

**Meike Wagner: Who am I? Challenging the self through puppets.**  
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## Who am I?

### Challenging the self through puppets<sup>1</sup>

In many cultural and historical contexts, puppets appear as an image of humans representing and negotiating existential philosophical questions. Puppets appear as effigies replacing another person, as in the representational practices of early modern history;<sup>2</sup> they can be doubles/ghosts/spectres haunting the human soul, as in the novels of Romanticism;<sup>3</sup> and they can appear as a mirror or model to educate people and better them, as in the writings of the avant-garde acting movements around 1900.<sup>4</sup>

These appearances of the puppet, the doll, the effigy in manifold disguises require from us a response. Rarely do we manage to pass them unnoticed; we desire them, we envy them, or we might even be utterly disgusted and appalled by their silent presence. We oscillate between familiarising them in order to become acquainted with them, and rejecting them in order to mark the difference between their objecthood and our unique soulful existence. Both attitudes speak of an existential need to respond to the challenge of the puppets in order to rebalance our human self after the encounter.

Puppeteers seem to be very aware of these existential negotiations between the self and the Other when performing. Accordingly, the puppets act out two main strategies of challenging the human self in their manifold stage appearances:

- 1) Representing ›the Other‹ of man
- 2) Performing an ›othering‹<sup>5</sup> of man

In the first case, the representation of ›the Other‹ requires a human-like puppet gestalt relating to a human being. The puppet is a ›mini-me‹, a double or an icon of the object body. In the second case, the processes of turning ›normality‹ into a feeling of uneasiness in the performance comes into play. I would argue that these two challenges of

the puppet are closely interlinked with aesthetic strategies and dramaturgies in puppet theatre. ›The Other‹ becomes a valid configuration in a theatre presenting the puppet as an integral dramatic figure, while ›othering‹ happens through staging the performativity of the puppet, bringing the materialities and the dynamics of the creation of the puppet body into the picture. In the following section, I will investigate further the ›aesthetics of othering‹ in puppetry.

### **Aesthetics of ›othering‹**

From the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century onwards, open manipulation in puppetry became very popular, up to the point that we consider the open interaction between puppet and human actors as the rule today, rather than the exception. A second important development set in towards the end of the century, with the advent of postdramatic and performative modes of dramaturgy and playing – both in theatre and in puppetry. As a consequence, theatrical narration and the construction of the dramatic figure became highly contested, opening up new, manifold ways of relating theatre texts and puppet bodies. The artistic focus moved towards the materialities of objects and puppets, bringing to the fore their visual, medial and symbolic qualities in performance. In the process of performance, audiences are now confronted with visual and material meanings of puppet bodies that are being constantly reorganised, reformulated and reflected through the clashing and fragmentation of materials and fluid reshaping. These aesthetic strategies of late 20<sup>th</sup>-century puppetry became interlinked with social and political discourses on the human body, its prosthetics and processes of optimisation, construction and virtual imaging. Puppets revealed themselves as the ideal artistic medium *per se* for negotiating these matters, since they position themselves exactly on the threshold between subjective existence and material object.

Postmodern puppet theatre is greatly invested in the destabilisation of identity concepts and subject positions. In my book *Nähte am Puppenkörper* (2003), I identified three main strategies that have the potential to challenge the self of the puppeteer, the puppet and the

spectator: 1) displaying the construction of the puppet; 2) emphasizing the ›otherness‹ of the puppet's being; and 3) liquefying the body concept of puppets to make it impossible to identify a fixed corporeal form. Puppet artists using these aesthetic strategies relate their staging of the puppet body to a reformulation of the dramatic puppet figure and the ontological status of both puppet and human actor. When attending such performances, we experience how stable entities or ›natural‹ ontologies seem to be more of an illusion than a solid fact. Puppet bodies are formed from materials mixing with organic body parts of the actors, and subject performers and performing objects operate in a mode of transformation rather than subscribing to any given order. Subject actors are performed as subjects and object actors are performed as objects, while at the same time they can easily switch roles through their playing. The status of a being materialises through processes of performativity on stage.

This performativity of identity has been described in terms of gender theory by Judith Butler (cf. Butler 1990). Mainstreamed into constructivist philosophy from the 1990s onwards, it has shaped our idea of human identity as something performed within normative frames in daily life through unintentional, repetitious acts. This idea of identity defies notions of naturally born gender identity and corporeal existence. We are not born as a specific identity, but rather born into the normative frame of ›becoming an identity‹ through performance. The repetitiousness of the performative act allows for negotiation and development through failure. What we see on stage performed are, of course, intentional acts of performers; but in aesthetic experience, we relate their staged performativity to ourselves, feeling uneasy about our own re-negotiated identity, corporeal scheme and the challenge of ›othering‹ our self. A phenomenological perspective can offer us an opportunity to better grasp the interrelation of the performativity on stage and the performativity of our being.

Within this frame of thinking, I will discuss how puppet performance exposes its potential to unearth the ambiguities of our own ›non-identity‹. I will focus particularly on Helmuth Plessner's phenomenological writings on human eccentricity. His ideas on laughing and crying as human existential crises serve as a key to discuss the

effects of fragmenting and destabilising our own identity during puppet shows – ›challenging the self through puppets‹.

### The existential crisis of laughing

A few years ago, in 2013, I had an eminent physical experience of total laughter at the international puppet festival in Erlangen when I saw the performance *The Table* by The Blind Summit Theatre. Three performers operated a bunraku-style puppet made of cardboard and cloth, its actions limited to a table of merely three by six feet. The puppet performing Moses started a conversation with the audience on life and human existence, flying high, while at the same time always bouncing back to the fact that the puppet was no more than a ›thing‹ moved around by three people. The puppet's discourse, its movements and the audience response added up to a hilarious experience. My body responded with bursts of laughter to the jokes and the absurdities of the puppet acting totally out of proportion. No one present could help laughing. In some moments, even the performers started laughing and lost control of the otherwise skilfully operated performance. Yet there were also ambiguities in the performance experience. I felt that my laughter was a reaction to the tension between the perfection and disorganisation of the puppet movements (which was all skilfully planned, of course), between the larger-than-life themes discussed and the miniature puppet on the limited space of a table, and between the lifelike behaviour and sophisticated discourse of the puppet and its cardboard surface. These tensions would elsewhere have created a feeling of unease or even uncanniness, yet in the theatre they were immediately overcome by laughter. After the side-splitting performance, my jaws were aching from laughter. I felt a kind of exhaustion, like after a thorough workout...

In 1941, the German philosopher Helmuth Plessner proposed with his book *Lachen und Weinen. Eine Untersuchung nach den Grenzen menschlichen Verhaltens* (translated into English in 1970) an anthropological and phenomenological reading of laughing. Here, he states that the emotional expressions of laughing and crying have a common trait,

namely that they both act out a liminal condition of human beings on a corporeal level:

Laughing and crying provide another view of the relation of man to his body. Their form of utterance, whether expressive or expressionless, whether full or empty of meaning, reveals as such no symbolic form. Although initially motivated by us, laughing and crying make their appearance as uncontrolled and unformed eruptions of the body, which acts, as it were, autonomously. Man falls into their power; he breaks – out laughing, and lets himself break – into tears. He responds to something by laughing and crying, but not with a form of expression which could be appropriately compared with verbal utterance, expressive movement, gesture, or action. He responds – with his body as body, as if from the impossibility of being able to find an answer to himself. And in the loss of control over himself and his body, he reveals himself at the same time as a more than bodily being who lives in a state of tension with regard to his physical existence yet is wholly and completely bound to it. (Plessner 1970: 31)

So, according to Plessner, laughing is an autonomous response of our body to a situation that is otherwise impossible to answer. At the core of this lies the human condition of »eccentricity«. <sup>6</sup> Plessner uses this word to describe in phenomenological terms the double position of human beings in regard to their body: human beings have a body and they are a body.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, human beings are able to reflect on this paradoxical double bind and therefore take on an eccentric position (Plessner 1970: 36). We must find a balanced relation towards these two orders of being, without ever being able to find a definite solution to the essential opposition between ›being a body‹ (»Leibsein«) and ›having a body‹ (»Körpersein«) (ibid.). In the performance of daily life,<sup>8</sup> humans normally succeed in establishing corporal coherence through action, language and physical expression, covering and concealing the paradoxical opposition between ›being a body‹ and ›having a body‹. According to Plessner, laughing and crying belong to the liminal situations (»Grenzlagen«) of human beings. A non-threatening crisis that cannot be answered (in the sense of ›cannot

be solved) causes a temporal disorganisation of human coherence and, consequently, releases the physical response of laughing or crying. This temporal disorganisation, however, does not affect the personal integrity of a human being:

*Unanswerable and nonthreatening situations [...] arouse laughing or crying. Man capitulates as a soul-body unit, i.e., as a living creature; he loses the relation to his physical existence, but he does not capitulate as a person. He does not lose his head. To the unanswerable situation, he still finds – by virtue of his eccentric position, because of which he is not wholly merged in any situation – the only answer still possible: to draw back from the situation and free himself from it. The body, displaced from its relation to him, takes over the answer, no longer as an instrument of action, language, gesture, or expressive movement, but as body. In losing control over his body, in giving up a relation of it, man still attests to his sovereign understanding of what cannot be understood, to his power in weakness, to his freedom and greatness under constraint. Even here he still knows how to find an answer, even where there is nothing more to answer. (ibid.: 68; emphasis in original)*

Laughing thus offers us an answer to the disorganising crisis of the human soul-body unit, when language, expression or action cannot respond any longer in a meaningful way.

Is laughter then an excuse for a lack of symbolic communication? And why is theatre, specifically puppetry, able to create instances of such disorganising crises?

### **The theatre of laughing**

To begin with, we can assume that a theatre performance is generally embedded in an artistic framework and is therefore not a threatening situation. Even though it is non-threatening, it has a binding quality; when we are in the theatre we need to engage ourselves in the situation and respond to what we experience there. In that sense, it is similar to playing a game in the Plessnerian sense. ›Playing‹ thus has

a more substantial meaning here than mere ›children's play‹ or game-play. By talking about ›playing‹ in relation to theatre, I do not intend to diminish the relevance of theatre or to impose a concept of ›illusion‹ (›as if‹) in opposition to ›reality‹ on the performance. Instead, following Plessner, I maintain that ›play‹ and ›playing‹ have an essential impact on the participants and agents of play. When entering the theatre, the audience enters at the same time into an imagined contract of both watching a mimetic ›play‹ and engaging physically and mentally in the ›playing‹.<sup>9</sup> Plessner's notion of the play as an ambivalent situation links in with this ›double game‹. According to him, the ambivalences of the play become effective on two levels: on one level, there is a persistent oscillation between the material world and the illusion of play; on the other level, there is a constant switch between an active bonding and a being bound by the play situation and by the other players (cf. *ibid.*: 78–79). The natural response to these double ambivalences is laughing.

The first level seems to be particularly true for theatre and performance. The second level requires some further explanation. The playing participants bind themselves to the play, yet the resultant bond is unstable and needs continued renewal and confirmation. The will to bind and to being bound is the precondition of the play, otherwise the real environment and the authenticity of an action invade and destroy the play. Playing partners inscribe themselves fully into the play. In theatre, this means that an audience has to allow itself to be bound to the seriousness of the performer and the performance, up to a point where the absurdity of the action and narration brightly illuminates the binding contract, potentially making it doubtful and nonsensical. The inevitable answer is laughing.

Why is not all theatre a theatre of laughing then? Is there not a quality of play inherent in all theatre?

I think that theatre has a basic, profound tendency towards both play and laughing in the Plessnerian sense. However, only certain styles and genres of theatre bring the aspects of play to the fore, playing out the ambivalences that need to be answered with laughing. Perhaps hermetic dramaturgies tend to cover and seal the fissures of playful ambivalences, generating a powerful pathos dispelling any



doubt, and transforming potentially explosive laughter into compassion, entertainment and education and thereby ›taming‹ the theatre's excessive energies.

Besides the basic disposition of play, there are two more aspects that make theatre a stage for corporal disorganisation and laughing. First, theatre is a space for communal communication. Resonating laughter of people present has its space here, disqualifying one of the most prominent forms of this kind of laughter: namely, the pre-recorded laughter used predominantly in American sitcoms. These recordings are meant to produce outbursts of laughter with TV audiences, but in reality they generate a great unwillingness in me. Its resonances do not find their target object, because my body does not want to resonate with such commodified laughing. In the theatre situation of co-presence one spectator ensures and confirms the corporal disorganisation of the other. The corporal resonances in the theatre amplify guffaws of laughter and take control of the otherwise rational beings in the audience.

Secondly, theatre as a place of corporal representation and body art is predestined to question coherent body concepts through artistic intervention. Particularly since the mid-1990s, modern puppetry has invested a great deal of time and energy in research into the relations between the human body, the object/puppet body and the material environment in order to negotiate the ambivalences and ›otherness‹ of the human corporeal existence (cf. Wagner 2003: passim Wagner 2006: 125–136).

The puppet is the perfect mirror of the eccentric human position. It demonstrates the existential divide between ›being a body‹ and ›having a body‹. The puppet presents to us its material body, the thing, the object that determines its ›gestalt‹. And through its performance, it becomes and expresses a subjective being, a personality. ›Being a body‹ and ›having a body‹, object and subject come apart before our eyes and are divided into two different orders of the same figure. Through manipulation by the puppet players, both orders fuse into one again and enable the agency of the puppet body and interaction with its object environment. The performance establishes corporal coherence and thus materialises the image of a soul-body unit.

Today's puppeteers joyfully play with the multi-levelled dissipation and restructuring of the corporal figure. They bind the audience to the play about the crises of the body in a particular, aesthetic way. The crises of the puppet become critical moments of our own body scheme. This is because – in Lacanian terms – what we see (»ce que nous regardons«) in the stage mirror, concerns (»nous regarde«)<sup>10</sup> our deepest feelings about ›having/being a body‹ (cf. Wagner 2003: 77–95). When this corporal disturbance of puppetry happens on a limited level, it creates unease, perhaps a certain feeling of uncanniness; the secret of the phenomenal body (›corps phenomenal‹) is merely indicated. It is only the excessive and unbound level of corporal disturbance that becomes unanswerable: the soul-body unit of the spectator falls apart, overwhelming her with laughter.

But where is the limit between the proportional/limited and the disproportional/excessive act of ›corporal disturbance‹ in puppetry?

### ***The Table***

To answer this question, I will go back to the beginning and pick up the thread from my own physical outbursts of laughing at the performance of *The Table*.<sup>11</sup> This is one of Blind Summit's most successful pieces. It was premièred in 2011, and has since been played at numerous international puppet theatre festivals. The performance does not have a coherent narrative, even though the performers claim to be presenting a piece about the last 12 hours of Moses's life, in real time. It is rather a loose series of improvised acts, demonstrating the main principles of puppetry and the highly expressive potential of the puppet. In this respect, it is a masterpiece in presenting the fine art of puppetry in an energetic, incredibly sophisticated choreography involving three puppeteers. At the same time, the audience is witness to a corporal performance acting out the finely knitted network of relations between the puppet body, the performers' bodies and the spectators' bodies.

At the international puppet theatre festival Titirimundi in Segovia in Spain in 2014,<sup>12</sup> the three puppeteers<sup>13</sup> Mark Down (head and left arm

operator), Sean Garrett (right arm and torso operator) and Irena Stratieva (feet operator) began their performance of *The Table* with a concise transformation from technical preparations to the act of manipulating the puppet. They stood silently behind the table placed on centre stage. Mark held the puppet Moses by the head, halfway behind the table. For a moment, the puppeteers looked out at the audience in a friendly manner. At a given cue (breathing), they focused their gaze on the puppet, and at a second cue, Mark put the puppet on the table. He immediately began to manipulate Moses' head and animated the puppet that was now nodding towards its left arm. Mark took this left arm and started to move it around. Moses now focused on his right arm and leant towards his back – he was asking Sean to operate his body parts. Finally, Moses looked at his feet, and Irena began to manipulate them by stomping them on the table. All the puppet players were now in position; having fitted the object body together, they started to animate it. A stage character was emerging. With a wink in their eye, they established a basic corporal scheme that both mirrored the paradox of ›being a body‹ and ›having a body‹ and offered a parallel between the eccentric position of the puppet and the eccentric position of man. The puppet Moses casually indicated that it fully grasped the negotiations between its own materiality and the puppeteers who provided it with consciousness and enabled it to act. At other performances of the show, Moses introduced himself as a »Japanese Bunraku style puppet« (*The Table*, Pistoia, 2015) manipulated by three puppeteers behind the table »that you might have noticed already...« (ibid.).

All hints as to the existentially eccentric positionality of puppet and man were answered by the audience with bursts of laughter. In that sense, Plessner's comment about the comic effect of obtrusive consciousness on the paradoxical human situation appears to be a key to the laughter in *The Table*. Because on the one hand, the comedy is produced by breaking a social or cultural norm, but on the other hand, it is also created precisely by indicating the paradoxical ›condition humaine‹<sup>14</sup>:

[T]he comic itself is no social product, and the laughter which responds to it no warning signal, no punishment (which it can



*Blind Summit Theatre, The Table, 2011.  
Puppet: Moses, Puppeteers: Sean Garratt on right hand and bum,  
Nick Barnes on feet, Mark Down on head. © Lorna Palmer*

become in a society), but an elementary reaction to what is disturbing in the comic conflict. Eccentric to his environment [*Umwelt*], with a prospect on a world [*Welt*], man stands between gravity and levity, between sense and nonsense, and thus before the possibility of their inextricable, ambiguous, contrary relation, which he can do nothing with, from which he must free himself, but which at the same time still holds him bound. (Plessner 1970: 87; emphasis in original)

I posit here that replacing the word ›man‹ with ›the puppet Moses‹ results in an apt description of the theatrical principles of the performance of *The Table*.

Starting from the eccentric positionality of the puppet, the Blind Summit Theatre probes the limitations and liminal areas of the stage figure. Again and again, the puppet Moses is drawn into excessive physical action that demonstrates the finely tuned choreography of the three puppeteers. When Mark Down announces »Moses walking in the wind«, such a scene begins.<sup>15</sup> The puppeteer quickly begins to imitate the hissing sound of the wind, gradually increasing until it is the loud roaring sound of a real storm. Shaken by gusts of wind coming from the right, Moses starts to walk towards the wind. Despite all its efforts, the puppet is constantly pushed back and ends up walking on the spot. Bracing himself against the wind with all his strength, Moses bends more and more towards the table, eventually sliding down to the left side. He can only grab the edge of the table with one hand while his body flies up into the air and is spun round by the ›windy forces‹ of the puppeteers stretching the puppet into all directions. Then he manages to cling to the table's edge with his second hand, and crawls on his elbows and knees back onto the table. The wind calms down a little, and he stumbles back to his position at the centre of the table, shaking his fists in rage against heavens: »Why, oh God, why?«.

Moses bemoans his fate of being a powerless puppet rendered a plaything of heavenly forces. He has seen himself turning into an object body shaken by external forces, without any possibility of defending himself against them. But in fact, the puppet was never an independent subject with a will of its own. It is, of course, the puppeteers who provide him with ›consciousness‹ and ›agency‹, while at the same time

exposing his body to the wild forces of nature by way of a dramatically orchestrated manipulation. Through the performance, the body object turns into an eccentric soul-body unit, then back into a body object. The audience could only answer this paradoxical corporal configuration by laughing.

I see a puppet body that is torn between the three performers and then put together again, I see the bodies of the performers mirroring the mimetic, corporal expressions of the puppet figure while at the same time synchronising the puppet's actions through their own excessive body movements, and I see the other spectators bursting out in laughter, disorganising their soul-body units, crouching, shaking, holding their sides. All these stretched, torn, jointed, perfectly choreographed, chaotic and eruptive bodies have an overwhelming physical effect on my frail body being-in-the-world, on my eccentrically positioned self. I sense, trembling, that my corporal coherence is being put to the test. No ontological certainties are granted, all remains performative – negotiating the eccentric positionality of myself ›being/having a body‹.

This impression of an absolute performativity of the theatrical body (puppet, performer, spectator) appears to me to be the result of an excessive, limitless act of ›corporal disturbance‹. I cannot respond here by sceptically distancing myself, or by allowing a feeling of unease. I can only answer this excessive act with excessive laughter. In *The Table*, this excessive corporal disturbance is embedded in a strategy of excessive trespassing of rules and norms, and of a total disproportion of theatrical means: The pace of narration and action changes quickly from high speed to slow motion; the relationship between Moses and God is totally out of proportion since the puppet takes on both roles; the puppet breaches the rules by controlling, manipulating and sanctioning the puppeteers while remaining a powerless object; the boundary between the puppet performance and the audience is constantly shifting, not only because of ›corporal disturbances‹, but also on the level of discourse; and finally, the relationship between philosophical discourse and biblical epos is quite out of proportion – the performance is nonchalantly presented as »the last 12 hours of Moses – performed in real time« – while there are constant indications of its cheap (crude

and raw?) materiality and strict limitations – cardboard, cloth, and a table.

All of this leaves me utterly exhausted, feeling a certain dullness and with aching sides – there is no doubt that my eccentric positional-ity stands clearly before me. An otherwise integral, coherent idea of myself and my body has been shaken up and ripped into pieces. I have been challenged by the puppets, and willingly accept being challenged again. The aesthetic experience of the puppet show has not only had an effect on my wholeness, but has also showed me that I am resilient. I can deal with the challenges and even learn to accept a more differentiated idea about myself, and hence about my fellow humans too.

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## Shows

Blind Summit Theatre (2014): *The Table*, Segovia, Spain: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWMa3xNMzPs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWMa3xNMzPs) (last accessed: 24 June 2019).

Blind Summit Theatre (2015): *The Table*, Pistoia, Italy: [vimeo.com/131567718](https://vimeo.com/131567718) (last accessed: 24 June 2019)

Blind Summit Theatre (2016): *The Table*, Stadttheater Ingolstadt, Germany: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=aCvNEoa8MBc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aCvNEoa8MBc) (last accessed: 24 June 2019).

## Notes

- 1 A revised version of this text will be published in French in *Europe*, special issue »La Marionette et ses registres sur la scène contemporaine«, spring 2021.
- 2 See, e.g., Erich Kantorowicz's seminal book *The King's Two Bodies* (1957), where he describes the use of effigies as a practice to ensure political stability after a king's death in early modern France.
- 3 For a detailed analysis of the puppet concepts of the Romantics, see Rudolf Drux (1986), *Marionette Mensch*.
- 4 For an overview of the puppet concepts of historical avant-gardes in the theatre, see Jochen Kiefer, *Die Puppe als Metapher den Schauspieler zu denken* (2004); Didier Plassard, *L'Acteur en effigie* (1992).
- 5 I am using the word ›othering‹ in a different way from how it appears in the discourse of queer and postcolonial discourse. Here it describes marginalising strategies of social normativity. My current use of ›the Other‹ and ›othering‹ is rooted in phenomenological concepts of the human self.
- 6 Helmuth Plessner developed the idea of an eccentric positionality (›exzentrische Positionalität‹) humans in his book *Die Stufen des Organischen und der Mensch*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1928.
- 7 This is, of course, the fundamental basis of phenomenological approaches to the perception of the human body. See, e.g., Plessner's French contemporary Maurice Merleau-Ponty and his study *Phénoménologie de la Perception* (1945).
- 8 I refer again here to Judith Butler's concept of performativity. See Butler, *Gender Trouble* (1990). Plessner's thinking is also grounded in a ›performative‹ concept *avant la lettre* when he says that »[i]n this unity, of the relation to his physical existence as impersonally and personally given, a unity which he must constantly renew, man's living body is disclosed to him as a means [...]« (Plessner 1970: 41).



- 9 This notion of ›play‹ extends beyond Roger Caillois's study of the play/the game (›le jeu‹ (Caillois, Roger (1967): *Les jeux et les hommes*, Paris: Gallimard, 37–40), in which he positions theatre in the category of ›mimicry‹ (›simulacre‹ (ibid.: 92)). When trying to relate the above concept of play to Callois's four categories of play/game (›agon‹ (ibid.: 50–55), ›alea‹ (ibid.: 56–60), ›mimikry‹ (ibid.: 61–67), ›illinx‹ (ibid.: 67–71)) it rather moves freely between ›mimikry‹ and ›illinx‹.
- 10 The wordplay with ›regarder‹, of course, is indebted to Lacan's can of sardines; see Lacan, Jacques (1973): *Le Séminaire, Livre XI: Les quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse*, Paris: Le Seuil, 88.
- 11 My analysis is based on the performance of 11 May 2013 at the International Festival of Puppetry at Erlangen, and on video clips of different performances that are available online.
- 12 A three-minute excerpt from the performance is available online: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWMA3xNMzPs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWMA3xNMzPs) (last accessed: 24 June 2019).
- 13 Over the years the bum and feet operators of the puppet Moses have varied. The current cast includes Mark Down (on head), Sean Garratt (on bum), Fiona Clift (on feet).
- 14 ›Precisely as such the comic conflict is *not* confined to the sphere of the human but can break out at any time where an outward appearance offends against a norm which it *nevertheless obviously obeys*.‹ (Plessner 1970: 86; emphasis in original)
- 15 The description of the scene is based on a three-minute video clip from the performance at Stadttheater Ingolstadt, 2016, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=aCvNEoa8MBc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aCvNEoa8MBc) (last accessed 24 June 2019).

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