The Mediated Double Body: An Instance of Ab-sence and Alterity in Mixed-media Theatre

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Abstract

The paper explains how 'dys-appearance' (Leder 1990) as a mode of embodiment identifies with doubleness and alterity in mixed-media theatre. In Petros Sevastikoglou's production of Sarah Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* (Empros Theatre, Athens 2003), the dynamic co-existence of selfhood and otherness is expressed through the process of 'reversibility'; in a sense both physical and technological entities are divided and then reunited building up a cohesive mixed-media event. Self as one side of the Other and technological body as the other facet of the physical compose a 'chiasmic' (Merleau-Ponty 1964) experience on stage.

The symbiosis of the performing body and its digital double in a theatrical context has been an essential characteristic and common ground for the making of mixed-media performance. Taking into account the works of different theatre companies and practitioners of late twentieth and twenty first century, from the doubled fragmented bodies in The Wooster Group productions and the telematically transmitted doubles of Blast Theory and Station House Opera, and from Merce Cunningham's and Bill Jones' computer-generated double bodies to Stelarc's human like avatars, doubleness has defined the interrelation between body and technology in many ways. Taking into account the cases above, it could be argued that any technological double virtual, digital, videated, screened or not, is brought into the theatrical frame as a feature of the mise-en-scène hence, any avatar and recorded representation offers a double take of self. The paper discusses doubleness as an instance where the technological double 'stands out' from its physical referent. The emergence of the mediated double(s) identifies with the idea of experiencing an ontologically different version of self, a separate entity that either bears a great resemblance to its physical referent or not.[1]

The paper argues that, in mixed-media theatre, the digital double reveals a sensation of presence from distance, a mediated re-appearing presence. A bodily image of self is literally seceded from the performer's body or even is generated far from its user to exist and function away from its subject. The paper suggests that the technological, when next to the physical body, declares a sharp presence, yet both bodies are complementary and correlative phenomena. The co-existence of corporeally mediated doubles functions as a 'reversible' and synergy between two ontologically different entities. Starting from a Greek performance of *4.48 Psychosis* by Sarah Kane that develops ideas around the fragmentation of self, the paper develops a conceptual framework that aspires to explain the self double dynamic onstage. Departing from the various critical theories that have explored the digital double in theatre, either as fragmented replica, as an alter ego, or as mirror reflection, the paper proposes a phenomenological framework that discusses doubleness as a mode of ab-sence and alterity. Based on Drew Leder's

understanding of the 'absent body' (1990), I propose that doubleness in mixed-media theatre is a process that takes body away to bring it back again as Other.

The Performance: *4.48 Psychosis* by Sarah Kane[2]

In 2003, Petros Sevastikoglou directed *4.48 Psychosis*, in the Theatre Empros, in Athens. Sevastikoglou is both a theatre and film director and his intention was to produce a version of *4.48 Psychosis* that would bring together the two media. The director in cooperation with the performer, Roula Pateraki, aspired to create a performance that delivered the sense of isolation of the self and body struggle described in the play through a mixed-media ensemble (my translation, P. Sevastikoglou, Interview September, 2007). The play's reference to different states of consciousness of a psychotic mind is performatively interpreted mainly through the co-existence of two ontologically and aesthetically different corporeal forms. For Kane, body and mind do not form a unit; they simply do not belong together. In the performance, the dissociation of self-hood is expressed through both competing overlapping recorded and live voices that raise two agonising questions; 'Do you think it's possible for a person to be born in the wrong body? Do you think it's possible for a person to be born in the wrong era?' (*4.48 Psychosis* 215).

The director creates a phenomenological spectacle that spotlights the main concepts of the play, particularly the idea of a person in despair who is parted from her/his body. The combination of a reductive mediated and a 'grounded' physical body onstage portrays a body 'in trouble' that becomes separated from its self. Drawing on the play's prevalent ideas about split selfhood, the performance establishes a dialogue between self and other. The mediated body demonstrates how the performer is reproduced, transformed and reduced to pixelated fragments. Sevastikoglou has orchestrated an embodied and dis/dys-embodied schema on stage that functions as an afterimage and reveals 'the presence of sensation in the absence of stimulus' (Maude, 2007: 130); that is, the performance creates a mixed-media event that oscillates between visibility and invisibility.

The theatre's clock is stuck at 4.48 a.m. for seventy five minutes. 4.48 is the time of the day that 'the body is at its lowest ebb, the most likely time for a person to kill him/herself' (Mirzoeff, 2006: 343). In one hour and fifteen minutes, two corporeally different bodies tell their story, a story that Sarah Kane was about to perform. The lights are off, nothing moves, no sound is heard. The end-on stage of the theatre space cannot be discerned. The dimensions, shape and exits of the space are lost in darkness. Not even the green exit sign is on. Suddenly a pale female figure is lit by a faint spotlight. She is dressed in black, black dress, black tights, black shoes, the only exposed parts and actually the only clearly visible areas of her body are her face, neck and occasionally her hands. Above her, a mediatised version of the actress emerges. There is no apparent image or screen frame to the video because it is projected onto a black screen that is part of the blackness of the setting. The videated image is also dressed in black, with only her face and occasionally her hands uncovered, giving the impression of a floating three-dimensional head, a hologram, a digital ghost, fading in and out of sight. However, the frame that the projection lacks appears as a grey square within which the performer is 'grounded'. While the physical body is mostly still or merely rotates within the frame, the

projected body demonstrates hyperactive behaviour as it appears, disappears, sleeps, has a crisis, screams mutely, becomes disfigured, is maximised and dispersed in space. At the centre of the unseen stage, right in front of the audience, the two figures are the only visible substances in the space.

Roula Pateraki. The physical and the videated body

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In *4.48 Psychosis* the deliberate collapse of the boundaries between the self and the outside world inspired the director to create an uncanny semi-invisible environment 'inhabited' by a female performer and her enlarged mediated body. The visual field of *4.48 Psychosis* oscillates between the realistic and the illusionary, between the world of recognisable objects, figures and a world of dreamlike aesthetics. An essential element of the performance of *4.48 Psychosis* is the darkness that defines the interaction between the bodies and is also an integral part of their contour. The darkness, the black screen on which the video is projected, the black background of the theatre wall, the dark background of the video footage, the black clothes of the performer create and reinforce an eerie game of absence and presence in an ostensibly dimensionless space. The darkness brings out a cinematic quality and turns the space into a kind of camera obscura, a black box that modifies and defines the bodily image of the performer.

The Ab-sent Body. The Dys-appearing Body of *4.48 Psychosis*

The aim of this paper is to offer a phenomenological reading of doubleness in mixed-media theatre, stressing the moment that the actual performer confronts and is confronted by her/his mediat(is)ed[3] double. In this section, I explore doubleness as a case of absence and alterity, or else dys-appearance, that reconfigures subjectivity onstage. Starting from the coexistence of the performer and her videated double, I define doubleness as an embodied experience of self and self as Other. By introducing Leder's phenomenological approach on absent corporeality, I intend to explore the different modes of bodily absence linked to the phenomenon of doubleness in mixed-media theatre.

The first question that I pose in this section is: How doubleness in mixed-media theatre is considered as a case of corporeal absence and in particular a case of dys-appearance. Taking a fresh look at Leder's writing, I suggest the usefulness of his ideas for the study of digital double in mixed-media theatre. Leder, in his book *The Absent Body* (1990)*,* expands Merleau-Ponty's views on modes of embodiment, as presented in his unfinished essay *The Visible and the Invisible* (1968), aspiring to explore further the sense of absence as it happens in everyday life. Leder proposes that 'while in one sense the body is the most abiding and inescapable presence in our lives, it is also characterized by absence' (1990:1). The book provides an extensive analysis based on the 'question of why the body, as a ground of experience […] tends to recede from direct experience' (1990:1). Leder contends that the body ordinarily becomes absent and 'disappears' from our experience when we are engaged in a 'purposeful action' that reforms our personal experience (1990: 49). In fact, Leder's book appears to answer the question: what happens when we read a book, watch a performance or a film and we are lost in the plot, the action, and the story. Our bodies (as spectators or readers) sink into the background and do not become the objects of our own experience (we actually pay little attention to our bodies in the moment). In his first chapter, the author discusses the idea of the ec-static body as a mode of corporeal absence to refer to 'the very nature of the body' to project 'outward from its place of standing' when the subject interacts with the world and the other (1990: 22). That is, the subject, when s/he interacts with the world and is engaged with an activity, forgets about her/his body and therefore, tends to 'stand out' of it, while being immersed into a 'purposeful action'. Leder has infused an embodied quality into the term of ecstasis that he borrowed from Heidegger who uses the term in his book *Being and Time* (1962) to define different modes of temporality.

Leder later in his book argues that the body's disappearance from our experience (or ecstasis) can be reversed in what he identifies as 'dys-appearance' of the body. Utilising the Greek prefix 'dys' signifying 'bad', 'hard', or 'ill', he refers to the reappearance of the body as a focus of our experience in a problematic and deviant form, that is, instances where we become aware of our bodies because they dysfunction in some way (1990: 84). In short, Leder explains that when we are in pain, we shift our attention from the world, towards our body or the part of the body that suffers. Drawing from Leder's concept of dys-appearance, I propose that in mixed-media theatre mediat(isat)ion is likely to extend physical corporeality and shift the attention back to the body through doubleness. In *4.48 Psychosis* dys-appearance is actuated on different levels, namely as a connotative value of the play signifying a psychotic mind trying to splinter off its body and as a element of mise-en-scène that defines the intertwining between the performer and her mediated self.

The symbiosis of an enlarged body and its physical referent on stage strongly refers to the dys-appearing nature of a psychotic individual resonating with Leder's concept of dys-appearance where the 'body may emerge as an alien thing, a painful prison or tomb in which one is trapped […]. The experienced self is rent in two as one's own corporeality exhibits a foreign will' (1990: 87). In *4.48 Psychosis*, the videated body seceded from its physical referent visualises Kane's view of a face being 'pasted on the underside of' the psychotic person's mind (*4.48 Psychosis* 245). The videated body expresses a corporeal alienation which is reinforced by its lack of 'liveness', the inability to look back. The videated body loses its ephemeral capacities when it is recorded and projected as a pre-documented body. The projected enlarged body, then, is not just a body that is away from its self, but a body that next to its physical referent connotes the dysfunction, entrapment and absence that the *4.48 Psychosis* subject experiences. The onstage bodies 'flesh out' the dramaturgical dysfunctional identity of self through spatial confinement, media(tisa)tion, and the splitting of corporeal image into two. Therefore, although the screened body is still an imposing presence on stage, it is an 'alienating presence', integral to what Leder identifies as a dys-appearing presence. The subject of *4.48 Psychosis* is shared between the stage and the screen. Indeed, the body becomes decentered through the co-existence of the double images; namely, the physical one is drawn toward invisibility and immobility, while the other flows around in slow motion, both connoting a desire to break free from the here and now.

Having said that dys-appearance is more of an antonym to disappearance and identifies with the concept of re-appearance of the body, in mixed-media theatre doubleness becomes a process of literally taking the body away to bring it back again as an alien thing, as Other. Therefore, the representation of *4.48 Psychosis* subject's entrapment takes place as the outcome of perpetual imminent disappearances/re-appearances that define the mixed-media ensemble onstage. The digital double is an absent body responding to the literal etymology of the concept of absence that signifies the condition of being away [ab (= from, away) + esse (= to be)]. All types of digital double and computer generated doubles stand out or just exist in distance from their physical referents. Stelarc in his performance *Movatar* (2000) stands in front of a screen wearing high-tech appendages and physically controls the avatar's movements on screen by his gestures. His avatar exemplifies digital double as a case of absence in the sense that the avatar has been created and controlled outside its creator's body, yet remains interconnected with its physical corporeality. *In 4.48 Psychosis*, although, the digital double functions in relation to the performer, their theatrical relationship is defined by distance and through the splitting of corporeality, which offers the performer the chance to see a technological version of herself from a distance.

Having described the digital double as a form of dys-appearance, as part of self that makes an appearance from a distance, I need to explain the physical referent's reappearance through its digital double. I suggest that the activity of interacting with any digital double is based on corporeal absence. In *4.48 Psychosis*, the performer confronts a digital version of herself. The performer can gaze upon her face in extreme close-up. It is interesting that the head, which is out of the central focus of the performer's visual field, is projected in an enlarged version.[4] On the other hand, what is visually accessible from her physical point of view could be hardly discerned on screen.[5] The head that is absent from the performer's attention, appears in a videated form in front of her. Hence, apart from the corporeal absence contingent on

the performer's anatomy, corporeal absence defines the performer's experience of doubleness per se.

Recalling Leder's introductory question 'why the body, as a ground of experience […] tends to recede from direct experience', I argue that in terms of doubleness in mixed-media theatre, the performer's corporeal absence lies in her/his self-awareness and proprioception. In *4.48 Psychosis*, when the performer shifts her attention from her physical body and focuses on her role, on her mediat(is)ed double, she opens her senses out to the world, while her physical body 'recedes from direct experience' (Leder, 1990: 1). It is precisely due to this 'ecstatic' nature of corporeality that the performer can forget her physical body, while focusing on her mediat(is)ed self/Other. Leder confirms that 'the body conceals itself precisely in the act of revealing what is Other' (1990: 22). In *4.48 Psychosis*, the Other has to be the videated self, which signifies a displaced reappearance of corporeality. According to Leder, the performer's forgetfulness lies in the idea of proprioception which allows the performer's body to adjust and get used to her physical behaviour as a matter of habit (1990: 42). Roula Pateraki, the performer rotates mechanically with long pauses in her constrained little square. The performer's posture and movements automatically happen after a certain point; she does not need to be aware of them and shift her attention towards her body, unless prompted by a certain stimulus, which comes from outside. In the case of the computer generated double the performer/participant focuses her/his attention on her/his avatar, the mediat(is)ed Other, while forgetting about her/his physical body. In *Second Life*, the participant successfully navigates and experiences the virtual landscape through her/his avatar without considering how to make it move and function, as after a certain point s/he is already familiar with her/his movement that activates her/his avatar. In mixed-media theatre, the double Other attracts its performer's attention and makes her/him forgetful of her/his physical corporeality.

In mixed-media theatre context, dys-appearance has been described as an interrelated physical/technological co-existence based on mutual-absences. Both the physical and technological body presupposes a series of absences in order to exist and function on stage. The *4.48 Psychosis* subject is fully enacted via the synergy between the physical and videated performing bodies. Doubleness that 'urges the corporeal out of self-concealment and effects a certain alienation renders the dys-appearing body as something foreign to the self' (Leder,1990:76). The dys-appearing subject of *4.48 Psychosis* consists of different modes of absences. In particular, the physical performer experiences a transitory phase that proceeds from 'primary absence' towards a 'secondary absence'. While the 'primary absence' refers to the fact that 'the body is away from direct experience' (the performer opens out towards the digital double which exists in distance), in the 'secondary absence' 'the body is away from the experienced self' (and is directed towards her Other self) (Leder,1990:90). Therefore, the dys-appearing body in *4.48 Psychosis* is the outcome of 'the reversal, from *the absence of an absence*' (author's emphasis, Leder,1990:90). In the performance*,* ab-sence that links the physical and technological together through the successive disappearances/re-appearances emerges as a haunting process. The physical body is doubled, reduced and decentered in its confined space. The performer is almost a ghost of itself.

The subject of *4.48 Psychosis* consists of two integrated media that never coincide, but are always interrelated. Hence, Kane's description of her experience of self as a kind of 'outside experience' is pragmatically happening for the performer herself when she stands next to her mediated self. In the performance, the function of the

absence is both a constitutive principle of the real and a symptom of psychosis. Reflecting on the psychotic subject of the play, the performance visualises a persistent scission between the self and the body, the physical and mediat(is)ed, body and its image. In mixed-media theatre, dys-appearance, as corporeal re-appearance through technological mediation does not identify with any sense of dysfunction, but rather with doubleness. In *4.48 Psychosis*, the performer while standing opposite her screened double is corporeally self-aware, this awareness of her body is not practically linked to dysfunction though.

I would like to clarify that by no means do I regard the mediat(isat)ion of the body as a dys-appearing process in a sense of a troubling phenomenological analysis of the body's states. In *4.48 Psychosis* dys-appearance is just a connotation of the role's undesirable and problematic condition. Therefore, mediat(is)ed otherness might not equate with a case of dysfunction, but it could be considered as a case of, what Leder identifies as 'neutral coenesthesia' (1990: 91). Leder notes that the body's re-appearance is not necessarily the outcome of a painful stimulus. There are also cases that neutral and even pleasurable stimuli activate people's coenesthesias (1990:91).[6] In mixed-media theatre, the technological doubling up of the physical performer could be described as a condition of self-awareness which is not defined by any positively or negatively charged situation. In the performance, the body re-appears as a complementary entity to its physical referent, not in a pathological, but in a kind of 'deviant' form. However, the mediated body resonates with some of the characteristics of the troubled body; in fact, it makes the performer aware of an inaccessible part of her corporeality. The divided self on stage or else the performer's body with her mediated double are in a transitional state of vanishing and reappearing. That is, the body keeps reappearing denoting its perpetual division from its physical referent/self. After all, there is nothing problematic about the physical/videated coexistence on stage.

To sum up, I would argue that dys-appearance as the outcome of doubleness in mixed-media theatre might not take the performer's 'breath away', or create a rupture in 'purposeful activity', as according to Leder any problematic corporeal condition could do, but it definitely makes the performer aware of her body as a thing, demanding her attention (1990: 130). Therefore, mediat(isat)ion as a process of re-appearance (literally separating the body image from its physical referent) purposefully turns the performer into a dys-appearing body. Modifying Parsons' view of the 'sick role' that wants the body to become prominent only when illness or other problematic conditions disturb any purposeful action of everyday life (1991: 59), I would suggest that in mixed-media theatre the prominence of the digital double as part of mise-en-scène provides a tool to facilitate the purposeful action. In *4.48 Psychosis*, the purposeful action is the doubleness associated with the 'schizoid' condition expressed in Kane's play, while in any avatar based performance, the purposeful action could be the navigation and experience of a virtual milieu.

The Screen of Ab-sence

Having discussed the different modes of absence both as disappearance and dys-appearance in *4.48 Psychosis*, I will focus on the absent technological instrument that brings mediat(isat)ion and also doubleness into the performance space of theatre Empros, that is, the screen. As part of the absence of the screened body, the screen is closely associated with doubleness in mixed-media theatre. The absent screen, either as a non-visible element of the digital double or as a visible feature of the technological representation that is forgotten by the viewer (that slips from

viewer's attention), is the agent of mediat(isat)ion that enables the digital double to enter the theatrical space. In *4.48 Psychosis*, the absent screen identifies with the content of the projection, rather than the actual medium of projection. Moreover, the absent screen refers to the immediate and hypermedial nature of mixed-media theatre, where the physical and technological are remediated to form an intertwining on stage.

In *4.48 Psychosis*, neither the performer nor the audience can discern any frame indicative of mediat(isat)ion. There is no identifiable bordered screen to define the enlarged floating figure. The indiscernible quality of the screen contributes to the embodied experience of ab-sence. As dys-appearance is the main mode of absence in the performance determined by doubleness, I propose that the performer's videated re-appearance signifies the disappearance of the rest of the world and the background that frames the re-appearing corporeal entity. In the case of dys-appearance that brings body to the foreground, nothing else really matters, as the body is the focus of attention. The centre of attention is the mixed-media corporeal ensemble that fills in the performance space, a space that is made of bodies. The only frame that defines the videated figure is the contour of her face. The only spatial indication of the place is swept away by insistent corporeality. The screen is present but it is not perceptible in the pitch black and almost shapeless space of *4.48 Psychosis*. Yet, it is the screen that renders the videated body visible. The dys-appearing body re-appears through the absent screen. I would suggest that the absence of screen conceals the traces of mediat(isat)ion, while enabling the doubling of the physical body.

The dys-appearance - disappearance correlative of the performer and her screened double effects a 'spatial constriction' (Leder, 1990:75). Although, the performer is confined in her small grey square on the floor of the playhouse, the videated body flows around defining its own space apparently without the limitations of the screen. The physical body's immobility in relation to the technological body's hyperaction resonates with Scarry's description of intense pain which is 'experienced spatially as either the contraction of the universe down to the immediate vicinity of the body or as the body swelling to fill the entire universe' (1985: 35). In fact, the mediat(is)ed double of self expands and contracts in front of the performer and the audience giving a sense of texture in a space where no spatial dimension or border is perceptible. While all the physical bodies of the theatre event are 'restricted' and effectively trapped in one space, the videated body fills in the disappearing space suggesting a materiality and defining dimensions of a space that otherwise appears shapeless. The movement of the videated head also suggests a depth of space. The dys-appearing body gathers the space 'inward to the center' by exerting, what Leder names as, 'a phenomenologically "centripetal" force' (1990: 76). Therefore, the absent screen defines and modifies the performance space and through its absence orientates or even dis-orientates the audience, who perceives nothing else but bodies conquering and filling the space in.

Pragmatically the disappearance of the screen occurs as the whole space is plunged into darkness. Moreover, the dimensions of the screen coincide with the background wall of the playhouse that, in turn, contributes to the indiscernibility of its frame. The invisibility of the screen in combination with the darkness offers a unifying disorientating spatial experience. The absence of screen ostensibly banishes the boundaries between physical and technological body, enabling the two modes of corporeality both to embrace and separate from each other in the darkness. The darkness invades, surrounds, engulfs, and even covers the different components of

the performance. The absent screen defines a space which is built up by and for the body, taking form from the inside, 'like a shell, in an intimacy that works physically' (Bachelard, 1969: 100). Therefore, the bodies are the integral parts in and of space that provide themselves with an environment adapted to their presence. The present/absent bodies are constructed by the 'invisible' which is the depthless space for them to exist. Both the transparent physical body and the videated non-screened body colonise the material space. In *4.48 Psychosis* the bodies are the space.

Digital Double + Physical Performer = Chiasm

Drawing on Matthew Causey's view that the performer's confrontation with her/his double is characterised as 'the quest for disappearance […] a quest for otherness' (2003: 385-386), I suggest that in *4.48 Psychosis* the physical body's encounter with its technological double identifies with a quest for otherness which in this analysis is a quest for *re-appearance*, namely a simultaneous inter-change of disappearance and appearance between the performance media. In the performance, the double connotes an alter ego, a schizophrenic self, an other self, which appears as an element of ghosting. The body tends to disappear and re-appear, not only according to the audience's perception that observes this hovering process from invisibility back to visibility, but also according to the performer's experience of her bodily image.

Although, the physical performer does not coincide with her digital double, there is no complete division between them. The mixed-media corporeality is fragmented, and decentered and is characterised by absence. The mediat(is)ed double is a body that takes distance from the physical self, while moving towards the foreground of the performer's attention and turns into the Other/self. The mediat(is)ed body as the second half of the representation of a psychotic subject offers the stimulus that could catch the performer's attention urging the performer to act to her body which has become the object of her experience. Hence, the performer draws attention to her mediat(is)ed double which is part of her body/self, yet is also the Other.

In mixed-media theatre the physical and its mediat(is)ed double co-exist, through a network of appearances/disappearances without privileging any of two components. Theatrically doubleness is a case of phenomenological absence, which oscillates between alterity and intercorporeality. Hence, the intermedial collaboration between the physical and technological embodiment on the stage of *4.48 Psychosis* resonates with the phenomenological 'truth' about the self image, which according to Amelia Jones 'is not self-sustaining or coherent within itself; not a pure, unidirectional show of individual agency, but always contingent on otherness'(2006: 68).

In addressing the physical and the technological correlation in the production, it could be argued that this mixed-media correlation is an intercorporeal embodied action consisting of different modes of embodiment stemming from self and other and eventually self as Other. The notion of intercorporeality includes both the sense of absence and presence. Hence, the act of performing next to a technological double is an embodied experience which is not 'a private affair, but is always already mediated by our continual interactions with other human and nonhuman bodies' (Weiss, 1999: 5). Therefore, I propose that the lived-body in mixed-media theatre comprised through a process of digital doubleness, is a gestalt of different

intertwined modes of embodiment. Yet the technological body together with the different modes of embodiment of the physical body compose a 'chiasm' in mixed-media theatre. In contrast to the traditional performance studies discourses that consider the representational nature of the mediated and the ontology of live performance as fundamentally opposed, the chiasm is suggestive of body and technology interdependence and mutual exchange.

Merleau-Ponty explores this term of chiasm (or chiasmus) in his essay 'Eye and Mind' (1964) to indicate a 'unique space which separates and reunites, which sustains every cohesion' in human perception (1964: 187). The Merleau-Pontian metaphor of chiasm is applied here to define the interrelation between the technological double and its human referent. The chiasm, otherwise known as intertwining, reversibility, fold, hinge or even flesh is differentiated from any idea of, what Vivian Sobchack calls, 'harsh dialectics' (2004: 99) or binary oppositions between body and world, and for the purposes of this paper, I would suggest, between the physical and the technological. At the same time, the chiasm appears as the dynamic potential that brings both body and technology together, while maintaining their gaps (écart) and the differences between them. For Merleau-Ponty chiasm identifies with the sense of the 'double and crossed situating' (1968: 134-135), while consisting of both the lived body and the experienced world. The chiasm is 'a reciprocal insertion and intertwining' of the seeing body in the visible body: we are both subject and object simultaneously, and our 'flesh' merges with the flesh, that is, the world (1968: 138).

Although, the performance deals with ideas such the corporeal alienation (as bodily absence) when in contact with the videated double, the phenomenological approach of this paper develops a methodology which argues that the mixed-media theatre mise-en-scène expresses a quest for unified subjectivity. The technological double represents an expression of perception of the performer's surface body. Considering the physical/videated ensemble on stage of *4.48 Psychosis*, I propose that both constituents do not form a split, they only connote one.

The mixed-media correlative that this article has suggested functions as what Merleau-Ponty would call a 'fabric into which all objects are woven' (1962: 235). I suggest that in *4.48 Psychosis*, the mixed-media ensemble appears as fragmented objectivity that composes a holistic subjectivity. In *4.48 Psychosis*, none of the corporealities, neither the physical nor the videated, could function independently. On the contrary, both physical and technological are linked through 'flesh'. Drawing on Leder's views on the absent body, I would say that in *4.48 Psychosis* the body's disappearance and absence in the performance mark the performer's 'ceaseless relation to the world', and so to the audience and to the self (1990: 160). The performer both onstage and on screen connotes the blurred boundaries between the 'me' and 'not me' as expressed in the play.

The digital double in theatre establishes on stage a new body image, while enabling a chiasmic interaction between technological and physical body which is virtually based on both intercorporeal connections and non-coincidence. The mediat(is)ed double either as an avatar or a videated representation projected in the performance space never completely coincides with its physical referent, yet they remain closely interlinked. In a sense absence does not necessarily lie in the disappearance of the physical body, but mainly refers to the re-discovery, difference and displacement of the physical body as it goes through the process of mediat(isat)ion. More than an alienated form of co-existence, doubleness in *4.48 Psychosis* inaugurates a

'chiasmic' relation so that the technological body and its physical referent become mutually interrelated.

Endnotes

[1] Regarding the computer generated double, the avatar could bear no resemblance at all to its physical referent.

[2] Sara Kane's play, suggestive of the experience of a psychological collapse, is laid out as a polyphonic monologue indicating what is happening in the mind of a psychotic person. In the play text there is no specific character indication, but only multiple voices comprise a psychotic subject that oscillates between being and not being, me and not me. In the play, the self appears to stand out of the body and question its validity, accuracy and even its existence. The body in Kane's play tends to vanish ['watch me vanish' (*4.48 Psychosis* 244)], to be suspended and eventually to turn into an apparitional entity that haunts itself. *4.48 Psychosis* expresses the human despair of a psychotic subject which is no longer 'at home', yet it is everywhere, (as explicitly expressed in the play) 'I am not here and never have been' (*4.48 Psychosis* 209).

[3] I avoid using the term mediatised to resist creating any socio-political connotations of a cultural object of mass media. Equally ambiguous is the term mediated as it does not nesseccarily refer to media technologies, but, as Chapple and Kattenbelt contend to 'all forms of communication' that 'are mediated by signs' (2006: 23). Therefore, I often utilise the term mediat(is)ed and mediat(isat)ion in my attempt to make a distinction from the above terms, while still referring to the representational nature of media technologies.

[4]The face cannot be seen without the help of a reflective surface. Merleau-Ponty points out that 'my body as given to me by sight is broken at the height of the shoulders and terminates in a tactile-muscular object' (1963: 213). Hence, the performer, similar to all people, cannot see most of her face, with the exception of a protruding tongue or nose.

[5] As I have already mentioned, the video projects an enlarged body, yet only the head and rarely the hands could be discerned.

[6] Leder mentions the example of running race, meditation, looking our reflection in the mirror. All these cases of self-awareness are not associated with problematic and dysfunctional contexts.

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