

Some like it real

The solo as dramaturgical strategy within the context of engaged theatre practices

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Abstract

This research occupies itself with the dramaturgical functioning of the solo within the context of engaged theatre practices. The positioning of the spectator and performer that is a result of the solo's particular functioning is hereby of central concern. Amongst others, the direct communication between the spectator and performer will be discussed. Next to that, the various implications of having only one person on stage are analysed too. Understanding the solo as a dramaturgical strategy helps to identify the various ways in which the relation between spectator and performer can be set up. In addition, the focus on engaged theatre practices shows how the solo mediates in the dynamic between an individual and society. That is why the following research question will be answered in this thesis: How does the solo, as a dramaturgical strategy in theatre, enables a performer to position himself towards the real and how does this positioning communicates with the spectator about the relationship between theatre and the real?

By using the solo, the real, narrative and focalization as analytical tools a performance analysis of the solos *Archive* and *De radicalisering van Sadettin K.* will be conducted. It will be demonstrated how the performer can position himself to the real by the act of zooming in and out. Even though the presentation of both soloists might come across as sincere or authentic it will be argued how the truth in theatre is always constructed. Moreover, you can understand the positioning of spectator and performer not only on the level of the performance itself, but also from a conceptual point of view. That leads to the conclusion that the solo emphasizes the difference between the individual on stage and the spectators as a collective in the auditorium. In doing so, the performer and spectator are both implicated in how they come to understand the relation between theatre and the real.

Table of contents

Abstract	2
1. Introduction.....	4
2. The performer and the world.....	11
3. Narrative and the solo performer	17
4. 'A real seeing person'	22
5. A real speaking person	27
6. Conclusion	29
7. Bibliography.....	31

1. Introduction

1.1 Theatre and the real

Performances that explicitly draw upon reality, such as documentary and autobiographical theatre practices, are engaged with what can be called the thin line between theatre and reality.¹ Such practices, as Carol Martin observes in her book *Theatre of the Real* (2013), confirm “theatre’s participation in today’s addiction to and questioning of the real as it is presented across media and genres.”²

An example of such a performance is *De radicalisering van Sadettin K.*, a solo by theatre maker Sadettin Kirmiziyüz.³ In his solo, Kirmiziyüz wonders why he has not radicalized yet and why he did not go to Syria to fight for the greater good in the name of the Islam. According to Kirmiziyüz, his profile statistically corresponds with the profile of a radicalized Muslim. Next to that, he has had his fair share of discrimination. Therefore, Kirmiziyüz seems sincerely confused about the fact that, in spite of all this, he is still in the Netherlands. To be precise, Kirmiziyüz not only wonders why he is still in the Netherlands but also questions why he is ‘here’ tonight, standing in the theatre in front of an audience. On the one hand, *De radicalisering van Sadettin K.* can be understood to be a personal revelation of a Turkish-Dutch theatre maker who tries to speak out against “hotly debated topics” as Kirmiziyüz mocks himself. On the other hand, these personal and seemingly authentic revelations are undermined by Kirmiziyüz’s observations on the theatrical event itself. Therefore, his solo also questions the perception of the spectators with regard to what they believe to be an authentic account of Kirmiziyüz’s experiences of reality.

Also in *Archive*, a dance solo by the Israeli choreographer Arkadi Zaides, the spectator finds himself confronted with the real.⁴ This time though the real is not represented by personal stories but by videoclips made by Palestinians. These videoclips are played on a huge screen at the left side of the stage and depict violent situations experienced daily by Palestinians who live in the West Bank area. These clips were shot in 2007 by Palestinians themselves within the scope of a project of the organization called B’Tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories. The videos seem to be a truthful representation of the real the Palestinians are daily confronted with. For instance, the footage is rather jerky and by times unfocused, as if the clips were recorded right on the spot. Next to that, it is highly questionable that Israelites would voluntarily opt

¹ See for instance: *Get Real. Documentary Theatre Past and Present*, eds. Alison Forsyth and Chris Megson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

² Carol Martin, *Theatre of the Real* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 5.

³ *De radicalisering van Sadettin K.*, directed by Sadettin Kirmiziyüz, Junushoff Wageningen, October 2015.

⁴ *Archive*, directed by Arkadi Zaides, Rotterdamse Schouwburg, September 24, 2015.

for being filmed by Palestinians this way. Zaides engages with the clips for instance by copying as precisely as possible the gestures made by the Israelites. After doing that for a while, he begins to adjust the copied gestures and creates his own choreography out of them. At the same time, this choreography is a proposal for understanding the body as a living archive that is subject to societal structures such as violent behavior. By “recycling reality” as Carol Martin would put it, both performances demonstrate how theatre can be used to engage critically with what we understand to be reality.⁵

In that regard, the choice for a solo is of particular interest. Since there is only one person on stage by whom we come to understand what has happened or what is happening, already a question comes up of why we consider something to be a truthful account. Next to that, Kirmiziyüz and Zaides seem to take advantage of this feature even more by presenting themselves as themselves. Instead of pretending to be characters in a fictional world on stage, their accounts on the events of the real, i.e. radicalization and the Israel-Palestine conflict, seem to become more ‘real’. Seen that way, it seems to be a strategy to counteract the deceitful and staged nature theatre is usually associated with. According to theatre scholar Christopher Balme, both notions, namely what is considered to be real or authentic and what is considered to be staged and theatrical, are “variations of the same cultural symptom: an increasing awareness of the constructedness and mediatedness of so much experience.”⁶ It can be suggested that the solo, because of its particular form, offers an interesting possibility to play with this dynamic. Because of the solo’s form, whereby one performer stands in front of many spectators, a more direct communication between spectator and performer is facilitated. After all, the performer has no one else to relate to. However, by being addressed directly, it is harder for the spectator to forget that he finds himself in a theatrical, i.e. staged, situation. This implies that he will, to some extent, be aware of the fact that what he sees is staged and thus not as real or true as is suggested. Both Zaides and Kirmiziyüz use this feature of the solo in order to reflect on the events of the real that are the subjects of their solos. Next to that they question how we, as spectators, come to understand these events. Basically, the solo directs attention to one of the fundamental characteristics of theatre, namely the staging of the communication between performer and spectator. In this thesis, it is proposed that the solo can thus be regarded as a dramaturgical strategy. This implies that we will look at how the solo structures the interaction between performer and spectator. This will be done by focusing on how the positioning of both performer and spectator takes place.

⁵ Martin, *Theatre of the Real*, 5.

⁶ Christopher B. Balme, *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 91.

1.2 Theatre and engagement

Opting for a solo performance might be motivated by economic concerns, for instance since one performer is cheaper to program than a whole ensemble. Nonetheless, the solo provides an interesting opportunity to investigate the relation between an individual and society.⁷ From a conceptual point of view, you could say that in the way the solo spatially arranges the spectator-performer relationship, the relation between a community and an individual is accentuated. The soloist, standing in front of many spectators, can be considered to be the individual while the individualized spectators can be accorded to “stand in for the community at large”.⁸ Theatre scholar Elinor Fuchs uses this characterization of the spectators when describing the interaction between the theatre event and the world. Seen this way, the relationship between theatre and the real can also be understood in terms of engagement. This element of engagement, namely the relationship between a work of art and society, forms the second component of my research. You could of course say that any work of art, whether a performance or a painting, has in one way or another a relationship with society. However, this relationship can be more or less explicit in an artwork. With regard to theatre, the vision of dramaturg Marianne van Kerkhoven on the ‘big’ and ‘small’ dramaturgy is of particular relevance here. The ‘small’ dramaturgy according to van Kerkhoven is the dramaturgical work that takes place on the level of the production of the performance itself. The big dramaturgy by contrast is about the relationship theatre can develop with the current political affairs whereby a critical reflection on reality is necessary.⁹ Towards the end of her article “Van de kleine en de grote dramaturgie” (2002) van Kerkhoven underlines the necessity of artists who present us with a different view on reality, in order to make us aware of the existing paradoxes and discrepancies.¹⁰ Her call for these kind of practices is reminiscent of how Dutch columnist Bas Heijne, almost seventeen years later, addresses the role of art in a society that seems to become more and more polarized. In the 2016 Februari-March issue of *Rekto Verso*, a magazine on culture and critique in Flanders and the Netherlands, Heijne reflects on the populist tendencies in Europe and the Netherlands and the role popular culture plays with regard to these tendencies. At one point he explains how art is able to counteract populist tendencies since art is able to reflect critically on the relationship between an individual and society. Where populism or polarized debates might lead to a narrow understanding of who you are and to which society or

⁷ Dragana Bulut, “Negotiating Solo Dance Authorship in a Neoliberal Capitalist Society,” *Tkh*, no. 18 (2010): 57.

⁸ Elinor Fuchs, *Death of Character: Perspectives on Theatre after Modernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 8.

⁹ Marianne van Kerkhoven, “Van de kleine en de grote dramaturgie,” *Van het kijken en van het schrijven. Teksten over theater* (Leuven: Uitgeverij van Halewyck, 2002), 197.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 203.

group in society you belong, art has the capacity to show how the big world, i.e. society, plays into the small world, i.e. the world of an individual.¹¹

In bringing the focus on the solo and engagement together, you could say that this research occupies itself with the dramaturgical functioning of the solo within the context of engaged theatre practices. Therefore, the following research question will be examined in this thesis:

How does the solo, as a dramaturgical strategy in theatre, enable a performer to position himself towards the real and how does this positioning communicate with the spectator about the relationship between theatre and the real?

1.3 Methodology and theoretical framework

In this research three important elements come to the fore, namely the solo, the real and the act of positioning. The first two elements can be regarded as concepts, while the third element is part of the concept of focalization. It is the aim of this research to use these concepts as analytical tools for performance analysis of the two solos *Archive* and *De radicalisering van Sadettin K.*

In taking the concepts as analytical tools I follow the recommendation of cultural scholar Mieke Bal who suggests that concepts: "If well thought through, they offer miniature theories, and in that guise, help in the analysis of objects, situations, states and other theories."¹² The concept of the solo, the real and focalization thus constitute my theoretical framework and will therefore be discussed in relation to my methodology.

With regard to the solo as concept, not much has been written on the solo per se. Although the solo is discussed in many academic texts, this is mostly done with regard to the presentation of self. The more fundamental question, how the solo positions performer and spectator, seems to be taken for granted or bypassed. In the introduction of *Monologues. Theatre, Performance, Subjectivity* (2006) Clare Wallace for instance states that the monologue, which she considers to be an example of solo performance, "focuses attention intensely upon the speaker and upon the way in which s/he expresses him or herself."¹³ Apart from the fact that this is an essential element of the solo or monologue the fact that another essential element, namely that the spectator is implicated in this situation as well, is completely missed. My understanding of the solo as a concept that takes into account the positioning of the performer as well as the spectator is therefore mainly based on Hans-Thies Lehmann's understanding of the solo with regard to postdramatic theatre practices. First of all, Lehmann clarifies how he approaches the solo performance and the monologue from a theatre point

¹¹ "Gaat het hoge omlaag, of het lage omhoog?," *Rekto Verso: Tijdschrift voor cultuur & kritiek*, 70 (2016): 12.

¹² Mieke Bal, "Working with Concepts," *European Journal of English Studies* 13, no. 1 (2009): 19.

¹³ Clare Wallace, *Monologues. Theatre, Performance, Subjectivity*, ed. Clare Wallace (Prague: Litteraria Pragensia, 2006), 6.

of view and not from a drama point of view. By this he means that he does not understand the workings of the solo or monologue as opposed to the dialogue. Instead, as we will see in chapter four, he points out how the solo performance and monologue in postdramatic theatre intensify the direct communication between spectator and performer. An effect that also has to do with the appearance of the performer as a “real speaking person.”¹⁴ Secondly, Lehmann’s conception of the solo is of use since he distinguishes between the intra- and extra-scenically communication. While the former describes the communication taking place on stage, the latter accounts for the communication between the spectator and performer.¹⁵ This distinction is not only reflected in my research question but also accounts for the structure of this thesis. In the first two chapters, attention will be paid to the positioning of the performer only. It will be demonstrated that even in a solo intra-scenically communication takes place. In the last two chapters, the positioning of the spectator will be addressed too.

The concepts of narrative and focalization will then account for how the positioning of the performer and spectator takes place. As will be demonstrated in chapter three, narrative is a useful concept for understanding the construction of a first-person narrative and its effects. The book *Narratology. Introduction to the theory of narrative* (2009) by Mieke Bal has been used as a point of reference. Although narratology is essentially concerned with written texts, the concept of narrative is, according to Bal: “active as a cultural force, not just as a kind of literature.”¹⁶ It can therefore also be used to clarify the narrative structure of a solo performance. With regard to the solo, the first-person narrative is of special relevance. In chapter three, it will be demonstrated how this form of narrative can account for effects that come from the fact that there is only one performer on stage. Although the concept of focalization is part of narratology too, it will nonetheless be explicitly used in chapter four to understand the positioning of the spectator with regard to the extra-scenically communication. In this, I follow theatre scholar Maaïke Bleeker who suggests that focalization can also account for understanding how the relation between the seer, i.e. the spectator, and what is seen is set-up.¹⁷ Chapter four will show, when taking this relation into account, how moments in the solos of Kirmiziyüz and Zaides make the spectator aware of this relationship. In chapter five it will thereafter be argued that this situation has specific implications for how the spectator comes to understand the relationship between theatre and reality.

It has been mentioned at the beginning of this introduction how theatre might participate in today’s addiction and questioning of the real. The solos of Kirmiziyüz and Zaides are examples of such

¹⁴ Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jüers-Munby (London, New York: Routledge, 2006), 127-128.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 127.

¹⁶ Bal, “Working with Concepts,” 16.

¹⁷ Maaïke Bleeker, *Visuality in the Theatre. The locus of looking* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 10.

theatre practices. Nevertheless, to understand how these practices might deal with the real, the concept of theatre of the real as shortly introduced above, is of use. Theatre of the real has to do with practices that for instance reinterpret events that have happened in the real world, thereby questioning the way we remember these events.¹⁸ Another feature of theatre of the real is that makers are not necessarily concerned with the truthful (re)presentation of this event. Rather, theatre of the real presents the spectator with a truth. In doing so, theatre of the real gives way to multiple viewpoints from which to look at an event of the real. It can therefore help to account for the element of subjectivity that might furthermore interfere with the truth-claims arising from the personified narrative elements that are part of *Archive* and *De radicalisering van Sadettin K.* Moreover, theatre of the real helps to distinguish between the various dimensions of the real Kirmiziyüz and Zaides relate themselves to, such as a political, historical, personal or societal one.¹⁹

1.4 Performance analysis

I have based my performance analysis, on the above introduced concepts. The analysis has been carried out by drawing upon questions that are derived from these concepts. With regard to the element of the intra-scenically communication, I have specifically paid attention to the following questions:

- Is the performer on stage by himself?
- How does the performer present himself?
- How does the performer position himself to the real?
- Towards what real does the performer position himself?
- What are the implications of the first-person narrative with regard to the positioning of the performer?
- Is there a specific moment/are there specific moments in which the performer positions himself differently towards the real? Or where his positioning changes?

These questions thus form the basis of the analysis in chapter two and three. In chapter four and five we looked at the following questions:

- How is the spectator addressed?
- What strategies are used to address the spectator?
- Is there a moment/are there moments in which the relationship between the spectator seeing and what he sees is/are exposed?

¹⁸ Martin, *Theatre of the Real*, 9-12.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

- What do such moments communicate with the spectator about the relationship between theatre and reality?
- What is it in the solo performance that provides the opportunity for the performer to say something about the real?
- What does the appearance of one (performer) in front of many (spectators) implicate for the story that is been told on stage?
- Could the performance have been performed by another performer?

The choice for *Archive* and *De radicalisering van Sadettin K.* as my objects for analysis has been based on a few considerations. First of all, there seems to be a strict division between texts and books on dance solos and texts and books on theatre solos. Since both solos can respectively be labelled as dance and theatre solos, this study aims at bringing the perspectives on the solo of both disciplines together. Furthermore, this might help to grasp from a more general point of view how the solo, as a dramaturgical strategy, functions. Secondly, both performances were my first encounter with solos that explicitly used events of the real to reflect on how the individual and the world are connected to one another. I thought it of special interest that both Kirmiziyüz and Zaides were, for as far as possible, on stage as themselves. By positioning themselves this way, I felt triggered to question my own position with regard to radicalization and the Israel-Palestine conflict. Did I witness the solos just to prove that I am a socially engaged person? Did I have an opinion regarding these issues? And, most of all, I found it remarkable that in spite of their highly mediatized character, it did matter that someone, and not just someone, addressed these highly debated topics on stage. I have witnessed both solos in the fall of 2015. Both Sadettin Kirmiziyüz and Arkadi Zaides have been most kind to provide me with the registration of their solos. These registrations are thus the main source on which I base my findings.

As explained above, the structure of the chapters that follow is based on the division between the intra- and extra communicational systems of theatre. The chapters three and four are thereby specifically concerned with the positioning of respectively the performer and spectator towards the real. To account for the question of how theatre and reality are related to one another, chapter two and five address the solo from a more conceptual point of view. Chapter two provides an overview of the historical developments in theatre and dance concerning the solo. Amongst others, it is explained how the rise of the solo around the beginning of the 20th century reflects a change in how the relation between an individual and the world had been thought of up till then. In chapter five, this relation will be discussed quite concretely by looking at how the relation between theatre and reality is communicated by Zaides and Kirmiziyüz with their spectators. It will be argued that not only focalization but also the spatial set up the solo offers might account for how this relation can be communicated.

2. The performer and the world

The relation between an individual and society, as previously addressed in the introduction, is of particular interest when approaching the solo as a dramaturgical strategy. For instance, when the solo became more popular at the beginning of the 20th century the hitherto assumed relationship between the world and a dance or theatre performance was contested. Till then, it was commonly accepted that a dance, as a representation of the world, could either resemble or imitate society.²⁰ Likewise, the dialogue in theatre functioned as a medium that represented the world by having characters expressing the world's conflicts to each other.²¹ Nevertheless, at the beginning of the 20th century these beliefs were challenged by the solo and the way the solo was used. Instead of representing a visible societal order or conflict as was the case for court dances and drama, soloists tended to focus more on the inner, invisible, experiences of being a dancer or a character. As such, the solo instigated, on a conceptual level, a break with how the relationship between actor or dancer and the world had been thought of before. The turn inwards was in the 60's and 70's used to address political issues too. In this way, the personal or inner experience of the performer were used to address quite literally the 'outside' world, namely the world outside the theatre building. The relation of the performer to the world in terms of an in- and outward movement will be used to understand how Kirmiziyüz and Zaides position themselves to the real.

2.1 Self-presentation and self-expression

Before the 20th century, the solo as a complete play or performance was a quite rare phenomenon. Rather, the situations in which a performer had the stage temporarily to him- or herself were often alternated with dialogues or group dances. Depending on the aesthetic conventions of the time, these solo moments occurred more frequently than in other times. In theatre for instance, the monologue can be understood as a form of solo performance.²² In realistic and naturalist plays however, the monologue was hardly used. This had to do with the belief that it was inappropriate and unrealistic to have someone talking to him- or herself on stage. In other times though, the prerequisite of representing a true-to-life rendering on stage was barely asked for. During Shakespeare's time for instance, as Patrice Pavis points out, the monologue

²⁰ Susan Leigh Foster, *Reading Dancing. Bodies and Subjects in Contemporary American Dance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 121.

²¹ Peter Szondi and Michael Hays, "Theory of the Modern Drama, Parts I and II," *Boundary 2* 11, no. 3 (1983): 194-195.

²² Wallace, "Monologue Theatre," 4.

was used more frequently due to the different aesthetic conventions.²³

Towards the end of the 18th century a new genre of “first-persons presentations” in the form of the monodrama came into being.²⁴ Where the monologue is a speech by a single person, the monodrama is “a play with a single character or at least a single actor (who may take on several roles).”²⁵ According to Carrie J. Preston, author of the book *Modernism’s Mythic Pose. Gender, Genre, Solo Performance* (2011), you can consider *Pygmalion*, written by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in 1762 as the first hybrid monodrama in Western theatre.²⁶ Of interest is here that next to being an operatic piece, *Pygmalion* also served the research of Rousseau to combine music and speech in such a way that the “truthfulness of expression” was achieved.²⁷ For Rousseau this had all to do with his understanding of how the combination of music and speech, and ultimately gesture, could do justice to the expression of passions that live inside a character. As such, and together with other genres of first-persons presentation like attitudes and dramatic monologues, the monodrama can be regarded as one of the generic antecedents of the early modern, expressionist dance and the dance solo.²⁸ Nonetheless, it was not till the end of the 19th century that a break between the dancer and its relation to the world was set in. Before that time, according to Susan Leigh Foster, dance’s main modes of representing the world were based on resemblance or imitation. Dances in the Renaissance for instance resembled the current social order in how their choreographies “often affirmed the existing organization of power, condoned a transfer of power, or heroized the ruler and praised the court.”²⁹ In the 18th and 19th century, dance and especially ballet started to represent the world by imitating society. The spectator was thereby presented with perfect moving bodies on stage that imitated an idealized human being and society. It was during these epochs that the dancer became recognized as a professional too. This meant that a dancer was ranked and received salary according to his virtuosity and competence.³⁰

At the end of the 19th century though, early modern dance radically broke with the ballet’s principles of drilling a body and making it move ‘unnaturally’.³¹ Instead, Isadora Duncan, one of the famous choreographers of that time, went looking for the “divine expression of the human spirit.”³²

²³ Patrice Pavis, *Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts, and Analysis*, trans. Christine Shantz (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 218.

²⁴ Carrie J. Preston, *Modernism’s Mythic Pose. Gender, Genre, Solo Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 27.

²⁵ Pavis, *Dictionary of the Theatre*, 217.

²⁶ Preston, *Modernism’s Mythic Pose*, 28.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁹ Foster, *Reading Dancing*, 112.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 121-122.

³¹ Aldo Milohnić, “Choreographies of Resistance,” *TkH Special Issue: Social Choreographies* 21, (2013): 16.

³² Foster, *Reading Dancing*, 145.

Dance main representational mode thus became that of replication, whereby the dancers had to replicate universal feelings and experiences that could be experienced by the onlooker too. Next to that, dances became the product of one's own ideas concerning the subject matter of the dance and its corresponding movements. This often led to dances that were danced by the choreographers themselves. According to Foster, this "heightened the immediacy and authenticity in the dances."³³ As such the solo can be seen as "one of the distinctive markers for early modern dance,"³⁴ according to Sally Banes author of the book *Writing Dancing in the Age of Postmodernism* (2011). To put it briefly, modern dance instigated a turn inwards whereby the inner experiences of a dancer formed the basis for the outer expression that could be shared with the spectators. The assumption that a body could move freely, not bounded by any social context, became nonetheless problematic. In the 60's and 70's for instance, the assumed relationship between one's movement and inner feelings was rejected. Instead, choreographers such as Merce Cunningham, created choreographies that "emphasized the arbitrariness of any correlation between movement and meaning."³⁵ Even so, the idea that dance and especially dance solos are based on the self-expression of a dancer still holds a firm grip on the understanding of dance nowadays. In their article "Solo Dance as a Technique of the Self," (2012) Ana Vujanović and Bojana Cvejić show how dance is always related to society and that the individual self cannot be regarded as standing apart from it. Consequently, dance is more than "expression of movement of the individual self."³⁶

2.2 Autobiography and the presentation of self

At the beginning of the 20th century, in theatre as in dance, a turn inwards whereby the inner life of the character became foregrounded, occurred. Dramaturg Marianne van Kerkhoven ascribes this turn amongst others to the "crisis of drama" as described by Peter Szondi in *Theory of the Modern Drama* (1983). For instance, Szondi explains how, before the 20th century, the dialogue in drama functioned as a medium by which the conflicts between people, and thus the world that existed in between the people, could be expressed.³⁷ Differently put, in the internal communication taking place between the characters, society was reflected or confirmed. However, since drama finds itself in a crisis at the turning of the 19th century, van Kerkhoven states that the visible societal conflict that was expressed in dialogues was substituted for the invisible inner conflict. This resulted amongst others in a

³³ Ibid., 150.

³⁴ Sally Banes, *Writing Dancing in the age of Postmodernism* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2011), 349.

³⁵ Foster, *Reading Dancing*, 168.

³⁶ Ana Vujanović and Bojana Cvejić, "Solo Dance as a Technique of the Self," in *The Public Sphere by Performance* (Berlin, Paris and Belgrade: Bbooks, Les Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers and TkH, 2012), 15-16.

³⁷ Peter Szondi and Michael Hays, "Theory of the Modern Drama," 194-195.

substantial growth of inner monologues after World War II.³⁸ Furthermore, according to theatre scholar Clare Wallace, it was at the end of the 50's that the "experimental potential of the monologue" became explored of which the works of Samuel Beckett are exemplary.³⁹

Around the same time, the field of solo performances was also influenced by the developments in performance art. Performance artists, according to Marvin Carlson, were hardly concerned with the bringing to life of characters that were previously created by other artists. Rather, performance artists based themselves on their own bodies and their own experiences in a culture or of the world around them. As a result, the body figured as the centre of the presentation of the self. This being so, "typical performance art was solo art."⁴⁰ Though performance artists were first and foremost concerned with the physical presence of their bodies, this slowly shifted towards a focus on the word, and more frequently a focus "upon the word as revelation of the performer, through the use of autobiographical material."⁴¹ However, most of the times this personal element triggered a question of politics too. Especially in the USA and UK, autobiographical solo performances were amongst others seized upon by queer artists to articulate pressing issues such as race relations, HIV and AIDS to name but a few.⁴² The personal thus became political too. Nevertheless, autobiographic solo performances also became associated with what Jonathan Kalb describes as "self-indulgence and incipient monumental egoism."⁴³ Notwithstanding, solo performances are nonetheless of interest to Kalb because the people's individual stories might function "as possible keys to our own individual development."⁴⁴ In what comes we will see how Zaides and Kirmiziyüz position themselves towards real by understanding their positioning through the act of zooming in and out. Just as the historical developmenst have shown that the solo enabled performers to 'turn inside', the question at stake here is how Zaides and Kirmiziyüz 'turn in- or outside'.

2.3 The act of zooming in and out

Generally speaking, the solo triggers a question of how a turn in- or outwards can be communicated on stage with regard to the relationship that exists between an individual and the world around him. For instance, if the inside world of a character or dancer would have literally been kept inside, nothing

³⁸ Marianne van Kerkhoven, "Kein Auge sollte alles sehn. Over monologen," in *Wordt er gezwegen dan rest alleen het niets. Negen keer de monoloog als toneelstuk*, ed. Tom Blokdijk (Amsterdam: Stichting Het Theaterfestival, 1997), 43.

³⁹ Wallace, "Monologue Theatre," 3.

⁴⁰ Marvin Carlson, *Performance. A critical Introduction*, 2nd ed. (London, New York: Routledge, 2004), 5-6.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 128.

⁴² See for instance the collection of performance texts by queer performers in *O Solo Homo. The new queer performance*, eds. Holly Hughes and David Román (New York: Grove Press, 1998).

⁴³ Jonathan Kalb, "Documentary Solo Performance: The Politics of the Mirrored Self, *Theater* 31, no. 3 (2001): 14.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 16.

would there to be seen on stage. It is as the title of the brochure of the 1997 Dutch theatre festival, that specifically addresses the monologue, says (own translation): "If all remain silent, then nothing remains."⁴⁵ In their solos, Zaides and Kirmiziyüz of course do not stay silent. By starting from a specific event of the real, either radicalization or the Israel-Palestine conflict, they are able to reflect on how the big and small world work into each other. More specifically, the positioning of Zaides and Kirmiziyüz towards the real can be characterized by the act of zooming in and out.

If we take a look at *Archive* for instance we see how in the beginning of his solo, Zaides meticulously copies the gestures made by the Israelites in the videoclips. Actually, this copying can be thought of as mirroring. The situation thus created seems reminiscent of a dance class in which dancers look in the mirror to master certain movements. As a matter of fact, the notion of the mirror not only points to an essential characteristic of dance training but also directs attention to how a certain reality can be mastered. As if Zaides, by mastering the violent gestures of the filmed Israelites, could better understand what is happening twenty kilometres from where he lives. The contrast between Zaides as an individual and the community the Israelites stand for, is even reinforced by how Zaides introduces himself as an individual at the start of his solo. He namely says the following:

"Good Evening. Thank you for coming. My name is Arkadi Zaides. I am a choreographer. I am Israeli. For the last fifteen years I have been living in Tel Aviv. The West Bank is 20 kilometers away from Tel Aviv. The videos you are about to watch are filmed in the West Bank. All the people we will see in these clips are Israeli, like myself. The clips were selected from a video archive of an organization called B'Tselem."⁴⁶

The social and political real that the videoclips represent in terms of the violent acts of the Israelites against the Palestinians, stand in sharp contrast with Zaides own position on stage. However, Zaides makes the violent gestures his own by making small adjustments. For instance, he changes the order of the gestures, presents them from a different body position or repeats them a few times. The appropriation of these gestures can be considered as an act of zooming in. By bringing the attention to his own body more and more, Zaides uses the act of zooming in to explore the dynamic between the reality represented by the videoclips and its implications for the functioning of an individual human being.

⁴⁵ *Wordt er gezwezen dan rest alleen het niets. Negen keer de monoloog als toneelstuk*, ed. Tom Blokdijk (Amsterdam: Stichting Het Theaterfestival, 1997).

⁴⁶ Arkadi Zaides, *Archive*, Theatre National de Chaillot, January 29, 2015, performance registration, <https://vimeo.com/119049112>.

Kirmiziyüz, on the contrary, uses the act of zooming in and out quite differently. His solo can be considered to be an example of an autobiographical solo performance. Instead of departing from material of the real that comes from others, like the videoclips in *Archive*, Kirmiziyüz departs from his own material. As such, his connection to the real is based on a personal one. This implies that he has already zoomed in, namely into his own memories and experiences. His experiences and memories then form the basis from which he addresses the bigger societal issues such as radicalisation, immigration and so forth. However, Kirmiziyüz does not slowly zoom out, as would have been the opposite to Zaides' act of zooming in. Rather, Kirmiziyüz switches continuously between zooming in and out. One moment he tells the spectators about his birth, the next moment he states that everything we do has a consequence for how the world around us will look like. In a way, this reflects quite literally Kirmiziyüz's struggle. On the one hand, as he puts it, he is concerned with problems that are part of him while on the other hand these problems are outside of him. For instance, the question of why he has not radicalized yet is a question that has at first sight has nothing to do with him. Nonetheless, Kirmiziyüz's profile corresponds to that of radicalized Muslims and since he is a Muslim too this issue seems to affect him as well. Quickly changing between his personal concerns and the bigger societal issues, the act of zooming in and out creates the impression of an individual, in this case Kirmiziyüz, who is not sure which world he belongs to.

In their ways of zooming in and out, Kirmiziyüz and Zaides have both constructed a different relationship between an event of the real and an individual. These events of the real can be considered to stand in for the 'larger' world while Zaides and Kirmiziyüz both represent the small world of an individual. It is of interest that they thereby present themselves as themselves. Zaides does this explicitly at the beginning of his solo. Kirmiziyüz creates this impression by sketching an image of himself based on the apparent truthful recounting of his past experiences in life. It is an extra layer that needs to be taken into account when trying to understand how, in positioning themselves to the real, the soloists construct a particular vision on how the real and an individual are related to one another. By focusing on the intra-scenically communication in the next chapter as well, we will see how the presentation of a performer as himself adds to the perception that his account of the real is 'true' or sincere. That this is a highly questionable perception in a theatrical situation goes without saying.

3. Narrative and the solo performer

The solo as dramaturgical strategy provides an interesting opportunity for a maker to investigate the relationship between an individual and society. In that regard, it seems that the solo is a form that lends itself for the act of zooming in and out. As has been pointed out in the previous chapter, the fact that someone is on stage by him- or herself is hereby of pivotal interest. It was demonstrated, through the act of zooming in and out, how the interrelation between an individual and the real could be understood both historically and within the logic of a specific solo performance. Yet, the act of zooming in and out is conducted by this one person only. This implies that the story told in the solo is presented from one point of view. Although other viewpoints or perspectives might be included, it is undeniable that the soloist is the only one by which we come to understand what is happening or what has happened.

This being so, the soloist basically has two options from which to present the story of his solo to the spectators. On the one hand, a solo performer can opt for the first-person narrative to tell the story. On the other hand, the solo performer can choose to present the story as an external narrator. The difference between these two forms of narration stems from the fact that the performer does or does not take part in the story. Next to that, as cultural scholar Mieke Bal explains, the first-person narrative “entails a difference in the narrative rhetoric of ‘truth’.”⁴⁷ Usually, someone who recounts his experiences on stage will probably proclaim that his experiences and his personal facts are true. Yet, at the same time the staged nature of the theatre undermines this rhetoric of truth. The boundary between the staged nature of theatre and the ‘unstaged’ real becomes more porous. Especially when the subject of a performance is related to an event of the real world and even testifies such an event by for instance using videoclips. Grasping how the solo performer might mediate in this dynamic is thereby significant. He or she is namely the only one through whom we come to understand the relationship between an individual and the world. In that sense, the solo is in a way self-referential, since it will always attract attention to the given of having only one person on stage. The concept of narrative can thereby be of use to clarify how this self-referential aspect can be used to construct an account of the real. Amongst others, narrative is concerned with questions such as who narrates, in which way are events narrated and what kind effects does the specific way of narrating sort. The act of zooming in and out whereby Kirmiziyüz and Zaides position themselves towards the real, can be furthermore understood by looking at the narrative structure of their solos.

⁴⁷ Bal, *Narratology*, 21.

3.1 Narrative

The concept of narrative is mostly used in the theory of narratology. Narratology is concerned with the analysis of literary and linguistic texts. However, as Mieke Bal points out, narrative is “not confined to any academic discipline.”⁴⁸ According to Bal, any cultural artefact that “tells a story” is also engaging with narrative.⁴⁹ To account for the effects that result from a particular narrative structure, such as the first-person narrative, Bal recommends to differentiate between the three layers of a narrative text. For instance, in *De radicalisering van Sadettin K.* you could say that Kirmiziyüz relates in a specific medium, namely language, a story to the spectators. Next to that, this story consists of Kirmiziyüz’s own memories and observations. Furthermore, these memories are mainly related to the issue of radicalisation and serve Kirmiziyüz’s question why he has not radicalized yet. The memories are thus presented from a certain angle. It goes without saying that by recounting his own experiences, Kirmiziyüz himself plays a role in these memories too. Seen this way, the three layers that are present in Kirmiziyüz’s solo are ‘the narrative text’, ‘the story’ and ‘the fabula’. In general terms, the fabula consists of “a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors”.⁵⁰ In *De radicalisering van Sadettin K.* these events mainly come from Kirmiziyüz’s own memories. In *Archive* however, two strands of events can be distinguished. On the one hand, you have the videoclips that provide Zaides with events out of which he can create his own choreography. On the other hand, by making his own choreography Zaides becomes an actor too. He creates a new event by adjusting the mirrored gestures. The story denotes the content of what is being told and consists of a “particular manifestation, inflection, and ‘colouring’ of a fabula.”⁵¹ In the way Zaides deals with the clips, by mirroring, forwarding and pausing them, it seems that the reality the videoclips present can be controlled. As we will see in a bit, Zaides changes this impression over the course of his solo. The modifications of the gestures for instance lead to a new angle from which the videoclips and the real they represent can be understood. Kirmiziyüz’s memories that constitute the content of the story are subject to ‘colouring’ too. As pointed out before, these memories are presented within the frame that is build around Kirmiziyüz’s question of radicalization. To conclude, the third layer, namely the text itself can be defined as “a text in which an agent or subject conveys to an addressee (‘tells the reader’) a story in a particular medium, such as language, imagery, sound, buildings or a combination thereof.”⁵² Kirmiziyüz addresses his spectators by using language, whereas Zaides not only uses language, but also sounds, videoclips and movements. The usefulness of the concept of narrative does not necessarily comes from the fact that we can point to these three different layers in a narrative

⁴⁸ Bal, “Working with Concepts,” 16.

⁴⁹ Bal, *Narratology*, 3.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 5.

text. Distinguishing between these layers does help however to account for particular effects of a narrative text.⁵³ In addition, it is impossible to account for all the effects of a narrative text, it therefore makes sense to focus on one or two elements. In the case of the solo this implies that we will look at the effects of the narrative structure that are related to the fact that there is only one person on stage. More specifically, by looking at the interaction of 'actor', 'character,' and 'narrator' we gain direct insight in how a soloist can relate him- or herself to the real in terms of narration. The actor, character and speaker are, as Mieke Bal notes, "the anthropomorphic figure" that figures respectively in the layers of the fabula, story and text.⁵⁴ The speaker or narrator corresponds with the figure of the agent in the text layer. The character functions within the layer of the story, although this term might be confusing since Kirmiziyüz and Zaides do not present themselves, or others, as fictional characters. Last but not least, the actor in the layer of the fabula denotes those who create or experience the events the story consists of.

While narrative is part of any cultural artefact that tells a story, Mieke Bal nevertheless grounds the concept firmly within the theory of narratology. Karel Vanhaesbrouck rightly observes that narratology is "a traditionally literary paradigm," and thus takes not into account the performative situation created by the solo.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, narrative is of use since this chapter is still concerned with the intra-scenically communication in a solo. This means that the presence of the spectator is not accounted for yet. In the subsequent chapter though the relationship between the one seeing, i.e. the spectator, and that which is seen will be discussed by using the initially narrative concept of focalization. For now, I will consider the solo to be a narrative text in which the above discussed layers are present. In the following analysis of *Archive* and *De radicalisering van Sadettin K.* the positioning of Kirmiziyüz and Zaides will thus be understood through the lens of narrative.

3.2 A personified narrative

To come back on the first-person narrative, it is basically a construction in which the narrator of the text is the same person as the character in the story layer. It can furthermore correspond with the actor in the fabula, although you cannot speak of the same person here. Especially when memories are recounted, as is the case in *De radicalisering van Sadettin K.*, the Kirmiziyüz in the memories is technically someone else than the Kirmiziyüz who performs his solo in the here and now of the theatre. In any case, in *Archive* as well as in *De radicalisering van Sadettin K.* the first-person narrative is at work. Furthermore, by having Kirmiziyüz and Zaides presenting themselves as themselves the rhetoric of truth Mieke Bal speaks about seems to get accentuated. Next to that, the solo reinforces the

⁵³ Ibid., 7.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 9.

⁵⁵ Karel Vanhaesbrouck, "Towards a Theatrical Narratology?," *Image and Narrative* 9, (2004): 1.

impression that only one person tells the story, because of its self-referential character. In terms of positioning, the first-person narrative helps to account for the effects that come from how the performer has constructed his position towards the real.

For instance, in *De radicalisering van Sadettin K.*, Kirmiziyüz recounts memories of when he was speaking as a son to his father, as a student to his teachers or as a father to his newborn son. Looking at the layer of the fabula, it thus becomes clear that Kirmiziyüz presents himself in various roles. Next to Kirmiziyüz's personal relationship to the real, this real is also presented as being multiple since it is recounted from various roles or points of view. This might have been the reason why Kirmiziyüz creates the impression that his relation to the event of radicalization is quite ambiguous. After all, he still does not know why he hasn't radicalized yet and stayed in the Netherlands. In a way, his ambiguous relation with this event of the real also comes to the fore in his way of quickly zooming in and out as has been demonstrated in the previous chapter.

Next to that, the real Kirmiziyüz is concerned with has not only to do with the event of radicalization. In his solo, Kirmiziyüz refers a few times explicitly to the theatrical situation he and the spectators find themselves in. For example, Kirmiziyüz justifies the sharing of him watching decapitation movies, by stating that the theatre is preliminary a place to be honest. Also, he questions his own motives for making performances that address hotly debated topics such as religion, family, immigration, Islam and the Netherlands. And, towards the end he compares himself with the spectator by stating that he wants to go home with a good feeling as well. He therefore demands applause and compliments after his solo is over. By exposing the structure of the theatrical event in such a way, Kirmiziyüz highlights how his solo is essentially staged. He furthermore exposes that the rhetoric of truth as implied by the first-person narrative is used as a staging element too. After all, this rhetoric might help to create the impression that Kirmiziyüz's account of his experiences of the real are true and thus believable. Actually, by exposing the staged nature of his solo Kirmiziyüz even constitute the impression of transparency. By exposing that as a theatre maker he is aware of the theatrical conventions, Kirmiziyüz creates the impression that the spectator really got to know him. As such, the rhetoric of truth arising from the first-person narrative clashes with the deceitful nature of the theatrical event. It seems that Kirmiziyüz wants to present himself as someone who knows very well how the real, either the theatrical event or the event of radicalization, is constructed. By using the first-person narrative to expose this construction the impression of transparency is created. In the next chapter it will be demonstrated though how this impression of transparency can be interpreted differently by the spectator.

In *Archive*, the use of the first-person narrative mediates differently in how Zaides positions himself towards the real. First of all, at the layer of the fabula there are two actors to be noticed. On the one hand, there are videoclips that provide Zaides with the material from which he constructs his

solo. On the other hand, Zaides is an actor too. By changing the violent gestures of the Israelites he creates a new event, namely the construction of a bodily archive. Nonetheless, at the beginning of his solo Zaides does not tell about himself, but rather ‘tells’ about the Israelites and the Palestinians.⁵⁶ He does this by physically mirroring the violent gestures in the clips. Also, by using a remote control he refers to the fact that he has been selecting and presenting the clips in a certain way. Thus, Zaides can also be considered to be an internal focalizer who directs the perception of the spectators. Anyhow, the videoclips can be regarded as a special co-performer. This implies that, strictly speaking, Zaides is not performing a solo. As we will see in chapter four however, when Zaides switches off the videoscreen the impression of him being alone on stage becomes much stronger. In terms of positioning, Zaides creates the impression that the real he deals with, namely the event of daily violence caused by Israelites, has nothing to do with his own life. Although he mentions that he is an Israelite too and lives in close proximity to the site where these clips were made, he approaches that reality as if it happens ‘over there’. This suggestion is evoked by how Zaides deals with the clips on stage. By using information fiches that appear on the right side of the stage and by using the remote control, the real the videoclips represent seems controllable and classifiable. In that sense, you can compare Zaides’ position with that of a scientist who tries to understand the functioning of cells by looking at them through a microscope. The lens, the magnifying glass in the microscope and the camera’s lens of the clips, thereby function as the medium through which you can understand the real, e.g. the functioning of cells or the functioning of the Israelites. Zaides literally tells about the others, the Israelites and Palestinians, by mirroring the movements and controlling the images. As such, the first-person narrative is not at work yet. Rather, Zaides’ position is that of an external narrator. Nonetheless, when he begins to alter the movements he zooms in on what such violent situations might imply for an individual. Zaides then physically explores the implication of the violent gestures within his own body. As such, the real the videos depict and that seems to be ‘over there’ in the beginning of the performance, seems to become ‘over here’ by Zaides’ physical involvement. Put differently, the real appears through the body of Zaides in the way he choreographs new dance phrases on the basis of the gestures in the videoclips.

You can then indeed conclude, as Ruthie Abeliovich does in her analysis of *Archive*, that Zaides has turned his body into an archive.⁵⁷ In being an external narrator at first and then switching to a first-person narrative, Zaides positions himself respectively quite distant and quite close to the real that is represented by the videoclips. This seems to be in line with the act of zooming in and out as discussed

⁵⁶ The Palestinians can be considered to be implicitly present since it is through their eyes, or lenses, that we come to see what happens in the West Bank area in terms of daily violence caused by Israelites.

⁵⁷ Ruthie Abeliovich, “Choreographing Violence. Arkadi Zaides’s *Archive*,” *The Drama Review* 60, no. 1 (2016): 170.

in the previous chapter. It might also point to the fact that by letting the others, in this case the Israelites, 'speak' first that Zaides is thereafter able to speak as himself. In any case, even if the spectator is inclined to take up the view Zaides present him, we will see in chapter four how the solo nevertheless complicates that possibility.

4. 'A real seeing person'

So far, it has been demonstrated how the solo as a dramaturgical strategy mediates in the way the relationship between an individual and an event of the real can be staged. Amongst others, it has been shown how the solo facilitates the act of zooming in and out. The real, being a social, political or personal one, defined how the performer was able to zoom in and out and could thereby position himself. Furthermore, it has been explained how the first-person narrative effects this positioning as well. For instance, the first-person narrative can be used to highlight the fact that there is only one performer on stage by whom we come to understand the unfolding of the actions and events that are related to the real. This highlighting might result in the impression that the performer presents a true account of these actions and events. In that sense, this rhetoric of truth contradicts the staged nature of the solo and theatre in general. So far though, the position of the spectators has hardly been addressed. Nonetheless, their presence is essential for understanding the specific performer-spectator relationship created by the solo. Next to that, by accounting for the communication that takes place between performer and spectator, we can analyse how the solo as dramaturgical strategy mediates in the positioning of the spectator. In other words, this chapter will focus on the extra-scenically communication by analysing the positioning of the spectator in the solo.

The concept of focalization, as earlier introduced with regard to the intra-scenically communication in chapter three, is thereby of relevance. Although the concept originates from the theory of narratology, theatre scholar Maaïke Bleeker shows how focalization also "mediates in the relationship between the visual address presented by a painting or performance and an actual seer as subject."⁵⁸ As we have seen in chapter three, the internal focalizer presents the actions and events of the fabula from a particular angle. In theatre, the internal focalizer does the same. It namely directs the attention of the spectators in such a way that they might take up the point of view this focalizer presents them with. Apart from the internal focalizer(s), there is always an external focalizer apparent in a performance. According to Maaïke Bleeker this is "the anonymous agent through whose eyes we

⁵⁸ Bleeker, *Visuality in the Theatre*, 38.

as audience see the performance.”⁵⁹ If the spectator is not alert of this anonymous agent, the performance can appear as “simply there to be seen.”⁶⁰ This for instance would imply that in *Archive* and *De radicalisering van Sadettin K.* spectators see the solos without being conscious of the fact that there is an actual relationship between them seeing and what they see. Such a situation can be described by the term absorption. The opposite of absorption is theatricality. Theatricality denotes the event in which a spectator becomes aware of the relation that exists between him seeing and what is seen. The anonymous agent through which eyes the solo is seen is thus temporarily exposed. Hiding or exposing this relationship has implications for how the world, as created on stage, takes into account that this world is perceived by the spectators too. If the illusion is created that this world exists independently from the position of the spectators, it becomes “a world they are looking into, rather than implicated in.”⁶¹

4.1 Focalization and direct communication

This last observation is of interest with regard to Hans-Thies Lehmann’s understanding of the theatre solo and monologue. As shortly mentioned in the introduction, Lehmann has shown how the solo is exemplary of postdramatic theatre practices that conceive of theatre as an event that has at its core the communication with the spectator.⁶² Even more than groupperformances, the solo offers the possibility of diminishing the intra-scenically communication to an absolute minimum in favor of the extra-scenically communication. By this, Lehmann means that the communication between spectator and performer becomes foregrounded while the communication that is supposed to take place on stage more or less disappears.⁶³ The situation thus created by the solo intensifies the direct communication taking place between the spectator and performer. The spectator is not presented with a fictional, closed-off world that he can simply ‘step in to’ as would have been the case for ballet and drama. Rather, the postdramatic theatre solo implicates the spectator within the situation created by the performer. This situation can furthermore be strengthened by the fact that the performer appears as a “real speaking person” instead as a character who plays a role in a fictional, closed-off world.⁶⁴

Whereas the direct communication between the spectator and performer can be understood as a dialogue taking place in the here and now of the theatre, the dialogue in drama rather confirms the absence of this communication. After all, the dialogue does not account for the presence of the

⁵⁹ Ibid., 31.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 31.

⁶¹ Ibid., 20.

⁶² Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, 104

⁶³ Ibid., 127.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 127.

spectators who are witnessing this dialogue. By creating a fictional, closed-off world, drama and ballet try to hide the relationship between the one seeing and what is seen. This situation is different compared to the one in which the intensified extra-scenically communication leads to the perception that as a spectator you are part of the “real theatrical situation” as it takes place in the here and now.⁶⁵ This might lead to the conclusion that in such situations the spectator might become aware of the fact that he is looking and that there is a relation between him seeing and what he sees. Nevertheless, Lehmann is not so clear at this point. For instance, his observation that a performer appears as a real speaking person seems to underestimate the fact that this is, after all, a staged impression. Therefore, focalization can be of use to understand what happens in a solo with regard to how the spectator comes to understand the vision he is presented with in the solo. In what follows, the concept of focalization will thus be used to analyze the positioning of the spectators in *Archive* and *De radicalisering van Sadettin K.*

In *Archive* as well as in *De radicalisering van Sadettin K.* the spectator is presented with a vision on how the individual and the world are related to one another. This vision is communicated by how Kirmiziyüz and Zaides relate themselves to the real. To be more specific, Kirmiziyüz and Zaides relate themselves to specific events of the real, such as radicalization and the Israel-Palestine conflict. Kirmiziyüz hereby also approaches the theatrical event as an instance of the real. In *Archive* the spectator is positioned in such a way that he can come to understand the body to be an archive. As an archive, the body is on the one hand inscribed by societal structures and on the other hand free to change these inscriptions. Zaides shows how a body might physically remember structures of violence while it has the potentiality to change these structures as well. In *De radicalisering van Sadettin K.* the spectator is invited to take up the point of view that Kirmiziyüz is completely transparent the way he relates about the events of radicalization, immigration, religion, Islam etc. This is amongst others a result of how Kirmiziyüz exposes instead of hides the staged nature of his solo. Nonetheless, there are at least two moments in both solos in which the spectator might become aware of the fact that he has been taking up these points of view. In these moments the spectator becomes aware of the fact that he has been looking. This will be explained below. It will then be demonstrated in chapter five what such moments might mean for how the spectator comes to understand the relation between theatre and reality.

4.2 Do you see what you see?

Approximately half way during his solo, Zaides switches off the videoscreen. All of a sudden silence reigns and we see how Zaides starts to repeat the mirrored gestures of the Israelites. The repeated

⁶⁵ Ibid., 127.

gestures are no more concordant with the gestures of the Israelites though. It thus takes a moment for the spectator to align Zaides' presence with the absence of the clips. This is exactly the moment in which the spectator might become aware of the relationship between him seeing and what he sees. Before the screen was switched off, the relation between the videoclips and Zaides was quite straightforward. Zaides mirrored the violent gestures of the Israelites and slowly started to change these gestures. Nevertheless, Zaides' gestures could always be traced back to the acts of the filmed Israelites. When the screen is switched off however, this relationship becomes questioned. There are no more clips that can testify where Zaides' gestures are based on. Only the etched images of the Israelites in your mind can testify this relation. It is obvious though that no one can 'see' which images and gestures you have remembered exactly. This implies that as a spectator you become aware of the fact that you and the other spectators are the only ones who can 'see' Zaides' movements in relation to the videoclips. Subsequently, you have to set up the relation between Zaides' gestures and the videoclips yourself. This might happen in the way you start to compare Zaides' gestures to the gestures of the Israelites for instance. Nonetheless, in refiguring how Zaides' gestures are related to the previously displayed clips, you become aware of the fact that in the way you refigure this relationship is dependent on how you have regarded the videoclips before. In that sense, the spectator might become conscious of the relation that exists between him seeing and what he has seen, namely the videoclips. How you will come to understand Zaides' proposal of creating a bodily archive is subject to if you have or have not seen the clips. Since the videoclips also refer to a highly mediatized event this situation might also lead the spectator to a more general question of how he has been looking at such clips on the news for instance. In a first encounter with the clips in *Archive* the spectator might think of the clips as 'I have seen this before.' Zaides nevertheless asks the spectator to rethink such assumptions by switching off the screen. He thereby questions the spectator in what he has seen by altering the gestures of the Israelites.

In *De radicalisering van Sadettin K.*, Kirmiziyüz creates a similar moment as Zaides does. Towards the very end of his solo, Kirmiziyüz asks the spectators a question. He namely wonders if the spectators have been looking at him or at someone who has impersonated Sadettin Kirmiziyüz. At first, this comment might underwrite the created impression of transparency. At the same time though it questions how the spectators have been looking at Kirmiziyüz so far. If he has been truly impersonated, what kind of character have we then been looking at? And does this mean that what has been told on stage can be considered to be fictional, albeit the seemingly true to life stories about discrimination, being a father, etc.? The moment you start to look at Kirmiziyüz's solo that way, it seems that you count no more on the created impression you have of Kirmiziyüz being transparent and sincere. It actually confronts the spectator with a question of what him made believe or not believe that Kirmiziyüz was on

stage as himself. This moment exposes the relation that the one who sees is implicated in what he sees. It is by his beliefs, fears, etc. that the spectator has been perceiving Kirmiziyüz a certain way. The spectator might have forgotten about this relationship by Kirmiziyüz's transparent account of his experiences and the staged nature of his solo. Next to that, if we can be tricked that 'easily' in theatre, what does that say about the personal and authentic presentations of people in the real?

As both examples show, the theatricality of both moments leads to a situation in which the spectator becomes aware of the fact that he has been looking at these solos in a particular way. Such moments might occur in any performance of course whether it is a solo or not. Nonetheless, it seems that the solo strengthens the perception of theatricality since there is only one performer on stage. In *Archive* for instance the presence of Zaides suddenly becomes stressed when the clips are no more displayed. Apart from the fact that this is a moment in which the spectator starts to question his perception of the videoclips, it might also accentuate the difference between the spectators as a collective and the performer as an individual. Since Zaides has positioned himself quite clearly as an Israelite in the beginning, the spectators might now wonder what it means that they look with Dutch 'eyes' to an event of the real that is happening 5600 kilometres away from where they live.⁶⁶ Positioned this way, the spectator seems to be addressed as a 'real seeing person.' In this case, real refers to the awareness of the spectator that apart from being spectator he is also Dutch and has or has not an opinion regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict, etc.

Also *De radicalisering van Sadettin K.* positions the spectator in such a way that the relation between theatre and reality is not just communicated by how Kirmiziyüz positions himself to the real. The moment the spectator starts to think about who he has actually seen on stage, he is confronted with his own ideas concerning radicalization, immigration, discrimination too. This confrontation might have happened earlier in the performance too. At this specific instance though, the spectator has a reason to question the staged nature of this confrontation. By this I mean that Kirmiziyüz's question if he has been impersonated or not also questions the staged nature of his initial wondering on why he has not radicalized yet. It furthermore highlights the fact that Kirmiziyüz's comments on the theatrical event have been intentional. The spectator might become aware that he has been led to think in a particular way about radicalization. The difference between Kirmiziyüz on stage and the spectators in the auditorium is hereby of relevance too. The situation created by the solo actually accentuates how Kirmiziyüz presents himself as someone who is not sure which world he belongs to. On the one hand Kirmiziyüz tries to side with the spectators but on the other hand a comment such as if he has been impersonated or not distances him from the spectators.

⁶⁶ Distance Rotterdam – West Bank, according to Google Maps.

If the spectators become aware of the fact that they are implicated in the world as created on stage by Zaides and Kirmiziyüz, this implies that the relationship between theatre and reality is also constituted by the act of looking of the spectators. The spectators might become aware of this through the theatrical moments in the solos, but also by how their position as spectators relates to the presence of the individual on stage. From a conceptual point of view, the solo can lead to an understanding of the relationship between theatre and reality in terms of how the small world, i.e. that of an individual and the big world, i.e. that of society are positioned with regard to one other.

5. A real speaking person

Understanding the positioning of the spectators and performer in terms of the big and small world shows us how the spectators are positioned as real seeing persons. Also, it deepens our understanding of the notion of real speaking persons, as coined by Lehmann. Especially performers that present themselves as themselves, the notion of the real speaking person gets an extra dimension. It has been mentioned before that it is significant that Zaides and Kirmiziyüz present themselves as themselves. This has for instance to do with a reinforcing of the rhetoric of truth that comes from the first-person narrative. As will become clear in this chapter, their solos also show that no one but them could have addressed these events of the real. This is due to their personal background and where they come from. For instance, because of his Turkish-Dutch background Kirmiziyüz seems to be the 'right' person to address issues such as radicalization, the Islam, integration etc. With regard to *Archive*, the fact that Zaides is Israelite matters for how he relates himself to the gestures of the Israelites in the clips. In a way, the personal is political too. For instance, it is already a question of politics if you look at who speaks as Deirdre Heddon puts it in her book *Autobiography and Performance* (2008).⁶⁷

4.1 Who speaks

When someone speaks, this implies that he directs himself to someone else. According to Mieke Bal: "Only when speech is addressed to a second person can language fulfill its mission to communicate."⁶⁸ The term deixis thereby denotes how the 'I' who speaks relates to the 'you' who listens. In principle, the personal pronouns I and you are empty forms that become defined in how the relation between 'I' and 'you' is set up. Maaïke Bleeker explains how deixis can therefore be used to

⁶⁷ Deirdre Heddon, *Autobiography and Performance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 20.

⁶⁸ Bal, *Narratology*, 30.

analyze the extra-scenically communication in theatre.⁶⁹ It is thereby interesting that the solo accentuates the relation between I and you. For instance, you could think of Zaides and Kirmiziyüz being the 'I' and the spectators being 'you'. This distinction between I and you that is accentuated by the form of the solo, is used by both performers in order to communicate with the spectators about the relation between theatre and the real.

For instance, Kirmiziyüz's account of the events of radicalization immigration, religion, and discrimination might be read as an account of someone who lives in two different 'worlds', namely a Dutch and Turkish one. But, these same issues have come up over the past years with regard to how the Dutch identity has been constructed. Cultural sociologist Dick Houtman explains how Islamic identities, such as radicalized Muslims, imams who refused to shake hands with female ministers, immigration and integration were 'pathologized' in order to define our Dutch identity. This led amongst others to an exclusion of all who were thought to be different than the 'Dutch'.⁷⁰ This exclusion is quite obvious in how Kirmiziyüz is literally not part of the spectators who are looking at him. The moment Kirmiziyüz asks the spectators if they have been looking at him or at someone who has impersonated him, the spectators become aware of how they have been regarding Kirmiziyüz. For instance, their perception of him is probably influenced by how they conceive of an event of radicalization themselves. Seen that way, it is as much by Kirmiziyüz as by the spectators that the world on stage is created. As soon as the spectators start to grasp that they are not just looking into a world on stage, they might realize that Kirmiziyüz's account of the real is as much about him as about them.

Archive, in comparison with *De radicalisering van Sadettin K.*, uses the specific situation of the solo differently to communicate about the relation between theatre and reality. As stated before, when the videoscreen is switched-off the spectators realize that they are implicated in the vision that they are presented with. By guiding the attention of the spectators to his body, the spectators become aware of how Zaides approaches the gestures of the Israelites in a different way. In this way, Zaides points to the potentiality an individual has to change a situation. Dramaturg Jonas Rutgeers understands this positioning of Zaides in terms of the concept of *gestus* of Brecht.⁷¹ According to Rutgeers, we can understand *gestus* as a term that describes how our daily movements, patterns of behavior, relations, social codes, etc. are determined by the social, historical and cultural contingencies by which we live. Nonetheless, Brecht accounts for the fact that these patterns of behavior and social codes can be changed by individual action. Of interest is, as Rutgeers points out, that Brecht also conceived of *gestus* as being 'theatrical' in the sense that a theatrical *gestus* is able to break through

⁶⁹ Bleeker, *Visuality in the Theatre*, 19.

⁷⁰ Dick Houtman, "Op jacht naar de echte werkelijkheid. Dromen over authenticiteit in een wereld zonder fundamenten," (Inaugural address, Erasmus University, Rotterdam, June 13, 2008).

⁷¹ Jonas Rutgeers, "Een kort Organon voor de dans. Over Bertold Brecht en Arkadi Zaides," *Etcetera. Tijdschrift voor Podiumkunsten* 144, (2016): 40-44.

the social, daily gestus.⁷² Taking this into account, you could describe Zaides' mirroring of the gestures of the Israelites in the beginning of his solo as mirroring the social, daily gesti that are related to the specific social, cultural and historical environment the Israelites live in. Nevertheless, by changing these daily gesti and by incorporating them differently in his own body Zaides also shows how the theatrical gestus, might break with the gesti that have been socially inscribed.⁷³ The form of the solo then accentuates this potential since it foregrounds Zaides individual presence on stage. Even when the clips are turned on again, they do not seem that important anymore. It is way more interesting to see how Zaides expands his choreography by exaggerating gestures and sounds. As such, *Archive* not only communicates about a specific event of the real as depicted in the videoclips. The solo also offers the possibility for the spectator to understand from a more general point of view how an individual within a particular environment might still be able to change the conditions and contingencies by which he or she is used to live.

In their own way, Kirmiziyüz and Zaides seem to use the solo to not only position themselves to specific events of the real, but also to communicate about this positioning with the spectator. In doing so, it seems that they surpass the 'purely' personal connection they have with these events of the real by addressing the spectators not only as spectators but as 'real looking persons'. By being implicated in what happens on stage, the spectator becomes aware that it is because of his specific position from which he looks that he sees what he sees. In *De radicalisering van Sadettin K.* this might lead to the perception that Kirmiziyüz's personal question about why he has not radicalized yet, is also a question for the spectators of why they would or would not consider Kirmiziyüz to be a radicalized Muslim. This furthermore refers to the question of how we are used to look at radicalized Muslims in general and how that defines our position from which we look at the Dutch society. In *Archive*, the position of the individual on stage is used to emphasize its potentiality of taking action and changing the hitherto commonly accepted social codes or patterns of behavior. In that sense, both solos function as an example of how the big and the small world work into each other. The solo mediates in this dynamic in how it positions the spectators as a collective and the performer as an individual.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, by approaching the solo as a dramaturgical strategy various instances of positioning with regard to the performer and spectator have been discussed. The strength of approaching the solo this

⁷² Ibid., 40-41.

⁷³ Ibid., 44.

way comes from the fact that it enables you to take into account various elements the solo is usually associated with. Therefore, this thesis focussed did not focus on one element but brought together various elements such as the presentation of self or the direct communication between spectator and performer. It can be concluded that the various instances of positioning all had to do with the act of zooming in and out or with a turn in- and outwards. It seems that this is one of the essential characteristics of the solo, because, as mentioned in chapter two, if the performer does not 'speak' in terms of language, gestures, etc. nothing remains. In one way or another, the soloist has thus to open up by using for instance personal experiences to communicate with the spectators about the real. In chapter two and three, how the performer zoomed in or out in terms of how he positioned himself to the real has been discussed. Amongst others, it has been shown how the solo might accentuate the effect of the rhetoric of truth that comes from the use of the first-person narrative. The first-person narrative might also reinforce the perception that there is only one person on stage by whom we come to understand what is happening. In *Archive* this was of particular relevance with regard to how the position of the individual in relation to the community was communicated. In *De radicalisering van Sadettin K.* the relation between individual and community was at stake too. In this case though the first-person narrative was used to play with the perception the spectators had of Kirmiziyüz. From a conceptual point of view, the solo offers the possibility to position performer and spectator in such a way that the relation between theatre and the real becomes perceptible on various levels.

It has been mentioned in the introduction that this study tried to combine insights from theatre and dance solos. Nonetheless, medium specific elements of both disciplines such as language versus movement have hardly been accounted for with regard to how the performer positioned himself and his spectators. Thus, this element could be explored more in further research. Also, it would have been interesting if the solos of *Archive* and *De radicalisering van Sadettin K.* had been compared to other solos. A solo such as *Fit to Fly* might have been of interest to discuss somewhat more that it does or does not matter that Zaides and Kirmiziyüz presents themselves as themselves.⁷⁴ In *Fit to Fly* an actor, albeit his presence as a real speaking person, relates about the real by positioning himself towards the event of the European refugee crisis. This solo could have been used to demonstrate more clearly what impersonating a character does for the positioning of the spectator with regard to the real and the theatre.

⁷⁴ *Fit to fly*, directed by Casper Vandeputte, het Nationale Toneel, Den Haag, March 17, 2016.

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