

Keynote Speech

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Cultural Sharing of Performing Bodies with Body-Mind Languages in Japanese

The human condition as related to the ambiguous body brings about compound epistemological questions. What is the structure of body-mind languages with performing bodies? One may sum up the two positions of the argument in performing bodies as follows:

- A. Performing bodies are often tied up with non-verbal structures as is true with the cultures of music and the visual arts. We believe that when performing bodies are captive to language or words, they are on the beginner's level. A well-known shogi (the Japanese version of chess) master said, "One's ability is the competence of continuing to make all possible efforts and the important thing is to keep walking without thinking." (We see this concept grasped in physical activity without words, and even with no mindful intention.
- B. A Japanese creative dancer said, "I am talking to the other, by facing to the body. Everything is expression. Words overflow from dancing." He wishes to write words coming out from dancing. Sounds, dancing and spinning words, all get mixed with one another. He wants to state no aim so that he may feel any depiction by the body. By being thrown by oneself into an avoidable situation, he wants to see how he would be changed. (We see in this idea the nature of physical activity fully supported by individual words or minds.)

While perform or playing, it is true that we do not use any speech or words, but still languages exist with sporting, dancing and performing bodies. Engaging non-verbal structures does not mean no mind or no thinking. So then, what structures do we have in the body-mind language? How can we approach an appropriate understanding of human activities such as skillful performers in common with ordinary people as they experience health practices and general hobbies?

This incompatible system : *Langue as social facts and Parole as individual words*

Since the 20th century, theories of uncombined "body-mind problems" have developed enormously. Fruitful outcomes have been described in the work of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), within the structure of deep layers of consciousness—the so called unconscious levels of mind. Also, Freud's contemporary, Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1912) reorganized the systematic study of language and may be seen as the founder of modern linguistics. He identified the incompatible nature of human languages as an adequate understanding of human practices and institutions. Saussure made the distinction, between langue as systems and words as realization, and " gives a principle of relevance for linguistics (J. Culler:1984).

"In separating langue from parole," Saussure writes, "we are separating what is social from what is individual and what is essential from what is ancillary or accidental" (Course, 14)

If language were simply a nomenclature for a set of universal concepts, it would be easy to translate from one language to another. One would simply replace the French name for a concept with the English name. If language would also be much easier than it is (Culler, 31).

The ultimate law of language is, dare to say, that nothing can ever reside in a single term. This is a direct consequence of the fact that linguistic signs are unrelated to what they designate, and that therefore $\langle a \rangle$ cannot designate anything without the aid of $\langle b \rangle$ and vice versa, or, in other words, that both have value only by the differences between them, or that neither has value, in any of its constituents, except through this same network of forever negative differences (Culler, 64). (for emphasis, author put brackets $\langle a \rangle$ $\langle b \rangle$)

As stated above, the value of the language does not exist in itself, but occurs in relation to, and in connection with, the subject or the situations we are thinking about. In other words, language is not only the linguistic system, but the cultural social facts that connect systems and individual. This is shown in a diagram based on a Saussurian principle which asserts that “meaning is the product of differences”. Thus, the essential task for us will be to disentangle the state of our basic distinctions.

The reorganization of body-mind languages in Japanese

In the late 1960s, we gained the new term of “performance” from western society and have come to use it without translating into Japanese. The use of the term has started with the relationship between performers and observers who have challenges in interchangeable conditions, and the idea of transforming oneself into a different dimension. Because Saussure states that meaning is the product of differences one must make distinctions between the relevance of body-mind, subject-object, performer-spectator, and western-eastern relations and the like.

Ichikawa, H. (1984; 1993.) has written the book of “Mi-no-kouzou”. (The attempt in his work is the reorganization of multi-relations of body-mind from the first person’s view to the third and imaginative, potential view of the body). For this he takes a notion of the traditional use of term of “MI (身)”. Originally the symbol of this Chinese character stands for the form of “having a baby” and is the same as “to bear fruit”, have seed and substance such as the blade. This is the traditional usage of a word that has symbolic, metaphorical as well as concrete sensory feelings which are embedded as predecessors experienced in the living world. For example, in a following sentence, “it is quite natural that one should put one’s own interests first,” the portion of < one > will be expressed in the term of Mi. Japanese people use body-mind language when we want to express our inner minds fully. It was good that the body is the closest to us and everybody has it nearby. The detailed examples and the numbers of the words will be shown more fully.

A Brief Conclusion

The conclusion will show some concrete examples and explanations of the structure of the multi-layers of human languages as related to the nature of a Performing Body. We will explore further the language of body-mind. These seem to be incompatible concepts, but the words/actions are embedded in the living world. The performing body will be described as a special skillful world which we see more clearly in the idea of the Zen Story, that is, in the Art of SWORDMANSHIP.

Appendix

- * The Symbolic Representation of Performing body called “SUMO”
- * Zen story: Once we laugh about it or realize to disentangle the state of our basic distinctions, we see the conflict, incompatibility is gone.

In the story of Zen proceeds as follows;

One day a Zen master gave a sermon: “Here is a man hanging by his teeth on the branch of a tree. There comes a monk who asks him a question regarding the great principle of Buddhism. If the man does not answer the monk’s question he is not a pious follower of Buddhism. If he opens his mouth to speak he will surely fall to the ground. What is your solution in this critical situation?” Speak! Speak! (Sengai : The Zen Master by Daisetz T. Suzuki. P.16.)