

# The “Intercultural” Work of Lee Breuer<sup>1</sup>

*Iris L. Smith*

The American theater has never found a way to integrate its avant-garde artists into the larger world of theater the way Europe did, by giving them a place in their major institutions after they’ve proved their worth, nor even the way that the film, literary, and art establishments/industries have done here. In theater, the avant-garde spirit is made perpetual outcast.

— Bonnie Marranca

French cultural theorists and American theatre critics may rarely agree, but on the cultural position of the avant-garde, editor and critic Bonnie Marranca might be paraphrasing Pierre Bourdieu. Marranca sees contemporary American avant-garde theatre as economically dominated (“made perpetual outcast”) but symbolically dominant (“they’ve proved their worth”), a distinction Bourdieu draws for the nineteenth-century avant-garde in his essay “The Field of Cultural Production.” In the United States, the contemporary “avant-garde” includes artists who came to maturity in the 1960s and 1970s, often working in theatre collectives or in collaboration with artists from diverse media; familiar names include Richard Foreman, Maria Irene Fornes, Philip Glass, Megan Terry, Meredith Monk, Jean-Claude van Itallie, The Wooster Group, Elizabeth Swados, Yvonne Rainer, and Mabou Mines. This avant-garde is largely white, often but not always straight, female as often as male, and mature, both in age and artistic experience. Now part of an established avant-garde, if such an oxymoron can be entertained, the group continues to struggle financially, despite recognition as artists who have long since arrived. Had they come to maturity in Europe rather than the US, as Marranca notes, they might have been running major theatres, as Heiner Müller did the Berliner Ensemble. Some of these artists, not comfortable being considered avant-garde, have tried to dispense with the ghettoizing label. Others would argue that the term has not applied since the 1950s, when accommodation with mass culture began to mark the work of avant-garde artists, and public response to the work shifted from anger to acceptance. In other words, the artist cannot be avant-garde when the public refuses to be shocked by what s/he produces. While artists like Sam Shepard, Spalding Gray, and Philip Glass have embraced (not without irony) their acceptance in the mainstream—on Broadway, at Lincoln Center, or in Hollywood—for most of them a confrontational stance toward the status quo in theatre, dance, and music remains characteristic of their work.

A number of artists, among them playwright and director Lee Breuer, have turned to interculturalism to redefine “American theatre,” modifying avant-garde strategies of confrontation to address their own continuing marginality in the United States. Despite widespread recognition for productions with Mabou Mines, of which he is a founding member, and for independent work as varied as *Lulu* and *Gospel at Colonus*, Lee Breuer remains unaffiliated with any regional or commercial theatre. His outsider position, added to his knowledge of the theatre and funding worlds, makes him a useful commentator on the current status of the so-called “established” avant-garde. While theorists of intercultural performance have written off these artists as cultural imperialists, Breuer uses his position to stage genealogies of cultural stereotype. Unable to reverse or erase these stereotypes, Breuer plays them to the hilt. As his work has evolved, its tendency to allow stereotype to stifle the experience of cultural difference has been replaced with a reading of social and ethnic difference through discourses that have informed interculturalism, most prominently discourses of gender.

In his 1991 article “The Two-Handed Gun: Reflections on Power, Culture, Lambs, Hyenas, and Government Support for the Arts,” Breuer outlines the situation of the contemporary American artist. As a young writer, Breuer felt that the artist was solely defined by his aesthetics—“Give me a metaphor or give me death” (89)—but he now sees the cultural context shaping that attitude as American, Calvinist, capitalist. While art was removed to an elitist, privileged realm, the artist was situated as capitalist. If not as useful a commodity as a toaster, the product could at least be assigned to “high” culture, a safe realm in the doxology of bourgeois capitalism. And *doxa*, as Roland Barthes notes, sticks.<sup>2</sup> Breuer soon learned that art could be seen alternatively as a field of cultural production or, in 1960s terms, a field of struggle: the artist with his art, yes, but also with other artists, and with institutions, including government, corporate sponsors, and the press. Less quantifiable struggles lay behind these: structures of class, gender, and race relations that render some artists more visible than others. Already in the late 1950s, as young Breuer turned to directing with the San Francisco Mime Troupe and the San Francisco Actor’s Workshop, he found that theatre collaboration was, unlike many forms of artistic struggle, healthy for the individual artist. Among other benefits, it uncovered new ways of working and thus new ways of seeing. By the time he, Ruth Maleczek, JoAnne Akalaitis, Philip Glass, and David Warrilow founded Mabou Mines in 1970, groups such as the Living Theatre, the Open Theatre, and the Judson Dance Theatre had formed working communities within the larger downtown community of artists in New York City. Out of that empowering group work emerged the first glimmerings of interculturalism in white American performance.<sup>3</sup> As Mark S. Weinberg points out, “collective theatre” of the late 1960s provided “a model for the reenfranchisement of marginalized groups and the revitalization of indigenous cultures” (22), developing (not coincidentally) with a civil rights struggle that empowered blacks and women, and the Vietnam War, which galvanized student movement and the

counterculture. If these theatre groups were not explicitly political, their demand for freedom to experiment and their expectation of personal rather than career development increased the likelihood that all members would have access to decision making and the opportunity to explore new ideas and techniques.

In his article, Breuer does not discuss the conceptualist performance experiments of the late 1960s and early 1970s that lay the groundwork for the intercultural performance of the 1980s and 1990s. But he does see that any discussion of the state of contemporary theatre must acknowledge the "cultural logic of late capitalism" (Jameson) within which government and business participate in cultural production. Government arts policy, first formulated in the context of President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society, has been a permanent feature of the landscape for the established avant-garde, influencing artistic practice even now, with a smaller National Endowment for the Arts and little state or private funding.

Breuer clearly understands the position of avant-garde artists in the US as economically dominated and symbolically dominant, thus similar to that of the historical avant-garde, nineteenth-century French artists and writers whose efforts to shock the middle class first brought the term "avant-garde" into play. As Bourdieu points out, cultural production is contained within larger fields of power and class (and, I would add, race) relations, wielding little influence within those larger realms, yet retaining relative autonomy. These are not absolute relations of control. Bourdieu notes how several prolific and popular nineteenth-century playwrights were discredited in their own time as "hack" writers, while the *poètes maudits*, the "bad boy" artists of their day, earned relatively little but were held in great esteem. A similar state of affairs exists today in the largely white, established American avant-garde. Economically dominated in relation to its (white) relatives in regional and Broadway theatres, it has nevertheless gained symbolic dominance in the postindustrial world.<sup>4</sup> Receiving public and corporate assistance has been one indicator of symbolic dominance, but, with the exception of the one-time MacArthur Foundation "genius grants," such funding seldom underwrites more than a fraction of the work. Though university research and teaching, which increasingly include discussion of the American avant-garde, offer another kind of cultural capital, it seldom contributes in more material ways. Universities occasionally hire avant-garde artists, but the position rarely comes with support for large-scale, professional productions.

Lee Breuer is aware of the many ironies of his avant-gardist position. While he neither sought nor likes the label, his attitudes are clearly confrontational. In his creation of "American classicism," Breuer rejects drama on the "European model" (qtd. in Rabkin 13), by which he means high-tone literary theatre, particularly BBC-style productions of Shakespeare and other classics. Although Breuer's American classicism has worn a number of faces—minimalist, postmodern, intercultural—I will focus here on the intercultural, a form of

theatre that, as Una Chaudhuri has put it, attempts at its best to “produce the experience of difference” (196). *The Gospel at Colonus* (1983), *The Warrior Ant* (1988), *The MahabharANTa* (1992), and *An Epidog* (1996)<sup>5</sup> all written and directed by Breuer, incorporate staging techniques drawn from traditions largely unfamiliar to American audiences, such as Kabuki, Bunraku, Kathikali, and Balinese shadow puppet theatre. In *Gospel* and *Ant*, Breuer and his composer, Bob Telson, worked with African, African American, Caribbean, and Latin American artists in a wide variety of musical forms.

“Written and directed by” is a standard phrase that does not fit intercultural performance well. Breuer’s rejection of European theatre models means discarding traditional conceptions of both author and director. Preferring a Barthesian writerly stance as an author who does not claim patriarchal authority but who returns to the text as a guest (“From Work to Text” 161), Breuer also reshapes the role of autocratic director into that of negotiator, listener, and translator. As director, Breuer translates his vision as writer to the company; he also works collaboratively, exploring different “takes” on a given moment. In observing rehearsals for *The Warrior Ant*, Susan Cole was struck by the “lack of closure” in Breuer’s methods (204). Sharing the directorial role with Bob Telson, Middle Eastern dancer and choreographer Elena, or Bunraku master puppeteer Yoshida Tamamatsu, Breuer lets go the usual monocular directorial vision. Instead, his authority in rehearsal involves both “absorption in and detachment from” his collaborators’ work (Cole 208). As a result, “the cross-cultural multilayered texture . . . is continually exposed. What may look in performance like the work of an impresario . . . has as its invisible subtext the fragile intricacies and resistance to closure of collaborative improvisation” (Cole 209).

Similarly, in terms of actor-audience relations, the collaboration that resulted in the widely touring *Gospel at Colonus* was re-made in each new venue as local singers and musicians were selected to join the cast. In performance, cast members would improvise vocals or change blocking and exits to suit the moment. Breuer values such collaborative “looseness” (qtd. in Smith). By means of a distinctly avant-gardist lack of closure, Breuer and his collaborators sought to involve the audience in the interactive, intercultural catharsis he has called Artaud without the cruelty.<sup>6</sup> Here an inclusive aim replaces the “high” culture tone of earlier minimalist pieces, such as *The Red Horse Animation*, which Breuer created with Mabou Mines.

Breuer’s script for *Gospel at Colonus* is a double-voiced narrative both celebrating and questioning European theatre tradition. While Breuer talks about basing *Gospel* on the ecstatic experience of ancient Greek tragedy, the narrative puts the canonical text of *Oedipus at Colonus* in the interactive context of a Pentecostal church service. Here Breuer’s authorial and directorial confrontation with European culture may be less important than the way in which performers and audience together create the event. As Janelle Reinelt points out:

Too strong a reliance on the canonicity of Sophocles' play and Lee Breuer's adaptation ignores the deliberate transposition of the play into a different idiom, the idiom of the Black Church, and that to see Breuer as *auteur* repeats a favorite Western theatrical conception without seriously considering the collaboration. (101)

Reinelt suggests that *Gospel* operates as an open text, available to a variety of interpretive communities, but in looking at *Gospel's* reception, the reviews, and its subsequent publication in book form, she notes the "persistence of institutionalized privilege" granted Breuer and Telson (107). Coming as it did when African and Asian American artists were being added to the American cultural canon, Breuer's rewriting of the dominant European tradition has seemed to some critics less avant-garde than accommodating or politically correct. Breuer occasionally compounds the problem by saying that he is writing out his feminine side, as in *The Shaggy Dog Animation*, or that as a writer he is African, not European. While such statements might sound paternalist or imperialist to some, the avant-garde artist is a woman, is African (not African American), in Bourdieu's limited sense of a symbolic power, or visibility, that does not translate into economic terms. Thus, Breuer's move to interculturalism is more subversive than accommodating, especially in light of political conservatives who find interculturalism an attack on "American traditions and values." In "Two-Handed Gun" Breuer notes right-wing columnist Pat Buchanan's claim that "the art crowd . . . is engaged in a cultural struggle to root out the old America of family, faith, and flag, and recreate society in a pagan image." "Right on, Pat!" Breuer replies. "Don't give up the Parthenon! . . . More gods now! Better gods now!" (89).

Oddly enough, Breuer continues to adhere to an American romanticism Buchanan might find familiar—the expectation of social progress toward a better, happier future. Breuer's ideal is not one Buchanan would approve: a society in which art is not considered a product but fully integrated into daily life, families are not one-size-fits-all, and interculturalism is a working reality. Like many avant-gardists, Breuer's cultural criticism is clearer than his intercultural vision. In "Two-Handed Gun" he complains that while corporate philanthropists and the NEA made possible the brief blossoming of arts festivals in the 1970s and 1980s, they sought to create an upper middle class avant-garde that perpetuates a conservative European tradition of elitist art (90). He sees Philip Glass and Robert Wilson as two beneficiaries, and yet Breuer, the self-styled "working class intellectual" (qtd. in Cody 214) has also sought and received funding from these organizations:

In the Endowment mirror I can see myself to be a fake. I play the counterculturalist but . . . hey! . . . I taught at Yale. I'm a cultural pluralist, but . . . hey! . . . I'm white and I'm male and I even, finally at age 53, love my mother. I rail against fat institutional felines . . . when I am a willing, unduped party to the system one plateau down. Buddy Holly will rise from the grave singing "That'll Be the Day"—"the day" the Institutional Radio Choir or Moods Pan Grove [sic] get an Endowment grant. No, the

so-called plurals of cultural pluralism that I work with are funded through me. Hey! I'm a two-handed gun. (90)<sup>7</sup>

Bourdieu points out a final irony of the avant-garde's position. Late nineteenth-century French symbolists and decadents often found themselves in solidarity with the symbolically and economically dominated in the field of class relations—i.e., the poor. Yet the same artists found it difficult to turn their antibourgeois aesthetics into anticapitalist politics. The same could be said for the Surrealists' brief, conflicted flirtation with the French Communist party. The historical avant-garde, as well as its contemporary counterpart, seems by definition apolitical, even conservative.<sup>8</sup> Breuer's intercultural work has been attacked with some justification as imperialist, resting as it does on the joining of postmodern disjunction to a celebration of cultural pluralism. Daryl Chin remarks about *The Warrior Ant*:

[T]he formal disintegration of the piece could be seen as a statement about the disintegration of national boundaries implied by the collision of disparate elements from many different cultures. Thus, a Bunraku master, a Turkish belly dancer, and rap singers are all equated, rendered not so much equal as equally distracting. . . . This disjunction ultimately devalued all elements, as no element was allowed to exist within . . . the cultural context from which [it] derived. (87-88)

Chin admits that a double-voiced interculturalism is one way for the avant-garde to enter a more general, even popular, discourse. But he warns that "the general discourse . . . must not deform other cultures by making them speak in the language of the dominant culture" (95). Just as Artaud's project had reached for inclusiveness without dealing with the imperialist legacy of the European model, Breuer's desire to make "an American statement" (Cody 211) often elides difference even as he struggles to capture it.

### Metaphor and Stereotype in *Animation*

To understand Breuer's American statement, we must examine his master narrative, *Animation*, rather than approaching one part—*The Warrior Ant* in this case—as an isolated representative of the avant-garde's intercultural work. *Animation*, a mock epic that traces through six realms of existence the lives of the three participants in a love triangle, incorporates most of what Breuer has written since 1975.<sup>9</sup> Like *The Mahabharata*, on which a portion of Book II is based, Breuer's narrative is a wide-ranging epic that if staged complete would last ten to twelve days. Unlike *The Mahabharata*, however, *Animation*'s stories are not familiar folk tales, known to audiences from childhood. Rather, like *Gulliver's Travels* or *The Rape of the Lock*, they are parables playing with and off contemporary events and so carry with them social and political commentary. *Animation* is also closely connected to Breuer's own life; he calls *Animation* "'autographical'—a way of making my myth."<sup>10</sup> Breuer's intercultural work can thus be viewed as a single line of inquiry that informs the understanding

of all its parts.<sup>11</sup> In the US, avant-garde success often depends on developing an informed audience that brings to new work an understanding of how it fits into an artist's or company's development. Breuer believes that the artist's *oeuvre* forms a comprehensible "master narrative" of its own.

Breuer is also after something larger, i.e., helping to develop an American tradition of choral narrative theatre that is at once literary and dramatic. Given the intercultural imperative of such a tradition, Breuer's "master narrative" poses two distinct problems. First, by opening the master narrative to a broader audience, Breuer loses the particular knowledge his relatively small avant-garde audience has brought to each new production. Second, the concept of a master narrative, tied as it must be to the life and perspective of its author, seems incompatible with both the collaborative principles valued by avant-garde groups like Mabou Mines and those of Asian, African, and Latino artists with whom Breuer has worked.

*Animation*, Breuer's master narrative, is an allegory of cultural evolution, played out as a parody of Buddhist ideas of reincarnation. The personae of *Animation* move from one realm of experience to another, struggling to extricate themselves from the illusions that afflict their particular form of life. Various gods, demons, humans, and animals help the suffering soul toward a needed purification, while others hold him back. *The Shaggy Dog Animation*, for example, is described as the story of "an unenlightened life," a dog whose attachment to her master (and whose attachment to her) is the specific burden of illusion circumscribing identity and behavior. In *An Epidog* Breuer finishes the dog's story by effecting a transition—first, from life in earthly hell to purgatory, then to the threshold of a second life as the demon warrior ant. Breuer sees Rose, the dog, as both the artist and the "female" part of himself. Like the domesticated avant-garde animal of "Two-Handed Gun," Rose likes to "eat shit" and lives with "a rage of self-hatred" that eventually causes her to bite the hand that feeds her. The parallels drawn between dog and woman become, in effect, an extended metaphor of the avant-garde artist in general, and Lee Breuer in particular. Characters resembling Breuer, his fellow artists, and his children figure prominently in *Animation*, but Breuer parodies these autobiographical elements, recasting the raw material of life into the six realms through which, as in a cosmic comedy of manners, his characters move.

Tending in interviews to downplay his work as director, Breuer sees writing as his primary artistic activity, through which he continues to develop his master narrative. As early as 1968, Breuer was working on his distinctive staccato, pun-laden narrative style. Breuer acknowledges influences from Kafka, Genet, Beckett, and Céline, but he has hewed to his own line in regard to the intersection of style with the shaping of story:

My only writing teacher, ever, at San Francisco State, was named Herb Willner and the only thing I remember him telling me is, "write into the metaphor." I really believe that. I don't think I've ever followed any other advice about writing. The key is the moment I can formulate the metaphor,

when it reverberates. A dog. A dog as the precise metaphor for the male-female sociopolitical entity in terms of feminism today. A dog and a master. A leash. A chain. That kind of a thing. I really feel I'm writing a parable. (qtd. in Savran 12)

Breuer's intent to "write into the metaphor" is unabashedly totalizing. That is, he does not hesitate to appropriate material from the lives of family and friends, of African and Asian as well as European cultures, in an effort to drive into the heart of the metaphor and articulate all of its meanings. For Breuer, this theatrical literalizing of metaphor gives language an opportunity to reshape reality through parody. Such a reshaping does occur in Breuer's work, *when it is staged*. Breuer's intent, however, "to write into the metaphor" overwhelms other elements in his language. The controlling influence of metaphor throughout *Animation* is a fundamental source of the difficulties identified by Daryl Chin in his critique of *The Warrior Ant*.

In *Unmarked*, Peggy Phelan outlines the dangers of metaphor succinctly: "Metaphor works to secure a vertical hierarchy of value and is reproductive; it works by erasing dissimilarity and negating difference; it turns two into one" (150). Long privileged in British and American literature for its ability to establish resemblance and thus to "consolidate/aggrandize a common-wealth of cultural, ideological, and intellectual knowledge," the preoccupation with metaphor has had what Denis Salter calls "devastating" effects on postcolonial cultures: "They have been written completely out of the historical record through metaphors of exclusion, assimilated within larger narrative patterns through metaphors of domination, or relegated to the margins through metaphors of displacement" (2). Salter is speaking specifically of the master narratives offered by theatre history in its effort to erase "cultural differences in order to position all of us in the narrative register of the One and the Same." Much the same could be said, however, of the treatment of cultural difference that results from "writing into the metaphor."

Book II of Breuer's narrative begins with a reading from *The Quantum*, "the holy book of ants," and then sketches the Warrior Ant's life, from conception, to a Dante-esque midlife descent into hell, to the ant's pilgrimage and death in the arms of the Death Moth. *The Warrior Ant* omits the title character's heroic battle against a Republican White House, a battle staged separately in *The MahabharANTa*. The ant defeats the forces of repression with aid from his father, a termite, who with a fifth column of fellow termites undermines the seat of power. Despite large and complex themes, there is much wordplay on the extended metaphor of the insect world and the multiple social and political fronts on which the ant-artist must fight. Breuer models the ant on the familiar *Mahabharata* warrior Arjuna, as represented in traditional Balinese shadow puppet theatre. In fact, Breuer enlisted Balinese master puppeteer (*dalang*) I Wayan Wija to perform both the *MahabharANTa* and, in juxtaposition, scenes from the original, at the 1992 New York premiere. Spectators who attended both performances could appreciate the variations



Breuer had drawn on the Arjuna narrative, by spinning a series of metaphors adhering carefully to the laws of insect life. They could also appreciate the variations introduced by *dalang* Wija, who in selected performances improvised a kind of parody on Breuer's Westernized version of the story.

Breuer's choice of the insect world was governed less by Buddhist thought than by a distinctively American concern with individualism. Charles C. Mann comments: "Ants, of course, are the perfect social creatures, unable to exist without their fellows. Yet [in Breuer's work] a hero is always separate from the mass." Breuer agrees: "In that paradox is my hit on the question, 'How much can you consider yourself an individual?'" (Mann 31). Initially this theme seems incompatible with the issues raised by interculturalism, but Breuer addresses both in a 1988 discussion with Gabrielle Cody, first connecting individual behavior to culture and genetics, then linking his intercultural theatre practice to a distinctively American one:

I am more and more interested in the idea of behavior as culture, in cultural biology rather than cultural politics. If behavior is deterministic, part of the genetic picture, then it is a reasonable assumption that culture is part of the genetic picture as well . . . the collective behavior of various genetic groups, not single individuals. Cultures are, in a sense, the behavioral phenotype of a genetic grouping which manifests itself in certain imagery and form. What I have been trying to look at are the various cultural movements over the face of the earth through theatre. And in the same way that life is ultimately deterministic in that it replicates itself through genes, theatre is how culture duplicates itself. . . .

American culture today is becoming triangular. The influx of African, Caribbean, and Asian cultural ideas, along with European ideas are creating a new culture—no longer a strictly European one. This is the ultimate melting pot. A country's classicism is its statement. Molière, Corneille, and Racine say it for France. Shakespeare says it for England, but nobody was saying it for America or they were saying it in such a minimal way, a neo-European way, that I didn't think it was really an American statement. Is O'Neill really an American statement? No, he is another Irish playwright writing another Irish play. (209, 211)

Breuer's understanding of interculturalism has been shaped by his sense that American theatre has no identity of its own, but rather has tied its identity to imported productions of the classics, performed in canonical fashion. Since the 1970s Breuer has aimed to develop a uniquely American "classicism," but his subsequent theories of cultural behaviorism—and the triangle formed by the joining of African, Latin American, and Asian ideas to this European influence—extends that trajectory into the intercultural projects he has pursued since the early 1980s. The shape of Breuer's triangle has never been quite clear; just as his language is intended to suggest jive, the triangle representing "classic" American culture always seems to have more than three sides. But the real problem once again is Breuer's over-reliance on metaphor, in this case

very familiar metaphors, to shape his thinking. The intercultural playwright may not be O'Neill, but for Breuer that writer still swims in a "melting pot," a conception of America that boils down cultural difference to a single statement representing the nation-state. No wonder that for *The Warrior Ant* he took as his "autograph" a creature whose individual identity is dependent upon, yet always threatened by, the mass of its fellow beings. Breuer's effort, as director, to create interculturality is undercut from the very moment he, as writer, configures the terms of *The Warrior Ant's* narrative.

Breuer's continuing concern for the place of the individual in a society marked by multiple cultural traditions has its origins in a related, but separate area—that of gender. His interest in the warrior ant as metaphor for the beleaguered American artist seems to have crystallized on the "complete sexual division" of ant society. As Breuer writes in *The Warrior Ant* program, "The love of ants is a thing of mid-air, . . . for the queens live and multiply, and the drones love and die." Breuer's vision of men's lives as a matter of sex, followed quickly by death, is a narrative line that takes precedence over the borrowed narrative of the warrior Arjuna. As Mann notes,

Breuer is of the generation closest to [the feminist] struggle, and a good deal of his art springs from the sweaty grapple with the self that feminism entails. "Although anybody who works with black artists [Breuer says] had better be aware of what color means to this society, the liberation movement that for me hit closest to the bone was feminism. You're dealing with attitudes that may be even deeper than racism, and any male has got to feel ambivalent about it. The position of power was sweet, and that's why we held on to it for so long." (31)

Thus, Breuer wants *The Warrior Ant* to be considered "a jive, kidding version of a feminist universe" (qtd. in Mann 31), and *Animation* "a chronicle of the gender wars."<sup>12</sup>

Undoubtedly, Breuer has long viewed his work as feminist. While one might wonder who's kidding whom, Breuer's work does exhibit Brechtian techniques associated with a variety of feminist approaches, such as the double-voiced narrative and ironic stereotyping. Breuer began to respond to feminism from 1974-1978, as Mabou Mines were developing *Shaggy Dog*. His company role as first among equals was being altered by the emerging talents of other members, several of whom undertook their own projects. With the women's movement more a backdrop than a direct influence, JoAnne Akalaitis and Ruth Maleczek recognized that they had the experience and desire to take on the director's role. At the same time, Breuer felt the company's collective identity had overcome members' individual identities—and that he was simply "vanishing" (Wetzsteon 33). This anxiety has haunted his work.

As a piece that deals with the formation of subjectivity amidst the siren songs of American popular culture, Breuer's *Shaggy Dog* invokes gender as one of several themes, but not as an end in itself. Breuer may have been ahead of

other directors in realizing that feminist issues forced men as well as women to re-examine their gender roles. Yet given the self-referential quality of his metaphors, Breuer may have been less interested in femaleness per se and more interested in how characteristics marked as female also participate in forming maleness. This interest can be found in *Prelude to Death in Venice* (1980), which grew out of *Shaggy Dog*, and most recently in *An Epidog* (1996), of which Michael Feingold wrote, "Breuer reinforces his maleness by luxuriating grandly in his female components" (67). Even Breuer's gender-reversed *Lear* (1990) re-presents stereotypes in ways that do not seem explicitly feminist. The contrast becomes clearer if *Lear* or *Shaggy Dog* is compared with Mabou Mines productions that have enacted feminist forms of gender ambiguity, notably Maleczek's *Vanishing Pictures* (1980) and Akalaitis's *Dressed Like an Egg* (1977). In the latter, based on the writings of Colette, distinct gender lines faded as male and female figures, straight and gay, took on each other's identities in a series of intriguingly framed Orientalist poses. *Egg* appropriated its own first-world culture rather than others; its specific focus on Colette and her circle historicized its "Oriental" elements. *Egg* shares with *Shaggy Dog* and Maleczek's *Vanishing Pictures* this focus on first-world culture through the lens of gender. But Breuer has generally shunned gender ambiguity for its opposite: gender stereotype.

FIG. 2. Bunraku master puppeteer Yoshida Tamamatsu operating the Warrior Ant puppet as it rides on the back of its Dantean guide, Maeterlinck. Photo: © T. Charles Erickson.



Emily Apter points out that stereotypes can pose a threat other than that of intimidation or repression: while the latter is faced by the individual, a more interesting type threatens gender orthodoxy itself by “pretending an identity into existence.” Here Apter quotes the late Craig Owens to explain the late nineteenth-century interest in stereotype. Speaking of Oscar Wilde and others, Apter hypothesizes: “The subject poses as an object *in order to be a subject*” (18). As a way of redrawing the colonial subject, Apter (using the work of Homi K. Bhabha) seeks to recoup stereotype for current postcolonial circumstances “as the bad object of colonial mimicry [allowed] to return as a good object of subjectification, shattering politically fixed colonial subjects into a multitude of refractive, potentially emancipatory subject positions” (Apter 27). Breuer attempts something like this in *The Warrior Ant*, with gender playing backup to his primary intercultural themes. As with Brecht’s *Verfremdungseffekt*, the first step, shattering the stereotype, is easier than the second, reviving it as a set of viable options for active subjects. In the earlier *Shaggy Dog*, Breuer had attempted only the first step, producing a multitude of refractory selves that Sylvère Lotringer characterized as ecstatic rather than emancipatory. Rose has no proper body but is represented across the body of the production, her representations “a collection of disjointed quotations that . . . are never allowed to cohere” (Lotringer 93). The “trail of glittering fragments” that Rose leaves behind is a trail of stereotypes and played-out metaphors. In keeping with Breuer’s avant-garde preference for a cynical, ecstatic theatre over an Aristotelian, purgative form, he makes no attempt to create a new subject position and thus to pursue the stereotype’s second, ironic voice to a progressive conclusion.

Although Breuer developed his taste for metaphor and stereotype in the 1960s, *Shaggy Dog* was the first complete joining of his metaphoric narrative style to the collaborative directing techniques later applied to his intercultural projects. This may seem to contradict what Breuer himself has said about *Shaggy Dog*’s long development period, during which he “[ran] roughshod over the company” by asserting his own vision over the suggestions of his fellow artists (qtd. in Wetzsteon 33). After *Shaggy Dog*, Breuer directed outside Mabou Mines for the first time (*Lulu, The Tempest*), bringing with him Mabou’s collaborative techniques but leaving behind the extended arguments that accompanied collaboration. By working freelance, Breuer may have discovered that many actors *assume* the director’s authority, even when invited to collaborate. By stepping away from his exclusive work with Mabou Mines—but not from the collaborative techniques the company had developed—Breuer began to conceive *Animation* and thus set the stage for his intercultural work. As noted in Susan Cole’s account of the rehearsals for *The Warrior Ant*, Breuer learned with each new project that he works best (and most in tune with the peripatetic availability of funding) when he develops his ideas over an extended period. Thus, on *The Gospel at Colonus* and *The Warrior Ant*, writing alternated with workshops, dialogue supplemented monologue. Yet for both projects, Breuer tacitly insisted on remaining the auteur, the director in charge—in short, the two-handed gun.

**"Metonymic Logic" from *Shaggy Dog* to *An Epidog***

If "writing into the metaphor" is the form of 1950s *doxa* that has stuck to Breuer's work, the intercultural potential of that work comes out in its staging. Breuer's projects with Mabou Mines honed the collaborative methods that Cole describes. In particular, the *Red Horse Animation* (1970), *B. Beaver Animation* (1974), and *Shaggy Dog Animation* revealed Breuer's struggle to accommodate his *writer's* impulse toward a self-referential linear narrative with a *directorial* desire for challenging productions that depicted and subverted American culture. I would argue, in fact, that Breuer's plays are only culturally subversive when their metaphors are literalized on stage, i.e., when the metaphorical images are thrust into the contingent and contiguous realm of metonymy.<sup>13</sup>

In his essay "DissemiNation," Homi Bhabha speaks of the "metonymic logic" of postcolonial culture as it tries "to construct narratives of the social imaginary of the nation-people" (152). With *Animation* Breuer intends to construct such a narrative, or in Bhabha's terms, a "narrative inversion" in which "the subject is graspable only in the passage between telling/told, between 'here' and 'somewhere else'" (150); in this "double scene," Bhabha posits the alienation of the subject as the very condition for cultural knowledge. Elsewhere, Bhabha uses Freud's notion of the uncanny (*das Unheimliche*) to help explain the double scene, in which the subject goes missing *after a fashion*, reappearing in a connected figure that is not a simple substitution but "an adjunct, a subaltern instance" (55). Breuer had already provided gendered examples of the adjunct in *Shaggy Dog's* Bunraku-style puppets, Rose and John, and the actors who manipulate them. It took three to four actors to manipulate Rose as she took a bath, made cream puffs, or cut film at her editing table. As she moved about, her voice could be heard: sometimes raging, as in the "Dear John" letter that opened the show; sometimes reflective or resigned, as she recalled her love affair. Rose's lines, however, were never experienced as "natural." With few exceptions, the actors spoke in *Sprechstimme*, American-style, produced through the mimicry of well-known voices, such as Fred Neumann's impersonations of Telly Savalas and James Beard. The voices were amplified, distorted, varied in pitch, or doubled using an Eventide harmonizer/synthesizer. During interludes in Rose's story the actors might waltz with the puppet and each other, or lip synch popular songs in a "live record mix."<sup>14</sup> The complex layering of elements in *Shaggy Dog* had evolved during a four-year rehearsal period from a more direct or "natural" emotional connection between the content of the borrowed songs and the characters' states of mind, to a highly abstracted coordination of staging elements that took turns carrying the narrative line, often allowing one element, a light or a musical phrase, to take over the moment and do the speaking.<sup>15</sup> The actors, like other visual and aural elements, were present metonymically, supplying individual, autographical qualities but not their own lives or "natural" voices. The idea of a media-filtered subjectivity may have been implicit in Breuer's metaphoric narrative, but its metonymic display was developed fully only in the course of rehearsal and performance.

Perhaps the best example of the staged "autograph" as a figure of contiguity was provided by Lee Breuer and Ruth Maleczech's daughter, Clove, then eight years old, who seemed at ease speaking Rose's lines or occasionally slipping into one of Rose's personae. Even in a cut-down version of the evening gown worn by the women in the cast, she was not at all the young girl playing "dress-up." Clove/Rose threw the audience's understanding of gendered behavior back on itself. Her detached, amplified voice reverberated oddly as Rose's anger and grief over her failed relationship replicated the borrowed lyrics of a torch song. "PUPPY LOVE," mused Clove's child-voice. "I MISS YOU . WHEN I CLOSE MY EYES . BUT ALL YOU DO IS FEED ME LIES . YOU RUN AROUND ALL OVER TOWN . YOU TIE ME UP . YOU PUT ME DOWN" (Breuer, *Animations* 77). Richard Schechner described Clove's depiction of Rose as innocent and knowing; operating in a liminal space between the natural and the artificial, she "present[ed] and re-present[ed] a startling naturalness" (76). Besides supplementing the absent subject, Clove/Rose as "adjunct" questioned the distinction of an "us" from a "them," particularly in terms of age and gender. In an important way, Breuer's metonymic strategies attempted to destroy an originary moment and thus to invoke the "silent other" of which Bhabha speaks.

In *The Shaggy Dog Animation* Rose's identity is suspended between the extended metaphor of woman as dog, and the recursive staging of the metaphor in overlapping choral techniques. *Shaggy Dog* evoked the "silent other" for some spectators. For others, however, *Shaggy Dog* did not break out of the *amour propre* that characterized the first two *Animations*, the recursive staging only reinforcing sexist stereotypes of women. Despite its double movement, the metaphoric narrative that configures Rose as other also confines her to the realm of "narcissistic love-objects in which the subject [in this case, Breuer] . . . rediscover[s] himself" (Bhabha 166). When Breuer notes that in a sense Rose "wins" and John "loses" at the conclusion of the piece,<sup>16</sup> he has not strayed out of the kennel of narcissism at all.

Yet Breuer's work remains among the most interesting of the established avant-garde, perhaps *because* his avant-garde and intercultural purposes, while related, are often at odds. Breuer himself has invoked the postcolonial by pointing to his reformulation of "American theatre" and by highlighting his complicity in "the funding game." As a postcolonialist, he must grapple with the "hybrid of interdependent relations [of] colonizer and colonized, original and copy, metaphor and metonymy, [which] not only encounter but *require* each other in a complex set of mimic (re)negotiations" (Salter 8). At the same time Breuer has never abandoned the role of defiant outsider; like earlier avant-garde artists, he remains a dissident operating within the dualistic confines of the first world. In this way Breuer is reminiscent of Oscar Wilde who practiced the confrontationalist creed *épater le bourgeois* both professionally and personally. But Wilde believed, long before the advent of interculturalism, that the depiction of cultural difference is meaningless without producing its experience, a sensation of I-as-the-Other. His wit was both a pose and his living, a double movement that seems to prefigure Bhabha's double scene. Ed Cohen,

writing on Wilde, identifies the double movement as a form of performativity "[having] to do with repetition . . . of oppressive and painful gender norms to force them to resignify. This is not freedom, but a question of how to rework the trap that one is inevitably in" (Judith Butler, qtd. in Cohen 37). In his role as "two-handed gun" Breuer is reworking the trap he is in. Just as Wilde relied on the pose of dandy to reveal difference while concealing it, Breuer's metonymical postcolonial body has been hidden behind his statist use of metaphor. If Breuer the avant-gardist is to work productively with Breuer the postcolonialist, he must address the contradictions between his identity as a first-world colonial subject and his identity as the dispersed hybrid. In other words, the metaphorically-minded Breuer, or Breuer-at-home, must "vanish" in order to reappear in an *unheimlich* guise. The avant-garde spirit of exclusivity, confrontation, and cynicism must find common ground with the inclusive, multiply-marked assertion of "More gods now!"<sup>17</sup>

Breuer's recent work indicates his recognition of both needs, as a look at the continuation of Rose's narrative in *An Epidog* may best illustrate. As the final section of Book I of *Animation*, the action centers on the later years of Rose, now a retired filmmaker, who is taken in and lionized by her former rival, the feminist graduate student Leslie (played by Clove Breuer at the age of twenty-six). Breuer spins an elaborate series of metaphors and puns around Rose, as he did in *Shaggy Dog*; but in *Epidog* the staging of Rose has been simplified. Rather than a woman/dog represented by the puppet of a young woman, she appears literally as a dog, a Bunraku puppet.<sup>18</sup> As in *The Warrior Ant*, the puppetry is juxtaposed with types of choral narration, but here the puppetry remains the focal point of the performance, more effectively literalizing Breuer's metaphors. Moreover, *Epidog's* narrators are woven physically into the action around Rose, rather than standing at the side of the stage, as they had done in *The Warrior Ant*. With stylized Kathak face-paint and gestures, the narrators become living puppets, wheeled around the stage by their own black-clothed puppeteers. In this case, Breuer demonstrates how intercultural elements are removed from their original contexts. Rather than naturalizing the appropriation, he underlines it by parodying the transformed elements in their new setting. He avoids the reverential panoply of *The Warrior Ant*, instead making gentle fun of American (specifically the downtown avant-garde's) difficulties in understanding and accommodating non-European cultures, here Indian and Japanese. In Chaudhuri's terms, Breuer's focus has shifted from differences between others to difference within an other, to whose experience the spectator has a new kind of access.

*An Epidog* appeared in January 1996 at the downtown performance space Here as a production jointly sponsored by the Gertrude Stein Repertory Theatre (GSRT) and Mabou Mines.<sup>19</sup> Many of *Epidog's* spectators knew the performers' history and work, and something of their lives. They may have known that Clove Breuer had studied at Brown University, where her character, Leslie, is earning a degree in "gender ontology" with an emphasis on the ancient cynics,

or “the school of the dog.” (“A Master’s Degree,” Rose growls in Ruth Maleczek’s voice. “All I need’s another Master. This time with a degree.”) Perhaps *Epidog* seems in some ways more successful than the carnivalesque *The Warrior Ant* because the cultural discourses represented on stage—feminism, theatre criticism, avant-garde filmmaking, pop psychology and philosophy, queer theory, and the clichés of love and death—are not borrowed but home-grown. As an “autograph” of Mabou Mines’s and GSRT’s lives, *Epidog* takes these self-mocking discourses one step further.

The scene of “Rose’s last brunch,” for example, takes place in an Indian restaurant of the sort found wall-to-wall on East Sixth Street, where gentrification has erected a parody of itself. Breuer’s operative metaphor in *Epidog* is apotheosis, specifically the death scene of a spiritual leader who simultaneously reaches enlightenment and climax. In a parody of the Last Supper overlaid with Socrates’s death scene, Rose speaks to her feminist “disciples.” Her subject is love, specifically interspecies love, species being Rose’s preferred basis for difference. Just as Rose reaches the high point of her monologue (delivered, as are most of Rose’s lines, by Ruth Maleczek), brunch is served, in the form of various barnyard animals roughly delivered on covered platters. This interruption disrupts Rose’s Socratic monologue on her escape from doggy domesticity to become “the tale that wags the dog . . . language . . . the word,” and thus, she concludes modestly, “God.” In an unscripted sequence, chaos ensues as the gender ontologists, joined by the show’s narrators, object to the unplucked creatures on their plates and harangue the snappish Indian restauranteur. This moment is a perfect and perfectly mundane instance of cultural misreading. As a “metaphorical site for an exploration of difference,” food links individual behavior to cultural stereotype. Chaudhuri explains:

Food is . . . a material element of cultural identity . . . widely recognized as such, both from within and without an ethnic group. Yet the mechanism by which this materiality is connected to identity is notoriously, even mysteriously, subjective: namely, taste. Thus food, for all its cultural determinism, seems to be a prime instance also of the *transferability* of cultural meaning. This level of meaning (prior to the symbolic level, where food = spiritual nourishment, emotional sustenance, and so on) is especially useful. (198)

In *Epidog* food operates both as metaphor and as a site for exploring cultural misreading, which hinges here on the question of what one loves, and whether in “consuming” it one masters the other, or is mastered. As a younger dog Rose caught and ate Bunny, her friend and sometime lover, but now finds the tables turned as Bunny (Fred Neumann) narrates her story from beyond the grave. By linking food with love, and love with mastery, however, Breuer quickly reabsorbs the intercultural potential of the brunch scene into “food for thought,” one more episode on the metaphoric road to Rose’s apotheosis. At the end of act 1, Rose dies, her nose in a bowl of champagne.



In act 2 Bunny retells Rose's story, not as a retraction of the first telling, but as an epilogue, "For the Issue in this case That of the ravings of a Mad Dog Cannot die so simply But issues forth into its lives to come . . ." (16), an "obituary" that Bunny could not write without violating the boundaries of "good taste" established by his liberal/conservative publisher, the *New York Times*. In the retelling, Leslie sees Rose out of this life with more than a bowl of champagne. She attempts to make love to Rose, but Rose, fearing she will lose her hard-won cynicism, asks Leslie to read from Plato's dialogues on love instead. Throughout *Shaggy Dog*, Breuer understands love as a form of attachment, an illusion that ties us to the phenomenal world. Since breaking with John, Rose has shunned love but in *Epidog* finds cynicism to be the remains of that illusion. When Rose accepts Leslie's love, she accepts her dharma, the law of her existence. Near death, Rose dreams she is offered passage to heaven on the goddess Kuan Yin's red Suzuki; she refuses, because Leslie has been thrown off. If no dykes are allowed in heaven, Rose will settle for purgatory. This moment of knowing innocence is Rose's apotheosis.

Breuer's interruptions of this parodic narrative are not the sum total of *Epidog's* demonstration of "difference within." In the course of the narrative he allows gender identity to lose and refind itself in the relationship between Rose and Leslie. At first this breaching of gender stereotypes seems unlikely to succeed. The final representation of Rose's apotheosis begins, like the brunch, as a parodic scene of oratory in which Leslie plays straight man/disciple to Rose's Socrates. While Rose never "goes missing" as a subject, she does begin to dream. In that dream, she and Leslie engage in a "surreal" dance of love. Throughout, Leslie, as played by Clove Breuer, suggests another, re-emerged subject, at once Rose's puppeteer, partner, and adjunct, the difference within Rose's world that had gone unseen. Suddenly aware of a new subject on Breuer's stage (as Schechner was of the young, *unheimlich* Clove in *Shaggy Dog*), the spectator becomes conscious of an autographical double movement. That movement resists the originary moment of language and recuperates a silent other.

Should it be surprising that Breuer's daughter provides the focus for the unknown other who has entered his scene of subjectivity? In this sense, Breuer's query regarding individualism ("How much can you consider yourself an individual?") has become more openly intercultural. Isn't the uncanny of intercultural identity something like the mystery of one's child, who is oneself, but also beautifully and monstrously other? This is not merely a question of Breuer's "getting lost" in another version of himself. As Clove's mother, Ruth Maleczek, narrates and Clove's step-brother's mother, Leslie Mohn, puts on the costume of the parodic guru Sri Moo, and Clove's father, Breuer, watches from the audience with his dog, the real and fictional identities of Leslie/"Leslie"/Clove/Ruth/"Rose"/Lee cross-connect usefully. Gender remains the enabling discourse for Breuer's intercultural ideas, in this case focused on a lesbian other who is also Breuer's adult daughter.

*Epidog* does not fully reconcile Breuer's avant-garde sensibility with his postcolonial impulse, for the avant-gardist remains dominant. Rose's ironic apotheosis is determined by her inability to remember the name "Antisthenes," the real founder of the ancient school of cynics; recalling only the first syllable, she enters a new life as the warrior "Ant-". Nor does he subvert entirely his metaphoric narrative of apotheosis with locatable social referents, such as the metonymic setting of the Indian restaurant. The weaknesses of *Epidog* are the intercultural and gendered elements that remain uncontextualized, exotic, and—I am tempted to say—"unloved" by their writer/director. Still, the "difference within" appears on Breuer's stage, in his metonymic interruptions of the narrative, in the puppeteers' manipulation of and bonding with the puppet Rose, and in the performance of Clove Breuer. Perhaps an established avant-garde production verges on the intercultural when it looks with knowing innocence at the culture it has rejected and autographs it lovingly.

Before this intercultural project begins to take on utopian tones, it is important to hear Salter's warning that metonymy does not, like metaphor, reproduce itself and thus as a strategy remains only "partially enabling" (6), subject to metaphor's control. In other words, metonymic intercultural strategies need constant renewal in order to counteract the sticky *doxa* of metaphor's appropriative tendencies. In this sense, Lee Breuer's work remains more intergendered than intercultural. The turn to a local examination of "difference within" does not answer the needs of postcolonial subjects. Breuer's feints toward feminism, queerness, and interculturalism remain incomplete moves marked by traces of sexism, homophobia, and imperialism. Perhaps Breuer, the two-handed gun, the avant-gardist symbolically if not economically dominant in the funding stream, cannot follow postcolonialism to its logical conclusion, i.e., to create Bhabha's double, "the suffering, performative and reflected colonised body" (Salter 9). Still, this seems to be the admirable trajectory of Breuer's artistic desire.

---

*Iris L. Smith* is Associate Professor of English at the University of Kansas.

## Notes

1. A shorter version of this paper was presented at the "Reading Culture Through Performance" panel during the annual ATHE conference in New York, August 1996. Thanks to Mabou Mines, particularly to Lee Breuer, Ruth Maleczech, and Fred Neumann, for permission to cite from interviews and manuscripts. For assistance with photos, thanks to Ellen Jacobs Associates, Sharon Levy, and Liza Lorwin.

2. Comparing capitalist language to the "jargons" of Marxism, psychoanalysis, and Christianity, Barthes says, "The (thereby much higher) pressure of capitalist language is not paranoid, systematic, argumentative, articulated [as are the others]: it is an implacable stickiness, a *doxa*, a kind of unconscious: in short, the essence of ideology" (*Pleasure* 29).

3. Una Chaudhuri identifies three types of interculturalism. The first, an effect of global mass communication, "flatten[s] cultural differences into a homogeneous mediocrity" (192-93). The second, exemplified in Chaudhuri's opinion by Brook's *The Mahabharata* and Breuer's *The Warrior Ant*, colludes unwittingly with cultural imperialism, "in which the West helps itself to the forms and images of others without taking the full measure of the cultural fabric from which these are torn" (193). The third, less a definition than a set of interrelated propositions, sketches a vision of theatre as a self-conscious practice of "modeled *differentiality*" (193) by which social and ethnic stereotypes are breached, that is, "simultaneously evoked and undermined" (204). In my opinion, Breuer's work has evolved toward this evocation of the experience of "difference within" while remaining consciously implicated in cultural imperialism.

4. "Symbolic dominance" should not suggest a position of authority over other artists. It means, rather, visibility in that society, relative to the visibility experienced by other artists.

5. Production dates indicate premieres, which were in many cases preceded by a lengthy development period, including workshops and work-in-progress presentations.

6. Lee Breuer, personal interview, 25 Jan. 1996.

7. Breuer worked with the Institutional Radio Choir on *Gospel* and with Moods Pan Groove on *The Warrior Ant*. According to Breuer, the American artistic sensibility is, of necessity, a dog that bites the closest hand that feeds it. This defiant, ironic, often self-serving attitude has earned Breuer the double-edged reputation as a "wild man" of American theatre, an idea that Ross Wetzsteon made public in a tongue-in-cheek feature on Breuer in the *Village Voice*.

8. Occasionally, avant-garde artists *have* made visible the situation of disempowered groups. As Bourdieu notes, "The fact remains that the cultural producers are able to use the power conferred on them, especially in periods of crisis, by their capacity to put forward a critical definition of the social world, to mobilize the potential strength of the dominated classes and subvert the order prevailing in the field of power" (44). Breuer's *Gospel at Colonus* exemplifies this point. The work's subversive nature was underscored when Breuer refused a Tony nomination, complaining that his collaborators had been ignored. The cultural capital of Breuer's reputation was more enhanced than diminished by this confrontational stance. The show has been staged widely, by Breuer and producer Liza Lorwin, and by independent groups, providing employment and visibility for many black singers, actors, and musicians.

9. The triangle consists of John, a washed-up 1960s filmmaker, Rose, a film editor and John's dog/love, and Leslie, an actress and Rose's human rival. The three books of *Animation* are 1) *A Dog's Life*, including *Sister Suzie Cinema*, *The Shaggy Dog Animation*, *Prelude to Death in Venice*, and *An Epidog*; 2) *The Warrior Ant*, which begins with *The Quantum*, incorporates the existing *Warrior Ant*, and adds *The MahabharANTA*; and 3) *Ecco Porco*, in which the primary subject Rose, who has lived as a dog and an ant, returns as a pig. While no book has been staged in its entirety, all parts of Book I have been individually staged. Breuer continues to work on Books II and III.

10. Lee Breuer, personal interview, 8 Nov. 1994.

11. A similar through-line exists in the work of Richard Foreman, with whom Breuer is often paired in discussions of avant-garde auteurism. Richard Schechner, Maria Irene Fornes, Meredith Monk, Philip Glass, and Yvonne Rainer also have developed performance vocabularies easily recognizable to audiences who have followed their work since the 1960s.

12. Lee Breuer, personal interview, 2 Nov. 1992.

13. To literalize a metaphor by staging it means not to reduce difference "to the grossest and most material of conceptions" (Chaudhuri 196), but to sharpen the spectator's sense of it by resorting to indexical means: sensory experience, the juxtaposition of forces, a change of speed or direction. Inherent to theatre, metonymic experience contributes to a spectator's discursive understanding and response. When metonymy overflows meaning, however, it literalizes metaphor by tearing part of it away and displaying it, shifting the basis for the spectator's discursive response.

14. Lee Breuer, personal interview, 8 Nov. 1994.

15. Ruth Maleczech, personal interview, 28 Oct. 1994.

16. Lee Breuer, personal interview, 8 Nov. 1994.

17. In Bhabha's terms the Breuer-at-home in the "natural" realm of "US" must be lost and then refound as "the object of loss written across the bodies of the people" (165). This project invokes another kind of collaboration, where Breuer shares control of his own transformation with the forces of cultural determinism.

18. The puppet was made by Julie Archer and manipulated by lead puppeteer Barbara Pollitt with assistants Terry O'Reilly and Basil Twist. Archer and Pollitt received a joint Obie Award in 1996 for the creation and performance of *Rose*.

19. As an emerging theatre company, GSRT's remarkable success in attracting corporate, private, and government sponsorship can be attributed to their belief in computer technology to transform the relations of artists to one another, to audiences, and to the institutions of late capitalism (*Lee Breuer's An Epidog* program). On the one hand, access to technology, as well as the desire to use it, now circulates most powerfully among the symbolically and economically dominant. On the other hand, GSRT emphasizes both technological collaboration with, and service for, other artists, providing "computer-enabled performance space," technology assistance, and an AT&T-sponsored videoconferencing link. Videoconferencing enabled Bunraku puppeteer Yoshida Tamamatsu and musician/composer Ushio Torikai to participate in rehearsals held in New York, and facilitated the participation of students and faculty at the University of California at Santa Cruz, where parts of *An Epidog* were developed. While running the danger of losing its confrontational edge in dealing with the corporate culture that controls technology distribution, GSRT has taken advantage of its entrepreneurial side to strip the avant-garde artist of his/her elitist aura, cobbling a hybrid identity that can operate inside late capitalism, albeit on the latter's terms.

### Works Cited

Apter, Emily. "Acting Out Orientalism: Sapphic Theatricality in Turn-of-the-Century Paris." *Diamond* 15-34.

- Barthes, Roland. "From Work to Text." *Image-Music-Text*. Trans. Stephen Heath. New York: Noonday P, 1977. 155-64.
- . *The Pleasure of the Text*. Trans. Richard Miller. New York: Hill and Wang, 1975.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. "The Field of Cultural Production." *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. Ed. Randal Johnson. New York: Columbia UP, 1993. 29-73.
- Breuer, Lee. *An Epidog*. Unpublished ms. 1996.
- . *Animations*. Ed. Bonnie Marranca and Gautam Dasgupta. New York: PAJ Publications, 1979.
- . Interview with David Savran. "Lee Breuer." *In Their Own Words: Contemporary American Playwrights*. New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1988: 3-17.
- . Interview with Gerald Rabkin. "Toward an American Classicism." *On the Next Wave* 1.3 (1983): 13-14.
- . Personal interviews. 2 Nov. 1992, 8 Nov. 1994, 25 Jan 1996.
- . Program notes for *The Warrior Ant*. Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn, NY. 20-30 Oct. 1988.
- . "The Two-Handed Gun: Reflections on Power, Culture, Lambs, Hyenas, and Government Support for the Arts." *Village Voice* 20 Aug. 1991: 89-90.
- Chaudhuri, Una. "The Future of the Hyphen: Interculturalism, Textuality, and the Difference Within." Marranca and Dasgupta 192-207.
- Chin, Daryl. "Interculturalism, Postmodernism, Pluralism." Marranca and Dasgupta 83-95.
- Cody, Gabrielle. "Behavior as Culture: An Interview with Lee Breuer." Marranca and Dasgupta 208-15.
- Cohen, Ed. "Posing the Question: Wilde, Wit, and the Ways of Man." Diamond 35-47.
- Cole, Susan Letzler. *Directors in Rehearsal: A Hidden World*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Diamond, Elin, ed. *Performance and Cultural Politics*. London: Routledge, 1996.
- Feingold, Michael. "Cosmic Love Comics." *Village Voice* 30 Jan. 1996: 67.
- Jameson, Fredric. "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism." *New Left Review* 146 (1984): 53-92.
- Lee Breuer's An Epidog*. Program. Mabou Mines and The Gertrude Stein Repertory Theatre. 10 Jan.-4 Feb. 1996.
- Lotringer, Sylvère. "Trans-Semiotic Analysis: Shaggy Codes." *Drama Review* 22.3 (1978): 88-94.

Maleczek, Ruth. Personal interview. 28 Oct. 1994.

Mann, Charles C. "Doo Wop Opera and Greek Gospel Tragedies." *Mother Jones* Apr. 1987: 28-31, 44-45.

Marranca, Bonnie. "The Aging Playwright and the American Theater." *Village Voice* 16 June 1992: 94.

Marranca, Bonnie, and Gautam Dasgupta, ed. *Interculturalism and Performance: Writings from PAJ*. New York: PAJ Publications, 1991.

Phelan, Peggy. *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*. London: Routledge, 1993.

Reinelt, Janelle. "The Hybrid Cultures of *Gospel at Colonus* and the Politics of Representation." *Theatre Annual* 47 (1994): 97-109.

Salter, Denis. "Metonymic Tensions and the Restaging of Theatre Historiography." Annual meeting of the American Society for Theatre Research. New York. 14 Nov. 1994.

Schechner, Richard. "The Natural/Artificial Controversy Renewed as Seen in *Rumstick Road* and *Pig, Child, Fire!* with Some Other Notes About (New York) Theatre." *Bennington Review* Apr. 1978: 72-78.

Smith, Wendy. "Sophocles with a Chorus of Gospel." *New York Times* 20 Mar. 1988: H17.

Weinberg, Mark S. *Challenging the Hierarchy: Collective Theatre in the United States*. Westport, CT: Greenwood P, 1992.

Wetzsteon, Ross. "Wild Man of the American Theater, Part I." *Village Voice* 26 May 1987: 33-36.