How to Write Religious Ritual into Theatre. Gérard Genette's *Palimpsests* Applied in Plautus' *Rudens* and Simone Weil's *Venise Sauvée*

Cómo relatar el ritual religioso en el teatro. El *Palimpsestos* de Gérard Genette aplicado en el *Rudens* de Plauto y en la *Venise Sauvée* de Simone Weil

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Abstract

In theatre, actors often perform religious rituals on stage. In this article, we argue that in some cases, like in Plautus and Simone Weil, religious rituals are not just imitated but the specific performative structure of the ritual enhances the affective charge of the theatre play. To illustrate this technique we apply Gérard Genette's theory of hypertextuality to develop a new concept of hyper-performativity. Consequently, we analyze Plautus' *Rudens* and Simone Weil's *Venise sauvée* to portray their hyper-performative techniques, in antiquity as well as in late modernity, how to write religious rituals into theatre.

Resumen

En el teatro, los actores a menudo realizan rituales religiosos en el escenario. En este estudio defendemos que en algunos casos, como en Plauto y en Simone Weil, los rituales religiosos no son sólo imitados, sino que la estructura performativa específica del ritual realza la carga afectiva de la obra teatral. Para ilustrar esta técnica, aplicamos la teoría de la hipertextualidad de Gérard Genette en el desarrollo de un nuevo concepto de hiper-performatividad. Por consiguiente, analizamos el *Rudens* de Plauto y la *Venise sauvée* de Simone Weil con el fin de mostrar sus técnicas hiper-performativas para escribir rituales religiosos en el teatro, tanto en la Antigüedad como en la Modernidad tardía.

1. Introduction

Coming from different disciplines, classical philology and philosophy of religion, we share a focus on theatre plays that feature significant affinities to religious rituals. It is essential for our research to specify this relationship between the performances and latently inscribed religious rituals as accurately as possible, without alienating the particular properties of either theatre or religious rituals. Thus, in this paper we aim to address ritually inflected meaning in the theatrical work, e.g. by means of irritation, reversal, transformation, and deception as well as transposition and recomposition. As an instrument to describe the rituals' inscription onto the stage, we apply Gérard Genette's concept of hypertextuality. Based on Genette and exemplified by the manifold performative structures found in our case studies we introduce the concept of "hyper-performativity". In the first part, we discuss the theoretical foundations of hyper-performativity and illustrate how Genette's literary instrument can be translated into the performative framework of theatre. In the second part, we apply the concept to our case studies, investigating and describing how Plautus as well as Simone Weil write religious rituals onto their stages, both in Ancient Rome and 20th cent. Paris.

2. The Architecture of Hyper-Performativity

To become sensitive to the aesthetic sophistication of writing religious rituals onto the stage we have to highlight a genealogy of performative structures. To provide a beneficial framework that delineates the architecture of multiple levels and modes of mimetic practices and techniques such as transposing, transforming, reversing, and recomposing, we refer to Gérard Genette's discussion of *palimpsests*.[1] Here, hypertextuality consists of transformation and imitation, i.e. of shifting style, moods and material into a new context.[2] Following Genette, hypertextuality implies that the succeeding text cannot exist without its predecessor. As a unique feature among all the other forms of intertextuality, hypertextuality constitutes a strong genealogical dependency. By applying and "translating" Genette's intertextual theory into the context of performances, we argue that one can access the original, hidden hypo-performances of the religious model scheme via the visible hyper-performances, i.e. the performative structures of the play, as they become "fractally" present on stage by an affective charge directed towards the audience. Yet, this affectivity can be marked and described by deconstructing and reimagining the play's performative structures. The application of Genette's concept allows us to trace underlying model schemata of the latent religious rituals in question, which had been transposed or even "broken up" into ritual fractals and altered in manifold ways.

Here, the expression "model schemata" serves as reference point and indicates that in the specific theatrical contexts of our case studies the embedded religious rituals reappear on several different levels and modes of mimesis. To define these model schemata of religious rituals we apply three criteria: Firstly, it is important to highlight that we define religious rituals as culturally constructed structures that function on the basis of symbolic communication. Secondly, rituals are sequenced and ordered gestures, acts, and words performed at particular times in particular places by particular people with their bodies, which make the rituals contextually dependable and definable. Thirdly, religious rituals are affectively highly charged and have definable as well as expected effects on participants and spectators, in so far as they refer to shared cultural codes by performers and audience. In perspective of these criteria, we have labelled this threefold substance of religious rituals as model schemata that are mimetically reapplied on stage. Here, we argue that because of its threefold (symbolic, structured, affective) substance the religious rituals written into theatre sustain at least a necessary minimum of affective recognition of the original

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1. Genette, 1992, pp. 1-8.
2. Schmitz, 2008, pp. 80-83.

context, even if only fractally present on stage. For this concept of model schemata, we prefer the mathematical metaphor of a "fractal" to the literary term of a "fragment" because a fractal is a self-similar subset that exhibits recognizable patterns at different levels whereas a fragment is a part broken off that does not necessarily maintain recognition and thus loses its performative effectivity of the original setting. While fragments have a shard-like quality and need abstract, cognitive reconstruction due to often randomly scattering, fractals cultivate the affective and aesthetic charge of the model schemata and invoke the audience with an original religious orientation. With such properties model schemata are sizable, reproducible and recombinable as fractals and can be submitted to keen recontextualizations on stage. By inscribing model schemata of religious rituals into theatre, dramaturgs like Plautus and Simone Weil, in antiquity as well as in late modernity, aim to produce an affective plurality of alienation, even outside of its original context, deviating in manifold ways, opening up new affective and aesthetic spaces.

We argue that Plautus and Simone Weil draw on practices and techniques similar to Burkhard Gladigow's concept of ritual sequencing; however, we do not conceive theatre as another religious ritual with rearranged ritual sequences. We define religious rituals and theatre as two distinct forms of cultural performances. Here, theatre only shares common model schemata with religious rituals. For us, it is important that Gladigow attributes to rituals the possibility of splitting up existing model schemata by the method of ritual sequencing.[3] Within a model schema of the original ritual, sequences are arranged as assemblages of meaningful acts that, as Gladigow puts it, can be individually subjected to practices and techniques of rearrangement, fragmentation, composition, disposition, and transposition. He defines the smallest definable and delimitable set as ritual element that can be rearranged within ritual sequences that furthermore emerge in complex rituals. Therefore, theater is not another complex ritual but a different form of cultural performance that makes use of the recognizable patterns at different levels, especially if only fractally present on stage as hyper-performance. Here, Gladigow's research comes in handy to describe hyper-performance as cultural technique of translating elementary performative structures from the realm of religious rituals to the realm of theatre without mixing both distinct forms of cultural performances.

When successful, the transposed rituals or ritual fractals reassume their model schemata and allow subtle affective echoes of the model's original effects within the new framework of theatre. It is crucial to consider that performers and audience are

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3. Gladigow, 2004, pp. 59-63.

permanently co-constructing this multi-level architecture of hyper-performativity together.[4] As Wolfgang Iser has outlined in his interactivist reader-response theory on a textual level,[5] also recontextualized performative fractals necessarily produce non-logocentric, superficially invisible but somehow sensible implications or gaps. After all, apart from the reapplication of the emerged model schemata the original religious ritual itself remains absent. These gaps are filled only by the continuous negotiation of the shared agencies of the performance, the recipient's cultural reference system and the cultural substance or repertoire of the play.[6] Because of this precarious interdependency, especially on the affective level, hyper-performances can never be completely engineerable. Thus, the performative structures may vary from each performance to the next. However, via certain textual and performative steering mechanisms the playwright can nonetheless influence or even dominate this precarious interdependency between performers and audience, channeling the affective process of recontextualization and performative sequencing of the model schemata by the audience, for example via irritation and delusion. However, the risk of constant failure or provoking an unforeseen unwanted effect remains.

As a next step, we will apply the concept of hyper-performativity to analyze the transposition and transformation of model schemata in Plautus' *Rudens* and Simone Weil's *Venise sauvée*.

3. Plautus

Plautus' comedies portray highly stereotyped urban family life, turning the traditional Roman values upside down, as Erich Segal has demonstrated.[7] The theatrical entanglements always resolve in a happy ending, while the prologue often predicts the struggles, conflicts and threats of the stock-type protagonists. With such playfulness, the characteristic saturnalian order that predominates in Plautus' plays achieves its objective. It is noteworthy that even though Plautus based his dramatic productions on models of the Greek New Comedy and his plays remain Greek in their setting, their entanglement with distinctive Roman features appealed to the tastes of the Roman audience. The model schemata of religious rituals that we find written onto the Plautine stage were a constitutive part of daily life and consti-

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4. Slater, 2000, pp. 2-3.
5. Iser, 1994, pp. 301-314.
6. Dablé, 2014, pp. 31-60.
7. Segal, 1987, pp. 1-14.

tuted an important field of reference for the audience in Rome. Comedies were performed at religious festivals honoring gods (*ludi*), which were organized by public officials and provided a specific festive setting for the stage plays. Consequently, a particular religious as well as political dimension was certainly discernible to the audience during the performances, alongside the entertainment dimension. Existing cultural contacts in the Mediterranean, especially Greek and Roman, are evident in the cultural production of the period. The interdependencies of the expanding Roman society, the intertwining of literary and theatrical traditions as well as the current political and religious discourses are also reflected in religious rituals, which Plautus creatively transposed into his comedies.[8]

The first case study shows, how hyper-performances pertinent to hypo-performances of religious rituals basically originating from different cultural contexts blend into a comically effective performative structure, playing with stereotypical comical attributions to the Greek and Roman sphere, which Plautus uses frequently throughout his plays.[9] The scene in focus from his play *Rudens* (Plaut., *Rud.* 253b-891) displays an extraordinary density of hyper-performances which can be traced back to the Greek version of the ritual of supplication, *hikesia* (as performed in this play, the ritual was not familiar to the Romans from their daily life, but known to them probably mostly from the Greek theatrical and epic literary productions), and to the Roman sacrifice to Vulcan. In the following passages, we examine both model schemata in the light of hyper-performativity.

The plot of Plautus' comedy *Rudens* takes place on a beach somewhere near the ancient city of Cyrene. A temple dedicated to Venus and an altar in front of it as part of the scenery provide a religious horizon of meaning during the play. As the play's prologue tells, the audience is going to watch a typical love story between the young sex slave Palaestra and the adolescent Plesidippus. The latter purchases Palaestra the day before, but her procurer Labrax takes the money and his sex slaves and runs off. However, their ship is wrecked and the slaves manage to escape. When the second slave Ampelisca notices that the procurer survives, the two women both seek asylum in the temple of the goddess Venus. As the procurer enters the temple and violates it, the two women flee out of the temple in desperation and seek refuge at the stage altar. As their prosecutor follows them out of the temple and reaches the altar, he threatens to burn them. Here, he personifies the imagined fire he is about to get to execute his threats as the god of destructive fire Vulcan. This allows the audience to associate

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8. Jeppesen, 2015 and 2020.
9. Segal, 1987, pp. 34-38.

the threat of burning the women with the sacrifice to Vulcan, transforming the two
supplicants to Venus into sacrificial animals for Vulcan. Daemones, an old man living
next door, intervenes, and orders his slave to beat up Labrax with clubs, saving the
women. Plesidippus then drags the procurer to court. Finally, a recognition scene re-
veals Palaestra to be Daemones' daughter and an Athenian citizen. Palaestra marries
Plesidippus and the play culminates in a celebration.

The dramatic rules pertinent to the generic structure of *Rudens* allow us to char-
acterize the passage in question as a scene involving a crucial turning point in the
dramaturgy of the play. Synthesizing the findings of Hanson and Segal,[10] we claim
that the play is premised on multiple antitheses of personal dispositions and values
which lay the fundamentals for the basic themes of the play and influence the devel-
opment of the plot decisively. These antitheses are evident already in the exposition
of the prologue and manifested in the characterization of the main figures. Arctu-
rus, the divine speaker of the prologue, who dictates the moral substructure of the
play, explicates in epigrammatic manner the model assessment of deeds of men. This
amounts to a fundamental opposition of *fraus*, *scelus*, *parricidium* and *periurium* in
order to achieve *lucrum* on the one hand and *pietas* and *fides* that guarantee a conclu-
sive *amor* on the other hand. Palaestra (and her relationship with Plesidippus) stands
for the latter while Labrax incorporates the former. The basic opposition of *amor* and
lucrum is solved according to Hanson's concept of "deservingness".[11] In the moralistic
Rudens, gods reward virtuous behavior: *pietas* as moral conduct towards parents and
gods and *fides* in the sense of paying vows and keeping oaths.[12] Labrax, a typical pro-
curer, who embodies the exaggerated mercantilist aspect of the *mores maiorum* as he
clings to ruthlessly pursuing business, represents a "blocking character" to the festive
atmosphere and must therefore be removed from stage,[13] while the wellbeing of the
pious courtesan Palaestra has to be secured by all means, as she will be (re-)united with
her lover (as well as her parents) at the end of the play, laying ground for the expected
happy ending.

The hyper-performance of the *hikesia* with regard to seeking refuge with Venus
constitutes the frame of the scene in question (Plaut., *Rud.* 253b-891). The action on
stage is evolving around the central question whether the fugitives are going to get

10. Hanson, 1959, pp. 85-97; Segal, 1987, pp. 79-98.
11. Hanson, 1959, pp. 85-88; Segal, 1987, pp. 95-96.
12. Hanson, 1959, pp. 89-97.
13. Segal, 1987, p. 74.

hurt or spared, whether love or lucre is going to prevail, and whether the expected festive ending of the play will be obstructed by intrusion of disturbing elements.

In the source material, the ritual of *hikesia* is performed either towards another person or towards a deity to prevent harm. The aim is the establishment of a special relationship between the suppliant and the expected protector. When possible, this relationship is enacted by physical contact and is often accompanied by a plea or a prayer. If the protector is a person, the suppliant touches or embraces chin, arms, knees, feet or hands of the person. Kissing the hand occurs as well. The same goes for a statue of a deity. Other gestures are bowing low, extending hands, displaying branches, often entwined with wool, wearing mourning or shabby clothes and sometimes rending them. To perform the ritual in a temple, the suppliant touches either the central object or the most external point of the building. The fleeing to altars is also well documented.[14]

In the enactment of the supplication ritual, there are considerable differences between Greece and Rome. Seeking refuge in Roman shrines is so rarely reported that it is considered insignificant by researchers. Rather, it was common practice in Rome to approach a magistrate. The legendary *asylum* of Romulus, which was part of the Roman foundation narrative (cf. Liv., I 8, 5), had no religious character and should hence be regarded as a Hellenizing element.[15]

The supplication ritual represents a topos deeply rooted in the Greek theatre and literary tradition. In this way, the nuances were certainly known to the Romans (at least to the more sophisticated among them). It is also noteworthy that in the time of Plautus the first Roman decrees of *asylum* were issued for Greek cities and sanctuaries in Asia and Achaia.[16] The hyper-performances in the play *Rudens* might as well reflect this political state of affairs.

Consequently, for the Roman audience, the unusual image of slaves, at any rate with little prospect of actually receiving protection, who were seeking refuge in a temple and an altar in order to escape from their master, must have been something typically Greek.[17] Therefore, in the context of comedy it was perhaps simply considered as funny (cf. Plaut., *Most*. 1094-1143).

In the *Rudens*, Plautus doubles the original ritual he had found in the Greek source material by making the women seek refuge twice, inside and outside the

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14. Derlien, 2003, pp. 46-47; Naiden, 2006, pp. 43-62.
15. Naiden, 2006, pp. 250-256.
16. Derlien, 2003, p. 127.
17. Naiden, 2006, pp. 375-377.

temple.[18] By doubling the ritual, he aims at a multiplication of its comic potential, causing ridiculous confusion even within the plot amongst his stage characters. With this, Plautus achieves a threefold objective. Firstly, he doubles the dramaturgical possibilities to play with the performative frame of the *hikesia*. Secondly, he allows Labrax to live up to his reputation as lawbreaker and spoilsport twice.[19] Thirdly, he doubles the dramatic suspense of the scene, making the audience shiver twice while fearing the abrupt collapse of the comedy.

In this context of a doubled refuge seeking by the two women, we find two hyper-performative structures inserted which stage Plesidippus' slave Trachalio as parodying the supplication motif. After Trachalio exits the temple seeking help, he himself becomes a supplicant addressing Daemones to protect the women in the temple. Here, Trachalio's exaggerated gestures and inflated words proposed the audience to think in terms of tragedy. Daemones, sensing the irritating shift of the generic framework from comedy to tragedy, interprets Trachalio's supplication as unwanted disturbance (Plaut., *Rud.* 629) and turns the formalized structure of supplication into a threat against the supplicant as such a threat is more suitable for comedy (634-637). When Trachalio is surprised that his supplication did not work, even though he performed it correctly (639), Daemones alludes to the common perception that comedy demands a threat to punish the slave (640). Nevertheless, Trachalio reveals to Daemones what has happened in the temple and persuades the old man to aid the persecuted women. This is the second time the audience hears the report of the events in the temple, adding the cruelties of Labrax. This furious description of Labrax's character has become one of the most prominent charac-terizations of this stock type (649-653). Here, we encounter a paradox of suspense manifested in the ambiguity between the expected outcome of the comedy and the malice of Labrax. The asylum should guarantee safety for the fugitives, however as the audience learns from the reports from inside the temple that the procurer is not hesitant to commit sacrilege. The spectators witness how a haven of safety is being violated, albeit belonging to the realm of a goddess. Besides that, Trachalio's explication of Labrax's attack against the priestess in the sacred framework of the shrine of Venus reinforces the negative image of Labrax.

Similarly, Trachalio refers to the generic conventions in the next scene, after the two fugitives escape from the temple to the altar and speak in exaggerated tragic style. Trachalio wonders what this kind of language is about and encourages the persecuted

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18. Lefèvre, 2006, pp. 39-41.
19. Lefèvre, 2006, p. 51.

women to be "in good spirits" (679) as it is proper for comedy. As they persist in desolation, he simply directs them to the stage altar and when Palaestra does not see how their new refuge could be safer than the old one inside the sanctuary, he boldly orders them to just sit down on the altar and promises to protect them with Venus' assistance, relying on the conventionality of the hyper-performance of supplication (687-693). After that, Palaestra speaks a prayer as suppliant to Venus again not withholding from the tragic tone alien to comedy, whereupon Trachalio asks the goddess for forgiveness for them questioning her capacity to protect them. He concludes with a vulgar pun (playing with the double meaning of *concha* which stands for clam as well as figuratively for female genitalia) referring to the birth of Venus from a seashell and reducing the two suppliant women to the female genital organ (704-705) as if he did not want the audience to forget that they are witnessing a comic play. In the same manner, Daemones' order to flee to the altar, not seeing that the women are already there, ridicules the old man's inability to follow the quick rhythm of the ambiguous scene (706-707).

While the *hikesia* is doubled in its complete model scheme, Plautus breaks the sacrifice to Vulcan in several ritual fractals and conceals them within new performative structures. In order to apprehend those opaque ritual fractals written into theatre we have to consider the spectator's horizon of expectation. In the historical context of Plautus, the *Vulcanalia* were celebrated on August, 23rd at the Forum in Rome.[20] According to Varro (Varro, *Ling.* VI 20), on this day people would throw animals into the fire to satisfy the deity, so that they themselves would not fall victim to the destructive power of fire. Sextus Pompeius Festus (cf. Lindsay 1913: 274-276) mentions that live fish, caught by the fishermen of the river Tiber, were sacrificed to Vulcan for the lives of men in a holocaustic rite on the holiday of *ludi piscatorii* or the fishermen's games, celebrated annually in June.[21] Moreover, a poem from late antiquity attributed to Paulinus of Nola reports that on the day of the *Vulcanalia* garments were hung outdoors and exposed to the sun.[22] At the altar, Labrax makes his threat explicit when he threatens to fetch Vulcan, whom he praises as Venus' enemy (Plaut., *Rud.* 761). Thereby he parallels a familiar mythological story to the plot of the play. He is alluding to the infidelity of Venus, who betrayed Vulcan, her husband, with Mars. This happens as soon as Labrax realizes that his attempts to violate the protection of Venus are not effective and says that he will fetch her jealous husband to

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20. Dumezil, 1996, pp. 321.
21. Rose, 1933, p. 58.
22. Boin, 2013, p. 212.

assist him. Thus, the audience could witness symbolically on stage the mythological matrimonial dispute regarding the fugitives simultaneously. During Plautus' lifetime, Venus was already venerated not only as the goddess of love but also as the mother of Aeneas, the mythological ancestor of the Romans. The popularity of the legend in Plautus' era is attested e.g. in the *Miles gloriosus* (1265; 1413; 1421), where the Roman divine ancestral heritage is being parodied.[23] Besides, fish were the animals of Venus, because they saved her and Cupid during the war with the Titans, thus earning their place in the sky (cf. Ov., *Fast*. II 448-472). The Roman audience hereby finds itself involved in a conflict on a mythological level, which also addresses its historical conceptions and with them the question of its identity.

After Labrax has invoked Vulcan, he also makes an actual physical threat: he is about to light a big fire (Plaut., *Rud*. 767) and he declares that he intends to burn the women alive (768). His threat to the suppliants and the threat to Venus, who watches over the plot of the play, with destructive fire of Vulcan is implicitly also directed against the spectators, since plays at the time of Plautus were performed in temporary wooden constructions,[24] where the audience could also fall victim to the fire. The realism of the scene increases the suspense and transgresses the generic limits of comedy. Apart from the fire which the audience plausibly assumes to be brought to the stage, further ritual fractals were subtly written into the performative sequence, allowing the audience to co-construct the allusive framework of the sacrifice to Vulcan as part of the play. In this context, it is reasonable to assume that hung vestments were part of the stage set. At the end of the second act, Daemones' house slave Sceparnio offers Labrax's accomplice Charmides to dry his wet clothes and to lend him a coat. Although Charmides refuses because he fears that Sceparnio only wants to steal his robe, a piece of clothing must have been on stage (573-583). Whether fish were sacrificed to the god of fire during Plautus' time is not explicitly documented. However, the fact that the fugitive women who were to be thrown into fire wore completely wet clothes as they came out of the sea seems to fit well into this context. The fishermen's choir performing in the second act may also add to the confirmation of such allusions. Furthermore, after Palaestra has spoken her last prayer to Venus (694-701) the women fall silent and remain mute until the end of the third act (891), when they are finally brought from the altar into Daemones' house. This may be seen as an element of depersonification and victimization of the suppliants, allusively turning them into sacrificial animals. The motif of people appearing to have become animals

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23. Hanson, 1959, pp. 51-52.
24. Marshall, 2006, pp. 31-48.

is frequent in this scene. At the beginning of the third act, Daemones is meditating on a dream with animals that he cannot understand or interpret: A monkey wants to kidnap two swallows from their nest and cannot reach them. It asks Daemones for a ladder, which he refuses to give, because he doesn't want the swallows to get harmed. Thereupon the monkey becomes angry and aggressive and now threatens him with violence, too. But he can handle it and put it in chains. Through his narrative he opens up the deictic space of dreams, in which a new metaphorical scene takes place. In this regard, we can read the dream as a projection of the stage events, which will soon unfold on stage. Later, Daemones deciphers the metaphors and identifies the uncivilized Labrax with the monkey and the swallows with the women on the altar, whereby it cannot go unnoticed that the word standing for swallow (*hirundo*), also meant flying fish. In addition, the asylum scene ends with Charmides' remark about people turning into animals and another comparison of Labrax with a pigeon captured (598-610; 771-773; 886-889).

We may conclude that in *Rudens* the *hikesia* and the *asylia* resulting from it is through allusions and threats from Labrax in danger of being turned into its direct opposite: a human sacrifice (which the Romans claimed to reject in their ritual practice,[25] with few exceptions under extreme circumstances reported in Liv., XXII 55-57). This threat of human sacrifice can be read as a sudden intrusion of unfestive barbarity, as Segal puts it,[26] which has to be prevented by all means. The Roman way of dealing with slaves, which was more dehumanizing than in Greece,[27] lends even more potential to these events on stage, confronting the audience with a Roman-characterized realism. Labrax's instrumental relationship to his sex slaves is common practice, but in the specific context of Plautus' theatre it can be seen as an outrageous violation of the festive spirit of the play. Even though the audience already knows from the prologue that Palaestra is not a slave at all, but an Athenian citizen who was abducted as a child, and the generic conventions promise a happy outcome, the suspense climaxes in the unexpected transformation, which is part of the hyper-performative sequence.

Approaching ritual written into theatre by Plautus with hyper-performativity inspired by Genette highlights the playfulness of the Roman author while dealing with performative structures derived from hypo-performances of religious model schemata. By creatively including these hyper-performances, Plautus in his play *Rudens* multiplies the levels of the plot, expanding the relevance of stage events from the

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25. Schultz, 2010.
26. Segal, 1987, p. 36.
27. Segal, 1987, pp. 102-103.

human sphere to the divine sphere. Additionally, he refers to concepts of history
and concerns of collective identity. By doing so, he does not only use the rituals
performed on stage "as a kind of catalyst for stage action, without necessitating
any physical intervention of the deities on stage", as Boris Dunsch has noted.[28] He
also increases and multiplies the comical potential of the scene by directly address-
ing the audience's religious, cultural, intellectual, historical, affective, and identical
sensitivity. In his article about the practices of adaptation with regard to Roman
comedy, Mario Telò remarks, that "When a play announces itself a deliberate re-
make of a prior work, the process of cultural adaptation is programmatically dis-
closed and converted into a subject of theatrical discourse. This is especially true in
the case of the *comoediae palliatae* ("comedies in Greek dress") of the archaic Roman
dramatists, which present themselves as revisitations of works originally conceived in
and for a different cultural context".[29] In Plautus' theatre, the (re-)negotiation of hy-
per-performances of religious rituals on stage not only offers effective outbursts of
comic action, but also gives us an insight into the mechanisms behind the creative
clash of different social, cultural and historical circumstances that shape Plautus'
vibrant religious and ritual discourse.

At this point, we are making a temporal shift, passing on from the stages of
republican Rome and turning towards our second case study during World War 2:
Simone Weil's *Venise sauvée*. Although Plautus was an important source for Weil's
socio-political philosophy and Weil even mentions Plautus in *Venise sauvée* regard-
ing the conditions of slavery in antiquity,[30] all attempts to trace a possible influence of
Plautus on Simone Weil leave us with vague speculations. Nonetheless, Plautus' and
Weil's performances share the application of hyper-performative practices of ritually
inflected meaning in their theatrical work.

4. Simone Weil

Venise sauvée [Venice Saved] is an unfinished tragedy fragment by the Jewish philo-
sopher Simone Weil (1909-1943), written between 1940 and 1943. Throughout the
play, we can trace a melange of hyper-performative structures and gestures that, on
the one hand, have all the hallmarks of ancient Greek tragedy,[31] and, on the other

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28. Dunsch, 2014, p. 647.
29. Telò, 2019, p. 47.
30. Panizza and Wilson, 2019, p. 93.
31. Brueck, 1995, p. 75.

hand, feature contemporary lived religion, notably from the Roman Catholic liturgy in France and the Black spiritual heritage in New York. Weil's theatre is "a laboratory of life where practicing a work on oneself, in order to understand it [life] in its various levels" takes place.[32] Her approach to theatre differs significantly from that of her time, as the latter rarely evinced "transcendent orientation" whereas Weil establishes a theatrical style that demands religious and particularly liturgical literacy. Her theatre theory was of a distinctive "supernaturalist" and "redemptive nature",[33] reminiscent of Nietzsche's interpretation of the cultic origins of tragedy in antiquity. However, Weil does not simply refer to liturgical elements or imitates them as religiously charged parts of her play. She rather cultivates the affective potential of Christian worship to perform distinct multi-temporal realms simultaneously on stage, however, outside their original religious frames in a world without God. These religiously voided, supernaturalist hyper-performances, albeit rooted in the model schemata of religious hypo-performances, aim at a late modern audience that lost its capability of perceiving that what transcends dimensions of time and space, a strategy Simone Weil shares with her theatrical coeval Antonin Artaud (1896-1948) who fostered a similar metaphysical transformation of culture.[34]

Venise sauvée tells a new version of Abbé Saint-Réal's early modern historical novel *Conjuration des espagnols contre Venise en 1618.* The fictitious plot is about the brutal conquest of Venice by collaborators and the betrayal of the betrayals by their commander, which finally saves the doomed city. The entire play circulates around the question of how to make sense of the double-betrayal, a question on whose answer Simone Weil disagreed with the three existing prequels. Weil was attracted to use this plot to speak to the horrors of the war, the conquest of Paris, and the paradox of necessary violence in order to furnish a lost idea of redemption and hope.

Thus, the composition of the play is closely interwoven with Weil's biographical and historical context. Weil's personal experiences of being a refugee and the trauma of exile wrote themselves into the surviving fragment. Yet, we can witness her writing also oscillating towards as well as away from two prominent dramaturgical constituents: contemporary European theatre of the 1940s and its affinity for ancient Greek tragedy as well as romantic theatre and its bizarre reenactment by Nazi theatre. Weil's tragedy relates to her left-wing contemporaries Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, and to a certain extent to Berthold Brecht, who all three restaged

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32. Campo, 2019, p. 179.
33. Brueck, 1995, pp. 57-58.
34. Rey, 2003, p. 19.

ancient Greek tragedy to symbolically encode their critique of fascism in a time when artistic criticism had become deadly. Disapproving of the existing solutions to the double-betrayal, Weil decided to restage the material again after the English version *Venice Preserv'd* (1682) by Thomas Otway and its German adaption *Das gerettete Venedig* (1904) by Hugo von Hofmannsthal.[35] The two already existing theatrical performances of Saint-Réal's novelistic material offended the French philosopher due to their lack of understanding that the doomed city had not been saved by inner-worldly mechanisms. By imitating her prequels' genre of historical drama Simone Weil broke with contemporary French theatre culture and went head-to-head with the ideological weaponization of historical drama by Goebbel's newly installed and very successful German theatre culture.[36]

For Weil, the affective bodily performance takes priority over intellectual aspects to return to a sense of wonder that she considered necessary for transcendent orientation. For her, as for her coeval Artaud, theatre was the most suitable medium to lend a body to the bodies in need of relationships.[37] Here, Weilian *catharsis* is a way to transform and embody our relationship to the world: "It is [according to Weil] exactly the work of theatre to negate the perspective in time and space, and it is thanks to this peculiar attribute that it is able to make a breach to eternity […] Religion is based on belief, just like theatre, and both use metaphor to actualize this belief, which in both cases has spiritual meaning".[38] Our bodily condition and its potency of speaking in gestures without words are the primary hermeneutic tools that allow us to see the all too familiar from a new angle. It makes us sensitive to the co-creation by performers and audience of one shared empathic body of theatre, sensing the beheld bodies on stage in one's own body as individual spectator. In this way, Weil writes that "the world is a text with several meanings, and we pass from one meaning to another by a process of work. It must be work in which the body constantly bears a part […] the relationship between 'I' and the world […] I am he who sees this cube from a certain point of view, but also he who sees it from a certain other point of view (from which I do not see it). I am he who reads sensations according to one law, and also he who reads them according to some other law".[39]

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35. Otway, 2012.
36. Sojer, 2019, pp. 25-26.
37. Schulze, 2020, p. 11.
38. Campo, 2019, p. 194.
39. Weil, 1956, p. 23.

Unsatisfied with the conventional tools of contemporary theatre, Weil applied Christian liturgies on stage as ritualized and existentially participative *catharsis* of the corporeal relationship between "I" and the world. This epistemic re-entanglement of theatre and religion allows the dramaturge to make audible a "beauty of ritual. The Mass. The Mass is unable to touch the intelligence, for the intelligence doesn't grasp the significance of what is there taking place. It is something of perfect beauty, and of a sensible form of beauty, for rituals and signs are sensible things. It is beautiful after the style of a work of art".[40] Thomas Nevin argues that it is not the case that religion is added to theatre in Weil but her supernaturalist enterprise needs theatre to speak Religion in a non-religious world, as it is "the most public of arts to portray the passage of the Holy Spirit through a single soul and the consequent preservation of a community".[41] In *Venise sauvée*, the theatrical dimension is its supernaturalist dimension and a new way to do a kind of performative philosophy of religion. This feature places Weil's tragedy very close to the tradition of passion plays, although it does not suit the conventional framework of passion plays due to the ambiguous deviations and occasionally obscure contradictions. In *Venise sauvée*, the role of the victim-protagonist, first, the doomed city, switches with the offender while the former victim, Venice, is going to kill the person who intended to destroy it but finally managed to save it.

Similar to the psychological movement within traditional passion plays, Weil performs a rapid collective acceleration of violent rage towards each victim-protagonist. This ends in total stagnation of all escalations by symbolically fixing the protagonist on the cross of stalled time. In her stage directions, Weil reminds her actors "it is supernatural to stop time. It is then that eternity enters into time".[42] To express the internal psychological state that exists in such a stalled time, when "eternity enters into time", Weil applies performative fractals deriving from the Catholic liturgy and the Harlem spirituals as model schemata. In the metrically composed verses she strives onomatopoeically for a "maximum flavor" in both its lingual composition as well as its non-logocentric performative affectivity to all human bodies present on stage as well as in the audience, allowing them to witness the temporal amalgamation of different time moods into an excess of stalled time.[43] The suffering of full stop in the protagonist's persona aims to unmask a history of blind contagion with violent

40. Weil, 1956, p. 335.
41. Nevin, 2000, p. 167.
42. Panizza and Wilson, 2019, p. 53.
43. Panizza and Wilson, 2019, p. 57.

acceleration, or as Weil puts it, in the stage directions, "a human milieu of which we are no more conscious than the air we breathe".[44]

In three acts, *Venise sauvée* presents a series of events that last, as Weil puts it, "a little more than 24 hours".[45] Weil changed the original fictitious narrative by Abbé Saint-Réal written in 1674.[46] The plot introduces the audience to St. Mark's Square in Venice at the break of dawn, the day before the feast of Pentecost. Saint-Réal set the plot in the framework of the *Festa della Sensa* [Feast of Ascension] while Weil does not mention the feast at all but only highlights a specific detail of the feast, the *Sposalizio del Mare* [Marriage of the Sea], a ceremony with a strong religious character that in turn is not mentioned in Saint-Réal.[47] The *Sposalizio del Mare* consists of a colorful ship procession in the lagoon of Venice that originally dates back to an early medieval ritual with placatory and expiatory elements. In the 12th cent., out of gratitude, the pope gave the doge his papal episcopal ring to be cast into the sea during the ship procession, quasi-sacramentally marrying Venice to the sea, and ordered it to be repeated annually.[48] The 12th cent. anthology *Allegoriae in universam sacram scripturam* uses a pictorial language similar to the *Sposalizio*: The eroticized flooding of a holy city by the Holy Spirit: *flumen est spiritus sanctus ut in psalmis fluminis impetus laetificat civitatem Dei.*[49] Weil applied this symbolic entanglement of placatory and expiatory rituals with nuptial gestures to elaborate on the city's geographical topography, choosing the flooded city as a spiritual metaphor of lost and regained redemption. Accordingly, she rescheduled the *Sposalizio* from its traditional time on Ascension Day, a feast with placatory and expiatory liturgical literacy, to the feast of Pentecost, the feast of the fiery penetration by the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church as Christ's eternal bride.

The first act of *Venise sauvée* starts with early morning's darkness and introduces the protagonist Jaffier, a French naval captain in the Venetian fleet who prepares renegade troops for the brutal conquest of the city on behalf of the Spanish Crown.[50] The initial scenes reflect the Old Testament in the context of exile and violence and culminate with a dystopian vision of a devastated city.[51] Following her anti-Jewish

44. Panizza and Wilson, 2019, p. 52.
45. Panizza and Wilson, 2019, p. 58.
46. Saint-Réal, 1988.
47. Saint-Réal, 1988, p. 110.
48. Borghero, 1994, p. 104.
49. Migne, 1852, p. 933.
50. Panizza and Wilson, 2019, pp. 59-65.
51. Panizza and Wilson, 2019, pp. 52 and 61.

resentments, Weil instructs her actors to recite a new version of Psalm 110, altered by Weil: "This city will lie prostrate at our feet and we shall be the masters".[52]

The second act thematizes the relation between reality and gaze.[53] In a shared dystopian vision the two conspirators, Jaffier and the Spanish-French ambassador Renaud, look upon an imagined Venice on the day after tomorrow, subjugated and enslaved, while Renaud recognizes in Jaffier the city's "future god".[54] For this scene, Weil directs her actors to "make them [the conspirators] as sympathetic as possible. The spectator is to desire the success of the enterprise. Until Renaud's speech, which should have the same effect on the spectator as it has on Jaffier".[55] What is the effect on Jaffier and what are Weil's corresponding effective steering mechanisms of affective mimesis targeting the audience? Weil has outlined that all collaborators are blinded by a collective, furious zeal of destroying Venice while "only Jaffier has not been carried away by this zeal, even for a moment. He is immobile at all times".[56] We have to interpret this immobility not only as the fact that Jaffier does not move bodily on stage but that he does not participate in the psychological acceleration of time shared by everyone else on stage. He remains in-between the multiplicity of temporal rhythms. For the individual spectator to imitate Jaffier and to realize these psychological states of mind, to remain in-between the multiplicity of time, that not all people exist in the same now, in a performative way, Weil incorporates the temporal patterns of the model schemata, as we will see in more detail. In the center of the second act, the daughter of the Secretary of the Ten, Venice's leading political institution, appears as the vulnerable "incarnation of the city".[57] Jaffier is fixed by Violetta's "innocence [...] infinitely precious" and is aware of the immanent violence waiting for her, unmasking the girl's ignorant joy as "a precarious happiness, fragile".[58] Jaffier looks at Violetta, who is also accelerated, however, not by violence but false hope for tomorrow's *Sposalizio* as the first erotic event as young woman: "I feel I'm going to fall in love. I also feel I love the entire universe".[59] He sees her, and reality looks back at him. Weil projects Violetta's minacious future, still unknown to her, with the story of a prostitute who was "born to the noblest local family" on a Greek island ruled by

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52. Panizza and Wilson, 2019, p. 65.
53. Panizza and Wilson, 2019, pp. 66-88.
54. Panizza and Wilson, 2019, p. 73.
55. Panizza and Wilson, 2019, p. 50.
56. Panizza and Wilson, 2019, p. 54.
57. Panizza and Wilson, 2019, p. 52.
58. Panizza and Wilson, 2019, p. 54.
59. Panizza and Wilson, 2019, p. 80.

Venice.[60] The prostitute joined Jaffier's conspiracy to avenge her humiliations by Venetian men. However, the disarming encounter between Jaffier and Violetta reveals to Jaffier a Venice that is a fragile and grievable reality "made by God".[61] Here, Weil tells her actors that in a "mysterious way", inaccessible for language, the vulnerability of Violetta woke up a "resonance of pain" within the body of the violently dreaming Jaffier and "reality enters into him [...] as soon as Jaffier realizes that Venice *exists*".[62] Consequently, Jaffier feels pity for Venice and explicates the city's grievability. This alludes to Christ in the Gospel of Matthew who felt pity for Jerusalem only a few days before he was crucified there (Mt 23:37).

Here, it is important to highlight that Jaffier recognized the final eulogized sweetness of the city, later revealed by Violetta's hymn at the end of the third act, already before the final Paschal-Pentacostal morning of the play, namely at this very point when he sees the vulnerable incarnation of Violetta amidst his, apart from Violetta, dystopian vision. Via an ambiguity between dream and reality, dystopian future and a harmonious but blind present, *Venise sauvée* repeatedly confronts the audience with different flavors of time and its temporal visualizations. Weil instructs her actors for the second act that "mention should be made of the time (noon), the course of the sun and the light".[63] Here, it is noteworthy that in *Venise sauvée* light, especially sun light signifies a particular important visualization of temporality. The audience encounters repeatedly the impossibility to naturally "suspend the flow of time" by the impossibility to stop the movement of the sun.

The third act unfolds the bloody execution of the conspiracy members and portrays a muted Jaffier, who suffers the fate of being both saviour and traitor, Jesus and Judas in only one vulnerable body, fixed onto the stage, exposed to everyone.[64] Overwhelmed by the absurdity of his fate, Jaffier realizes that he is losing the garment of his flesh (cf. Sirach 14:17). With the loss of his carnality, that is, when his biological body stops being visible as tactile, vulnerable flesh, also his ethical status as human ceases. Consequently, he perceives himself paradoxical as a kind of fleshless animal that has lost the status of grievable life, like Jesus who is imagined as an ungrievable lamb.[65]

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60. Panizza and Wilson, 2019, p. 77.
61. Panizza and Wilson, 2019, p. 82.
62. Panizza and Wilson, 2019, pp. 52-53.
63. Panizza and Wilson, 2019, p. 67.
64. Panizza and Wilson, 2019, pp. 89-113.
65. Panizza and Wilson, 2019, pp. 102-103.

Unable to execute his power and destroy the city after seeing Violetta, Jaffier had revealed his mission to the Council of Ten, in exchange for their promise to spare his soldiers. Jaffier's lament remains unrecognized by everyone on the stage and is only audible for the audience. This absurd situation culminates in Jaffier screaming "It is finished" from John 19:28 when Jesus dies on the cross.[66] Afterwards, paralleling the fate of Judas, the high council of Venice sends Jaffier money to honor his betrayal of his fellow conspirators, mixing up the moral duality as well as the all too familiar chronology in the New Testament Passion narratives. Jaffier then drops the money and runs towards a last group of his soldiers into the hail of bullets. Although his death is likely, it remains ambiguous what happens to Jaffier. He becomes the gap. Finally, Violetta appears on stage and recites a hymn about the smiling day ignorant of the just performed nocturnal slaughter. As a performative steering mechanism, we can identify Jaffier's smiling before his final exit as identical with the imaginary smiling of the feast day in the Violetta's hymn. After all, the only smile visible on stage to the audience is that of Jaffier who now is absent as well as present as gap.

The majority of Venetians will not find out about Jaffier's act of redemption. In Venice, the conspiracy remains a secret and the people continue to ignore their precarious state. However, for the audience the participated storyline debunks the idea of linear progress towards an always-brighter future and reveals suspensions and the in-between of different temporal structures. On the content level, these suspensions unite the two fundamental Freudian drives *Eros* and *Thanatos*: Pentecost is not simply Pentecost, it has merged with Pascha, culminating in an erotized Pentacostal-Easter morning with the sea marrying the city yet simultaneously and ambiguously climaxing in a lethal eternal Good Friday with no dawn, no city, and no wedding.[67] Furthermore, the transformation of temporal structures does not only happen on the content level of the plot but also takes place on a non-logocentric performative level. Weil interweaves a variety of the model scheme's performative structures as hypo-performative fractals into the hyper-performance of her play, precisely because these "liturgical palimpsests" allow Weil to break up, rewrite and turn upside down the audience's perceptions of time. In the following section, we paradigmatically highlight the liturgical literacy of the absent rituals as well as their application as performative fractals in *Venise sauvée*.

In the following, three temporal structures of hypo-performative model schemata are distinguished. The first temporal level is diachronic and refers to the plot's

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66. Panizza and Wilson, 2019, p. 108.
67. Panizza and Wilson, 2019, p. 113.

told time of "little more than 24 hours" that meets with the actual little more than 24-hour-structure of Catholic paschal rites as celebrated in the monastic communities Weil had regularly lived in.[68] *Venise sauvée* starts with the first act in early morning darkness on the day before Pentecost. Analogously during the first of two Paschal nights, after Holy Thursday, in early morning darkness on Good Friday the monks commemorate Jesus' blood sweating at the Garden of Gethsemane. As Venice's Good Friday progresses in the second act, the theatrical gaze on the doomed city of Venice corresponds with the liturgical gaze on Jesus as vulnerable suffering man. After trading Venice for Jaffier as the victim-protagonist of the play, the third act portrays the total abandonment of Jaffier, deprived of his humanity, as well as Jaffier's transformation into the "sweetest day" by the gesture of the last smile. This again corresponds with the liturgical contemplation of Christ's total abandonment in hell and the ambiguous empty grave as the ultimate gap in the Easter Vigil as the "day of God" in the morning of Holy Saturday. Violetta's hymn of the "sweetest day" at the very end alludes to the Easter hymn *Hic est dies verus Dei* that builds on Psalm 118:24 identifying Christ as the day of God: "This truly is the day of God; his holy light shines bright today, when by his sacred blood, once shed, he washed the shame of men away".

On a second synchronic time level, the actual duration of the play corresponds to the celebration and faithful's participation in a Sacrifice of the Mass, the ritual representation of the death and resurrection of Christ. While the play represents the chronology of the Sacrifice of the Mass, it demontages and transposes its two-fold dualist structure (liturgy of the word and liturgy of the sacrifice) according to a tripartite (trinitarian) division of setup, confrontation, and climax, often found in ancient Greek tragedy. The first act evokes Weil's anti-Jewish interpretation of the Hebrew history of salvation and the Hebrew proclamation of imagined eschatological victory. In the second act, different movements of vision imagine an incarnation (Violetta) as well as the eschatological dystopia (destroyed Venice) corresponding to the Mass' "unbloody sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ". Finally, the third act echoes motifs (flesh, darkness, unrecognizability) during digesting the delicacies of the Eucharistic feast[69] with reciting the prologue in John at the end of every Sacrifice of the Mass.

The third temporal level, a kairological suspension of time, corresponds with spirituals Weil had encountered in the black Baptist church in Harlem, New York. Back then, Weil remembered a *kairos*, an infinitely dense point of time, when the

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68. Panizza and Wilson, 2019, p. 58.
69. The idea of the delicacies of the feast in Weil's writings we owe to Gwendolen Durpé.

minister and the congregation suddenly explode into dances much like the "Charles-
ton". Time stopped, and everyone cried and sang, and were ultimately chanting "They
crucified my Lord!".[70] In the stage directions Weil directs her actors that "the power of
simple repetition, as found in Spirituals. Repetition until your nerves begin to suffer.
This is to be used in Venice. In the sense of those condemned to death. And in the
insults to Jaffier".[71] While emphatically experiencing the muteness and immobility
of Jaffier, this third time level allows the audience to enter into the gap Iser refers to
as necessary for an interactivist reader-response. The resultant co-creation by per-
formers and audience of ritually inflected meaning consequently suspends both the
imagined diachronic time of the plot as well as the lived synchronic time of perform-
ers and audience within the theatre building by an immersive repetition of the ulti-
mate now. Weil's demontage and decontextualization of the rituals' model schemata
and their respective temporal structures grant the audience a new form of mental
agency of co-constructing multifold simultaneous "affective temporalities", entering
the space of the in-between. Here, the temporal *catharsis* of Weil's tragedy needs both
the performative and content level.

On the performative level, *Venise sauvée* conveys that not all people exist in the
same now, opening up an awareness of something beyond the conventional order of
time. On the content level, the tragedy's plot tells a story that gives the audience a
narrative model how to deal with a multiplicity of disturbing temporal experiences.[72]
While Simone Weil uses material from the 17th cent. by Abbé Saint-Réal, her con-
temporary audience would have soon deciphered the manifold allusions and recog-
nized Hitler attacking Paris behind the fictitious plot. Here, *Venise sauvée* performs
a *catharsis* of time, and thus perception of violent acceleration in war times, via the
particular effective steering mechanisms, disclosing tensions in the relationship be-
tween the various rituals' temporal structures and its languages in different poetic
rhythms. Finally, the audience might not only listen to underlying liturgical echoes
as a fractally present hypo-performance in *Venise sauvée*. We could go one step fur-
ther to even identify Weil's personal traumatic experiences anonymously present and
audible as another hypo-performance in the hyper-performances of the play. Here,
aided by religiously voided, supernaturalist hyper-performances, the play attempts to
turn around this direction from existential experiences (trauma of the playwright)
to the stage (theatre), in order to allow *Venise sauvée* to serve as hypo-performance

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70. Weil, 2006, p. 188.
71. Panizza and Wilson, 2019, p. 55.
72. Nicastro, 2019, pp. 86-87.

(theatre) to the real-world hyper-performance (WW2) acted out by isolated individuals against totalitarian collectives.

5. Conclusion

Hyper-performativity establishes a double relationality. On the one hand, hyper-performativity sheds light on the specific correlation between hypo- and hyper-performance, namely how the implementation and transformation of performative structures and their ritually inflected meaning are processed affectively on stage. On the other hand, hyper-performance (in which the above-mentioned correlation is implied) also characterizes how the audience engages with the performative structure on stage and thus directs its response. As we have seen, the distinct affective charges in the respective theatre plays foster the participation of the audience in different ways: In the scene in *Rudens,* Plautus refers both to a Greek ritual (*hikesia*), as well as to well-known Roman rituals (sacrifice to Vulcan) on a collective referential level of contemporary Roman society. In *Venise sauvée*, Simone Weil rewrites the model schemata in which the individual's decisions are decisive and refers within a framework of multiple affective temporalities to the freedom of being an individual during a time of co-ordination. In both cases, the concept of hyper-performativity allows us to describe the nature of the particular interdependences of the plays and the model schemata. This interdependency seems to surpass common theatrical practices and techniques and reveals a kind of vertical agency present in both plays: In *Rudens*, through the intertwining of ritual and theatre, the antique audience can witness in a playful manner the divine patronage and help of Venus and is reminded of the destructive power of Vulcan. At the same time, the spectators are made aware of their exposure to the disputes and the moods of the gods. In *Venise sauvée*, the religiously voided, supernaturalist hyper-performances open up towards an awareness of something beyond the conventional order of time, the multiplicity of the now for every individual, and expose the latent agency of something that can never be engineerable, namely the in-between of time.

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