoded. There seems to be neither place nor status for the power of ordinary human judgement, that is, for a capacity for making sense of the things around us that is unaccountable in, and cannot be submitted to the terms of technical rationality. It is in this context that we must renew efforts to define once again the meaning of citizenship, and to clarify for ourselves what it could mean to be citizens in such a world (Beiner 1983: xv).

Here, Peter Brook's account of theatre and its 'sloppy meanings' could also be attributed to the influence of technology and the condition of the actor, 'bundled from pillar to post-confused and consumed by conditions outside his control. If there is 'neither place nor status for power of ordinary judgement' (Beiner 1983: xv), then what relevance does a theatrical framework have in society? From the 'intrusion of technology' Beiner seems to appropriate its 'dominating' effects, by placing the citizen to assume a passive role in respect to 'ordinary human judgement,' and alludes to the aesthetic when refers to 'making sense of the things around us that is unaccountable in and cannot be submitted to the terms of technical rationality' (Beiner 1983: xv). How can a theatrical framework become a space designated for reflective judgement? This introduces my work succinctly, as it conceptually draws parallels to this study in a performative context while also situating this work in direct proximity to a socio-political context. The quandary surrounding the meaning of citizenship is seemingly suitable for Social Science discourse; the solution however, would correspond to Performance discourse when considering Lawrence Franks account of the world's communication network. In *Sign Image, and Symbol* (1966) edited by György Kepes, Franks provides a conceptual framework to ground Beiner's task of defining citizenship into a theatrical framework:

> Symbols, it must be emphasised, cannot and do not alter the world, but operate in and through the human actors who perceptually have learned to transform the world according to the meanings of the symbols by which they pattern their perceptions of the world and evaluate its possibilities.
>
> (Kepes 1966:8).

Here, Kepes account of symbols suitably align with my definition of aesthetics and represent the potential promise of Performance Art while Brook's account of theatre signals to the exceptions that prevent the artist from communicating the aesthetic. This research, grounded in creating a platform to present the sublime, will rely upon clearly defining the ambiguity surrounding the parameters of a theatrical framework. The limitations of the theorisation portion therefore suggests that I will be defining terms that are part of a wide range in scope of academic discourse. The theorisation portion is set up like an engineer developing a prototype airplane with the objective of flying. The parts of the prototype consist of several conceptual ideas that function with other terms, formulated with the objective of presenting the sublime. However, in this sense, I will not be able to provide concrete evidence such as flying, and the conceptual parts are limited to serve a function in accord with both Performance Studies and Social Science discourse. Here, sources could be used more critically, however, because this dissertation is aimed at introducing a new concept, the work is limited by a necessity of first establishing itself as a credible reference to build knowledge upon. From this, I will first develop a conceptual framework and ground my exploration in Performance Studies discourse. I will then analyse this question by investigating the current paradigm of the theatrical framework in relation to the socio-political construct. To delimit the scope of my exploration, my concern with the socio-political will focus on the symbolic, insofar as it pertains to the theatrical framework.

1

Conceptual Framework and Research Methodology

Preliminary Overview for Establishing a Conceptual Framework

The etymology attributed to the discipline of Performance Studies distinctly considers a hybridization of various other disciplines (Bial 2004: 43). The gap I hope to fill through my research will aim to modestly ground the obscurity of Performance Studies by suggesting how the aesthetic directly influences the discipline of Social Science. To develop a conceptual framework for presenting the sublime, I will set out to ground my exploration for this theorisation by outlining certain precepts, centred on addressing the ambiguity associated with a theatrical framework. In consideration of the audience's perspective, an assumption follows that a theatrical framework does not necessarily predicate a metaphysical context. I will therefore set out to examine the influence of the socio-political construct, by relying upon the methodology of Grounded Theory. My hope is that this approach will allow my research to integrate philosophical and conceptual analysis into a performance practise. It should be important to note that other alternatives were considered for a methodology. Auto-ethnography is seemingly fitting as it would incorporate my personal background, emotions and experiences in developing a theorisation. However, because my aims for this dissertation is centred on grounding universal terms such as art and theatre, using my personal background would be misplaced, especially with respect to Social Science. This can be further exemplified by Olu Taiwo, a performance practitioner who states in his auto-ethnographic approach in an article titled, *Urban Butoh: A performance philosophy in an age of*

digital acceleration:

> I will deconstruct some assumptions of self and identity in order to discover a
> native distinctiveness as a black British man making sense of a post-colonial
> Nigerian heritage. (2017)

This example serves to highlight how an auto-ethnographic approach indirectly leans on symbols appropriated to a socio-political construct. In other words, my preconception of identity could indirectly reveal a relationship to a socio-political context and therefore may indirectly allude to assumptions and objectifications that may influence the interpretation of the artwork. I will now explore precepts for developing a conceptual framework.   Firstly, if art is a form of communication, then I can draw upon communication models based on assumptions aimed at predictability to investigate how this basic function relates to a theatrical framework. This also serves the purpose of highlighting the causal relationship between assumptions of the individual and its respective (social) environment (Newsom 2007 70-71). From the discipline of Communications, I draw upon the term Symbolic Interactionism, as understood by Stephen Littlejohn to denote:

> How groups coordinate their actions, how emotions are understood and controlled,
>
> how reality is constructed, how self is created, how large social structures get
>
> established and how public policy can be influenced.
>
> (2002: 145)

This definition aptly fits to examine how a symbol (Kepes 1966:8) relates to the tension between a socio-political context and theatrical framework.   Here, Symbolic interactionism directly responds to the necessity of delimiting the scope of my exploration; especially in consideration with Kathy Charmaz's assumptions that

Society, reality, and self are constructed through interaction and thus rely on language and communication.

(2006: 7)

From this view, if social reality is influenced by social interaction, then it would also follow that a performance is also included in the shaping of social reality. However, critical analysis reveals that a paradox arises when considering how symbolic interactionism operates in a performative context. For Kristeva:

There exists a fundamental opposition, in the history of human thought, between symbolism, which is discontinuous, and knowledge, which is marked by continuity

(1982: 74)

This paradox becomes even more concerning in respect to a theatrical framework that also theoretically affects Kepes' notion of symbols (1966:8). I will now seek to analyse these implications for a theatrical framework.

Does the aesthetic refer to Kristeva's notion of the symbol that is discontinuous or knowledge that is continuous (1982: 74)? As a performance practitioner, I create artwork through a process that assumes a relationship to symbols (Kepes 1966:8) that exist within a metaphysical context. By this I simply mean that the aesthetic, as discontinuous (1982: 74), has infinite possibilities of interpretation, especially when considering how symbols relate to other symbols. More specifically, it also represents the infinite possibilities that a symbol can be defined or contextualised in respect to meaning. Here, this definition of a metaphysical context aligns with my previous definition of the sublime insofar as an individual is willing to explore its implications; the epiphany would result from examining how the perception of reality is affected or influenced

by this experience. This view of a metaphysical context suitably fits as a precept for developing a theatrical framework with the aim of presenting the sublime, however, because of the presupposed ambiguity surrounding the meaning and communicative function of art and theatre, (Brook 1996:31), further investigation is necessary for resolving the seeming paradox appropriated to symbols and knowledge. In other words, presenting artwork in a theatrical framework does not necessarily assume that its symbols correlate to a metaphysical context *a priori*; especially when considering how a theatrical framework indirectly signals to a socio-political context. Knowledge, (1982: 74) seems to appropriate symbols to a socio-political context, the implication being that there are certain expectations of symbols *a priori,* that correspond to a history and therefore influence communication. I will now seek to examine how symbolic interactionism functions with respect to the ambiguity surrounding theatre: (Brook 1996:31) to formulate a strategy for aligning the symbols presented in a theatrical framework to a metaphysical context. For this, it becomes necessary to draw upon philosophical discourse to investigate the seeming obscurity surrounding how symbols are interpreted in a theatrical framework.

Here, a direct parallel can be made to the sorites paradox that specifically corresponds to the problem when 'indeterminacy surrounds limits of application of the predicates involved' (Hyde, 2014). In other words, how can something defined in a vague manner as Brook suggests about the term theatre, (1996:31) have concrete application, whereby the function of a communicative expectation corresponds to meaning. This philosophical problem corresponding to discourse in Logic is also known as the heap of sand paradox that can be explained by Professor Timothy Williamson succinctly, in an essay titled, *On vagueness, or, when is a heap of sand not a heap of sand?* where he states:

Imagine a heap of sand. You carefully remove one grain. Is there still a heap? The obvious answer is: yes. Removing one grain doesn't turn a heap into no heap. That principle can be applied again as you remove another grain, and then another… After each removal, there's still a heap, according to the principle. But there were only finitely many grains to start with, so eventually you get down to a heap with just three grains, then a heap with just two grains, a heap with just one grain, and finally a heap with no grains at all. But that's ridiculous. There must be something wrong with the principle. Sometimes, removing one grain *does* turn a heap into no heap. But that seems ridiculous too. How can one grain make so much difference? (2016)

Here, the paradox would be resolved if a heap of sand were to be defined, however what criteria would be used to demarcate the boundary between a heap and no heap? In other words, if a theatrical framework encompassed precise definitions of theatre, art, and socio-political with distinguished boundaries, then the paradox would be resolved. Here, from a symbolic interactionist point of view, critical analysis suggests a possible explanation for Brook's account of 'theatre' and its 'sloppy meanings:' (1996:31) ambivalence could be indirectly caused by the contention associated with assuming authority to separate these boundaries. I will therefore set out to develop the platform of Neo-Surrealism to function as a theatrical framework that can be universally understood by clarifying its terms and aims, serving the purpose of resolving the presupposed ambiguity surrounding the communicative model that mediates the symbols of a performance. As another precept, I will also seek to investigate how the symbol relates to authority and how it influences a theatrical framework.

By drawing upon the Sorites Paradox, I will now be able to formulate a strategy from a symbolic interactionist point of view, to locate, assign, and set up an expectation for symbols that function as discontinuous in a metaphysical context and knowledge that assumes the continuity of symbols in a socio-political context (1982: 74). Here, I extrapolate from Kepes' account of symbols that highlights the importance of 'human actors who perceptually have learned to transform the world according to the meanings' (Kepes 1966:8). Edgar Rubin, a psychologist whose work deals with visual perception provides a model, the Rubin Vase, (1915) for grounding philosophical problems surrounding ambiguity into a concrete conceptual framework that aptly simplifies the scope and aims of this theorisation.

Figure 1.1 Rubin Vase
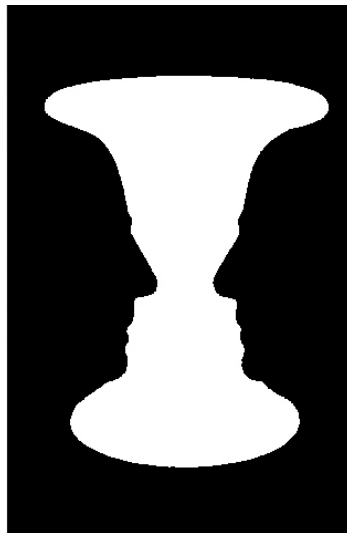
Here, this visual clearly demonstrates how two distinguished images can share a common border. This becomes useful for a theatrical framework because it suggests that a socio-

political context and a metaphysical context can co-exist. To my ground my research, I will now demonstrate how I intend to conceptualise a theatrical framework.
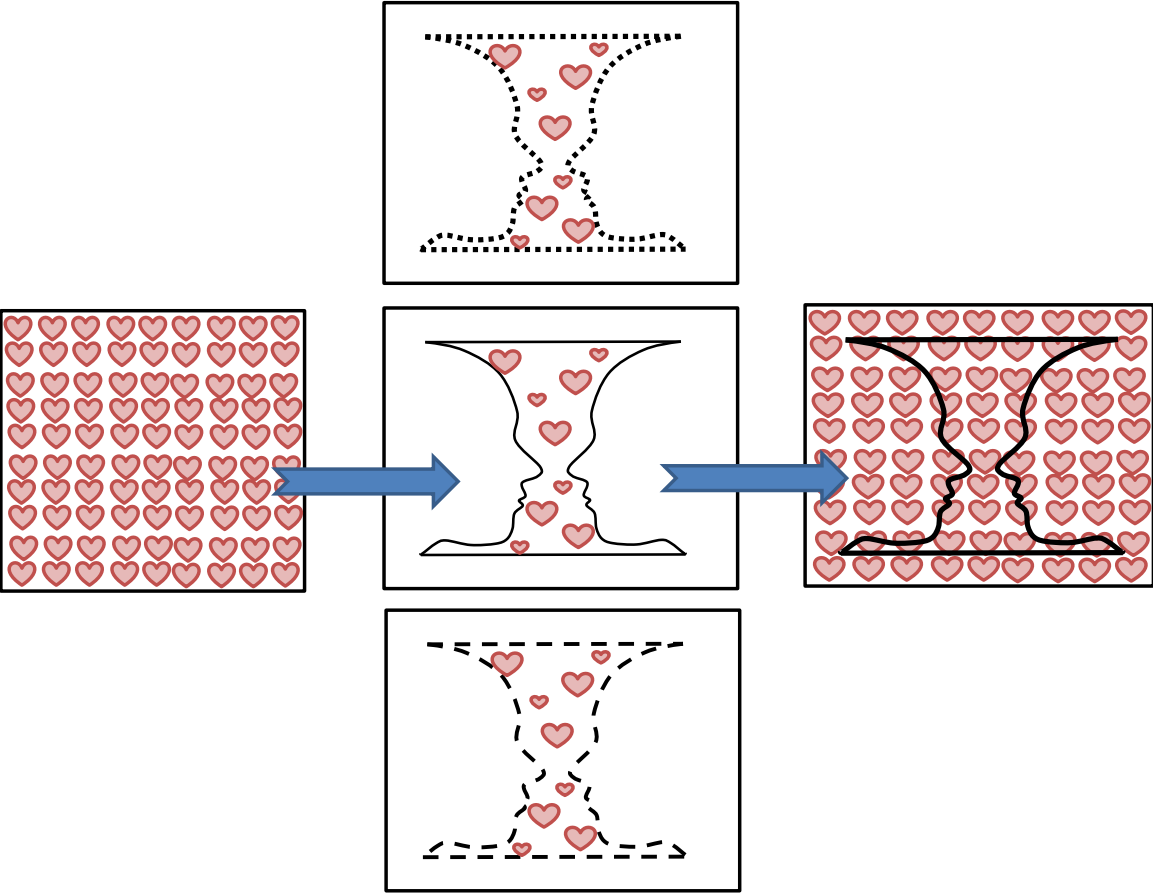
Figure 1.2 Rubin Vase Conceptual Framework

The Rubin Vase Conceptual Framework uses the symbol of a heart to represent the aesthetic symbol of love as an example to emphasise a performative context. The box on the left represents a metaphysical context, discontinuous, and assuming infinite possibilities of interpretation, akin to the infinite grains of sand from the heap of sand paradox. The middle row represents the vase as a socio-political context, to denote how the symbol of love could pertain to knowledge that is continuous. The assumption being that a socio-political context varies with different socio-political constructs. The box on the right conceptually represents the theatrical framework of Neo-Surrealism, where the perception of Love can be interpreted from the perspective within a socio-political context, and in respect to the infinite possibilities of interpretation corresponding to a metaphysical context. The faces allude to the representation of the sublime with implications that suggest that a metaphysical context also indirectly defines a socio-political context. Following from the model, the sublime would be qualified by perceiving the aesthetic in a different way; and quantified by the questions that follow from exploring or reconciling the dichotomous relationship between the aesthetic in a socio-political context and metaphysical context. At this juncture, it has yet to be determined what is a socio-political context entails and how Neo-Surrealism as a platform can signal to the presentation of the sublime.

Methodology

Grounded Theory methodology was first introduced in 1967 by sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss as a strategy for qualitative research, particularly social science (Charmaz 2006: 4). In the book *Constructing Grounded Theory*, Kathy Charmaz outlines the characteristics of its methods. Since there is an extensive amount of work written about Grounded Theory; I will

primarily be relying upon these following parameters that succinctly encompass my methodological approach to this study. According to Charmaz, Grounded Theory is:

> Systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analysing qualitative data to construct theories grounded in themselves…construct these data through our observations, interactions, and materials that we gather about the topic… we study our early data and begin to separate, sort, and synthesise these data through qualitative coding…attach labels to segments of data that depict what each segment is about…distills data, sorts them, and gives us a handle for making comparisons with other segments of data... creating abstract interpretive understandings of the data (2006: 2-9).

Because the nature of my artistic practise and queries of this research pertains to a metaphysical context, I will rely upon Charmaz's approach to Grounded Theory that allows the freedom of inductive reasoning to develop a conceptual framework. Since the aims of this dissertation is centred on developing a theatrical framework, I integrated grounded theory with the Universal Systems Model to ground my exploration of abstract concepts. More specifically, this approach allowed me to visually see pertinent relationships between ideas.

ELECTRIC CIRCUIT

SWITCH

BATTERY

LIGHT BULB

WIRE
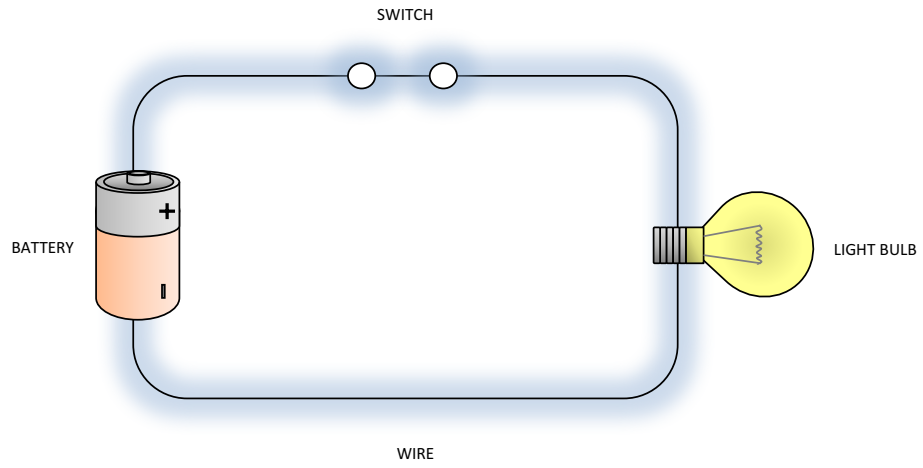
Figure 1.3 Universal Systems Model

Figure content (hand-drawn concept map):

OPENING | Balance Writer, Stores case.) Object of Analysis (content), Reader, FORMAL PROPERTIES OF LANGUAGE

PRESENT THE SUBLIME
DEFINE
CONTEXT
SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT
TO WHAT EXTENT DOES S-P CONTEXT INFLUENCE THEATRICAL FRAMEWORK
PROBLEM — CURRENT THEATRICAL FRAMEWORK
TECHNOLOGY → REFLECTIVE JUDGEMENT
THEATRICAL FRAMEWORK
SYMBOLS DO NOT ALTER WORLD
AGENTS — PERCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
ALL ENUNCIATION IS THETIC — IDENTIFICATION
SYMBOLISM VS KNOWLEDGE
SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT   METAPHYSICAL CONTEXT
AESTHETIC
SORITES PARADOX   AUTHORITY —
LIMITS OF PERCEPTION
AUTHORITY
MATTER
METHODOLOGY/ CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
SCIENCE
PHENOMENOLOGY
ONTOLOGY
CASE
NEU-SURREALISM
IF I CAN DEFINE SOCIO-POLITICAL
ASSUMING THETIC, REFLECTING UPON IDENTITY THROUGH EXPLORATION OF SYMBOLS
USE RITUAL TO CREATE METAPHYSICAL CONTEXT
THEN I COULD THEORETICALLY PRESENT THE SUBLIME

POLITICS VS ART
MARKETING
PROPAGANDA
ORLAN
MERIT/MEASURE OF ARTWORK (OBJECTIVE)
FEEDBACK
CRITICS
FASHION
EMPHASIS ON CONTEXTUALISATION OF ART
CHORA   THETIC   LACAN MIRROR
SEMIOTIC   KRISTEVA   RANCIERE
ASSUMING INFLUENCE OF SOCIO-POLITICAL CONSTRUCT
PROPERTIES OF METAPHYSICAL CONTEXT
SUBLIME   JUDGEMENT
POLITICAL TELEOLOGY

EISENSTADT
SOCIO-POLITICAL CONSTRUCT
SURREALIST MOVEMENT
DEFINE/ METAPHYSICAL CONTEXT
SYMBOLIC HEGEMONY
LIMITATIONS OF WORK

NEU-SURREALISM

Figure 1.4 Application of Grounded Theory

Following from this approach, in this chapter, I first set out to analyse and extrapolate patterns circumventing the contextualisation of contemporary performing artist Orlan, namely: through her art work, interviews, and lectures. In chapter two, I will investigate the surrealist movement through a historical analysis with the aim of drawing parallels between Orlan and her relation to the socio-political construct.

My hypothesis is such that the current paradigm of the theatrical framework, as a social context or expectation, restricts the semiotic signification of a performance to the socio-political; namely

because of a dependence upon the socio-political context for every day physiological needs of survival. Furthermore, I would argue that we are currently living in an era of symbolic conflation, especially, with respect to the recent advancements in technology; it therefore becomes difficult to gauge where the boundaries between the individual, media, and the socio-political construct of reality exist (McDougall 2012: 6, Beiner 1984: xv). This becomes significant from a symbolic interactionist (Charmaz 2006: 4) point of view; especially if analysed in accordance with Schopenhauer's account of perception. According to Schopenhauer:

> Our mode of perception is a consequence of the survival mechanism of the will
>
> and thus the primary task of our perceptual organs and our mental capacities is
>
> to shape the world of representation in such a way as to give best expression to
>
> our willing nature
>
> (1818: 284).

Here, I draw upon Schopenhauer to highlight the implicit, symbolic dependence that the individual has on the socio-political construct as means of survival. In other words, from a symbolic standpoint, (Kepes 1966:8) the interpretation of performance art could therefore oscillate between the tensions of altruism and self-preservation. How does our 'willing' nature (Schopenhauer 1818: 284) affect interpretation and what are the implications for a performing artist? As such, my performance practice is a direct response to these questions, seeking to establish a metaphysical context for a theatrical framework. In chapter four I will present the communicative model, Neo-Surrealism, designed specifically to address the influence of the socio-political construct on the theatrical framework. Chapter five will discuss the application of the theorisation encompassed from this research.

Grounded Theory - Conceptual Framework.

Since the 1970s, there has been a trend with performative strategies surrounding the psychological and physical use of 'bodily pain and decrepitude' (Warr 2015:32). Some notable contemporary performing artists would include Marina Abramović, Orlan, and Stelarc. While Orlan would argue that her work is different than the contextualisation of 'bodily pain,' it nonetheless has the psychological effect comparable to 'bodily pain,' especially from the visceral impression it evokes (MutleeIsTheAntiGod, 2011). However, it is not yet clear whether contemporary performance art is intended to be understood in direct proximity to a socio-political context and this inquiry is precisely the purpose of this investigation. From the perspective of a performance artist, my interest is to understand how performance relates to the socio-political construct. For the purposes of this research, it may be necessary to conceptualise this trend of 'bodily pain and decrepitude' in conjunction with a socio-political context; I will, therefore, proceed by using the terms 'abject' and 'transgression' as terms that seem more appropriately fitting for examining the scope of this performance phenomena. I will now proceed to define and elaborate on these terms. Here, I explicitly use the *Oxford Dictionary* to explore the underlying assumption of authority in defining terms in a socio-political context. I also rely on this source to explicitly anchor terms in a socio-political context that also functions to highlight relativity-distancing my position within an argument as separate from the term used in an objective view. In other words, locating the term from the perspective of a satellite that simply identifies the term as defined by a specific location within the socio-political context. For example, the definition of abject as: '(of something bad) experienced or present to the maximum degree; (of a person or their behavior) completely without pride or dignity; self- abasing' *(Oxford Dictionary 2017*), signals a boundary that excludes. This

definition of the term presents a paradox and contrasts considerably when juxtaposed to Julia

Kristeva's account of abject:

> If it be true that the abject simultaneously beseeches and pulverizes the subject,
> one can understand that it is experienced at the peak of its strength when that
> subject, weary of fruitless attempts to identify with something on the outside, finds
> the impossible within, when it finds the impossible constitutes its very being, that
> is none other than abject.
>
> (Kristeva 1984:5)

Here, the paradox is made visible as both definitions illustrate seemingly opposing points of view

in respect to the socio-political construct. The former definition implies a qualification of abjection

that assumes a superior moral position; while the latter is seemingly centred on the individual's

disposition, where the 'impossible' reflects a metaphysical context and 'weary of fruitless attempts

to identify with something outside signal to a socio-political context (Kristeva 1984:5). For the

purposes of this study, both definitions of the term are useful, as they allude to a wide scope of

viewing a symbol in a socio-political context. The polarity attributed to the term is precisely the

focus of my investigation in this research.

The term transgression also signals a socio-political context as the definition is aligned with a

'violation of moral or social boundaries' (*Oxford Dictionary* 2017). From this perspective,

Performance Art could therefore use the strategy of transgression as a means of negotiating how

abject is defined (Kristeva 1984:5). What are some implications that follow? Would abject or

transgression in performance signal a political act? From a critical standpoint, how can a

performance practitioner distinguish the boundaries between a socio-political context and a metaphysical context? Here, the obscurity between these boundaries seems impalpable, especially from the point of view of the audience and the interpretation of the performance. To investigate the polarity attributed to the boundaries between a socio-political context and metaphysical context, I will aim to conceptualise this scope by examining transgressive performance from the perspective of means and ends. For example, if Performance Art explicitly alludes to a socio-political context, could the art symbolically be reduced to a form of protest? In other words, is Performance Art used as a political strategy, a means to a political end? If this is true, would it still be considered Performance Art? In the Diego Gambetta's, book titled, *Making Sense of Suicide Missions* (2006), self-immolation is examined by Michael Biggs as a form of protest in the chapter: 'Dying without Killing'. He gives a notable example when Thich Quang Duc, an elderly monk, set himself on fire in response to the conflict between the Buddhist and the Diem regime in South Vietnam (Gambetta 2006: 173-208; 320-24). While this act seems to be aimed at a political end, it could also be interpreted to represent the means to a metaphysical end or an ideal. To a certain extent, this resembles contemporary performance artists adhering to the implicit aim of a metaphysical end, commonly known as art. For example, artists that use extreme forms of self-inflicted bodily pain as metaphysical representations. Tracey Warr describes how this performative strategy is intended to provoke the audience in a socio-political context. In her book, *The Artist's Body* (2015), she elaborates upon this further under the subject heading: 'The Personal is Political', by pointing out how bodily pain becomes a point of transgression:

> The performance of bodily pain and decrepitude has become a crucial strategy to
>
> imprint the psychic sufferings of individual and collective subjects on the social

screen… To reveal symbolically the structure of agreements that we make as we

try to come to terms with an unsettling, indeterminate, consciousness of our own

bodies.

 (Warr 2015:32)

This striking resemblance to Kristeva's account of abjection (1984:5), suggests that bodily pain

(Warr 2015:32) is a performative strategy to express abjection. For insight into how this strategy

could align with a metaphysical context, I will look at 'grotesque realism', where Mikhail Bakhtin

likewise provides insight into the abject through degradation:

To degrade is to bury, and sow, and to kill simultaneously, in order to bring forth

something more and better. To degrade also means to concern oneself with the

lower stratum of the body, the life of the belly and the reproductive organs; it

therefore relates to acts of defecation and copulation, conception, pregnancy, and

birth. Degradation digs a bodily grave for a new birth; it has not only a destructive,

negative aspect, but also a regenerating one. To degrade an object does not imply

merely hurling it into the void of nonexistence, into absolute destruction, but to

hurl it down to the reproductive lower stratum, the zone in which conception and

a new birth take place

 (1984: 21)

This dichotomy resembles the polarity ascribed to the definition of abject, in both a socio-political

and metaphysical context. As a performance strategy, this boundary between both contexts is

seemingly aimed to co-exist, however, it would be an assumption to presume that the audience is

aware of this distinction. The main weakness of conflating a socio-poltical context with a

metaphysical context, is that the symbols of interpreting a performance, favour the socio-political context. This distinction is further exemplified through the term abject *(Oxford Dictionary 2017)* as it refers to the socio-political context, and is arguably symbolically more disseminated and therefore more recognised among the social consciousness than the term as appropriated to a disposition of an individual. This discrepancy appears to support that from a symbolic standpoint, the theatrical framework is influenced by the socio-political construct.

I intend to use Grounded Theory as a means of investigating the phenomena of symbolic interactionism as it pertains to Contemporary artists Orlan, and Marina Abramović and their relation to the socio-political context. I will draw comparisons between their performance work and the paradox that surrounds art in the context of abject and transgression. I will begin by examining the Contemporary Performance Artist Orlan through a contextual analysis of her own work, titled *Carnal Art(2001):*

> Carnal Art is self-portraiture in the classical sense but made by means of today's technology. It swings between defiguration and refiguration. Its inscription into the flesh is due to the new possibilities inherent to our age. The body has become a « modified ready-made », no longer seen as the ideal it once represented, not ready enough to be adhered and signed (Orlan.eu, 2017).

Orlan's description of her work seems to allude to a metaphysical context. For example, 'self-portraiture in the classical sense' seems to refer to a painting. Here, the painter would assume authority over the context because implicit in the painting is the mystery surrounding the process. Orlan seems to follow with this intent by situating the body in a similar manner to Bakhtin's

account of degradation and grotesque realism (1984: 21). This contextualization, however, becomes misleading when interpreting her work as she provides a contradictory statement that alludes to a different intention. In the *Carnal Art*, she explicitly states, "my work is a critique on beauty and on cosmetic surgery as it is usually used" (MutleeIsTheAntiGod, 2011). Taken directly from the work itself, Orlan is alluding to the intent of her work directed at a socio-political context. However, this is in part misleading because her contextualisation is in fact, part of the artwork itself. From the audience's perspective, it becomes difficult to symbolically ascertain which contextualization is the means or end. In other words, the boundaries between art and politics becomes impalpable to the audience. For example, as Orlan is being operated on in *Carnal Art*, she provides more emphasis on the context of her work by stating:

> I do not care about provocation… it is simply a way of understanding
>
> the work. I would have a far greater possibility of saying things if I had…
>
> the bigger my audience, the better I can be heard. My problem is a guide
>
> for others, it's not for myself.
>
> (MutleeIsTheAntiGod, 2011)

Here Orlan seems to defend the contextualization of her work by dismissing the work as a provocation. This also seems to follow from a socio-political context as her concern seems to be aimed at an explicit message to the audience, signaling an end. There seems to be a direct tension between the paradox outlined in the previously stated definition of abject. That is, her personal disposition or discord with the external environment (Kristeva 1984:5) is in direct conflict with the societal definition and consequently, a judgement on abject *(Oxford Dictionary* 2017). This

tension is made visible in *Carnal Art* when she abruptly addresses a comparison to Van Gogh's madness:

> I disagree with the Van Gogh comparison. Cutting off your ear in a moment of madness or despair isn't the same as me. I make it my art. That's my art, not painting.
>
> (MutleeIsTheAntiGod, 2011)

The disagreement in contextualization seems to symbolically circumvent socio-political authority, a comparison to Van Gogh as an established authority in the Arts and the association with his madness, which alludes to the *Oxford Dictionary's* definition of abject, and therefore a representation of weakened symbolic, socio-political authority. While Orlan's *Carnal Art* seems to emphasise the importance of a socio-political context, the work is however, encompassed within the context of Performance Art and therefore, assumes a metaphysical context. Though, in an interview titled, *French artist Orlan: Narcissism is Important* (2009)*,* she states, 'I always tried, in my work to break barriers between sexes and genders, generations and artistic practices' (*The Guardian,* 2009). This explicit declaration of transgressive intent, provides insight into the contextualization of her oeuvre, that is, that the intent of her work seems aimed as the means to a socio-political end, or more specifically, aimed at a socio-political context. Here, certain parallels can therefore be drawn to self- immolation as a form of protest. Evidence also suggests, that context plays an important role in how Orlan intends her work to be understood. The data reported here appear to support the assumption that her Performance Art obscures the boundaries between art and politics, especially as it pertains to a socio-political context or metaphysical context. From the audience's perspective, implicit in the interpretation of Orlan's work is a correlation or

familiarity with the discipline of Performance Art as a separate context. In other words, Performance Art as a context, is attached to symbolic meaning and interpretation coinciding a socio-political context, especially from a symbolic interactionist point of view. I draw upon the work of Jacques Ranciere, to provide insight into how these boundaries manifest through the contextualization of Orlan's Performance Art. For Ranciere, the obscurity between the boundaries of a socio-political context and metaphysical context are intentionally meant to be impalpable. According to Ranciere:

> I call the distribution of the sensible the system of self-evident facts of sense perception that simultaneously discloses the existence of something in common and the delimitations that define the respective parts and positions within it. (2004: 12)

In a similar vein, Ranciere's account of the distribution of the sensible echoes Hannah Arendt's definition of politics, centred on the phenomena of appearances and disclosure. (Beiner 1983: 12). The context of Performance Art could therefore encompass an element of disclosure, a means of obscuring the boundaries between a socio-political context and metaphysical context. From this, certain implications would follow, namely, that performative strategies could intentionally use the context of Performance Art to elicit authority in a socio-political context. Here, Michel Foucault illustrates how this authority manifests in the form of power relations. Accorrding to Foucault:

> There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations (1977: 27).

Foucault's account of 'power relations' draws comparisons and provides insight into reconciling the paradox associated with the definition of abject. The field of knowledge attributed to the individual's disposition, or the subject's inability to identify with the external environment (Kristeva 1984:5) is engaged in 'power relations' (Foucault 1977: 27) with the definition of abject (*Oxford Dictionary* 2017) that signals weakened symbolic power. In other words, the subject is confronting the power relations attributed to a system; these implications add another dimension to my previous definition of a socio-political context. This could also explain why Orlan in *Carnal Art,* seemed to place importance on clarifying the comparison to Van Gogh's madness (MutleeIsTheAntiGod, 2011). Taken together, these implications suggest that Orlan's work as a 'critique on beauty,' (MutleeIsTheAntiGod, 2011) could plausibly represent a means of transgression, negotiating how beauty is judged from a socio-political perspective, and therefore reconciling Kristeva's account of the abject (Kristeva 1984:5).

The trend of 'bodily pain' (Warr 2015:32) in performance is arguably more pronounced in Abramović's oeuvre. Her implementation of this strategy is more concerning and demands investigative attention when considering the socio-political implications underlying her work. In an interview with Abramović describes her difficult childhood and reveals feeling damaged from the lack of love received from her mother; and this sentiment signals Kristeva's account of abjection (Kristeva 1984:5, The Pool, 2016) that seems to resonate through her performance art. The premise of this abjection (Kristeva 1984:5) is that a direct correlation to the socio-political construct is assumed. This association becomes pertinent when considering her work. For example, in *Rhythm O, 1974,* Abramović assumes a passive position and allows the audience to choose from 72 objects to use on her; some of which included a gun, a single bullet, and scalpel.

At this end of the performance Abramović was stripped and cut and reflects upon the experience as feeling violated (Demaria 2004: 295, Pejic and Abramović 1998:80-93). Here, evidence supports the assumption that Abramović is using the theatrical framework as a form of Transgression. By inviting the audience, the possibility of becoming complicit in violating social boundaries (*Oxford Dictionary*, 2017), the audience is provoked to confront the consequence of their actions.   This dichotomy can further be illustrated when considering that someone in the audience could have used the gun in the performance. From this performance, the boundaries between a theatrical framework and socio-political context are seemingly obscured, and therefore beget further investigation. Does the law protect Abramović from being shot or possibly killed in a performative context?

These observations raise questions in respect to the context of Performance Art, its aims and how the audience understands or relates to the discipline. Analysis of Orlan's and Abramović's work, as situated in a theatrical framework, seems to indicate that their Performance Art is influenced by a socio-political context. The question yet remains, to what extent? This view also implicitly raises the question as to whether a metaphysical context and socio-political context can co-exist. Before I proceed to examine this question, it may first be necessary to establish how I conceptualise the theatrical framework and socio-political context. My hope is that this will ground my qualitative approach to further explore abject and transgression through Performance artist Antonin Artaud and his involvement with the Surrealist movement.

2

Conceptualising the Socio-political Construct

Paradigm of the Theatrical Framework: Performance Discourse

The theatre and performance platform inhabits unique social codes that allow certain expectations. Perhaps in one sense, a performance that contains nudity is socially acceptable. However, outside of this parameter, an individual walking through the city of London nude could be sent to jail for indecent exposure, violating legislation of the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Is this distinction between the parameters in respect to the law sufficient to separate the boundaries between the context of performance and the context of society? What sort of implications follow from theatre and performance platforms, whereby performers and audiences alike engage in communication outside the boundaries of social norms and mores? What is the nature of this relationship? In the book Dance and the performative, Sanchez-Colberg and Preston-Dunlop comment on the boundaries of a performative context:

> A theatrical framework sets out the physicality of performance, in that people
> mount a work with the intention of it being watched and responded to. It also
> sets up that what is presented inhabits a world that is separated from the
> mundane.
> (Colberg and Dunlop 2002: 4)

While this may seem like common knowledge, critical analysis suggests that it is an assumption

to believe that any framework existing in the 'mundane' can separate itself from the influence of the 'mundane' or socio-poltical construct. While it could be argued that a theatrical framework inhabits a 'world' (Colberg and Dunlop 2002), it would also follow that so does a courtroom, a classroom, a pub, or casino. The fact remains, that while the accepted norms may be different, these 'worlds' (Colberg and Dunlop 2002), are still subject to be viewed within the perspective of the ever-present 'mundane,' or social order (Colberg and Dunlop 2002). For example, in the context of a performance, the audience may analyse the intentions of the performer in the form of a political agenda. Here, a possible distinction can be made: are the principles attributed to aesthetic judgement separate from political judgement? In other words, from the Rubin Vase Conceptual Framework, can a performance practitioner control the context that a symbol reflects?

As a performing artist, what is central to the development of my practice has been founded upon an interest in presenting the sublime. My development of both a theory and practice have been reciprocal sources of understanding the nature of this interest. To this end, I will therefore proceed to account how I have intended to research this phenomenon. My hypothesis is such that context plays a pivotal role with influencing the way in which a performance is interpreted. I would therefore argue that the audience is consequently affected by the preconceptions of symbols and meaning attributed to everyday-life- the context of the socio-political construct of reality, when interpreting a performance. I will now proceed to examine the underpinnings of the social order from a symbolic perspective; and aim to integrate this research with a new paradigm of signification. I will intend to explore the nature and interplay of the boundaries between a socio-political context and a metaphysical context.

Goal: Presenting the Sublime

In the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant's aesthetic theorization of the sublime incorporates the subject (aesthetic judgment) and object within the context of an infinitude (1952: 103-104). Kant equates the sublime with the phenomenon of Nature, and elaborates upon the feeling experienced by the subject as the:

> Inadequacy of even the greatest effort of our imagination in the estimation of
> the magnitude of an object… the effort towards a comprehension that exceeds the

faculty of imagination for mentally grasping the progressive apprehension in a whole of intuition, and, with it, a perception of the inadequacy of this faculty. (1952:103)

From a performative standpoint, this description becomes fruitful for liminality due to the potential grounds of symbolic receptivity in respect to audience interpretation. However, the difficulty arises when assimilating the sublime as a metaphysical context within the influence of the socio-political context. Before I expand upon aesthetization, it is necessary to elaborate upon the 'liminal' and how it relates to my practice. The term liminal is rooted in anthropology and more specifically in ritual studies. Arnold van Gennep used this term to describe the second stage related to the rites of passage, denoting a period in which the ritual subject is situated in a transitional, unfamiliar state (Bial 2004: 79). Victor Turner elaborates upon liminality by positioning the 'stage as a storehouse of possibilities, not by any means a random assemblage but a striving after new forms and structure' (Turner 1990: 11-12). From a performative standpoint, critical analysis suggests that the sensitivity outlined by the guidance of a ritual subject through this stage to new forms and structures implies that awareness of the previous forms and structures is worth examining. The question yet remains as to how the Kantian sublime becomes possible in a theatrical framework.

Social Order

I will now analyse the social order by delineating the object of my inquiry to the parameters of the sublime with a symbolic interactionist approach. In respect to my methodological approach in Grounded Theory, I will examine the socio-political construct for the purposes of supplementing my theorization; with the intent of drawing upon concrete evidence to create a conceptual metaphor of the social order. I will expound upon socio-political context. I should first preface that my aim through this analysis of the social order is centred on the utility of a performative theorization rather than as a response to the current socio-political climate. As such, my concern is to look at politics through a meta-sociological lens; rather, than advocating the associated term with ideologies related to liberal or conservative. Perhaps at its most simplistic form, I loosely use the term politics as a matter of looking at the 'interdependence of human beings, on the one hand, and individual distinctiveness, on the other' (Eisenstadt, 1978: 19). I also use the term politics in tandem with governance and the inevitability attributed to leading ideologies as to how social order

should be conducted. Additionally, I will also investigate the phenomenon of the social order from a historical account- the various patterns and changes associated with the political systems of empires; the implementation of strategies for organising and establishing expectations circumventing social order.

Symbolic Hegemony

From the Rubin Vase Conceptual Framework, the term symbolic hegemony as an abstract concept can be utilised by explicitly referring to phenomena related to defining the abstract term, socio-political context, in respect to the Universal Systems Model suited for a theatrical framework. This also functions to resolve the sorites paradox by clearly defining the vague associations with the term.   It is important to note that the term Hegemony has already been ascribed with various connotations, namely alluding to Marxism or Communism in general; Antoni Gramsci has been influential in establishing hegemonic discourse and used the term to associate power with economic dominance (2014:150). However, for the purposes of this dissertation, I will instead define and codify the use of the term hegemony, to simply represent the fluctuating strata of symbolic power *de facto* within a socio-political context. In other words, symbols within a socio-political context presuppose power relations (Foucault 1977: 27). I am therefore making a distinction between the alliances or agents that build consensus towards the legitimacy of their dominance, as separate from a basic hierarchal spectrum that encompass varying degrees of symbolic power (Watson and Hill 2003:126). However, it has yet to be determined how the utility of the term symbolic hegemony correlates to how authority is established or functions, especially as it corresponds to the Rubin Vase Conceptual Framework.   I will now seek to examine this phenomena.

Shmuel Eisenstadt has taken a sociological approach to investigate social order through the relationship of revolution as it pertains to the transformation of societies (1978: 20). He highlights a distinctive problem associated with social order, namely organizational- the identification of mechanisms and ensuring the predictability for social interaction (1978:20). Eisenstadt also suggests an emerging pattern throughout history among ruling empires, that is, 'centre-periphery relations were characterized by a high level of distinctiveness of the centre, the perception of the centre as a distinct symbolic and organizational unit' (Eisenstadt, 1978: 86). Implicit in this

statement is a valuation, priority that would regard preservation of the ruling system to take precedence over the seeming inherent purpose of social order. It would, therefore, follow that strategies are implemented to reinforce the centre. This is also echoed by Foucault's account of the 'Panopticon:' a tower representative of an institution and the ability to monitor the periphery without being seen in the process (1975: 202). However, Eisenstadt elaborates upon this even further by describing the extent that is placed upon maintaining control of the centre:

> Imperial systems were based on the assumption that the periphery could have at least
> symbolic access to the centre; such access was largely contingent upon weakening the
> social and cultural closure and self-sufficiency of the periphery and upon its developing
> active orientations to the social and cultural order upheld by the centre. The centre
> permeated the periphery by developing channels of communication and by attempting
> to disrupt the ascriptive ties of the groups on the periphery. These channels
> of communication emphasized the symbolic and structural separateness of the
> centre
> (1978: 87).

If the self-sufficiency of the periphery is intentionally weakened, how would this affect 'individual distinctiveness' (Eisenstadt 1978:19)? Eisenstadt's account of previous systems allude to the dichotomous relationship of the definition previously ascribed to abject. The weakening of the periphery is also echoed through Foucault's account of the transitory nature of punitive societal measures. He describes how the spectacle of physical bodily harm evolved to the punishment of the soul: 'The expiation that once rained down upon the body must be replaced by a punishment that acts in depth on heart, the thoughts, the will, the inclinations' (Foucault, 1975, 16). Implicit in this perspective is a psychological strategy to maintain social order. While Foucault's account is explicitly tied to punitive measures for creating social order, Rebecca Lemov provides a similar slant centred on Social order being reinforced through psychological means. Lemov outlines the history of Social Engineering in her book entitled *World as Laboratory,* 2005. She describes how institutions such as Yale were substantially funded in 1939 with the specific intention of operating experiments to modify human behavior; initially these experiments began with rats; the experiments evolved in the development of methods for human conditioning, exploiting fears and desires to control an outcome (2005: 75). Another such facet of human conditioning can be

exemplified through propaganda. Edward Bernays, nephew of Sigmund Freud (1951:9), developed and wrote extensively on emerging propaganda techniques since the war. He outlines the complexity behind the strategies intended to control human behavior by taking:

> Into account not merely of the individual nor even of the mass mind alone, but also and especially of the anatomy of society, with its interlocking group formations and loyalties. It sees the individual not only as a cell in the social organism but as a cell organized into the social unit.
> (2005:55)

Here, evidence suggests that subjectivity and therefore aesthetic judgment, could be influenced by the socio-political construct, especially when analysed in juxtaposition to Schopenhauer's will to survival (1818:284), or Pierre Bourdieu's view in *A Social Critique of the Judgment, 1984* where he uses the term habitus to denote how an individual's judgment is connected to her lifestyle that also pertain to values and expectations (Bourdieu 1984: 170). It also provides evidence that the individual's dependence upon the social construct is being exploited to target the interests of the individual. The evidence also suggests that the abject as described by Kristeva, could in fact be caused by the socio-political construct. Bernays account of the socio-political construct explicitly places power in the hands of the few (2005); however, the purpose of investigating the underpinning facets of the socio-political construct, is specifically aimed toward discovering emerging patterns attributed to the phenomena of a socio-political paradigm. For example, inductive reasoning may suggest that a symbolic hegemony occurs, and can be viewed as an encompassing spectrum of the socio-political construct. While evidence seems to coincide with a Westernised view of a socio-political context, phenomena of symbolic authority could be extrapolated in terms of a universal principle: that authority ascribed to symbols within a socio-political context rely upon other symbols to reinforce its position. For the purpose of universally defining the phenomena of a socio-political context in respect to the Rubin Vase Conceptual Framework, principles of a symbolic hegemony could serve to identify a pre-existing relationship between the audience and symbols appropriated to a socio-political context. This universal abstraction can be similarly understood by the pyramid attached to Abraham Maslow's conception of a Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow distinguishes levels of motivation according to specific needs such as physiological, safety, love, and esteem (Maslow 1943).

However, in this sense, symbolic hegemony can simply be defined by suggesting that, in a socio-political context, social order is governed through a power structure of symbols. Certain parallels can therefore be drawn of the symbolic hegemony, due to its representation being phenomenal, especially as it pertains to politics- the realm of appearances where action becomes a matter of disclosure (Beiner 1983:12). Implications of the symbolic hegemony indicates, especially from a performative standpoint, that transgression *(Oxford Dictionary* 2017), as previously defined as a, 'violation of moral or social boundaries' necessitates an expanded view of the term-especially in juxtaposition to Kristeva's account of abject (Kristeva 1984:5). Here a correlation becomes available: the 'violation of moral or social boundaries' is distinct from a defense of an individual's moral or social boundaries. From this expanded view of transgression, Orlan's emphasis on the contextualisation of her work, reconciles the boundaries between a socio-political context and a metaphysical context. The subject's defense of moral or social boundaries is separate from being complicit towards the socio-political construct. This view, consequently allows for a metaphysical context to emerge, as the symbols would not align with serving a political agenda. However, this view of transgression has yet to integrate with the established symbolic hegemony as it coincides a theatrical framework. It therefore becomes necessary to examine the abject (Kristeva 1984:5) from the perspective of the institutional authorities that define abject.

For Jacques Rancière disclosure goes beyond politics and into aesthetics where he considers different regimes having the intent of seeking to claim authority over different aesthetic practices (2004:21). One such example is the aesthetic regime; the ethical regime (2004) can be exemplified by Nicolas Bourriaud, a director of the contemporary art magazine *Documents sur l'art* (1992–2000), who wrote about 'Relational Aesthetics' (2002), proposing that:

> Rather than the artwork being an encounter between the viewer and an object,
> relational art produces intersubjective encounters. Through these encounters, meaning
> is elaborated *collectively*, rather than in the space of individual consumption
> (Bourriaud 2002:17).

Here, critical analysis points to several implications. Firstly, the boundaries between a theatrical context and socio-political context can become blurred and secondly, it becomes evident how the

socio-political context can influence aesthetic judgment and therefore demonstrates the need to examine the parameters of the theatrical framework. While this analysis in regards to the nature of the socio-political construct leans more to the Western tradition, the evidence nonetheless suggests how symbols (Kepes 1966:8) correlate to Ranciere's distribution of the sensible (2004:12); that a symbolic relationship can be ascertained between the various forms of centralised power (Eisenstadt, 1978: 86) and the dependence upon those symbols for survival (Schopenhauer 1818: 284). Also, that the symbols surrounding centralised power could in fact indicate a dependence involving a symbiotic relationship as a means of reinforcing the centre; these symbols could also be predicated upon the prevalent resources available by proximity to centralised power (Eisenstadt, 1978: 86). From a performative standpoint, this investigation alludes to the development of a theatrical framework that adapts to the site-specificity appropriated to universal principles of any socio-political construct. While the various forms of centralised power seem to always fluctuate, evidence from investigating the properties and patterns of the social order seems to indicate that the paradigm of the centre-periphery relations (Eisenstadt, 1978: 86) remains consistent. Here I draw upon my previous analysis and the work of Sociologist Georg Simmel to define and conceptualise the socio-political construct with a metaphor, namely of fashion, that functions to serve both the Universal Systems Model and the Rubin Vase Conceptual Framework. According to Simmel:

> The essence of fashion consists in the fact that it should always be exercised by
> only a part of a given group, the great majority of whom are merely on the road
> to adopting it. As soon as fashion has been universally adopted, that is, as soon
> as anything that was originally done only by a few has really come to be practised
> by all- as is the case in certain elements of clothing and in various forms of social
> conduct- we no longer characterise it as fashion. Every growth of a fashion drives
> it to its doom, because it thereby cancels out its distinctiveness
> (Clarke, Doel and Housiaux 2003: 238).

Central to my use of this metaphor is the correspondence of the socio-political construct to the aesthetic. I will therefore proceed to use this metaphor and define the term Performance Fashion to indicate the phenomena attributed from Simmel's account of Fashion as it parallels the research corresponding to the symbolic hegemony (Clarke, Doel and Housiaux 2003: 238). The utility of

Performance Fashion serves to locate a socio-political context within the conceptual framework of the Rubin Vase model. From a performative standpoint, this allows a general view of extrapolating from any socio-political context with the assumption that the power structure associated with social order also corresponds to Performance Fashion. If, however, symbols 'operate in and through the human actors who perceptually have learned to transform the world according to the meanings of symbols,' (Kepes 1966:8) then this also implies that a socio-political construct, as a conglomerate of symbols, also pertains to the aesthetic. Following from the Rubin Vase Conceptual Framework, it could be concluded that a socio-political context also indirectly refers to a participation in regards to defining its parameters. Consequently, symbols appropriated to social order serve a unique function, however, these symbols also exist independently, and in respect to a metaphysical context; distinguished insofar as a socio-political construct is defined. In other words, if a socio-political construct ceased to exist, the infinite possibilities of defining the structure that governs social order would still refer to a metaphysical context. Previous analysis suggests that both socio-political context and metaphysical context have been identified in relation to the Rubin Vase Conceptual Framework. However, it has yet to be determined how to locate the criteria that influences the meaning ascribed to the aesthetic. I will now proceed to examine this phenomenon, especially as it corresponds to the sublime.

Judgment

Is it possible for the audience to be able to symbolically decipher the difference between a socio-political context and a metaphysical context? Here, I will aim to approach the presentation of the sublime by analysing the facets of judgment as it correlates to a theatrical framework. For Kant, central to his view of the sublime was to distinguish a pure judgment:

> It must have no end belonging to the Object as its determining ground, if it is to
> be aesthetic and not to be tainted with any judgement of understanding or
> reason.
> (Kant 1952:101)

Critical analysis would indicate implications that follow from the Kantian notion of a pure judgment: to have no end belonging to the Object also signals a means. If the audience perceives the performance as a reflection of their 'will to survival' (Schopenhauer 1818: 284) and thereby

indirectly also alluding to the socio-political construct, then this judgment would thwart the experience of the sublime. For example, ethnocentric judgment alludes to this, defined by *Oxford Dictionary* as the 'evaluation of other cultures according to preconceptions originating in the standards and customs of one's own culture' (*Oxford Dictionary*, 2017). In a similar vein, confirmation bias, defined as the tendency to interpret new evidence as confirmation of pre-existing beliefs or theories, also signals judgement centred on the socio-political construct (*Oxford Dictionary*, 2017). For Kant, this would only be the case as being a determining ground; the audience could therefore experience the sublime from a pure judgment and then reflect upon those implications to the socio-political construct or their willing nature (Schopenhauer 1818: 284). One key facet that Kant appropriates to aesthetic judgment is that it must remain autonomous from heteronomous judgment (Beiner 1983: 47). Here Kant's notion of heteronomous judgement is understood as judgement that is influenced by others and therefore alluding to a socio-political context. In *Political Judgment*, Ronald Beiner asserts that Kant's, 'stress upon autonomy and formal right induces him to exclude teleology, on principle, from his definition of the political, and this leads to a conception of politics that seems indifferent to the provision for human needs (1983: 71). I would argue that political judgment in a theatrical framework, should be understood in conjunction with teleological judgment because it therefore emphasises the distinction between the human need for survival (Schopenhauer 1818: 284) and the socio-political construct as a means for that end. From a performative and symbolic standpoint, political judgement as teleology becomes fruitful because it allows the performance practitioner to conceptually abstract symbols linked to the socio-political construct in a metaphysical context. For example, if I presented an aesthetic that indirectly provokes the audience's disposition to a socio-political context, it could also signal to a metaphysical context if abstracted as an aesthetic appropriated to authority; leading to further questions such as how should authority be used? What criteria is necessary to determine authoritative roles? I will therefore use the term Political Teleology, to denote how a socio-political context corresponds to a teleology in a metaphysical context; from a symbolic standpoint, teleology, assumes that the function or purpose of the aesthetic is to be explored and examined in respect to its infinite possibilities of definition and meaning. This view, explicitly takes a polemic stance in respect to limitations of the aesthetic:

the simple exercise of reflective judgement comes increasingly to be regarded as

outmoded. There seems to be neither place nor status for the power of ordinary human judgement, that is, for a capacity for making sense of the things around us that is unaccountable in, and cannot be submitted to the terms of technical rationality. (Beiner 1983:xv)

Political Teleology conversely represents how 'reflective judgement' (Beiner 1983:xv) correlates to the 'human actors who perceptually have learned to transform the world according to the meanings of symbols' (Kepes 1966:8). Here, Political Teleology also serves the function of conceptualising and accessing a symbolic interactionist utility in the context of its application to the Rubin Vase Conceptual Framework.

Kant's view of the sublime seems to indicate a means of locating the shared boundary between the socio-political context and metaphysical context from the Rubin Vase Conceptual Framework: through the aesthetic of authority. This can be illustrated through an article written by Nathan Rotenstreich where he discusses the Kantian sublime, asserting that 'judgments of the sublime are projections of respect' (1973: 238-9). This view echoes the nature of the symbolic hegemony centred on authority and disclosure (Beiner 1983:12). Rotenstreich is referencing 'respect' (1973: 238-9) to Kant's description of the sublime (1952: 103) as the perception of the inadequacy of a mental faculty to grasp the magnitude of an object (1973: 238-9). Here, political judgement could align with Political Teleology, with the Object becoming the means of survival. In other words, even if the audience is influenced by heteronomous judgment or the socio-political construct, the principle of respect would allow the possibility of surrendering the end belonging to the object; the socio-political construct or heteronomous judgment could still act as the source or impulse to experiencing the sublime. For example, from a performative standpoint, exploring the aesthetic in a metaphysical context that assumes a fictitious narrative could become a means of survival for a socio-political context. However, evidence seems to indicate that this would only be possible through Kantian respect (1973: 238-9).

Through this chapter, I have explored the boundaries between a socio-political context and metaphysical context. From a symbolic standpoint, evidence suggests that the theatrical framework is in fact influenced by the socio-political construct. The conceptual metaphor of the

symbolic hegemony as fashion (Clarke, Doel and Housiaux 2003: 238) coincides with communication models that rely upon assumptions to determine predictability. For the purposes of this research, I will designate the term Performance Fashion, to signal the utility of this metaphor, especially as it coincides with the symbolic fluctuation correlating to the socio-political construct. It is therefore flexible in terms of the transitory nature of the socio-political construct along with being adaptable to different forms of centralised power (Eisenstadt 1978:87), cultures, beliefs that form socio-political systems. The central distinction that separates Performance Fashion from the symbolic hegemony is the emphasis placed on the aesthetic in respect to an infinitude and in conjunction to the limitations of perception. Here the limitations of perception allude to the socio-political construct as a self-referential system, especially in respect to the 'will to survival,' (Schopenhauer 1818:284) or 'hierarchy of needs' (Maslow 1943).   I will now set out to transition my research into seeking the practical means of applying the development of this theorisation. By analysing performing artist Antonin Artaud in the Surrealist movement through an inductive approach, I hope to provide insight into developing a theorization, aimed at addressing the influence of the socio-political construct.

3

Artaud in the Surrealist Movement

The purpose of this chapter is to continue with a qualitative approach and aim to discover emerging patterns relative to this study. I will therefore critically investigate surrealism as it pertains to the Surrealist political movement that began in the early 1920s, its ideologies and associations with the political revolution (Puchner 2007: 179, Waldberg 1997: 13). Furthermore, I will draw upon Eisenstadt and approach this social science material from a comparative sociological-historical perspective (Eisenstadt 2010: xvi). To provide a more in depth account, I will narrow the scope of this subject matter by focusing on Antonin Artaud's involvement, especially since he is arguably one of the most influential figures in the discipline of Performance. More specifically, I will seek to provide critical analysis on the nature between Artaud as an artist amid the political climate of his time. Through this case study, my intention is to correlate the implications of this investigation with the purpose encompassed in the platform of Neo-Surrealism, and to demonstrate how it corresponds to my specific artistic practice. I will elaborate on this in a later chapter. Central to this study is to seek and understand the underlying causes of Artaud's lack of performative success. My hypothesis follows from the previous observations of the abject: that Artaud's actions signal a lack of political awareness, especially in juxtaposition to the implications of the symbolic hegemony. In this sense, I am also delimiting the term success to Artaud's lifetime as opposed to his success posthumously. The task of quantifying someone's political awareness may seem impossible, especially in particular, a figure like Artaud whose persona is shrouded with such mystery. This may also seem difficult to prove, considering that he spent a great deal of his later years in a mental asylum under supervised care (Lepsyl, 2015). However, my approach will instead seek to explore and confront the seeming paradox of someone who was involved with the Surrealist movement yet proclaimed to have no interest in the realm of politics (O'Farrell 1996: 2). It is likely that this investigation will somehow correspond to the influence of the socio-political construct on

performance art and, therefore, provide insight into exploring different approaches to performance practices.

Introduction

To demonstrate how Artaud's actions lacked political awareness, I will first seek to draw upon the political climate of the Surrealist movement. This period is preceded by the effects of World War I and its direct and immediate impact on the stabilisation of the socio-political and economic structures. In his book, *The First World War*, John Keegan further elaborates upon the effects of this war by stating:

> It damaged civilisation, the rational and liberal civilisation of the European enlightenment, permanently for the worse and, through the damage done, world civilisation also.
> (Keegan 1999: 8).

It is likely, that the several ideologies that were formulated thereafter that proposed 'a new way of thinking, a way of feeling and a way of life' (Waldberg 1997: 12), were formulated in response to these conditions. As such, the boundaries between art and politics became a prevalent theme that permeated throughout Europe. (Alexandrian: 1970, Puchner: 2007, Waldberg 1997) For example, in Russia, the Futurist movement was considered as the first of the avant-garde (Glisic 2012: 356), influenced by Marx principles aimed at eradicating the old political structures to create a new society. The Surrealist movement also emerged and was explicitly associated with revolution (O'Farrell 1996: 2). However, for Martin Puchner, the Surrealist movement's downfall was due to a lack of cohesion in terms of determining its objective and more specifically, defining it (2006: 179). On one hand, André Breton, author of several Surrealist manifestos and widely held as the leading proponent figure of the Surrealist movement, often sought allegiances with political parties such as the Third International; while on the other hand, Antonin Artaud was primarily concerned with his own manifestos and theatre, more specifically the 'Theatre of Cruelty' (Puchner 2006: 197). I am proposing that by investigating the disparity between Breton and Artaud's approach to Surrealism as a platform, a fundamental distinction will be revealed; that their intent underpinning the form of manifesto, was entirely different. This essentially personifies authority as the shared

boundary between a metaphysical context and socio-political context; and can also be viewed from the perspective of the dichotomous relationship surrounding theatrical objectives as opposed to socio-political ones (Puchner 2006:180). Because their use of manifesto as a form explicitly makes their ambitions and claims known, then a comparative analysis of their stratagem is possible. Furthermore, I will firstly seek to investigate the parameters of this distinction.

Implications of Center-Periphery relations

Through my theorisation of the socio-political construct, a direct correlation to a symbolic hegemony was formulated. I will now proceed to examine these implications on the theoretical framework; the impact in respect to the artist, the art, and the audience. For purposes of clarity I will define these terms. I define the artist in the ubiquitous sense of an individual enacting in the process of creation. Here, possible distinctions arise: the prominent performance art figure Joseph Beuys conceived that the act of peeling a potato could be considered an artistic act if consciously done, I argue that the 'artistic act' (Lippard 1973:121) is phenomenal, existing regardless of 'consciousness' (Lippard 1973:121). For example, I would consider a child scribbling outside of the lines as art as much as a politician creating government policy. In other words, I am defining the artist in conjunction to determinism, defined as the belief that, 'all events, including human action, are ultimately determined by causes regarded as external to the will' (*Oxford Dictionary*, 2017). In this sense, I would argue that the artist can be understood as a way of referencing form. I attribute the 'consciousness' (Lippard 1973:121) of the artist to coincide with the awareness appropriated to the process of creation. In this sense, I consider the 'will' (Determinism: *Oxford Dictionary,* 2017) to coincide with determinism, as a variable that serves the function of deciphering the process of creation, or art. Here, I define art as the infinite implications of a symbol, existing independently of our perception, with the assumption being, that there are processes of nature that exist beyond the limits of our perception or understanding. In other words, I would argue that art in a socio-political context, fundamentally creates a binary opposition or dialectic, between the limitations of perception and the infinite possibilities of perception- the tensions that arise from phenomenological or ontological questions of experience. In terms of the context of a theatrical framework, there are several paradoxes that follow from the implications of considering the artist as positioned on the periphery of centralised power (Eisenstadt 1978: 86). This view is supported by, the assumption that the artist creates artwork presupposing a

metaphysical context. Artwork, would consequently represent symbols explored in a metaphysical context and shaped, defined, or formed, relative to a time and space that also presupposes the process of creation; existing as a separate phenomenon from a socio-political context. From this view, the artist would theoretically be positioned on the periphery (Eisenstadt 1978:86), as the aesthetic would reflect symbols that exist outside the parameters of Performance Fashion. Here, the term artist, also alludes to a separate connotation when considered in respect to the socio-political construct, and more specifically, the symbolic hegemony whereby certain distinctions follow. I would argue that art is revealed and preceded by a socio-political context; the artist is therefore dependent upon the socio-political construct as a means of presenting the art; and even if the art were to be presented outside of the context of the symbolic hegemony, the influence would yet still, be nonetheless arguably indirectly prevalent. To make this argument more visible, if 'the act of peeling a potato' is considered an 'artistic act' (Lippard 1973:121), the fact remains, that in a socio-political context, others' would have to recognise the 'artistic act' (Lippard 1973:121) as art. Evidence therefore suggests that the 'will' associated to determinism or 'consciousness' (Lippard 1973:121) associated with creating the artwork could also be directly or indirectly linked to the will of survival (Schopenhauer 1818: 284) or 'consciousness' (Lippard 1973:121), in respect to the symbolic hegemony. I will proceed to analyse these implications and expound upon the paradoxes that follow surrounding various perspectives of examining the theatrical framework: the artist, audience, and the aesthetic.

Symbolic Synecdoche

For the intents and purposes of this dissertation, the term: symbolic synecdoche encompasses the ubiquitous relationship between parts of a whole. For example, the parts contained within an engine, how the engine becomes part of a vehicle, the vehicle becomes part of a transportation system, ad infinitum. The symbolic synecdoche could then become a pivotal tool in measuring the extent that a performance is affected by the socio-political context as a part to the whole represented by the construct of society; especially if political empires inherently create delimitations that thwart access to the centre (Eisenstadt 1978:87, Foucault 1977: 27). This also highlights in terms of extent, understanding of the parts' implications in relation to greater wholes. In terms of the analogy, to what extent is the engine aware of the transportation system? In a similar vein, to what extent is the theatrical framework as a part, aware of the socio-political

construct of reality it symbolically subsumes? Here, the phenomena of the symbolic hegemony, forms a direct correlation to the conceptualisation of a symbolic synecdoche and Ranciere's distribution of the sensible (Ranciere 2004:12). I will now elaborate upon how this theoretical analysis coincides with a historical analysis of the Surrealist movement. While Artaud and Breton both represented prominent figures of the Surrealist movement, their relation to centralised power (Eisenstadt 1978:87) contrasts considerably. According to Puchner, Breton became the leader of the Surrealist movement because of his attachment to writing the 'Surrealist Manifesto' (2006: 184). In this sense, the Surrealist movement was symbolically positioning itself closer to centralised power (Eisenstadt 1978:87, Foucault 1977:27) as more influential people supported its ideologies. Central to the aims of the Surrealist movement was a disposition that implicitly lacked authority (Puchner 2006:5). In other words, it could be argued that the Surrealist Manifesto was precipitated by Breton seeking to establish authority. Therefore, when Artaud was exiled by Breton from the Surrealist movement, Artaud consequently lost a significant amount of authority or power in relation to the socio-construct of reality (Puchner 2006: 180). It could also be argued that Artaud was exiled from the Surrealist movement, as a result of failing to integrate the symbolic associations that reinforced the political ideologies as expressed through Breton's writing. The symbolic synecdoche as revealed through this analysis illustrates how symbolic interactionism (Charmaz 2006:7), Littlejohn 2002:145) contributes to a fluctuation of the symbolic hegemony (Eisenstadt 1978:87, Foucault 1977:27). For example, from the perspective of viewing the socio-political construct as a macrocosm, language and dialect can act as symbolic forms of delimiting access to certain structures that reinforce the center (Ranciere 2004:12). Evidence suggests that that the socio-political construct could play a vital role and influence the theatrical framework. I will now proceed to examine these implications in respect to Performance Art.

Periphery Identity Paradox

From the perspective of the artist, a periphery-identity paradox could manifest if the artist denies having a dependence to the socio-political construct, a will to survival (Schopenhauer 1818: 284). Following from the assumption that an inherent principle of the symbolic hegemony is that of disclosure (Beiner 1983: 12, Ranciere 2004:12), the artist could then obscure identity in a metaphysical context with identity in a socio-political context. This paradox manifests itself by the artist identification with Kristeva's account of abject, without an awareness that follows from

the judgement encompassed in the *Oxford Dictionary's* definition of abject (Kristeva 1984:5, *Oxford Dictionary,* 2017). In other words, the implications that follow from an artist having a lack of awareness in respect to the influence of the symbolic hegemony. If for example, the artist assumes an antagonistic relationship to the socio-political construct, this identification could result in a *de facto* symbolic reinforcement of being on the periphery of centralised power (Eisenstadt 1978:87). Because the theatrical framework also coincides a socio-political context, the art could unknowingly signal as a form of propaganda, using the theatrical framework to build consensus on ideas or symbols that reinforce its position to the symbolic hegemony. For example, from a symbolic interactionist standpoint, transgression, as a violation of social boundaries, would signal a socio-political context. Here, the distinction between performance and propaganda (Bernays 2005:55) becomes difficult to discern. For example, if the artist were to deny an identification with the socio-political construct with the aim of preserving the integrity of the art, then it would also follow that the artist would deny its weakened symbolic position within the socio-political construct. The artist would then have to reconcile the complicit act against the socio-political construct with the need to gain symbolic authority or credibility. This can be exemplified by the concept of political art; the paradox becomes apparent because a distinction between art and propaganda is difficult to ascertain from the perspective of the audience. By prefacing art with political, the intent being political, that is, politics of civilization, implies that the 'art' is a means to civilized ends. Moreover, in communication studies, a symbolic convergence theory is the narrative or storytelling act used to tell stories that fall into three categories: one that is a moral tale, righteous analogies; another that is explaining how to relate to others, social analogues, and the third telling us how to accomplish something, pragmatic analogues (Littlejohn 2002: 157-8). These theories are examples of persuasive communication often used in advertising; therefore, drawing a distinction between political art and propaganda is not easily discernable outside of the context it subsumes, i.e. Theatre or newspaper. In my opinion, this paradox is the most difficult to diagnose, mainly because the boundaries between the identity of the artist, the art, and the symbolic hegemony, become difficult to distinguish. I have elaborated upon how the socio-political construct or symbolic hegemony can affect the theatrical framework, but how does the politics of the artist affect the context of the theatrical framework? This alludes to the premise that the socio-political behavior or symbolic communication outside of the theatrical framework acts as a context to interpret also how art is symbolically interpreted. I will therefore proceed to analyse

Artaud in relation to the Surrealist movement, elaborate how these paradoxes affected him, and how his actions demonstrate a lack of political awareness.

Artaud- Periphery Identity

Insight into the political climate of the Surrealist movement can be personified through a pamphlet published in 1926, titled: 'Au grand jour', where Artaud was ridiculed for his opposition to political ideologies such as Communism (O'Farrell 1996: 2). Artaud believed that the political strategy towards Communism was a superficial solution for change, especially in response to the deeper issues that inflicted the soul (O'Farrell 1996: 3). In the context of the above pamphlet, Artaud's disposition towards Communism reflects signs that depict Kristeva's account of the abject (Kristeva 1984:5); and, revealing a schism in strategy in respect to the Surrealist movement. This raises questions as to the causes underpinning the widely-held belief that the application of Artaud's objectives in terms of his oeuvre was unsuccessful (Puchner 2006:197). Puchner attempts to provide an alternative cause of his failure other than the speculation of his physical and mental deterioration by arguing that:

> In conceiving his theatre of cruelty in the form of manifestos, Artaud played out
> the dominance of the manifesto over art that lies at the heart of the avant-garde.
> (2006: 197)

While there may be enough evidence to support his claim, the main weakness of this argument is that it signals an over simplification, more attributed to the effect of his failure rather than the cause. In other words, from a socio-political perspective, the proposition is insufficient in terms of pinning down the cause of his failure and should therefore provoke further investigation. For example, if Artaud's failure was attributed to 'playing out the dominance of the manifesto', then what implications follow? If the evidence from my previous chapter holds true, then it would follow that his failure could have been attributed to the contextualisation of his oeuvre. While Puchner contends that several avant-garde movements sought to claim authority (2006: 5); my focus however, and for the purposes of this study, is to specifically examine the underpinning and re-emerging patterns between the artist and the influence of the socio-political construct of reality. I will investigate the socio-political contextualisation of Artaud's oeuvre.

If the socio-political construct perpetuates symbolic dependence for authority, then how can the abject (Kristeva 1984:5) have a voice, when language or meaning rests upon the implicit reinforcement of centralised power (Eisenstadt 1978:86)? Consequently, I am arguing that certain implications (as discussed in Chapter 2) follow from the polarity ascribed to how abject is defined, namely illustrating the possibility of a causal relationship. This would consequently present a double-edged sword: independence of the symbolic structures that reinforce centralised power allows more imaginative freedom, yet simultaneously limits the structural, symbolic and authoritative means of communication. Following from this critical analysis, a striking parallel can be drawn to Puchner's assertion suggesting that the Surrealist movement was 'a balancing act between avant-garde theatrics and socialist strategy' (2006: 180). This is further echoed by Artaud's textual analyses of Van Gogh and the perception of his madness:

> And what is an authentic madman? It is a man who preferred to become mad, in
> the socially accepted sense of the word, rather than forfeit a certain superior idea
> of human honor. So society has strangled in its asylums all those it wanted to get
> rid of or protect itself from, because they refused to become its accomplices in
> certain great nastinesses. For a madman is also a man whom society did not want
> to hear and whom it wanted to prevent from uttering certain intolerable truths.
> (Artaud 1988: 185)

I will first proceed to analyse this text from the perspective of the symbolic hegemony, followed by the perspective of the artist, subject, or individual. From this passage, Artaud seems to be describing the paradox within the definition of abject. From a performative standpoint, this text provides insight into the dichotomous relationship between the artist and the symbolic hegemony. Previous analysis of Orlan's response to a comparison with Van Gogh (MutleeIsTheAntiGod, 2011) is further illuminated by Artaud; if Orlan signaled an alignment with 'madness' (Artaud, Sontag and Weaver 1988:185) then, it would also follow that the contextualization of her work would align with the periphery in respect to the symbolic hegemony. Orlan's response to her work being referenced to Van Gogh's madness (MutleeIsTheAntiGod, 2011) could symbolically signal socio-political awareness. This can be indicated through the verbal contextualisation of her work that symbolically distinguishes between the weakened symbolic authority ascribed to Van Gogh's

madness, and the symbolic authority ascribed in respect to the symbolic hegemony, when she asserts, "I make it my work" (MutleeIsTheAntiGod, 2011).

These findings provide insight into a possible interpretation of Artaud's account of madness. From the perspective of abjection (Kristeva 1984:5) it is likely that Artaud would not define Van Gogh or himself as mad, but rather accepts that the definition, as defined (*Oxford Dictionary* 2017) by the symbolic hegemony, is used with the purpose of symbolically positioning themselves on the periphery (Eisenstadt 1978:87). On the other hand, this passage also illustrates abject (Kristeva 1984:5) from the perspective of Artaud and Van Gogh, assuming they are positioned on the periphery in respect to the symbolic hegemony. (Eisenstadt 1978:87) First, by appropriating the disposition of a 'madman' (1988:185) in respect to the symbolic hegemony, an implicit decision to preserve ontological and symbolic independence from the socio-political construct is revealed. These implications can be further explored through Kristeva's account of Artaud's approach to abjection in respect to the symbolic hegemony:

> An "I" overcome by the corpse-such is often the abject in Artaud's text. For
> it is death that most violently represents the strange state in which a non-subject,
> a stray, having lost its non-objects, imagines nothingness through the ordeal of
> abjection. The death that "I" am provokes horror, there is a choking sensation that
> does not separate inside from outside but draws them the one into the other,
> indefinitely. Artaud is the inescapable witness of that torture-of that truth.
> (Kristeva 1982: 25)

The juxtaposition of this passage and Artaud's account of madness echoes the notion that the symbolic hegemony of his time may have influenced the communicative means of sharing his perspective as a performing artist. From a symbolic interactionist point of view, this alludes to the periphery-identity paradox; insinuating, that Artaud's identity has symbolically formed a separate system, outside of the symbolic hegemony to define reality. From a performative standpoint, this symbolically reinforces a dependence to the symbols ascribed to the symbolic hegemony, as a means of communicating performance art.

I will now proceed by focusing on an analysis of Artaud in the Surrealist movement from the perspective of the symbolic hegemony. Uri Hertz's essay explores Artaud's hopes of realising his ideologies while spending time in Mexico. Hertz examines several of Artaud's writings to the Mexican Press that provide insight into Artaud's disposition toward the Surrealist movement. For example, in 'Surrealism and Revolution', Artaud references himself: 'Doesn't Artaud, care about the revolution? they asked. I don't care about your revolution, I care about mine, I replied, quitting Surrealism since it too had become a political party' (Artaud quoted by Hertz 2003: 12). Hertz's essay provides further insight into Artaud's conception of his revolution. Artaud states: 'What is necessary to let culture ripen is to close the schools, burn the museums, destroy the books, break the printing presses' (Hertz, 2003: 12). This juxtaposition of Artaud's views reveals that by rejecting European culture, he symbolically distanced himself further away from centralised power. Artaud explicitly makes known his intentions for traveling to Mexico as a means of exploring shamanistic methods to actualize his notion of revolution against European ideology (Hertz 2003: 13). Critical analyses suggest that because Artaud spoke openly with defamatory accusations towards the very same people within the system in which he depended upon to support his Theatre of Cruelty. This included the several patrons that had authority within the symbolic hegemony in respect to art and culture, namely, Gaston Gallimard and André Gide, who did not support Artaud's symbolic position (Puchner 2007: 200). His strategy or 'lack' thereof, can be illustrated by the contradiction of his actions and ideology as expressed through his written text. Following from the 'Periphery Identity Paradox' (mentioned in Chapter 2), even if the logic of his manifestos were true, it would still follow that his goals could have been disillusioned by his position on the periphery of the symbolic hegemony; to seek authority implies a system or others' which ascribes him this authority.

Self-reference Paradox

As such, from the perspective of the audience, the influence of the socio-political construct can lead to a self-reference paradox, a logical organization that produces itself the physical structure that creates itself. This would be exemplified by the artist introducing symbols that signal an implicit disposition to the symbolic hegemony, and therefore assuming certain ideals of the socio-political construct should reflect him/her. For example, if a performer or director was a drug addict and the themes of the performance were centered on highlighting the protagonist's harsh reality of

an addict, then the performance could signal or even become objectified as self-referential. In a practical sense, this could also be akin to a child performing a tantrum with the pretense of wanting something. This objectification could presumably be interpreted from the perspective of a socio-political context, indicating a will to survival (Schopenhauer 1818: 284). Conceptually, the symbols attached to the art would then theoretically signal a socio-political transgression, and therefore dismiss the metaphysical context of performance art. To follow from the earlier example, the objectification of a drug addict is already represented in the symbolic hegemony, and would therefore implicitly indicate a position of weakened symbolic authority, or periphery (Eisenstadt 1978:86). This objectification could manifest itself in the socio-political context of building consensus. I would argue that this paradox highlights the disparity between the artist's perceived intrinsic value of socio-political transgression and the weakened symbolic position that follows from a symbolic hegemony.

Artaud- Self-Reference Paradox

From the perspective of the symbolic synecdoche, if the symbols ascribed to the context of a theatrical framework subsume the symbols ascribed to the symbolic hegemony, then it must also follow that symbolic authority could play a vital role in the 'will' (Determinism: *Oxford Dictionary*, 2017) or 'consciousness' (Lippard 1973:121) pertaining to the creation of a Performance Art. The theoretical framework of my practice rests upon this premise and I will therefore seek to further investigate the validity of this claim. Throughout several of the avant-garde movements, there was often a manifesto attached to its ideologies. From an etymological perspective, the manifesto first gained its credence from the Manifesto written by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels as it impacted the way people thought about society (Puchner 2006:2). Underpinning this manifesto is the romantic notion that so much change and impact came from the thoughts of two individuals, alluding to the possibility that ideologies could change society (Puchner 2006:6). However, there was a fundamental difference between the different uses of the manifesto as a form. Puchner asserts:

> This distinction between performativity and theatricality can be phrased in terms
> of means and end; the socialist manifesto has tended toward seeing itself as an

instrument, as a means and an end, whereas the avant-garde manifesto has tended

toward seeing the manifesto as an end itself

(2006: 261)

Here, critical analysis suggests that there is a distinction to be made from the form of the manifesto as separate from the intent or objective of the manifesto. Underlying the form may unveil the extent of political awareness or strategy in terms means and ends. Furthermore, previous evidence that implicate Artaud's lack of political awareness may have caused him to associate the manifesto with a theatrical framework. For example, In the *Theatre and its Double* (1978), Artaud writes at length about the effects of the plague from the seeming point of view of abjection (Kristeva 1984:5, *Oxford Dictionary*, 2017). For the sake of my argument, it is necessary to present Artaud's stark imagery: 'Buboes appear around the anus, under the armpits, at those precious places where the active glands steadily carry out their functions, through these buboes the anatomy discharges' (1978: 12) This visual description may rather contribute to the effect of catharsis as opposed to gaining consensus, an attribute relating to a political agenda, or rather, a 'means to an end' (Puchner 2006: 261). Artaud then compares the plague to the theatre when he states:

> And finally from a human viewpoint we can see that the effect of the theatre is as
> beneficial as the plague, impelling us to see ourselves as we are, making the masks
> fall and divulging our world's lies, aimlessness, meanness and even two-facedness.
> (Artaud 1978: 9-14)

The ending to his manifesto can be compared to a moral tale often used in theatre. Based upon the previous examples, there is evidence to suggest that Artaud may have used the form of manifesto as a theatrical veil. To highlight his use of strategy, I will draw upon Eisenstadt's depiction of the strategy and objectives pertaining to the policies of the rulers and political elites throughout history:

> The first general goal was to establish and maintain a unified and centralised polity
> and the ruler's sovereignty over it… then the rulers of the historical bureaucratic
> societies developed special orientations with regard to mobilizing resources. Their

objective was to acquire the certainty that they could obtain continuous and independent recruitment of resources from various strata in the society. (Eisenstadt 2010: 117)

From this, I will now seek to gauge Artaud's strategy in relation to those established within society or the political elites during this time-period. It was well known that Artaud had difficulty in gaining support from influential patrons of the art community (Puchner 2006: 200). Consequently, he resorted to creating a society, La Société Anonyme du Théâtre de la Cruauté for the specific purposes of raising capital to realise his Theatre of Cruelty, using his manifesto as a means of advertisement (Puchner 2006: 200). Here, evidence suggests a contradiction to his own ideologies, the means of obtaining his objectives. This can contradiction can further be illustrated through a poem titled *Dinner is Serve,* written by Artaud in the context of Surrealist propaganda, La Révolution Surréaliste

> Abandon the caverns of existence. Come, the spirit breathes outside the spirit. It is time to leave home. Surrender to Universal Thought. The Marvellous is at the root of the spirit. We are within the spirit, inside the brain. Ideas, logic, order, Truth (with a capital T), reason: we sacrifice all to the void of death. Beware of your logic, Gentlemen, beware of your logic… Only by turning away from life, by checking the spirit, can the supposedly real physiognomy of life be determined, but reality is not found there (Waldberg 1997: 56).

Here, the context of propaganda reduces the poem that assumes a metaphysical context to a socio-political context; the symbolism of the poem is therefore a means to surrealist propaganda. Artaud's use of the terms, 'Abandon,' 'Surrender,' and 'Beware' indicate a disposition that assumes authority (Waldberg 1997: 56). However, to read this poem in a metaphysical context, it would then implicitly be symbolically directed against the socio-political context it assumes, namely, *La Révolution Surréaliste* itself. Both perspectives would theoretically weaken his symbolic position within the symbolic hegemony and this contradiction illustrates the effects of negotiating and compromising symbolic authority. These findings indicate that the cause of Performance Art symbolically signaling self-reference could be linked to a weakened position within the symbolic hegemony. This symbolic reference could be akin to patterns that link

certain behavior to economic or financial impoverishment. It is not yet clear whether the symbolic signification of art as self-reference directly correlates to the symbolic hegemony. However, because my performance practice depends on a communicative model based on assumptions, it is nonetheless important to recognise the effect of symbolic contradiction in respect to the influence of the socio-political construct on a theatrical framework.

Interpretation Paradox

The interpretation paradox directly relates to the interpretation of the art itself. This should also be considered in regards to the problems that surround the artist in contention with the symbolic hegemony. For example, Breton claimed that automatic writing was a 'writing apparatus', but it could never as he hoped function 'without the work of filtering' (Puchner 2007:330, Waldberg 1997: 13 - 4). Because all means of expression are filters, there is no such thing as a neutral or pure medium; because every medium mediates, automatic writing too, demands a system of interpretation, of translation and retranslation (Puchner 2006: 190). If the symbolism of a Performance Art is obscured to a point of not being recognised as part of the symbolic hegemony, then by what means is the audience expected to interpret the art. In other words, this is analogous to language and the implicit consensus that follows from its form of communication. From the perspective of the audience and in the context of a theatrical framework, instrumental to the acceptance of an artist's presentation of symbols is a reliance upon the imagination and the willingness to conceive the art and symbols. Here, the sociological imagination (Wright 1959: 14-18) as a symbolic common denominator of the symbolic hegemony, implies that the symbols should mirror the socio-political construct. For Artaud, he would view the modern conception of the sociological imagination as a paradox; a paradigm of the lowest common denominator is itself a limitation of the imagination. This conception represents a nostalgia to the medieval period, where symbols did not need to reflect the socio-political construct to be accepted (O'Farrell 1996: 4). Theoretically, the theatrical framework presents symbolic boundaries in respect to the symbolic hegemony. Namely, that socio-political transgression and symbolic obscurity align with the periphery in conjunction to the symbolic hegemony. These boundaries consequently illustrate, the importance of establishing a metaphysical context through a theatrical framework.

My intention is such that by investigating Artaud in the Surrealist movement, I will be able to provide insight into integrating the aesthetic in conjunction to the symbolic hegemony. I realise that my own understanding and perspective could be influenced by a position in respect to the symbolic hegemony, however, I still maintain that awareness of the socio-political construct is instrumental to utilising the theatrical framework for a Neo-Surrealism platform. After researching Artaud's involvement with the surrealistic movement, questions arise as to the extent that socio-political construct of reality influenced his performance work, ideologies and mental health. In the next chapter I will attempt to distill this investigation centred on the methodological approach of Grounded Theory into a theorisation and communicative model for the theatrical framework. This aim is centred on presenting the sublime with the implicit understanding that a framework is necessary for the sublime to be perceptible for the audience. Evidence from this research suggests that for the sublime to be a possibility in a theatrical framwork, it is requisite for the boundaries between a socio-political context and metaphysical context to be addressed.

4

What is Neo-Surrealism?

In this chapter, I intend to crystallize the theoretical portion of my dissertation into a practical platform- Neo-Surrealism. More specifically, this platform is aimed at establishing a 'theatrical framework' (Sanchez-Colberg and Dunlop 2002: 4), or communicative model intended to address the influence of the socio-political construct. Neo-Surrealism simply represents a metaphysical context. However, with ambiguity presupposing a performative context, a ritual process is necessary to create a metaphysical context. To this end, I will introduce a precept that encompasses this study: Neo-Surrealism is a platform that constitutes the demarcation of sacred space, where the signification of the aesthetic has symbolic authority over the signification of the socio-political construct. This sacred space can be understood by expanding the term Transgression that will be elaborated upon later in this chapter; for the purposes of the platform of Neo-Surrealism, Performance Transgression will instead represent the term situated in a theatrical framework or metaphysical context. I will also outline in this chapter, an analysis of the flaws that follow from the current performative paradigm or theatrical framework. The strategies encompassed with this new communicative model is centred on a symbolic interactionist approach, with the aim of presenting the sublime: integrating the conceptual metaphor of Performance Fashion with performative methods used in Ritual Studies. My approach in this chapter is to introduce Neo-Surrealism: insofar as it supports my research and performance practice; and more importantly, in tandem with the modest development and infantile stage of its reception.

Neo-Surrealism differs from the Surrealist movement; unlike Breton whom once attempted to strategically align with the communist party (Alexandrian 1970: 94; Puchner 2006: 183;

Waldberg 1997:18), the platform of Neo-Surrealism explicitly conforms to the established political structures and systems encompassing the socio-political construct of reality. Here, the term Neo-Surrealism is paradoxically quasi-misleading. It relies on the symbolic connotations of Surrealism as an art movement and its direct associations with art manifestos (Waldberg 1997: 18) that represent an established form of authority within the symbolic hegemony. However, the objective of Neo-Surrealism is not aligned with revolution as the Surrealist movement once suggested (Alexandrian 1970: 94; Puchner 2006: 179; Waldberg 1997 :17), but rather a framework that integrates the symbolism appropriated to the symbolic hegemony. Furthermore, the purpose or *raison d'être* of Neo-Surrealism is to address the symbolic value of the artist within the symbolic hegemony and to explicitly confront underlying problems that correspond to the discipline of Performance Studies.

Context: Establishing a Metaphysical Context

I will first proceed by examining the flaws of the current paradigm of the theatrical framework as it correlates to the influence of the symbolic hegemony. In an anthology titled The Performance Studies Reader, Henry Bial shares in the introduction, the common sentiment that the discipline of performance is difficult to define, suggesting the:

> Positive promise of performance studies- its potential to illuminate, instruct, and inspire – is enhanced, not diminished, by this ever-present uncertainty… the only definition that is universally applicable to the field is a tautology: performance studies is what performance studies people do.
> (2004:1)

Following from this, it should first be stated that this investigation is supported by Bial's view of Performance Studies: 'enhanced, not diminished, by this ever-present uncertainty.' (2004:1). However, this tautology, and previous account of Performance Studies, echoes another example of a self-reference paradox (Chapter 2); it begs the question, how can there be a promise based on uncertainty? If Performance studies did have the potential to illuminate or instruct, how would anyone recognise it as Performance Studies? This seeming contradiction is also echoed by Richard Schechner, whom helped coin the term, Performance Studies. He reveals through his experience

and interaction with relative constituents that the education system regarding the discipline has become conflated; young students seeking professional careers or teaching positions are setting themselves up to be disillusioned people (1988:4), elaborating the limited space in the theatre, television or film industry. Schechner addresses this concern by proposing the broad-spectrum approach, namely, expanding the Performing arts curricula as it pertains to performative behavior (1988:4). Here, critical analysis would suggest in accordance with the previous investigation of the socio-political construct, that the uncertainty tied to Performance Studies signals a weakening of its symbolic power. It could be argued that the proposed tactic of expanding the curricula can lead to even more ambiguity surrounding the function of the discipline. Neo-Surrealism as a platform is consequently explicitly aimed at strengthening the symbolic power of the Performance discipline. By concretising its aims as establishing itself as an existing part of the symbolic hegemony, it would follow that a collective could understand its aims and therefore a consensus can be formulated surrounding the function of this communicative model. This purpose is also aligned to the reinforcement of its symbolic power, conveying the value that the platform of Neo-Surrealism can offer the spectrum of the symbolic hegemony. For example, Finance studies, Physics, and Mathematics have become established disciplines that demonstrate value in shaping the socio-political construct and our understanding of the natural world. This approach is founded upon the premise that a pretext surrounding the symbol of Performance art or the symbols appropriated to the theatrical framework, affects the context of the Performance art. At this point, it might be important to state that the strategy of this aim is in consideration of a long-term objective; this dissertation is the first step in that direction, highlighting the importance of context in Performance.

I will now elaborate and present a case for demarcating the theatrical framework as a sacred space within the socio-political context. If a performance were to take place in an institution, forming a direct association to the symbolic hegemony, contextual implications would follow from the site specificity of the performance. Such implications may include the performers being students and therefore subject to be judged by a criterion administered by specific authorities. An audience could also be led to assume that the performance is intended to support an academic context. While it may be an assumption to propose that the audience has direct association with the symbolic hegemony, it could yet still be argued that the audience is dependent upon a symbolic system

attributed to the symbolic hegemony to interpret the performance; the performance is therefore preceded by a socio-political context *a priori*. Even if an audience member was foreign to the meaning associated with the symbols of a performance, it still follows that a global socio-political context exists. In other words, I am arguing that the context of the current theatrical framework is influenced by the socio-political construct and it therefore raises questions about discerning the symbols of a performance: the boundaries that pertain to political judgment and aesthetic judgement. How, for example, could a performance establish a context as separate from propaganda, or political agenda? This alludes to the symbolic signification of a performance representing the dichotomy appropriated to a contention of ideologies between the performer and audience. In other words, the question arises whether the audience can experience a performance from a space of *Tabula Rasa*. The platform of Neo-Surrealism is designed as a response to the obscurity surrounding the context that precedes the theatrical framework, namely, by its proposed precept. Until the Neo-Surrealism theatrical framework is assumed to be aligned with aesthetic authority and established as a context that precedes the theatrical framework, a ritual process is necessary to reinforce this precept.

The influence of the socio-political context is seemingly unavoidable; however performative strategies aimed at obscuring the signification can also be problematic. This can allude to Surrealism in general and the paradox that follows from vagueness and interpretation. As such, critical analysis suggests that an implication arises following from performances saturated with symbolic obscurity: the performer would presumably assume symbolic authority of the inherent meaning of the art by failing to provide the audience with the necessary means of interpreting its symbols. More importantly, in the context of Eisenstadt's 'centre-periphery relations' (1978: 86), the symbolic signification centred in obscurity signals 'periphery,' in respect to the symbolic hegemony, as it fails to align with other structures that reinforce the centre (Eisenstadt 1978:86). It therefore becomes likely that the signification of the performance theoretically corresponds with this alignment and therefore represents a weakened representation in respect to the symbolic hegemony. For example, this can allude to performances that form parallel symbolic associations with the abject within the symbolic hegemony, demonstrated through work that emphasises 'bodily pain' (Warr 2015:32). I am therefore proposing that the theatrical framework of Performance Art considers how signification can be aligned with symbolic authority, as it coincides a socio-political

context. From this view, some may contend that contemporary surrealist performances are situated or aligned with authority in respect to the symbolic hegemony. Here, I would argue that the symbols of a surrealist performance presumably use symbols underpinning the performance like dance movements, lighting, music, and setting, that have been traditionally established to align with the symbolic hegemony. The symbolic hegemony has also incorporated institutions that represent Rancière's aesthetic regime (2004:21) where his conception of the distribution of the sensible would follow (Rancière 2004:12), along with Foucault's conception of 'power relations' (Foucault 1977:27). From this, I am implicitly drawing a parallel that also follows from the context of an aesthetic regime, namely that the audience could also represent this regime and therefore reflect the symbolic hegemony. My aim through this platform is to present the sublime, creating a metaphysical context that is centred on the audience's experience.

From a performative standpoint, the quandary appropriated to symbolic authority has been previously visited by Russian Formalist Bahktin, namely through his view of *Carnivale*. As mentioned in chapter 2, the context or signification of transgression also becomes problematic for the current paradigm of the theatrical framework. From previous analysis, the art can easily become misconstrued or symbolically aligned with politics, marketing, or principles of propaganda. This evidence gives rise to a possible solution: of separating the boundaries between aesthetic and political judgement within the context of performance. I will now begin to elaborate on this distinction of judgement. A Neo-Surrealism performance may contain acts that are seemingly symbolically signified as transgressive. However, Performance Transgression situated in a sacred or metaphysical context, changes the symbolic signification from a complicit act against the symbolic hegemony to a complicit act against the limitations of perception, or the semiotic sign in respect to an aesthetic infinitude. In other words, the approach and intent would instead be centered upon expanding the aesthetic possibilities of the symbol, rather than having the political intent of socio-political displacement. Implicit in this approach is my belief that art as a creative act, is understood by the extent that the metaphysical context of the symbol is aligned with infinite possibilities of signification. Performance Transgression will therefore become the point of integrating empirical evidence from my performance practise, centred on symbolic interactionism. The objective of Neo-Surrealism is consequently aimed upon the audience experiencing the sublime; central to this end is Kant's notion of a pure judgment (1952:101). For Kant, judgments

of the sublime become possible when, "the feeling of our incapacity to attain to an idea that is law for us, is RESPECT (1952:105). As such, from a symbolic standpoint, a strategy of Neo-Surrealism leverages the authority of the aesthetic and the uncertainty concomitant of infinite possibilities over the signification of the socio-political construct. Therefore, the context of Neo-Surrealism assumes dominance over the context of the socio-political construct because the unknown or unknowable reinforces the limitations of perception to the audience *a priori*. I will now proceed to expound upon the characteristics of Neo-Surrealism as a platform, distinctly separate from the current paradigm of the theatrical framework.

Neo-Surrealism

The study of symbolic interactionism is primarily aimed at creating communicative models incumbent on observations, assumptions, and predictability (Newsom 2007: 70). In a similar vein, Neo-Surrealism as a platform is a communicative model dependent on certain *assumptions* of the nature of reality; presenting the sublime, is therefore a performative goal that follows from the assumptions and implications of this research. To this end, I loosely draw upon the work of Arnold Van Gennep with the purpose of implementing my theorisation into a performance practice. Before I proceed, it is perhaps first necessary to introduce the liminal and how it relates to my practice. The term liminal is rooted in anthropology and more specifically in Ritual Studies. Van Gennep used this term to describe the second stage related to the rites of passage, denoting a period in which the ritual subject is situated in a transitional, unfamiliar state (Bial 2004: 79). Victor Turner elaborates upon liminality by positioning the 'stage as a storehouse of possibilities, not by any means a random assemblage but a striving after new forms and structure (Turner 1990: 11-12). From a performative standpoint, critical analysis suggests that implicit in guiding a ritual subject through this stage, to new forms and structure, is an understanding of the previous forms and structures. As such, Gennep describes the (first) stage as a period of detachment from a 'fixed point in the social structure.' My research analysis on the socio-political construct is therefore instrumental in correlating the ritual process with this 'detachment' (Bial 2004:79), especially in conjunction with establishing sacred space in a metaphysical context. As such, I will now proceed by highlighting a fundamental distinction surrounding the ritual process of Neo-Surrealism, especially in relation to Turner's notion of the liminal (Turner 1990: 11-12). From the Rubin Vase Conceptual Framework, the 'detachment' (Bial 2004:79) process essentially assumes that the

position of the aesthetic exists within the vase or socio-political context and identified by Performance Fashion.

Earlier in the chapter, I mentioned the proposition of a precept correlating to the theatrical framework; namely to demarcate a sacred space. Here, the term sacred is surrounded with ambiguity, necessitating clarity. In a Journal of Performance Studies, Joy Crosby argues that the notion of the sacred becomes jettisoned by Turner in his theorisation of the liminal (2009: 7). Crosby continues to support this claim by highlighting its important function:

> For the emerging field of Performance Studies, this divorce of liminality from
> the sacred enables Performance Studies to enact its autonomy from
> anthropology by adopting a theoretical concept nourished by but distinct
> from ethnographic practice and capable of describing the transformational
> effects of a wide range of cultural performances (2009: 7-8).

Here, Turner's 'divorce of liminality from the sacred' implicitly dismisses the importance of a religious context, in its affect to both ritual and 'transformational effects' (2009: 7-8). To locate the utility of liminality in a Performative context, it may be important to explore the implications of what Crosby means by enacting its 'autonomy from anthropology' (2009: 7-8). In a journal article written by Mathieu Deflem, titled, *Ritual, Anti-Structure, and Religion: A discussion of Victor Turner's Processual Symbolic Analysis*, Turner's notion of religion is explored. Deflem highlights Turner's definition and use of the term ritual to include a symbolic reference to 'supernatural beings or powers' (1991), or a religious context:

> the cultural field encompasses the ritual within the totality of Ndembu rituals and
> within the cultural realm of Ndembu religious beliefs. (1991)

In Victor Turner's book titled, *The Drums of Affliction: A Study of Religious Processes Among the Ndembu tribe of Zambia*, these religious beliefs encompass four distinct components: A belief in a High God, existence of ancestor spirits, efficacy of local medicine, and the destructive power of female witches and male sorcerers. (Turner 1968: 14-15) This evidence signals a weakness in the utility of liminality in a Performative context without also incorporating its main component- a

religious context. In other words, Tuner's account of liminality assumes a reductive approach of the term and similarly echoes the Surrealist movement and the problems that ensued from the 'balancing act between avant-garde theatrics and socialist strategy' (Puchner 2006: 180). In Turner's article. *Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites de Passage*, the emphasis is centred on his analysis of the liminal as it correlates to the second stage of Gennep's rites de passage. In terms of the other stages, Turner explicitly states, 'I shall pay only brief heed here to rites of separation and aggregation, since these are more closely implicated in social structure' (1967:47). Turner's account and performative utility of the liminal fails to recognise a very important assumption of Gennep's research of the ritual process. Namely, that the liminal associated with Gennep's *Rites of Passage* is assumed to be aligned with the sacred as it coincides a religious context. Turner seems to overlook this underlying crux of the liminal, as he groups the liminal experience and conflates the socio-political context with a religious context:

> I have no need here to dwell on the lifelong ties that are held to bind
> in close friendship those initiated into the same age-set in East African
> Nilo-Hamitic and Bantu societies, into the same fraternity or sorority on
> an American campus, or into the same class in a Naval or Military
> Academy in Western Europe (1967:50).

From this evidence, there are several implications that follow. First, on one spectrum, it becomes theoretically problematic to suggest that the Performative platform should become aligned with a religious context. Religion assumes a specific context preceded by distinct values and beliefs that may limit the signification of the symbol. However, this is where I formulate a distinction in terms of the platform of Neo-Surrealism. From the perspective of a theatrical framework, a sacred context could still theoretically exist as separate from a religious context. Consequently, the precept I propose, defines the sacred specifically in accordance with this principle: I define sacred in accordance to the value placed on the context of the infinite implications or possibilities of a symbol as it relates to the socio-political context and the limitations of perception. With this precept, I am hoping that presenting the sublime becomes a possibility: by subverting the signification or symbolic value of the socio-political construct into the aesthetic. My strategy is centred on demarcating a sacred space for the theatrical framework; to act as a metaphorical defense mechanism in the communicative model aimed at protecting the integrity of the art from

the symbolic dominance or influence of the socio-political construct. I therefore introduce the term Performance Transgression to act as a symbolic pretext that follows from the platform of Neo-Surrealism, demarcated by sacred space, defined as: symbols that seemingly signal Transgression in a socio-political context, conversely reflect and assumes that its context is precipitated by a defense from symbolic violation of the artists' and audience's moral or social boundaries. From the Rubin Vase Conceptual Framework, Performance Transgression represents the shared boundary between a socio-political context and a metaphysical context; authority is therefore positioned in accord with the infinite possibilities of symbolic signification. Consequently, because the performance assumes a metaphysical context, the performer likewise assumes the position of an audience member; the implication being that the experience of the performance rests on the dichotomy alluded to a metaphysical context, the limitations of perception and the infinite possibilities of aesthetic interpretation. Here, the platform of Neo-Surrealism emphasises the context that precludes the performative space of the theatrical framework. A strategy is therefore necessary to mark the symbolic separation of the performative content from the paradigm of the symbolic hegemony, assuming, that Neo-Surrealism as a theatrical framework, has not yet been established to correspond to a metaphysical context.

From previous analysis, there are some basic assumptions about the Aesthetic that follow from Political Teleology. From the Perceptual Framework Model, both performer and audience can benefit from exploring the multi-faceted dimensions of an aesthetic symbol in a metaphysical context. From this, Neo-Surrealism becomes a platform for exploring the aesthetic from a different perspective.   This also follows from previous analysis of a socio-political context: that Performance Fashion alludes to exploring the varying ways that the aesthetic can be defined, along with the implications of symbols demarcated by its boundaries and association to other defined symbols (Kepes 1966:8). Finally, the platform of Neo-Surrealism becomes a space where reflective judgement can emerge and become utilised to 'transform the world' (1966:8) as it provides 'status for the power of ordinary judgment' (Beiner 1983:xv). By this, I simply mean that this view of the performative experience supports active participation from the audience, as the platform of Neo-Surrealism explicitly challenges the criteria that defines or shapes a symbol. As such, from the heap of sand paradox and the Rubin Vase Conceptual Framework, one grain of sand or aesthetic symbol can become the source of experiencing the sublime. Here, the Perceptual

Framework Model reveals that one added dimension or perspective of an object, can lead to reflective judgement, where the implications are explored: especially since, the audience would assume responsibility and become an active participant in re-defining the aesthetic. Because Neo-Surrealism assumes both sacred space and a metaphysical context, the symbols contained within the performance does not correspond to any form of authority, including the performer. I will now proceed by elaborating on how I intend to use this theorisation for presenting the sublime.
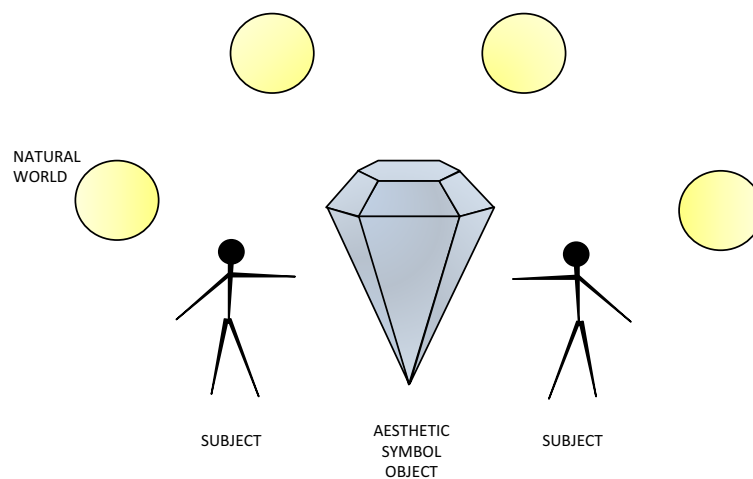

NATURAL WORLD

SUBJECT

AESTHETIC SYMBOL OBJECT

SUBJECT

Figure 1.5 Perceptual Framework Model

How is aesthetic authority established within a socio-political context? To reinforce the significance of the symbolic hegemony in a performative context, I will draw upon Ritual Studies and first proceed by elaborating on how this initial stage is distinct from contemporary performative methods. From the Rubin Vase Conceptual Framework, the performance assumes a the influence of the socio-political context, the aesthetic limited by the boundaries within the Vase.

For Gennep the (first) stage is a period of detachment from a 'fixed point in the social structure' (Bial 2004:79). Here, evidence suggests how the socio-political context could indirectly influence the theatrical framework. Gennep refers to sacredness as the disruption of the social order, and holds the position that as an attribute, it does not represent the absolute (Crosby 2009: 8). He describes sacredness in the form of a metaphor as:

> A man at home, in his tribe, lives in a secular realm…he moves into the realm of
> the sacred, when he goes on a journey and finds himself a foreigner near a camp
> of strangers (1960:12).

In a similar vein, the context of Neo-Surrealism draws from Gennep's 'sacredness' (1960:12) to establish a sacred space for the theatrical framework; except in following from the metaphor, the 'camp of strangers' refers to the aesthetic or metaphysical context, the audience's relationship to the infinite implications of the symbol. The sacred would theoretically transition into an 'attribute of the absolute' (Crosby 2009: 8) when contextual authority displaces the socio-political context (Gennep 1960:12). For example, the ficitious narrative of the performance could enact its authority of implicit authority prescribed to the socio-political context, reinforcing the authority of a theatrical framework. Here, symbolic interaction as a communicative model becomes useful; certain assumptions and implications of the symbolic hegemony become the materiality for the audience to experience a 'detachment of the social structure' (Bial 2004:79). To address the boundaries between political judgment and aesthetic judgement, a semiotic 'sacrifice' (Kristeva 1984: 79) corresponding to the symbolic hegemony becomes necessary. Kristeva articulates this important semiotic function, signaling this initial stage of Rite of Separation as a transition into a space of reordering the symbol. The following further elaborates upon this process and will be stated in full as it succinctly coincides with presenting the sublime:

> Semiotic violence, breaks through the symbolic border, and tends to dissolve
> the logical order, which is, in short, the outer limit founding the human and the
> social. This practice is the representation that generally precedes sacrifice; it is
> the laboratory for, among other things, theatre, poetry, song, dance-art. That the
> combat it mimes precedes the sacrificial slaying is less important than the fact that
> it mimes in the full sense of the term: it repeats not a detached object but the

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movement of the symbolic economy. By reproducing signifiers- vocal, gestural, verbal-the subject crosses the border of the symbolic and reaches the semiotic chora, which is on the other side of the social frontier (1984: 79).

Here, the 'chora' can be understood as an ordering (Kristeva 1984: 25-26) or psychic process, that can be exemplified by a child's disposition in respect to its external environment: how energy and drives fluctuate and circumvent through movement and constraints. Here, the chora corresponds to a metaphysical context when 'semiotic violence' (Kristeva 1984:79) re-positions the audience to assume the disposition of a child-assimilating drives with the change in structure or context. This also resonates with a principle of the Kantian sublime, representing a state in which the subject is unable to articulate or present an object equal to the 'magnitude of an object' (Kant 1952:103). The 'chora' also serves an important function. The ordering process as an attribute of semiotic violence, theoretically aligns with the sublime as an 'autonomous' (Beiner 1983: 47) process. Critical analysis would suggest that a semiotic 'sacrifice' would be sufficient in presenting the sublime; however, this would depend on a sacred or religious context. With the influence of the socio-political context on the theatrical framework, it therefore becomes necessary to position the semiotic 'sacrifice' (Kristeva 1984: 79) in a context of aesthetic authority. Aesthetic authority within the socio-political context implies that the fictitious content is a means of 'survival' (Schopenhauer 1818: 284) or rather, complicit to 'survival' (Schopenhauer 1818: 284). Here, Kristeva's chora or aesthetic ordering coincides to a potential socio-political chora; as individuals in an audience collectively recognise socio-political, symbolic implications of the aesthetic-aposteriori (Kristeva 1984: 26). I will now proceed to elaborate on how this is accomplished in practise.

Through the symbolic interactionist approach, assumptions of the symbolic hegemony become the source of 'semiotic sacrifice' (Kristeva 1984: 79). As a communicative model, these can correspond to the artist, the work itself, or the audience. For example, this could be appropriated to the site specificity of the performance, demographic of the audience, promotions of the performance, critics, reviews, or anything that may affect the context of the performance. This also includes the socio-political assumptions of the theatrical framework a priori, especially as it pertains to judgement or 'habitus' (Bourdieu 1984: 170); one such assumption of the theatrical

framework is that the performing practitioner is dependent upon the audience's approval or socio-political recognition. The function of this perspective is to ascertain the structural limitations that inhibit the aesthetic, like perception inhibited by ethnocentric preconceptions and biases. For the platform of Neo-Surrealism to be made accessible, it is therefore necessary for the performance practitioner to symbolically communicate socio-political authority within the theatrical framework. In other words, the fiction of the performance corresponding to Kristeva's 'chora' implies how this psychic process could also continue after the performance through reflective judgement (Kristeva 1984: 26); this will consequently reinforce the value of aesthetic exploration as it correlates to the symbolic hegemony *aposteriori*. Central to the platform of Neo-Surrealism is the preconception of fictitious symbolic association with the theatrical framework, the interplay between the real; as the symbol that corresponds with the socio-political context, and the fiction; as the symbol corresponding to the aesthetic. This important function serves to deflect socio-political objectification. After establishing contextual aesthetic authority and making a 'semiotic sacrifice' (Kristeva 1984: 79), sacred space could then become, theoretically accessible to the audience. Here the context of Neo-Surrealism satisfies the implicit functions appropriated to the symbolic hegemony. The assumption of the symbolic hegemony being that the audience is dependent upon the socio-political construct for 'survival' (Schopenhauer 1818: 284) and Maslow's conception of Hierarchy of needs (Maslow 1943). In the next chapter I will elaborate more on how the 'semiotic sacrifice' (Kristeva 1984: 79), can take many forms.

Transgression in a Metaphysical Context: Philosophical Dialectic-
The findings from these studies suggest implications that arise from the intersection between the boundaries of a socio-political context and a metaphysical context. Here, an important distinction arises between Transgression and Performance Transgression. To understand this distinction in respect to presenting the sublime, I will proceed by providing a critical analysis of abjection (Kristeva 1984:5).

In the context of Performance Fashion, if an individual is symbolically aligned with abjection then this judgement would indirectly create a symbolic antagonism between a 'will to survival' (Schopenhauer 1818: 284) and the Performance Fashion that defines abjection. The assumption being that Performance Fashion is a system that creates a dependent relationship to the individual

that is centred on mediating the means of survival (Schopenhauer 1818: 284). From this, a possible explanation arises from Orlan's emphasis on contextualisation that can provide insight into understanding the significance of Orlan's oeuvre. When she states, 'I do not care about provocation…it is simply a way of understanding the work' (MutleeIsTheAntiGod, 2011), an implicit relationship with Performance Fashion seems to resonate. It seems possible that Orlan could have used the platform of Performance art as a means of expressing abject (Kristeva 1984:5), through 'provocation' (MutleeIsTheAntiGod, 2011). Here, it is likely that Orlan is using the term 'provocation' (MutleeIsTheAntiGod, 2011), to denote the symbolic and psychological impression of 'bodily pain' (Warr 2015:32) that constitutes the context of her statement; namely, her face being operated on.

Conversely, when Orlan states that it is a 'way of understanding the work' (MutleeIsTheAntiGod, 2011), this may signal an end, corresponding to aesthetic discourse associated with defining this abjection. This distinction suggests an explicit link correlating the contextualisation of her Performance Art to Performance Fashion and is further supported by her statement that her 'work is a critique on beauty and on cosmetic surgery as it is usually used' (MutleeIsTheAntiGod, 2011). This intention is an explicit aim towards a socio-political context. These findings serve to highlight a critical view that corresponds to the intersection between the boundaries of a socio-political context and a metaphysical context. From a symbolic point of view, Orlan and Abramović could be considered as leading figures of aligning Performance Art with symbolic authority in conjunction to Performance Fashion. More specifically, the implications of this study seem to indicate that a politicisation of performance art transpired in the form of transgression, aimed at re-defining the symbols from the symbolic hegemony ascribed to the judgement of abjection. For example, ORLAN may have used her performance work to expand the signification of the symbols appropriated to beauty standardisation (Kristeva 1984:5, MutleeIsTheAntiGod, 2011). By this I am attaching the term politicisation to denote the means of navigating through the socio-political construct's 'channels of communication' (Eisenstadt 1978:87). However, implicit in this perspective, is a critical view about the general means of how they gained 'symbolic access to the centre,' (Eisenstadt 1978:87) and a critique of the performance strategy trend of 'bodily pain' in general (Warr 2015:32). I will therefore proceed to explore the implications of the boundaries

between a socio-political context and a metaphysical context being obscured. For this study, I will examine this phenomenon from the perspective of presenting the sublime.

If Performance art assumes a metaphysical context through a theatrical framework, then a paradox would arise if this theatrical framework became the means to a socio-political end.   This would also raise questions concerning Performance Transgression. From this, there may not be sufficient evidence to directly link Abramović or Orlan's work to ends appropriated to the symbolic hegemony. However, it does raise concerns regarding the parallels of the performative strategy of 'bodily pain' (Warr 2015:32) to psychological forms of propaganda. Especially when considering the exploitation of fear to control an outcome (Bernays 1951: 9, Lemov 2005: 75); or self-immolation (Gambetta 2006: 173-208, 320-24), as a form of protest. These symbolic representations of transgression pertaining to a socio-political context also allude to Foucault's power relations (1977:27) where a 'will to survive' (Schopenhauer 1818: 284) would contradict the signification of Kantian sublime centered on judgement with 'no end belonging to the Object' (1952:101). This can further be illustrated by the periphery identity paradox and the self-reference paradox that symbolically limits the symbol to a socio-political context. From this point of view, Performance Transgression would conversely represent a performative context intended to protect the audience from exploitation (Bernays 1951: 9, Lemov 2005: 75). The phenomena pertaining to the obscured boundaries between socio-political context and metaphysical context as outlined in this study, could suggest an explanation that would influence Kant to exclude teleology from the conception of politics (Beiner 1983: 71).   It therefore becomes necessary to distinguish the boundaries between the socio-political context and a metaphysical context.

To this end, the philosophical dialectic appropriated to Neo-Surrealism explicitly creates tensions from a symbolic perspective, between the limitations of the symbol appropriated to the symbolic hegemony and the infinite possibilities of the symbol appropriated to the aesthetic, creating an antinomy centred upon political judgement and determinant judgement. It is the nature of this dialectic appropriated to the platform of Neo-Surrealism that distinguishes itself from other performative methods and the limitations that follow from Kant's conceptualization of the sublime. The symbols appropriated to the 'needs of man' (1983:70) and the symbolic hegemony signal a socio-political context; and in a metaphysical context, signal Political Teleology. The assumption

of the platform of Neo-Surrealism is that the theatrical framework is influenced by the socio-political context; therefore, a philosophical dialectic becomes necessary, aimed at creating a metaphysical context. This framework is centred on the aesthetic, namely, the means of confronting tensions that follow from Ontological and Phenomenological inquiry. From a symbolic standpoint, this transition into a philosophical wakefulness is theoretically misleading. While the terms Ontology and Phenomenology are primarily located in academic discourse, and loosely appropriated to metaphysical inquiry-as above the sphere of the socio-political construct; the meaning appropriated to a Neo-Surrealism context, conversely reduces the symbol to the rudimentary function of curiosity or uncertainty about reality: the nature of being and what appears. From a practical standpoint, an example of this can be illustrated through Kristeva's conception of signifiance, a term that can be used in conjunction to the performative body. In her book *Poetic Revolution of Language,* Kristeva offers a seminal analysis of the symbol as it corresponds to the performative body, highlighting the influence of the socio-political construct. Here she states,

> The kind of activity encouraged and privileged by (capitalist) society represses
> the *process* pervading the body and the subject, and that we must therefore break
> out of our interpersonal and intersocial experience if we are to gain access to what
> is repressed in the social mechanism: the generating of signifiance (1985: 13).

A translation of the term signifiance is defined as joy, but here Kristeva uses the term as a complicit act towards the limitations of the socio-political construct; representing the 'unlimited and unbounded generating process…drives toward, in, and through language' (Kristeva 1985: 17). From a symbolic interactionist point of view, critical analysis offers an important distinction of the performative body: in a socio-political context, the performative body exists on the periphery of the symbolic hegemony. As Kristeva aptly puts emphasis on 'process' (Kristeva 1985: 17), she thereby distinguishes the 'process' (Kristeva 1985: 17) from the societal manifestation of signifiance in an objectified form (Kristeva 1985: 13). The platform of Neo-Surrealism therefore allows the performative body to exist separately from the socio-political context. I draw upon Kristeva's signifiance as a source of symbolically accessing Political Teleology. Here the assumption being that the counterpart of 'will to survival' (Schopenhauer 1818: 284) in respect to

the symbolic hegemony is the 'repression' (Kristeva 1985:13) of the 'will to survival' (Schopenhauer 1818: 284), as outlined by Eisenstadt's centre-periphery relations (1978: 87). This approach to the dialectic deviates from the Brechtian narrative structure centred on a socio-political dialectic (Feral 2003: 467). Brecht was in fact known to represent in the play, his own political analysis (Feral 2003: 466) incumbent upon a Marxist approach of socialist ideals aimed against bourgeois domination (Karch 2011: 2). Brecht clearly had an end in mind when creating a dialectic. Conversely, the platform of Neo-Surrealism is centred on the principles underlying the Kantian sublime, incorporating a philosophical dialectic so that 'no end belongs to the object' (Kant 1952:101). I will now proceed to elaborate how the philosophical dialectic is created in practise.

From the previous stage, autonomous judgement was established; however, the audience confronting the 'chora' (Kristeva 1984: 79) may only have a temporary effect. It therefore becomes necessary to reinforce autonomous judgement. Assuming the audience is intrinsically engaged by a complicit collective 'chora' (Kristeva 1984: 79), or an ordering process that would influence the socio-political context aposteriori, it becomes necessary to re-establish autonomy. This autonomy represents Performance Trangression situated in a metaphysical context: an active strategy aimed to deflect and distinguish, political judgement from aesthetic judgement. Here, another semiotic sacrifice becomes necessary. This sacrifice could take the form of a self-sacrifice: the artist simultaneously sacrifices the socio-political authority of the art and creates a philosophical dialectic. In other words, this dialectic is centred explicitly by the tensions from the inter-relationship of Ontological and Phenomenological inquiry. Here, the artist is therefore assuming the same disposition that follows from a metaphysical context. From this perspective, the symbolic representation of presenting the limitations of perception in relation to the aesthetic infinite possibilities becomes paramount. This would consequently serve to deflect the possibility of the symbolical representation of a self-referential paradox, periphery-identity paradox, or interpretation paradox that refers directly to the socio-political construct. The self-sacrifice could theoretically take the form of an artist confronting: a fear, repression, self-criticism, vulnerability, ad infinitum. If this sacrifice were to become symbolically located or easily discernable, then it would also follow that the symbolic signification reflects a socio-political context. However, because this stage reflects the liminal as signified by symbolic ambiguity, the self-sacrifice

intentionally becomes difficult to locate as this symbol would usually subsume the fictitious narrative of the performance. This would therefore permit the performative strategy of 'bodily pain' (Warr 2015:32) because the symbol would be detached from an end or 'object' pertaining to the Kantian sublime (Kant 1952:101). This strategy also serves a double function: by protecting the sacred artistic process, impulses, vulnerability, the artist from political judgement; the self-sacrifice could also theoretically allow the audience to interpret the artist's Performance Art through the contextualization aligned with a space of Kantian 'pure judgement' (Kant 1952:101). In other words, the artist is proving that there is 'no end belonging to the object' (Kant 1952:101) as part of the creative process. The performance is also contextually detached from heteronomous judgement (Beiner 1983: 47) because the content has transitioned into philosophical inquiry. This approach of the communicative model would explicitly place the responsibility and accountability on the artist: this dialectical organisation of Performance Transgression explicitly confronts the artist's relationship with the art in conjunction with the symbolic hegemony. Here, Transgressive Performance could also manifest through previous Performance Strategies. Namely, Brechtian Alienation that,

> gives the narrative a dialectical organization in which external conditions interrupt, imposing seemingly contradictory forces upon linearly unfolding narrative processes …alienation appears as the moment during which the function of discourse is transformed. At this moment, the audience passes from a discourse which aims at interpreting reality, to a discourse of purely aesthetic and theatrical intent (Feral 2003; 467-8).

By allowing Alienation to subsume through the strategy of Transgressive Performance, the signification would theoretically avoid symbolic alignment with a socio-political context commonly appropriated with Brechtian performance (Feral 2003: 466). My hope is that through this approach, the boundaries between the signification of art and politics become more discernable to the audience.

In summation Neo-Surrealism is a platform or theatrical framework that is centred on addressing the influence of the socio-political construct. For the purposes of this research and my performance practise, the theorisation encompassed in Neo-Surrealism is a modest attempt to conceptualise and

address the problems that follow from the contextualization of performance art. From this theorisation, the application of the conceptualisation of the symbolic hegemony becomes visible. The methodology of Grounded theory has allowed the freedom to use an inductive approach to attempt at developing a new theoretical concept. In the next chapter, I will provide support to interpret my performance practise from the perpective of using the platform of Neo-Surrealism centred in presenting the sublime.

5

Neo-Surrealism & Performance Practise

My performance practise, is the counterpart to the theorisation encompassed in this study. This consists of three experimental performance artworks that explore the application of Neo-Surrealism as a platform. My approach to each performance was specifically designed to incorporate various assumptions that follow from the presupposed contextualisation of the symbolic hegemony. The three distinct performances, *Neo-Surrealism: What is Performance Art?* (2015), *Neo-Surrealism: The Audition* (2016), and *Neo-Surrealism: The Rehearsal* (2017) were all formulated to serve the function of Performance Transgression. This also became the centre point of processing empirical evidence and reflections of previous performances. The empirical evidence was collated through observations of how the symbols appropriated from the performance expanded in a subsequent socio-political context. Due to the sensitivity surrounding these observations, I have omitted them from the documentation. However, they may be implied through the implementation of Performance Transgression.

***Neo-Surrealism: What is Performance Art?* (2015)**

Performance Transgression: As an artist, certain choices reflect the use of the platform of Neo-Surrealism to confront or expand limitations of a semiotic sign in a socio-political context. In *What is Performance Art?* (2015), I designed the philosophical dialectic to confront specific semiotic limitations that I experienced in the context of a PhD student. For example, during the preliminary process of the development of my theorisation, my academic interest surrounded the

influence of social science in a performative context. My credibility, and authority as a performing artist, and more specifically at a doctorate level was in doubt; the institutional system drew certain parallels to Eisenstadt's account of Political systems (Eisenstadt 1978: 87). Performance Transgression became the means of defending the dichotomous relationship between the semiotic sign of an artist in respect to an academic context. The decision to incorporate the signified form of original music, painting, dance, acting, piano, and drums, served to explicitly address my credibility as an artist in a socio-political context. However, because this confrontation is in a metaphysical context encompassed in the theatrical framework of Neo-Surrealism, then the signification relates to the expanded semiotic sign of myself, as a PhD student, and performing artist within a socio-political context. To establish Neo-surrealism as a platform it was important to establish socio-political authority. The performance began in the Foyer so that the site specificity of the Artaud building symbolically aligned institutional grounds outside of the designated theatrical framework. As a performative strategy, the assumption from the symbolic hegemony is that the institution has more symbolic socio-political authority than a PhD student. As reflected from the professor recording the video, there is ambiguity surrounding the formality of the performance; the professor represents an authority figure within the symbolic hegemony. I establish a fictitious narrative by addressing the audience and stating that, 'My life is a play and I'm always holding auditions in my mansion home.' Through this authoritarian archetype, (*holes in shirt*) I am contextually transmitting this authority in a theatrical framework to a socio-political context. A student or professor could unknowingly enter the building and yet the audience in the performance, is complicit in demarcating authority of the institutional space. This authority is further emphasised when the professor recording the video exclaims, 'you didn't say that in the programme.' The archetype (*holes in shirt*) ignores this and walks into the room, signaling where the performance is to continue. I used the archetype (*holes in shirt*) to denote symbolic behavior that would signal the periphery of the symbolic hegemony with centralised power symbolically appropriated specifically to a British socio-political context. From a symbolic interactionist point of view, I appropriated the symbolic authority of the Queen of England as the pinnacle of Performance Fashion. I used this archetype *(holes in shirt*) with the purpose of explicitly creating tension between political and aesthetic judgement. Evidence would suggest, that I would have theoretically established socio-political authority in a theatrical framework in the opening scene. At this point, because most of the audience has never met me in person, there is ambiguity

surrounding the distinction between myself and performer. The second archetype (*cowboy hat*) is intended to reinforce the fictitious narrative, dispelling the assumption that the performer is the initial archetype (*holes in shirt*). This archetype (*cowboy hat*) also serves a different function: dispelling the assumption's appropriated to political judgement, namely that of a self-reference paradox and periphery identity paradox. In other words, the question may arise from the opening scene whether the archetype (holes in shirt) reflects the artist's relationship to the symbolic hegemony; symbolically expressed as the artist using the theatrical framework to voice an underlying political agenda. The tensions between heteronomous judgement and autonomous judgment escalates further, when the archetype *(holes in shirt)* returns and exclaims, 'you don't give a shit about anyone but yourself.' The audience would presumably confront and ascertain the context in which to address this question.

Philosophical Dialectic: The dialectic was centred on the antinomy between the audience's judgement that assumed a socio-political context and judgement that followed the fictitious narrative that assumed the metaphysical context. The use of the title, *Neo-Surrealism: What is Performance Art?* (2015) in the flyer was explicitly used to signal that I was presuming to present an answer to this question, especially through an academic context. In other words, I was setting up a strawman argument that would transpire through the performance. This title in a metaphysical context, would signal the infinite possibilities that follow from contemplating the implications of a question.

Figure 2.1. Flyer Neo-Surrealism: What is Performance Art? (2015)

The fictitious narrative explicitly emphasised a metaphysical context through several archetypes, namely, 'taking the audience to outer space,' and 'auditioning for my metaphysical home.' I drew upon Kristeva's signifiance (1985:13) as a performative device to access Political Teleology. Central to an artistic impulse is to use signifiance, to channel 'repression' (Kristeva 1985:13) through the means of music. For the duration of this study, I have worked to develop a method of improvising signifiance through different mediums of expression: namely, piano, dance, drumming, and the tambourine. It is important to note that through this method, I am intentionally diverting from music standards traditionally understood in the symbolic hegemony. However, I do acknowledge that, from a performative standpoint, this strategy could be similarly categorised by music used in ritual studies that emphasises rhythm, to attune the body to a metaphysical context.

Figure 3.1 Kristeva's Signifiance

The implementation of a philosophical dialectic culminated in the final presentation of the archetype (*gold skeletal mask*) whom was described from the fictitious narrative as a 'friend from outer space.' The strategy constitutes an escalation and tension between political judgment and aesthetic judgement. In a socio-political context, these semiotic symbols could be categorised as a sermon or moral tale, and consequently signal a didactic approach. However, the monologue conversely served to challenge the Kantian notion of pure judgement, as 'it must have no end belonging to the Object as its determining ground, if it is to be aesthetic and not to be tainted with any judgement of understanding or reason' (Kant 1952:101). In other words, I aimed to explicitly challenge the extent of the audience's suspension of disbelief, correlating to the metaphysical context of the fictitious narrative. The archetype (*gold skeletal mask*) begins the monologue with:

> We always have to appear perfect in some respect, proud…. Where in society can
> you be stupid…You don't fuck up enough and you certainly don't challenge each
> other to fuck up…. Three little pigs, you know the story…

Figure 3.2 Gold Skeletal Mask Archetype

In a metaphysical context, this monologue could lead to questions that surround the ambiguity of the archetype (*gold skeletal mask*), especially in respect to the previous archetypes presented; in respect to the fictitious narrative that suggested that the audience was auditioning to enter the metaphysical home. The philosophical dialectic presents other forms of inquiry when examining the representation of the different archetypes. For example, in the context of the performance and from the perspective of Phenomenology and Ontology, 'What is a lucid dream?' Who does the Big Bad wolf represent?' What does the mansion represent? Conversely, the use of swear words, and a seeming didactic monologue could have been offensive, especially if aligned to the symbolic signification in a socio-political context; however, through the theatrical framework encompassed in the platform of Neo-Surrealism, the fictitious narrative has established authority over the socio-political context. It is then that the archetype (*gold skeletal mask*) confronts the judgement aligned with a socio-political context, as its determining ground (Kant 1952:101):

> Come here little piggy… When did I lose you? You don't like my attitude? You think im egocentric? You don't like my American accent? You think I'm patronising you? You think this is about me the director? This isn't about you…

either. This is a performance! There is no identity in infinity. You are the performing artist. I am the audience. Listening is a performing art.

Here, the symbolic signification becomes available through Political Teleology. The mask taken off signals addressing the audience's judgement and demonstrates the use of Brechtian Alienation, as the audience's judgement takes the form of 'external conditions that interrupt, imposing seemingly contradictory forces upon linearly unfolding narrative processes' (Feral 2003: 467-8). Here, the symbolic signification intertwines the Political Teleology, judgement of a socio-political context, and judgement in a metaphysical context:

> Alienation appears as the moment during which the function of discourse is transformed. At this moment, the audience passes from a discourse which aims at interpreting reality, to a discourse of purely aesthetic and theatrical intent (Feral 2003: 467-8).

The archetype that is revealed after the mask is taken off, is imbued with ambiguity as to whether the performing artist is revealed, or another archetype. The metaphysical context is reinforced when a video on the screen appears and states, 'Congratulations, you are all now invited into our living room,' with the implicit context in the opening of the performance that stated, 'I am always holding auditions in my metaphysical home.' More importantly, this transition reveals that the intent of the performance dismisses the Self-reference paradox, or Periphery Identity Paradox that would assume that I was using the means of performance art to reflect a position towards the symbolic hegemony. Instead, the symbols have been strategically designed to reinforce Performance Transgression, in defense of judgements that violate moral or social boundaries encompassed in the platform of Neo-Surrealism.

Figure 4.1 Video: Symbolism of Fish in a Metaphysical Context

The video appropriating to the symbolism of the fish is intended to indirectly create time for the audience to reflect about the philosophical dialectic, especially in conjunction to the signifiance (1985:13) from the music. The culmination of the philosophical dialectic takes place when condidering the fictitious narrative that stated in the opening scene, 'I'm always holding auditions in my mansion home.' The philosophical dialectic situated in the performance is essentially forming a separate dialectic through the video of the fish representing the natural world, since the behaviour of the fish is assumed to be out of my control. The performance therefore provides several channels to explore Performance Fashion.

Figure 4.2 Video: Culmination of Philosophical Dialectic

Neo-Surrealism: The Audition **(2016)**

Performance Transgression: The previous performance generally received a positive response, however, it was yet to be determined if the platform of Neo-Surrealism could gain any recognition outside of an academic, performative context. The site specificity of *Neo-Surrealism: The Audition* (2016) took place in Alaska, centred on the utility of the conceptualization of Performance Fashion. This strategy therefore served to challenge the application of the theorisation of Neo-Surrealism. The symbolic hegemony was useful for deconstructing the performative context of a classroom, situated in Anchorage, Alaska that primarily consisted of college fraternity students. From a creative standpoint, my intention was to use the performance as a means of implementing Performance Transgression from the perspective of the audience. In other words, the fictitious narrative served to defend the audience's moral and social boundaries. Because symbolic hegemony assumes different forms of centralised power (Eisenstadt 1978:86),

then a different value system appropriated to Performance Fashion would also follow. Here, the symbols of classroom, Alaska, and college fraternity, become important factors in designing a Neo-Surrealism performance in a State that I have never visited before. Because I incorporated being a student from London in the fictitious narrative, I therefore crossed referenced these symbols from two different perspectives of Performance Fashion. I assimilated the audience within the context surrounding the United States of America and a global context. The Performance Transgression is therefore centred on defending moral and social boundaries of the audience, against socio-political judgements that could inhibit or limit identifying with a metaphysical context. Because the development of Neo-Surrealism was still in its infantile stage and the symbolic authority of my work was also precarious, I depended on the symbolic authority of my brother H. From the perspective of the symbolic hegemony, H. graduated from the reputable institution of The LSE in London and was regional director of the TKE fraternity, one of the oldest and largest fraternities in the US. He also founded this specific chapter in Alaska. H. will be running for Congress in San Diego in the year 2020. My brother's reputation as a representation of symbolic authority in a socio-political context, strategically became the means of contextualising the performance in conjunction with the Kantian sublime that states, judgments of the sublime become possible when, 'the feeling of our incapacity to attain to an idea that is law for us, is RESPECT (1952:105).'

Philosophical Dialectic: The dialectic in this performance is centred on the antinomy of a socio-political context and Neo-Surrealism as a platform. I specifically set out to confront the tensions that follow from the process of creation: the antinomy of authority in a metaphysical context and socio-political authority. Implicit in this dialectic are the assumptions of socio-political authority being a creative process and the Political Teleology that asserts that authority is necessary for social order or the means or provisions for survival (Schopenhauer 1818: 284). The philosophical dialectic presented in *The Audition 2016* is intended to explore social dynamics and the inter-related relationship of art and authority. The fictitious narrative was strategically set up by incorporating the socio-political context that preceded the performance, or the audience's preconceived symbolic associations to my brother. The TKE chapter in Alaska was made aware that H. had intended to visit their chapter and that his brother, a PhD student, was going to visit to

do a performance. I had video conference conversation with two members of the fraternity to gain insight about their respective relationship with the symbolic hegemony.

In the opening scene of the performance, I assumed the archetype of a PhD student; from a symbolic interactionist point of view, the fraternity only formally knew H. through the socio-political context of Regional Director. The implications are such that the performance indirectly addressed Performance Transgression by confronting the limitations directly associated with the semiotic sign of his identity in a socio-political context. The following text was sent to all the fraternity members from one of its members that illustrates the significance of aligning the principles ascribed to the symbolic hegemony in tandem with the aims encompassed from the platform of Neo-Surrealism:

Gentlemen,

I am asking for a huge favor. On March 12th I will be working
on a video with H and his brother Kalid (K for short). What
this video entails is a performance K and H want to give to us
that will benefit our fraternity. If you've been witness to H
public speaking I'm sure his brother is on that same caliber.
This video I am working on will also be shown to his London
school so our fraternity name will actually be heard to his
professors. Hopefully I haven't bored you enough with the
details yet before I got into what I ask of you gentlemen. What
I'm looking for is to at lest have no less than ten brothers who will
come to listen and participate in this speaking. I know most of us
got time off of work during H's visit and like I've said before, to
publicly be a witness to H speak, along with his brother now, will
only benefit your life. So if i could please have brothers either
comment here and message me personally if they would and
could attend this. Time is yet to be determined but we're looking
 sometime late in the afternoon so possibly at five maybe even later.
Also, afterwards we would probably all hangout afterwards as
H and K would just like to see that this performance only brings

us closer as brothers and hyped about the fraternity. If that means

Casa's, cool. If that means hiking a mountain ten at night, awesome.

Thank you for reading and to those in advance who can attend.

YITB

- marcskateswithstyle

This message sent to the fraternity illustrates the importance of considering the relevance of Social Science in the discipline of Performance Studies. There are several implications that follow from this text that also signals the significance of contextualising the performance with principles of the symbolic hegemony; more specifically, the alignment of the Performance Fashion to this particular fraternity chapter in Anchorage Alaska. From a symbolic interactionist point of view, I used the symbols ascribed from the message to the fraternity to create the performance. The opening monologue intentionally obscures the boundaries between a political and aesthetic context. The proud demeanor is seemingly attaching the titles of Masters and PhD as socio-political terms intended to assume authority over the audience. I also incorporate within the archetype of a PhD student, assumptions of Alaska as appropriated to the symbolic hegemony, thus reinforcing the influence of the socio-political context. The comment about being over-dressed is intended to insinuate the implications of habitus (Bourdieu 1984: 170) as a judgement towards Alaskans in general. In other words, a judgement towards their lifestyle, while portraying the demeanor of superiority that follows from assuming and reinforcing the illusion as an authority in respect to the symbolic hegemony. However, these tensions are intended to also be obscured from the fictitious narrative, with the archetype of a PhD student suggesting that the topic being discussed is centred on a metaphysical context: the process of creation. The audience, being primarily TKE's was already familiar with the public, interrogatory process that emphasises leadership. Here, socio-political authority and the metaphysical authority of a theatrical framework, coincide to a point where the distinction is impalpable to the audience. Because the contextualisation of the performance was situated in conjunction with symbolic authority, the tensions surrounding the antinomy of the philosophical dialectic culminated early in the performance. This occurred when the authority assumed by my archetype as a PhD student became in direct conflict with H's Performance Transgression. At this point, it should be noted that H had no prior experience as a performer or actor in a theatrical framework. His reaction, from the perspective of the audience,

could have signaled a socio-political context. Underlying this confrontation, is a semiotic sacrifice, outlined by Kristeva, as

> semiotic violence, breaks through the symbolic border, and tends to dissolve the logical order, which is, in short, the outer limit founding the human and the social (1984: 79).

The semiotic sacrifice alluding to the brothers' confrontation, paradoxically corresponded to my authority as a PhD student.

Figure 5.1 Brothers' Confrontation

Brechtian Alienation also occurs because my artistic authority as the creator of the performance contradicts the fictitious narrative of the PhD archetype. This function served to introduce the liminal, as the audience confronted the semiotic sacrifice (Kristeva) aimed at 'striving after new forms and structure (Turner 1990: 11-12), through Brechtian Alienation, where the audience 'passes from a discourse which aims at interpreting reality, to a discourse of purely aesthetic and theatrical intent.' (Feral 2003: 467-8) This could be exemplified from the audience being introduced to H. as an archetype (Bubbles) encompassing a theatrical framework. *The Audition* (2016) also suggests that the socio-political identities of the performers are detached from the philosophical dialectic with the fictitious narrative centred on the audience painting, or symbolically expressing their free will to create. In an academic context, this raises questions about the performance*, Neo-Surrealism: The Audition (2016) and the* corresponding signification of: a Painting, Performance Art, or Social Science. In respect to the platform of Neo-Surrealism and Performance Transgression, several other aesthetic, symbolic implications would follow.

Figure 5.2 Painting, Performance Art, or Social Science

***Neo-Surrealism: The Rehearsal* (2017)**

Performance Transgression:

In *Neo-Surrealism: The Rehearsal* (2017) I explored symbolic abjection (Kristeva 1984:5, Oxford Dictionary, 2017) through the platform of Neo-Surrealism. As seen from the work of ORLAN, contextualisation of her work in a socio-political context seems instrumental for establishing her social boundaries, akin to Performance Transgression. The platform of Neo-Surrealism however, is aimed at establishing Performance Transgression through the theatrical framework. The term abjection, from a symbolic standpoint, presents a paradox within the context of the symbolic hegemony. The site specificity of *The Rehearsal* (2017) is held at Brunel University in the Artaud Performance Building. Here, from the perspective of a PhD student, I appropriated the symbolism of art, performance, and academia, to a form of centralised power, subsuming an aesthetic regime (2004:21). In other words, in this specific performative context, an underlying aesthetic regime (2004:21) is assumed, forming its own center or values in accordance to the principles of Performance Fashion. An aesthetic regime (2004:21) was alluded to from the Performance Transgression in *What is Performance Art?* (2015), where I sought to establish symbolic-aesthetic credibility. In a performative context, a binary relationship is formed by symbols that reflect social order, aimed at predicting future behavior; and symbols that reflect the aesthetic, centred on an infinitude aimed at deconstructing the limitations of the symbol. I therefore conversely appropriated symbols aligned to governance as the periphery. My brother H. therefore represented two forms of centralised power: from the implications of habitus (Bourdieu 1984: 170), his public persona is aligned to governance and the fictitious narrative that places him as the creator of the performance. The Performance Transgression is aimed at defending the moral or social boundaries of the performer through the platform of Neo-Surrealism; from the polarity ascribed to the paradigm of the social order and more specifically, the aesthetic regime (2004:21).

Philosophical Dialectic:

The philosophical dialectic is set up to explore the dichotomous relationship between authority and abjection. Here, a paradox is formed from a symbolic standpoint: the fictitious narrative that situates the archetype of H. as the creator of the performance and consequently an aesthetic authority, creates an antinomy with the implicit authority of myself as the creator of the

performance. This dichotomy therefore contradicts my symbolic authority as a PhD student in the field of Performance studies, symbolically appropriated to the aesthetic regime. Conversely, in respect to a global, symbolic hegemony, H. situated in a socio-political context, represents an authority, while my fictitious archetype is conversely situated on the periphery, signaling abjection. The dialectic is initiated by the fictitious narrative that incorporates our relationship in a socio-political context as brothers, when he states, 'I created this performance to try and save my brother.'

Figure 6.1 H. The Archetype of Performance Artist situated in the Fictitious Narrative

Figure 6.2 Introducing the Philosophical Dialectic through Performance Fashion

The philosophical dialectic is introduced through the fictitious narrative as H's archetype (*gold mask*) reads a poem that considers reflections about the ontological and phenomenological tension surrounding the nature of appreciation. This dialectic culminates when the archetype *(blonde hair)* asks his brother to hit him; here, the symbolism is appropriated to both the fictitious narrative and socio-political context. Political Teleology therefore becomes a form of Brechtian Alienation when the symbol of H. as an authority within the symbolic hegemony, acts out abjection within the platform of Neo-Surrealism (Feral 2003: 467-8). From a performative standpoint, H is conversely, simultaneously, aligning his action of hitting his brother with aesthetic authority; this performative strategy alludes to Bakhtin's conception of degradation (1984: 21). This has further implications, as the act could symbolically signal Transgression in a socio-political context. For example, the act of hitting someone with a belt could affect how H. is perceived or judged as a governmental authority. However, through the platform of Neo-Surrealism, Performance Transgression deconstructs and expands the symbol of his identity appropriated to the symbolic hegemony that assumes a metaphysical context. Performance Transgression also incorporates the institutional

authority of academia, and more specifically, the socio-political context of the performance associated with the research development of a PhD student. *The Rehearsal* (2017), thereby provides further evidence to suggest the relevance that Social Science can have on the discipline of Performance Studies. Even if the socio-political construct influences the theatrical framework, through Political Teleology and the platform of Neo-Surrealism, the symbolism appropriated to the symbolic hegemony can serve to create a metaphysical context. This can be exemplified by the symbolic use of 'bodily pain' (Warr 2015:32) in the performance that symbolically deflects association to the Kantian Object or end (1952:103). *The Rehearsal* (2017) also demonstrates how the symbols used in a performance can draw from the socio-political construct without implicitly revolting against the current paradigm that facilitates social order. This performance could presumably affect the symbolism appropriated to Performance Fashion. In other words, in accordance with the principles of Simmel's Fashion, the platform of Neo-Surrealism could become the means of being,

> universally adopted, that is, as soon as anything that was originally done
> only by a few has really come to be practised by all- as is the case in certain
> elements of clothing and in various forms of social conduct
> (Clarke, Doel and Housiaux 2003: 238).

This suggests, that the aesthetic, as explored through the platform of Neo-Surrealism, could become a means of symbolically challenging and defining the principles appropriated to the symbolic hegemony. For example, the definition of abject (Oxford Dictionary, 2017) could transition into an expanded use of the term that incorporates Kristeva's account of abjection (1984:5). In other words, the platform of Neo-Surrealism could become aligned with Simmel's account of the essence of fashion, namely,

> that consists in the fact that it should always be exercised by only a part of a given
> group, the great majority of whom are merely on the road to adopting it
> (Clarke, Doel and Housiaux 2003: 238).

Here, I am not suggesting that the platform of Neo-Surrealism should necessarily become aligned with a political party or institution that defines the boundaries of the symbolic hegemony. I am

however, illustrating that aesthetic interpretation of a performance could become a means of signaling Performance Fashion for the purposes of aesthetic discourse coinciding the implications of Foucault's power relations (1977:27).   This echoes Charmaz's account of symbolic interactionism that assumes the premise that, 'society, reality, and self are constructed through interaction;' here, the term constructed implies the process of creation or art (2006:7). I therefore argue that the symbols that formulate and encompass social order would also be considered as aesthetic. From this chapter, the analysis of my performance practise demonstrates an emphasis on the application of the theorisation corresponding to this research.   While I consider these performances to be complete in terms of the practical application of Neo-Surrealism as a platform, I would not necessarily consider them to be complete works of art. By this I mean, that the work is meant to be judged by the academic context of a PhD student. In other words, my socio-political identity is not yet a Performing Artist located within the symbolic hegemony. This distinction serves to create an indirect contextualisation of the work itself.

Conclusion

I will use a metaphor to conceptually explore how the implications of this study could integrate in a socio-political context. From the theorisation of Neo-Surrealism, Performance Fashion was established to represent the symbolic hegemony. However, in the context of an aesthetic infinitude and from a symbolic interactionist perspective, the socio-political construct more aptly represents the system of a fish tank. The discipline of social science would represent the study of the fish tank as the aesthetic boundaries that govern social order. The discipline of Performance Studies would consequently represent the study of the aesthetic filtering system, the means of filtering the aesthetic waste, repression, or outmoded symbols that no longer serve the interest of preserving social order. Aesthetic discourse could then become a space where the limitations of perception confront the infinitude of aesthetic possibilities. Here, sacred space allows pure judgement (Kant 1952:101) to exist and therefore serve to filter the judgement in the fish tank that assumes 'power relations' (Foucault 1977: 27) and a 'will to survival' (Schopenhauer 1818: 284). Here, Bakhtin's degradation (1984: 21) and Kristeva's abjection (1984:5) are examples of how the confrontation repression can manifest in the metaphorical fish tank and therefore serve to expand how we conduct social order in the context of an aesthetic infinitude. The implication being that the socio-political construct and its respective symbols 'do not alter the world' (Kepes 1966:8), but rather reflects aesthetic decisions that are defined by the 'human actors who have learned to transform the world according to the meanings of the symbols' (Kepes 1966:8). From this, the platform of Neo-Surrealism could become the means of confronting abjection (Kristeva: 1984:5), the 'meaning of symbols' (Kepes 1966:8). For example, this theatrical framework could be utilised to prevent transgressive violence like mass shootings that have become prevalent in the United

States. In a similar vein, those that define abjection, or leaders of Performance Fashion, could benefit from exploring aesthetic implications of symbols in a metaphysical context, especially since their decisions affect so many others. Here, my intention is not to contextualise this study in conjunction with these ideals in a lofty manner, but rather to situate these ideals through a framework with respect to contemporary problems in a practical manner. The implications of this work allude to concretising a function of the discipline of Performance Studies that coincides with a purpose that coincides with facilitating and preserving social order in tandem with our evolution as a species. In a socio-political context, rather than Performance Studies being symbolically aligned with obscurity, I am instead proposing that the discipline of Performance Studies should be considered with various other disciplines, namely, Mathematics, Astro Physics, and Medicine, generally understood to serve specific functions that corresponds to both a socio-political context and the natural world. To this end, Neo-Surrealism could become a platform where the mental faculty of Judgement intersects the aesthetic boundary between the context of an infinitude or metaphysical context and a socio-political context that explicitly creates a dialogue 'that we must renew efforts to define once again the meaning of citizenship' (Beiner 1984: xv). In an academic context, the work of Erving Goffman, as indicated from the title, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life,* situates performance in a socio-political context (1988). This study builds on that premise. By reducing the aesthetic to the symbolic and assimilating the socio-political context to serve the function of defining metaphysical parameters. More specifically, Neo-Surrealism: The Social Science of Performance Art becomes the practise of extrapolating the socio-political context from the metaphysical context; allowing the perceptual lens to make this dichotomous relationship visible where a discourse of art in respect to an infinitude becomes possible. To this end, if the platform of Neo-Surrealism were to become widely accepted, then there are several implications that could follow. The main implication would be that this platform would serve a different function in respect to Performance Fashion, namely Neo-Surrealism: The Performance Art of Social Science. This distinction being, that Political Judgment would be centred on Political Teleology; with the assumption being that the theatrical framework encompassed in Neo-Surrealism would conversely influence Performance Fashion and consequently, social order. The function of Neo-Surrealism would also serve the function of grounding or filtering the aesthetic possibilities in respect to social order, akin to the practicality of an Engineer that serves to ground the imagination of an Architect.
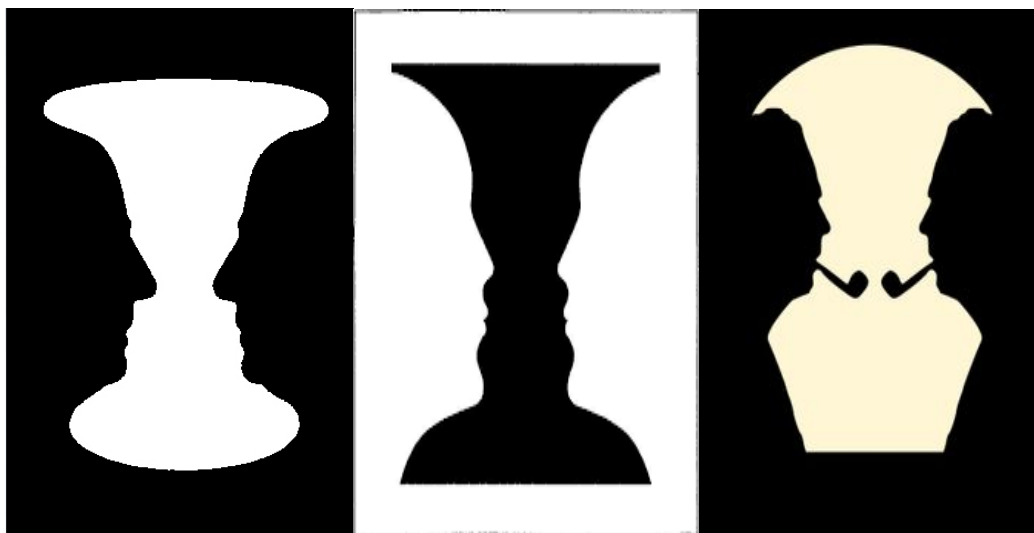
Figure 7.1 Neo-Surrealism: The Social Science of Performance Art

While the aim of this study was centred on the influence of the socio-political construct, my future studies will seek to build from the platform of Neo-Surrealism by concentrating on the main weakness surrounding my performance practise, namely aesthetic. I will research traditional theatrical performative strategies that draws from literature such as dramaturgy, plot structure, storytelling, mise-en-scène, character development, pacing, and suspense. The implications of assuming a metaphysical context for my work, will permit an exploratory approach to the aesthetic principles of taste in terms of how its traditionally understood as aligned with style, or beauty. I will then seek to correlate the platform of Neo-Surrealism through the medium of Film that presents several other theoretical obstacles and challenges.

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Appendix: Glossary of Terms

1) **<u>Sublime-</u>** an audience's response to a performance that elicits an epiphany about reality- either subjective, objective, or both. (Page 9)

> Inadequacy of even the greatest effort of our imagination in the *estimation of the magnitude of an object…* the effort towards a comprehension that exceeds the faculty of imagination for mentally grasping the progressive apprehension in a whole of intuition, and, with it, a perception of the inadequacy of this faculty (1952:103).

2) **<u>Socio-political-</u>** intersection between civilization and culture. The former denoting the relationship between structure and social order, the organisation appropriated to incorporating laws, rules, and boundaries that govern society and the latter with how the individual and collective negotiate consensus- the values, beliefs, and attitudes that underpin judgement, authority, and exclusion. (Page 10)

3) **<u>Socio-political context-</u>** relates to site-specificity, corresponding to both the physical setting and invisible influences that affect how social order is conducted; and therefore, also alludes to the audience's varying relationship to this context. (Page 10)

    a) There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations (Foucault) (Page 31)

4) **<u>Theatrical framework-</u>** the communicative model that establishes the context that precedes a theatrical performance; and functions to mediate artistic impulses through symbols. (Page 10)

5) **<u>Symbols-</u>** also refers to the Aesthetic that functions from György Kepes definition: Symbols, it must be emphasised, cannot and do not alter the world, but operate in and through the human actors who perceptually have learned to transform the world according to the meanings of the symbols by which they pattern their perceptions of the world and evaluate its possibilities. (Page 11-12)

6) **<u>Aesthetic</u>**- Symbol assuming a metaphysical context and infinite possibilities of defining its boundaries (Page 12)

7) **<u>Symbolic Interactionism</u>**- How groups coordinate their actions, how emotions are understood and controlled, how reality is constructed, how self is created, how large social structures get established and how public policy can be influenced. Stephen Littlejohn (Page 14)

8) **<u>Metaphysical context</u>**- Symbol, aesthetic, as discontinuous has infinite possibilities of interpretation, especially when considering how symbols relate to other symbols; also represents the infinite possibilities that a symbol can be defined or contextualised in respect to meaning. (Page 15)

9) **<u>Grounded Theory</u>**- Systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analysing qualitative data to construct theories grounded in themselves…construct these data through our observations, interactions, and materials that we gather about the topic…we study our early data and begin to separate, sort, and synthesise these data through qualitative coding…attach labels to segments of data that depict what each

segment is about…distills data, sorts them, and gives us a handle for making comparisons with other segments of data… creating abstract interpretive understandings of the data. (Page 21)

10) **Abject-** (of something bad) experienced or present to the maximum degree; (of a person or their behavior) completely without pride or dignity; self-abasing (Oxford Dictionary) (Page 24)

   a) If it be true that the abject simultaneously beseeches and pulverizes the subject, one can understand that it is experienced at the peak of its strength when that subject, weary of fruitless attempts to identify with something on the outside, finds the impossible within, when it finds the impossible constitutes its very being, that is none other than abject. (Kristeva) (Page 24-25)

11) **Transgression-** violation of social boundaries (Oxford Dictionary) (Page 25)

12) **Distribution of the Sensible**- the system of self-evident facts of sense perception that simultaneously discloses the existence of something in common and the delimitations that define the respective parts and positions within it. (Page 31)

13) **Politics**- phenomena of appearances and disclosure (Hannah Arendt) (Page 31)

14) **Hegemony-** the fluctuating strata of symbolic power *de facto*

15) **Symbolic Hegemony**- Social order is governed through a power structure of symbols. (Page 40)

16) **Relational Aesthetics-** Rather than the artwork being an encounter between the viewer and an object, relational art produces intersubjective encounters. Through these encounters, meaning is elaborated collectively, rather than in the space of individual consumption. (Bourriaud) (Page 40)

17) **Performance Fashion-** Symbolic Hegemony conceptualized for the the Rubin Vase Conceptual Framework to coincides with Georg Simmel's account of Fashion: The essence of fashion consists in the fact that it should always be exercised by only a part of a given group, the great majority of whom are merely on the road to adopting it. As soon as fashion has been universally adopted, that is, as soon as anything that was originally done only by a few has really come to be practised by all- as is the case in certain elements of clothing and in various forms of social conduct- we no longer characterise it as fashion. Every growth of a fashion drives to its doom, because it thereby cancels out its distinctiveness. (Page 41)

18) **Pure Judgement-** it must have no end belonging to the Object as its determining ground, if it is to be aesthetic and not to be tainted with any judgement of understanding or reason (Kant) (Page 42)

19) **Political Teleology-** denotes how a socio-political context corresponds to a teleology in a metaphysical context; from a symbolic standpoint, teleology assumes that the function or purpose of the aesthetic is to be explored and examined in respect to its infinite possibilities of definition and meaning. This also allows for the term to conceptualise and access its symbolic interactionist utility in the context of its application to the Rubin Vase Conceptual Framework. (Page 44)

20) **Art-** infinite implications of a symbol, existing independently of our perception with the assumption being, that there processes of nature that exist beyond the limits of our perception or understanding. (Page 48)

21) **Artist**- individual enacting in the process of creation, providing form to symbols that assume a metaphysical context. (Page 48)

22) <u>Performance Transgression</u>- a symbolic pretext that follows from the platform of Neo-Surrealism, demarcated by sacred space, defined as: symbols that seemingly signal Transgression in a socio-political context, conversely reflect and assumes that its context is precipitated by a defense from symbolic violation of the artists' and audience's moral or social boundaries.