Projection Technology and the Theatre Stage: Light, Space, Body Politics

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1.

In the late 80s, when I first became actively involved in theater, one of the most popular books among theater people was *The Empty Space* by Peter Brook, originally published in 1969. Conceiving of the theater stage as an empty space tried to moderate contemporary challenges with core traditional values of European theater. While Brook did not belong among the theater directors who endorsed projection technology (even when he used a camera and TV screen onstage in *L'homme qui*, the context was a critical interrogation of employing media in medical diagnosis and therapy[1]), the notion of emptiness he put forward sheds light on some circumstances that were prerequisite for film and video projection becoming a regular element of theater performances. These circumstances are aesthetic and social-political, as well as technological.

Projecting film or video requires that the audience and the stage are dark enough for a projection to be visible. It took surprisingly long until that was accomplished. Since the Italian Renaissance, when plays were first performed inside theater buildings on proscenium stages with settings designed according to the laws of central perspective, theater theoreticians had demanded that the stage be more brightly lit while the audience should be sitting in darkness. Technological solutions using mirrors helped intensify the stage lighting, but for centuries the audience room remained the same: illuminated by candelabras, leaving spectators plainly visible for each other during the entire performance. Even at the end of the 19th century, as gaslight and electric light

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1   *L'homme qui* (1993) was based on Oliver Sack's book *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*.

that could be switched off would have permitted total darkness, theaters preferred to keep the lights on slightly dimmed. In his lecture on *Optical Media*, German media theorist Friedrich Kittler quotes Charles Garnier, the architect of the Paris opera, arguing against a total blackout:

> "First, opera visitors had to be able to read along during the dazzlingly incomprehensible songs in the libretto of the current opera in order to understand at least some of the plot. Second, as a social event people go to the theater not only to see but also to be seen. (Princes, above all, were always illuminated in their boxes, because for them everything depended on courtly representation or glamor rather than bourgeois illusion.) Third, Garnier argued that it is crucial for actors and the artistic quality of their performance that they see all of the audience's reactions; they thus perform in an optical feedback loop. Fourth, a darkened auditorium would also have the disadvantage that it would not be controllable down to the last corner. Opera visitors who no longer read along in the libretto during a love aria might resort to quite different thoughts or actions." (Kittler 1999: 169)

The Bayreuth Festspielhaus was the first theater to use electric light, and Richard Wagner's vision of total immersion in the fictional reality of the performance called for darkness everywhere but on the stage. Yet, although Wagner managed to hide the musicians from the sight of the audience by covering the orchestra pit, he had to concede a certain degree of light in the auditorium. When, in 1876, the curtain rose after the performance and the German Emperor sitting in the audience remained dimly lit, this became a scandal (ibid: 170).

The process of dimming down the audience, with its delays and its – episodic – success in the 20th century, reflects the fight between two concepts of theater: theater as a popular entertainment spectacle; and theater as a form of art, a decent aesthetic discipline related to literature, music, and the visual arts. In the London playhouses of Shakespeare's era, where only the boxes had roofs and performances took place in daylight, the atmosphere likely was still close to that of dogfight arenas. Lords climbed the side stage to show off in their latest dresses, light chatter over eating and drinking continued while the actors declaimed their dialogues and monologues, and prostitutes served customers. France and Germany were at the forefront of the neoclassical fashion in the 18th century, which sought to redefine the theater as a place where literary works of art would be presented in silence to attentive, devoted listeners and viewers. Yet, the artists

and progressive principals found it quite hard to discipline their audience and change visitors' behavior so their attendance matched the concepts of aesthetic perception that Alexander Baumgarten and Immanuel Kant had promoted. Some German cities deployed a theater police to make sure people kept quiet during the performance and did not disturb others from focusing on the artificial world created onstage.

It wasn't until well into the 20th century that the lights in the auditorium went reliably off upon the curtain's rise. In this period, realist aesthetics also inspired new acting techniques like that of Konstantin Stanislavsky, who taught his students to create mental images that helped them bring forth the right, seemingly 'natural' expression, and then combine them into an interior film reeling off in front of their mind's eye (Kittler was certainly right to stress the coevolution of cinema and theater, with mutual influences between them). Not only did Stanislavsky insist that actors should respect the 'fourth wall', which Diderot had recommended in 1758; he also elaborated the illusionary space so as to include passing through adjacent rooms or outdoor environments before an actor entered the stage. Set designs became themselves ever more detailed, and thanks to the darkness in the audience the setting of, say, an Ibsen play might suggest a living room lit by a single lamp while snow was falling behind the window in the room's rear wall in a bluish winter afternoon hue.

It is important to be aware of the intrinsic connection between a theater aesthetic that embraces and magnifies the power of illusion, whether realistic or surreal, and the socio-technical situation of an audience whose physical presence has been scaled down to almost zero. Those who frequently visit theaters that show plays in this tradition will be accustomed to the situation: As soon as the auditorium goes dark, the conversations break off within seconds, and all eyes are, and mostly remain, on the stage. Contrary to what Garnier had suspected (or pretended to suspect), absence of light has helped interiorize the police; abandoned in darkness, spectators learned to police each other.

Brook's term 'empty space' attempts to continue in this bourgeois tradition of a thespian art that evolved in the 18th century. His book was published in a time when a politicized avant-garde – The Living Theatre and Richard Schechner's The Performance Group, to name but two prominent examples – turned the lights in the audience back on, trying to overcome theatrical representation in favor of participation (which could include having sex with audience members or being carried by them out of the theater

building into the street). The book's famous first sentence, "I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage," (Brook 2008: 7) appears to open up the theatrical to the entirety of spaces, illuminated by whatever natural or artificial sources. Its strongest implication, though, is that the theatrical is *grounded in the 'I'* – and the 'I' is not just anybody who has eyes to see a space as empty and a mouth to call it a bare stage; it is the 'I' of the theater director who professionally represents the spectator; any spectator *and* the spectator's anybody-ness, which is crucial to bourgeois aesthetics' political dimension, as Jacques Rancière (2009) has explained at length.

Indeed, the eyes of the director become like the lens of a projector here. Whatever appears on the stage – wherever that stage is located, in whichever environment it is embedded – will be a materialization of a single person's vision. It will have been produced by one man's (or perhaps woman's) subjective perception and imagination commanding a cast of actors and a team of technicians, who in turn manage bodies and machines. Projection technology had already been in use on theater stages for decades when Brook wrote the four lectures that were assembled into the book. But the deeply ideological term 'empty space' marks a point in the history of theater when the production of a theater performance is claimed to be a *visionary-technical act*. If theater is that which a director has seen, converted into images for everyone to see, then projection is the very principle of theater work.

2.

Erwin Piscator is commonly assumed to have been the first theater director who used film projection, because that is how he presented himself in his 1929 book *Das politische Theater* (engl. *The Political Theatre*; 1978). Friedrich Kranich's *Bühnentechnik der Gegenwart* (engl. *Contemporary Stage Technology*), however, published in two volumes, in 1929 and 1933, gives a more comprehensive account. Kranich mentions a number of precursors, the earliest from 1911, mainly in the realm of opera and operetta, where footage from films that already existed was employed in the fashion of a scenographic prosthesis. For example, falling rain was projected on a wall or waves were projected on the floor to suggest a river. For Kranich, projection is used skillfully when it blends in seamlessly with the other elements of the stage. Ideally, the audience will not become aware of the film as a film; as though by magic, the rain is suddenly falling, the waves are floating by (Kranich 1933: 132).

Piscator, in contrast, welcomed film as a young, innovative medium suited to carrying a progressive political message. Short scenes in quick succession, assembled through rough, clearly perceivable cuts, would open up time and space for spectators to reflect actively on what they encountered, he believed. And if they realized the artificial nature of scenic composition, there was a chance that they also saw how social reality was composed based on decisions, not natural necessity, and could be changed by decisions as well. The *organization* of film, the cross-pollination between a new technology and novel narrative forms, mattered for Piscator's political aesthetics, more perhaps than the actual projection.

There were other experiments with film projection in the 1920s and 30s avant-garde. Ivan Goll, for instance, produced a Jarry-influenced play in Berlin and then also in Paris, where the surrealists celebrated George Méliés who had made films for his theater of illusions and spectacle from as early as 1904 (the way in which Loïe Fuller used colored light for her dances at the Folies Bergère, like the famous *Serpentine Dance* first shown in 1892, also deserves mentioning in a genealogy of stage projection). Picabia, Man Ray and Duchamps collaborated with Erik Satie for the revue-like performance *Relâche*, which featured a film of the artists playing chess on the roof of the theater. In Russia, Sergej Eisenstein proceeded from theater to film directing.[2]

Throughout the 20th century, from Adolphe Appia to Robert Wilson and beyond, embracing light as an element that is just as important as actors, or even more important, has been a statement for theatrical avant-gardes to distinguish themselves from a traditional mainstream. My first example follows along that line, but in letting light become an actor of its own – or more exactly, in letting it become *all* actors except for the protagonist – Robert Lepage's interpretations of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* add a dramaturgical meaningfulness to the use of projection. In *Elsinore*, first shown in Toronto, in 1995, and in *Hamlet Collage*, which was developed for the Singapore International Festival of Arts, 2016, Hamlet himself is played live by an actor who interacts with characters and things that are being projected. For *Hamlet Collage*, the Canadian director uses a video projection on three rotating rectangular screens in order to create a permanently changing visual environment. When Ophelia drowns, there appears another real body, but only to sink into a trap that opens in the midst of a projected river.

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2   For a more detailed account, see Greg Giesekam, Staging the Screen. The Use of Film and Video in Theater, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

By transforming Shakespeare's drama with its many monologues into a monologic performance, Lepage stresses the already strong subjective element in Shakespeare's deconstruction of the revenge tragedy genre. A slow flow of images eliminates the 'outside' quality of the surrounding world, making it appear like a stream of consciousness (or a 'stream of the subconscious'). In consequence, nothing gets to be any more real than the ghost of Hamlet's father, or the ghost is just as real as all the other characters. Yet, as we see the visible reality sinking into abysmal subjectivity, a shift towards the objective seems to occur at the same time – and indeed, *time* seems the very medium of this objectivization. Hamlet laments the "wicked speed" of proceedings after his father's death, and even before he encounters the ghost of his father who tells him that he was murdered by Hamlet's uncle, the mother's marriage with the father's brother upsets the young man. Second to "To be or not to be," "Time is out of joint" is the most frequently quoted line from Shakespeare's most famous play.

A running clock that shows the actual time will always appear alien on a theater stage, Walter Benjamin remarks in his essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility* (2008: 47). In contrast, the clock seems perfectly natural in a movie, because the ficticious present of the movie action is not coincidental with the presence of the audience (and in the predigital age, film reel and clock hands moved in a similarly mechanical fashion). In fact, properly speaking, there is no movie audience, as Benjamin asserts in another text, on Brecht's epic theater: the spectators in their cinema seats do not assemble into the collective singular attendance that constitutes the audience; they are just people who happen to be in the room (Benjamin 1998: 10).

The irritating effect of the clock reveals to what an astonishing degree the 'copresence' of a theater performance depends on imagination. The actors' bodies are mediating their own physical presence with the absence of the characters they impersonate, and it is for the audience to synthesize character and actor by projecting an image of who and what and how the character would be onto the actor's performing body. We thus have projection here in the psychological sense of the word: only insofar as the audience is willing and able to align presentation (of the actors' bodies) and representation (of the characters) through an ongoing process of projection, will the play, which is but a written text, come 'alive' in the live performance. The agent of this projection is, indeed, *the audience* – not the single spectator as someone who happens to be in the room, but a 'we,' an imaginary blend of all the people in the auditorium. Whereby we have another act of imagination, which is as crucial

for a theater performance to provide its unique experience as the projection of the character-image onto the actor's body and vice versa. 'Copresence' at the theater does not just consist in performers' bodies and spectators' bodies being there, casually synchronizing their heartbeats and breathing rhythms; on top of that, a complex temporal synthesis needs to take place, which is irritable because it involves a psycho-somatic negotiation of different temporalities.

Video projection smuggles a microdose of clock time into the synthesized present of theater performance, and it does so even where the projected images amplify the theatrical representation. This can be observed in *Elsinore* and *Hamlet Collage*. Mostly, Lepage uses projection as a prosthesis that allows the stage to spread out into other spaces. The river that swallows Ophelia's body is not that different from the river mentioned by Kranich. Film projection complements, extends, enhances the stage design. For Kranich's eyes the stage already was an empty space that could be filled with anything visionary minds were able to imagine, and the role of technology, to his understanding, consisted in expanding the possibilities of realizing the imagined. Lepage empties the stage even further, aggrandizing possibility itself on a scale that makes the result look both fascinating and monstrous. But the projection technology registers its own temporality within the illusionary complex. The video measures time, and given the difference between life performance and the flow of projected images, this flow comes to execute a merciless beat that pictures 'the world' as everything structured by its sequences.

In reviews, Robert Lepage regularly gets lauded as a "theater magician." Still, for all the efforts to mesmerize, both *Elsinore* and *Hamlet Collage* convey some rather dry truths about infrastructure. They remind us that on a theater stage, a video will always be counting time. Whatever it shows, one of its effects will be that of a clock, and an interesting potential of projection technology for questioning and redefining the conditions of theater lies in the alien quality clocks acquire on stage, as pointed out by Benjamin. It would be vain to speculate if the dialectics between subjective and objective temporalities were 'intended' by Lepage (and after all, 'the director' is but a projection, too: a name that allows me to attribute anything I perceive to a decision). However, since Hamlet is obviously a play about theater as much as a theater play, this technologically induced *Verfremdungseffekt* inside a capturing illusion seems noteworthy.

3.

Hamlet has become so famous because it presents us with the drama of occidental subjectivity in its excess of reflection, which obstructs and deconstructs the action right from the moment when Hamlet meets the ghost. Lepage's interpretations of the play are a late celebration of these complications, and whereas *Elsinore* in 1995 seemed quite in pace with the times, *Hamlet Collage*, twenty years later, appears somewhat outdated already. My second example, the Japanese collective Dumb Type, founded around 1984 by frustrated students from the Kyoto City University of Arts, also gained international fame in den 1990's. Thanks to an agreement with Sony, the group had access to the most advanced technology and was able to project their videos onto a huge screen that spanned the entire stage – or rather became the stage. Dumb Type are no traditional theater company but an assembly of artists who work in different fields, and while some of their collaborations were and are designed for the theater stage, others are exhibited in galleries and museums or presented on the internet.

Members of Dumb Type have opposed interpretations that try to label their work as typically Japanese. Still, they belong among a considerable number of Japanese artists who were enthusiastic about media technology and whose aesthetic approach was greatly shaped by technological possibilities. In the 1980s and 90s, music videos, which were running 24/7 on specialized pop music channels such as MTV and reached a broad international audience, evolved as a promising new format. As directors often would be granted plenty of artistic freedom and could rely on huge budgets, the music video became an experimental playground, and its aesthetics exerted a strong influence on the visual arts. Dumb Type brought this to live performance.

In *OR*, which premiered in France at Festival VIA, 1997, a hemispheric screen surrounds the – otherwise empty – stage. Giant white beams that appear to be taken from a first generation 'tennis' videogame move across the dark screen, accompanied by an electronic music score that also uses distorted videogame sounds. Flickering several times, the grey turns into a dazzlingly bright white light. The projection is so intense the light seems three-dimensional. Back to the old black, the white beams continue to make their way from left to right in steady pace, until a second stroboscopic flash of white reveals two dancers who twist their limbs next to a steel table on wheels (whose austere design reminds of hospital or morgue equipment). Before the eyes are able to catch more than a tiny choreographic fragment, darkness

swallows up the bodies once more, and when the next bright period starts a third dancer is there – but then, after another five seconds break with only the white beams being visible, the third body has vanished again just as suddenly as it appeared. The other two are rolling on the floor now, and one or both of them may be naked...

The performance goes on like this, and most other stage performances by Dumb Type follow a similar structure. Gigantic landscapes, architectural and geometrical forms or decontextualized elements flash, pulse, jump, waver across the screen, while bodies engage in jerky, convulsive dance movements. Sometimes two or more images overlap each other, zooming in and out, lending a vertigo-inducing depth to the visual space. The Dumb Type aesthetic almost dissolves the human body in whole-screen patterns that incessantly oscillate between concrete and abstract, subjecting the continuum of live performance to a spasmodic rhythm generated through fast cuts. More explicitly than in Lepage's flow of images, projection here serves to shape time as well as space. And darkness matters as much as light: one might say that the ultimate function of high-end projection technology is to enable blackouts of a particular strength. As a result, the 'co-presence' of live performance itself is being sliced up as though manipulated by a video editor.

If Piscator was optimistic about the stimulating effects rough cuts would have on the audience, appreciating film projection on the stage as a technological tool that promised to help political enlightenment, Dumb Type express their political agenda through a *negative* approach to technology. Fascinated though they are by the power of video projection, the performances veer towards the anti-illusionary – or hyper-simulacrum, to use terminology of the era.[3] The visual overkill of projected images creates a nauseous numbness that makes one all the more aware of one's own body's being a solid but vulnerable, indeed feeble, physical thing. In a sequence of *S/N*, first shown in 1994, the performers identify themselves as just such vulnerable, physical things. Clad in a grey suit with the words "GAY", "JAPANESE" and "HIV+" attached to it, one of them tells the audience, "We are not actors. I am a man. Japanese. And gay. He is a man. Japanese. And HIV positive." In another sequence, performers can be seen dancing on top of the projection screen, which is a solid

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3   The term „simulacrum" was made popular by the French sociologist Jean Baudrillard. See, for example, Simulacra and Simulation, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994.

wall, and then falling down backwards. One wonders what happens *behind* the empty space that is filled with images.

4.

"There was nothing to see at the beginning," Jens Roselt quotes a spectator from an after-show discussion in his article on video projection in German director Frank Castorf's adaptations of Dostoyevsky novels for the Berlin Volksbühne (2005: 111). Actually, there *was* a lot to see at the beginning of the performance in question, *Erniedrigte und Beleidigte* (*Humiliated and Insulted*), which premiered in 2001 after the Dostoyevsky series had started with *Dämonen* (*Demons*) in 1999: an entire house, for instance, in a design that looked like it had been imported directly from a real estate catalogue, in the typical fashion of Bert Neumann; and a screen on top of the building that displayed video images showing what happened inside the house. But even though everyone could see the action caught by the mobile hand camera – including close-ups of actors' faces, conveying details that usually remain obscure from a theater visitor's distance – those images did not satisfy the audience's "appetite for human flesh," (ibid.) as Roselt phrases it. Despite the fact that they were live images, broadcast with just milliseconds delay, looking at the screen apparently did not compensate for the inability to see the actors directly. Quite the contrary, the on-screen representation may have intensified a feeling of absence.

Produced only a few years later than Lepage's *Elsinore* and Dumb Type's first worldwide successes, my third and final example already bears witness to a time when video projection in the theater was no longer considered a 'hot' technology that would impress a metropolitan audience with its powerfully dynamic images (which is not to say that theaters did not keep trying – some still do, even today). For Dumb Type, the excessive brightness of projected light provided a means to create repeated caesura, cutting up the present of live performance by enveloping spectators in momentary darkness. Castorf's and Neumann's strategy also has its point in negating or subtracting something from the standard theatrical situation, albeit with a different twist that engages profoundly with the traditions of dramatic theater, *revising* them instead of leaving them behind. Video technology here puts theater in the position to withdraw its most precious asset – the actor's living body. It allows the performance to move the adjacent room, which Stanislavsky designed for

his actors to prepare themselves before entering the stage, right into the center of that very stage. What used to be a *parergon*, an addition to the main work disclosed behind the frame, is now located at the focus of the spectators' view, where everyone is looking for the work. And the work is, in fact, *there*; it happens exactly where the audience expects it to take place. However, the visual presence has been replaced with a visual representation (as has the acoustic presence, since the actors carry microphones and their voices reach the audience through speakers, slightly distorted so the transmission process registers).

One effect of this is that the stage never appears as an empty space. It does not even commemorate the empty space of Brook's era. It looks like it has never been empty. Indeed, it seems to communicate that a stage *can* never be empty, because no space in this world can. The set designs by Neumann, who died in 2015, contributed substantially to the Berlin Volksbühne's unique style, and one of his major aesthetic achievements was that he introduced the reality of *habitation*, of living in the sense of 'living room,' to the world of live performance. Interiors have always dominated the bourgeois theater stage. Yet, for all their picturesque details, their cushions and ashtrays and vases and unwashed dishes, these domestic settings never once convinced anyone that someone actually lived there. Echoing a bourgeois worldview, for which 'the world' is but the backdrop for subjective experience, the aesthetic concepts of realism or naturalism posit that every material thing be presented as the *materialization* of something *imagined*. Even if the cushions, ashtrays, vases and dishes have not been produced at the theater workshop but bought in the same shops where spectators buy stuff for their own homes, bourgeois theater aesthetics places them in the empty space, which redefines their essence. Their appearance in that space attests to a single mind (or a fusion of minds resulting in a single decision) that has thought them appropriate for the realistic composition of a scene – not to the entangled realities of living together.

Diderot's 'fourth wall' erected the regime of realistic imagination precisely in that it was *not a material* wall. Neumann's fourth walls, which are material, transform the stage, at least one part of it, into a sphere of living together. The collective presence inside the building is still theater, actors playing their characters, but in doing so, they simultaneously participate in a living room reality. This affects acting; it substitutes manners and mannerisms for acting methods: the actors behave towards the camera and its operator in a social and sociable way, making conversation with the fact of being recorded, as it were, on top of interacting with each other shifting in and out of their

impersonated characters. Projection technology, thus, does not appear as an exclusive property of the director and the stage designer. Whereas in Lepage's and Dumb Type's pieces the camera-projector unit unmistakably serves as a visionary author-director's instrument (while Dumb Type members also perform, the video manifests their authorship over of their own performance), the use of technology in *Erniedrigte und Beleidigte* socializes the technological impact, to a certain degree – not the apparatus, but some of the power video holds as a medium.

The media theorist Clay Shirky once wrote that a new technology becomes socially and culturally relevant when it has become technologically boring (2008: 105). In Lepage's and Dumb Type's works from the 1990s, video has descended from film, and its innovative capacity – to blend in recorded reality with digitally created content – at the beginning of the digital epoch only renews the authority cinema had for much of the twentieth century. The videos are presented with a thoroughly cinematic gesture. How Castorf and Neumann employ the same technology, in contrast, refers to a social normality that encompasses home recording as a familiar everyday practice. And the familiarity of recording social life turns those who are being recorded into a kind of family. Sitting in the audience, watching it all on the big screen, I realize that I am not part of that family *but could be*, wherefore not being among the family members triggers a feeling of deficiency. Hence the emotional reactions from visitors like the one quoted above, who felt so excluded that he believed there was nothing to see.

Concealing the actors' bodies from direct view and making them available only through representation during longer periods of the performance, manipulates the affective economy of theater. In "Two Myths of the Young Theater," an essay from *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes observed that contemporary theater capitalizes on the actors' physical presence because it does not entice with the virtuosity of capricious acting styles anymore. The bourgeois audience wants something in return for the money spent on tickets and the time spent on crouching in uncomfortable seats. If the performance offers neither meaning (a gullible message) nor the well-established mix of impressive acting technique and charismatic personality, the performing body itself needs to deliver the revenue. Running around, shouting, sweating, achieving a state of visible exhaustion at the end of the show, the actors redeem the audience's investment (Barthes 1957: 100-102). While the actors in *Erniedrigte and Beleidigte* are in no way stingy with physical commitment, the collaboration between wall and screen severs the experiential space that provides the

proper milieu for these affective transactions. Like a semipermeable membrane, the two surfaces do not seem to let through the valuable particles. The spectator's gaze gets in, but the evidence of laboring-for-the-audience cannot get out. The narrow camera angle confines the performers into a space that remains theirs, however hard they try to bust it by exaggerating their presence.

In terms of psycho-economy, this live broadcast from a space that is folded into the theater stage generates the opposite effect of *Big Brother*, which Christoph Schlingensief famously adapted for his *Bitte liebt Österreich!* performance at Heldenplatz in Vienna, in 2000, featuring 'asylum seekers' as candidates. *Big Brother* uses cameras in order to sell privacy, intimacy and authenticity in exchange for an agreement to submit to the arrangement's cynicism. The permanent surveillance isolates the people who are living inside the container, preparing their bodies (and the subjectivities hosted by them) just the way the audience needs them to feel entertained. One could say that the very visibility to which they are exposed constantly humiliates and insults them. *Erniedrigte und Beleidigte* uses a similar setting, but the fact that the people inside the house are actors and the house has been placed at the center of a theater stage makes an altogether different situation evolve. Being-filmed establishes a collective dynamic among them, a social relation which they cannot convert into individual visual appeal, not even if they want to. "Any person today can lay claim to be filmed," writes Benjamin in *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility*, considering the process of visual recording and display as a chance for reorganizing the social (2008: 33). Castorf's and Neumann's experiment with video projection, which they pursued further in many other productions, gives an idea of what that could mean for the theater.

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