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The power of presence : Marina Abramović's *The Artist Is Present* (2010) as an invitation to dwell in public feeling

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THE POWER OF PRESENCE:
Marina Abramović's *The Artist Is Present* (2010)
As an Invitation to Dwell in Public Feeling

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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Certificate of Approval

This is to certify that the accompanying thesis by Natalie Q. Godfrey has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation with Honors in Rhetoric Studies.

Dr. Heather A. Hayes

Whitman College
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Abstract

Neoliberalism privatizes social problems by severing the individual from the collective. This extends to human expressions of feeling. As a result, the neoliberal state captures potentially collective expressions of feeling as individual sentiments, dampening the possibility for collective political expression. This process is represented and sustained by what I term “the feelings industry.” To better understand how the feelings industry functions and explore some features of a space where it might be resisted, I turn to a performance by artist Marina Abramović. I argue that Abramović’s *The Artist is Present* (2010) produces a space with vast potential for collective expression of affect; it serves as a constructed invitation to dwell in public feeling. Through the experience of collective presence, bodies within this space may resist neoliberal privatization of feeling.

KEYWORDS: *Neoliberalism, Feelings Industry, Affect, Public Feelings, Performance Art, Marina Abramović*

Introduction: The Artist is Present

Marina Abramović is a controversial artist. She is and always has been a source of intrigue since she began performing in the 1970s.¹ She has stabbed her own hands, cut her own stomach, and whipped her own back.² She has passed out in a ring of fire and laid on a bed of ice.³ She has taken psychotropic drugs and pulled out her own hair.⁴ She has allowed others to touch and mutilate her body.⁵ She has made people walk past her nude in a doorway.⁶ She has screamed for hours, lived in a cube for days, and sat in a museum for months.⁷ She has been called crazy and insane, over the top and out there; she has been described as cheesy, exploitive, and even satanic.⁸ Some flock to her strange uniqueness in this way, lauding her transgressions of the body; many others, however, uncomfortably dismiss her as obscene and/or psychotic.⁹

Abramović is thus known for her “subversive” performances, her “pushing” of boundaries and “causing” of controversies.”¹⁰ This is very much in keeping with performance art as a movement, which already existed in full-swing by the time Abramović first begins performing.¹¹ As a derivative of conceptual art—a postmodern reaction to the avant-garde art of the 1950s, performance art situates itself as a primarily anti-establishment medium, “executed by artists impatient with the limitations of more established art forms and determined to take their art directly to the public.”¹² Within such an anarchic function, performance art emphasizes both a “non-materialistic” and “inter-disciplinary” stance, using one body or many to interweave several media together in the interest of the conceptual over the quantifiable.¹³ This provocative emphasis on the body, on the body as the material, thus serves to interrogate the psycho-social relationship between artist(s) and spectator(s), to

polemically probe audience(s) to reconsider their conventional conceptions of both art and society.¹⁴

In one of her more recent and well-known performances, Abramović quite explicitly calls attention to the presence of her body. As part of a larger (re)performance retrospective of her past works at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA), Abramović additionally performs *The Artist is Present* (2010)—one of the longest and most profound performances of her career. From March 14 to May 31, 2010, within the museum hours of operation, Abramović physically performs her own presence: she presents her body for 75 days to a transient public audience. In the middle of the MoMA's atrium, Abramović sits in stillness and silence, inviting visitors to sit opposite her and do the same, to meet her gaze for a duration of their choosing. By the end of the performance, Abramović sits with a total of 1,545 visitors for a combined total 736 hours.¹⁵ The resulting reactions within the space are quite profound: many of these visitors emote by smiling, crying, and/or placing one or both hands over their heart; over 10% (approximately 168 people) produce tears while sitting.¹⁶ In effect, this performance seems to encourage an affectively charged space that allows for bodily sensations to surface.

In this thesis, I seek to locate Abramović's *The Artist is Present* (2010) in a greater discussion of individual and collective expressions of feeling. I begin by situating the performance within the larger context of neoliberalism, in which the neoliberal state privatizes social problems by severing the individual from the collective. In section one, I explore how neoliberalism functions to sever the individual from the collective with specific reference to human expressions of feeling. I describe

how privatization confines potentially collective expressions of feeling to individual sentiments and thus dampens the possibilities for collective political expressions. This process is represented and sustained by what I term “the feelings industry,” which depends on market solutions to aid individual self-regulation of feeling.

In section two, I engage the affective turn within rhetorical studies. I attend specifically to Eve Sedgwick’s concept of affect as a mode of being, Melissa Gregg and Gregory Seigworth’s description of affect as “synonymous with *force* or *forces of encounter*” and as “a gradient of bodily capacity,” and Sara Ahmed’s theorization of affect as capable of directing and orienting bodies.¹⁷ It is here, within this language of mode, force, and capacity, that I see affect as a concept useful for its potential to mobilize bodies into collection action. Furthermore, within rhetoric’s uptake of affect theory, I turn to Ann Cvetkovich’s concept of public feelings as potential for public engagement and collective action in opposition to neoliberal privatization.

To better understand how the feelings industry functions and to think about some features of a space where it might be resisted, I then turn to Abramović’s *The Artist is Present* (2010). In section three, I argue that *The Artist is Present* (2010) produces a space with vast potential for collective expression of affect; that it serves as a “constructed invitation” to dwell in public feeling.¹⁸ In drawing some conclusions, I explore the power of bodily presence to engage affect and in turn critically engage public feeling and collective action. I argue that through the affective potential constructed by Abramović, bodies within her performance space may resist neoliberal privatization of feelings. In conclusion, I more broadly propose performance art as site of resistance against neoliberal forces, apt to enable an imagination of the alternative.

I. Neoliberalism & the Privatization of Feelings

At its core, neoliberalism lauds free market capitalism as “an organizing principle” for not only the economy but nearly all aspects of social life.¹⁹ As described by David Harvey (2005), neoliberalism and its proponents view the free market as “an apolitical force that fosters personal liberty, encourages individual responsibility, ensures the most efficient utilization of all social and economic resources, and promotes an optimal way of life.”²⁰ Proponents “insist the market is akin to natural law” and that it will regulate itself.²¹ In effect, a neoliberal agenda thus privileges a pro-business model of government, emphasizing deregulation, privatization, and a general withdrawal of the state from economic (and social) matters.²² Such neoliberal strategies, as epitomized under Reagan in the 1980s, include “cutting taxes, curbing government spending (particularly on social services), doing away with unionized labor as much as possible, and slashing regulations to create a social, legal, and political environment conducive to business.”²³ In this model, the role of state is to protect the presumed neutrality of the market by enacting and upholding as little regulation as possible.

This emphasis on market neutrality, however, (dis)places the burden of responsibility from the system onto the individual. While advancing minimal government regulation in state form, neoliberalism simultaneously enacts a Foucauldian form of “governmentality,” or self-governance, in which “subjects under neoliberalism regulate themselves [based on] . . . modes of rationality that support the prevailing market order.”²⁴ Such modes of market rationality, including “individualism, self-reliance, consumerism, and personal gain/profit,” thus become

measures of judgment for assessing an individual's behavior. A neoliberal subject is judged as "normal and functional" insofar as they are able and willing to demonstrate these rationalities and accept "'personal responsibility' for their own problems."²⁵ Conversely, a neoliberal subject who fails to display this behavior is "assumed to fail not only as an economic actor but also as a rational or responsible being."²⁶ Neoliberalism's emphasis on "personal responsibility" thereby locates agency primarily within the individual, obfuscating the accountability of larger systematic forces and naturalizing the suffering of those who fail according to the logic of the market.²⁷ Any economic or social problem thus becomes framed as a result of failed self-governance and/or the state's failure to maintain the neutrality of the free market.

Privatization & The Pseudo-Public

In theorizing any economic or social problem, neoliberalism foregrounds the individual as both the source and the solution. In effect, neoliberalism privatizes the individual. As Mary Douglas Vavrus (2002) argues, "[n]eoliberalism thus privileges private, corporate solutions to social problems and tends to marginalize critiques of racism and classism as potentially subordinating practices."²⁸ Instead of addressing the peculiar intricacies of the larger public, neoliberalism reifies the idealized narrative of equal economic opportunity for all individuals, regardless of race, gender, and class. Solutions to social problems are therefore always framed as market solutions; individualism, self-reliance, consumerism, and personal gain/profit exist as mechanisms for economic and social ascendance.²⁹ This privatization tactic not only

alienates individuals from each other but moreover encumbers collective identification of systematic forces and chills collective action to dismantle those forces.

Lauren Berlant (1997) argues that this privatization extends into the conceptualization of American citizenship, working to “collaps[e] the political and the personal” in turn creating an “intimate public.” She calls this public (of which she refers to the political public under Reagan) a “political pseudo sphere,” where private concerns become framed as public discussions “vital to how citizens should act.”³⁰ As a result, Berlant argues, “[t]he experience of social hierarchy is intensely individuating, yet it also makes people public and generic.”³¹ Seemingly private and intimate matters, such as sexuality, reproduction, marriage, morality and family values, are thereby seen as part of individual rationality and character.³² This move renders “[c]itizenship as a condition of social membership produced by personal acts and values, . . . [n]o longer valuing personhood as something directed toward public life.”³³ The proposed shrinking of the state thus simultaneously creates a pseudo-public of separate private realms, working to dislocate individuals, regulate those individuals, and effectively disorder collective efforts to address larger political problems.

The Feelings Industry

Because neoliberalism privatizes the individual, in turn creating a privatized “public,” I argue that neoliberalism moreover privatizes human expressions of feeling. This process is represented and sustained by what I term “the feelings industry,” a privatized web of consumer goods and services that enable the individual to rationally

govern their feelings. Consistent with the neoliberal model, these market-based solutions serve to burden individuals and constrain collective expressions.

Luigi Esposito and Fernando M. Perez (2014) expand the purview of neoliberalism to encompass the commodification of mental health.³⁴ In line with the privatization of the individual and market-based solutionism, they identify “the tendency to treat “mental illness” as a problem within the individual” as “supported within the prevailing neoliberal logic that downplays [(a)] the social realm, [(b)] treats individuals as self-contained agents, and [(c)] pathologizes thoughts and behaviors that deviate from what the market defines as functional, productive, or desirable.”³⁵ This commodification of mental health readily aligns with modes of market rationality that serve as measures of judgment for assessing an individual’s behavior. In fact, in more specific terms, Esposito and Perez suggest:

. . . failing to display these sorts of behavioral and/or attitudinal qualities is very commonly attributed to some type of personal dysfunction or pathology. Furthermore, because the prevailing market order is assumed to be fundamentally sound, blaming any behavioral deviations or adverse conditions/circumstances on social, political, or economic forces is typically regarded as little more than an excuse for problems that lie within the individual. It is up to the individual, therefore, to overcome whatever pathology they might have by taking the proper steps—for example, seeking and being able to afford the proper medical/psychiatric treatment that might enable that individual to make the necessary behavioral/attitudinal adjustments that will lead to a happier, more productive, and fulfilling life.³⁶

Neoliberal privatization thus functions to privatize mental health, burdening the individual with “personal responsibility” as both the source of and the solution to the problem. Likewise, this logic purports that the solution lies in the market: individuals must seek and be able to afford “the proper” goods and services to rationally govern

their mental health. Accordingly, if unable to do so, the individual is to blame—not the market or its ideology.

Though not explicitly linked, I argue that the commodification of mental health relates to the privatization of feelings. Discourse surrounding mental health overlaps with greater discussions of self-help and/or self-care.³⁷ Contemporary self-care may refer to “the active process of recovering, maintaining, and improving one’s health.”³⁸ This logic generally locates self-care within practices that concern “physical techniques of the body,” identifying acts that an individual can attend to for general well-being.³⁹ I argue that, as part of the body, feelings are intrinsically linked to health and well-being. Many self-care goods and services offer ways to assuage general states of being, including general and/or specific feelings of depression, anxiety, stress, insomnia, grief, anger, sadness, etc. Mapping more specifically into neoliberalism, such self-care rhetoric with regard to feelings positions the individual as personally responsible for their own health and thus the regulation of their own bodies, sensations, and feelings. This process is likewise laden with power, as certain bodies, sensations and feelings are privileged over others in terms of race, class, and gender. Neoliberal privatization thus applies to feelings through its emphasis on the ability of individual to self-govern in terms of the prevailing market rationalities. The success and/or failure to do so works to define the individual as functional, productive, or desirable in such society.

The feelings industry is thereby comprised of the goods and services put forth by the market that enable the individual to self-regulate how they express feelings. This may include self-help and self-care books that help individuals find happiness, coloring books that help individuals with stress-relief, apps that help catalogue how individuals

feel, or advertisement strategies for products that aim to make individuals feel good, such as lotions, candles, teas, candies, exercises, and even medicines. This privatization and subsequent industry strives for—and thrives off—self-regulation. By the late 1980s, health conscious goods and services, such as diet foods, health clubs, and vitamins, garnered billions of dollars alone.⁴⁰ Neoliberalism not only profits from the efficiency of a healthy, rational, desirable body—a “normal and functional” body that can produce labor—but depends on the affective labor of the individual to self-govern.

II. Affect, Rhetoric, & Public Feelings

In this section, I argue that affect theory offers a constructive entry point for new ways to think (and feel) about neoliberalism, the feelings industry, and spaces of potential resistance. While neoliberalism functions by privatizing the individual, disordering the collective, affect theory and its axiom of bodies in proximity, sensing together, suggests alternative modes of engaging the privatization of feeling. For these purposes, I explore public feeling as a means for public engagement and collective action. I build off scholarship attached to the affective turn, with specific attention to Eve Sedgwick's concept of affect as a mode of being, Melissa Gregg and Gregory Seigworth's description of affect as "synonymous with *force* or *forces of encounter*" and as "a gradient of bodily capacity," and Sara Ahmed's theorization of affect as capable of directing and orienting bodies.⁴¹ It is here, within this language of mode, force, and capacity, that I see affect as a concept useful for its potential to mobilize bodies into collection action. I turn to Ann Cvetkovich's concept of public feelings more specifically to explore spaces with vast potential for collective expression of affect—for perhaps in this capacity to feel together we may oppose the neoliberal force to feel separately.⁴²

The Affective Turn

Since the 1990s, many scholars of social life have more readily attended to affect theory as a way to account for the everyday lived experiences that seem to subsist in excess of meaning.⁴³ This has been called "the affective turn" in several

disciplines including rhetorical studies, though many scholars would argue that affect has always been explored in some form—there has always been an affective element to discourse.⁴⁴ Regardless, such a “turn” marks the formal emergence of affect as both an object and a method for scholarly criticism.⁴⁵

Patricia T. Clough and Jean O. Halley (2007) coin “the affective turn” in their edited volume of the same phrase, doing so by situating the turn within a preexisting trajectory of affect scholarship authored by Baruch Spinoza (1677), Henri Bergson (1896), and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1980).⁴⁶ To Clough and Halley, the affective turn refers to contemporary scholars who are increasingly informed by such theories; scholars that “treat affectivity as a substrate of potential bodily responses, often autonomic responses, in excess of consciousness.”⁴⁷ In this sense, affect is located within the body as pre- or non-conscious potential.

Clough and Halley primarily cite Brian Massumi (1987) as a more recent affect scholar, who specifically translates Spinoza’s affect (*affectus*) as the ability or bodily capacity “to affect and be affected.”⁴⁸ He further argues that Spinoza’s affect is not “a personal feeling” but “a prepersonal intensity” that “[corresponds] to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another” and “[implies] an augmentation or diminution in that body’s capacity to act.”⁴⁹ In this sense, affect can be described as precognitive sensory experiences in relation to other bodies, as non-conscious and extra-discursive—yet not quite “presocial,” as Massumi later argues.⁵⁰ Clough and Halley maintain Massumi’s definition while modifying it to comprise a “reflux” between conscious *and* non-conscious experiences.⁵¹ This binary between the

prepersonal and the personal, the non-conscious and the conscious, thus becomes a springboard for later debates on the differences between affect, emotion, and feeling.

Melissa Gregg, and Gregory J. Seigworth (2010) further refer to the affective turn in their own edited volume, similarly tracing the influence of the turn through Massumi's engagement of Spinozist philosophy, while also acknowledging Eve Sedgwick's invocation of Sylvan Tomkin's psychobiology.⁵² Gregg and Seigworth pinpoint two specific articles from 1995 that orient the turn to affect: Eve Sedgwick and Adam Frank's "Shame in the Cybernetic Fold" and Brian Massumi's "The Autonomy of Affect."⁵³ To Gregg and Seigworth, the main difference between these two projects exists as "a certain inside-out/outside-in difference in directionality," for Tomkins-thought posits "affect as the prime interest *motivator* that comes to put the drive in bodily drives" while Spinozist-thought posits "affect as an entire, vital, and *modulating field* of myriad becomings across human and non-human" bodies (emphasis mine).⁵⁴ In this sense, affect can be located dependent or independent of the body, though nevertheless still in relation to the body.

In closer contrast to one another, Massumi and Sedgwick differ in their concern for the differences between affect, emotion, and feeling. As outlined by Clough and Halley, Massumi is much more concerned with affect as precognitive and extra-discursive; affect as *autonomous*:

Affect is autonomous to the degree to which it escapes confinement in the particular body whose vitality, or potential for interaction, it is. Formed, qualified, situated perceptions and cognitions fulfilling functions of actual connection or blockage are the capture and closure of affect. Emotion is the intensest (most contracted) expression of that capture and of the fact that something has always and again escaped.⁵⁵

Thus, for Massumi, affect and emotion seem to fall along the conscious-nonconscious, inside/outside binary. Affect in Massumi's sense exists in excess of language, outside our conscious experience and is located solely in the body. Emotion is thus a momentary capture of such underlying intensity, the fleeting impingement of non-conscious experience into our consciousness.

Sedgwick, on the other hand, is less concerned with such distinction between affect and emotion and is more concerned with techniques for non-dualistic thought and pedagogy.⁵⁶ To Sedgwick, affect is a mode of being; a way of living; a way of teaching and learning.⁵⁷ Affect is a way to recover the de-privileged body and its sensorium; to complicate the separation between bodies and language or signification.⁵⁸ Sedgwick uses "affect" and "emotion" almost interchangeably, though still maintains Tomkins' working definition of affect as subscribing to "a limited number of affects . . . [that] combine to produce what are normally thought of as emotions, which . . . are theoretically unlimited in number."⁵⁹ In this sense, Sedgwick acknowledges an affect-emotion correlation, though demonstrates less concern for the conceptual distinction perpetuated by Massumi.

Gregg and Seigworth themselves describe affect as "synonymous with *force* or *forces of encounter*," as "transpiring within and across the subtlest of shuttling intensities," and thus can be defined as:

a gradient of bodily capacity—a supple incrementalism of ever-modulating force-relations—that rises and falls not only along various rhythms and modalities of encounter but also through the troughs and sieves of sensation and sensibility, an incrementalism that coincides with belonging to compartments of matter of virtually any and every sort.⁶⁰

In this sense, affect retains its initial connotations as precognitive, non-conscious, and bodily experience, existing as a *capacity* or *potential*. I see this as the most useful term for my project, as affective potential ultimately underlies the potential mobilization of bodies into collective action.

Sara Ahmed (2010) additionally embraces the potential that affect necessitates as well as perpetuates.⁶¹ Ahmed contends that, “we may walk into a room and ‘feel the atmosphere,’ but what we may feel depends on the angle of our arrival,” or perhaps “the atmosphere is “already angled.”⁶² Gregg and Seigworth posit Ahmed’s angles as “the kind of aesthetically inflected moment that underlies almost any theoretical orientation toward affect.”⁶³ As such, “different affects make us feel, write, think and act in different ways.” Thus, in this sense, affects are not only contingent on the space in which they circulate but moreover influence both the space and the bodies within it.

In addition, Ahmed moves to posit “affect as sticky,” as what sustains or preserves the influential connection between ideas, values, and objects; objects thereby become sticky because they are already then attributed as to good or bad feelings.⁶⁴ Ahmed’s concept of stickiness highlights the ability of affect to amplify in intensity when in contact with other “bodies” and spaces. Ahmed (2017) further references the capacity of affect to orient and direct bodies within spaces.⁶⁵ Ahmed’s work provides significant language for describing how a space orients bodies toward certain pathways, directs certain patterns of traffic, and affects the rhythm of flow of such movement of bodies through space.⁶⁶ Affect thus provides a constructive way in re-thinking and re-configuring the connections between bodies, spaces and power. I employ much of this fluid structure when analyzing Abramović’s performance.

Rhetoric's Turn to Affect

Jenny Edbauer Rice (2008) most explicitly outlines rhetorical studies' uptake of affect theory. Referencing the affective turn, Rice argues, "the notion of affect poses an interesting question for rhetorical studies: is discursive deliberation sufficient for talking about the constitution of publics?"⁶⁷ She writes:

On the one hand, publics are not possible without discourse. On the other hand, deliberation generates affects that do not neatly conform to the signifying elements of that civic discourse. Public participants get something from deliberation beyond deliberation. This is why some people get energized from a public debate about a political issue, or maybe why some people actually experience the academic conference scene as intensely invigorating. Thus, what underscores civic or rhetorical deliberation is arguably an affective element. It is unclear whether merely accounting for this characteristic will lead to more critical analyses, although expanding our understanding of public affect might help us understand why certain rhetorics retain powerful circulation.⁶⁸

Affect theory thus enters rhetorical studies via analysis of those affective elements of discourse in relation to circulation. Drawing from the language to describe affect as mode, force, and capacity, I therefore see affect in rhetorical studies as a concept useful for its potential orientation and mobilization of bodies into collective action. I argue that affect can thus account for embodiments of discourse that exist in excess of language or signification. Public spaces with such affective potential then become sites of critical (and perhaps even resistive) engagement for the circulation of power.

My Turn to Public Feelings

Building from the scholarship attached to the affective turn, I turn to Ann Cvetkovich's concept of public feelings. Cvetkovich acknowledges affect as "force, intensity, or the capacity to move and be moved."⁶⁹ She recognizes that "crucial to such

inquiry is the distinction between affect and emotion, where the former signals precognitive sensory experience and relations to surroundings, and the latter cultural constructs and conscious processes that emerge from them, such as anger, fear, or joy.”⁷⁰ In this sense, Cvetkovich chooses to use both “affect” and “feelings” in a generic sense, conceptualizing affect as “a category that encompasses affect, emotion, and feeling, and that includes impulses, desires, and feelings that get historically constructed in a range of ways” and feeling as “the undifferentiated “stuff,” . . . the somatic or sensory . . . experiences that aren’t just cognitive concepts or constructions.”⁷¹ Cvetkovich preferences the term “feelings” over “affect” as it remains “intentionally imprecise” and “retains the ambiguity between feelings as embodied sensations and feelings as psychic or cognitive experiences.”⁷² Cvetkovich feels this term is more readily accessible than affect in its dualities, thus following the aforementioned move toward non-dualistic conceptualizations of affect.⁷³

In terms of her greater project, Cvetkovich moves to situate the idea of “political depression” as a *public feeling*; as a shared “sense that customary forms of political response . . . are no longer working either to change the world or to make us feel better.”⁷⁴ In positing such experience as *collective* rather than individual, Cvetkovich identifies the goal of her project as “to de-pathologize negative affects [e.g., political depression] so that they can be seen as a possible resource for political action rather than as its antithesis.”⁷⁵ She is careful to note that this does not mean turning negative affect into positive emotions. Pathologize is used here as a medicalized term for diagnosing an individual dysfunction as a medical issue, such as depression. To Cvetkovich, it is important that these affects can be seen as collective

rather than merely individual. She argues that by “de-pathologizing” such affects they then can “become sites of publicity and community formation,” alternative affective avenues for political engagement in times of potential ambivalence.⁷⁶ This provides an alternative framework for neoliberal privatization of feeling.

Cvetkovich further strategically moves to situate politics “at the level of the lived affective experience,” at the level of embodied discourse.⁷⁷ Drawing from both queer and trauma studies, Cvetkovich not only explores the ways in which “putatively private or personal matters [have become] . . . central to political life” (such as the role of sexuality in public life), but additionally seeks to investigate the pervasive ways in which “the affective legacy of racialized histories” continue to manifest at present.⁷⁸ Cvetkovich’s project argues that we “have yet to attend to the past adequately,” and as a result, “one measure of that neglect arises at the affective level.”⁷⁹ It is here that Cvetkovich sees the potential to intervene:

Affect is often managed in the public sphere through official discourse of recognition and commemoration that don’t fully address everyday affects or through legal measures . . . that don’t fully provide emotional justice.⁸⁰

In this way, at an affective level, Cvetkovich provides an inroad “for bringing into public view individual experiences that should be understood as a collective,” for seeing feelings as socio-cultural phenomena and not individualized dysfunctions or pathologies. Though the discursive move to re-frame “private” feelings as “public” ones, Cvetkovich provides a framework for understanding how a collective history of feeling, a legacy of emotional burdens, can be—and *is*—always being (re)negotiated through the present.⁸¹

Cvetkovitch's concept of public feelings thus explores "how it might be possible to tarry with the negative as part of daily practice, cultural production, and political activism."⁸² It is here that she proposes "finding public forums for everyday feelings . . . "[with] the aim [of] generat[ing] new ways of thinking about agency."⁸³ To Cvetkovich, perhaps, "feeling bad might, in fact, be the grounds for transformation."⁸⁴ In this sense, a moment saturated with affect, or a space with vast potential for the expression of affect, can become a potential site for political engagement and perhaps even a point for shuttling or intensifying capacities for systemic disruption. It is within this potential that possibility for change exists. It is within this framework that I situate Marina Abramović's performance and further suggest performance art as a mode of resistance.

III. Affective Potential in *The Artist is Present* (2010)

In this section, I analyze Marina Abramović's performance *The Artist is Present* (2010) as "a constructed invitation," a term used by Brian Ott and Diane Keeling to describe "film as a constructed invitation to a complex experience of thoughts and feelings."⁸⁵ All rhetorical forms, as per Ott and Keeling (2011), are "at once symbolic and material," where "the materiality of rhetoric induces principally 'presence effects'—effects that touch and move bodies in sensory-emotive ways [sensation and affect]."⁸⁶ I use this lens of affects/effects, in conjunction with "public feelings," to analyze both the space itself and the interactions within the space. I thus expand Ott and Keeling's use of the term: while they consider such invitation on the level of textual criticism and issues of textuality, I employ its use with political possibility on a broader level. I explore how the performance invites a collective engagement with presence and its effect/affects. To do so, I analyze the performance in two ways: (1) how the space itself orients the flow and attention of bodies, as per Ahmed (2010, 2017), constituting a public space, and (2) how the interactions within such space not only reflect the bodily sensations that occur when bodies are brought into proximity but additionally when sensations amplify to the collective.

Orienting Bodies: The Space & The Setup

Inseparable from its spatial context, *The Artist is Present* (2010) derives much of its form and function from that of the pre-established organization of the New York MoMA. Located within the Marron Atrium on the second floor of the MoMA's central

Rockefeller Building, the performance not only embraces the physical layout of such space but likewise utilizes the temporal structure of the museum.

The atrium itself, an illustrious open enclosure, stands sixty-feet high at the center of its six-story edifice. Its inner expanse, circumscribed by several balconies protruding from each floor, maintains the square structure of its bare concrete base. Its stark white walls, reaching to the height of its ceilings, provides an innocuous blank backdrop for the interactions within. Its expansive skylights, capturing the natural fluctuations of the outer sunlight, imbue the space with an organic sense of time and mutability. Its visitors, present within the museum hours of operation, move freely about the various galleries at every level, progressively emerging and converging upon its four balconies and its base floor. Its atmosphere, characterized by the collective motions and ambient noises of its visitors, highlights the function of the Atrium as a transient public space, as a switchboard for social interexchange. Its effect, like that of an amphitheater, directs viewership inward toward the expanse between the skylights above and the concrete base below, toward the interactions within and between the balconies and the floor.

The structure of the atrium thus works to materially orient the bodies of its visitors, which directs both the initial angles of encounter with the space and the flow of traffic once in the space. The greater structure of the MoMA as an institution modulates bodies by delimiting access to those bodies physically present in New York; those with the time, interest, and means to acquire a ticket and to attend within the hours of operation.⁸⁷ Once ticketed and in attendance, visitors may arrive at the second floor via the escalator, elevator or staircase from the entry floor before heading into one

of four galleries or the atrium. Visitors then access the atrium from four entrances, two from the main hallway and two from the contemporary exhibition behind the atrium. These multiple points of access create multiple points of initial contact with the space as well as but a nonlinear flow of bodies at the base and the balconies of the atrium. The materiality of this space thus serves as the fundamental framework for the materiality of the performance.

The performance itself transpires within the spatial context of the MoMA, its material objects located on the ground floor of the atrium. Surrounded by the purview of the balconies, walls, and skylights, the base already presents as a stage. Abramović hence builds upon such preexisting structure, situating her performance at the very center of the base, at “center stage.” Here, a large, white outline of a square demarcates the performance space. To ensure the inoccupation of this spatial boundary, rope barriers and rotating security guards later additionally reinforce this form. This demarcation preserves an unoccupied space to distance the performance from the spectators. The bodies and interactions within the space are thus markedly separate from the bodies and interactions outside of the space.

Within the square, at each corner pointing inwards, four large klieg lights illuminate the space with intense force, further presenting the performance space as a stage. At the very center, Abramović positions two basic wooden chairs opposite one another, initially with the presence of a wooden table in between, though the curatorial team later removes it per her request.⁸⁸ Positioned to enable bodies to face each other, the chairs constitute the space for the primary interactions to occur; their close proximity and front-facing orientation invite a form of contact between the potential

bodies that sit in them. The table, serving a similar purpose to that of the square, represents both a literal and metaphorical barrier between the chairs and the potential interactions; its absence in the last month of the performance represents Abramović's willingness to remove such barrier, altering the proximity and the interaction between Abramović and the sitter.

Such spatial setup thereby directs bodies along certain pathways. Materially, the space directs bodies to flow within the base and the balconies as they arrive from the entry floor or other galleries. Unlike a linear exhibit that directs bodies forward into different parts, the atrium is a space of convergence—a circular, cyclical space where bodies emerge and converge. Upon the balconies, bodies linger and negotiate next destinations after emerging from galleries of which they choose to see; this includes those bodies that emerge from Abramović's retrospective on the sixth floor. Upon the ground floor, bodies encounter the performance in the middle, prompted to intermingle in the space according to its spatial setup. The centrality of the performance encourages bodies to flow around the demarcated square. The performance thus garners the attention of bodies, warrants interaction between bodies, and directs the flow of bodies within the space.

The transient presence of these bodies aids the constitution of the space as a public space. The amount of spectators, including the security guards, enact a sense of surveillance; the bodies outside the demarcated performance space establish a viewership presence. As attendance increases, those waiting to sit with Abramović accrue in linear form. Some bodies sit or stand, directing their attention toward Abramović and/or contributing to the ambient noise of the space. As the performance

becomes more widely attended, security guards also grow in number to regulate crowds and maintain organization of the participatory queue. This increase in bodies in turn affects the mobility within and thus the sensation of the space. Through these orientations, the spatial context thus establishes the primary roles within the performance: that of Abramović and her audience.

The Artist is Present

Abramović herself, her presence integral to the performance, performs her role daily for the duration of her exhibit. From March 14 to May 31, 2010, Abramović sits completely silent, relatively motionless, and usually expressionless in the same chair with her back to the two entrances from the main hallway. Per the pre-established structure of the public visiting hours, she arrives before the museum opens and leaves after the closing; she sits for seven hours on Wednesday through Monday and nine hours on Friday.⁸⁹ During the performance, she does not get up, go to the bathroom, or eat; she doesn't even sneeze.⁹⁰ Her hair is always tied in a braid to her left, her make up is always plain and her complexion is consistently pale and sweaty; she does not appear to be in pain but she does appear to be concentrated. She is the only concentrated source of color in the room, each day donning one of three separate floor-length gowns—either red, dark blue, or white. For the opening, she wears red; for the rest of March, she wears blue; for April, she wears red; and for the final month, May, she wears white. Visually, the red stands out most significantly against the starkness of the atrium, though the dark blue and white similarly stand out as solid blocks of color among dispersed bodies of visitors.⁹¹

The consistency of her demeanor only bolsters the power of her presence. The spatial context already presents Abramović at center stage, suggesting to visitors that her presence is a large part of the performance. The characteristics of Abramović's demeanor thus facilitate her role, the structure and atmosphere of the space, and the conditions of possibility for potential interactions. Abramović's consistent and continual presence creates an illusion of immutability and immobility, prompting the presence of her body to be juxtaposed with both the movement of other bodies and the passing of time. This juxtaposition warrants attention to her body as well as suggests an invitation to attend to one's own bodily sensations. The performance thus invites a collective attention to what is happening to the bodies present at that moment.

The Audience is Present, too

While Abramović maintains her role as the "present" artist, her audience constitutes a significant portion of the performance as well. Several signs prompt visitors to particular understandings, both outside and inside the atrium on the ground floor. On the wall outside the two main entrances from the hall, the title "Marina Abramović: The Artist is Present" is posted in large font. Just around the corner, a large block of wall text explains parts of the performance, emphasizing the duration of the act, the silent composure of the artist, and the personal involvement of the visitors if they so choose; this text is replicated on one of the inside walls adjacent to one of the main entrances as well.⁹² The last piece of wall text exists as a visual tally system behind the artist, marking the progression of exhibition days by month before each sit. Lastly, but most importantly, several floor signs marked "NOTICE" explicitly prompt

visitors “to sit silently with the artist, one at a time.” In this way, the space presents viewers with the opportunity to become participants. Though highly scripted and regulated by security, the viewers ultimately choose whether to sit with Abramović.

Visitors, entering the Atrium from the four separate entrances on the ground floor, move freely outside the margins of the square, constituting a part of a primary immediate audience; visitors from above, peering out from the four levels of balconies, contribute to a secondary immediate audience as well. Abramović and her curatorial team provided live streaming and a live Flickr feed of photos throughout the duration of her exhibit.⁹³ Such apparatuses enable even more people to access and witness her performance, thus expanding her audience beyond those physically present and include another level of “virtual” viewership. As someone who has accessed and witnessed her performance more than seven years later, I include myself in another layer of her audience, interpreting her performance through fragments post-exhibition.⁹⁴

These several layers of audiences—from those on the ground floor, to those on the balconies, to those online—constitute a group of bodies oriented toward a central space. Their spectatorship, even voyeurism, thus becomes an integral part of the performance. Those paying attention, either stopped and standing or slowly moving, present a witnessing body to the performance; even those not paying attention but physically present contribute to the number of bodies in proximity to one another and to the ambient noise of the space. In this sense, those bodies physically present within the space establish the space as public—without them, the performance would be entirely different.

Bodies in Proximity: The Interactions within the Space

Upon her stage, at the center of the atrium, Abramović presents as the focal point. The other chair, positioned to face her, stands as a counterpoint; a literal metaphor for potential interaction with another body. In this way, Abramović' constructs her performance as an invitation—an invitation for interaction between another body with her body and the gathering of bodies in proximity. As indicated by the visual tally system, Abramović sits for 75 days for a combined total of 736 hours.⁹⁵ By the final day, a total of 1,545 people sit with her and over 750,000 people visit the museum during the run of the exhibit.⁹⁶ Such documentation of the performance is kept in two official forms: (1) through the portraiture of installation photographer, Marco Anelli, and (2) through a direct video feed posted to MoMA's website that is later edited into an HBO documentary.⁹⁷

Anelli, a world-renowned Italian photographer, captures the points of exchange within the performance, collecting both portraits of the sitters and the durations of their sitting.⁹⁸ At the time, this compilation could—and today still can be—found on Flickr, an online (public) photo management application, under an account operated by MoMA.⁹⁹ Titled “Marina Abramović: The Artist Is Present—Portraits,” the album contains 1,566 photos (each sitter, plus several portraits of Abramović and the space) and maintains over 1,717,500 views.¹⁰⁰ The official number of sitters is cited at 1,545 and the approximate number of visitors is estimated at over 750,000.¹⁰¹ At least one person sits every day with a maximum of no more than 50 sitters in any one day. Most participants sit only once, for a minimum of one minute, while other outliers sit for up to 420 minutes, including several 200-300 minute stints and a few repeaters.¹⁰² One

man, Paco Blancas, a make-up artist from New York City, sits twenty-one times and even tattooed the number on his forearm for the last time he sat with Abramović.¹⁰³

Many celebrities, such as Sharon Stone, Rufus Wainwright, Lou Reed, James Franco, Isabella Rossellini, Christiane Amanpour, Lady Gaga and others, also make appearances and unknown performance artists use Abramović's platform as their own stage.¹⁰⁴ Two potential sitters, including one woman disrobing and another wearing a mask, are removed by security; Abramović maintains her demeanor nonetheless. On the opening night, her ex-lover and performance partner, Ulay, arrives and sparks one of the most poignant interactions of the entire exhibition. This is one of the only moments Abramović breaks her decorum, reaching out to touch Ulay before he stands up.¹⁰⁵ On the final day, Klaus Biesenbach, the Chief Curator at the MoMA, sits as the last sitter. This is another moment of breached conduct, as Biesenbach stands up to kiss Abramović on the cheek before leaving the space. After this specific exchange, the audience erupts in applause and Abramović herself stands up, extending her arms out and twirling in the center of her performance space.¹⁰⁶

At each turnover, Abramović lowers and then lifts her head to meet the gaze of the new sitter. She committedly maintains the same demeanor with each person, though the reactions of the sitters vary. Numerous sitters smile, cry, and/or place one or both hands over their heart center. Over 10% (approximately 168 people) cry while sitting.¹⁰⁷ Though many did not cry, the prevalence of tears indicates a capacity for individual bodies to express similar sensations in this space. As indicated by a popular blog, titled "Marina Abramović Made Me Cry," many visitors and virtual viewers are intrigued by the high occurrence of tears.¹⁰⁸ Abramović infrequently reciprocates with

the expression of a subtle smile or tear, as demonstrated at least 12 times.¹⁰⁹

Nevertheless she remains fairly consistent throughout the performance.

Within the spatial setup that directs the flow of bodies around and toward the performance space, the interactions within the performance space exist at the center of attention. Due to the parameters delineated by Abramović and her curatorial team, the behavioral processes within the space are reduced to basic bodily sensations: sitting, breathing, and gazing.¹¹⁰ This reduction, coupled with the intense awareness of being watched, positions sitters to acutely feel bodily sensations. In the absence of conversation, of using language to communicate, the nature of the interaction between Abramović and the sitter allows for such bodily sensations to surface. The nature of this communication is explicitly embodied; the eye contact necessitates an intense focus on Abramović's body as well as one's own body. Such sustained eye contact breaks social norms, disrupting the comfortable significations of interacting with strangers in public spaces. This silence, stillness and bodily engagement likewise disrupt conventions of sitting at a table with someone. Such setup usually carries connotations of conversation or activities like eating or drinking. In this sense, the interactions prompt an awareness of oneself while simultaneously prompting an awareness of other bodies in proximity.

An invitation to watch and be watched thus emphasizes bodily sensations. Such awareness of self and others in proximity invites a registering or individual experiences on a collective level. An individual experience, expressed in tandem with others, prompts the capacity to dwell in such experience collectively. The repetition of such simple, bodily acts encourages an attentiveness to one's body; the publicity of such

acts necessitates an attentiveness to one's body in relation to the other bodies present. In effect, the sensation of sitting in juxtaposition to the sensation of being watched elicits expressions of feeling that not only contribute to the atmosphere of the space, but affects future interactions in that space.

In analyzing this spatial context and the expressions elicited, I argue that Marina Abramović's performance produces a space with vast affective capacity; the attention to bodily presence serves as a constructed invitation to dwell in public feeling. This space directs bodies along certain paths and orients their attention toward the center; this space does not force bodies to publicly feel but does encourage bodies to engage in some form of public feeling. Through this collective attention to Abramović's body as well as the other bodies present, bodies within this space thus may resist a pressure to *privatize* feelings. Engaging the body physically in the presence of others thus prompts a moment saturated with affect—a potential, a capacity, an invitation to dwell in an uncomfortable feeling together.

Conclusion: Politicizing Affects

At the center of this project is an understanding that the neoliberal state functions by severing the individual from the collective. This hegemonic force pervades almost all aspects of social life, collapsing the political public into the realm of the private. This severance extends into the expression of feelings, confining potentially collective expressions to the individual and dampening the mobilizing force of collective expressions. In what I call the feelings industry, neoliberalism privatizes individual feelings, lauding self-governance while pathologizing the failure to govern oneself according to the pervasive market rationality of individualism and consumerism. The market in turn provides the individual with consumerist solutions to mitigate bad feelings, tactfully eluding systematic forces that may contribute to those feelings in the first place. Confining expressions of feeling to the individual thereby dampens collective expression of such feeling through which collective action could potentially arise.

To better understand how the feelings industry functions and to investigate a space where it could be potentially resisted, I have turned to a performance by Marina Abramović. Abramović's *The Artist is Present* (2010) fosters a public space with vast potential for collective expression of feelings; it serves as a constructed invitation for bodies to dwell in public feelings. Through the experience of collective attention to Abramović's body as well as their own, bodies within this space may thus experience collectivity and potentially resist neoliberal privatization of feelings. It is important to note that this is indeed an invitation—a *potential*—and not a promise. Neoliberal subjects are prompted to witness and to engage in feelings in a public space, together,

though as evident in the fact that not everyone expressed feeling, this did not necessitate (nor depend on) such expression. The very presence, the very possibility of public feeling, exists as enough potential to provoke critical investigation of affective spaces. Here, the role of public feelings functions in opposition to neoliberal severance—for in this capacity to feel together we may oppose the force to feel separately.

Though I provide analysis for only one performance, performance art more generally may provide a significant site of resistance. Jaclyn I. Pryor (2017) argues that performance maintains “a unique capacity to transform the way audiences feel,” especially with regards to time.¹¹¹ “As a time-based medium,” she argues, “performance is uniquely situated to produce time-consciousness . . . , making audiences feel, see, hear, and sense the passage of time and the production of history—and to glimpse how we might live our lives in relation to them differently, queerly, and unapologetically.”¹¹² The method of performance art is to provoke, to invite audiences to feel, think, and imagine alternative social realities. Performance art necessitates an interaction between the performer and the audience; it necessitates an interactive public. It is here, in a public space, where affective potential can be engaged and collective action can be mobilized. Performance art provides one such avenue for engaging those shuttling or intensifying capacities for systemic disruption.

Pryor further argues that, “performance has the potential to forge new social structures of belonging.”¹¹³ She cites Jill Dolan (2005) who likewise asserts, “performance can bind us, move us, and allow us to imagine what a more socially just world might look and feel like.”¹¹⁴ In this sense, performance can provide a framework

for “subaltern subjects to negotiate their relationships with dominant culture, transcend seemingly fixed structures of the state, and temporarily inhabit utopia through feeling.”¹¹⁵ Such optimism is naturally met with criticism, engaging with critiques of privilege (for those who are less affected by structural violence and may more easily be able to envision an alternative utopia), and illuminates the gendered nature of such skepticism. Pryor writes, “positive affects (and by extension, their proponents) are read as feminine and therefore critically unsophisticated.”¹¹⁶ In the same way Cvetkovich argues negative affects are evacuated, Pryor argues positive affects are similarly vacated through stigmatization. Cvetkovich further suggests that “utopian sensibilities are a complex brew of ‘mixed feelings’” regardless, indicating that her greater concept of public feelings includes engaging both the good and the bad in collective forms. In this way, an exploration in the affective potential of performance not only elucidates the privatization, medicalization, and marginalization of individual feelings, but suggests the resistive potential of politicizing affects.

In conclusion, I argue that such performance spaces, public spaces that direct bodies toward collective feeling in some way, can be a source of collective action. Though I do not argue that such spaces can irreversibly challenge systemic issues, I do see spaces with vast affective potential as having capacities for resistance and protest; as having capacities for escape, reprieve and possibility rupture, if only temporarily. I firmly believe that in the gaps of signification—where affect resides, where Abramović invites us to be present—exists our capacity for hope and change. Thus, my project is one of potential: of affective potential, of collective potential, and of potential resistance and alternatives. We must start somewhere—why not *here*?

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Notes

¹ James Westcott, *When Marina Abramović Dies: A Biography* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2010), 39-40.

² See *Rhythm 10* (1974), *Lips of Thomas* (1975/2005).

³ See *Lips of Thomas* (1975/2005).

⁴ See *Rhythm 2* (1974) and *Art Must Be Beautiful, Artist Must Be Beautiful* (1975).

⁵ See *Rhythm 0* (1974).

⁶ See *Imponderabilia* (1974).

⁷ See *Freeing the Voice* (1976), *House with the Ocean View* (2002), and *The Artist is Present* (2010).

⁸ James Yeh, "Marina Abramović Still Doesn't Give a Fuck," *Vice*, November 29, 2016. See also Benjamin Lee, "Marina Abramović Mention in Podesta Emails Sparks Accusations of Satanism," *The Guardian*, November 04, 2016; and Elizabeth Greenwood, "Wait, Why Did That Woman Sit in the MoMA for 750 Hours?" *The Atlantic*, July 02, 2012.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ RoseLee Goldberg and Margaret Barlow, "Performance Art," *Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online*. Oxford University Press, last modified September 22, 2014.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Marco Anelli, *Portraits in the Presence of Marina Abramović*, (Bologna, Italy: Damiani, 2012).

¹⁶ Maree Stenglin, "The Eyes Have It: 'In the Gaze ... Everything Happened,'" *Mapping Multimodal Performance Studies*, eds. Maria Grazia Sindoni, Janina Wildfeuer, and Kay L. O'Halloran, (New York: Routledge, 2016), 86.

¹⁷ See Clough and Halley, *The Affective Turn* (2007); Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling* (2007), 1-2; Gregg and Seigworth, *The Affect Theory Reader* (2010), 7; and Ahmed, *Living A Feminist Life* (2017).

¹⁸ I borrow Brian Ott and Diane Keeling's term "constructed invitation," which they use to describe "film as a constructed invitation to a complex experience of thoughts and feelings." See Ott and Keeling, "Cinema and Choric Connection" (2011), 367.

¹⁹ See Luigi Esposito and Fernando M. Perez, "Neoliberalism and the Commodification of Mental Health," *Humanity & Society* 38, no. 4 (2014); David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Mary Douglas Vavrus, *Postfeminist News: Political Women in Media Culture* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002).

²⁰ Esposito and Perez, "Neoliberalism," 418. See also Harvey, *A Brief History*.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 420.

²² Harvey, *A Brief History*, 2.

²³ Esposito and Perez, "Neoliberalism," 418; Harvey, *A Brief History*, 2.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 421. See also Wendy Larner, "Neo-liberalism: Policy, Ideology, Governmentality," *Studies in Political Economy* 63, no. 1 (2000): 5-25.

²⁵ Esposito and Perez, "Neoliberalism," 420-21.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 420.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Vavrus, *Postfeminist News*, 8.

²⁹ Esposito and Perez, "Neoliberalism," 420.

³⁰ Berlant, *Queen of America*, 1, 3.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 1.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*, 5.

³⁴ Esposito and Perez, "Neoliberalism," 414.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 421.

³⁷ I acknowledge that there are greater debates over self-care that should be accounted for. Specifically, in social movement contexts and particularly in black feminist and queer contexts. For further reading, see Alondra Nelson's *Body and Soul* (2011), Adrienne Maree Brown's *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds* (2017), and *The Remedy: Queer and Trans Voices on Health and Health Care* (2016).

³⁸ Christopher Ziguras, *Self-Care: Embodiment, Personal Autonomy and The Shaping Of Health Consciousness* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 3.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Ziguras, *Self-care*, 3.

⁴¹ See Clough and Halley, *The Affective Turn* (2007); Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling* (2007), 1-2; Gregg and Seigworth, *The Affect Theory Reader* (2010), 7; and Ahmed, *Living A Feminist Life* (2017).

⁴² See Cvetkovich, *Depression*.

⁴³ See Pryor, *Time slips*, 16.

⁴⁴ See Joshua Gunn and Jenny Edbauer Rice, "About Face/Stuttering Discipline," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 6, no. 2 (2009). See also Clough and Halley, *The Affective Turn* (2007); Gregg and Seigworth, *The Affect Theory Reader* (2010). As a theorization of emotion, affect theory can also trace its roots to Aristotle's definition of *pathos*, which outlines emotions and emotional appeals as a fundamental mode of persuasion. See Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, transl. George A. Kennedy.

⁴⁵ Cvetkovich, "Introduction" to *Depression*, 3.

⁴⁶ Here I am loosely referring to Spinoza's *Ethics* (1677), Bergson's *Matter and Memory* (1896) and Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980).

⁴⁷ Clough and Halley, *The Affective Turn*, 2.

⁴⁸ Ibid. See also Massumi, "Notes" in *A Thousand Plateaus*, xvi.

⁴⁹ Massumi, "Notes" in *A Thousand Plateaus*, xvi.

⁵⁰ Clough and Halley, *The Affective Turn*, 2. See also Massumi, *Parables*, 30.

⁵¹ Clough and Halley, *The Affective Turn*, 2.

⁵² Gregg and Seigworth, "An Inventory of Shimmers," in *The Affect Theory Reader*, 6.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Massumi, *Autonomy*, 96.

⁵⁶ Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, 1.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 1-2.

⁵⁸ See Debra Hawhee, "Rhetoric's Sensorium," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 101, no. 1 (2015).

⁵⁹ Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, 24.

⁶⁰ Gregg and Seigworth, "An Inventory of Shimmers," 7.

⁶¹ Ahmed, "Happy Objects," in *The Affect Theory Reader*, 14, 30-31.

⁶² Ibid., 14, 36.

⁶³ Gregg and Seigworth, "Introduction," in *The Affect Theory Reader*, 14.

⁶⁴ Ahmed, "Happy Objects," in *The Affect Theory Reader*, 29, 35.

⁶⁵ See Ahmed, *Living A Feminist Life* (2017).

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Jenny Edbauer Rice, "The New 'New': Making a Case for Critical Affect Studies," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 94, no. 2 (May 2008): 211.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Cvetkovich, *Depression*, 4.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Cvetkovich, "Public Feelings," 459-468.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 460.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 464.

⁷⁸ Cvetkovich, "Public Feelings," 465. See Berlant, *Queen of America* (1997).

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Cvetkovich, *Depression*, 3.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ott and Keeling, "Cinema and Choric Connection," 367.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ The hours of operation of the MoMA include Wednesday through Monday from 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Friday from 10:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m., and it is closed on Tuesday. The general admission fare stands at \$20 for adults, \$16 for seniors of 65 years and over (with I.D.), \$12 for full-time students (with current I.D.), and free for children of 16 years and under; on Friday Nights from 4:00-8:00 p.m. admission is free for everyone. See MoMA, Department of Communications, "Marina Abramović: The Artist Is Present," 6.

⁸⁸ Abramović, *Walk Through Walls*, 315.

⁸⁹ Refer to note 86.

⁹⁰ Abramović, *Walk Through Walls*, 314.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² No photograph nor paragraph of the wall text in exhibition form exists in current circulation. I deduced the connection between the press release as issued by MoMA and the wall text through careful analysis of the few photographs that do exist. While the two retain substantial conceptual overlap, the texts are in no way the same.

⁹³ See "Marina Abramović: The Artist Is Present," exhibition calendar, March 6, 2010, last accessed November 28, 2017. The Museum of Modern Art.

⁹⁴ See Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 7-11. Cvetkovich describes ephemeral fragments, such as dispersed documentation of performances, as “site of investigation” that “are not intended to constitute an exhaustive survey but to represent examples of how affective experience can provide the basis for new cultures” or public cultures.

⁹⁵ Marco Anelli, *Portraits in the Presence of Marina Abramović*, (Bologna, Italy: Damiani, 2012).

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), "Marina Abramović: The Artist Is Present-Portraits," Flickr, March-May 2010, last accessed October 2017.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ The MoMA, “Portraits,” (Flickr).

¹⁰² David Hart, "MoMA | Analyzing Abramović," Inside/Out: A MoMA/MoMA PS1 Blog, June 11, 2010, The Museum of Modern Art, last accessed October 2017.

¹⁰³ Julia Kaganskiy. "MoMA | Visitor Viewpoint: MoMA’s Mystery Man," Inside/Out: A MoMA/MoMA PS1 Blog, The Museum of Modern Art, May 10, 2010, accessed October 2017.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Abramović, “Walk Through Walls,” 310.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Maree Stenglin, “The Eyes Have It: ‘In the Gaze ... Everything Happened,’” *Mapping multimodal performance studies*, eds. Maria Grazia Sindoni, Janina Wildfeuer, and Kay L. O’Halloran, (New York: Routledge, 2016), 86.

¹⁰⁸ See "Marina Abramović Made Me Cry," a blog curated by Katie Notopoulos, May 2010.

¹⁰⁹ Stenglin, “The Eyes Have It,” 89.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Pryor, *Time Slips*, 13-14.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid., 16. See Jill Dolan, *Utopia in Performance: Finding Hope at the Theater* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005).

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 16.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 16-17.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 17.