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Ένας ρεαλισμός για την εκφραστική
χειραφέτηση του καλλιτέχνη

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του Β' Παγκοσμίου Πολέμου

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Protest Choruses: Rethinking the Aestheticisation of the Political

Stefan Donath*

Περίληψη

Στις αρχές του 21ου αιώνα, η αυξανόμενη προθυμία διαμαρτυρίας εξαιρετικά ετερογενών μεταξύ τους δρώντων υποκειμένων παράγει εντελώς νέες μορφές διαμαρτυρίας. Εκτός από τα καθιερωμένα κοινωνικά κινήματα, τα αυθόρμητα κινήματα διαμαρτυρίας γίνονται ολοένα και περισσότερο η βάση για το σχηματισμό νέων μορφών αντίστασης. Συζητώντας το μοντέλο του αρχαίου ελληνικού χορού και των χορωδιακών μορφών που προτείνονται από το αρχαίο θέατρο και τα πολιτικά περιβάλλοντά του, επιδιώκω να πραγματευτώ σύγχρονες στρατηγικές ακτιβιστών που ασχολούνται συλλογικά με μερικές από τις πιο επείγουσες πολιτικές και κοινωνικές προκλήσεις. Χρησιμοποιώντας το παράδειγμα των αποκαλούμενων χορών διαμαρτυρίας, το ζήτημα δεν είναι μόνο να εξεταστεί η μορφή διαμαρτυρίας του χορού. Πολύ πιο αποφασιστικά, η συζήτηση για τις διαδικασίες χορικότητας θα επικεντρωθεί σε διάφορες μεθόδους συμφιλίωσης στο πλαίσιο του χορού καθώς και στη δυνατότητα δημιουργίας ενός χορού, προκειμένου να προσδιοριστούν οι πολιτικές επιπτώσεις που περιέχονται σε αυτόν. Η βασική μου θέση είναι ότι η αξιοποίηση των διαδικασιών και εννοιών του χορού στις αρχές του 21ου αιώνα χαρακτηρίζεται από μια αποφασιστική αλλαγή στις στρατηγικές διαμαρτυρίας: ενώ η μορφή του χορού ως δραματοποιημένου ηθοποιού, συγχρονισμένου πλήθους ή πληθωρικής σωματικής συλλογικότητας, υποχωρεί όλο και περισσότερο, οι χορικές μέθοδοι, οι οποίες δεν στοχεύουν πλέον στην παρουσίαση των διαδηλωτών ως αντιπάλων ή ανταγωνιστών, κερδίζουν έδαφος.

Abstract

At the beginning of the 21st century, a growing willingness to protest on the part of highly heterogeneous actors produces completely new forms of protest. In addition to established social movements, spontaneous protest movements are increasingly becoming the basis for the formation of novel forms of resistance. By engaging in the model of the ancient Greek chorus and choric forms proposed by ancient theatre and its political environments, I seek to discuss contemporary strategies of activists who engage collectively with some of the most urgent political and societal challenges. Using the example of so-called protest choruses, it is not a question of only taking the protest form of the chorus into consideration. Much more decidedly, processes of the choric will be focussed on various methods of reconciliation within the chorus as well as the processability of becoming a chorus, in order to determine the political implications contained therein. My basic thesis is that the use of choric resources at the beginning of the 21st century is characterised by a decisive change in protest strategies: while the form of the chorus as a dramatised actor, synchronised crowd or overwhelming

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bodily collective retreats more and more, choric methods, which are no longer aimed at staging protesters as opponents or self-asserting antipodes, are gaining in importance.

1. Introduction: Protest as theatre

At the beginning of the 21st century, we can observe a growing willingness to protest on the part of highly heterogeneous actors. Occupy Wall Street, the Arab Spring, #MeToo, the Yellow Vests in France or the recent protests in Hong Kong illustrate how spontaneous protest movements, in addition to established social movements, are increasingly entering a global stage. In many places, protest becomes an expressive strategy of alienation tied to the invention of novel forms of resistance. Since protest movements operate in an environment with limited attention, it is not only about political messages, but about the creation of features (such as the Guy Fawkes mask of the Anonymous movement or the umbrellas in Hong Kong) that can be recognised.

What we see is a new range of forms of political activism, which include performative elements as well as theatre, installation, music, song, dance and choreography. These new forms make it all the more important to investigate protests that have been largely ignored by protest research thus far. It is not enough to only recognise the diversity of these different expressions. Protesters do not only point to the causes of political action; they use special articulation methods or establish creative communication styles themselves. Since the effects and meanings associated with protest actions mostly go beyond the respective protest action, they demand contextualisation all the more.

Protest and social movement research conventionally recognises protest movements as having a significant contribution to processes of participation. It misses the mark, however, as it neglects to specifically turn to the specific manifestations of various means of representation and expressions of protest. Research is scarcely devoted to the relationship between activists and the public, the actual actions of the protesters, the phenomenality and the eventfulness of public and protestors resistance. Thus, there is a lack of analyses that explicitly take into account the aesthetic characteristics of the protest—especially that question the politicality of its expressive, sensuous and, thus, theatrical representations, emerging from the etymology of the word “protest”.¹

My thinking about the connections between theatre and protest is based on the assumption that an approach informed by theatre studies can take up and compensate for the implicit deficits of previous protest research. While the stated interest of protest research is, for the most part, in the motivation of the actors

1 In its capacity to express both displeasure, rejection or objection to something, as well as to advocate ideas, opinions and beliefs, an etymological approach to the concept of *protest* illustrates how to “protest” has always combined strong performative qualities. Already in the late Middle High German verb “protest” there is the meaning “to explain”, which goes back to the Latin *prōtestārī*, meaning to “bear witness, publicly prove, display”. The *testārī* in *prōtestārī* emphasizes the actionist dimension of “testifying, proclaiming, insuring and proving”.

exclusively, my research focuses on the equally relevant processes of demonstration, perception, incorporation, staging and performance of protest.

I argue that protest and movement research methods can be enriched by a theatrical understanding of protest.² From my point of view as a theatre scholar, protests are not only self-imposed situations of staged showing and looking. They are also political acts, which go beyond representative performance of political messages. That's not to say that protests still oppose repression. With the help of a variety of strategies, they criticise misguided policies that seal subaltern situations, deprive the marginalised, or drain political representation mechanisms. Today, protesting means not only articulating oneself with self-confidence, but refusing to stand still and, as Hannah Arendt pointed out, to actually act on your own behalf.³

Nevertheless, the problem I see is the following: When you want to act as a critical pioneer, a contemporary strategy of resistance can no longer dedicate itself to the representation of a marginalised group as a unitary, collectivised and therefore strong opposition. Establishing resistance through the generation of countervailing power ultimately only stabilises the mechanisms of the prevailing system. What we need are nonviolent forms of public intervention that interrupt, manipulate, or extend everyday actions through direct or less obvious actions.

To further radicalise these statements, one could say: Actually, it is less important what you say, what is significant is what you do and how you do it. To put it in a nutshell: I believe that it is not so much a question of political messages, but rather how we implement what we imagine to be a united community through our own actions and in cooperation with others.

2. Focusing on choric forms

In the following section, I would like to clarify this argument by focusing on choric protest practices and introducing "protest choruses". What is a protest chorus? When choric practices, either speaking or singing choruses, are used in the field of political activism, these eventful assemblies, coordinated sequences of movements, or affective collective formations can be called protest choruses. As specific formations of speech and movement, protest choruses point to a particular communication practice. Protest choruses emphasise physicality. They demonstratively stage the co-presence of their members. And they create extraordinary choreographies that require special coordination skills. Protest choruses emphasize relational arrangements and joint acts of protesting without

2 On one hand, the differentiation between the terms *mise en scène* and performance can contribute to the efforts to distinguish the use of theatrical means and the planning of a desired presentation from the actual realisation of action during the protest event. On the other hand, the distinction between theatrical and performative acts can help distinguish in protest actions between the situations of showing and the reality-constituting actions in which diverse actors interact with one another as well as with cultural norms.

3 Arendt's question "What we do when we are active" can precede basic considerations of protest actions, as well as her consideration of human conditionality, in which she associates action with the fact of plurality. She writes: "Action requires a plurality in which all are the same, namely human beings, but in a curious way that none of these people ever resembles another who once lived or will live" (Arendt 2014: 17).

being limited to a specific protest format. From protest marches and demonstrations, they go through various protest actions in order to convey certain messages, to generate meanings or to substantiate demands symbolically.

The chorus is one key element which can illuminate the theatricalization of public co-existence. From its beginnings through its manifold transformations, the chorus is directly linked to often-complex political strategies of aesthetic appropriation as well as specific techniques of presentation. In this way, the chorus can become a model—or a heuristic tool—for analysing cultural, discursive and artistic protest procedures. By engaging with the model of the ancient Greek chorus and choric forms proposed by ancient theatre and its political environments, I seek to discuss contemporary strategies of activists who engage collectively with some of the most urgent political and societal challenges.

2.1 The connection between the chorus and protest

The transformation of choric practice has already shown in antiquity how the chorus has been charged with a certain potential for resistance. All the more because the chorus went through various stages of repression. From a choric song and dance culture to the dramatisation of the chorus and its continuing reduction within the drama, one can follow how the chorus loses its importance in relation to the birth of the “modern subject”. The marginalisation of the chorus explains why the occurrence of choric groups is associated with the resurrection of strong communities (see Dreyer 2014: 177-236).

Since then, collective voices have been used in political struggles to bring together scattered forces. The chorus was instrumentalised for national purposes and symbolically charged to illustrate imagined communities or ideals such as equality and independence.⁴ Political mobilisations have used the chorus as an effective means of presenting marginalised actors as a community. The specific forms of assembly served to increase the exposure of the protesting bodies to gain recognition and visibility. In order to acquire the sphere of political speech, the chorus appeared in the streets, occupying its space. In order to make them their own sphere of action, protest choruses used the given infrastructures. While protest choruses, in this way, used the already existing material conditions, the potential of choric protest that I seek to expose lies in questioning the very existence of these conditions.

2.2 Difference between the chorus and the choric

The theatrical practice of the chorus is very often associated with synchronizing contributions of different actors or with harmonizing different expressions

⁴ In Germany, the ancient Greek chorus was rediscovered in the 19th century as part of a general return to the valuable empirical content of antiquity, recognized as a reference point and initially used for theoretical arguments. The occupation thus allows important insights into the foreign and self-images of this time. See Billings, Budelmann and Macintosh 2013:2.

in a single image. A plural group of actors is speaking in unison or dancing in a choreographed way. In contrast to this general understanding of the chorus, “the choric” points to the processability of becoming a chorus. The focus is therefore on the question: What kind of demand does it take for a group of very different people to come and act together?

At a critical distance from the dramatic form of the ancient Greek chorus, a model of “the choric” clearly highlights the diverse processes of communication within the chorus as well as its process of becoming. The choric points to the ritual roots of the chorus. It emphasises its specific materiality and mediality, in which phonetic, physical and spatial dimensions intensify as an interdependence of music, dance and language.⁵ Unlike the chorus, which stands for the realisation of a form, the choric does not aim towards a ready-made principle, an arrival or an achievement of something, but rather emphasises a flexible arrangement that is able to reflect the completion of the gathering itself.

To illustrate the analytical potential of the choric and the political implications contained therein, I would like to talk more about the etymology of the chorus. The word *choros* refers to both the public dance floor, as well as the round dance in which humans mixed with divine. Later that group of dancers and singers was also called chorus, who performed their actions together. The different levels of meaning of action, place and people involved in the term *choros* refer to the cultural interdependence of a communal practice associated with the chorus. The perception of the choric is therefore based on the distinguishable meanings of the chorus as a place of dance, a dance and a group acting together. From a phenomenological point of view on the choric, the outcome of this is an analytical spectrum of spatial, physical and vocal performances, which qualify and shape its materiality decisively. The choric reveals a relational network of different levels of perception, which—depending on the intended action—can be used extremely variably and in different emphases.

2.3 To be loud and present – and then?

The choric is predominantly able to penetrate us through phonetic phenomena and by triggering affective or physiological reactions. Reception to and perception of what has been heard are preceded by acoustic processes of production, for example by the performance of voices, music or sounds. Choric techniques can produce special listening spaces in which vocal, musical or noise elements mix. This can cause the generated listening room to stretch and expand beyond the geometric space. The presence of choric groups, which we notice as audiovisual appearances,

⁵ It was suggested to make “the choric” a heuristic tool for the investigation of protests. The aim of using choric strategies as the basis for the analysis of internal coordination processes of collective actors was to understand even more closely its immediate presence, specific modes of production and agency. In this way, choric protests could be studied as pronouncements, linguistic productions, arranged collective bodies, theatrical spatial structures and meaningful, symbolic media. The aesthetic strategies of protest choruses served to express opposition, while also potentially triggering new forms of resistance and thus leading to a renewed examination of society.

is thus produced by concrete vocal and gestural articulations. Of course, it makes a difference whether the choric is used to grab our attention only or whether it wants to overwhelm us.

With the discrediting of the concept of communion by the National Socialists, the chorus was brought close to phenomena of the national community, mass aesthetics, Gleichschaltung and the exclusionary politics of racism. Since then, fascist choruses have stood for an extremely affirmative chorus model, in which the production of a physical common-mode, in addition to the mechanism of identification, plays a crucial role. The German theatre scholar Matthias Warstat writes about the mode of operation of these fascist choruses:

It was important that the audience get used to the rhythm of the chorus, to adapt to it, to physically participate and thus to participate in the collective movement little by little. The synchronization of the bodies was seen as the decisive step in a more complex interdependency: if one has absorbed the rhythm of the homogenous, active and dominant bodies of the chorus, so to speak, then one is taken in by the political, social and other occupations, that are associated with the staged bodies. (Warstat 2009: 18)

Unfortunately, we see this fascism of the chorus again today at public demonstrations. Its dictatorial and anti-democratic features are felt where the individual loses their self-determination within an authoritarian leadership structure and through the manipulative instrumentalisation of synchronisation and rhythmic attempts. With my investigation, I wanted to show that there are currently very opposite developments. Being part of a protest chorus does not automatically mean drowning in the synchronised crowd or indulging in a clearly defined, identitarian community.

Choric protest procedures can, however, honour dialogue, difference and diversity. The performance of the protestor's materiality can be used to test how and why protesters use a potentially resistant practice. As a result, the choric can help in examining the sensible modes of action in specific forms of protest. It can take into account the organisational processes of protesting in order to reveal, for example, the contradictions between the communicated message and its own practice of political protest. In turn, the self-reflective scrutiny of one's own constitution becomes a protest event in which a potential change has already been suggested or taken shape. With regard to the organisation of the choric at work, this then gives rise to questions of the organisation and the arrangement of plural actors. Processes of perception-based understanding and relational localisation all point towards the choric being a potentially anti-authoritarian communication model. Using a chorus model, protest choruses thus appear not only as instruments of acoustic reinforcement, but intensify the resonance of social references, which is often accompanied by the hope for the revitalisation of democracy. But how can the choric serve to generate resonance or (re-)activate intersubjective relationships?

3. Occupy Wall Street and the Human Mic

Using the example of the Occupy movement, I want in particular to focus on the specific ways of coming together. The example of the so-called “Human Microphone” demonstrates in particular how collective amplification of choric speech created a tuning process, which contributed to the establishment of a new aural space during the protests. The use of the “Human Mic” was a reaction to the New York authorities’ ban on amplified sound in public demonstrations and technical devices such as megaphones. As a result, the human mic served as a special and already proven form of human amplification that ensured the transmission of information through large crowds.

3.1 Choric repetition as aesthetic negotiation – on the political effects of choral sound

The human mic did not amplify a speech using electronic technology, but rather with a multitude of human voices. When somebody said something, a chorus of voices repeated what was said. The procedure was based on a choric way of communicating at meetings and rallies of the Occupy movement. I would like to show how the human mic aided the spread of information, but also how it intensified human relations.

The use of the choric repetition process can not only be explained by a technical deficit. In the coordinate system of activist acts of gathering, persevering and spatial confiscation, the human mic followed the logic of occupation, additionally recognisable as an auditory occupation of public space. The acoustic usurpation continued, which had already topologically begun as a spatial appropriation of urban space. As an innovative tool, the human mic became a central instrument of political formulation. Tied to specific forms of theatrical representation, the special kind of choric speech produced a performative protest space. The example shows how the human mic reinforces individual voices. It extends the listening room, increases the range and volume of what was said, making individual statements and opinions audible.

The human mic as an instrument was all the more necessary when prominent guests visited the camp, attracting great interest and gathering many listeners. The philosopher Judith Butler’s visit to Zuccotti Park on October 23, 2011 is one such example. The clip “Judith Butler at Occupy Wall Street” documents this event.⁶ The video was uploaded to YouTube the same day. It shows how Butler is greeted by applause. After the collective proclamation of her name, she nods briefly as a gesture of gratitude and begins to speak.

Butler speaks in short sequences, she interrupts her fluidity, deliberately pauses, so that her statements are not too long. Her speech seems practiced, appropriate and mindful. When she talks about the critics of the movement who

⁶ The video is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JVpoOdz1AKQ> (last accessed on 20 Aug 2019).

constantly ask for concrete demands, one can clearly recognise the melodic impetus she is using, making sentences such as “Either they say, there are no demands” stand out clearly. The protestors try to follow the melody of her speech.

When she speaks, she bows her upper body as if to give additional weight to her linguistic program. In the pauses between phrases she leans back as if waiting for the chorus’ repetitions. Her receding upper body signals her readiness to receive, which is strengthened by her repeated gazes up at the crowd. The camera also captures the behaviour of some people in the chorus, who turn away from the sequences of Butler’s collective rendition and let their gaze wander through the group, perhaps impressed by their own impact, before returning full attention to the speaker. As a result, there is a movement-rich turning-to-and-turn away during the speech, a dynamic flow of articulation in which the bodies are affected by the transmitter and receiver reacting sensitively to the sound of the chorus on both sides.

Then follows a sequence in which Butler wants to say a longer sentence: “Or they say —”. She wants to continue, but is interrupted by the protest chorus by repeating her first three words before she can continue her sentence. At this point, the choric is no longer a simple reproduction method. Instead, a characteristic of a horizontal process of negotiation materialises in this moment, in which not only the speaker determines the lengths of the text, but the crowd, in much the same way, influences the flow of the speech.⁷

The dialogical signature of the choric guarantees the openness of a negotiation practice in which orientation, coordination and performance is no longer dictated by a single speaker. In contrast, a leading authority’s position is relativised in favour of a language process of situational negotiation between a speaker and protestors.

3.2 On the aesthetics of choric repetition: synchronicity as modification

The human mic does not allow social energies to emerge solely from the synchronous rendering of a text. Rather, the choric becomes a model for the plurality of sound-like disassociations, the diversity of the vibrations, dissonant, inappropriate set pieces, a lack of harmony. This audio coincides with the image of the collective as a teeming abundance that condenses and thins out and, therefore, can be described more concretely by their fluctuations than by their constancy.

After all, synchronicity does not mean an externally arranged unison of the chorus, but the group-immanent control of energetic moments of breathing and speech. The choric performances of the human mic demonstrate how different bodies can be organised. The protest chorus is never a product, but always a process of manifold conflicts, in which dissonances and differences also become apparent. Through breath and rhythm, the choric chanting of a speech or joint movements, a practical discussion also takes place as a spatial communication strategy of the

⁷ At this point the protest chorus realises, in the sense of Negri and Hardt, a polyphonic concept of narration. It expresses the embodiment of a pluralistic nature, which in turn becomes part of one’s own narrative. They write: “In a polyphonic conception of narrative, there is no center that could dictate the enthusiasm, but the meaning arises only from the dialogue between the different singularities” (Hardt and Negri, 2004: 237).

occupation. The swarming appearance, which is manifested as the absence of concrete formations of the group, and the tonal diversity of the address, reflect the lack of uniformity within the group, again distancing one's actions from one another and thus strengthening the self-reflexivity of the movement.

The collective character of the occupation is seen here as a specific form of acoustic organisation that can be described as an anticipation of structural synchronisations: less than the act of speech itself, synchronicity refers to sharing the same place at the same time. It is of political importance that the experience of permanent synchronisation does not coincide with the establishment of a synchronous sound. The unified sound created by the collective repetition of the many voices does not deceive the fact that the protestor's response is by no means assured. On the contrary, the choric echo rarely sounds like a blind agreement. With the help of the human mic, slogans are by no means thoughtlessly recited. The German theatre scholar Sylvie Kretzschmar stated that the content of the speech in repetition is "understood and not only processed, but rather is, simultaneously, continually and collectively commented on" (Kretzschmar 2014: 153). In consequence, she calls this process "a multitasking of listening, speaking, understanding, and simultaneous development and expression of one's own attitude towards what has been said" (Kretzschmar 2014: 153). In the protestors' repetition no echo arises as a simultaneous reproduction of spoken words in the chorus. Rather, in the superficially concessional sound of the group, resonance materialises as a mode of tuning, in which rules of procedure and processes of control penetrate each other.

3.3 Loud speaking as listening

The prerequisite for choric reinforcement is attentive listening, which always identifies the listeners in the protest chorus as co-producers. For the speaker, this kind of close listening gives them certainty that he or she will be heard. Not only the volume and range of vocal productions are strengthened, but human relationships are intensified and multiplied at the same time.

The social impact of choric reinforcement techniques becomes particularly noticeable when people implement a special program of self-admittance, following themselves more attentively by repeating the spoken word and forcing new approaches to one another. While the fragmentation of verbal speech activates a more intensive process of listening, the potential of repetition is to better understand the opinions of others through intensified perception.

Protest methods such as the human mic cause choric sounds to move away from the original body, which is important for an attention-seeking protest strategy. With the expansive extension of the loudspeaker and the generation of a far-reaching, polyphonic voice, protest choruses develop both a symbolically and physically more powerful voice.

The mighty of the polyphonic voice is dispelled *firstly* by the sound of the voices and the vibrations of the choric reinforcements, which ensure that the pub-

lic space is acoustically occupied as “territorial access”. *Secondly*, the phoneticity of choric speech can produce a specific spatiality of occupation, which implies a special quality of confiscation, which can be tied back to concrete bodies with the vocal announcements at the same time. *Thirdly*, the diversity of the collective voice makes it possible to experience the special materiality of the protest, whose effects further intensify in a network of multiple, spatially distributed sound bodies.

3.4 Give a voice to others

Choric communication practices regulate how the powerful, democratic ability to grant one another the freedom of speech can be achieved by lending voice to other expressions of opinion. During the assemblies of the Occupy Wall Street movement, all participants had the opportunity to speak and respond to statements. Choric reinforcement techniques such as the human mic are thus integrated into a process of responsive speech, in which one does not have to fight for the word or be cut off from speaking. In a climate of respectful communication, the prevailing mentality was to let others come up to speak.

This example shows how the constitution of the protest chorus as a body of speech produced not only affective resonance but also generated repetitions, which could be interpreted as aesthetic as well as political negotiations. Choric repetitions not only attracted attention by means of special rhythms, but also manifested themselves as areas of action, in which responding meant modifying the choric speech.

Instead of using the chorus as a means of expressing binding actions, the example of the human mic demonstrates how the revitalisation of the political came into play through the re-organisation of public space as a fundamentally political space for communication. This included the fact that the acts of protest in these public spaces, whether state-regulated or subject to the laws of private ownership, activated recipients by making the existing regulations noticeable.

While this irritating resistance to choric demonstrations seems to be partly unmotivated, too self-centred, less clear or goal-oriented, I finally want to argue that it is precisely in this ambiguity that the strength of contemporary choric protests can be discovered: protests no longer aim at attacking the political foundations of the community, such as its constitutions and institutions. On the contrary, protestors perceive themselves as affecting and, in turn, affected by the political community that they constitute.⁸

⁸ Protests can therefore be described as processes in which divergent ideas are expressed. Choric methods perform different selection and communication methods, which work to achieve binding decisions for all.

Conclusion

Using the example of so-called protest choruses, it is not a question of only taking the protest form of the chorus into consideration. Much more decidedly, one can differentiate processes of the choric as various methods of reconciliation *within* the chorus. Talking about the difference of what I call “the choric” and “the chorus”, I explained how various Occupy activists succeeded in using choric strategies: instead of instrumentalising the chorus form for political representation to help marginalised interests to gain recognition, they focused on mutual perception.

At the beginning of the 21st century, choric protests are no longer superficially driven to overthrow political regimes. They instead develop their resistance today by evading ideological and authoritarian rules. They resist disciplinary or organisational measures precisely by the way in which their own actions are executed. The fundamental change in the use of choric protest strategies is manifested by the fact that choric methods nowadays focus on processes of direct exchange. Instead of using the chorus as an instrument of political representation to help marginalised interests become recognised, protestors put mutual perception in focus. Choric protests recognise the dialogue, difference and diversity of plural actors.

The current use of choric protest methods stands for the further development and politicisation of aesthetic resistance practices. Today, protest activities are no longer concerned with the representation of the chorus group as a uniform, collectivised and therefore strong counterpart. The sensory effects of choric overpowering are increasingly criticised. The particular use of choric protest methods lies in stressing the choric as a relational, potentially anti-identitarian and anti-authoritarian organisational process. The choric leads to an intensification of the protester’s experience of all parties by means of the self-referential examination of one’s own constitution—openness instead of identitarian delimitation, self-control rather than authoritarian leadership. Finally, the potential of choric protests is no longer to only use the given material conditions, but to question the existence of these conditions themselves.

Whenever there is an awareness of one’s own resources and their applications instead of an affirmative protest strategy, protest choruses contribute to creating spaces in which subjectivities can emerge that resonate with the environment in order to question hegemonic orders. That is, when the autonomous design of alternative social practices, rather than the production of visible resistance, moves centre stage. Ultimately, choric protest methods enable resistance by shifting perceptions of the world via the use of their sensuous materiality, in order to revive the project of a shared (trans)action transcending the boundaries of everyday conventions.

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Στα ελληνικά η λέξη «κρίση» συμπεκνώνει τουλάχιστον δύο μεγάλες κατηγορίες νοημάτων. Αφενός, παραπέμπει στις έννοιες της απόφασης, της άποψης ή της γνώμης και, σε στενή συνάφεια με αυτές, στις έννοιες της κριτικής, της αξιολόγησης και της δίκης. Έτσι κάποιος/ου η «κρίση» μπορεί, παραδείγματος χάρη, να επηρεαστεί από την υπερβολική χρήση αλκοόλ· οι δικαστικοί, οι δημόσιοι υπάλληλοι αλλά και τα επιστημονικά άρθρα περνάνε από «κρίση». Αφετέρου, παραπέμπει στις καταστάσεις εκείνες, στις οποίες η αναπαραγωγή της προηγούμενης, της κανονικής ή ομαλής συνθήκης είναι δύσκολη ή αδύνατη. Έτσι, για παράδειγμα, κάνουμε λόγο για «κρίση» άσθματος όταν το αναπνευστικό σύστημα δεν λειτουργεί κανονικά ή για οικονομική «κρίση» όταν το οικονομικό σύστημα δεν αναπαράγει ομαλά τον εαυτό του.

Η πρώτη σημασία προκύπτει από το αρχαιοελληνικό ρήμα «κρίνω», το οποίο αρχικά σήμαινε «διαχωρίζω», αλλά αρκετά νωρίς (στα ομηρικά χρόνια), επίσης, «αποφασίζω». Η δεύτερη σημασία, η οποία είναι και μεταφορική, προκύπτει –σύμφωνα με τους περισσότερους λεξικογράφους– ως μεταφραστικό δάνειο ή αντιδάνειο από τα λατινικά ή τις λατινογενείς γλώσσες. Η «κρίση» έγινε crisis (λατ., αγγλ. & ισπ.), crise (γαλλ.) και crisi (ιταλ.) και κατόπιν «κρίση». Με αυτό τον τρόπο, ενώ τα λατινικά, οι λατινογενείς γλώσσες και τα αγγλικά έχουν δύο όρους για να αποτυπώνουν τις δύο διαφορετικές οικογένειες σημασιών (iudicium, judgement, judgement, juicio, giudizio για την «κρίση» και crisis, crise, crisi για την «κρίση»), τα ελληνικά περιορίζονται σε μία και μόνη λέξη, την *κρίση*.

Κατά ενδιαφέροντα τρόπο, ήδη από τα αρχαία ελληνικά, μπορούμε να ανιχνεύσουμε κάποιες χρήσεις της λέξης, οι οποίες συμπεκνώνουν και τις δύο σημασίες. Έτσι, η «κρίσις» μπορεί να σημαίνει το κρίσιμο σημείο μιας αρρώστιας, το σημείο όπου “αποφασίζεται” η τύχη της ζωής του ασθενούς. Επίσης, κατά ενδιαφέροντα τρόπο, η φιλοσοφία, σε ανεξάρτητους μεταξύ τους κλάδους, έχει φέρει κοντά τις δύο σημασίες, οι οποίες συμπεκνώνονται στη μία και μοναδική ελληνική λέξη. Για παράδειγμα, στη φιλοσοφία και την ιστοριογραφία της επιστήμης η κρίση σηματοδοτεί μια κατάσταση, κατά την οποία το κυρίαρχο Παράδειγμα αδυνατεί να αναπαραγάγει ομαλά την κυριαρχία του εξαιτίας μιας πλειάδας εμπειρικών ανωμαλιών. Η κατάσταση αυτή, παράλληλα, ωθεί στην όξυνση της κριτικής και στην ανάληψη μιας σειράς αποφάσεων ή αξιολογήσεων, οι οποίες δεν ήταν διαθέσιμες στο παρελθόν. Αντίστοιχα, αλλά με αρκετές διαφορές, στον χώρο της πρακτικής φιλοσοφίας, η έννοια της κρίσης σηματοδοτεί την απουσία εγκαθιδρυμένων κριτηρίων για την ανάληψη και τη νοηματοδότηση μιας πράξης – κατάσταση η οποία αναγκαία ωθεί στην κριτική και την απόφαση.

Μοιάζει, λοιπόν, η κρίση όντως «να γεννά ευκαιρίες», όχι όμως αυτές που εννοούν οι επιτήδριοι της αναπαραγωγής της υπάρχουσας κατάστασης. Η “κρίση” επισύρει ‘κρίση’. *Κρίση* λοιπόν...

«Δεν υπάρχει βασιλική οδός για την
επιστήμη, και στις φωτεινές κορυφές της
μπορεί να φτάσουν μόνον όσοι δεν
φοβούνται τον κόπο να διασχίσουν τα
δύσβατα μονοπάτια της».

Κ. ΜΑΡΞ

