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**The American University in Cairo
School of Humanities and Social Sciences**

**Theatre, Performance and Affect through Revolutionary Times in Egypt
A Thesis Submitted to**

The Department of Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology, and Egyptology

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Arts
In Sociology - Anthropology**

**By Noha Khattab
Under the supervision of Dr. Reem Saad**

May 2014

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Preface

My parents have always taught me to follow my passion. I am sure it never occurred to them when they were telling me this statement that I will find my passion in clowning, dancing and singing in the street. To be honest, I was not fully aware how passionate I am about this until I decided to delve into a corner that has always been intriguing for me. I am saying this not only to introduce my topic of research but, more importantly, to invite you to my position in this thesis. My position in this thesis has been complex to a considerable extent that I often got lost with my stance: am I an audience, am I a performer or am I an anthropologist. This often led me to take steps back to think and rethink, but also to think less and allow the experience to flow through my body. The possibility of knowing, as I learned through one of the most inspiring and controversial writers I was exposed to John Law, is itself a quest and a journey where “We will need to teach ourselves to know...Perhaps we will need to know through the hungers, tastes, discomforts, or pains of our bodies. These would be forms of knowing by embodiment” (Law, 2004, p.2).

In this thesis, this experience, I was a subject of my own research. I situated myself in the midst of the mess, the mess where imagination is plausible. I suggest in my final chapter to think of imagination as a machine. A machine, which extracts from the everyday life, from ourselves and from others, plays with this mess of extraction and releases it back. This machine is always in process, and has a temporal flow of continuous becoming. In this sense, imagination, I argue, is an enabling mechanism that triggers possibilities and renders street theatre, which provokes laughter, happiness, gathering and creating noise, a space that squeezes within the everyday to invoke imagination.

Imagination as a subject to think and study, nevertheless, it is not a machine that I can get my toolkit and unpack its pieces and duly define. Imagination is a flux and the only possible way to produce some thoughts on imagination is by imagining. A theatrical performance is an imaginary world that viewers resonate to from their own life experiences, more or less. There is a line that connects this imaginary with the realities. As much as realities are constructed

enunciation of imaginations goes through processes of creative formation to weave performances – imaginary worlds.

Jakob, one of my colleagues/ interlocutors in Outa Hamra, once told me this: “Clowns are an extreme form of humans and they need to be created with inner and outer peace.” The statement sounded strong enough to linger in my mind, but to be honest I did not take it that seriously or possibly even did not understand it well enough at the moment he mentioned it. What is so extreme about a clown, I was not convinced but I wrote it down in my big red note book, and never really grasped its full meaning till I did put on my red nose. Becoming a clown I became closer and closer to my own body, my feeling, my emotions and my own facial expressions. This awareness to convey genuine feeling and emotions, and how such enunciation finds a path and creates mutual sympathetic relations with the audience is when I realized that extreme is no exaggeration.

My passion drove me to pick my topic of research and I was determined to delve into theatre and what it has to do with the social. Given the contemporary moment we live in Egypt the street became a central and an appealing venue to think, and to me street theatre carried a hefty political connotation- a rebellious project, a revolution in its very uttering and happening. I was intrigued by the idea of a street as a stage and my enthusiasm led me to an initial hypothesis about street theatre as a space of resistance. However, to speak of street theatre as entertainment, we do not say much, and if we speak about it as resistance we say too much. Resistance the word with the capital R, is the word that vanished more and more as I further worked through this research. I found myself within the rehearsal room playing in the theatrical sense of play, dancing, drumming on barrels and singing. I found myself disciplining my body, my voice becoming part of a collective but in the meantime digging through for my unique individual self. I came out to streets in dispersed spaces around Egypt from Cairo to Aswan. What we aimed to do in these spaces was no resistance. We aimed for laughter -we aimed for happiness.

So my questions further developed to what is it about this imaginary world that is yet subversive, despite its aim - laughter? What is it about this laughter that invites us to rethink how public the street actually is and that laughter poses a threat? My questions were attuned to think more of the processes and the multiplicity of situations that weave affective relations between the audience and the performers on stage – the frontier. Such affective relations that initiate within

the rehearsal room – the factory where instances of the everyday enter into the machine of imagination to create new dimension, new subjectivities – a parallel imaginary world which squeezes back to rupture instances of everyday to provoke imagination and trigger happiness.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Chapter One: Theatre, Performance and Affect | 1 |
| Background | 4 |
| Street Theatre | 4 |
| About the Troup | 8 |
| Methodology | 10 |
| Conceptual Framework | 11 |
| Embodiment and the Body as a Vehicle of Expression | 12 |
| Space Time and Subjectivity | 13 |
| Everydayness and Performance | 14 |
| The Paradox of Representation of Marginality- The Marginal and The Marginalized .. | 15 |
| The Chapters | 16 |
| Chapter Two: Configurations of Capital: Khayal Shaaby and Outa Hamra | 18 |
| Emergence of Khayal Shaaby | 19 |
| Emergence of Outa Hamra | 21 |
| Names that give an Impression: Outa Hamra and Khayal Shaaby..... | 22 |
| Capital Configurations | 23 |
| Social Relations and Cooperation | 24 |
| Outa Hamra: Beyond Institutional Walls | 24 |
| Khayal Shaaby Secure Umbrella | 26 |
| Creative Production Absorbed by Capitalism | 29 |
| Conclusion | 30 |
| Chapter Three: Street Theatre from the Inside Out: a Spatial Reading of Performance and Rehearsal Spaces | 32 |
| What is Happening? | 33 |
| The Rehearsal Space- The Factory | 35 |
| Khayal Shaaby: Nahda Spacious Rehearsal Room | 37 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Outa Hamra: We Have No Space Today, So No Rehearsal! | 38 |
| The Problematic of Scarcity and Centrality | 41 |
| Performance Space | 42 |
| Ethnographic Sketches from Street Performances: Anything Can Happen on The Street | 43 |
| Access to The Public | 44 |
| Street Theatre Behind Walls | 47 |
| Imagined Spaces of The Marginalized | 49 |
| Chapter Four: The Performing Body: An Embodiment and a Vehicle of Expression | 51 |
| Embodiment Why and How it was Possible? | 52 |
| Troupe's Aesthetics | 54 |
| Concealment through the 'Genuine' | 57 |
| Play, Improvisation and Affect | 58 |
| Playing and awareness | 59 |
| Putting Awareness into Feelings..... | 60 |
| Playing and Communication..... | 62 |
| Revolution of Color: Alignment and Alienation..... | 64 |
| The Red Nose | 66 |
| Becoming a Clown..... | 66 |
| The Creative Formation – The Making of the Play | 67 |
| Conclusion | 68 |
| Chapter Five: Affective Relations from the Stage and off | 69 |
| Affective Relations | 71 |
| Do The Poor and The Marginal need 'Enlightenment? | 75 |
| Conclusion | 77 |
| Bibliography..... | 78 |

Chapter One

Theatre, Performance and Affect

Introduction

Interactive street theatre is this significant genre of theatre that takes the stage to the audience. It is a genre that stages its performances beyond the walls of theatre houses, and finds its space within the everyday. This Thesis is an ethnographic study about interactive street theatre in Egypt post 2011. It explores how street theatre creates alternative spatiality and temporality that triggers possibilities of change through imagination. In this thesis I am focusing my analysis of two street theatre troupes who are particularly concerned with taking the stage to 'marginalized' audience, and by this act they tend to create spaces for expression and imagination.

Considering the locality of this thesis in Egypt within a dynamic contemporary moment post the events of 2011, I situate Egypt hypothetically as the wider stage within which small stages emerge through Outa Hamra (Red Tomato) and Khayal Shaaby (The Popular Imagination) performances. The research attends to the manifestation of this genre of art and the aesthetic and social value of taking theatre to the street in the realm of a contemporary moment in Egypt. Through my fieldwork with both troupes, I travelled through rehearsal rooms and different staging areas, where I have performed and witnessed performances. Affect and subjectivity are two essential concepts to this research. The relation between spaces, performing bodies, and spectators is a subjective mutual creation. In fact, Affect or the line of empathy created between the audience and the performers through the performance and play is what triggers possibilities and imaginations.

Through this research I am looking at street theatre mainly from the perspective of the performer by situating my analytical gaze from inside the stage and outward. The stage, the rehearsal room and the everyday constitute the main spatial analytical sites of this research. The three spaces motion as happening processes that feed into each other. So rather than segregating them as separate realms or phases, I analyze the stage, the everyday and the rehearsals as fluid

happenings linked through performance, imagination and enunciation. Nonetheless, Performance in the everyday is an essential entry point to guide thinking what links everydayness to the stage. We can further think of how the staging and the making of the performance stakes place within a wider staging of events post 2011 in Egypt. The resemblance between what happens through political demonstrations and street theatre is the rupture to the flow of the everyday to squeeze in possibilities. Political demonstration and marches express public demands by holding still the flow of the everyday to invoke and stipulate a public demand for change. Street theatre, on another level, attempts to capture the temporality and spatiality of the everyday to invoke possibilities through imagination. Through this connotation, street theatre can be one space to think and search for meaning to change and possibilities of change.

Moreover, through the practice and philosophy of Outa Hamra and Khayal Shaaby, there is an essential question related to their concern with addressing ‘marginalized’ audience as another level of analysis. This political choice influences their politics and aesthetics. This targeting of a certain audience – the marginalized audience situates them away from the so called intellectual audience (centralized in Cairo and big cities). Therefore, this opens to a further debate concerned with the production of this category and why performed by both troupes is so inherent to marginality.

Street theatrical performance attempt pushes through limitations. Limitations that might be actual physical spaces that the actors utilize to stage their performance, or they can also be socially constructed boundaries that limit people's interaction. Crashing down physical limitations and creating unbounded space for creativity, leads to greater possibilities of imagination. Through imagination, as a key concept, possibilities can be triggered. Theatrical performance can suggest such imagined possibilities beyond conceived realities. Through this thesis, I am particularly interested in this aspect of imagination, which theatre creates through representation on the stage. Imagination, I argue is an enabling mechanism that triggers possibilities and renders street theatre, which provokes laughter, happiness, gathering and creating noise, a space that squeezes within the everyday to invoke this imagination.

Street theatre is distinct from other genres of theatre through its mission of taking the stage to the audience rather than inviting the audience to the stage. This distinction negates limiting the imaginaries that theatre capture behind walls of theatre houses and closed rooms. Although this

mission carries a project that can be described as political yet this thesis further locates the political through the sociality and everydayness. It engages with the everyday as a material to extract bits and pieces for the creative formation of its performances, and invokes it further through a rupture to its mundane flow through the interruption of the performance to the temporality and spatiality of various everyday instances.

Another, guiding theme throughout this research is how to think about the collective and the individual. The troupe is a performing body and each performer utilizes own individual body to constitute the collective body of the troupe. The complexity of the collective is found within the individual discipline and awareness to own individuality and what it has at stake and needs to remain as such to form a collective. Being in the rehearsal room or on the stage there is always an intrinsic relation between the one body, the bodies and the formations uniting and dispersing performing bodies.

By focusing on two street theatre troupes I look into how this imagined stage that involves play, music and dance, opens this space of expression. I closely analyze performance and rehearsal space, the performing body, the voice and the rhythm. Through these variables affect constitutes the making of new subjectivities to the places and provoke imagination and potentialities. When speaking of imagination and potentialities, I recall the endless small details that emerge and recur and might even go unnoticed through the everyday. Such details involve happiness and laughter, which both troupes invite as aspects not separate from life itself, and that allow us to think of subversion that is not separate from life itself.

However, this form of expression involves complexities of representation, especially related to the troupe's target of 'marginalized' audience. This very aspect of marginality which is inherent to the practice of street theatre provokes questions around who is the marginalized and why are 'they' a target audience? I further problematize this choice of the marginalized and locate my analysis to address a question around what is it about the marginalized that triggers a potentiality for street theatre? Moreover, with regards to the complex of representation, which is inherent to theatrical performance, I look into how and why certain channels of representation are constructed. Thus, I am focusing in this thesis on particularly two street theatre troupes and closely studying the different social and artistic status they encompass, precisely through their group dynamics, their artistic production and working strategies.

Through this ethnography I chose to work with Outa Hamra and Khayal Shaaby, as they are two of the main theatre troupes in Egypt and mainly located in Cairo. This research will contribute to a body of literature that attends to art in context of the social. More precisely, this thesis is an anthropological study of theatre as a space that captures the social and the cultural on many levels, which I deal with some through the coming chapters. Theatre is essentially linked to the social and this is not a recent realization. In fact, theatre in general, as a genre of art essentially speaks to and about the contemporary and narrates the imaginaries of the social from the past to the present and what we hope to come. Street theatre, as a genre, is not a new phenomenon and has been part of the cultural scene in Egypt. However, in this thesis I am particularly concerned with the contemporary and what we can read through street theatre at this moment in relation to the social. Theatre and street theatre in Egypt relate to a wider social and historical context. I will further attend to some of these instances for the purpose of locating my research within a local context. However, I do not particularly attempt to draw on a genealogy of street theatre, but will focus on what is it about street theatre that allows a reading of the social.

In attending to previous research that attempted anthropologically to engage with theatre in Egypt, I found that it has been scarcely approached by earlier scholars. Therefore, this research is significant in terms of the historicity of the events it encompasses within the contemporary moment it is concerned by. Also, it adds to a library of an interdisciplinary approach of research that links theatre and performance practices as a means to understand the social.

Background

Street Theatre

To begin with, it is important to elaborate on what I am specifically referring to when speaking of street theatre. In the context of this research I am focusing my analysis to the social through two Egyptian theatre troupes, which were one troupe at some point and decided to split. The emergence, establishment and aesthetics of both troupes resemble to some extent practices within Egyptian street theatre history. Khayal Shaaby and Outa Hamra carry distinct narratives in terms of what inspired the emergence and the making of each troupe. However, I argue that each troupe carries an identity that is not particularly inspired or limited to a genealogy of Egyptian street theatre. In fact, each troupe has been inspired from local and international schools of theatre. Different theatre

methodologies led them to further combine and appropriate their unique identity within the local cultural setting.

Street theatre and public performance in general reflects a broad spectrum of artistic performative practices that happen within the public space. When speaking of performance within a public space we are referring to a genre of art that is practiced beyond familiar theatrical settings. Street theatre, or outdoor theatre, is not solely reflecting a performance that is not under a roof. Street theatre refers to what this genre of art aims to invoke by its interruption to everydayness. Hence, it can happen in 'public' spaces as in literally the street or it can happen within gated settings such as (in an school, a hospital or even a prison). So when speaking of street theatre we can think of the ultimate purpose and the sociality generated through this form of art, rather than the physical space of the street (Manson, 1992).

Street theatre and popular theatre are essentially related. Prentki and Selman (2000) argue that street theatre is actually a genre or a venue to practice popular theatre and make sure that it succeeds in out reaching and having access to ordinary people. Therefore, it is important to think of how popular theatre came to be and was manifested through street performance. The street was essentially a venue for popular forms of artistic expression. Such forms in Egypt can be traced back to shadow theatre, Aragoz and Hakawaty (the storyteller), which all that have been associated with colloquial popular stories, songs and even myths (Khalil, 2009). Aragoz and Shadow theatre were puppet based performances, while the Hakawati, which literally means the story teller, was in fact a story teller roaming the streets sharing stories in performative musical way. However, Aragoz in particular is significant for its historical significance in the Egyptian cultural tradition. The puppet is made out of wood and mostly dressed in red and its name – Aragoz - has controversial historical roots, one of which is that it “is derived from Qaraqosh, the vezir during Saladin's reign in Egypt, who was known for his harshness and bad judgement.” And through his name he came to life through a mobile puppet roaming all around Egypt mocking and criticizing tyrant rullers since Qaraqosh and till recent history (Noshokaty, February 2013).

These forms were outdoor kind of performances. However, they don't necessarily directly lead to the theatrical forms that Outa Hamra and Khayal Shaaby come to represent in the contemporary moment. In fact, as I previously highlighted there is a resemblance to a great extent and it can also inspire their work given the locality of their praxis. Moreover, street and outdoor

performance in Egypt can also be traced through these unofficial and small travelling troupes, which emerged and became popular during the last decade of the nineteenth century (Fahmy, 2011). Such forms of popular theatre seemed to exploit a wide range of human expression and interaction through public spaces within the rural and urban areas in Egypt. The troupes were popular for their comic way, which was based on improvisation. They also utilized forms such as puppetry and shadow plays in whatever space possible (street, Café's, square or even an alley) (Fahmy, 2011).

Street theatre as practiced by Outa Hamra and Khayal Shaaby can be counted as part of the independent theatre scene, which is a movement that became a visible part of the Egyptian cultural scene since the late 80's and early 90's (Kamal, 2010). By independent theatre troupes, I am not referring to the troupes who are part of the state theatre or the mainstream commercial troupes who have their own theatre houses (Kamal, 2010). In fact, unlike the mainstream commercial independent theatre troupes, which had their own theatre houses, independent theatre troupes were only hosted at theatrical venues and didn't have their own theatre houses. According to Pahwa the international experimental theatre festival that was held annually in Cairo since 1988 inspired so many independent theatre troupes (Pahwa, 2007). Thus, independent theatre has evolved and was subjected to many challenges as an alternative theatre scene.

Independent theatre troupes that were established back in the early 90's and late 80's as in the case with directors such as: Hassan Al- Gritly the principle founder of Warsha troupe that was established in 1989, and Haraka (Movement) directed by Khaled El Sawy, as well as Atelier troupe that was founded by Muhammad Abd al-Khaliq (Kamal, 2010). These troupes were all significant for the avant guard forms of theatre they produced, which were inspired by international forms introduced through Cairo international experimental theatre festival. Independent theatre troupes and the genre of art they produced became part of the under-ground cultural scene in Egypt. Therefore, independent theatre troupes were not generally appreciated by the ministry of culture during the 90's, so they had no access to state owned theatres, except for Hanager theatre. This access to Hanager theatre was actually a result of a collective gathering by the independent theatre troupes, which was able to draw the attention of the media. The ministry of culture Farouk Hosny back then in 1993 allowed this access to Hanager as a gesture of inclusion (Kamal, 2010).

This is a popular or 'official' narrative around the emergence of the so called independent theatre scene in Egypt. However, another narrative alternative to this official as described by Nada

Sabet (co- founder and artistic director of noon creative enterprise), is the emergence of the independent theatre scene with the emergence and expansion of independent art spaces. Within these spaces different groups started to find a space to come together and collaborate and collectively create a new life to the art scene through. So according to Sabet the independent theatre scene like the independent music scene, which nourished with the emergence of studios for music jamming, theatre also started to grow and actually found a vent to evolve with the expansion of rehearsal spaces.

However, looking at the contemporary independent theatre scene and the history of theatre within public spaces in Egypt is an attempt to locate how the scene generally used to look like; what were the obvious recurring moments? And how can we relate to the historicity of theatre in relation to the social through a contemporary moment within my analysis of street theatre?

In 2001 Khayal Shaaby was formed by a group of Egyptian and non Egyptian artists, and ten years after a split happened and Outa Hamra came to give another dimension to the street theatre scene in Egypt. However, Khayal Shaaby and Outa Hamra more or less bears a common basic purpose of taking the stage to the audience. Kanny a member of Khayal Shaaby describes his practice of street theatre as a reverse action “we go to people, rather than waiting for them to come to us” (Antoun, 19 April 2013). It defies the idea of categorizing theatre as an art for the elite and refutes the structural boundaries that performing in a theatre house enforces (Manson, 1992). It can play with the minimum elements, which is available to everyone. Although it is also associated with acrobat and circus like techniques, so they sometimes rely on catchy props and tricks such as juggling. Yet similar to any genre of theatre, it is an imagined space, but is created in the midst of the everyday, it is also abstracted from mundane everyday reality, but it is significant in its capacity to represent this new imagined dimension away from formal barriers. Although theatrical value is not abolished, because after all a stage is set, even if it’s an imagined one, yet street theatre also, to a considerable extent, breaks some of these barriers between audience and performers, because the show can only develop around the crowd, so spectators turn into active engaged audience. Moreover, Street theatre adopts different forms that are highly interactive and diminish the limitation of the stage to the performers and invites the audience to the stage and their presence contributes to the performance (Manson, 1992). So it basically deals with theatre as an art that should be made available to everyone. The idea of performing in the public space invokes beyond the mundane everyday performance. It requires a big deal of

flexibility, attentiveness and openness, because “anything can happen in the street” as Mustapha a member of Khayal Shaaby puts it.

About the Troupes

Through my thesis I conducted my ethnographic research with mainly *Khayal Shaaby* - The Popular Imagination, as well as *Outa Hamra*- Red Tomato. Some of the members of Outa Hamra were part of the founders of Khayal Shaaby, but they have split and Outa Hamra was formed in 2011 right before the revolution. They both define with street theatre and social interactive theatrical performance. However, each adopts a distinct styles and aesthetics despite the similarity in the techniques they rely on.

Khayal Shaaby - The Popular imagination

Khayal Shaaby is a street theatre troupe interested mainly in street performance. The troupe was established back in 2001 by current members and others who left the troupe. The troupe is now composed of six members, and they generally perform four times a month and meet once a week for rehearsals. The troupe works under the umbrella of Nahada association – Jesuit Cairo, which covers their administrative affairs and provides them with a venue for their rehearsals. The troupe follows the philosophy of “poor theatre”, which is a concept, introduced by Polish theatre writer Jerzy Grotowski and manifested through his Theatre Laboratory productions. According to Grotowski theatre will remain poor in comparison to other more advanced fancy channels such as multimedia and television, yet theatre will remain to have the edge of the actor-audience relationship. Therefore, poor theatre adopts the concept of “performance as an act of transgression” (Grotowski, 1965, p.3) and refutes the all the “superfluous” and persist to exist solely relying on actor-spectator relationship.

Such a philosophy influences the choice of theatre forms they apply, which is rather intriguing to further question why they chose certain forms upon their choice of adapting this philosophy. The troupe began with Aragoz – folklore puppet¹ show at poor marginalized areas of Egypt. The intention was to search for something common to Egyptian audience and appropriate it within a contemporary context to retrieve a particular cultural heritage. They also adopted other forms of theatre such as

¹The puppets were developed to be emerging from the environment where the performance happened, where they made the puppets for example at Al zabaleen – garbage collectors area from trash bins and paper bags and so on

object theatre², Forum theatre³ and clowning. The troupe uses the street as a venue; this is because they are interested in going to the people and in reviving the old folklore and contemporary hidden facts of life in these marginalized areas. This imagination of a location to marginality, however, is a central concept to Outa Hamra as well, and I further problematize and delve further into. They also conduct workshops and trainings through Nahda association and in collaboration with other organizations. Through these workshops they rely on various social theatre techniques, which they have acquired through constant training with various theatre experts.

Outa hamra – Red Tomato

“To have fun is our serious business”

Outa Hamra is a street theatre troupe founded in January 2011. It uses street clowning and social theatre techniques through their performances in public spaces and workshops with under privileged in Egypt. They target marginalized areas and groups in order to give opportunities to learn and to express points of view that might otherwise never be heard”. They have worked with different marginalized groups; refugees, street children and low income communities within different venues and ultimately for the same purpose. . Out Hamra is currently composed of four members. It works in collaboration with a number of nongovernmental organizations and international entities, but they handle their own financial and administrative work.

The troupe aims to create “high standard drama practices serving to develop the society”. They consider that learning through theatrical techniques is a fun, pleasurable and collaborative and this is how change becomes possible. Clowning is a serious business to Outa Hamra, and they have travelled with their shows almost all over Egypt.

Methodology

²which is a kind of theatre that gives objects role in the play; they utilize objects and involve these objects in such a way that it has significant effect or role in the play

³I will further elaborate on this precise form of theatre through the literature review

The main thematic area of my thesis is imagination which invokes possibilities that street theatre provokes by interrupting the everyday. Moreover, I find in street theatre a metaphorical representation through what it encompasses and invokes. This metaphorical representation lies in the symbolic value involved in this genre of art in relation to its wider social and political context, which essentially influences its production and continuity. Theatre performance is inspired from everyday performance and street performance in particular has a significant value because of its core mission and what it aims to address in the social. Therefore, the relation between the political and the social through art can be traced through the scope of street theatre. My methodology is primarily inspired by a question posed by Law in his book *After Method*. He poses a question around possibilities of apprehending 'the mess' (Law, 2004). In the context of my research, the mess is this complex of imagination, happening and enunciation. How imagination happens, where it comes from and how can we possibly think of ways to understand it? What is this imagination that inspires and interrupts the everyday? How do such performances rupture the flow of the everyday through and for the purpose of imagination? How can imagination carve means of communication within the rehearsal room, and allows for means of enunciation, which bring forth affective relations amongst the performers and their audience.

Posing more questions than setting guidelines or a plan to my methodology necessitated a creative way to apprehend, a method that can allow a way to move through the flux of sensibilities that my questions revolved around.

Through this thesis I decided that a good way to give a profound ethnographic account about street theatre would be through imagining, which required complete participation. In theatre you can be a spectator or an actor, I found in both sides two different realms worth delving into. Therefore, alongside attending some of the troupe's performances I became part of both troupes through different roles according to the group consent. I have a main character in the play *Revolution of Colour* with Khayal Shaaby. With *Outa Hamra* I also have put on the red nose and performed in a number of clown performances. Additionally, I am working with them on a project with refugees and training on precise improvisational forms of theatre. Therefore, the methodology enables me a complete participation, where I reflexively experiment staging of the street. Also, I am allowed to get a direct feel of the sensible shared experience that occurs between the actor and the spectator both ways, which provides me with a space to identify and conceptualize mundane and taken for granted

dimensions through the performed representation. I am following an interpretative ethnographic approach, which involves me as a researcher and as a performer. Therefore, I experiment, practice and perform (Denzin, 1997). I become a subject of my own research through embodiment and full participation (Law, 2004).

The experience of using myself as a field for my own research enables me to represent more precisely a more comprehensive account of street theatre performance. Embodiment of a role, dancing, singing and exercising with the troupes transforms and influences my perception of different variables, which are related to the subjectivities of spaces where we rehearse and perform. Moreover, related also to the construction and enactment of theatrical roles and the complexity of the body as a space of expression in itself and in relation to other bodies.

Embodiment is my main method; but I also use participant observation through attending the performances which I am not taking part of. This process of observation from a distance provides me a wider scope where I become able to observe the audience interaction and the whole scene from a distance. Hence, I mainly rely on myself reflexive position to engage analytically with the link between the everyday, the rehearsal and performance.

Conceptual framework

Through this research I am tracing the relationality of variable concepts, which I expand on as inspired from earlier theorizations. These concepts guide my analysis and theoretical framing and they range from performance, the body, creativity, imagination, space, time and the everyday. These concepts are like key words that grew as I further delved through my fieldwork and retrieved me back to needed theoretical groundings to guide my thematic analysis. Therefore, my attempt initially was not to offer a redefinition of these concepts through my fieldwork, but rather to expand on the relationality they pertain and produced practically. Each of these concepts is to be found in relation to other concepts, and evokes “collective assemblages of enunciation” (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, p.7), making it impossible to settle for a single certain identification. Thus, through the uncertainty and the relationality of the concepts I formulate my questions and utilize them as guide lines through my conceptual framework, which I utilize to support my arguments and analysis.

Street theatre is a metaphor in itself, as it metaphors the current socio-political and cultural scene in Egypt where street protest and demonstrations have become a commonplace.

Furthermore, theatrical performance, and the symbolic details it pertains are yet another channel of symbolic representation of the everyday. However, the focus of my research is not limited to the marginalized subject represented by, to and with. In fact, marginality poses a problematic conception associated with performance and rehearsal spaces, as well as the audience.

In this coming section, I deploy the use of the concepts I found as guiding key words to my analysis. These concepts kept weaving and unwinding as I processed my fieldwork and observations. I have positioned them together and independently in different ways, which led me to unravel particular details around the questions and uncertainties that remain to erupt through my analysis.

Embodiment and the body as vehicle of expression

The body as a space and a tool for the performer is a complex field to explore. Embodiment and employing my own body as a vehicle and a tool to experience a portion of the world of street theatre, was mainly a method inspired, as I previously mentioned, by John Law's argument around ways to apprehend the mess. This method has led me to the centrality of the body as an analytical space. The performing body, which through my reflexive choice to “embody and carry a bundle of hinterland” (Law, 2004, p.33), is the container of affective relations that emerge within the rehearsal room and extend towards the stage. Embodiment in this sense is not limited to performing or enactment. It is also related to conceiving the variable aspects among which is performing such as the space and the affective relations that unfold and process through one’s own bodily experience.

Affective relations, in this sense, being physical or sensual enunciate affect in their unity and multiplicity. The performing body is a collective of bodies, which deploy their multiplicity and unity in various instances. Through analysing the physical and sensual transformations of the body, I engage with Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) notion of the “body without organs” the rhizomatic multiplicity, which engenders and transforms the one and the multiple bodies performing. Through these processes of shaping and controlling the body, the performing body passes through phases of discipline and awareness. Disciplining of the body as Foucault (1975) argues render bodies docile, and performance entails different means of taming and disciplining. The performing body passes through phases of disciplining for the sake of awareness, which allows a more clear connection with performers own corporal and emotional muscles.

Such processes of disciplining, nonetheless, take place in a realm of playing. Playing theatre games or playing through the body is a mechanism that privileges the body to the mind, which disciplines the performing body to a more genuine expression of feelings and emotions. In analyzing this play element, I rely on the book *Homo Ludens* by Johan Huizinga (1955). He argues through *Homo Ludens* that play as an element of non materialistic quality of itself that allows the performing body in our context to transcend and wrap around the possibility to engender multiplicity and unity.

Space, time and subjectivity

Speaking of space in the context of street theatre encompasses a discussion around two physical spaces; the rehearsal room and the performance space. According to Lefebvre (1991) thinking of space is not limited to the geometrical physicality or the landscape. Space is alive and what signify particular spaces are the happenings it encompasses. In my analysis of these two particular spaces I look into the subjective making of these spaces that renders space rather as social phenomena, as Massey argues. The spatial, as she argues is “social relations stretched out” (Massey, 1994, p.2). So we can further question beyond the ‘where’ and think of what sorts of relations that the spaces of rehearsals and performance engender.

Moreover, I argue that these spaces encompass a particular happening. The happening is the possibility and space to imagine. So many things happen within the everyday and they linger in our heads. Performers take such happening, imagine possibilities to re-invoke them through their performances, and thus something is happening within the rehearsal room to imagine and creatively form a performance. The performance travels to interrupt the everyday. Through what is happening through the performance possibilities for imagination are re-invited.

The subjectivity of the performance space is associated with a particular imagination of location of the marginal. This imagination triggers both troupes to find target particular spaces to perform within. I further problematize this categorization of marginality by attending to Bayat’s (2011) account on what sort of possibilities duly exist within marginality, rather what is uncertain and renders enabling to street theatre to seek out marginality as a space of expression. I further work through Bayat’s analysis on marginality in relation to imagination and possibilities. I link it further in the possibilities that duly emerge and render enabling for these troupes to sustain their praxis.

Everydayness and performance

Turner through his book *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors*, realizes the temporality and spatiality of the social world as “a world in becoming not a world in being” (Turner, 1975, p.24). Our lived moment is in between a past and a future moment, is happening. Hence, our life is in continuous becoming. Therefore, an analysis of the subjective experience of the everyday is essential to tracing the concept of performance. Realities are indeed socially constructed; we conceive the ‘real’ and represent our conception through performing our roles in the every day. This performance in the everyday is not far from performing on the stage. In fact, there is a reciprocal relation that links everyday performances to the performance happening on the stage. One way in which I attend to this relationship is to think the everyday and the stage as processes in continuous happening, and that performed roles in everyday life “the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product” (Bourdieu, 1990, p.56) are shaped and recreated within an imaginary world on stage.

Goffman argues in his book *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*, that life and theatre comprise several fields of analogy. He also drew the dramaturgical conception of social life as a means to analyze the human behavior in the social (Brissett&Edgley, 1990, p.37). According to Goffman “everyone, everywhere, more or less consciously, playing a role...it is in these roles that we know each others; it is in these roles that we know ourselves” (Goffman, 1959, p.19). In life, performance is the enunciation of actions, and our life in becoming involves numerous actions indicating several meanings. I take Goffman’s metaphorical conception of everyday life as a wider stage that comprises endless representations of roles and depicted personas to think further on the happening that links the stage- the frontier- to what triggers it within the wider stage. Metaphor is one way to attempt an explanation to a lived reality. As Jackson argues, “metaphors reveal or realize unities” (Jackson, 1996, p.9). In this sense, metaphor is a captor of an action or a set of actions, which represents a certain meaning in reality (Jackson, 1996).

Dramaturgy links the conceptual grounds of metaphoric representation and the everyday, through performance. As Goffman argues, Performance in the broader sense is a representation of reality that involves social beings performing the role they really are - or not really are. In ‘reality’ we perform our roles in life or the roles we strive to live up to (Goffman, 1959). Performance is not limited to the role played by actors on the stage; it is the subconscious and conscious process that we embody and enact. Thus, the enunciation of what we perform in real life is also not far from the enunciation of affect through staged performance. Enunciation is the capturing and reflection of

feelings and emotions that social beings resonate with and relate to. As social beings we interact in our everyday, we communicate; we receive, send and share feelings. On the stage this sending and receiving, which is circled by sharing, digs through channels that rest on creating affect.

The paradox of representation of Marginality - the marginal and the marginalized

The politics of marginality is a huge debate. First, a distinction is required between ‘the marginal’ and ‘the marginalized’- subject and space in this context. The representation of a space or a group is layered through power relations and calls for debates around autonomy and choice. Therefore through thinking of street theatre and the choice of the troupe of the streets where they perform, I need to think of how they conceive such spaces as marginalized spaces. Hence, the power relations around the object of such spaces and its inhabitants that represents them as ‘marginal’ or ‘marginalized’? Why are they categorized as such? And how do they identify and how does imagination renders possibilities beyond categorization? What are the power relations in the society that recognized such spaces as the marginalized spaces? Moreover, According to Bayat, “marginality as social category... and thus different from the reality of exclusion...marginality may not just be a curse; it can and does serve as an opportunity” (Bayat, 2012, p.14). Thinking of the cure, it is important to look into how does their position or their categorization as the marginalized ruptures particular power relations i.e. limit and provides unlimited potentialities. In this sense, marginality as a position – a statuesque is the configuration of particular social fields within the social space, which offers a way to realize the associated stereotypes, but also take in considerations the subsequent power relations it pertains and offers a possibility to breach (Bourdieu, 1988).

The social space is a “multi-dimensional space of positions” (Bourdieu, 1988, p.724) that includes social fields which agents (social beings) occupy. The occupation of social fields by agents within the space is based on capital distribution and power relations defined by differentiation. Therefore, by settling for marginality as an unprivileged position within the space, which encompasses certain configurations of capital distribution and power relations, invites thinking of the choice of the stage and the politically packed decision of picking a stage within a marginalized/ marginal space, to perform to marginalized audience.

Through my preliminary interview with Khayal Shaaby we discussed very briefly marginality in relation to the spaces where they perform. According to Shaker (one of the troupe

members), there was a distinct differentiation between one space and another; performing in the street in a rural area in Upper Egypt is a different scenario from performing in Imbaba. A marginalized space or a marginalized audience is not a single category that we can fit together. However, it is not a question of categorizing and assembling difference, it can be thought of more as a quest for acknowledging subjectivity and its relationality that truly articulates difference. Therefore, preconceptions of marginality and how they influence the creative production of performances by the troupe is central critical points of analysis

The Chapters

This thesis consists of four chapters. The chapters employ a critical analysis of the main concepts in question and how they emerge and develop through my fieldwork with Out Hamra and Khayal Shaaby. The second chapter is the setting and the context of the emergence and current surrounding factors that both troupes live with. This state of being which has precise historicity and mutual tensions is mixed with some eternal philosophical complexities concerning independence of the artist and what is work to art.

Moreover, I look into the cultural capital of both troupes through attending to the notion of the independent artist and the associated capital configurations. Also, the notion of the independent artist and what defines the artist to be as such. Can we consider Outa Hamra independent in comparison to Khayal Shaaby, because they work under the umbrella of Nahda association? But then emerges a question with regards to Ngoization, which basically influences both troupes, especially that street theatre is a genre that requires financial nourishing that occurs through a dependency process on grants and funding Therefore this chapter will look into questions such as what is exactly an 'independent' theatre troupe? Can we consider 'independent' a category that the troupe identifies with? And in such case what opportunities and limitations an independent troupe has to deal with being financial or artistic?

The third chapter is a step towards the stage and inside the rehearsal rooms. In this chapter I explore the subjectivity of performance and rehearsal spaces. I also attend to the physicality of the places, as well as the subjective making of these places through the troupes. With focusing on the subjectivity of these space the concept of marginality becomes an integral question; If the troupe decides that the place they pick to perform are marginalized, why, on which basis and how does such

recognition or identification influences their performance, alter it? Or frame it through a certain narrative to begin with?

The fourth chapter is an analysis of the performing body within various states and engages with the voice and the rhythm created individually and collectively. The relation and presence; what do these terms reflect and what is their necessity in relation to affect. The body and voice is a chapter through which I elaborate on the embodiment of the role, which I have experienced through my work with Khayal Shaaby and Outa Hamra. I elaborate on the process of embodiment of the role, and the shared experience of rehearsing with the troupes. In this chapter I focus on the body and the mind relation that together constitute expression and theatrical communication. How actors build a relationship with each other's through their rehearsal and how does that reflect on the stage and in their communication process with their audience. The voice is an essential aspect, because through the voice the actors are able to vocalize their feelings and verbalize their emotions. Moreover, the space and how it encompasses the body, the movement and the subjectivity created through performative bodies within a space.

The fifth and final chapter is a step off the stage towards the audience. This chapter expands on the influence of affect and relates back to the issue of marginality and questions related to who is the marginalized and why the marginalized how does such recognition or identification influences their performance, alter it? Or frame it through a certain narrative to begin with? Furthermore, it explores what sort of affect street theatre aims and actually brings? Also what kind of relation the actors experience and how it influences them.

Chapter Two

Configurations of Capital: Outa Hamra and Khayal Shaaby

When you go to attend a play in a theatre house you usually pay a ticket for the purpose of attending the show. With the genre of street theatre, which Outa Hamra and Khayal Shaaby adopt, it's a different story. It is not a basic supply and demand equation. No one pays a ticket to watch their street performances. The people in the street are their audience and they squeeze within the everyday to stage their performances. With such a performance strategy, being a street theatre performer, an independent artist, might render a need for financial dependency through external and indirect forms of funding. Indeed this is not a rule to all independent artists. However, with the case of Outa Hamra and Khayal Shaaby financial dependency and independence suggest a space to think of what is at stake with such affective and precarious form of work, and what can we read through the possibilities and challenges of leading the life of a working artist in a contemporary moment packed with new forms of laboring. Different forms of funding become the main financial scheme that secures the troupes financially. Hence, their ability to carry on with their artistic production is bound to their ability to secure enough sources of funding that can sustain the existence of the troupe. However, the relations of production that situates both troupes within the social field are not only limited to economic capital. In fact, cultural capital, social capital and symbolic capital reflect essential dimensions that enable us to locate each troupe capital configuration. According to Bourdieu (1985), the capital configuration active within the social fields allows the understanding of the distribution of power amongst groups of agents (Bourdieu, 1985). Hence, exploring the influence of capital configuration of each troupe enables a more profound understanding of the significance of each troupe within the realm of cultural production.

In this chapter, I locate the context and emergence of both troupes, as well as the current capital configuration, which speaks of their position in the social space and 'success' in the cultural field. Moreover, the configuration of each troupe can be initially traced through the identity both troupes deem. OutaHamra and Khayal Shaaby define themselves as 'independent artists'. This notion of independence, in the context of their art production, can be described through what Lazzarato (1996) referred to, in his analysis of immaterial labor, as "the intellectual proletariat" (p.4, 1996). The ability of both troupes to define as independent is associated with them leading a precarious form of labor, which is bounded by two essential factors; their professional capacities and ability to obtain and manage necessary social cooperation (ibid).

Through my analysis in locating the emergence and subsistence of both troupes, I attend to the social relations, which shapes and influence how both troupes work and designates them a particular capital within the cultural field possible. I begin by looking at what inspired and maintained their emergence, and what relations and cooperation they tend to keep. Then, I analyze their professional capacity as opposed to financial dependency and cooperation. In addressing this matter precisely, I look into their collaboration with different funding or cooperative organizations and the sort of activities the troupe engages with, as well as the policies they require them to follow if any.

Emergence of Khayal Shaaby

Khayal Shaaby was established back in 2002, by Mustapha (one of the current members), and Shaker and other members who are no longer part of the troupe. Among these members who are no longer part of the troupe is Jakob Lindfors, founder and current member of Outa Hamra. The main figures in the troupe since 2011 till 2013 were Mustapha, Shaker, Ruth and Nema, and they also have younger members Kanny and Budda. However, in 2013 as I approached the troupe for the purpose of conducting my research, Ruth was leaving and I was admitted to participate with the group as an active member.

When Khayal Shaaby was first established back in 2002 they were basically a group of people, including Jakob and Mustapha, who were eager to work and were lacking organizational cooperation so they began by basically gathering and rehearsing at Jakob's house. Through this period they produced their first performance *Khayal Shaaby yela'ab* – The Popular Imagination Playing. This performance was their first production, which was in collaboration with an Italian organization that worked at that time at El Sayeda Zeinab⁴. This organization was concerned with renovating old houses within old districts of Cairo. Their first performance was in the street in front of one of the old houses that the organization renovation project was targeting. Hence, the performance that they offered, which was basically puppet theatre, with Aragoz – the popular Egyptian folkloric puppet- as a central character, catered for the cultural renovation program that the Italian organization aimed to address. This revival of the distant and the old that the project

⁴A popular neighborhood in Cairo.

aimed to address in this old district resonated with what Khayal Shaaby was attempting to do at this point. The troupe particularly in its emergence was concerned with getting Aragoz, which is a rebellious cynical puppet that rests in the Egyptian popular imagination in relation to a particular representation of what it came to bring of joy and laughter. The basic idea of how laughter provokes and emerges from our own imagination led the troupe further to develop and appropriate the idea within various everyday instances.

The troupe began working further with object theatre, which is a genre that utilizes puppets and the making of puppets from mundane everyday life objects. They employed the tools of this theatre to work with environmental issues and the problem of garbage. They travelled with this performance and were able to receive a funding from a German funding entity. They aimed to create through their performance a dimension for discussion by involving the audience. Through this vent the performance provided a space for the audience to come together and speak, which according to Mustapha at this point, provoked particular disruption to the development objectives of the funding entity. As he puts it the entity wanted them to display “a beautiful image”. So the funding agency requested an omission of the scenes related to garbage and the discussions it provoked amongst the audience. However, the troupe collective decision was to maintain what they initially intended – to play with imagination and possibilities – so they duly persisted on keeping the performance as is.

This by return has also provoked Khayal Shaaby to get more and more involved with contemporary social problems. They carried on with appropriating their theatrical tools and developing them further and found an enabling space for their practice within marginalized communities in Cairo and other governorates.

Khayal Shaaby then soon learned about Nahda association – Jesuite through Talaat, who is the manager of the theatre of Nahda right now. He introduced them to father William (general coordinator and director of Nahda), and he was interested in their work. So, they made an agreement with Nahda that Mustapha described as a ‘manifesto’, which entails that they will remain an independent troupe and that Nahda will not interfere with their work, precisely not in the contents of their plays. Therefore, the agreement was that they remain an independent group functioning under their umbrella. Since then Khayal Shaaby has been working under the umbrella of Nahda.

Being under the umbrella of Nahda provided an enabling space for Khayal Shaaby. One can argue that through this affiliation the troupe found a space to delve further into what it aims to invoke. A space that kept them in a considerable distance from the tensions of digging a space to rehearse, to plan and think of their art as work. In other words it backed them up to be less precarious and ground their art in a particular distance. However, one can also argue that this lack of tension and distance also distanced Khayal Shaaby from what possibilities duly emerge through hanging to own radical stances while struggling to subsist within a system that finds in theatre an employable capacity. This also leads us to think further of independence and what is at stake when speaking of the artist at work?

Emergence of Outa Hamra

Through this dilemma and contradictions around independence a breach occurred within Khayal Shaaby by the end of 2010 and led to the emergence of Outa Hamra in 2011. Outa Hamra can be considered in their aesthetics, which mainly relies on clowning as the local seed that emerged through collaborations with Clowns Sans Frontiere – Clowns without borders, which came to Egypt and collaborated with Khayal Shaaby. The French collective of clowns is an entity of volunteering actors, dancers, acrobats, jugglers, musicians and puppeteers. Clowns Sans Frontiere was established in France in 1994. They travel like missionaries and adopt clowning as a means of outreach. Groups affiliated to the collective leave their base and travel to meet other artists and play for people affected by poverty, exclusion or war and particularly children. In Egypt they first came and worked together with Khayal Shaaby through intense trainings and mutual learning. They together created clown performances and traveled with them within different marginalized spaces around Egypt to invoke laughter and happiness.

Outa Hamra was established in 2011 by Jakob Lindfors, Aly Sobhy, Hany Taher and Diana Calvo. The troupe emerged after Jakob and Diana, who were active members at Khayal Shaaby, left and decided to form a new troupe independent from institutional affiliations. They found in the aesthetics they acquired through Clowns Sans Frontiere a space to further delve and appropriate in different manners.

Clowns Sans frontiere techniques and philosophy indeed inspired the establishment of Outa Hamra. However, Outa Hamra has captured the essence of this philosophy towards a more

infused manner in capturing the everyday across imagined borders within Egypt. They travel around the country to play in poor and marginalized areas. The locations of marginality they target are essentially designated as such in relation to wider entangled networks of power. Therefore, their access and strategies to perform in marginalized spaces is also associated with certain social and power relations, which is distinct to Khayal Shaaby relation to Nahda. This distinction lies in how they employ their professional capacities, as theatre practitioners, to collaborate with NGO's working in developmental through training and engage theatre and drama tools as part of developmental projects. Such affiliations situates Outa Hamra within certain relations of capital associated with developmental projects, which finds in Outa Hamra the independent precarious artists, an employable capacity in their access and centrality of marginality to their art.

Names that give an impression: Outa Hamra and Khayal Shaaby

An essential aspect that reflects the troupe's identity is the names they chose to represent them. The name is functional and says a lot about their discourse. Each troupe bares a name that represents an essential functional aspect of their aesthetic concerns. Also, each name tells us something about the basic difference and the significance of each troupe.

Outa Hamra – Red tomato, basically represents the red nose of the clown. As simple as the name is and directly revealing the function, it is in fact related to a story that is inherent to their philosophy and their target audience. Before the troupe was brought together and some of them were even still part of Khayal Shaaby, they were part of a collaborative project with the Clowns Sans Frontiere. During one of their performances the clowns arrived at their performance site in one of the small alleys of StablAntar (an informal settlement in Cairo) , and the moment they stepped out of the microbus they were faced up with a huge crowd of children that started yelling Out Hamra! Outa Hamra! – Red Tomato! Red Tomato! Therefore with the emergence of the 'new' street clowning troupe in Egypt, it automatically adopted the name Outa Hamra, which they received through their own audience.

Khayal Shaaby – The popular imagination have a different story. When they were first created they initiated through a popular Egyptian street folklore puppet –Aragoz, which I have previously elaborated on its historicity in the background section. Although they have acquired

new forms beside puppets and moved passed Aragoz, they are still concerned with going to the people in marginalized and poor areas to revive the folklore and contemporary hidden facts of life in these marginalized areas. Theatre to them is an inclusive popular mechanism that stimulates the imaginary of the people. As Mustpha said “Television is now dominating and in the meantime isolating people from their social sphere and their cultural heritage” and therefore they carry the mission of keeping this heritage alive and enrich it by adding further contemporary cultural dimensions. Hence, Imagination is an essential aspect and underlined message within their plays.

Capital configurations

Bourdieu (1985) argues that groups with similar dispositions occupy similar positions in the social fields and there by produce similar practices. Both Outa Hamra and Khayal Shaaby are defined within the cultural field as independent street theatre troupes. They both consider themselves significant in their practice of theatre as compared to other local independent theatre practitioners. The Independent theatre scene in Egypt is centralized within Cairo, and its audience mainly belongs to the bourgeoisie and the upper middle class social circles. On the contrary, the genre of theatre that Outa Hamra and Khayal Shaaby adopts targets marginalized and poor areas and finds in the street a space where such form of expression can occur. Therefore, I argue that both troupes represent the margin, represent to the margin, and a representation of the margin. Given that the significance of their cultural and social capital as compared to the independent theatre scene centralized in Cairo.

Moreover, this centralization around marginality provides them with a particular cultural capital. Thus, to locate their work within the wider independent theatre scene they will be mainly considered significant for their capacity to outreach situate their performances within marginalized locations, which is not accessible or possibly not the main concern to other independent theatre troupes.

However, despite the fact that both troupes conform to the same composition of capital within the social field, yet each has a significant configuration in relation to capital. These relations emerge from the variance of each troupe’s distribution within the social field. Hence, “according to the volume of capital they posses” (Bourdieu, 1985, p.724). Therefore, the volume

of their capital determines the aggregate power each comes to represent. So, Outa Hamra and Khayal Shaaby comprise variant power relations within a common distribution within the social field, this result in significant configurations in relation to capital.

Social Relations and Cooperation

To begin with, the social relations and cooperative mechanisms through which they function vary, and as a matter of fact led to the emergence of Outa Hamra and its creation as compared to Khayal Shaaby. This separation reflects the resistance to precise forms of cooperation, but also introduces alternative forms.

Outa Hamra: beyond institutional wall

Outa Hamra, has basically emerged after Jakob and Diana split out of Khayal Shaaby in 2011. To Jakob the separation was a freedom. He said “we made a revolution a bit before the revolution...freedom is beautiful”. This split happened before the revolution and the birth of Outa Hamra was in January just before the events of the 25th of January. The reason for the split, according to Jakob, was due to not being able to tolerate being part of Nahda as an organization. He found himself dragged into more and more bureaucracy, and he didn't want to be part of this and so he sought independence. He said that the management and the environment were unhealthy and packed with a form of day to day stress that he could no longer put up with. To him institutionalization directly influences the sense of independence of a troupe.

Outa Hamra has no long term agreement with any precise organization. Accordingly, they situate themselves outside organizational affiliations, as they seek no institutional guidance and formalities. However; their work relies heavily on external grants and funding schemes. Accordingly they invest their technical expertise as theatre practitioners to train and arrange theatre workshops in collaboration with a diverse pool of organizations and associations. Such entities employ them to work with marginalized and unprivileged target groups, such as street children, sex workers and children with disabilities.

Moreover, for the sake of easier access to grants they applied and were accepted as an incubate project under Nahdet El Mahrousa⁵ (local NGO). Being an incubate project under Nahdet El Mahrousa means that; they are allowed an access to the organization office facilities, Nahdet El Mahrousa can act as an administrative channel through which they can apply for grants and funding from local or international funding agencies, and it supports them with marketing and publicity services. So technically, Nahdet El Mahrousa should act as an umbrella for Outa Hamra, yet they don't provide them with any financial support. Also, according to Outa Hamra they have not been able to use their administrative channel for the sake of grants. Therefore, the only evident benefit of Nahdet El Mahrousa is the office space, which is indeed of much less importance to their nagging need for a rehearsal space. Outa Hamra has no private venue for their rehearsals. This is in fact an every week dilemma, as they keep trying to accommodate bookings sufficient for their rehearsing needs at one of the limited rehearsal spaces in Cairo.

Outa Hamra has no place that they can call their own, but they have a special relation to precise places in downtown Cairo where they have been rehearsing and doing their meetings. This opening out beyond the walls and borders of an institution yet does not deem their absolute unreliability on institutional bodies. Outa Hamra works in collaboration with a number of institutions such as the Spanish embassy and the British council in Egypt to produce their street interactive clowning shows. They also receive funds through their collaboration with NGO's to provide drama workshops and work with organizations that work with community groups such as street children, children with special needs and refugees. Outa Hamra is constantly in action and their agenda is usually occupied with the training and workshops they provide, and on top of this they also meet regularly at least once a week to rehearse and work on building up their street clowning performances. Hence, although it is hard to deem them as employees and belonging to a certain entity, this by no means frees them from being 'free' labor.

The constant interaction of Outa Hamra with a wide pool of NGO's and funding institutions engages them directly with the changes in the trends of the funding schemes, NGO politics and restriction on the local level in relation to ministries and municipalities. During the

⁵Nahdet EL Mahrousa is an Egyptian local non-governmental organization that supports entrepreneurial and newly emerging initiatives.

past year, Outa Hamra has faced a critical deficit in its income due to chronic restrictions over international funding schemes and channeling of funds through the ministry of social solidarity.

Therefore, Outa Hamra remains in constant struggle with the NGO capital prevalence. They don't deny the fact that some of their labor is an attribute to financial need "we are only doing it for the money". Therefore, for them to function outside of institutional walls they run into a constant struggle of maintaining a level of affection and commitment to the aesthetic quality of their work and its ultimate objective, and at the same time sustain financial subsistence.

However, NGO collaboration does not fall back to mere financial subsistence, for them it is part of their mission to make change through street clowning and social theatre, through both performance and through workshops. Hence, they carry an informal educational purpose in their mission. However, this gets back to another point of conflict between how "Art is art and regardless, it should always be there. Art carries within and provides many meanings and objectives, social, political,..." as Jakob puts it, and the fact that they necessarily employ theatre as a tool in their work with the groups they work with through NGO's. However, this does not necessarily illustrate an inconceivable contradiction, but gives an indication of the substantial influence of grant and funding politics (Locke, 2013).

Khayal Shaaby secure umbrella

Khayal Shaaby still functions till our day under the umbrella of Nahda, but according to Mustapha "We are not the association's troupe; we are an independent theatre troupe". According to their initial manifesto they are an independent theatre troupe. Nevertheless, Nahda technically speaking provides them support in three main ways. First, through financial assistance, they occasionally contribute by buying plane tickets for the trainers, who are essential for the troupe constant artistic development and plays dramaturgy. The trainers or dramaturgist are essential as the troupe has no director and they mainly rely on collecting a theme to work on, improvise till they build characters, voices and music to this abstract theme, and finally have a dramaturgist formulate the production of the play.

Second, Nahda provides them with a venue for their rehearsal at the association building in Ramsees. This venue is a spacious room with good lightning and air conditioners, and recently

has been renovated with a wooden floor. Having access to this rehearsal venue is a very valuable asset to a theatre troupe, especially with the given limited relatively affordable rehearsal studios available in Cairo. Moreover, rehearsing within the same space builds a subjective relation between the performers one another and in relation to the space. When the troupe members are well acquainted with the space it influences this communal artistic ritual of rehearsing together on a regular basis.

Third, Nahda offers each of the troupe members an amount of a hundred and fifty pounds per each performance. This amount of money might not be much, but through this amount they created a saving box and they call it 'the troupe's box'. Each member of the troupe contributes fifty pounds from his/her wage to this box. Through this saving mechanism they have been able to maintain their financial sustainability and were able to invite international trainers and dramaturgists. Practically, the troupe box has and yet provides the troupe with the capacity to expand and develop their work further.

However, the work of Khayal Shaaby is not limited to their street performances. As Mustapha stipulated, they are also very concerned with providing training workshops. They provide short scale workshop training and long term training in collaboration with other NGO's and CBO's (community based organizations). The training projects that they do in collaboration with other NGO's and CBO's are mainly through Nahda, which often engages in cultural projects and theatre training is partially one of the components they need to address, or the project can be particularly only addressing theatrical training. Mustapha, nonetheless, stipulated that working on these projects comes out of mutual agreement and discussions with Nahada. So, they never actually force them to be part of a project that the troupe doesn't find in match with their philosophy, or won't be achieving much influence. This is in addition to the training role they had with Nahda itself, where they have been in charge of training youth groups at Nahda. Most of these youth groups are from Fagala, which is the neighborhood where Nahda is located. Through these trainings, two of the youngest troupe members Kanny and Buddah have come to join Khayal Shaaby.

Khayal Shaaby funding scheme also relies on external grants, like the recent grant from Afaq⁶ (a local NGO) – the only direct funding they received separate from Nahda. They applied for this grant and received it as an independent theatre troupe. The grant is provided to the troupe to support their development and enhancement of their play the Revolution of Color. The dynamics between Khayal Shaaby and Nahda reflects how much the troupe has organically become more and more an essential part of Nahda. Such forms of collaboration reflect a sort of interdependency. However, this interdependency is what aggregately creates a tension when it comes to stipulating the troupe independence.

Being part of an institution enforces a certain formality and informs particular structural constraints. But it also allows certain privileges that functioning outside of an institution poses as limitations. The institution, in case of Khayal Shaaby seems to be the foster nourishing umbrella that is able to cater for their basic needs as a street theatre troupe, such as a place to rehearse and a minimum income in return to their performance.

There is a continuous process of submission and resistance between the troupes and their conditions of subsistence. Khayal Shaaby is in constant struggle with Nahda to maintain their identity and remain an independent troupe. According to Mustapha, Nahda keeps always attempting to negotiate with them to be the troupe of Nahda association, because of the kind of work they do that targets marginalized communities and reviving popular culture. This is the basic philosophy as well of Nahda, and they have particular pride in that. Therefore, as Khayal Shaaby is one of the oldest activities that have been able to sustain since 2001 and remains to serve the association's ideology, they keep pushing to get them involved. Never the less, the distinct line between functioning under the umbrella of Nahda or being Nahda's troupe is one that is not particularly significant. It is only apparent through their aspiration to manifest themselves through independent art festivals on the local and international level, and possibly through certain grants. Hence, the institutional influence may not be one that is grounded on papers, but it became inconceivable for them to detach and will remain their constant identity formation struggle.

Creative production absorbed by Capitalism

⁶ A local NGO that supports cultural projects and initiative by independent artists

With the vast expansion and current appeal of drama and theatre techniques within the training materials of developmental projects, the art production of street theatre in relation to commoditization has shuffled. The influences of grant and funding policies have succeeded in absorbing theatrical techniques and methodology to serve their purpose designed projects. This engendering is in itself enabling and repressive, as Gill argues “With precarity the new moment of capitalism that engenders precariousness is seen as not only oppressive but also as offering the potential for new subjectivities, new socialities and new kinds of politics” (Gill & Pratt 2008, p.3).

In a capitalist consumer based society, which can be defined as “a social system based on the imposition of work with the commodity form” (Cleaver quoted in Gill, 2008, p.5) even art production is reduced to supply and demand basis. It becomes impossible for a street theatre troupe to sustain its art production without being financially dependent. Precisely due to the kind of art that street theatre produces, which is not an income generative art. Thus, Street theatre always remains in need of external financial nourishing. Street theatre, in terms of labor, is a precarious form of labor. Outa Hamra and Khayal Shaaby cannot escape the restrictions that the economic capitalist conditions pose on their art production. Their work becomes associated with particular organized projects, within which they have a particular role to submit to.

The capitalist that fosters the material subsistence of the troupes is the funding entities that employ street theatre within particular projects. Within these projects they are employed to provide particular services. Hence, they are designated a significant job category in the world of developmental projects. Therefore, as Lazzarato (1996) argues street theatre actors, as a form of immaterial labor, operate through a “cycle of production” that “comes into operation only when it is required by the capitalist; once the job has been done the cycle dissolves back into the network and flows that make possible the reproduction and enrichment of its productive capacities” (Lazzarato, 1996, p.4).

Consequently, it only seems from a distance that street theatre appeals to a radical negation to profit based labor, but it is more complex than that; as they invite creative means of subsistence and are indeed not very far from global capital movement. However, the flexibility and unconceivable means through which they subvert capital exploitation through the content of their work yet remain part of it, invites thinking of the politics embedded in creative industries

and as Gill and Pratt argue “the possibility of new political subjectivities” (Gill & Pratt, 2008, p.3) that emerge through the immaterial labor “deep attachment, affective bindings to the idea of self-actualization through work” (Gill & Pratt, 2008, p.15).

Therefore, to consider street theatre as anon-commoditized form of art production is a rather elusive and superficial realization. It is essential to pay attention to the complexities that constitute the formation and continuity of street theatre troupes in the midst of a capitalist society driven by consumption. As Toby Austin Locke (2013) argues the neoliberal economic expansions has allowed capital to expand rhizomatically to extend and integrate creative practices. This has led to a state where it became hard to differentiate between commodity and experience and a relation between capital and creativity that now falls back to commoditization (Locke, 2013). In this sense, we can cease to romanticize the notion of art for art and root the foundational aspect of artists as cultural labor.

Deeming street theatre performers as immaterial labor falls back to how they manage and practice their art. Both troupes combine between creativity and entrepreneurial/managerial social skills (Lazzarato, 1996). Yet, they are also significant for their precarious capital configuration. This precarity allows them to be absorbed by capitalist cycle of production. However, their participation and ‘productivity’ is subject to the capitalist requirement (Lazzarato, 1996). This capitalist cycle, for the sake of clarity, is the funding and cooperative entities they align to.

Conclusion

Through this chapter I attempted to draw on the structure of both troupes by attending to their emergence and being. I analyzed the processes that were essential to attend to in terms of the capital configurations that the troupes uphold. Also, by engaging analytically with their artistic production, I explore the status of each troupe in relation to capital. Furthermore, I look into what is at stake when speaking of independent artists at work. The kinds of relations they get entangled within and allow them particular possibilities and poses challenges just as much. However, what I will further intervene with in relation to this section is the possibilities embedded within the practices of the troupes, which make the very process of absorption by capital yet a space for subversion.

This chapter also leads the way to get in depth with the everyday of the troupe members and the actual manifestation of their artistic production on the stage. Moreover, I attempted to draw on the diversion between the two troupes and the points of departure that led to their separation. Further on, I attended to the variables that constitute the life and art of street theatre performers, through analyzing their position within the cultural field in Egypt. I further elaborate on what problems duly exist within the various configurations each troupe encompasses. In the coming chapter, precisely, I attend to the genesis of the spaces being; the rehearsal space, the everyday or the performance space. I argue for a particular linkage, which is the happening that connects the subjectivity of the troupes and the spaces they occupy.

Another aspect that is evidently recurrent through narrating the story of emergence and troupe's aesthetics is the aspect of marginality. Targeting of a particular marginalized audience within particular marginalized locations is what designate them a significant cultural capital. This cultural capital renders as an employable capacity within development and humanitarian projects. However, marginality and the targeting of the marginalized in relation to the troupe aesthetics go beyond mere categorization and delineation. In the coming chapter, I also attend more closely to this matter in relation to what sort of possibilities imagination renders in relation the marginal.

Chapter Three

Street Theatre From The Inside Out: A Spatial Reading of Performance and Rehearsal Spaces

In chapter one I illustrated that my focus on street theatre is through two troupes; Khayal Shaaby and Outa Hamra. I further elaborated on the social and cultural context where they both can be located. In chapter two, I particularly attended to the variance each comprises within configurations of capital being social, cultural, as well as economic. Further on I attend to street theatre, as a form of performing arts, which has two main sites; the stage and the backstage. The back stage and beyond – the rehearsal room- is where theater is made and the stage is the frontier of this production – the site of interaction.

In this chapter, I take a step inside the rehearsal room and to the sites of performance. The rehearsal rooms are physical geometrical spaces, which contain happenings beyond the rigidity of their square forms and the blankness of their pale white walls. Moreover, the street or the spaces, which the troupes occupy temporarily to perform, contain everyday happenings, which get interrupted by a play over an improvised stage. Therefore, I situate my analysis of the rehearsal room and the stage through Lefebvre's (1991) notion of considering the space not only through its geometrical physicality but rather through the lived practices and symbolic meaning which carve the particularity and significance of particular spaces. Such symbolic meaning recurs through the sort of life the troupes creatively influences their rehearsal spaces by. Or the rupture that shuffles and transforms the everyday instances in the spaces where they perform.

The rehearsal room is the factory where not only theatrical production occurs, but most necessarily relations of production can be traced. By merely stepping into the physical spaces, I begin to question what is it with these places that makes them unique spaces for theatrical rehearsals? And what sort of subjectivities can we trace over the walls and the floors of given spaces? Within the walls and the ceiling of the room's ideas are formed through the collective imaginaries of the group, which is also inspired from their being on the stage of the everyday and the staging of their performances.

We perform our roles in the everyday, as Goffman(1959) argues. We express our identities through the socially constructed frames given. This lifeworld is a wide stage with a variety of roles which we represent within the social sphere. This designates performance in the public space as an interesting spatial analytical place where potentialities of imagination and formation of subjectivities occur. So to speak of performance in the street one cannot escape thinking of several performative practices that are part and parcel of the everyday in Egypt. Such

performative practices range from the street vendor, who display their merchandise and call for them in every performative and attractive manner possible.

The street in this sense is alive and fluid in its very containment of diverse everyday instances and performative social interactions. It is per say a stage that encompasses variable instances formed by its everyday dwellers. It is a dynamic changing space that represents the changes of its own dwellers. One can argue that each street engenders unique momentums and subjectivities, which get produced and reproduced to alter a perception of a street beyond its architectural structure.

Everydayness is a concept that invites thinking of repetition and continuity, leading us to think of what is happening within these spaces. The rehearsal and performance spaces are parts of the everyday spatial configurations of the troupe members, but they also engender happenings from everydayness beyond their own. They abstract everyday moments and reproduce them within an imaginary context by playing with them and having them as plays. Moreover, the troupe's performance in the street or the institution is an interruption to various everyday instances where their performances are located.

What is Happening?

Upon this instance I bring to the centre of this argument also the possibilities, the challenges and the power relations around the street particularly through attempted moment of rapture by street theatre. However, it is important to signify that street theatre is not only carried out within the street. Its very occurrence in the street is involved in a complexity of relationships that renders it possible, and also allows us to think further around the politics space transformation. Street theatre is to a large extent carried within institutions, which encompasses a particular everydayness, and a unique form of dwelling. Within the walls of these institutions; speaking of orphanages, shelter houses, juveniles, youth centers and even schools, there is also another utterance and performativity to the everyday. The power relations involved and the segregation between its internal dynamics and the dynamics beyond its gates makes each institution a significant microcosm away, yet not isolated from the wider stage of everydayness within the street. However, within the walls and buildings of these institution there is also a life

that renders possibilities, challenges and power relations that the performance of street theatre troupe can rearticulate.

I would like to attend here to the stage in the street through two lenses. A panoramic one which overviews the everyday happenings as a grand stage, and a zoom in lens that attends to performances staged by Outa Hamra and Khayal Shaaby – in this particular case. The street is a wider stage that encompasses everyday happening, and within that stage smaller stages are improvised peaking out new imaginaries and possibilities. These happenings are what necessarily connect three knods of street theatre to a one thread. Everyday happenings influence and inspire what happens within the rehearsal space, the creative formation within the walls of the rehearsal room is in this sense not in isolation from the everyday performative practices in the street. Furthermore, the performance that consolidates a multiplicity of such happenings and enunciates it an alternative imaginary everyday is re-invoked to disrupt the everyday happenings within the street or the everyday happenings within different institutions.

As an example to the performativities happening in the everyday in the street I would like to go back to the street vendor. One of the scenes in the play by Outa Hamra *The Queen and the Barrel*, a character plays the role of a street vendor. These street vendors, which one can see in downtown Cairo are street performers themselves, and representing them required situating their persona within an imaginary dimension and play with the narratives that ultimately one can imagine upon spotting them while passing down the street. The roaring screams and the lavish display of their merchandise (*Beda'a*) on the sidewalks to attract and impose their presence over passerby's is a performative significant happening within particular streets, which by and of itself subjectivities and manifest our perception of these particular streets. Through rehearsals the street vendor persona was invited with its subjective influence and the feelings it invokes, which ranges from entertainment to annoyance. The character of the play captured such feelings and performative attitudes that the street vendor embodies and transformed them through a game of juggling and a mimicry to the roaring screams of the vendor, which in itself an act that represents the entertaining and impulsive actions of the vendor. The throwing of pieces of cloth over another character that embodies a mundane passerby turns into this game of juggling, as the passerby gets annoyed by the impulsive imposition of the street vendor over its personal space. Then the juggling game entertains the passerby and attunes her to a possibility of regaining some

power of the situation and tricks the vendor by putting on all the clothes on and sneakily stuffing them all to a one big belly of clothes while the vendor is busy imposing his presence over other passerby's (the audience per say in the context of the play). The passerby by return inflicts his anger from the impulsive actions of the vendor and roars back at him and kicks him out of the stage.

The Rehearsal space – The factory

A typical place for theatrical rehearsal is an absolutely empty room. This emptiness is in itself a physical challenge in terms of availability. It is one of the challenges to theatre troupes in Cairo to find a rehearsal space due to the scarcity of rehearsal studio facilities, which is also due to the centralization of arts and cultural practices within downtown Cairo. However, the emptiness of the rehearsal room encompasses an enabling capacity for imagination and creation of new subjectivities of the very bare walls and floors. The more space, the more spread out and free we become, this is not what we aim for. The smaller the room the less restricting and disciplining it becomes and taming to make as much use from given square meters. For sure there is a limit to how tight a room can get, which adds up to the challenges of availability.

So the emptiness of the room inspires and encompasses the making of the collective and individual happenings and creative praxis within the room. In the mean time, the access to the empty room is associated with availability and the problematic of scarcity and centrality. Given the variance of both troupes capital configuration, each troupe access to rehearsal spaces is different. However, the happenings that various rooms engender are what significantly leave its invisible marks within the room and visibly beyond its walls.

Despite how basic a rehearsal room needs to be, the availability of such spaces and what occurs for this purpose and what in fact happens within them, constitutes a complexity of relationships beyond the square meters of the room. Entering a rehearsal room gives a certain sensibility of exclusivity and intimacy just as much. These mixed feelings emerge from subjects being within an empty space determined to take from each other's energy and the energy of the space and produce sound, movement and play collectively and individually.

Within a rehearsal room spoken and unspoken sorts of communication occurs. The space and performing body bonding occurs and accelerates through the playing and the imagination

that gets created within. I further elaborate on this through the coming chapter on the performing body. However, entering the rehearsal space and snapping out of the everydayness and individuality of each performing body can be best captured through the walking space exercise.

We begin by walking around the space. We try to get a feel of our body and its heaviness as we walk. We move faster and faster and try to move our whole body and then slow down and get back in our pace. We start maintaining eye contact, which I always find very alienating, because you make eye contact and then go away, so you receive and send a look which is usually blank because the exercise releases your mind and puts your focus in the physical motion of own body in relation to space and other bodies within the space. This feeling of connection to bodies and your own in the space creates a certain connection between oneself and the people trying to occupy the space. Moving in the space and moving with energy, directed by the eye. We move and we stop together with no one leading just try to grasp the changes that happen and communicate through our collective movement in the space and our collective stillness and back to movement. The moving bodies become parts of a collective body, which is consuming and reproducing its own space.

Therefore, According to Lefebvre (1991) space in this sense has a life on its own yet not independent from the happenings within. The space implies precise routes for the motion of bodies in space, but by the very ordering and restrictions that space “decides” there is necessarily a certain “disorder”. When we walk within the space our movement is bounded by the square meters of the room. However, within this much bounded movement the room starts to expand and our capacities to sense that one can actually fill all the empty spaces and reach the ceiling, walk off the walls is a rhythmic motion of the individual or the collective invoke.

Khayal Shaaby: Spacious rehearsal room in Nahda⁷

Khayal Shaaby being under the umbrella of Nahda- Jesuit Cairo, they have access to the facilities of Nahda cultural association, including the spacious rehearsal room. Nahda is located in Faggala, which is middle – working class neighborhood. It is close enough to downtown Cairo, where the cultural scene is mainly centralized, but yet distant enough. Nahda building is located in one of the narrow streets in Faggala, and it is surrounded by old buildings with

⁷I have previously elaborated on Nahda's role and influence on Khayal Shaaby

beautiful architectural details and interesting ornaments, yet their beauty is now concealed behind faded dusty grey color.

Stepping inside Nahda, one finds himself in a less than formal space; People casually walking in and out and chatting around. This was my initial impression towards the place. Nahda according to Mustapha- as an entity in general – “aims to target marginalized communities and revive popular culture”. This makes such premises remain as a merger between a cultural centre and an NGO. Due to the fact that they remain able to work towards their main aim without being driven by developmentalist funds, which is only possible because of their reliance on the integral fund they receive from the Jesuites.

The Same scenario applies to a great extent to Khayal Shaaby. The main aim of the troupe is to perform at poor and marginalized communities in order to ‘revive’ popular culture. The troupe’s ability to remain as a functioning independent street theatre troupe has been linked to their being backed up by Nahda. It provides premises where they get together, have a place, rehearse and get a room to practice and invest in their artistic development and division of new plays. Having access to an empty room on a regular basis is an edge. A theatre troupe is always in a process of bonding, exchanging and interacting as individuals with each other’s and as a collective. Within the walls of a rehearsal room they get a room to space out of the mess and get together to create another mess – a play.

The spacious rehearsal room

Khayal Shaaby have access to a fine spacious room, probably it was always in that good of a state. However, still having a regular access establishes a certain sense of security. I step into the spacious rehearsal room. The room has fine wooden floors, mirrors on one of the walls and air conditioners. In the wide space of the room before we start and in breaks we always sit in a single corner in the room by the wall like a cluster. The room feels like this huge sphere when nothing is happening, possibly because it is not meant to stay idle. This room is used to the loud drumming and singing, and dancing that the rehearsals essentially involves. However, this spacious room is not exclusive to Khayal Shaaby, like any other activity at the association; they have to make initial reservations with precise dates and time slots. None the less, Khayal Shaaby have priority in utilizing the room, not based because of any favouring over other activities, but

because like any theatre troupe they standardize their rehearsal schedule, and are thus able to have a long term reservation of the spacious room.

Outa Hamra - "We have no space today, so no rehearsal"

When I am heading to rehearsals with Outa Hamra, optimally I aim to be in downtown at least half an hour before rehearsal. Outa Hamra members usually meet before their rehearsal at precise coffee shop in downtown, chat and discuss over coffee. These coffee moments are basically their meeting and agenda organization moments. I go straight to the coffee shop at the corner of Emad El Deen Street. The coffee shop is called *Kahwt El Fananeen* – the Artists coffee shop. The coffee shop is one of those really old cornered ones and has a sitting area that is in a small alley or passage way. After having our coffee we head to rehearsal and sometimes we actually don't, well it depends if the troupe managed to reserve a space or not.

Studio Ideal

Studio Ideal can be considered their most visited space for rehearsals. Studio Ideal is located on the roof top of Ideal buildings in Emad El Deen Street in downtown Cairo. This street is well known for its artistic and cultural heritage. On one side there is Naguib Rehani theatre house, which has been resting idle for a considerable portion of time. The names of the narrow streets off Emad El Deen they all carry names of actors that go back to the forties and fifties like Ali El Kassar. The buildings are all old and carry beautiful ornaments faded away by the dust and pollution. However, they still carry the aura of a time long passed. When you walk down Emad El Deen Street it is hard to miss that there is a significant aura to the street, and not just because of the uniqueness of its buildings. It is also because of the groups of artists and theatre practitioners walking down the street heading to either Studio Emad EL Deen or Studio Ideal.

It is actually called Ideal sporting club. This space goes back to the sixties during the Nasser era, when its condition is rather miserable. The old wooden floor is wrecked, the doors are and the windows almost falling apart, but affordable enough that it is always packed with groups rehearsing and practicing. These poor conditions, nevertheless, don't make the space a hard space for rehearsals. In fact, it situates the mood for the hazarded street environment in which they basically implement their performances. Furthermore, the poor and limited facilities of the place basically resemble the conditions of the spaces where we perform. To begin with the

lack of privacy, the messiness, and most importantly its marginalization as one of those abandoned spaces.

Moreover, In Ideal, like several performance sites, our access to the toilet is limited. Given that we spend a whole lot of hours of our day in this place, I used to actually to sneak down stairs to studio Emad El Deen. Until one day, the scam was unravelled, and they hung up a sign on the door clearly stating “only Emad El Deen Studio users are allowed to use its facilities and Studio Ideal is not allowed to Emad El Deen facilities”.

Studio Emad El Deen is one of the most famous, or basically the only studio that specializes in providing a space for rehearsing groups of artists and hosts several workshops on its premises. Emad El Deen in comparison to Ideal is a luxurious place. However, because of its being the only studio, at least within downtown, which provides such service. It is considered beyond an average budget for a lot of independent theatre troupes including Outa Hamra. Moreover, abandoning studio Emad El Deen is also a political choice. For Outa Hamra, they refuse the political stance of the organization in relation to space making strategies in precisely downtown Cairo.

The birth of a new cultural space: The new villa in Dokki

The new villa in Dokki⁸ is ‘the space’ everyone in the cultural scene in Cairo all of a sudden within the downtown art scene is speaking about. It has come to be called as *Beit* – the home. The name in itself carries an interesting resonance to how some of the artists I met there speak of the place. The villa is an old unattended property of a man who, in collaboration with a number of activists from the art scene in Cairo, came to the decision to open this space for artists. The space has been getting renovated by a number of artists and volunteers, and has been emerging to become the new open cultural space. It is an important moment to get to witness the physical becoming of a space, which is being transformed and subjectified through the work of a diverse artist.

The Cairo art scene may be tight enough to include a certain strata of people that when you are at Beit you will bump into familiar faces from the scene. Using the space of Beit for

⁸ One of the famous Cairo districts close to downtown

rehearsals is free. However, having access to Beit is not ‘free’ per say. Having a particular cultural capital as in the case of Outa Hamra, which is recognized within the independent art scene of downtown Cairo, is what allows access to such piece of information and access to the space per say. The gates of the old villa are not truly open to the public. There is a certain kind of politics affiliated with the centralized art scene that can render the villa – Beit as a home for specific artistic practices.

It is an old villa with spacious rooms, and a high ceiling, which creates this echo and magnifies everything. The process of renovation is happening as a collective collaboration. The enigma of getting a place alive with artistic creations fills the air of the place, that whoever steps in is infected by the spirit of desire to create and collaborate and contribute something to keep the happening.

The villa consists of a spacious backyard where chairs were scattered and we began by having a meeting there. After a while another group came in and they also grabbed some chairs, sat in a circle and started rehearsing their work. We moved inside the underground floor. There is a wide corridor, which we transformed to be our rehearsal space for that day. This corridor where is painted in black and it has a low ceiling and yellow spot lights, which gives a feeling of an interrogation room or an investigation office. So, we pulled out colorful carpets and put out our dance floor ground and then the place seemed like a more playful place to start.

The problematic of scarcity and centrality

The challenge to a regular access to a rehearsal space is associated with a certain cultural economy. Rehearsal spaces in Cairo are scarce. If we do a quick math by adding the square meters available of the rehearsal venues available versus the number of artists or potential groups seeking a space to play and create, we will be able to trace such a limitation. According to Nada Sabet, theatre director and cofounder of Noon foundation for creative industries, it is only with the opening of independent rehearsal venues that the independent theatre movement started to flourish. She further added that the current problematic with the scene is also due to this scarcity

and tightness to access a room that gathers creative imaginaries together to play and produce creative formations.

Another aspect that complicates the story of scarcity is the centralization of the independent art scene in Cairo within downtown- Wist El Balad. Art and creative industries in general tend to find their home in the centre of the capital, and potentialities for newly emerging talents and ideas attempt to carve a space within the ‘intellectual’ circles of downtown. This has by return evoked particular nostalgia to retrieve “the *belle époque* culture, as a worthwhile ‘national’ heritage” (Abaza, 2011, p.1079). Such retrieval can be traced through the current movement powered by The Isma’ailia real estate investments⁹ “who have already purchased some 20 buildings and have plans to buy 12 more” within the centre of Cairo (Ibid). This mobilization of capital, for the sake of renovating long abandoned sites in downtown, arouses controversial arguments around attempts for the gentrification of down town and transforming the centre of the city to appeal to the nostalgia of the “*belle époque*”¹⁰.

However, going back to the street vendor, as Abaza (2011) also brings to the picture, a vivid resistance to this transformation takes place on a daily basis through mundane praxis as such. Nonetheless, what do we do with the artists striving to find affordable and accessible rehearsal spaces in the midst of these attempts for transformation, which sets art and culture as a frontier to the purpose of its investments? How is it possible to carve an alternative space for art within spaces absorbed by capital? To rephrase my question; to what extent subversive creative practices of space making will render plausible within such cultural economy?

The scarcity of rehearsal spaces creates a constant tension that pushes Outa Hamra, particularly in this case in contrast to Khayal Shaaby, to always keep digging for a space to rehearse. Being on the edge with a particular persistence to dig out possibilities is what allowed them for example to figure our Studio Ideal as a possible place for rehearsal. However, with Ideal getting more and more popular and the already given scarcity, Outa Hamra carry a certain agitation towards the movement of acquisition and renovation happening in downtown. Such

⁹ a real estate development company based in Cairo, Egypt, focusing on acquiring and renovating prime real estate in Downtown Cairo with the aim of revitalizing the historic neighborhood and celebrating its unique, organic urban framework.

¹⁰the period of settled and comfortable life preceding the First World War

movement poses a particular limitation to possibilities of digging a new Ideal and transform it into what it has turned to be today as an alternative space for art.

The Performance space – The Frontier

Outa Hamra and Khayal Shaaby, as street theatre troupes can be seen as nomadic to a great extent. They carry their theatre to their audience. The stage is a spontaneous eruption on a sidewalk or in the yard of a school, a facility or even a Juvenile. The troupe walks in with their props and through their presence and actions the scene gets created. However, the choice of which street and what institution is not random. The troupes target spaces and audiences needs to appeal to certain philosophy. As Ne'ma one of the members of Khayal Shaaby puts it “the troupe aims to target marginalized, poor and informal settings”. Ne'ma poses a particular problematic through this enlisting of the marginalized along with the poor and the informal. Within this statement there is a particular imagination to the marginal and their existence within particular geographies. Bush and Ayeb argue in the introduction to the book *Marginality and Exclusion in Egypt* that,

The term marginal or marginality has certain vagueness about it. It is used as a ‘catch-all’ phrase to encompass a range of very different situations. These may be situations of the most dramatic condition of poverty, or where individuals or groups of people experience merely a condition of less wealth or ‘bad luck’ compared with the ‘average’ person. (2012, p.7)

Their imagination of the marginal within particular spaces is nourished by a wider narrative that always attempts to classify and sort out categories. Such a “catch all” phrase poses a particular violence towards the significance of the diverse groups and the uniqueness of each space the troupes performs within. Moreover, it reduces the difference embedded within the repetition of the same performance within these various spaces. Each performance is unique despite being the same show. The variation of the conditions of life, the diversity of everydayness , the rapture moment that transforms time and space is also transformed with the change in time and space.

To complicate my argument further I begin attending to this question by looking to the ‘target’. Where the marginalized is and who are these marginalized audiences? Through my

fieldwork with both troupes I have performed in different dispersed spaces around Egypt, which they consider as marginalized spaces. The places we went to included villages in Upper Egypt, informal settlement – *A'shwaa 'yat* within Cairo, street children shelter houses and Juveniles. In such places that we have performed they aimed always to remain coherent to the 'philosophy' they carry, meaning that these places were places where the people never really saw theatre performance and clowns in their lives, according to their assumption. Nonetheless, they still take part in festivals and events that don't particularly fulfill their philosophy, yet cater to their social and cultural capital within the local art and creative industries. These festivals can be either organized through official state affiliations such as the ministry of culture or through state independent organizations such as Dcaf (downtown contemporary arts festival) or Alternative Solutions festival- *Hal Badeel*. In both cases the choice of each troupe to take part in either or always remains as a subject of internal controversial discussion for two main reasons. The first will be the political stance that the festival organization represents. The second, is that taking part in such festivals is not the priority of their praxis in the first place and therefore should remain as a secondary fields of intervention as Buda one of the members of KhayalShaaby puts it "we need to balance our diversity of audience between the 'intellectuals' crowd and the crowd from rural and outside of Cairo".

Ethnographic sketches from street performance: Anything can happen on the street!

As I have previously noted the performance space to street theatre renders a certain complexity rather than just popping up on the side walk and actually performing. The performance occurs within a network of relationships that situates it within a setting of interrupting this particular setting everydayness spontaneously or by becoming attuned within a special programme of a planned interruption to the pace of an everyday. More precisely it can happen within a 'public' space that can be a street or a park, with all due conservations to the notion of public in this respect. Or it can happen within 'private' settings behind the walls of an institution guarded and structured to encompass a particular excess of the social.

Access to the 'public'

The access to the below mentioned public spaces occurred through a preset arrangement by the troupe members with different stake holders. There is an essential need for a back up

entity or person to have an entry point to the public. The level of interrogation that we get subjected to within the street gets attuned through an affiliation with a local community based organization, youth community centre or even a well trusted and powerful figure within a neighborhood or a street.

I begin by elaborating on the performances that took place within 'public' spaces or within a street, which hints a problematic of how public a space can be and how it is subjectified by different relations of power. Moreover, it displays the challenges and possibilities that the so called public poses and its variation from one setting to another.

In the Book fare

We stopped a bus from Ramsees street that took us straight to the book fare. We waited outside for a while and then Nema got in touch with the person from the committee in charge of events organization at the ministry who invited us. Going through the gates people started asking us who we are and what we are going to do but we didn't get searched or interrogated thoroughly as we were warned. We got picked up by a microbus and were dropped off at the food court to grab a quick bite. A lot of people to the book fare as a promenade. The food court has more people than any book selling spots. It is a picnic place where people come and spend the day and have fun in the sun and eat. Basically it is one of the few occasions and places where there is a semi public space and event that anyone can attend and be affordable for a family to go together and spend the day. We went inside one of the tents belonging to the ministry of culture and changed.

We went then to figure out where we will perform around this crowded food court area. The chosen spot for staging the performance was behind a fool and falafel restaurant. The main strategic criterion in picking up the staging area is to have a wall to our back in order to lean our props on and avoid losing them in the crowd, but that was not plausible within the open food court area at the fare. We decided to start warming up and gather the crowds anyway till an alternative solution to this gets fixed. We started then playing with the buckets, beating on the drums and singing. We played with the music for a while until a car came where we will perform in front of in order to secure a place at our back to place our props through the play. We started the performance by a famous folkloric Arabic song called *yasalat el zein*, which some of the

lyrics are appropriated to match the context of Revolution of Color. Once we became circled by the crowd, we began moving together to carve a wider space to stage. Now that the stage is set the show begins. It was really a big crowd and then at a certain moment in the show we were interrupted by a man that approached Shaker from the side of the stage. The man was one of the people in charge of our invitation, and he sneaked into our staging area telling us that we have to move the place of the performance because the people from the exhibition booth near where we were performing called the police and an issue with the security forces might happen and he wants to avoid it. So shaker acted as if we painted this spot and we have to move to another one and the people followed us.

The clowns at StablAntar

Stablantar is one of the informal settlements in Cairo. It seems from a distance like a huge mountain of garbage. We headed to an NGO called Tawasol. Tawasol is an NGO that works in the field of development and focus its work on the children of stablantar area. We were supposed to perform in the youth centre of stablantar so jakob and Ali went to check the place. Surprisingly the person in charge in the youth centre asked us to pay money to take up the space because this is a governmental entity and displaying a performance requires paying a particular cost. So we decided not show in this place. The girl from the ngo was extremely pissed off and she said that they pay a certain amount of money every month for this youth centre so that the children have access to do activities there so they have no right to ask for extra money because this is part of the children activities. Anyway we decided to cut this argument short and search for a convenient spot on the street beside the ngo and set our paravan and improvise a staging area. Our convenient spot was a gap in between two buildings we set the paravan, spread the rope to set our pseudo stage. As soon as we set the paravan and the rope children started gathering, but we had to do one extra task to occupy the street and block cars from passing through this alley for the whole time of the performance. We asked the people of the Ngo to help us with that.

We performed in a rather tight spot and the children were very close to our staging area. The level of excitement that roared to a level of aggression from the tightness of the spot winded up the show with our final song and a side fight between girls who were sitting among the audience. However, to Outa Hamra, StablAntar, as previously elaborated in Chapter two, is

significant and they had to deal with more violent reactions through an earlier performance. Yet, StablAntar in particular remains special to the troupe as it was this particular neighborhood that gave them their name

With the arrival of the parade on the sidewalk of a small alley in a distant village or the playground of children with special needs facility, there is always a room for random possibilities and challenges to deal with. To begin with figuring out the right spot to occupy and transform from a mundane street or playground corner into a staging area with no lights, microphones only with the props they extract from mundane everyday practices like the buckets.

The clowns in Aswan: Kima the industrial village

Kima is half an hour far from Aswan and is significant for the big chemicals factory in the village. The place where we were performing was a sort of a youth community centre that was constructed in the sixties. The architecture of the place and the buildings around reminded me of the Nasser era soviet style buildings. The centre was constructed at the time when the chemicals factory was built in the sixties at the time of industrial transformations during the era of president Gamal Abdel Nasser.

The place which was suitable to have the performance inside this facility was the backyard of the facility, which was far from the street. We figured that it will be impossible to have any audience in this area so we decided to go out on the street and make musical parade to gather people from the neighborhood. Each picked up an instrument or a barrel and we agreed on a couple of rhythms to play. As soon as we went out of the facility to the street the children started gathering. We moved while we were performing and creating sound and noise in the area and inviting the children in the street and the people in the neighborhood to come down and see our show in the youth facility. The children were in the street got excited and started following us though the parade, the few cars passing down the calm street of this village started following and honking along with the music we were creating. The young children were a bit intimidated and when we approached them very close they would shy out and run away then come back and watch with an innocent amazement. When we started singing El Leila yasamra – a song by Mohamed Mounir, who is originally from Aswan, people started singing with us and the festivity of the parade reached a certain peak. With a considerable crowd circling the parade we started moving inside

towards the performance area. We always place a rope around the performance area and it is always tricky to keep the children around this rope and not to jump behind the paravan, especially with an enthusiastic crowd that voluntarily followed us from the street. The audience through the Kima performance was extremely interactive and filled up with the energy that we brought them in with from the street to the extent that we left the facility and walked down the street towards our vehicle with a parade the audience created through their cheers and chants.

Street theatre behind walls

What happens in the youth community centers, fares and small alleys within villages and informal settlements is the same performance that takes place inside state governed or private institutions. However, there is something more significant to staging within the walls of these institutions beyond the public and private dichotomy. This renders to spontaneity versus anticipation, whether the audience are pulled to the staging area or interrupted by it.

In this section of the ethnographic sketches I draw on the performances that occurred within different institution. The performance was enlisted to a programme for the children within these different facilities and they arrived into the staging area accompanied by the social workers and guardians. This in itself situates the performance as an intentional interruption proceeded by anticipation and to some extent obligation to come, sit and watch.

The clowns in the Juvenile institution

The place where we were performing was not inside the juvenile but in the sports and social activities building associated by the juvenile or the trilateral translation of the word *Dar El Tarbeya* - upbringing house. The juvenile is a governmental institution, which is operated by both the ministry of interior and the ministry of social solidarity. Outa Hamra familiarity with the place and the children, and their ability to access the juvenile in the first place is because of their involvement in a project with Save the children¹¹. They came to the place four days a week for four months and the children are very familiar with them but not as clowns as they come here to train the children on forming a theatre performance.

¹¹ Save the children is an international NGO concerned with human rights and protection and particularly children rights. It has been working in Egypt since 1982 and has a broad span of projects all over Egypt's governorates.

To begin the show, we decided to get into the staging area carrying a bit of suspense to the stage. The children were already seated in a semi circle by the social workers (their guardians and supervisors) around the paravan. We decided to find our way to the back of the paravan by acting as if we were trying to hide from the children behind trees, by taking one of the children and hiding behind them and acting scared from being seen while sneaking through towards the back of the paravan. In this game the children found something playful that they were not expecting, and it moved the disciplined vibe of them being seated and waiting for the show as instructed by their supervisors. However, the vibe of performing in a gated place is a shared feeling of challenge shared by the performers. Performing in a zone of exceptional everyday deviant to the everydayness of the street, or the youth centre, where People spontaneously circle and contribute to the making of the stage. Here children were seated more or less by an order they were not forced to, I hope, but it was like part of their program for the day. The children were guided at all times by the social workers, so our role in controlling the crowd was less.

The juvenile performing

On another occasion I came to the same juvenile as part of an audience to see the play by the children, which Outa Hamra has been training for four months. The play was part of a closing ceremony of the project by Save the Children. It was attended by the whole administration of the juvenile institution and a vice minister from the ministry of social solidarity. We waited for the ceremony to begin. I was standing by the door when a group of little children wearing colored paper flowers around their neck over their bellies and with face painting. The children surprisingly recognized me and when they saw me they all cheered “Outa hamra is here!” and they started singing the rhythm that we sang at the performance the other day. All the children were brought into the hall walking in queues with the social workers. The social workers have different attitudes towards the children. One of them was telling the children to clap and have fun because today is a day for them to have fun and the children were joyfully playing with him and clapping but then there was another one who was constantly shouting at him and the kids to stop making noise and clapping because there is a long day ahead of us and we want to enjoy it without having a headache. After a while the rest of the administrative staff of the institution came in together with a vice minister from the ministry of social solidarity.

The performance began by a couple of children sitting and playing. Another boy came in wearing a scarf – as the mother who was looking for something to feed her kids but she couldn't find anything to feed them. Then the father came into the scene that violently kicks the children and the mother out. The mother then takes the children to a place and tells them that this is a good place where they will receive education, will be well fed and will also play with other children. Then throughout they display different situations with children and with the administration. Where they show mostly how they receive violent treatment and act upon each other's violently as well. Also they display – the general – *El lewa* , which is the representative from the ministry of interior within the administration, in two ways. Once as a good person who refuses the social workers to hit them and another time as an unjust that doesn't really care and kicks them out of his office.

The performance was aesthetically poor but the children ability to grasp and represent the different forms of oppression, which they have been subjected to and still are , was very powerful especially in the presence of all the administration including the current general – El Lewa and the vice minister. The performance reflected a sort of rebellion to the whole lot of systems of oppression practiced over them including the very project that situated them as an experiment to achieve particular criteria, which they have succeeded to mark, as the project coordinator stipulated in her speech through the ceremony.

Imagined spaces of the marginalized

Through this ethnographic sketch I give a detailed description of the setting, and what the happenings of the performance inflicted on the spaces where we performed. Invoking happiness is central to what Outa Hamra and khayal Shaaby aim to bring, but this very notion of happiness is what necessarily complicates their choices of performance spaces. They chose these performance spaces, whether they were invited to or popped out in the place through a pre-organized agreement, as I previously highlighted in response to this particular philosophy of targeting marginalized audience. The act of targeting the audience for the sake of invoking happiness has a particular imposition on and an interruption to different everyday moments. This interruption aims to erupt what I like to call an explosion of colors. This explosion raptures the

everydayness and captures the time and space to a parallel imagined time and space, which invokes a possibility to imagine, to snap out, let go laugh and be happy for a moment.

Thus, if we think that both troupes mainly aim to create happiness; this renders the targeting mechanism of the marginalized rather provocative. The targeting of the marginalized emerges from the imagination of a location to the marginalized, which is necessary to nourish and maintain a way to deal with the excess of the social. Yet, as Bayat (2011) argues the very category of the marginalized evokes a particular potentiality in its ability to carve alternatives to the mainstream “a place of respite and counter power” (2011, p.14). Accordingly the choice of Outa Hamra and Khayal Shaaby to target the marginalized lies in the opportunities that such a category encompasses. Clowning and revolution of colors finds a space to stage and create happiness among the marginalized, due to the potentialities that such spaces engender. The messiness, the oppression, the poor conditions, which are traits of less fortune, is all in the mean time enabling. In fact, the political choice by both troupes to target the marginalized is related to the contingency around certain everydayness rather than others.

Chapter Four

The Performing Body: An Embodiment and a Vehicle of Expression

In this chapter I focus my analysis further from the space circling the happenings to the creator of the happening- the performing body. In chapter three I looked into what happens by

both troupes with different spaces, both the performance and the rehearsal space. In the performing body, I am more concerned with the happening within the rehearsal space, given the significance and the subjective influences and relation that happen within this empty space.

The performing body intertwines variable sensual and physical makings, which are both visible and audible to the external eye. These makings happen as relations that get created between the voice, the rhythm and the motion of the performing body. Such relations provoke and enable the body of the performer to create “collective assemblages of enunciation” (Deleuze&Guattari, 1987, p.7), which I have previously mentioned and will further elaborate on in relation to the affective relations. The creative formation of a performance is an active process of imagination, which can be traced through these affective relations, which get created on the stage and beyond the walls of the rehearsal room. Imagination is a multidimensional space that emerges within spatial and temporal configurations significant to ‘realities’. The unity that the performing body comes to represent engenders, in the mean time, a multiplicity of bodies with various motions, voices and rhythms. This multiplicity merges or fragments depending on sensual and physical capacities surrounding the creative makings and subjective influences.

The sensual and physical makings can be layered to what happens within the rehearsal room and what emerges to extend towards the stage. The makings engendering the totality of body, voice and rhythm can be non-chronologically, rather rhizomatically traced through play, improvisation and affect that emerge from awareness, communication, presence, imagination and unity/multiplicity.

Through this research I adopted embodiment and self- reflection as a research methodology through which I have placed my own body and emotions in the midst of the entangled sensual and physical relations that enables a perception of the performing body. By becoming part of the performing body myself; I analyze some of the constellations that are part of a making and engraving of what we come to call a performance.

In this chapter, I argue that the performing body as a unity or multiplicity enunciates affect through which imagination of new subjectivities becomes plausible. I begin by elaborating on the methodology as a self -reflective one. Then I situate my reflections through the makings constituting endless relations that identify with the performing body. These makings

overlap, merge and diverge to enunciate several states of the performing body. Therefore, I analyze the relationality of these makings and trace the affective creations they articulate. Through this analysis I attend to the revolution of color, which is the play Khayal Shaaby has been performing after the uprising of January 2011 and till 2014. Furthermore, I look into Clowning, which is the main form Outa Hamra represents. Through the revolution of color and the clown performances, which I was part of with each troupe, I situate my analysis of the body the voice and the rhythm.

Embodiment Why and how it was possible?

The analysis represented is based on my own bodily experience in becoming a performing body. This sort of analysis can be referred to as embodiment, which is one of the methods that Law (2004) brings forth as a means “to rethink our ideas about clarity and rigor, and find ways of knowing the indistinct and the slippery” (Law 2004, p.3). In this particular chapter, embodiment as an analytical method allows a space for the possibilities that we can delve upon by knowing through experiencing with our bodies. This process led me through a way to learn about the ambiguous emotional and bodily constructions of performance, and in the meantime stop the continuous attempts to grasp concise and definite knowledge.

When I first decided to conduct my thesis research on interactive street theatre I went to Nahda and met with Mustapha and Shaker. After this long meeting we remained in contact and I was taken by surprise when Mustapha one day called me and asked me to perform with the troupe. Until this moment I was not positive about my ethnographic methodology. First, I was very hesitant to confirm and then I realized that indeed I will be missing a very good chance of getting a real feel of what it actually means to be a street performing artist. However, until this moment I am not sure what were the criteria that lead them into trusting my performing talents and capacity to become part of their troupe?

I started to rethink my decision after I watched the performance. To me the performance was not aesthetically appealing and I felt it was too explicit in the way it dealt with the idea of the revolution through colors. However, I started to question my judgment of the aesthetic value of this performance and what it comes to represent. In fact, what actually constitutes such a

judgment and what sorts of relations gets created or ruptured to render such an influence on me as a viewer.

Becoming a member of Outa Hamra took a different narrative. After becoming a member of Khayal Shaaby, I have only remained in direct contact with the troupe merely through attending their performances and by attending occasional meetings. However, our relation evolved and they officially asked me to join the group on the condition of accepting to join the extensive workshop and tour, which they will arrange with the French clowns without borders. I didn't hesitate for a moment especially after realizing how experiential bodily experience bridged so many gaps in understanding the complexity of the creative formations of the performance through my brief experience at that time with Khayal Shaaby. Moreover, Outa Hamra artistic production is different from Khayal Shaaby, and to become able to grasp the aesthetics, the affective relations and the creative process of forming their performance, taking a step to become a clown in Outa Hamra was equally valid.

On another level, having the chance of becoming part of Outa Hamra at this particular moment, allowed me to experience and actively participate in the creative formation of two performances. I have watched earlier performances by Outa Hamra, one of these plays is titled "Yes Chief!" The play was produced in 2011 post the January 25th uprising. The main theme that runs through the play is authority. It is symbolized as a red beret and who ever wear the beret acquires power and becomes the chief. They play through this theme by rebelling and ridiculing the chief and ridiculing authority all in all by the end. Throughout the performance they barely spoke any words, most of what they needed to convey was conveyed through their bodily movements within the games they played, their facial and vocal expressions, even when one of the actors began mimicking the famous revolutionary slogan "People demand removal of the regime", it was pronounced to mimic only the sound of it, but didn't spell it out. However, by only mimicking the sound of it through non real words the audience would revert back the mimicry with the real words.

They attempt to stick to their initial philosophy that leads them to picking up on clowning precisely and not use slogans of any sort. To Outa Hamra the play is purely entertaining, and as clowns and their ultimate purpose is to have fun with their audience. Through this performance they were playing around narratives that shed some light on power, authority and revolt. Such

narratives are discretely displayed through their games and non spoken communication. By playing around narratives they do not per say ridicule the issue as much as they essentially abstract the issue to a level where it can be grasped by a variety of audiences without being a straight forward advice. As Jakob puts it;

“The theme is just a thread that we try to follow and we see where it gets us it doesn’t remain as a message that we transmit. At the end of the day we just keep it in the back of our head to inspire us but what we aim for is to build a performance that is fun and interactive rather than compressed with a message and a philosophy and boring. Laughter is very important and we need to laugh and have fun with it so the audience does as well”.

Troupe’s aesthetics

This reflects how each troupe encompasses a significant aesthetic value. According to Kant, judgment of aesthetics is purely a contemplative state, meaning that it does not stand at the existence of an object but rather the unity between the imagination and understanding that are manifested through the representation of the object art (Miall, 1980). This Kantian philosophy about the judgment of aesthetic quality made me realize my attempting non reflexive critical position having been among the audience in both cases with Outa Hamra and Khayal Shaaby, and indeed how oblivious I was about the creative formation of the performance of each troupe. However, I still remain to question what is it that constitutes my feeling of enjoyment content or dissatisfaction? In fact, a question about what possibilities duly exist in measuring such qualities, while measuring quality is inherently relevant. Accordingly, this emphasized how embodiment and reflexive involvement is one of the means that can help tracing through the relevant and the uncertain. This rational analysis from a distance was void from any sympathetic participation, which Weber argues to be the adequate medium that would allow grasping the emotional context through creating an empathetic connection sufficient for such types of action (artistic representation) (Keyes, 2002).

Outa Hamra aesthetics represents their choice of clowning. They go out on the street not for the sake of carrying hefty messages or slogans “we don’t give advises to the people...we go out to the street we do silly things, as clowns and they sure have a story and a theme, but implicit, so whoever wishes to read it can actually dig for it”. This complicates the story further

beyond a mere funny performance in the street, it goes beyond entertainment. A clown conceals layers of complexities beyond its mask – the red nose. Such complexities emerge from the ambiguity of the clown as a real and an unreal persona. Reality and unreality is a paradox that they play with through their being – their persona on the stage which is imagined, and through their performance as they perform genuine real humanistic acts within an imaginary context – the play. The clown that Outa Hamra represents is not the clown concealed behind heavy layers of makeup. It is mainly the red noses that signify their identity as clowns, as well as the style of clothes they wear. They dress up in shabby second hand outfits which they buy off the flea markets. The purpose is to look real but bigger than reality, meaning that anyone can easily mimic how they look like. Yet, the unreality lies in their “liberation from the social mask” (Davison, 2010) and ability to genuinely behave and authentically express.

When referring to the comedy or silliness that clowns come to present, it is important to look into why it is in fact categorized as such. When you carry a message and you wish to target a particular audience, the story does not render at the point of mere entertainment. Fun takes another level where it comes to conceal and glamour such presentation. Huizinga explains that “when we call a farce or comedy ‘comic’, it is not so much on account of play-acting as such as on account of the situation of the thoughts expressed” (Huizinga, 1955, p.6). Hence, Comedy and particularly clowning is not the fixity of what Outa Hamra presents, as much as it is the grounds or the channel through which they express.

As Outa Hamra, Khayal Shaaby avoids didactic narratives. However, they follow a different mode in conveying a given message. For Khayal Shaaby they seek to symbolize and represent certain values, which the Revolution of Color particularly speaks of. These values are concealed through a basic and fun story, which can be read differently by the audience with the variation of time and space, as Nema describes it “The play can be understood in different ways depending on the location of the audience and the timing of display. The tyrant has changed from being perceived as Mubarak to SCAF¹² (The supreme council of armed forces) and to ex President Mohamed Morsi¹³. The play is still at work because it still resonate the current situation”.

¹² SCAF is the supreme council of armed forces, which took power post Mubarak from June 2011 till July 2012

¹³Ex president Mohamed Morsi was elected back in 2012 in the first elections post the revolution.

The play *Revolution of Color*, like *Yes Chief*, was created back in 2011 after the January 25th uprising and the toppling of Hosni Mubarak. According to Khayal Shaaby members, after the revolution they wanted to put together a reflection on the narrative of the revolution. The basic idea of the performance is to reflect how different ‘ordinary’ people – Nas A’adya- have different imaginations and aspirations, but they all keep getting repressed by a tyrant. Only when they gather their forces they succeed in defeating this tyrant.

Despite of the variance in genres, the creative formations of the performances by both troupes remain to rely on imagination, which can be traced through affective relations and processes. Therefore, in this coming section I trace these affective relations and how the processes align and alienate the performing body. I trace the intertwinement of the relations and through this overlapping and extending thread of playing, improvising, communicating and most importantly imagining, I attempt to formulate an understanding towards the performing body.

Foucault (1975) argues, in his book *Discipline and Punish*, that multiplicity of processes of coercion of collective and individual bodies occur to discipline the whole social body. Such disciplines occur as “small acts of cunning endowed with a great power of diffusion” (Foucault, 1975, p.139). Thus, human bodies are subjected to variable forms of discipline that render our bodies docile. If we follow the examples given by Foucault we can trace the institutional and social control that ultimately aims to produce productive obedient citizens. Therefore, our bodies are disciplined to function and expected to convey feelings and emotions within a socially accepted pattern, which appeals to the disciplinary mechanisms we are subjected to.

The performing body is a docile body. However, the disciplinary mechanism it is subjected to requires first a degree of liberation from the collective coercive social body through awareness and flexibility. Through this level awareness another form of discipline occurs. The performing body is tamed and re-disciplined through intensive trainings and processes to render it docile to performance requirements. The performing body is subjected to forms of discipline that are not merely physical, but more importantly, especially to theatre performers, emotional discipline. Like the corporal physical muscles, human species possess an emotional muscle, which is capable of receiving, embracing and articulating. Performers work on raising their awareness of their physical and emotional muscles to become capable of genuinely conceive and express.

However, the disciplinary process of rendering the performing body docile is taming processes that occurs inside a smaller social structure – the rehearsal room- and expand to attempt rupturing the wider structure that engenders the collective of coercive bodies going through an everyday mundane practice being on a street or in a juvenile.

This rapture is possible with a discipline that happens through play. As playing is essentially a free activity in and of itself, as Huizing (1955) argues, therefore there is a significant quality to playing that allows awareness and in the mean time discipline. In this coming section I engage with ethnographic data on playing and its relational value to awareness and creation.

Concealment through the ‘Genuine’

On the street we attempt to conceal our subjectivities and characteristics, we attempt to reserve our personal space and respect other’s. Street theatre performers act in the opposite direction, grandeur their feelings and their display of their own being and presence to the max. In street theatre the spectacle needs to remain in a state of excitement, and the actors in a state of tension, and this happens only with certain openness from both sides. This state occurs if the audience convinces and engages with the imagined setting, which interrupts and squeezes into of the space of the everyday, displaying new subjectivities with it’s made up farcical characters.

Clowning, along with other genres of theatre, require being genuine to hold up their aesthetic value. By genuine here I mean the reflection of the innate feeling as is with no added pretence or self censorship. Nonetheless, concealment is a basic value that such genres rely on. Maintaining a genuine attitude through concealment lies in the capacity of the actors to abstract genuine feelings to create new imagined subjectivities, and place them within an imagined space. Concealment is important to uphold and non didactic frame of representation, but still remain genuine. Pretentious as opposed to genuine is less appealing to the audience; no one wants to watch a pretentious performance with no real depth, as articulated by the troupe members through different instances during rehearsals. Hence, all happening on the surface, a performance lacking affect and doesn’t construct a relation with the audience no bound occurs so what will make audience remain to sit and watch.

The concealment through the genuine is created through improvisation and long processes of disciplinary acts. Performing bodies need to remain in states of tension to be able to stage these feelings. Strategies and disciplines vary and also genres, which are the channels through which performers pick up on. Through the rehearsals we play. Playing games is the theatre language to implementing certain exercises. There are several sources to such games some of them are made up by the troupe members through the long hours they spend together. They create their own games to work their bodies and feelings as a collective. Or they rely on some widely known resources of theatre games such as *Games for Actors and Non actors* by Augusto Boal, which is considered like an essential reference book along with other resources. Other resources for theatre games can also be the workshops and trainings that both troupes get exposed to. In the case of Outa Hamra it would be through Clowns Sans Frontiere. For KhayalShaaby it would be through a variety of professional trainers, which they have the sufficient resources and access through their affiliation with Nahda.

Play improvisation and affect

Why do we play?

Playing is not a mere will nor is it simply a human instinct, in fact playing is an action beyond the human species as animals play. Huizinga argues in his book *Homo Luden* (man the player) that “play is more than a mere physiological phenomena or psychological reflex...it has a significant function...there is some sense to it” (Huizinga, 1955, p.1). Huizinga’s theorization of play leaves us with a valid starting point to look into the reason we play during rehearsals and on the stage.

Play is one essential aspect that has a non-materialistic quality in itself (Ibid). Play as a space between the instinct and the will is precisely where communication becomes plausible. By communication I am referring to verbal and sensual communication between the actors and corporal communication that happens within each individual body and in relation to the space, most importantly the ground/the stage.

Play within the rehearsal room certainly differs from that which takes place on the stage. Playing on the stage takes place through the persona we become through the characters we embody on the stage. However, playing is a valuable capacity that theatre practitioners invest in

and imply amongst themselves and with the groups they train through the workshops and trainings, which both troupes take part of.

Playing and awareness

Warming up and putting awareness into the body is a basic initial series of movements that we perform together. Through these small movements we attempt to gradually drift out of the everyday tension, and move into another type of tension. Therefore we attempt to release the tensions of the social beings we are to get into the tension of the performing persona we are. The two characters are not separate, and the two forms of tension are indeed not different, yet channeled and dealt with differently.

We lay on the ground. Relax our muscles and close the eyes. Laurence, the trainer hired by Khayal Shaaby, asks us to visualize and imagine how our bodies look like laying down on the ground. We take a moment and then we turn to lie facing the ground on our bellies. We start doing very tiny movements; we bend our knees so that the feet face the ceiling. We begin by simply sliding the right foot over the left the leg till the knee. Then the movement complicates bit by bit by attempting to reach an opposite direction towards the ground. We need to do this with minimum effort and by putting our concentration in our breath. Hence, through the expansion and contraction in the rib cage we begin to wake up our torso and relax the tensions resting in several tension points within our bodies.

After repeating these small effortless movements we pause and get back to lying on our back and checking in with how we feel. We go back to visualizing the image of our body on the ground and begin checking if any changes occurred. We repeat the same movements before doing them again by imagining them first. The process of imagining the movement before physically carrying them is something learned from athletes. By imagining, the mind leads the body to a state where it can achieve beyond its given physicality. However, the process of imagining a setting for the body in precise motions is not easy. Linking corporal physicality with mental processing takes a journey of concentration and thinking not just through the mind but through the body parts just as much.

This sort of warm up that we carry out, either with Laurence or conduct together through yoga postures, that we come to practice regularly together in Outa Hamra, means to concentrate

on the body as shape and a carrier of our feelings (tension, anger, sadness,..Etc...). Being aware of our feelings and our feeling of the feelings within our bodies because through our bodies we are present and presence is the most essential thing in theatre. Being present on the stage being here and the feelings that one reflect is genuine and true only then theatre is good because it will leave this truthful effect on the viewer.

Putting awareness into feelings

Putting awareness into our feelings and emotions is just as important. A performer needs to tweak and keep the emotional muscle present and in connection with the corporal muscles. Our bodies will always search for the home of its mundane everyday habitual status. This habitual state is what we change when staging, when we are performing we take this habitual state to a further point a point that is bigger and beyond the ordinary. We bring our feelings to our body parts and how they connect to each others at this moment of awareness and realize the difference between this and the habitual state. This habitual state resides in the body and also in our emotions. We go around our everyday life carrying feelings that we might be aware or not of. So according to Laurence to coordinate between the awareness of the body and the emotions, both muscles need to be set in conversation through memory.

The idea of taking the habitual state and its relation to the ordinary life is also related to what KhayalShaaby does through Revolution of color. They take the habitual and the ordinary practice of a group of painters, where each takes up a significant color. These colors embody emotions and imaginations of real people, but take them beyond this ordinary habitual state of everyday life. Then, they represent them as a fantasy or a dream of some sort.

So an exercise through which a conversation between the physical and the emotional muscle is created, we are asked by Laurence to mention one feeling that we relate to on daily basis. Mustapha said that he relates to the feeling of stress. Neama said she relates to the feeling of being a speedy. I said that I relate to frustration and anger. Then he asked us to share a feeling that our parents carried or we remember them with all the time. Then he went and brought a chair and told us that we will work now on our emotional muscle. Feeling and emotions contain a diverse, contradictory and complementary forms, which we are familiar with, but not necessarily aware of our very own personal ones. Through the exercise of the chair, we work on

our relation to our own feelings and become able to be aware of the flexibility of our emotional muscle. He explained that he will tell us a feeling and then we sit on the chair get into a neutral state and then try to feel this feeling that he will tell us. He asked me to start and told me that I feel angry

I sit on the chair and started to make myself comfortable first in mu position. I started going with my mind somewhere else. I started recalling a situation where I was really angry. I was angry but I wasn't shouting or reacting, I was now really just full of this feeling of anger. Laurence wanted to experience revealing the feeling without acting without moving from our place even only while sitting on a chair. I felt really angry and full of this feeling that I was recalling the scene from my life, a scene that actually occurred to me a couple of days before being in this very room and seated on this chair. He asked me then to get back to the neutral state slowly and snap out of the feeling of anger. I asked them as soon as I finished if they actually seen anything and they said that they saw a lot and they were able to see my anger. After that Neama conveyed the feeling of fear and to my surprise it was very obvious to track the change in the emotion and body features from neutral to a heightened feeling and then back to neutral. Finally, Mustapha sat on the chair and he was asked by Laurence to convey his feeling of disgust. The expression of his feeling of disgust was fifty percent of what we can anticipate, of something we know about the feeling, but the fifty percent chance of the personal feeling relevance is always a surprise, as Laurence explained.

The game of the chair converses the two muscles, but also links the performing body to his/her realities. The realities that are essentially constructed through the social structures where our everyday life is situated or we believe that we are bound by. Taking a step outside the everyday life and stepping inside a space to play with what these constructed realities have influenced us by, emotionally and physically, allows us to take a space also to imagine and create new subjectivities, which emerge from within our own persona.

Imagination is basic value to play. Through imagination we can comprehend the only pretending to be serious (Huizinga, 1955). Meanwhile, the categories of seriousness and play are really fluid and render to how and where the players go with their imagination. We (and speaking of the group here since it occurs in collective) play to nourish imagination and articulate a relationality between one and multiple imaginations of this collective. This play

occurs towards creative formation of performances, which get constituted through a merger of imaginaries that fluidly as well emerged through merging what's only pretending with serious.

Playing and communication

The body and the voice are the vehicles of communication which we utilize to unite and multiply the performing body, and all together affectively communicating with the audience. However, communication can occur in a non voice form, a non verbal form of communication. Playing to communicate in the rehearsal room allows for ability to communicate on the stage with fellow actors and with the audience. We play to communicate. Such form of play converses the body with the sound capacities of individual body, the multiplicity of bodies and the unity that forms an assemblage; a collective that is all a one unit, but not one.

When we play to communicate through our own voices or through utilizing instruments, we refer to this play as sound and rhythm exercise. We use our bodies as instruments. We can create beat and we can rhythmically move and respond to that beat as well. Every person has a beat. Our hearts beat and we all have rhythm but we are just not conscious enough of our internal sound and our capacity to create sound and play with it in a collective as much as alone

One interesting game that keeps growing and growing is the machine. Someone creates a sound and a movement and this sound and movement someone else comes with another sound and movement and complements this machine until the machine is saturated and then together with the sound and the movement of the machine as a whole a collective movement or reflex reactions occurs. I started one of the machines and when the machine was rhythmically creating consistent sound and movement it kept on growing and growing until it started to collapse and break down and the machine retrieved its capacity to get back to its original sound and movement as if it was fixed.

Another game that links the articulation of sounds and words, in other words the significant and the signifier, is a game where each body begins by a rhythmic sound and then we bit by bit build on it. Our body rhythms and the sounds we create combine together and melt to create a harmony, which we get into and start evolving and descending and creating dialogues. This multiplicity into one is a unique formulation that one as part of a collective loses senses of

individuality an assemblage. At other times it melts to form differently with a multiplicity emerging and gathering around one and it becomes one versus the assemblage.

The merging and repetition of sounds mimics the sounds that we collect through our senses by being in the stage of everyday on the street. The sounds that we carry in our heads also merge together to form an assemblage of sounds, which is essentially created in a precise rhythm, which we can sometime refer to as a city rhythm or a particular street rhythm. The reoccurrence of multiplicity of sounds and the internalization of the beats that constitute those sounds is receptive form, and recreating them requires an acceptance and subjective influence that communicates this multiplicity in an individualized form, which through harmony retrieves a new collectivity.

As I mentioned earlier, communication and relational creation is not limited to sounds and voices. The body communicates and initiates forms of relationality amongst the performing bodies and the audiences. Unity and multiplicity are not dichotomies, rather an expression of the individual and collective rhythm. The group merges to form an assemblage, which constitutes of a multiplicity of rhythm building and overlapping.

Such form of non verbal communication occurs through juggling and acrobat, which Outa Hamra pays considerable amount of attention to in their rehearsals. Aside from the fact that they are part of the clowning games, juggling and acrobat are two forms through which a very high level of communication is highly needed. It is really important not to lose sense of the collective and focus on self because it's all about movement synchronization and getting attached by the same rhythm. if we miss communicate we can really physically hurt each others, either by getting hit by juggling props or by jeopardizing your carrier, leaner or supporter in an acrobatic pose.

Revolution of color: Alignment and Alienation

This play is based on a collective decision to display a performance that speaks about the revolution. As Ne'ma said to me after the revolution they wanted to put together a reflection on the narrative of the revolution. The basic idea reflects how different people – regular people who are different have different imaginations and aspirations, but they all keep getting repressed by tyranny. Only when they gather their forces they succeed in defeating this tyranny.

The first time I was given my role – The Red color- I started wearing the props. The props are basically a big plastic barrel painted red, two thick brushes with wooden handles and painted in red color, a rope that I tie around my waist, a red piece of cloth and a broom that I tie on my back by a certain technique. When I was watching them wear the props I didn't see it complicated because they were so used to them, even Shaker who have to carry a ladder on his back. However, when I was putting on my props I felt confused. Ruth (who I am replacing) was helping me and giving me tips on not to tie the rope so tight because I will have to take it off at some point. They started by teaching me the drumming rhythm that I should do. It was very hard for me to capture the rhythm, and so we settled for doing a basic single hit on the drum along with the rest of the rhythm they were all making.

The moment we started getting into the performance a certain feeling occurred to me that kept growing, I felt estranged from my own body. I started feeling that my mind was consumed by trying to make sense and understand what I was doing and my body was being lead by Ruth to move in a certain way. My body was an object outside of me, as if it was part of the props I worn, and I was moving mechanically as instructed by Ruth and it was all just passing through my mind. This dichotomy grew even more when I started singing along and reached its peak when I was singing my character's lines. When I sang the lyrics out loud I heard my own voice as if it was not emerging from me, almost as if it was a strange voice that I am hearing. This alienation from the activity of labor, which is the process of producing the play, left me with a self estranged feeling. I was doing the work while being physically and mentally outside of myself.

Putting Marxist theory on alienation and estranged labor in mind, one can conceive how the estranged objectified labor becomes an alien hostile object independent from the self (Marx, 1844). This leads to what Marx refers to as 'unfree activity' (Marx, 1844) where the activity of production in itself becomes alien to man. Further from here alienation takes up another level where actors can become alienated from their production- the play.

With Alienation we lose our conscious realization of our own conditions of existence as performing bodies on the stage. By conscious realization I am referring to awareness but not control, where the ability to move one's body emerges from the body and the mind in coordination. This communication between the mind and the body allows the actor to become

aware of the physicality of their body, resulting in realizing the potentialities and limitations of being this body and not only utilizing it.

Therefore, when we lose this point of awareness and become too consumed and we start our movement solely from our heads, our bodies become a utility to us. When this point of unconscious realization and playing a role becomes too much bounded by mind rules and instruction, we become too disciplined to embark into embodiment, which is beyond imitation. This unawareness creates a gap between our persona and the characters we come to represent on the stage. This gap is what turns this unaware utility of the body into a mechanical depiction of a character outside of the actor. Therefore, the whole play to the actor turns into a non free space that is beyond the actor and alien to him/her. At this state our bodies are playing more and more by the rules, where the mimetic representation, as Caillois (1958) would argue become more drifted on the scale of playing towards 'Allea' and further from 'Ilinx'¹⁴. Hence, the mental activity grows over the physical activity and diminishing bodily improvisation.

Sara Ahmed (2010), in her article Happy Objects, argues that affect is a contingent, which shuffles between alignment and alienation. The process of moving further from alienation and towards an alignment occurs through processes of discipline and integration. Therefore to be aligned with the red color and to be on the same affective contingency as the rest of the group, I needed to perpetually align through the affective details of the object of desire – the play. as Foucault (1975) puts it “discipline is a political anatomy of detail” (1975, p.139) therefore submergence and consumption within the details of the creative formation; by playing, improvising and simulating games creates a certain happening that discipline and align the bodies of the actors to an assemblage – a harmonious unity.

The Red Nose

The nose of the clown is the smallest mask. Through this mask the person is recognized as a clown, which is a very sensitive being who reflects his gestures in a very clear manner. Everything a clown does is clean cut and speaks to the audience. The audiences need to connect with all the gestures, moves and emotions that the clown conveys. This clarity in movements

¹⁴ These are among the types of play as illustrated by Roger Caillois in his book *Man, Play and Game*. Allea refers to the most rule governed form of play, like playing the dice. Ilinx is the out of control form of play where the mental activity only initiates the move then the mental activity diminishes and the physical activity grows, like spinning.

contrasts the concealment that the mask entails. It is a mask that adds certain qualities to its bearer from the stand point of the viewer. However, the qualities it adds are not ones that are alien to the mask bearer; they are essentially internal distant or small qualities that the mask magnify and brings to life. As Koepping (2005) puts it “The hidden elements expressed in bodily performance are not analogues to that which the mask represents, but to that which is hidden by face, namely the inner self...” (2005, p. 145).

The process of embodiment entailed becoming a clown. This transition into the space of playing as clown involved a ritual. One does not simply just put on the red nose, as Jakob says “Clowns are an extreme form of humans and they need to be created with inner and outer peace”. He describes the nose as the smallest mask that has a life and a presence of its own. Whenever we are not performing we have to keep the nose away from our face. When we put on the nose we have to hide and put it we don’t just put it and take it off casually. Also we don’t touch the nose it becomes part of our face but still it is external to us.

Becoming a clown

This becoming is a process, which is triggered by a single significant moment, which is the first moment of putting on the red nose. Other than this moment, one is basically entangled within inner and outer feelings and expression that come together through playing to form one’s clown persona/ character that come to the stage. For me this moment happened in Aswan in Upper Egypt in the workshop where Outa Hamra was collaborating with the French Clowns Sans Frontiere.

The nose has its own subjectivity, and therefore has its own presence independent from the subjectivity and presence of the actor. In order to get a sense and actually realize what I mean by this, I explain a brief game. Through this game I came to experience what subjective individual presence utterly means and this mask adds/changes this subjectivity. The game begins by coming out to a staging area without the nose and walk in the space and communicate with the eyes with the audience. Then get back and hide, put on the nose and do the same thing. Communicating with my audience felt different in each situation. However, nothing changed with the audience they remained the same and they didn’t give any sort of reaction. It was merely the projection of the subjectibve effect of the nose on the audience that gave me this illusion of

difference. The nose has a subjective effect that I was unfamiliar with; therefore I directly projected it as if it was coming from the audience.

The relation that occurs through the mask with the audience metaphorically represents that ability of various forms of concealments, being masks, tags or even uniforms, to project particular subjective affect. Meaning that for example when we see a police officer in the street our relation and power dynamics occur through the uniform, which conceals but also magnifies certain human qualities.

Another essential aspect to becoming a clown or to experience the subjective influence of a concealment is to be conscious of It teaches This imaginary world, and how it needs to be carried in a grotesque imaginary container of the performers own presence. The presence of the mask is one aspect, but the presence of the actor and ability to discipline and clearly articulate his/her feeling is another aspect. This gets back to the paradox of concealment and authenticity, and in this context a disciplining exercise we practiced. The exercise was basically to express a precise feeling with arms crossed to the back and sitting on one's knees. The position itself is disturbing, but it aims to cater for the actor's ability articulate and express genuinely and avoid distortions that confuse the viewer from affectively engaging with the performer.

The creative formation - the making of the play

It takes a whole lot of effort and discipline for a creative formation to come to life. We put out all our equipment and all our tools; our voices, our bodies and our own feelings. The intensity of these five days in this out of time and space place left me dazzled and physically mal. The extreme exhaustion and immergence within my own feelings, my being only here and now and disconnected from everybody else and from the spaces I am familiar with.

In this workshop we spent five days doing theatrical exercises that have to do with the body the rhythm and with the group dynamics and characters building through improvisation. The intensity of the work, which is pulled up together back to back every day, still allows us to know each other's and get to know ourselves in this very context and possibly beyond it as well. Although it is such a brief period by the end of these five days we had our performance 'Le programme' written down and on the sixth day we were performed a run through to a small audience. The performance was based on the scenes we improvised together and the characters

were designated in accordance to the energy and the attitude each was pushing or demonstrating through the period of the rehearsals.

The creation of the performance happened through our day to day improvisation. Each and every one of us alone or together we formed a number of scenes through which our characters were shaped or at least began shaping. The theme that was leading the creative formation was 'difference'. This theme just renders the idea that we have in the back of our heads while carrying on with our playing. The bigger challenge that we carry through the creative formation is maintaining the affective relations, which are created among the actors and through the playing to be displayed on stage in a coherent frame. Although it is not realistic, clowns are not real they don't claim to represent reality. Yet, in fact they capture from own realities and reintroduce them in this imaginary container of the play.

Conclusion

In this chapter I traced the thread that lead through the constitution of the performing body and preparing it to become able and itself enables bodies of audience. The performing body mainly focuses on the entangled processes, which mainly occurs in the factory of playing- the rehearsal room. It is essentially linked to two stages the broader stage of the everyday – the street. It is also connected to the stage, which is also the street or an outdoor space. In the coming chapter I take this relations of affect and trace the affect and its extension towards the dimension of the audiences from the stage and out.

Chapter Five

Affective Relations from the Stage and Off

The genius of clowning is transforming the little, everyday annoyances, not only overcoming, but actually transforming them into something strange and terrific... it is the power to extract mirth for millions out of nothing and less than nothing. – Grock

We are discovering ourselves. Above all: we are discovering that we can change ourselves, and change the world...Nothing is going to remain the way it is. Let us, in the present, study the past, so as to invent the future. (Boal ix: 2008)

Boal and Grock come from two different genres yet from the same world, the world that imagines and provoke possibilities. I suggest that Imagination is a machine, which extracts from the everyday life, from ourselves and others, plays with this mess of extraction and then releases it back. A process that raps instantaneity with the repetition and wraps several variables forming “a single assemblage, operating in the same assemblage: packs in masses and masses in packs” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.34). This machine is always in process, and has a temporal flow of continuous becoming.

The possibility of creating new subjectivities, new dimensions – an imagined world is aligned with process of conscientious disciplining of the body and subjectification of the body to space and by space , as already conveyed through the chapter four – The performing Body. Thus, creation can be traced, but not pinned down within the processes of imagination; Processes that are fluid, complex and continuously happening within the everyday, the rehearsal room and on the stage.

Imagination allows for instantaneous possibilities, which also might linger and constellate to a further potentiality. Performers attempt to articulate imaginations through play, which invokes a mutual shared experience of creativity. Such an affective relationship involves a whole lot of communication sensual, verbal, and emotional. Nonetheless, it also rests on awareness, which requires the performing body a lot of taming and a lot of control. An awareness that triggers the performer to dig own feelings and emotions and carve routes that enables a clean genuine fluid enunciation of various given feelings. Such enunciation is what makes affect plausible, meaning that the affect of, for example, anger reflects and reaches the audience to circle the performance zone.

In this fluid enunciation, which is sensual and its affect becomes almost vivid, the performance weaves particular affective relations with the audience, and forms a multiplicity, which gathers bits of feelings and emotions to form a new subjective being performing. In this

final chapter I would like to draw on this particular relationship between the performer and the audience as situated within performance space. Performing in the street is one set of argumentative spatial and temporal aspect to draw on in relation to affect. Another argument is the sensual invisible line of empathy that is mutual between the bodies of the performers and the spectators. This form of affect as elaborated through Deleuze and Guattari (1987) is an intensity that intertwines a multiplicity of bodies through a reciprocal ability to affect and be affected.

Between the performer and the spectator there is a line of empathy, which creates a spontaneous relation between the performer and the audience and situates them together in a realm parallel to everydayness. To begin with I locate the audience of this theatre. Outa Hamra and Khayal Shaaby ultimately aim to display their performances to poor and marginalized audience, but who are they and what can be understood from this targeting mechanism they both carry through their philosophy? Through this ethnography I have put into practice knowing by embodiment. Becoming a performer at Outa Hamra and Khayal Shaaby allowed me to experience the potentialities and challenges that street theatre invokes. Experiencing becoming a street theatre performer involved extensive hectic hours of physical and emotional training, which are spent to communicate, play and imagine collectively. What I focus more into in my coming lines is what can be read through and out of these processes of creation?

Affective relations

The possibility of creating this new dimension rests on imagination and enunciation. As Deleuze(1987) puts it “The social character of enunciation is intrinsically founded only if one succeeds in demonstrating how enunciation in itself implies collective assemblages” (1987, p.80). The audience ability to grasp and engage with this new dimension rests on how far affective this displayed dimension actually is. Hence, it doesn't solely rests on representation, but also in the capacity of a representation to express and have an essence. Expressing rests as well on the capacity to engender a multiplicity of emotions, which complicates representation and

transmission. Feelings of anger, frustration, hope, joy and anger again all back to back fast enough. But also giving a space for each feeling to articulate and create an affect.

The aspect of affect is not a complex block independent of the happening. In fact affect is within happening (Ahmed, 2010). And when speaking of the happening, I like to retrieve back our earlier mentioned imagination machine, precisely, the multiplicities that feed into and gets released by the machine. This abstraction from everydayness, mess perception and articulation is always at work. From the rehearsal room to the stage the machine is always at work. Within the rehearsal room, performers attempt to weave this imagination into an assemblage of enunciation. On stage, this collective assemblage of enunciation finds its way back to the machine in the midst of the mess, which the very act of street theatre interrupts, and invokes further imaginations within the spectrum of performance and possibly beyond.

Affect in this sense as Ruddic (2010) argues through her analysis to the Deleuzian account on Spinoza, is an active process of becoming rather than being “a social act, a co-production...producing a common notion” (2010, p.30). The commonness and cooperation involved in the processes are intrinsic to the body; our very corporal existence is what keeps us in connection with sensible ways of knowing and experiencing. So we can think of this relation that gets created between performer and audiences, which can be traced within the sensible shared experience, as an affective sort of relation.

By inviting the performing body into this Spinozian analysis, we can think of how the performer “pay particular attention to getting to know each emotion as far as possible clearly and distinctly, so that the mind may thus be determined from the emotion to think those things that it clearly and distinctly perceives” (Ruddic, 2010, p.31). In a material sense, we can think of the happening on stage as an act of signifying clear signals that the audience receive, accepts or not. A process of becoming that rests on coding and decoding mutually. Rather, an active participation on and off the stage, which captures the audience together with the performers in this imaginary dimension. However, as the process is pretty much reciprocal it is subject to distortion. In this coming section, I elaborate further on the affective relations and distortions on and off the stage.

Through Chapter three; *Street theater from the Inside out: a spatial reading of performance and rehearsal spaces*, I have attempted to draw on different performance spaces to articulate a certain distinction in relation to space, time and the complexity of the location of the marginalized. However, among the spaces within which I have performed with Outa Hamra was a street children shelter. Street children are one of these social groups that lump within the category of the marginalized. Children living on the street - living an alternative life to 'normative' socially structured children life, are leading a social life resting on subsistence. Jakob, one of the clowns of Outa Hamra described their situation once as 'stateless persons', who mostly have no identification papers and are leading a sort of life, which is beyond state regulatory institutions, in terms of schools and family structures sort to speak. Walking through any given street in Cairo, and let's take downtown Cairo for the sake of association to where Outa Hamra finds a space within its scattered open cafes to meet, we often run into a child asking for money to buy something to eat or selling tissues for that sake. Outa Hamra like any Cairean dweller or someone sitting in these downtown cafes often deals with street children, but they also meet with them within a different realm away from the street- in street children shelters.

Such shelters, similar to orphanages they gather the children within a facility that can be privately owned and supervised by social workers, as our given example below. These facilities provide children with shelter, get them enrolled within schooling systems and other forms of socialization. The reason I recall here this particular site is due to the significant affective relations that emerged within this particular setting. This ethnographic sketch illustrates the complexity of affect as a non abstract concept, rather a sensual experience which is subject to getting ruptured blockage.

This line of empathy that links the performers and the audience allows for interaction and communication. Hence, the significance of each performance space also influences the subjectivity of the audience and poses particular challenges as much as possibilities to create an affect. More precisely, how certain connections and flows are subject to breach given saturated power relations, which subjectifies the sociality of such spaces to an extent that possibly hinder clowns squeezing in to invoke laughter.

The shelter home is located in the 6th of October, which is one of the new districts of Cairo. Despite the fact that this new district has become a rather inhabited district, the shelter was located on the extreme ends of the district in a deserted space with nothing surrounding it but distant high roads. The moment we arrived the children rushed to salute and explore who their visitors are and what they came to offer. However, the children welcoming spoke of something very peculiar that resonates with the setting of their home. The isolation and deserted space they were located within reflected a certain level of isolation. The children started holding my hands, and not letting go, almost as if thirsty for affection coming out of limited communication with people outside of their gates. This image in juxtaposition to the children selling tissues on the street invoked a certain dichotomy of two lives that street children are subject to on the street or within the gates of the shelter.

The first thing that occurred to me is the possibility of the children escaping this place. Yet, children cannot run out of this place because there is basically nowhere to run to. Upon our arrival there was a child standing by the door in the middle of nowhere, which appeared after to be grounded by standing outside. Within such a secluded setting we set our paravan and the show began. The children, like the case with other shows within gates were seated around the staging area in their playground waiting for the show to begin. However, what was peculiar about this setting was the silence which only magnified the echo of our own noise. The children were merely communicating or expressing. Their reactions towards the performance were mostly blank. Such a blank reaction evoked a breach to the interaction of the performance. A clown performance is in itself full of possibilities. It recycles its own mistakes to an aggregate of potentialities of more spontaneous interaction. There is no script; it is a sequence of sketches that leaves open a vent for the audience to interact. Nonetheless, this very inability to express and interact defeats the clown's ability to invoke the happiness they ultimately aim to bring. This leaves us to question how institutional power and surveillance that govern this space render a challenge to clowning. How such power gets infused and internalized to disciplines the bodies of these children and restrains their capacity to interact and express.

Being unable to invoke the happiness clowns attempt to bring, when we finished the show we decided that there is something more than the show that needs to linger with the children. Within any given performance site, children genuinely ask for a gift, for particularly a

red nose. The red nose, which is the representation of the imaginary subjects leading the imaginary life they lived within for a moment. The clowns always reply “our show is our gif to you”. However, in this particular setting, we decided to distribute red noses to all the children. We decided to leave them with a small symbol to this imaginary world. How influential this small gesture was? And what sorts of invocation it might bring? Were questions with no speculative answer, and sure didn’t heal the inability of colors to explode and taint the silence of grey. Diana, one of the clowns performing in this show said that she was really happy we distributed the red noses. She went inside the rooms where the kids live and everything was grey; the blankets, the walls and the beds. She pictured at night how everything is dark and grey and the red nose will be the only thing illuminating their little grey cells.

To get a smile to a child’s face, to invite the child to the imaginary world of the clown is what a clown aims for. However, this act is not a construct that gets displayed through a screen it’s a live happening through the frontier of the stage, which involves a giving and taking. When rendering at a point of giving there is a certain distortion to what is happening. The process of sending and receiving gets distorted through this rupture, which does not allow for affective relations to grow and the sensible experience of the performance to circle a new dimension of imagination.

However, the performer can also induce such a rupture. Such a rupture can be thought of vis a vis the performing body as a site of awareness and discipline, which digs through its own feelings and emotions and sort clean channels for their articulation. However, there is something at stake within such channels of articulation related to what is genuine and affective and what is not. The performer inability to genuinely articulate is rather subjective, but at the end of the day renders to the audience ability to connect and for this line of empathy to find its reciprocal formation.

Do the poor and the marginal need ‘Enlightenment’?

Going back to the targeting of marginalized audience, which I have previously problematized in chapter three, I would like to further complicate what sort of politics are involved in such a choice. As I discussed through chapter three around the imagined locations of the marginalized, which is in itself an enabling frontier to the troupes, I further draw on what makes this targeting of the marginal a space for possibilities and subversion.

To think of the act of street theatre by Outa Hamra and Khayal Shaaby as enlightening we say too much, and if we leave it at the point of entertainment we don't say much. Enlightenment, vis a vis Kant, is a linear process of maturity, which entails freedom to be thrown from above through the minds that already attained it (Kant, 1973). This leaves us to think of freedom - public freedom of expression that is a popular demand as a mere demand for maturity. The reason I actually call upon the notion of maturity and freedom into the conversation is for the sake of problematizing the enlightening - mind opening notion that theatre to the marginalized carries.

Theatre is an art that entails an elitist discourse. It carries a cultural value and represents it to an audience. Street theatre and its affiliation to marginality, poverty and informality can be read as if stipulating the narrative of the ignorant poor and marginal categories that we come to enlighten. Such categories are necessarily in Kantian terminology immature and therefore need creative and easy ways to deal with. This narrative necessarily feeds into the production of an excess, and deems putting street theatre as a tool suitable to deal with this excess. However, as I mentioned, Outa Hamra and Khayal Shaaby are no agents of enlightenment. Their purpose and philosophy to target the marginalized in fact acts in opposition to the narrative of freedom through maturity, which is the narrative that much of the contemporary developmental discourse remains to inform. In fact, both troupes targeting and situating their frontier amongst the marginalized allows for uncertain possibilities, given the openness and ambiguity that the very category of the marginalized represents. Being poor or marginalized – being an excess per say engenders repressive dimensions of power that stipulates such categorical production. However, as Saad argues “the margin may be a space where social-change dynamics are particularly active, and that in some instances we could in fact be looking at a frontier rather than a periphery” (Saad, p. 98, 2012). This allows us a different dimension to the implications of targeting the marginalized and invoking laughter and happiness. Performing to the marginalized is a chance for Outa Hamra and Khayal Shaaby to subvert the repressive dimensions of power that situate the marginalized as an excess of the social, rather enabling a space, a chance within the social as a frontier where uncertainty evokes possibilities.

I would like to stop for a moment and look more closely at laughter and happiness in relation to subversion. What is it about the revolution of color and clowning that makes us think

of a particular rupture? What laughter and happiness are to subversion? Through chapter four, I discuss the concealment and anti didactic narratives that both troupes follow through their representation. This is vivid in the genres they chose to channel their art. The efficacy of their performances, nevertheless, is subject to aesthetic critiques as much as it is subject to critique in the political representation it upholds. Meaning that, the relationship between the political and the performance renders subject to its affect, which involves the relation established with the audience and the conditions of representation (Wickstorm, 2012). Therefore, we can still argue that theatrical representation to a particular target audience does not escape marginalization. Rather, it twists the spatial and temporal arrangements within a given everyday moment, with all its politically packed designations of marginality, and provokes imagination through the parallel imaginary world it draws.

The revolution of color and the clowns provoke laughter and happiness, which seem to pose a particular threat. The space of the marginalized being presumably public as in the street, or gated as in the juvenile institution, is a space packed with surveillance and infused with a power policing even laughter. However, when speaking of even laughter, we are speaking of an act that allows an escape to a parallel world, a world in the words of Papadopoulos et Al “defies seriousness, disperses fear, liberates the word and the body and reveals a truth escaping the injustices of the present” (Papadopoulos, 2008, p.xx).

In Chapter two *What street art is to labor*, I draw on the relationship of the troupes to capital. Both troupes are entangled within a network of relations that situate them as actors within developmental projects, which aim to educate and inform and discipline marginalized bodies. In this statement I am referring to a lump of practices through which the cultural capital of both troupes gets invested in achieving particular criteria that different projects aim to achieve. However, it is within the how of these practices they reiterate a certain rupture to their very investment. Through the practices of what they do lays a particular subversion to the systems that encapsulates their cultural capital within the discourse of maturity towards freedom.

In Chapter three I draw on a particular project that Outa Hamra participated in with Save the Children. In this project Outa Hamra trained youth in a juvenile institution using drama and theatre tools to train youth on ‘life skills’, ‘planning skills’ and ‘mind opening skills’. The language in itself implies a necessity to save and capture the marginalized youth from their

lifelessness. Through the period of training members of the troupe maintained a direct relationship with their trainees and they repeatedly uttered the awareness of the youth with the systems of oppression they dealt and are dealing with. Given this awareness they youth already have, they worked together towards producing a theatre performance, which was displayed in the closing ceremony of the project. Through this process Outa Hamra ultimately aimed to put the youth awareness of own systems of oppression, and their own imaginations of emancipation into play. The play that demonstrated the systems of oppression including the very project that brought Outa Hamra in the situation of their trainers. By return evoked a subversive moment through speaking the language of their own oppressor to articulate their own agency.

Conclusion

Through my role in both troupes I came to the stage to get the audience to laugh. Despite the fact that the construction of this getting people to laugh takes a whole level of self training and consciousness, it also has a lot to do with the audience. Bearing in mind that we will target a particular audience – the marginalized audience, I found in this laughter something more complex than its object. As Jakob simply puts it "Clowning in public spaces can change societies. If you give people a chance, they will be happy." (Lindfors quoted in El Shimi, 2014, February 7). However, I argue further that by squeezing the performance within the everyday of the people something changes. Happiness, as Agamben (1996) argues, is always at stake to all human species – to life itself. A happiness that interrupts the everyday and brings forth a chance of change, happiness that is a threat, a potential threat to the habitual. It is a threat, a subversion that is not separate from life itself.

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