

The Aesthetics of Disappearance and the Politics of Visibility in the Performance of Technology

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When there is a solution, it is no longer a problem.
When there is an answer, it is no longer a real question.
For at that point, the problem is part of the solution and
the answer is part of the question.

Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations and Simulacra*

The critique and encouragement of the constructions of identity and the representation of the negotiations of subjectivity in various systems of power are tasks that the theatre neatly serves. Yet, I seek to articulate a problem in the reliance of some contemporary theatre and performance artists on a strategic essentialism,¹ which concretizes the facticity of identity, while embracing a solipsistic realism. I will suggest that this is an understandable, but problematic choice given the bio-politics of digital cultures in which virtual, televisual, and mediated technologies challenge the subject forth toward a troubling dis-empowerment (of expendable data). Drawing upon a disparate series of dramatic, theoretical and performative examples, I hope to demonstrate the problem of misusing strategic essentialism in the performance of identity and point to various useful alternatives of current philosophical and technological/new media stagings.

Firstly, two keynote addresses at the XIIIth World Congress of the International Federation of Theatre Research (Canterbury, 1998) by Erika Fischer-Lichte and Maria Shovtosa called for a return to the study and practice of the-

1. I am employing Gayatri Spivak's model of strategic essentialism, which argues that it may be useful to draw upon essentialist notions in order to counteract certain essentialist positions. The problem according to Spivak is when the strategy remains essentialist and forgoes a critique of its own position.

atre proper, back from the borders of performance studies. Each argued that performance studies asserts that everything is performative. Each countered that if everything is performative, then nothing is performative, ergo, if everything is theatre then nothing is theatre. According to Guy DeBord's Situationist model these theatre researchers have it right, yet, the option to return to things as they were, before the ignition of the televisual bomb and the encroachment of the ideology of the virtual, is not available. No call from the podium for the simulacra of mediatized culture to cease and desist is going to alter the affects of the ontology of the televisual and the virtual on how we see performance, theatre, and theatricality. The not-so-surprising tendency toward a bordered theatricality and critique of performativity as an ineffective epistemological model constitutes one flank in the defensive manoeuvrings by theatre scholars and practitioners against the perceived crisis of subjectivity in mediatized culture. The argument further suggests a concern within theatre scholarship that the analytical model of performance/performativity is too broad a concept to be an effective methodology.

Secondly, some contemporary theatre and performance artists in addressing the concerns of identity politics in a quest for representational visibility, have staged a solipsistic return through realism.² The solidification, centrality, and domination of the cultural critiques and empowerment strategies surrounding various models of subjectivity has been and is a process much needed and worthy, but nonetheless now the norm and therefore the target for critique itself. I am suggesting, following Baudrillard's tortuous train of thought in *The Perfect Crime* (Baudrillard 1966), that the anxiety engendered in the loss of the real in mediatized culture has resulted in some artists retreating from the borders of art and performance where subjectivity's visibility is always already disappearing and taking up positions where the redeployment of the binary distinctions of politics and classical representations is performed through traditional realism. The grounds for concern for digital culture's manipulations of the real, ubiquitous surveillance, and challenges to subjectivity are legitimate. But, I want to suggest that the strategy of re-engaging an essentialist position regarding identity is perhaps ineffective for resisting these issues. Against this phenomenon of the theatre's partial returnings to "more traditional and reassuring perspectival or mimetic enclave(s)" (Jameson 1991: 54), I want to counter with examples of current techno-philosophical theatres, which question the conflicts between the ideological, political, and aesthetic issues of the disappearing technologised body and the political visibility of the "lived body" in performance. I am pointing toward theatres (e.g. Beckett's later plays, The Wooster Group, and Socie-

2. The historical sketch of contemporary performance artists' and playwrights' reliance on the self as subject and theme can be drawn from the early body artists such as Chris Burden, Marina Abramovic, and Gina Payne, through to the postmodern solo-theatre practitioners Spalding Gray, Tim Miller, Holly Hughes, and Anna Deavere Smith.

tas Raffaello Sanzio) located in the space and time of technology, which acknowledge the profound effects of the metaphysics of the televisual and the virtual on many means of communication, and which can pursue a questioning regarding the theatre itself and thereby the disciplines of representation and the problems of subjectivity.

What drives the desire for a recuperation of traditional subjectivity at the moment when identity and the body are being challenged, mapped, commodified, and colonised through scientific visualizations, genetic engineering, and body modifications should not be overlooked. My assertion is that the demand for a solidified subject position is a retrograde motion in space (a slowing down to make things visible) to counteract the speed of the time of technology (making things disappear) (Virillo 1986). The argument against my questioning is that the abrogation of the subject is politically suspect. In an article brought to my attention by Professor Gay Gibson Cima of Georgetown University titled "The Postmodernist Turn in Anthropology: Cautions from a Feminist Perspective," the authors convincingly argue that the devaluation of the subject by Western white males has been generated as a strategy to neutralize the empowered subjectivities of marginalized people. Suspicions of the reader of this essay may be raised in that I have named African-American, queer, and female artists in my challenge. I would hasten to add that I am attempting to foreground an alternative theatre, NOT impugn the value of performance work for which the construction of identity is critical. However, given the phenomena of the human immersed in technology and the strategies of simulation, the returnings to a traditional subject position are impossible, and if possible, unfortunate, as they represent an avoidance as things as they are and thereby postpones any type of genuine resistance. The slippage of subjectivity in the space of technology is at issue in Sue Ellen Case's book, *Domain-Matrix*. Professor Case writes,

The immediate problem is how, or where, to begin to write the conjunction performing and lesbian in this time of slippage and upheaval, when medical technologies are redefining basic definitions of gender assignment, even the deep structures of corporeality itself, in genetic codes; a sexually-transmitted pandemic is loose in the world, taking (safe) sexual practices out into more virtual, abstract realms; political categories such as race or sexual preference are scrutinized at the deepest level as unstable, and even the seismology of such instability doubts its own methods. (1996: 1)

The world that Case describes is all that is the case in the West. The move toward a "post-human" construction of subjectivity has been taking place and the motors of science and capitalism are certain to accelerate the process at all cost.³ I wonder if within this post-human moment, instead of a theatre im-

3. For a further discussion of "post-humanism" and performance see Causey (2001, 2002).

mersed in the politics of visibility and identity, which inevitably calls on affirmative representations in a bid to rebuild a unified subject, what might be imagined as an aesthetics of disappearance,⁴ at the border of theatre where at play is the “cessation of the *principium individuationis*” in the space of technology.⁵ Practically speaking, how can we know the world that has been worlded as virtual through a theatre that operates with the technologies of a past age?

A Philosophical Alternative

Brecht, describing his model of Epic Theatre, wrote that “the theatre becomes a place for philosophers, and for such philosophers as not only wish to explain the world but wish to change it” (1964: 80). Yet, according to Lyotard, “philosophers ask questions without answers, questions that have to remain unanswered to deserve being called philosophical [. . .] answered questions are only technical matters” (1988: 8).

One of the unanswerable questions of philosophical thinking regards the nature of the thing in and of itself, the thingness of the thing. According to Heidegger, in order to think in this manner, we must abandon representational thinking in favor of meditative thinking. Meditative thinking can permit the object of discourse to reveal itself outside of the framing devices of representation. The thingness of the theatre, the riddle of the ontology of theatre has not been solved and perhaps, hopefully, it never will be resolved, for it is this impossible thought, this site of theatre’s aporia that seduces us to continually return to performance for to begin yet again, desiring the occurrence of the same thing only different. Asking answerable questions, posing solvable problems in the material and visible world is the difficult work of the engineer in decidability and the politician in representation. The contemporary theatre is, for the most part, one locked in politics, psychology, and realism that chooses a moral position and discards philosophical problems. The cultural critics that dominate new theatre practice and theory not only pose answerable questions but morally and ethically simplistic ones. Nonetheless, there are many exceptions to this problem, including the Wooster Group’s use of black-face, pornography, and appropriated texts, Suzan-Lori Parks’s deconstructions of “blackness,” or Societas Raffaello

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4. A theme that runs through this essay can be paraphrased as the “liquidation of subjectivity in the space of technology.” Troublingly, this notion seems to follow the nightmare scenario of the evolution of technology toward the Final Solution. The danger of technology lies in its consumption of the destinies of the human and it is not difficult to see the destiny of the machine at the collapse of the human and the destruction of the earth. I can sense this pressure on my thesis. I, and others who follow the call of technology, should be cautious.
 5. *Principium individuationis*, the principle of individuation, is drawn from the writing of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche and refers to the illusion of identity as a separate and autonomous entity.

Sanzio's challenging representations of the "disabled" body. Additionally, it is important to acknowledge the many fine examples of philosophical reflection in current theatre practice, including the work of Howard Barker and Michael Frayn. I admit to using my own strategic essentialism to chastise the theatre for its psychologism and moralism. Perhaps the position I am taking will be weakened by this admission, or at the least the area in which I stand will be reduced, but I still hope to argue that much of contemporary theatre seems unavailable to work through the difficult issues of identity and subjectivity in digital culture, choosing instead to reenact well-worn essentialisms.

Lyotard theorizes in his book, *The Inhuman*, that painting has become impossible in the light of photography, that literature has become impossible as a result of journalism. This has not been an aesthetic issue alone but symptomatic of capitalism. The world needs journalism, needs photography, has no need for writing or painting. Yet, within the impossibilities of painting and writing is the birth of philosophy through these media and a questioning regarding their essence and ontology. What is painting? What is writing? The failed systems become insanely self-reflexive, philosophical, reordered as the site of art production. Now at the point where theatre has become "impossible," or at least challenged, as a result of the simulation strategies of the virtual and the televisual, is the moment where a philosophical (failed) theatre can take hold to offer a "thinking through" of the forms of theatrical production. What is theatre? What are its borders? The process of a philosophical theatre is to avoid the answerable questions regarding the politics of the visible while approaching the unanswerable issues of the aesthetics of disappearance, the sublimity of the unrepresentable.

Textual and Performance Evidence: *Coriolanus*, *Film*, Ontological-Hysteric Theatre, and Societas Raffaello Sanzio

Consider the trajectory of these citations from the dramatic literature, theatre theory, and performance practice of Shakespeare, Beckett, Richard Foreman's Ontological-Hysteric Theatre, and Romeo Castellucci's Societas Raffaello Sanzio. I use them to highlight the problems of performing identity politics and suggest how some theatre artists continue to work towards the theatre's potential for openness to the mystery of transformative ritual despite its place in the simulacrum of digital culture. I hope to trace a historical trajectory from early modern to high modern drama to postmodern performance so as to foreground the ongoing crisis of subjectivity and representation, while critiquing the essentialism of identity politics in performance. From Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* I borrow the notion of the inevitability of cultural fragmentation and the need to seek representations of unity (scapegoats) so as to establish visibility and power no matter who or what is sacrificed. From Beckett's *Film*, I use the dramatised dissolution of self through an attempted escape from the technologies of vision, perception, and representation so as to rid ourselves of ourselves

through the act of seeing ourselves (Causey 1999: 383-94). From Richard Foreman's "Ontological-Hysteric Manifesto I" I take a model for a philosophical theatre involved in the struggle of making things appear not as representations, but as they "are." And finally, drawing from the work of director Romeo Castellucci and his theatre collective Societas Raffaello Sanzio, I suggest, following the theory of Giorgio Agamben, that the virtualizing of the "bare life" of the subjects of the bio-politics of digital culture is one of the central issues confronting contemporary performance. Castellucci's work indicates the importance to not draw upon past models of subjectivity, but to take account of the new position of "being" in virtual, mediatized, and technologised domains.

1. *Coriolanus*. The city of Rome is in upheaval and its citizens demand that their voices be heard. The Senate agrees to allow the people five representatives. Coriolanus, the great Roman soldier and patrician has been marked through war, and his mother counts the wounds on her son's body to confirm his suitability, his visibility, to act as representative for the people. But, Coriolanus despises the rabble. "Go. Get you home, you fragments" (I.i, 222), he sneers at the people. And yet, they require each other to gain power. Consider how the Third Citizen in *Coriolanus*' Rome constructs the problem of representation:

We have power in ourselves to do it, but it is a power that we have no power to do; for if he show us his wounds and tell us his deeds, we are to put our tongues into those wounds and speak for them. (II.iii, 4-8)

The seduction of representation lies in its cyclical nature. If Coriolanus shows his wounds to the people they must lend their voices to speak for his wounds. They have no choice as the Third Citizen warns, lest they become monstrous, remaining fragmented. The people speak through his wounds and the sound that is heard is ambiguous. Whose voice is being heard? The reluctant Coriolanus is cursed to act as a representation. In this drama neither the people nor Coriolanus are served as the wounds of Coriolanus consume the voice of the people and Coriolanus remains mute among the babble of voices. He resists representation and begins his own disappearing act. His memory fades, "like a dull actor now I have forgot my part" (V.iii, 40), he banishes the Roman State, abandons family, "all bond and privilege of nature break" (V.iii, 25), and seeks his erotic disappearance in the arms of the enemy, finally calling for his own slaughter, "cut me to pieces" (V.vi, 15). The state begins fragmented, Coriolanus is scapegoated as representation to unify difference, yet he cannot bear the weight of that collective desire. He calls down his own *sparagmos* thus fulfilling the scapegoat mission of unifying through a dismembering sacrifice. The play reasons that with an assertion of identity (the citizens and Coriolanus) comes a desire for power and often an exclusion of the other (their very representative and his constituents). How can one promote identity, gain power, but

not lose the other in the process? It is Coriolanus' retreat from representation, his desire to vanish, to disappear in the arms of the enemy that speaks to my thesis. Coriolanus' journey is similar to the individual performing in the space of technology who meets her own disappearance in the televisual mechanism of the split subjectivity wherein the "true nature" of the subject simultaneously finds itself and disappears. As I wrote in an article for *Theatre Journal*, "the inclusion of the televisual screen in performance, and the practice of performance in the screened world of virtual environments, constitutes the staging of the privileged object of the split subject, that which assists in the subject's division, capturing the gaze, enacting the subject's annihilation, its nothingness, while presenting the unrepresentable approach of the real through the televisual screens" (Causey 1999: 383-94). Beckett's *Film*, can help us sort this out.

2. Film. If *Coriolanus* can be read as marking the problems of political, personal, and aesthetic representation, and the inevitability of fragmentation in social systems, which results in a need within those structures to seek out representations of unity, Samuel Beckett's *Film*, a short film featuring Buster Keaton, goes a step further critiquing the technologies of perception and representation as a process of tragic self-delusion. Consider, Beckett's directions to *Film*,

All extraneous perception suppressed, animal, human, divine, self-perception maintains in being. Search for non-being in flight from extraneous perception breaking down in inescapability of self-perception. No truth value attaches to above, regarded as of merely structural and dramatic convenience. (Beckett 1986: 323)

"How can we rid ourselves of ourselves and demolish ourselves?" is how Deleuze reads *Film* (1986: 66). The text and film "reminds us that the technologies of vision, and their will to representation have at their essence 'no truth value attached,' to be 'regarded as of merely structural and dramatic convenience.' The protagonist 'O' sundered into objecthood, races through the streets under the surveillance of the eye, 'E.' 'Search for non-being in flight from extraneous perception breaking down in inescapability of self-perception'" (Causey 1999: 383). The eye, presenting the technology of self-perception as embodied in the camera, is restricted to 45 then 90 degrees of perception. "O," and the spectator, never see "E," the subject never sees the self until the end when it realizes that the character E is its double except that one eye is covered in a patch. *Film* represents the perceiving self as a camera with monocular vision. Like Coriolanus' longing to vanish in the face of the other, or the contemporary performer challenged by the mediated representations of the self in virtual environments, Beckett's screenplay/film implies that to see one's self is to demolish one's self in an autopsy of perception. The eye (I) is blinded. As Peggy Phelan suggests in *Unmarked*, what we see of the visible is locked to the matrix of surveillance, fetishism, appropriation, and violence (1983).

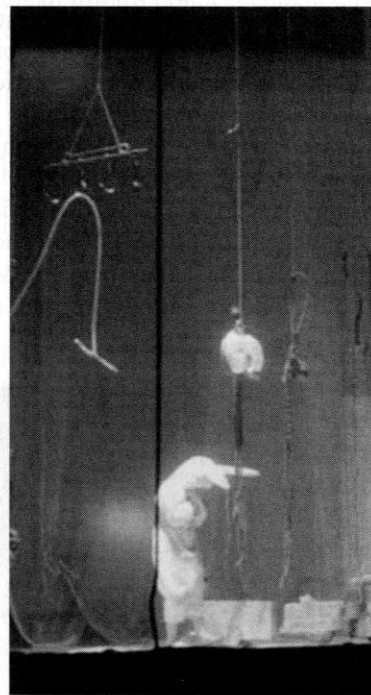
Deleuze in *Cinema I* and *II* narrates a history of the image in film that passes from the movement-image to the time-image. The movement image consists of descriptions, which assume the independence of the object of discourse, its chronological progression and the principles, which determine the order of the real. The unreal (dreams, memory, the imaginary) exist as contrast. In the model of the movement-image the imaginary and the real operate as oppositions; each substantiating the others' presence. "Narration is truthful, 'developed organically, according to legal connections in space and chronological relations in time'" (Deleuze 1989: 133). The time image consists of descriptions that replace their object, substitute, actuate, eliminate and are subsumed by other descriptions, and bring about "the coalescence of an actual image and its virtual image" (Deleuze 1989: 127), in which narration is falsifying, operating in "a chronic non-chronological time which produces movements necessarily 'abnormal,' essentially false" (Deleuze 1989: 129). The actual is cut off from its "motor linkage" and the real is cut off from its "legal connections" (Deleuze 1998). According to Deleuze, *Film* "elaborates a system of simple cinematographic conventions" (1986: 66-7) to represent the process of extinguishing the three varieties of the "movement-image": action, perception, affection. The subject "O," who is object to the perceiving self, moves through a cityscape trailed by the camera (action-image). In his room he perceives subjectively while the camera does so objectively (perception image). Finally, the affection image occurs as the self comes face to face with itself. The three varieties of the movement image are passed through and closed, but to what end? "Death, immobility, blackness" (1986: 68). But this is only a subjective end, Deleuze writes. "It is only a means in relation to a more profound end. It is a question of attaining once more the world before man, before our own dawn, the position where movement was, on the contrary, under the regime of universal variation, and where light, always propagating itself, had no need to be revealed" (1986: 68).

Deleuze's metaphysical claims are perhaps hard to follow or accept but what is important in his reading of *Film* in regards to my thesis, is the quest for disappearance, which I hope to make clearer through the theory of Richard Foreman below. The film *Film* represents the approach of the other side of representation (Artaud's cruelty or Genet's screens) as a quest for otherness. The goal is attained not through consolidation of identity, but through a loss of subjectivity. When "E" meets "O" the rocking stops.

3. The Ontological-Hysteric Theatre. *Coriolanus* proposes that the representational model is flawed as it stages the sacrifice of the self in an attempted unification of the un-unifiable as all begins and remains fragmented and unity is a cruel fiction. The hero seeks his own destruction to avoid the burden of representation. *Film* narrates the impossible escape plan from perception and representation while suggesting the territory of the unrepresentable by seeing what it is to see and thereby positing the myths and borders of subjectivity. If in my theoretical narrative *Coriolanus* and *Film* stand-in as cautionary metaphors for the

reliance of traditional representations, then Richard Foreman's thirty-year project, the Ontological-Hysteric Theatre, demonstrates a philosophical alternative. Foreman's "Ontological-Hysteric Manifesto I" is dated April 1972. In it he writes that "Art = make there assert self, not turn into project that absorbs there (1976: 67). Foreman is paraphrasing Heideggerian notions of meditative thinking, which attempts to allow the thingness of things to be unconcealed. The stage of the Ontological-Hysteric Theatre evolves a meditative *mise-en-scène*, in which objects set up systems wherein time and space are "suspended" and "there" is asserted. Foreman writes, "Art: not concerned with essence but with THING used in such a way that it vanishes and what is left is suspension" (1976: 69). This idea is a bit more challenging regarding my thesis, but it drives to the heart of the argument. Foreman is considering that an object when approaching itself, its thingness, it approaches its disappearance, its death. "What interests me is my own disappearance" is how Foreman says it in his play, *Blvd de Paris* (1985). *Coriolanus, Film* and the Ontological-Hysteric Theatre represent three models of the aesthetics of disappearance, which seek to undo the illusions of subjectivity while giving rise to otherness. In order to circumvent my claiming newness or academic isolation with this short reading of Forman, recent phenomenological studies of the stage should be acknowledged including the important work of Bert O. States and Stanton Garner, who draw from Merleau-Ponty's philosophical models.

4. Societas Raffaello Sanzio. My final piece of evidence is the recent performance work of Romeo Castellucci's Societas Raffaello Sanzio, which I use to represent a second strategy (to Foreman's phenomenological stage) around the trap of staging a solipsistic turn to essentialism. Societas Raffaello Sanzio is a contemporary Italian collective formed in 1989 and their best known works, *Giulio Cesare* (1997) and *Genesi: From the Museum of Sleep* (1999) have toured throughout Europe and the Americas. The work of Societas Raffaello Sanzio combines the use of complex imagery, dense audio scores, in linguistically minimal works devised from deconstructed classic

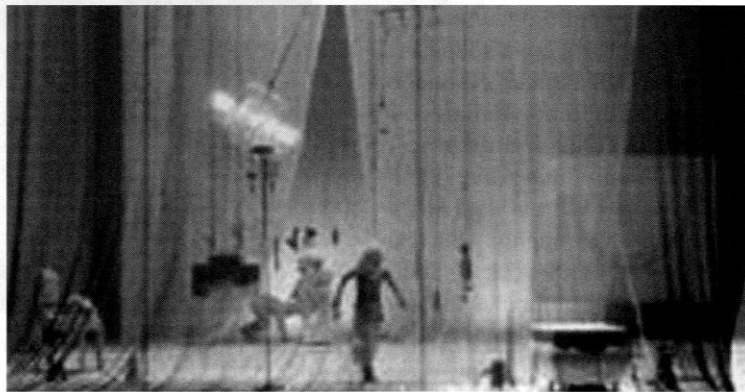


Societas Raffaello Sanzio's production of *Genesi*. Agatha Castellucci as the White Rabbit in the second act.

texts with what the director Castellucci calls the “dis-human”: actors’ bodies altered by disease and surgical interventions, animals, children, and performing objects.

As I argued in *Theatre Research International*, “The supplements of the performing machine, animal, child and the ‘disabled/perfect’ actor, establish an aesthetic that resists acting, metaphor, and narrative, in favor of performance/enactment, metonymy, and image. Each of the elements of machine, animal, child, and disabled adult, supplies a unique presence, which circumvents an imitative illusion. A strangeness pervades the performance of authenticity in Castellucci’s *mise-en-scène*” (2001: 199-208).

The stage of the dis-human playing through the tragic myths and historical atrocities remains over-determined and troubling, disavowing a simple moral theme or subject position to take hold. The narratives of Castellucci’s *Genesi: From the Museum of Sleep* draw from the histories and mythologies of Adam and Eve’s expulsion from the garden and the advent of nuclear catastrophe (First Act), the Holocaust (Second Act) and Cain’s murder of Abel (Third Act). In the Second Act of *Genesi*, entitled, “Auschwitz” with two secondary titles, “Genetics of the Non-Man” and “The Body without Organs,” a group of children of various ages (Castellucci’s own offspring), dressed in white (gowns, rabbit suit, and tuxedo) on a white stage screened by a white scrim, perform a series of simple and harrowing actions (e.g. murder) with a toy train, a mechanical milking machine, and a hydraulically convulsing chair. An embryo in a large specimen jar is placed downstage and various body organs hung from wires are lowered from the fly-space during the scene. The recorded audio track shifts from a sleepy, off-stage dance hall music, to the original 1947 recording of Antonin Artaud radio play, *pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu* (to have done with the judgement of god). The concluding image of the section of the children drenched in an actual shower leaves no doubt as to signs of the Holocaust. The use of children with performing objects develops two interesting stage strate-



Scene from *Genesi: From the Museum of Sleep*.

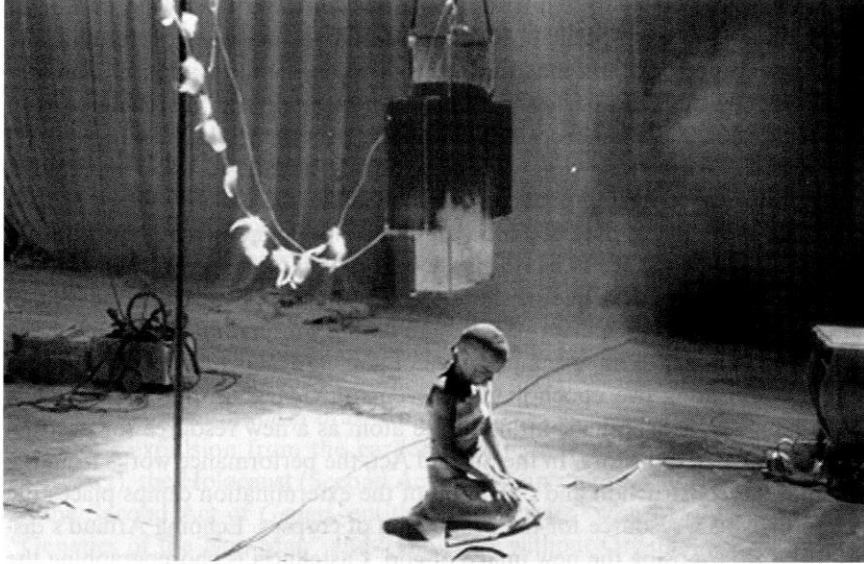
gies. Firstly, the children and machines work outside a traditional model of mimetic acting in what Michael Kirby identified as “matrixed performance.”⁶ They instead perform non-matrixed tasks. The de-familiarisation of non-matrixed tasks by the child performer sets off an uncanny and unsettling echo to the memory of the events recalled. Secondly, the use of children (non-Jew?, non-German?) presenting signs of the Holocaust indicates a wider association for the historical context implicating everyone in the horror.

As the shower runs over the children in the closing moments of Second Act of *Genesis*, Artaud’s voice is heard in a loop ranting, “I am not raving. I’m not mad.” Yet, it is the next line of the radio play that seems to have most resonance with Castellucci’s performance. “I’m telling you that microbes have been reinvented in order to impose a new idea of god” (Artaud 1995: 305-6). Castellucci is confronting two epoch marking events in *Genesis*. In the First Act, the performance considers the splitting of the atom as a new resource for destruction unparalleled in history. In the Second Act, the performance works from the idea that the construction and operation of the extermination camps places the human body as a resource for the production of corpses. Echoing Artaud’s disturbing voice exposing the new image of god, Castellucci is choreographing the 20th century’s reordering of the life of the human toward political commodity, and the restraining of nature toward destruction.

Giorgio Agamben in his book, *Homo Sacer*, devises a useful theoretical model for thinking through the issues of Castellucci’s staging and my thesis regarding the problems of the subject in the bio-politics of digital culture and the admonition against essentialist models of identity. Agamben, extending Foucault’s unfinished work on bio-politics, maps the history of the sacred human (*homo sacer*) in order to understand the function of the extermination camps of Nazism. The sacred human is one who is both un-sacrificeable and for whom there is no law against killing, who exists “at the intersection of the capacity to be killed but not sacrificed, outside human and divine law” (1998: 73). Agamben states that the sacred human is the result of both totalitarian and advance democracies’ politicization of life, wherein the subject’s “bare life” is the central, expendable commodity, and the locus of power of the state. Agamben writes, “If today there is no longer any one clear figure of the sacred man, it is perhaps because we are all virtually *homines sacri*” (115). The West is experiencing the maturing of the “genetics of the non-man.”

My link from Agamben to my thesis is twofold and leads to an abrupt conclusion. Firstly, Castellucci stages the “bare life” of the sacred human through the non-matrixed performance of children whose re-enactment of the Holocaust indicates the current un-sacrificeable and expendable status of the subjects of late-capitalist and bio-political systems. Secondly, digital culture is the

6. See Michael Kirby (1987) for a complete discussion of the model of matrixed (acting) and non-matrixed (not-acting) performance.



Scene from the second act of *Genesi*.

deployment of advanced technologies to further manipulate the subject's "bare life" toward a virtual position. The operations of subjectivity constructed through immersion in the domain of the virtual is not yet understood, but offers unique problems and opportunities for oppressive control and philosophies of discontinuity. If the theatre hopes to resist or support these projects, it will have to be able to confront the field of the virtual not through essentialised constructions of failed subjectivities and antiquated technologies, but through a strategic manipulation of the virtual, turning the system against itself.

The last segment of the Second Act (Auschwitz) of *Genesi* is named, "Milk from Nadir." Nadir is the lowest point, the time of greatest depression or adversity. Perhaps at the moment (post 9/11) when the West is confronted with the long repressed demands of the other there will be an opportunity to draw milk from nadir.

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