

# Consciousness, Theatre, Literature and the Arts 2015



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Edited by

Daniel Meyer-Dinkgräfe

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## INTRODUCTION

The book collects essays based on papers presented at the 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Consciousness, Theatre, Literature and the Arts (CTLA), held from June 10-12, 2015, at St Francis College, Brooklyn Heights, New York. The conference was attended by seventy delegates from twenty countries across the world—the twenty-five essays in this book come from delegates from twelve of those countries. The range of essays in the book reflects the range of material presented and discussed at the conference, across the fields or disciplines of philosophy, literature, fine arts, music, dance, performance and theatre.

**Aurelia Baumgartner's** contribution contextualizes her performance prepared for, and presented at the conference (and available to see on YouTube at the time of writing), as a new form of practicing philosophy—conceptualized as body-thinking. **Holly Berkowitz** continues the section on the performing arts with her consideration of meta-theatre and identity construction in *M. Butterfly* and *The Good Person of Szechwan*. Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is at the centre of **Joe Keener's** study that focuses methodologically on evolutionary theory and cognitive science. **Shahab Entezareghaem** discusses consciousness and Jacobean drama with reference to Tourneur's *The Revenger's Tragedy*, while **Thomas Phillips** takes us closer to the present in his consideration of liminal love and germinal consciousness in Sarah Kane's *Crave*. **Anna Renée Winget** moves away from textual and performance analysis to the teaching of drama in universities, focusing on performing utopia in Higher Educational Institutions. Deinya Phenix completes the section on the performing arts with an essay from a social science perspective on race consciousness, diaspora, and *Baianidade*.

The second section deals with consciousness in prose fiction. **Doaa Sayed Abdel Azim** writes about nostalgia in Ghada Karmi's *In Search of Fatima* and Lucette Lagnado's *The Man in the White Sharkskin Suit*. The evolutionary perspective comes back in **Dustin Hellberg's** chapter on literal and literary altruism. From the Near Eastern context of Azim's contribution, we move to Japan in **Liala Khronopulo's** discussion of imagination as an artistic method and a source of the plots in *Shōto Shōto* short stories of contemporary Japanese writers Akagawa Jirō and Atōda Takashi. Image and beyond is also at the centre of **Rosy Saikia's** re-



reading of Basho's Haiku. The international dimension, with authors from Russia and India, respectively, offering their interpretations of Japanese material, continues in the next chapter with a South Korean perspective on the Bible: **Yoon Ha Kim** (with Dustin Hellberg) considers holy disappointment and biological reconditioning in the Biblical flood narrative. The next two chapters widen the perspective beyond the close reading of one or two texts: **Tamar Mebuke** writes about archetype development in narrative, and **Faye Ran** about the autobiographical self, here regarding self-consciousness as a transformative mirror. **Phil Ndlela** brings us back to one author in his analysis of the speeches by Sojourner Truth.

Chapters sixteen to nineteen combine work on consciousness in relation to music, fine art, poetry and landscape. **Kris Falk** reflects on Tibetan Buddhist theories of consciousness as models for music analysis, **Bahadır Gülmez** asks how composer (Schumann), writer (Artaud) and painter (Bacon) are equally in pursuit of an unattainable knowledge. **Ranjan Kumar Sinha** examines female consciousness in the poems of Kamala Das. **Simon Grennan**, finally, reassesses the demise and spectral return of consciousness in landscape research.

Film studies became prominent as a context for the 2015 conference, and this is represented in the five chapters relating film work to consciousness. **Deniz Gürgen** offers a reading of *chronotope* as a historiographical tool in *Elevator to the Gallows*. Laura Hatry writes about the existentialism of Roberto Arlt's *The Seven Madmen* and its cinematic adaptation; **Derek Kanowsky** proposes a cinematic phenomenology, while **Nilay Ulusoy** examines a part of Turkish history in her chapter on citizen women's fashion and cinema on the path to contemporary civilization. **Sven Weidner** closes this section with an assessment of ambivalent male characters in the US-American independent cinema of the 1990s and 2000s.

**Gloria Dyc's** piece of prose fiction, her short story *The Darkness between the Four Sacred Mountains*, concludes this collection.



## CHAPTER ONE

### “CATCH ME IF YOU CAN!”— EURYDICE 2012 RELOADED: NOTES ON THE PERFORMANCE

AURELIA BAUMGARTNER

The following text is based on the keynote speech, 11 June, concerning the performance shown at the Sixth International Conference on Consciousness, Theatre, Literature and the Arts at the Maroney Theatre, St. Francis College in Brooklyn, New York, on 10 June 2015. This text concerns the ideas I had producing the performance, as well as the ideas concerning all my creations of dance performances, which I capture with the concepts of *dance philosophy*, and, more specifically, with *body-thinking*. I start with reflections on the performance of *Eurydice*, then I consider the ideas I had in creating this performance, and finally, I relate this to *body-thinking*.

#### I

*Catch me if you can! Eurydice 2012 reloaded* is an Interlaced Art&Dance Project. The initial question was: “Could it be that our understanding of the world is too poor if it were only rational?” In addition, what implications would that have concerning our mode of thinking, which gives rise to our mode of being and vice versa? Finally, which structures are at work?

From those questions the performance arose. Once I had developed the questions, I let the whole subject fall into my sub-consciousness and allowed it to grow and develop itself. Like this, from my whole reservoir of impressions, of all what I had seen and read, flashes of ideas could rise up from this variety of preconscious wisdom. Taking up all that fits and matches with that theme, I created the performance in an intuitive way. I allowed my ideas to develop through preconscious and intuitive processes. A major contributing factor was the hype around the year 2012, with all its

apocalyptic theories. I set this as the big unknown concerning the future of the world. The other point of departure was certain polar structures I observed as bases of energies at work in the whole 'world theatre': I noticed in all of these polar structures that they were lived more in the way of unbridgeable dualisms rather than interrelational processes. In addition, going back to one of the most schismatic, split-off energies in the whole history of human society, the female was the most to be antagonized, controverted and disintegrated.

I decided to explore this dissociation and its implications in the same way that I create my performances, with an integrated body and mind, so that I would not fall into exceptionally encoded theories about the female. As well, since a long time ago, the absence of the nymph Eurydice in the myth of Orpheus had been on my mind. In the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice I found an analogy with the structure of the Apollonian-Dionysian as discussed in Friedrich Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*. Therefore, in this performance, a creative connected pattern developed, for which Eurydice stands as a paradigm. Dance, words, video and ModulArt were interlinked, so that an open semiotic structure could be created and like that a non-linear reflection in motion, to approach the 'Other', the 'Un-known', the 'Vivid', without powerful concepts (as Derrida mentions). In this way I wanted to thematise the relation of the Dionysian and the Apollonian, the relation of nature and culture, of cyclic and linear time, of myth and reality, of interlinked and causal thinking, and of body and mind. In addition, I based all this on one of the main questions, whether rational thinking might be able to capture the whole variety of living reality.

Thus arose the following question in the performance: do we restrict life and liveliness by our rational view onto the vivid, so that we lose the notion of life, just as Orpheus lost Eurydice? In consequence, the performance as an interlaced reflection by different media and layers deconstructs the overvaluation of rational understanding. Moreover, I question the overvaluation of linearity and causality through this interlinked synchronicity and contemporaneity of the performance. In consequence, a space for a humble ego could arise. Therefore, one can see this interlinked movement between different layers and structures as an open semiotic process of forming structures. That is why the performance is thinking in motion, is body-thinking.

Concerning this performance, I worked with the ModulArtist Leda Luss Luyken. When I work generally with the sub-consciousness as a basis of wisdom without a system, I tend to work with pictures or picture-like archetypes that arise as a basis of creating; as pictures, they become

codifications in the course of time, and become symbols. However, these coded pictures are set in constant flow: the codifications are blurred. Similar to that and to how I work, ModulArt consists of constantly changing images that physically reflect the everlasting change and movement of life. They are pictures in motion and encourage, resulting out of their constant flow, the creation of various changing images.

## II

All of my performances are frottages, a simultaneity of different layers: the layers in this performance are mythological / historical, fictional / real, scientific / artistic. To construct these layers, I used the following ideas: I used parts and ideas of texts of different authors in a free collection and interlace. For the mythological / historical layer I used firstly Walter Benjamin’s ‘Angel of History’ and secondly Unsi Al-Hadj’s ‘The love and the wolf—the love and the others’, set as a dance trilogy. In addition, I used the speech of Morpheus from the film *Matrix* in dialogue with Ophelia from the *Hamletmaschine* of Heiner Müller. For the scientific / artistic layer I used aphorisms of my own. For the fictional / real layer I used Heiner Müller’s *Hamletmaschine*. The myth of Orpheus and Eurydice is simultaneously linked, which means connected in a vertical way with all three layers. Concerning the different layers, I also created videos, found music and had music composed for the purpose of the performance, and created dances in collaboration with the dancers and associated ModulArt.

In terms of the interpretation of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, and the mode of how it relates with my main question, I would like to interpret this myth in the following way: Orpheus is the son of Apollo, the god of beauty, representational norm and causal law. His music is so beautiful that by his art, he had access to the Dionysian process of life, and like this could communicate with nature and the animals and he even convinced the gods of the netherworld to get access to the world of the ‘Other’. Moreover, he fell in love with the nymph Eurydice, and married her.

However, having access to nature but being the son of the god Apollo, the Apollonian principle always sublimated this Dionysian energy. In analogy to that, just married, his beloved wife, the creature of nature, the nymph Eurydice dies from a snakebite. In his breakdown, Orpheus lives the tragic fate of the causally and teleologically thinking human. Bound by the cyclic rhythms of life, the human fails because of these unbridgeable dualities of the cyclical and the causal, Dionysian and Apollonian, presentation and representation, body and mind, if he does not try to break

out and therefore tries to find other modes of conceiving and living in the world. Grieving indefinitely about his dead beloved wife Eurydice, he convinced Persephone, the goddess of the netherworld, to be allowed to take his wife back, with one condition, not to look back at her.

However, he fails and induces her second death, now beyond recall. Eurydice dies irrevocably because Orpheus did not respect the law of the 'netherworld', of the 'Other'. Eurydice the nymph is the daughter of Persephone, the keeper of the netherworld. In my performance, she stands for the paradigm of the 'principle of life', as a creative, ever-changing process, the 'die and grow', and the love beyond frontiers. Moreover, with this last implication I will go beyond the differentiation of the Apollonian and Dionysian in the course of the performance.

And I differ from Nietzsche and his tradition: I disagree that the 'Will to power', as post-metaphysical principle, is the only fundamental principle of the world. In my opinion, Nietzsche's view is a male gaze. Apollo and Dionysus are both sons of Zeus, both male gods, and in Nietzsche's interpretation their interplay as metaphysical principles is at the basis of the creation of culture.

Apollo stands as a paradigm of form, reason, the rational, and individuality, whereas Dionysus is the God of the dissolving, the irrational, chaos and ecstasy, orgies, music and dance, but as well the gobbling, and devouring. Rüdiger Safransky writes in his biography of Nietzsche: "The Dionysian is this tremendous, egregious process of life and the cultures are these fragile and endangered attempts to create a zone of harboured, shielded life within this Dionysian energy" (2000, 59). The Dionysian is the layer of radical, pure immanence, which cannot be captured by a metaphysical way of thinking. To quote Safransky: "The Dionysian underlies civilization and is the dimension of the tremendous that is at the same time both threatening and compelling" (2000, 59). The Dionysian is tempting in its triple dissolution of boundaries: a triple triumph over the 'principium individuationis' (Benjamin 1965, 554).

The human loses all restraint from nature by becoming one with nature. The human loses all restraint from his fellow-beings by the orgies, by orgasm, by the rage of the masses. In addition, the third barrier is inside the individual. Consciousness is thrown open to sub-consciousness. This triple dissolution of boundaries might be menacing for an ego holding fast and frightened onto its identity. Dionysian in contrast, would be the willingness, the disposition for libidinous, exciting destruction" (Safransky 2000, 59).

I would like to give the death of Eurydice a feminist interpretation. I have to add that for me the male and patriarchal represent a non-integrated

way of living the male energy. But we humans, no matter whether male or female, have both aspects. To speak with C. G. Jung: we have both the archetypes of animus and anima. In the Daoist way of speaking we have both the interchange of *yin* and *yang*. Only a disintegrated mode of one of these energies or archetypes makes the male or the female adverse or even destructive to each other and to the world.

Orpheus lost his true love to his patriarchal norm. Life and lifelines make way for becoming his shadow. However, the more he wants to capture the shadow, the more she disappears. In my performance, I mention Ophelia of Shakespeare and Heiner Müller, in analogy to the mythological Eurydice. Moreover, in my interpretation of her character, Ophelia stands between a fictional and a historical character. Ophelia, too, is a victim of a patriarchally shaped milieu. She gets delirious and dies, because she wants to escape the strain of her father to act against her true love. Many interpretations mentioned this as relief, liberation and emancipation from the patriarchal suppression, the pressure to obedience, and, I would like to add, as the pressure of the ‘will to power’. Eurydice, in contrast, flees from the persecution of Aristaios, the god of the hunters and herders, who is also a son of Apollo and the nymph Cyrene. While escaping, Eurydice steps on a snake and dies from the snakebite. Psychoanalytically one could argue that she dies from violence of the phallus as oppression under the ‘hunter man’s’ ‘will to power’, fleeing the patriarchal persecution to avoid destruction of her love for Orpheus. Therefore, in my interpretation, Ophelia is a sister of Eurydice.

Now in Heiner Müller’s *Hamletmaschine*, both Ophelia and Hamlet leave the story. Ophelia stopped killing herself and Hamlet does not play any role any more. Therefore, Heiner Müller’s Ophelia emancipates herself from her subjection by choosing her own life and not as Shakespeare’s Ophelia killing herself:

I am Ophelia, she who the river could not hold.  
 The woman on the gallows.  
 The woman with the slashed arteries  
 The woman with the overdose ON THE LIPS SNOW  
 The woman with the head in the gas-oven.  
 Yesterday I stopped killing myself. (2001, 3)

In the same way and even deeper, Eurydice liberates herself from any patriarchal oppression and representation by her escape into the shadow world. However, it is not just the gender theme I mention, as Elfriede Jelinek conceived Eurydice in her transformation of the myth in ‘Shadow’s (Eurydice says)’. In my performance I refer to a wider context,

it is the 'becoming Other' as Deleuze argues in 'La littérature et la vie': the norm of Western societies is the male white warrior. In addition, 'becoming Other' is becoming female. However, this 'becoming Other' cannot be understood as becoming the opposite of the man, rather it is an 'Other becoming'. According to Deleuze,

[Literature] always possesses the power to move beyond man: becoming-woman. [...] Finally, literature can be seen as a becoming-woman, for in literature we no longer see language as the representation of some underlying human norm, but as the creation and exploration of new styles of perception and becoming. (Kreuzmair 2010, 44)

Kreuzmair explains: "The supposed real world that would lie behind the flux of becoming is not, Deleuze insists, a stable world of being; there is nothing other than the flow of becoming. All beings are just relatively stable moments in a flow of becoming-life" (2010, 43).

Not only literature, but body-thinking in performance art, as a creative interaction of different art forms, which means a frottage, as a mode of a free and simultaneous interaction of these art forms, including the expression of the body in performative action and in dance, is an exploration of new styles of perception and becoming. Therefore, in the performance the escape of Eurydice into the shadow world with all the implications it has, is an escape from these 'male white warrior' categories, an escape from even those concepts, Apollonian and Dionysian, and an escape from the 'will to power'. Although these concepts are not even only rational concepts of the world, in my opinion they are still male gazes on the world. Therefore, the only chance to escape these concepts lies even deeper. It is the deconstruction of the myth of Eurydice and Orpheus by creating this myth, in the sense that even my interpretation and sight of the myth creates another myth, which she / one has to escape.

In the philosophy of mind, the myth was systematically integrated into the development of the mind—integrated in the mode of a system-building capacity of reason and rational thinking, in a 'mythology of reason' with different states as magic, mythic and rational, as practiced in German Idealism. Nevertheless, even in his post-metaphysical creation of new myths, as Nietzsche intended, the myth stands as a link of the human to nature, in the sense that nature is made a place that is friendly to the human. However, by doing this one does not get rid of the homocentric view onto nature. Leaving the story here in the performance is leaving the myth and therefore, leaving the representational system, the patriarchal norm.



In my opinion, the wisdom created by the Dionysian is one first step to abandon this rational view onto life, by questioning the creation of human norms and morals as absolute principles. With this, I do not want to say that rational thinking, morals and norms are not useful on a certain level of human society: after all, we create science with theoretical reason, and we create freedom, equality and human rights through practical reason. However, they are human norms, which on the other hand created exclusivity and thus exclusion. “Wounded bodies” and the abuse of animals and nature are signs of this exclusiveness of the human norms. In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche writes:

In this sense the Dionysian man resembles Hamlet: both have once looked truly into the essence of things, they have *gained knowledge*, and nausea inhibits action; for their action could not change anything in the eternal nature of things; they feel it to be ridiculous or humiliating, that they should be asked to set right a world that is out of joint. Knowledge kills action; action requires the veils of illusion: that is the doctrine of Hamlet, not that cheap wisdom of Jack the Dreamer, who reflects too much and, as it were, from an excess of possibilities does not get around to action. Not reflection, no-true knowledge, an insight into the horrible truth, outweighs any motive for action, both in Hamlet and in the Dionysian man. (2000, 8)

Therefore, in Heiner Müller’s version of *Hamlet*, the *Hamletmaschine*, Hamlet leaves the story. “I am not Hamlet. I play no role anymore...” (2001, 5). Therefore, in *Catch me if you can!* it is not Hamlet, but it is Eurydice, the female energy, who leaves the story, and this represents a wider sense than the one Nietzsche had in mind. In the myth she is finally irretrievably dying, for Orpheus and the Apollonian way of grasping the world. In the production, even the myth is dying and with the myth every representation and differentiation of Apollonian and Dionysian and the concept of the ‘will to power’. She goes beyond the dualisms, even beyond the Dionysian and the Apollonian, the feminine and masculine, the subject and object, and therefore she escapes representation. She even goes beyond this ‘will to power’. Because she has no will any more, she gives up all resistance and in this way she is opening herself to what might happen. If Eurydice is dying for the ‘will to power’, she is opening to a love beyond frontiers, beyond unities and beyond dualities. Hence, she is forever gone to the world of dualities and unities, but as a shadow always present in every emanation of being. This is my version of Müller’s text:

I am not ‘Eurydice’. I play no role anymore. My words have nothing more to say to me. My thoughts suck the blood of images. My drama is cancelled. Behind me the scenery is being taken down. By people who are

not interested in my drama, for people to whom it does not matter. It does not matter to me either. I'm not playing along anymore. (2001, 5)

### III. Body-thinking

In all this process of creating the performance, one can recognize a structure that begins with an impulse, is restricted by a resistance and in its continuation gets a certain continuity that one can call a structure. The structure I found is quite similar to the semiotic process that Charles Sanders Peirce described in his semiotic philosophy. In contrast to Peirce's semiotics, however, the creation of structure is an open relational process of forming structures and of deconstructing precoded structures, and not a representational mode of interpretation. In her study on *Danse et philosophie: une pensée en construction*, Veronique Fabbri argues: "It is appropriate in the terms of the new philosophy to take a look at construction that forges new unities from disparate elements without demanding the value of eternity. It is about construction that can do without a system" (2007). Because of this openness to the relational process, my work is work in progress. In 2007 I created the first concept of *Eurydice 2012*, and the first night of that performance was in Munich, subsidized by the city of Munich, in 2010. A further elaboration of *Eurydice 2012*, as a dance video installation, was invited to the opening of the third sound-check philosophy congress in Halle in 2013.

#### 1. Concerning the structure of body thinking:

Out of that intuitively found material, I create different layers. The semiotic relation between impulse, resistance and structure build and reset each layer anew. When they respond to a resistance, impulses, no matter what the nature of that resistance may be, lead to structures, which do not have to be coded primarily already at this point. My performances are structured as body-thinking, the impulse to thematise the body as a comprehensive form of thinking in a wider sense, so that imagining, feeling and perceiving are included. This approach is inspired by my choreographical and pedagogical work with bodies in dance, as well as my encounter of Asian body and consciousness techniques, and it is influenced further by the study of oriental and occidental philosophies. In these oriental practices, as well as in a creative way of dancing, of moving the body, body-mind and soul get into connection with the surroundings and with the universe. That offers the possibility to get rid of the overvaluation of this head-guided attitude, which excludes the world by creating the separation from the world: creating the object, creating the

others. In the same mode, the cerebrum is separated into the two halves of rational thinking and imagination.

An example may help to illustrate this: the performance *Human without cerebrum—Attempts*, which had its first night in The Nietzsche Documentation Centre in Naumburg, Germany in 2013, and which was shown in 2014 at the International Federation for Theatre Research World Congress ‘Theatre and Stratification’ in Warwick. To quote the blurb for the 2014 performance:

Integrating the poem of the same title by Durs Grünbein, a dialogue arises of fractals from movement and from language, with a video and a trombone. This is about bewilderment as method, as question, as self-image. Three Arkana, three attempts, atmospheres and theory, imagination and reason in free interplay. Is that art or philosophy? Or is it the very bewilderment of thinking, the self-image of the individual that releases creativity and thus opens up the possibility of an arts-based philosophy?

Body-thinking is based on this openness to other parts of the brain and thus on the integration of the whole body and brain in relation to the surroundings. The body regains an important role in the process of sensing, feeling, imagining, and thinking the world. In my opinion, the body is the first principle that creates unity even before all rationality but not completely dissociated from rationality. The body in its creation goes through all of evolution, and in addition, the body moulds all experiences. It is the vessel and it is permeable for energies that also guide the universe. For example, this is evident in the Chinese Bagua, the eight changes and the five elements in Chinese philosophy (*I Ging*), the *yin yang*, the understanding of *chi* and its phases of permutation. In the body, *chi* combines with *shen*, spirit. Here, body and spirit are seen and conceptualized in a relational context. In my opinion, one cannot comprehend live bodies with Descartes’ differentiation of *Res Extensa* and *Res Cogitans*. Here I take up the old Chinese Daoist way of thinking to help me further. According to this, living bodies take part in the polar forces of *yin* and *yang*. According to the Daoist philosophy, this is not a dualism of *yin* and *yang*: rather, both behave in a permanently polar relation to each other. Thus, *shen* is a kind of energetic, immaterial *QI* spirit, or the energetic expression of the personality of a person. *Hun* and *Po* can be referred to as the body spirit. According to Gundula Link (2001), *shen* as the *yang* side of the person can be understood as the things of impact that radiate from people. This would be the personality of a person, their energetic radiation atmosphere. *Hun* and *Po* as spiritual forces of *yin* are again separated into *yin* and *yang* parts. *Hun* as the *yang* energy of *yin* is the energetic force that emanates from material form. *Po*

as the *yin* energy of the *yin* is the energy of the cells. The seven *Po* spirits or ‘body-spirits’ correspond to the Indian chakras. Therefore, here bodies are seen in a wider context than only human bodies. Moreover, the blurring life of the quantum and chemical worlds might be included. In addition, bodies not only come into existence and exist in relation to other bodies, but also in relation to spiritual energies, to mental contents.

Therefore, body-thinking is rather a body and mind integrating process of forming structures and of deconstructing precoded structures. The direct relational relationships of live bodies in their immediate force of expression are the ones that enter into an energetic relationship with each other, which in consequence is the condition for the creation of structure. When they respond to a resistance, no matter what the nature of that resistance may be, impulses arise from that resistance and lead to structures, which do not have to be coded primarily already at this point. Therefore, the impulses may not yet be signs. However, they tend to be interpreted as signs, because of our determination by our socialization. Therefore, we have to deconstruct our own constitution of signs: the signs serve for us only as possible significations to rationally codify the ‘Other’, as representations of the object.

The process I am talking about here is one of creating structures that deconstruct and reconstruct precoded structures in this interaction with the ‘Other’. This relationship can be understood in terms of Peirce’s concepts of primarity, secondarity and tertiary, which define in their assembly of coordinates of three, how structures come into existence (Atkin 2013). However, the semiotics of Peirce, for my dance-philosophy called body-thinking, is only an analogy. I differ from Peirce in the concept of the constitution of signs—that in body-thinking, the sign generating process is an energetic, body and mind integrating process of these relations of three.

The other difference to Peirce is that I leave out the final interpretant. The final interpretant

would be reached if a process of enriching the interpretant through scientific enquiry were to proceed indefinitely. It incorporates a complete and true conception of the objects of the sign; it is the interpretant we should all agree on in the long run. (Hookway 1985, 139)

For Peirce, to avoid an endless chain of interpretations, the final interpretant guarantees in the end of time—which means in the end of the interpretational process—that the objects in the end of the interpretational process will be signified totally, and therefore understood by its representations.

I also differ from Peirce because Peirce’s semiotic would lead to an idealistic approach in the same sense as Schelling’s transcendental idealism: “Matter is a solidified reason”, in the sense that the rules of nature appear *sub specie evolutionis* as adoption, anticipation of the regularity, which signalizes the reason in toto (Peirce 1990, 912). This would create another speculative system, which subordinates nature under the rules of reason. However, in my opinion, an adequate approach to the ‘Other’ might neither be an idealistic position in the tradition of Western philosophy, nor fall into the trap of a position in the sense of a ‘naïve objectivism’. In addition, here enters Kant’s critique of reason (1976), and I think it is still help-and useful. For our logical mind, the *Ding an sich* (‘Thing in Itself’) is only appearance, phenomenon, figure. Therefore, we cannot reach the ‘Other’ by rational thinking (based on our human categorical mind) and so we have to find another way to reach the ‘Other’.

Philosophy, the ‘philo’ - ‘sophia’ (as mentioned by Deleuze (2000) – but with different options), is not necessarily thinking only in terms and in logical structures. The body can be understood in its living experience and in its getting in relation with the world, not in a dualistic, but in a relational relationship of body and mind, where the ‘Other’ does not have to be dominated by absolute categories. This might allow a different kind of philosophy, which I propose to name ‘body-thinking’.

In the mode of rational thinking, the mind categorizes the imprints of the world outside, and in its reference to the synthesis point, the ‘Ich denke’, the ‘transcendental subject’ (Kant 1976) arises. Here the mind is as well connected with the body (*yang shen*), but one does not notice it so easily, and so one thinks that the world and the ‘Other’ have to be ordered under absolute principles, synthesized under an ‘absolute subject’, which will exclude a huge part of all ‘Other’ that might be.

To arrive at the ‘Other’ I suggest a bodily approach in the mode of body-thinking. This bodily approach releases the relation of body and mind in a mode of playing. This is meant as a creative process in analogy to the creative play of imagination and reason as Kant describes it in his *Critique of Judgement* (1974), but with another focus than Kant had, who wanted to constitute a teleology of reason in nature. Moreover, these teleological concepts subsume the ‘Other’ under the logic of reason or exclude the ‘Other’.

In contrast to that, the structure of the creating process of body-thinking is an open creative process. Body-thinking can be experienced in the art of performance. The art of performance I mention is the mode of a creative interplay of different art forms. The sensing-feeling-perceiving mode of body-thinking generates connotations, created out of the

interaction in and in relation to the different layers of the performance. Hereby conventions and norms get into a blurring relation, which causes a deconstruction of encoded signs.

I will describe this process as follows: in the creative process of body-thinking there is no more any fixed symbolization, but a play within symbols and expressions with an openness to results, so that there will be no more representation; rather, the presentation reveals by its very moment, in the immanence, a truth that cannot be grasped by any system. In body-thinking the representations coincide with the presentations.

In addition, another transcendence beyond will not be created. Rather, the space to a transcendence in the immanence will be opened, and so the space to another mode of consciousness. Every movement forges its path through the resistances of air, of air pressure, of blood pressure, of the rhythm of breathing, and of the body's memory. In the resistance the other of the movement becomes noticeable and perceptible. It becomes an experience as the gesture, as pure potentiality, which aims at those things that are not visible in the visible, that cannot be shown in what can be shown, and all the things that have to remain absent from the absent. The movement is strictly speaking not. It opens by becoming.

## **2. The interpretational level of body-thinking, in reference to what happens to the recipient**

Here I use 'recipient' with regard to the suggestion by Daniel Meyer-Dinkgräfe: "I am using this term because the term "spectator" is restricted to the visual, and the term "audience" to the auditory senses. These terms do not do justice to the more comprehensive experience aimed at, enabled and taught by *Eurydice*" (2015). If the final interpretant is left out, the semiotic process on the object level of the interpretant level reaches the mode of the symbol (the secondness of the thirdness = symbol). Further, in the process of interpretation, the symbols, the imprints as pictures, are not theorized, which means that the meaningful pictures get into an oscillation, in a free interplay. As an analogy to the free interplay of imagination and reason, see Kant's *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (Baumgartner 1993).

Therefore, the meaningful structure of the symbol is set into oscillation, and the meaning of the picture gets fluid and disconnected from this apodictic relation to the picture, in order to open the picture to other connotations. In other words, it is a mode of creativity, an openness to results, and an anastomotic process.

Because of the frottage of different layers happening at the same time, the structure of the performance is not in a logical, causal one-way order. Rather, it is a holistic interconnection of different layers, connecting with

the other layers by analogy. Therefore, there is no simple creation of only one story, one meaning. Instead, through the multiple interconnected layers the recipient is asked to interconnect with the performance by what s/he is attracted to and touched by, and as well what s/he in her/his own being catches out in and in between the different layers. One cannot capture the performance only by rational understanding, but by intuitive sensing–feeling–perceiving. Thus the recipient has to come him/herself into a creative process trying to experience what the performance means to him/her.

I want to provide a further example, in addition to the focus, in this chapter, on *Eurydice*: my performance of *Configurazione di Sign-art-our*, at the MART, Museum of Modern Art, for the Opening of the OrienteOccidente Festival in Rovereto, Italy, in 2012. For this performance I worked together with the Italian artist, Silvio Cattani. In this performance, the painter stands at the place of the recipient being involved in the creative process and therefore painting each time anew his own picture. The performance originated in a process of relations that in the end led to structures. This process of creating thus happened “in between,” at the place of the “and” that relates parts of a sentence, at the “gap” in relation of the Ego and the other, at the “border” of signatures.

Therefore, the composition of the performance is in permanent process. The painter and the recipients belong to this process; they are in each performance new, painting their own “picture.” Concerning the real physical process of body-thinking, what happens while acting and while creating: the physical encounter of the bodies remains in a mode of the quality of the encounter, and a physical mode of sensing-feeling-perceiving as individual bodies in a high perception while meeting the ‘Other’. The encounter is happening in the mode of playing. This is free interplay, and I propose to call it a ‘third language’. An example is *Dancing Horses-Reflections in Space*’ from 2012, a performance created for the 100 years’ festivity of the city of Starnberg, see Meyer-Dinkgräfe’s article (2014), and the video *Dancing Horses*, presented at the Philosophy Working Group of the 2014 ASTR Conference in Baltimore.

In the Old German language, Play - ‘*spil*’- means a ‘dance movement’. Playing is a type of free action, but you lose a part of your autonomy as well, because you do not exactly know how the play will end. You have to let yourself be involved in another state of mind. Concerning the free interplay of the semiosis, in Kant’s *Critique of Judgement*, the ‘free interplay between imagination and reason’ can be seen as the basis of a creative mind. Like this, the individual semioses are released into a simultaneous balance, which enables a free exchange of playfulness of the

different symbols, which creates an open creative process. This open creative process is the basis of my philosophy performances. Playfulness is central in the art of performance as well. In the sense of a separation of subject and object, infants are not yet separated from their surroundings and grasp the world by playing. Heidegger considered the possibility of defining 'Dasein' as being-in-the-world as play, in the way that the opposition between subject and object is overcome (2001). Therefore, my performance ends with the ethical aspect of body-thinking: "Let yourself go" is a song sung and danced by Ginger Rogers with Fred Astaire in the film *Follow the Fleet* (1936) with music and lyrics by Irving Berlin, directed by Mark Sandrich. I reinterpreted this song as a dance battle: swing jazz danced with flamenco steps in a free interplay. "Let yourself go" might happen throughout one's experiences of letting go all concepts in a mode of play, playfulness and vulnerability. There are in an equal play, beats and off-beats, syncopes, and call and response. It is in the end a homage to the playful and respectful interchange of cultural diversities.

Jazz has been created by the black Americans, and flamenco has been created by the Spanish gypsies. Therefore, these forms were created by groups of humans that were excluded from Western society. But with their music and rhythms they founded a niche, a place, a society of their own, and added an enriching element, a freedom, a mode of creativity to the conventional rhythms and music. They created this play of off-beats and syncopes, the in-between rhythms, that came into dialogue with the traditional classical music, based on whole notes and melody.

All this leads in this performance of *Euridice* to a lively revelation dance named Pizzica-Tarantella. I used it here at the end of *Catch me if you can!*, in analogy to the death of Orpheus being torn to bits by the Maenads, but here as a play that began with a dance-battle, passing over to a free headshaking dance with the audience, to get rid of the domination of our head. Torn to bits by the Dionysian energy, Orpheus is becoming 'Other'. In addition, by this mode of playing, he even breaks through the Dionysian energy.

It is this 'Other becoming', this 'Becoming Other' as Deleuze mentions, that in the end of the performance opens to another state of mind. In my opinion, body-thinking opens more to the 'Philo' 'Sophia', the love of WISDOM, than thinking only with our head as rational thinking, because in body-thinking something essential is made possible by our attention to the moment, which transcends terms or rules, because it is not encompassed by terms or rules. Throughout this openness to results, body-thinking operates in a mode of creativity, which is a basis of life, a basis of art and a basis of thinking, being open to every change that might



become. So the process of life, the history of our planet and of us as human beings cannot be understood in a linear way, reaching out for a final interpretant, which means by a system-orientated philosophy, by a philosophy that only points out to rational thinking.

Rather, the mode of philosophizing in the way of body-thinking, materialized as performance philosophy, philosophy performances, or experimental philosophy can be understood as an interconnected relational creative process, with the focus on the singular moment that, by the depth of sensing-feeling-imagining-perceiving, opens to other states of consciousness. This process of creating happens ‘in between’, at the place of the ‘and’ relating parts of a sentence, at the ‘gap’ in relation of the Ego and the ‘Other’, at the ‘border’ of signatures.

The movement is strictly speaking not. It opens by becoming. Therefore, I tore up my text and dissolved it at the end of my lecture.

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## CHAPTER TWO

### “I KNOW YOU’RE WATCHING ME”: META-THEATRE AND IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN *M. BUTTERFLY* AND *THE GOOD PERSON OF SZECHWAN*

HOLLY BERKOWITZ

Bertolt Brecht’s *The Good Person of Szechwan* and David Henry Hwang’s *M. Butterfly* consistently break the diegesis to call attention to the un-fixity of identity and, by extension, to drama as a form of expression. Meta-theatre impacts the notion of identity and performance on Brecht’s stage, allowing for a form of meta-identity that comments on itself as un-rooted. On the surface, it would seem that Hwang’s play is far more interested in notions of performative identity. However, *M. Butterfly* cannot be understood as the more radical piece, in part because of its fundamental dependence on Brechtian epic theatre. By reading Brecht in the context of Hwang, it is evident that both *Good Person* and the stage itself become the locus for a meditation on the unfixity of identity, even more controversially so than in Hwang’s work. In this chapter, I will do a close reading of the meta-theatrical elements in *M. Butterfly* to establish the ways in which the play is influenced by Brechtian alienation and how it *seems* to be the more explicit work of meta-dramatic theatre. Following my analysis of *M. Butterfly*, I will investigate Brecht’s play to show how re-reading it through a lens that pairs these two works allows us to see how Brecht is speaking to notions of identity performance and theatricality even more radically in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I will conclude my argument by examining the production histories of both plays, focusing on two or three productions of each. By looking at these instances we can see how Brecht’s play allows for much more flexibility in performance than Hwang’s play, which is fixed in time and staging.

*The Good Person of Szechwan* details the search for a truly good person. Shen Teh is deemed to be the only good person left in the decaying province and this burden of goodness literally splits her in half. This forces her to become Shui Ta, her male “cousin” as well. On the other hand, *M. Butterfly* is loosely based on the real life court case of Bernard Bouriscot, a man who was arrested for espionage after having been enticed to do so by his male Chinese lover who he believed to be a woman. Meta-theatre, though primarily associated with Brecht, is inextricable from both plays. It highlights issues of performance and indicates the performative and theatrical nature of identity itself. The liminal and nebulous nature of identity, specifically with regard to sexuality, gender, and ethnicity, becomes apparent in re-reading Brecht through Hwang.

*M. Butterfly* is highly aware of itself as a staged work of theatre. From Gallimard’s initial address to the audience, it is clear that two plays are being staged: one of diegesis that we as viewers are asked to enjoy, and one that the protagonist, Gallimard, puts on for both his and the audience’s “pleasure.” The majority of the play we see is, in fact, the play-within-the-play, and the text consistently emphasizes performance. Before Gallimard speaks, the stage directions describe him in his prison cell watching Song as s/he dances to a piece of Chinese opera. Before the play officially begins we see a performance within the existing performance. Gallimard, the object of the audience’s spectatorship as well as the object of the prison’s spectatorship, becomes the spectator himself. Song becomes the performer and Gallimard becomes a member of the audience. The shifts in subjectivity emphasize the way in which the roles of audience and performer are unmoored, highlighting the layers of performativity within the play.

*M. Butterfly* draws upon two main sources for its material: the real life trial of Bouriscot, and Puccini’s opera *Madame Butterfly*. These two sources open up an interesting facet of this play. In this instance, intertextuality includes a source of reality, blurring the lines of truth and imagination. The use of the opera further suggests this play’s meta-theatricality, as it includes several tiers of performance within its diegetic space. This meta-dramatic engagement is clear from Act 1 scene 3, in which Gallimard “introduces” us to his favourite opera, which also happens to be *Madame Butterfly* and begins to act it out with another (mentally-conjured) figure, his childhood friend Marc. Gallimard becomes Pinkerton, the hero, and Marc plays his friend Sharpless, both wearing caps to indicate the roles they have taken on. The scene culminates with Gallimard lip-syncing over the opera’s recording—a clear representation of performances layered over one another. At the end of the scene he

reiterates the casting and has Marc bow for the audience. The direct address to the audience about a scene being performed makes the audience complicit in the meta-theatrical nature of the play, as well as restricts them from becoming passive observers.

The function of audience gets explored further in the meeting of Gallimard and Song. The stage direction reads, “The upstage special area now becomes a stage” (Hwang 1988, 1420). This direction makes the dual stages obvious; more than just a play-within-a-play, we now have a stage-upon-a-stage. Gallimard is in attendance at this performance being staged. He has directed this scene, set it up for us, and now becomes an audience member as well. This spectatorial shift has the effect of unfixing the roles of the theatre. Who is the playwright, who is the actor, who is the character onstage, and who is the audience? This play consistently toys with these roles to remind us that they are not singular and can contain a multiplicity of meanings. The play-within-a-play-within-a-play is Song’s performance of *Madame Butterfly*, but Song complicates this performance when s/he breaks the fourth wall of her performance to speak to Gallimard. This moment is a meta-theatrical breach of the onstage audience. Gallimard is shocked as Song has stepped out of her/his role of performer to infiltrate what should be the separate and distinct world of the spectator. It parallels Hwang’s aim to breach the real audience’s world with Gallimard and Song’s intrusion into their space.

When Hwang’s play is read alongside an analysis of *Good Person*, what appears is a play that uses metadrama as a means to produce a sort of meta-identity. By this I mean an identity that comments on itself, and that is made performative by the performative nature of the work it is in. Hwang sets forth a dramatic world based on Brecht’s innovative meta-theatrical theories where identity becomes unfixed and vacillates between the poles of female and male, Occident and Orient, and falls in a liminal space between the two. Reading Hwang’s identity narrative back onto Brecht, it would seem as if Brecht’s dramatic world is unfixed and then some. It is not just a shifting between two subjectivities, but a world of play in which there are multiple ways to be a subject, and none of them are rooted in reality.

The first thing of note in *Good Person*, and something that oddly often gets overlooked, is the setting of the play itself: “A Street in the Capital of Szechwan” Why would Brecht make the decision to set this parable play in China, having likely never been there? Why give these characters all Chinese names but give them no other characterization through language or otherwise that suggests a Chinese ethnic identity? One suggestion to these puzzling questions is that this play, though preceding Hwang’s,

moves past the notions set forth by Hwang in regard to how to perform Chinese and European ethnicity. Here being Chinese is not tied to a specific performance. It is not being passive or feminine that makes you from the Orient, or being manly and bold that makes you from the West. Rather, the world of *Good Person* offers the stage as a site of a pan-ethnicity, in which all race is being performed. Thus the fluidity allows for a shifting back and forth between the Eastern and the Western world.

In addition to race, in *Good Person* performing gender is yet another facet of meta-identity. Rather than the big revelation that Song gives us in *M. Butterfly*, we know quite early on that Shen Teh is performing both male and female roles. S/he performs the change while onstage. The stage directions read: "Shen Teh enters, carrying Shui Ta's mask and costume...She puts on Shui Ta's costume and takes a few steps in his way of walking...She dons Shui Ta's mask and sings on in his voice" (Brecht 1943, 612-13). This explicit change has the effect of a backstage costume switch, an actor changing in between scenes to play someone else, or to perform in a different role. But more than that, this meta-theatrical practice signals to the audience that identity, specifically gender identity, is just another performance. It is as easy as putting on a mask and costume, taking a few steps and practicing the voice before the next scene is ready and Shui Ta is on stage. In this next scene, similarly, Shui Ta is not completely fixed as male. Upon hearing voices in the next room, Brecht's directions read, "Shui Ta runs to a mirror, with Shen Teh's light steps, and is just beginning to arrange his hair when he realizes his mistake. He turns away with a soft laugh" (Brecht 1943, 613). Shen Teh merely has to change his/her physical behaviour to become Shui Ta, signalling the capacity for play and liminality within the construction of identities.

Additionally, Shen Teh's biological status as woman is made explicit with her pregnancy. There is never the question as to whether Shen Teh is male or female, and yet there is the sense that s/he is both. When Shui Ta reveals himself to the Gods in the final scene, the stage directions read: "He takes off his mask and rips away his costume. Shen Teh stands there" (Brecht 1943, 649). What emerges from this small moment of direction is the unfixedness of gender and identity. Shui Ta begins this moment, and the use of the male pronoun is indicative of his status as male. But after shedding *his* sartorial elements, he has become Shen Teh, who is undeniably a she. It is more complex than that, however, as Shen Teh/Shui Ta's next lines indicate. S/he says, "Yes, it is me. Shui Ta and Shen Teh, I am both of them" (Brecht 1943, 649). In the space of this play where performance is consistently and unrelentingly emphasized, it is