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***Embodied Consciousness: Performance Technologies.* Edited by Jade Rosina McCutcheon and Barbara Sellers-Young. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Pp. xiii + 229; £55/\$90 Hb.**

William W. Lewis

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school philosopher. The book, which includes essays by scholars and critics from different backgrounds, argues that ‘performance’ is a central category in Adorno’s critical and aesthetic theory. As stated by the volume editors, the attempt to unite ‘performance’ and ‘philosophy’ in Adorno entails ‘the creation of a conceptual force field’ (p. 15). And, indeed, this is true not only because of the semantic polarity between the two disciplines – one conventionally devoted to the body and the other to the mind – but also because the collection of essays featured in this volume works together as a constellation, or a multiplicity, of points of view where the sense of the whole depends on the cross-referencing between the various essays. Going beyond the study of the numerous and direct references to performance that can be found throughout Adorno’s work – consider, for example, his reflections on Beckett, Kafka, Klee, Schönberg and Wagner, just to name a few – these essays also have the merit of bringing out the performative nature of Adorno’s thought and writing, and thus of philosophy in general. For example, Mattia Martinson’s essay considers the last aphorism of *Minima Moralia* to investigate the notion of philosophical performance. Interestingly, aside from the significant reflections stimulated by Adorno’s *Aesthetic Theory*, especially in the chapters by Andrea Sakoparning and Marcus Quent, even those Adornian theories not specifically dedicated to the arts are found to be fertile ground for reflections on performance, as well as the comparison with artwork or authors not directly related to him. For instance, Karoline Gritzner’s analysis of Adorno’s *Dream Notes* demonstrates the performative nature of dreams and observes some Adornian philosophical concepts in action, such as the possibility of redemption and reconciliation between subject and object world after the fracture caused by ‘identity thinking’; and the chapter by Ioana Jucan on Adorno’s remark that thinking is always a ‘mode of comportment’, carried out through the study of Richard Maxwell’s production *Neutral Hero*.

Beyond the specificity of each essay, it becomes apparent through this book how Adorno’s essential notion of ‘nonidentical thinking’, as an instrument of negative dialectics, could become a pivot around which scholars think through performance. This means that performance – in which identity, power and domination are continuously challenged – can become an alternative way of representing and unveiling the reality that ‘identitarian thought’ – the dominant, universalizing representational order of late capitalism’s globalized word that Adorno criticizes – is unable to understand.

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States of being, in relation to the world around us, have been interrogated since the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum* Western philosophical interpretation of consciousness and perception. This essay collection examines the impact and ontology of consciousness

through cognitive and aesthetic aspects of theatre and performance. Creating a multimodal assessment of consciousness and its relation to theatrical forms, the editors employ ‘technologies’ of performance to introduce new insights from cognitive science as applied to actor training, reception, and theories of performativity. The essays appeal to readers interested in corporeality and consciousness by approaching consciousness in many ways: from empirical foundations of neuroscience and cognitive studies, to the transcendental and spiritual, to a self-effacing questioning of the status of the real in the postmodern era.

Each section explores the question, how is an understanding of consciousness formed, applied, replicated and pondered through the stage? The introduction approaches this question by offering a concise explanation of the processes of consciousness using the biological and cognitive research of neuroscientist D. W. Zaidel. Zaidel explicates consciousness and cognitions as ‘situated in the body as well as the brain’ (p. 3). Section I explores intersections of consciousness with performers, in training and pedagogy. Methods employed by Stanislavski, Bogart, Brecht and Barba, among others, are interrogated to tease out models of cognition. Section II focuses on the impact of Eastern meditative practices located in holistic body/mind approaches to Western performance practice. Zen contemplation and yogic spirituality are offered as potential ways to expand the possibilities of dance and theatre training, encouraging a heightened sense of mindfulness in and through the body. Section III moves beyond the performer and questions assumptions about reception. The limits of mimicry and mimesis are put to debate through Jade Rosina McCutcheon’s intriguing discussion of the mirror neuron and reflection in the development process of verbatim theatre. The final section offers a culminating view; each of its essays approaches philosophical theories of cognition to reassess the nature of being in a postmodern epoch in which contemplations of the ‘real’ confer constant slippage. Doug Rossen reinterprets Heidegger to question the ontology of performativity, and Eve Katsoraki employs the work of Baudrillard and Rancière to explore new aesthetic constructions.

The methods and interventions chronicled in *Embodied Consciousness* are diverse, and taken together they provide a welcome and innovative critical dialogue on understandings of consciousness within and through performance. These approaches become the apparatus or ‘technologies’ mentioned in the title through which consciousness can be situated beyond the dualist model offered by Descartes. Breaking down traditional systems of theorization with the aid of new interpretations emphasizing the importance of the body in processes of consciousness, *Embodied Consciousness* helps readers to attain a richer, more informed sense of being and/in performance.

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***Dancing Jewish: Jewish Identity in American Modern and Postmodern Dance.***

By Rebecca Rossen. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. 336 + 50 illus. \$99 Hb; \$29.95 Pb.

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