Introduction

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PERFORMING CITIZENSHIP: TESTING NEW FORMS OF TOGETHERNESS

Realities and concepts of citizenship have changed radically throughout history and will keep changing. Today, in the beginning of the twenty-first century, new articulations of citizenship emerge in citizen's and non-citizen's practices and struggles, and they often do so in conjunction with artistic practices. In these struggles and practices, citizenship is embodied and changed; new forms of togetherness, new strategies to claim rights and new civic roles are tested and rehearsed. Within this book, the editors want to present insights from a wide range of perspectives into how citizenship is performed and thereby changed; a body of thought across disciplines, based on in-depth-research and artistic experimentation.

Performing citizenship is not only the title of this volume, it is also the title of a research and graduate program, bringing together scholars, artists and citizen researchers in practice-based forms of research. The members of this program investigate the performance of citizenship through

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artistic experiments which critically highlight long-hidden aspects of citizenship, promote new emerging agencies, create new choreographies and scores of movement in public space or invent and test nascent institutions. Funded by the city of Hamburg, the three-year program is a joint venture of two academic institutions—the HafenCity University Hamburg (HCU) and the Department of Design of the Hamburg University of Applied Science (HAW)—and two cultural institutions—The Theatre of Research/Fundus Theater Hamburg and the K3/Tanzplan Hamburg.

The title of this book and the individual contributions refer back to the international conference, *Performing Citizenship_02*, that took place in Hamburg in November 2016. At this conference, members of the program presented their research, while internationally acclaimed experts from a range of disciplines—such as media studies, urban sociology, philosophy, theater and literary studies, political science, critical gender studies and postcolonial theory—were invited to respond and give insight into the respective artistic and academic research practices. Across the broad span of contributions contained in this volume—from ‘Haircuts by Children’ in Toronto to ‘Claims for the Future’ from the Downtown Eastside Women’s Centre in Vancouver, ‘Citizen Spaces’ in Mexico City and back to the ‘Department of Paralogistics’ and the ‘Welcome City Group’ in Hamburg—many of the texts offer analytical accounts of artistic and activist research projects that address global transformations of citizenship and their local manifestations. This is complemented by more theoretical contributions and a few key historical examples: the masks that were instrumental in the performance of citizenship in the Golden Age of Venice (Schaub), Friedrich Schiller’s concept of aesthetical education (Gunsilius), and mimicry practices of the female jester at the court of King Louis XIII (Jungen).

CITIZENSHIP REDEFINED AND REINVENTED

Citizenship is back on the agenda of philosophy, together with urban studies, the global governance discourse and international politics (see, e.g., the Oxford Handbook of Citizenship 2017). Some scholars even speculate about a ‘renaissance of citizenship’ (Faist 2013, p. 4). Multiple publications try to grasp the current transformation of citizenship: citizenship seems to no longer be based primarily on places of origin, and is challenged by new forms of belonging, of representation and sovereignty. A flurry of concepts are celebrating new configurations of citizenship that are not determined by place, origin or nation—variously ascribed as activist

(Isin 2009), flexible (Ong 2006), insurgent (Holston 2007), medieval (Roy and AlSayyad 2006), multicultural (Kymlicka 1995), multilevel (Maas 2013), urban (Lebuhn 2013), transnational (Leggewie 2013), ubiquitous or diasporic (Balibar 2012). These concepts aim to grasp the current dynamics and diversity of border-crossing transfers, intersections and entanglements, with ever more people traversing the physical borders of nation-states and creating new political subjectivities.

Whereas citizenship as a legal and political institution is based on the nation-state as a framework of constitutional rights and obligations enforced by law and related institutions, this foundation of modern citizenship is increasingly and fundamentally challenged by a number of interrelated and indeed accelerated developments. Economic globalization disempowers nation-states and undercuts their sovereignty, while the gap between rich and poor within and across nations is widening, which puts existing social security systems and public health infrastructures under pressure. Changing patterns of mobility and connectivity, migration and transnational cultural interconnections all challenge the legal and political boundaries of sovereign nation-states, their legitimacy and capacity to organize and provide of citizenship (Benhabib 2006; Shachar 2009). At the same time, new alliances, networks and collectives of citizens emerge and assume roles and responsibilities formerly attributed to the state as institutional body and representation of the people.

Given these developments, citizenship today is at the same time associated with old and ineffective protocols, which continue to produce exclusion, and yet is also ‘in the making’, moving into a position beyond the given. Citizenship is simultaneously in withdrawal and in the process of becoming. At its best, this ambivalent performance of citizenship has the capacity to rearticulate or reinvent citizenship, to link old and new figurations of citizenship—often, if not necessarily, across given thresholds of legal and political institutions, social conventions, disciplinary competencies and discourses, ascriptions and attributions of race, class, culture and gender.

Given these dynamics, the editors of this volume conceive citizenship as ‘essentially contested’ (Gallie 1956)—a questionable and corrigible concept that has to be claimed, enacted, performed, and therefore is permanently subject to revision and considerable modification.

Accordingly, the editors of this volume suggest a performative take on citizenship in order to think beyond conventional notions of normative or legal definition of a citizen. Moreover, we are convinced that this

performative take should not be conceived from the overall viewpoint of an academic master discourse, but has to be informed in multiple ways by the dimension of contestation and struggle itself, in which citizenship is actually performed.

Transforming citizenship in action is a very challenging task. Not only does it require a certain momentum of self-empowerment to start acting in the first place, but it also implies building new and uncertain alliances across given social, cultural and institutional systems which allow for at least a temporary cohesion of collective action. Insights, inventions and new concepts have to be transformed into real and repeatable repertoires of citizen actions, thereby establishing new protocols, rules and conducts of communicating, sharing and ‘commoning’. All attempts and each initiative aiming toward a changed reality of citizenship face significant obstacles by challenging powerful counterparties. They confront a set of problems concerning their own ‘performance’ when claiming, contesting, enacting ... in short, when doing things with rights. A performative theory of citizenship should not only acknowledge these problems but should help to determine and to solve them.

However, in the following, three theoretical concepts will briefly be introduced and connected, which constitute a common ground for the different contributions to this volume. As a result, a first provisional definition of the performativity of citizenship and its different layers will be given.

DOING THINGS, WITH RIGHTS: CITIZENSHIP AS PERFORMANCE

Firstly, citizenship is understood here as a subject position that allows us to act in the first place. To be a citizen comprises a complex conditional framework that entitles us to certain actions, suggests certain ways of acting and links actors to one another in distinct ways, not only giving meaning to our actions but primarily allowing certain acts and actions to *be* acts and actions, to be real—that is, to constitute reality. How closely such an understanding of citizenship is linked to performativity becomes clear when we look back at the very origins of performative theory and, in particular, at John L. Austin’s initial examples for performative speech acts—that is, sentences which are neither true nor false but which constitute the reality of which they speak. As the sentence (as speech act) ‘I do’ exclaimed

in the course of the marriage ceremony (Austin 1962, p. 5) may bring about the reality they speak of, the example also shows that a certain subject position has to be taken in order for them to be carried out successfully. As evident in acts like getting married or the making of a will, which is also among the first examples for speech acts given by Austin, this is the subject position of the citizen, presupposing networks of bodies with institutional power. One has to be a citizen to marry or to make a will. Austin famously argued that, whereas speech acts like these cannot be false in terms of their truth value, they still can fail. Austin termed such speech acts as ‘unhappy’ (Austin 1962, p. 15). And they potentially do fail and become ‘unhappy’, if enacted outside of the presupposed network of actors that makes them work in the first place; in many cases, this means outside of citizenship. With this background, ‘performing citizenship’ first means to act in accordance with the protocols and systems of citizenship, and thereby successfully constitute and produce pieces of civic reality.

Secondly, performing citizenship today also means to claim and enact citizenship in new ways beyond already given subject positions and institutional networks. Though ‘acts of citizenship’ which shift or reinvent the concept of citizenship in action are by degree ‘unhappy’ in Austin’s sense, and partially failing, individual citizens, citizen initiatives and movements all around the world persist in their trying. To better understand these dynamics, this volume profits from Engin Isin’s concept of ‘Acts of Citizenship’, referring to acts which change and produce citizenship as such. Isin defines these ‘Acts of Citizenship’ as follows:

To act, then, is neither arriving at a scene nor fleeing from it, but actually engaging in its creation. With that creative act the actor also creates herself/himself as the agent responsible for the scene created. (Isin 2009, p. 25)

The proximity of this concept to another layer of performativity is evident in the reference to the creation of a scene. To perform citizenship in this sense means to act *as* citizen in a way that potentially reinterprets the citizen as a role and as a subject position. In other words, to perform citizenship and to act *as* citizen includes a certain dimension of ‘fake it ’til you make it’ when claiming, enacting or presupposing a right that has yet to gain legal apparatus.

In this context, to focus on how citizenship is performed, also implies a certain take on the crucial question of representation. Evidently, most, if not all, systems of citizenship—in terms of legally enforced rights and

duties—rely heavily on structures of representation in which citizenship is performed by speaking in the name of (all) citizens, or in the name of a certain body of citizenship. Conflicts between established formations and new figurations of citizenship are often oversimplified, using a binary opposition of citizenship as a system of representation on the one hand, and citizens claiming to speak and act for themselves and on their own account. Focusing on how citizenship is performed undercuts this binary by suggesting a middle ground, albeit a shaking one. To focus on the performance of citizenship within given systems means to look at the ways these systems are embodied in action; while to focus on the performance of citizenship *outside* of given systems means to be aware that nobody ever just *is* a citizen. Even claiming something like ‘direct democracy’ necessarily involves processes and constructs of representation in the course of its performance. Purely because performing citizenship outside of given systems also generates forms of representation, it does have a chance to create the scene and the actor in the action itself in an ‘Act of Citizenship’, as Isin defined it.

A third layer to the performativity of citizenship explicitly regards the body, the embodiment of citizenship to actually take shape. *Habeas corpus*—historically and biographically, the right to control one’s own body is what initiates citizenship. The performance of this right, the steady reiteration of corresponding practices, effectively creates the body as ‘my body’, as something ‘I’ own, a process that makes ‘me’ a citizen. It makes ‘me’ a citizen as ‘my ownership’ of ‘my individual body’ is dependent on being a member of other bodies, specific ones, which are dedicated to keeping the space open for individuals to perform their right.

In this third sense, performing citizenship is not so much about individuals and groups who perform citizenship, but about how citizenship *performs* individuals and groups, as it materializes in the making of our bodies and the bodies with which those form together. Citizenship *performs* the individual body in a way no less crucial, yet connected to, the process of gendering as it has been famously described by Judith Butler in the 1990s. Of course, control over one’s body is necessarily limited and compromised in many ways, through matter and also through discourse. Therefore, citizenship from this perspective might be seen less as a subject position and more as a *performance*, a constant negotiation between bodies (Butler 2015; Cvejic and Vujanovic 2012).

To summarize, the performativity of citizenship that the contributions to this volume are focusing on comprises three different meanings:

- There is the successful civic performative, allowing citizens to constitute and change civic reality through their actions.
- There is the performance of citizenship outside of given structures that includes a dimension of ‘fake it ’til you make it’, that enacts and thereby claims citizenship in new ways.
- There is the most basic performance of citizenship, that often resides beneath the radar of our attention, in which citizenship as such is a *performance* of bodies—institutional and individual—which, through a daily reiteration of practices, contributes to the very constitution of the individual body.

In the light of these three modes of performativity, their cross-references and transitions, it becomes clear that citizenship and performativity are not just two distinct concepts, two theoretical entities simply combined for the sake of this volume. Instead, the three modes constitute an intrinsic relationship between performativity and citizenship, who owe to each other much of their corresponding world-making powers.

This mutual reference, however, might also result in certain circularities. If citizenship has always been performative, then the limitations of citizenship might, to a certain extent, also be the limitations of performativity. Specifically, both citizenship and performativity are western, if not European, concepts. Therefore, this volume also discusses citizenship and ‘non-performance’, especially with regard to the politics of representation (Hildebrandt), post- and de-colonial questions (Peters), as well as the logistics of citizenships (Frischkorn).

ARTISTIC PRACTICE AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

To focus on the performativity of citizenship means considering the constant negotiations of bodies, rights and spaces. It also means paying attention to the fact, that these negotiations have always been a major field of artistic practice. Throughout the history of citizenship, there is an abundance of works and practices illustrating the hope that art significantly contributes to the ongoing negotiation of citizenship and empowers citizens to consciously shape and reshape the performance of citizenship. While highlighting a few exemplary historical lines, most contributions to this volume focus on articulations of the relationship between art and citizenship that have developed since the 1990s. The preface to ‘The Citizen

Artist', published in 1998, describes this new relationship between art and citizenship poignantly:

As public space becomes increasingly saturated by corporate culture, a new generation of artists is emerging. Frustrated by the insulated art world, encouraged by the politicization of art in the 80s, and desirous of the rupture between high and low art, artists are looking into the space of everyday life to find a new canvas. (Burnham and Durland 1998, p. 5)

Since then, research has concentrated largely on changes in art practices, on artists and projects that questioned art as a closed discourse and put it to experimental use in, with and for communities of all kinds. Beyond the initial enthusiasm for these new articulations of 'community art', it soon became clear that the question of participation is crucial to this line of practice and thinking (Bishop 2012; Doherty 2009; Hildebrandt 2012). While most corresponding art practices and projects can be called 'participatory' in general, participation can take many forms. In recent years, critical analyses of participation in art have gained in complexity and standing. They have shown, quite simply, that art can hardly ever get participation right. Though participatory projects often seem to question given power relations, they also produce and reproduce them. Citizen artists might counteract missing participation in society, but nevertheless will always mirror it and get caught in the overall structures of participation and non-participation.

The Performing Citizenship research program was partly designed in response to this critical discourse around participation and suggests the turning of tables: though the critique of participation in the arts may be well-founded, the editors of this volume are convinced that the corresponding problems and paradoxes of participation should not be held against participatory art practices in general, but should be interpreted as symptoms for a much wider crisis: the crisis of citizenship as the foundation and form that participation in society takes. Therefore, instead of looking exclusively at how art is changed through its new relation to citizenship, most contributors to this volume use participatory art practice, including and embracing its failures, as an instrument and a vehicle to examine the transformations of citizenship. Art practices—ranging from curating exhibitions to playwriting, urban intervention and performance, video making, and dance—are understood as tools and frameworks for participatory research, within and beyond the academy, that serve to reach

new audiences, but also, and more importantly, ‘to reformulate these research-relations’ (Hawkins 2013, p. 31) toward something that could truly be called citizen research. In this reconfiguration, the exemplary artistic practices discussed in this volume are not solely the subject of critical inquiry; instead, they become experimental methods with which to explore transformations of citizenship as we are experiencing them or envisioning them today. ‘What unites them, however, is that they are methods or means by which the social world is not only investigated, but may also be engaged’, write Lury and Wakeford in their inventory of inventive methods. ‘To describe them as inventive is to seek to realize the potential of this engagement whether it is as intervention, interference or refraction’ (2012, p. 6).

In this sense, hundreds of people—citizens and non-citizens—have contributed to the different research projects presented in this volume, not by writing about citizenship, but by performing and articulating it in new and experimental ways. Research into citizenship has to be citizen research. Therefore, while this volume is meant to make these collective research processes accessible to a transdisciplinary—yet academic—discourse, it is by no means the only outcome of the research projects in question, but is part of a multilayered production of knowledge and corresponding realities which take many forms in projects and practices and evolving networks around the world.

ABOUT THIS VOLUME

Writing about performing citizenship constitutes a form of performance in its own right, operating between criticality and creativity and generating new perspectives and practices of artists, researchers and citizens. For which kind of audience do we write and what kind of language do we choose? The challenge of translating artistic practice into text, theory (citizenship) into practice (performance), making connections between abstract and the particular means to navigate the fine line between knowing and not-yet knowing how to perform citizenship, and how to reflect upon our thoughts in the act. When we understand research as an open process that involves, or more precisely builds on, the contribution, the collaboration and co-production of knowledge with other citizen researchers, blurring—if not obliterating—the boundaries of the ‘white cube’ of art galleries and museums, the ‘black box’ of the theater or the ‘ivory tower’ of academic conferences, journals and publications, this relates also

to the act of publishing itself. In other words, this volume will be available online and in print; it is peer-reviewed and open access with a creative commons license.

As regards structure, the book is organized into four parts addressing key aspects raised by the intersection of performance and citizenship:

- Part I positions the present and vulnerable body at the center of struggles concerning citizenship. The body itself becomes both a battlefield and a space where values, norms and ideologies are constantly negotiated. With a focus on individual bodily practices as well as social choreographies of citizenship, this section asks how bodily art practices can challenge existing bodies of citizenship. Which individual and collective strategies enable us to intervene in political and social processes? How can these strategies be used in order to discover new forms of agency?
- Part II focuses on the city and urban spaces of citizenship. Diverse (urban) spaces let new figurations of citizenship emerge that bring existing binaries of private and public, art and activism, self-organization and governance, citizen and non-citizen, into question. These spaces arise out of manifold acts, through which diverse protagonists not only claim and challenge the urban as a scene but furthermore implement new relations between the notion of citizens and the city. But what happens on the edge of new-governance practices which always risk co-producing an urban development that counteracts emancipatory aims? Further, inasmuch as the city is constructed by social processes, spatial formations and its historical implications, the city is also shaped by the narratives and cultural representations of diverse communities which enable forms of belonging, identification and participation. What stories does the city tell, what is the ‘sound of the city’? And what are the artistic strategies that reveal counter representations or enable a critical reception of hidden narratives in our urban daily life?
- Part III addresses the premises, critiques and speculations of citizenship and (non)performance. While citizenship is often idealized as a means of emancipation, in an exclusive Western discourse, it also serves as a regulatory instrument of domination that relies on things and artifacts to stabilize its rule. The practice of citizenship implicates multiple sutures in the fabric of the common

world, thereby articulating differently empowered realms. A contested matrix of subjectivity and personhood—the position of the fully human—regulates which bodies are allowed to move freely and articulate their interests as citizens. Furthermore, any performance of citizenship seems to be predicated on its other; that is to say, on other delegated performances and the exploitation of the very part(s) it excludes. We ask: How to be aware of the historic violence inherent in the notion of citizenship? Is it possible to shift or weaken the continuing operation of Western hegemonic power that the concept presupposes? And how could performance be the act of renouncing or redistributing agency so that others become present and discernible?

- Part IV, ‘Emerging Agencies’, essentially deals with new educational practices of knowledge and cultural production. To change citizenship is to change subject positions and forms of representations. In micropractices, new subject positions and ways of addressing a public can emerge. How do they become discernible? How to foster, trace and support these invisible agencies beyond already existing logics of citizenship and performance? How to enable neighborhoods, schools, workplaces and cultural institutions to become hosts for the emergence of new civic agencies? Who invites whom there? Who speaks for whom? Who invents other spaces and where? What role do artists and artistic projects play within these processes of emerging citizenship and its negotiation?

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