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Dancing and Deleuze

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Abstract of the Thesis

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As a phenomenological investigation of dance informed by Gilles Deleuze's work, this thesis proposes that a re-configuration of our usual academic associations of 'dance' and 'philosophy' are long overdue. For Deleuze, the imagination has a way of inhabiting or deserting certain geographic references. While these ideas are not extended to human biology, the body is also a landscape for a similar type of imaginative and philosophical play. Discussion of both the rhizome and rhythm within Deleuze's work provides an elusive, slippery prescription for experience, creating a base for the body to be at the crux of aesthetic theory. Dance as a movement practice is a timed and spatial abstraction that proves to connect as well as deconstruct our usual construction of 'concept' on various intensifying levels. The imaginative functions at work within this project rely on a materiality that forces the body to be at the forefront of our experience of environmental phenomena, and in turn, creates a momentum that re-calls and redistributes our past formulations of dance, body, and philosophy.

To my parents Norman and Constance Ellis

Who created a landscape of love and who continue to indulge my imagination

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Introduction

What we know of and associate as dance exists in a strange position within aesthetic scholarship, posing both questions and threats on our conceptions of the human body within our artful and intellectual pursuits. Often a fleeting experience for both the performer and audience, how do we delineate this movement practice in a way that resonates appropriately within our theoretical works? It is because of this question that we draw on philosophy in the first place. What is meant by the expressive movement of bodies in space¹; in essence, why do we dance? This question is necessitated by the reach for an articulation of the workings of dance, and therefore in some sense, its importance. However, could the why of dance ever be legitimately answered outside itself, and if it could, wouldn't that accomplishment alone un-acclaim the motivating factor of the art? It is clear that the question "why dance?" can only be answered by the dance itself, not its philosophical counterpart. Therefore the philosophy of dance is not of concern here. These approaches tend to rely on philosophy as some illuminating base to hoist up, constitute and account for dance as an art practice. While more scholarly work *of* dance is crucial to its success as an institution, this approach seems to configure a relationship between philosophy and dance in all the wrong ways.²

And yet, we can't ignore this odd tension and longing for these two expressive fields to inform one another. Instead of philosophy informing dance in a vertical, explanatory sense, it seems more appropriate to situate these two forms of inquiry as inextricably linked. Both require an imaginative rendering and response to environmental phenomena in a way that ex-presses, brings about and constitutes how that phenomena will be understood. In order to demonstrate this, some kind of underlying methodology must run through the impetus of both these institutions in a way that has yet to be pronounced. It is almost as if dance and philosophy are phenomenologically and

¹ *Space* accounts for the socio-temporal experience of our surroundings, *which both performs on and is performed by its users*. Floyd Cheung discusses the movement through space in parades by marginalized immigrants as a way to reestablish roots and in effect, produce audiences and performers as legitimate historical figures. In this case, the passing through *space* becomes transformative politically, socially and psychologically. This is possible because space is determined by its users, making memory crucial to our spacial experience.

² John Martin, in his essay *Characteristics of the Modern Dance*, notes that as far back as Plato "Movement...in and of itself is a medium for the transference of an aesthetic and emotional concept from the consciousness of one individual to that of another" pg. 298. In this type of scholarship, the body acts as the aesthetic object on which an emotional concept comes to pass in order to be physically, culturally and socially symbolic. While this type of work situates and 'makes sense' of dance within particular contexts, an approach that configures dance and therefore the body as already and always representative, does not account for the act of dancing at its most basic phenomenological levels.

expressively *too* similar, like different sides of a coin unable to see one another. Both fields, at best, seek to frame a meaningful question and explore the consequences of that question through the structuring of the inquiry itself. This process, as an abstract expression and interactive dialogue between traditional dichotomies (such as mental/physical, conscious/unconscious) is manifest in both dance and Continental Philosophy, particularly post-structuralism.

The character of this post-structuralist work is conducive to the study of dance and its philosophical interactions because the concept of meaning is itself in question in this intellectual movement. The constructions of our usual concepts usually rely on an original 'source' or 'truth'. What then, does this say about the type of methodology at work here? This paper will explore several key works by Gilles Deleuze in order to unpack the role of the imaginative unconscious in his work, as well as investigate how these imaginative functions resonate in the corporeal. While Deleuze does not address the art of dance with any importance, he does propose concepts relating to time, space and the body in a way that is significant to the art of dance in profound and surprising ways. Appealing to both his specific and more general invocation of geography as a dynamic instinct, dance as a framework is re-configured as rhizomic. This type of post-structuralist empiricism has for the most part, been unexplored within dance scholarship.

The significance of his work with the rhizome and the implications of this idea relating to dance will become more vivid in later, more detailed discussion of his work. However I don't expect that the rhizome as articulated by Deleuze will explain dance as a functioning art-machine. Deleuze's theories are not employed here to assign his theories a productive power relating specifically to dance. Instead perhaps we can allow his theory to be generative, without creating generations. Deleuze stated clearly that "the rhizome is an antigenealogy"³. As a result, philosophy does not create a lineage of thought or art related products, but rather indicates that the philosophy itself is a part of the same articulation that is dance. It is not that Deleuze necessitates the dance or that dance necessitates Deleuze, but more that a phenomenological investigation of life necessitates both on basic levels. It is only with the cultivation of these levels (the institutions of dance and philosophy) that we confuse or perhaps mistrust the thrust of both as imaginative faculties. As non-reductive, this engagement of dance philosophically is possible because of the terms created by Deleuze. By re-imagining the possibilities of theory, the concept of multiplicity is set in motion by Deleuze, occupying and deserting our bodies, our islands, our mountains and our stages.

Therefore the use of Deleuze with dance is in this case, doubly demonstrative. Firstly because of how the rhizome as an idea configures a more accurate relationship between philosophy and dance than the philosophy *of* dance discussed before. Secondly because of how the rhizome as a philosophical idea along with dance investigates how our imaginative functions resonate in the corporeal. When speaking of the desert island,

³ Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Felix. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, University of Minnesota, Copyright 1987. pg. 12

Deleuze writes that “humans would have to reduce themselves to the movement that brings them to the island, the movement which prolongs and takes up the élan that produced the island. Then geography and the imagination would be one.” At first glance, dance as a movement practice is this timed and spacial abstraction that connects and deconstructs imagination and geography. Modern dancer Isadora Duncan agrees that “The dance should simply be, then, the natural gravitation of this will of the individual, which in the end is no more nor less than a human translation of the gravitation of the universe.”⁴ However there is a threat within this association of dance and necessarily the body in Deleuze’s work, which will be identified and addressed within the scope of this paper.

The problem of the body within philosophical scholarship has been grappled with in many ways, and yet physicality in general is still for the most part considered unscholarly. Philosophy as a historical institution and its function within the Academy at large often resists the body, which is inevitably racial, cultural, gendered and sexed. Perhaps this is why the study of dance in a critical context often lends itself to performance studies or cultural studies programs rather than philosophy. In seeking transcendence of these social constructions or world-hoods, the body is made invisible or at the very least, inconsequential. Dance as a practice and art does not tolerate this separation of the body from our imaginative intellectualism and demands an active interplay that could speak to the condition of the body within philosophy. Dance legend Merce Cunningham⁵ asserted that “you do not separate the human being from the actions he does, or the actions which surround him, but you can see what it is like to break these actions up in different ways, to allow the passion, and it is passion, to appear for each person in his own way.”⁶ While movement in this sense acts as a underlying connector between old dualisms, more provokingly, the act of dancing has the ability to disconnect through this connecting- to make passion visible through the sheer aesthetic physicality of our typically visible parts.

How is this disorganization and disorientation accomplished through dance logistically and what exactly is employed here as ‘dance’? Vastly divergent styles,

⁴ Duncan, Isadora, *The Twentieth Century Performance Reader*, Edited by Micheal Huxley and Noel Witts, Second Edition, Routledge Publishing, 2002 pg 173

⁵ Merce Cunningham is credited by Roger Copeland in his book *Merce Cunningham* as changing the dance-scape of abstract expressionism and modern dance, which insisted the body to be at all times autobiographical and incapable of abstraction. As a rejection of Martha Graham’s Primitivism, he created dances more as a collaged series of unrelated articles as opposed to employing narrative or symbolic elements. This approach is rhizomic in nature and seeks to abstract the body in the service of revealing some type of presence. However Cunningham’s work does not fully capture Deleuze’s mapping sense, considering that no type of collective reference, even to a imaginative mythos, is meant to be conjured. The abstraction or disorganization of the dancing body in this case does not include or recognize the potential of our imaginative unconscious to roam the body with any resonance. In this sense, Cunningham only accomplishes a part of what this discussion seeks to define as dance.

⁶ Cunningham, Merce, *The Twentieth Century Performance Reader*, Edited by Micheal Huxley and Noel Witts, Second Edition, Routledge Publishing, 2002 pg 167

techniques, and theoretical approaches populate our general understanding of ‘dance’ as a cultural metaphor, with the placement and presentation of this art almost always highly contingent on its context. This conditioning of the art effects the phenomenological experience of both the individual performing and the aesthetic/visceral experience of the viewer. However, the term ‘dance’ in this work will appeal to the most basic and fundamental idea of the intentional abstraction of the body in space and time.⁷ This particular understanding of ‘dance’ is not meant to transcend its context but rather, get at how its context is brought about; to re-conceive of the work that dance can do and establish the significant resonance between the post-structuralist momentum of Gilles Deleuze and this intentional abstraction.

In order to demonstrate the likeness of Deleuze’s basic concepts with the workings of dance, Section One will focus on the rhizome and line of flight discussed in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* by both Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. These concepts focus on a kind of directionality that attempts to evade horizontal and vertical dualisms. This unorthodox mapping sense is the network of the rhizome, which is in the process of constant re/de/territorialization, triggered by lines of flight. As un-ideological and interactive, our collective imagination is understood as rhizomic and tentatively, the dancing body is as well. Acting as both a rhizomic membrane as well as a line of flight, dance sets forth a tension and play between the parts of the body and the body as a whole that relates to the concepts proposed by Deleuze. In this sense, dance seems to constantly employ symbolism in the service of denying it; the leg is always connected to the torso, to the spine, to the tilt of the left cheekbone. In order to understand the body in this way and resist our usual understanding of biology, Deleuze employs the concept of the *Body Without Organs* or “BwO”. In *Section Two* the BwO will serve as a counterpoint to later discussions of rhythm as a methodology. How do we reconcile the disorganized mass of a rhizomic body with the procedural pulsation of rhythm- that pumps blood from the heart through the veins to the brain?

In order to fully understand the rhizome in relation to the BwO, a more solid application of Deleuze’s ideas in relation to earthy imagery will be delineated. The Third Section then will serve to elaborate on Deleuze’s employment of geography more in depth, using his essay *Desert Islands* to further draw conclusions about the articulation of movement in time and space and the associations in terms of the dancing body. The élan or momentum which ignites our geographic instincts will be aligned with our creative unconscious in a way in which bodies, the presence or absence of them, will be crucial to the desert island as a philosophical idea. With the peopling or deserting of the island and the essay’s reinforcement of a ‘second beginning’, a dynamic, non-linear sketch of our corporeal world is established. However, the problem of the body as a biological,

⁷ While Deleuze’s work easily relates to modern or contemporary dance as a genre, this definition of dance is not meant to distinguish between different styles, such as Ballet, Jazz or other culturally specific movement forms. These concepts of dance are already formulated movement languages which follow specific physiological and philosophical requirements. As Deleuze is seeking to revolutionize the map and the painting, dance is employed here with an expansive appeal to re-imagine the way this art form is conceived in the first place.

genealogical assignment still threatens our alignment of these concepts with the art of dance. By turning to another work by Deleuze, *The Logic of Sensation*, the elusive mechanics of some sort of non-sense of sense allow us to legitimately enter the world of aesthetic theory in the final section. To get at the crux of this conceptual problem, a methodology of rhythm will perhaps allow these concepts to resonate, redistribute and recall one another.

Rather than placing dance and painting side by side in the fourth section, Deleuze's discussion of painting is used to help articulate his spatial/geo-phorical ideas which can be used in a different way to talk about the body. If in dancing, we can use our body parts in order to actually disorganize our own bodies, then rhythm, even though it is in definition a law of series, also induces this kind of disorganization as articulated by Deleuze. His understanding and use of sensation in this context, as well the less overt mechanics of rhythm, will be introduced in hopes of establishing some methodological explanations for the relevance of Deleuze's work in dance. Like the desert island, the body is also characterized as a landscape for disorientation and de-territorialization, in which rhythm acts as a pivot for sensation or the BwO to interface with the corporeal world.

In the interest of not leaving "the ending to the end"⁸ as dance legend Doris Humphrey warns, what is at stake in this discussion is the insistence that rich scholarly work between these fields could speak to general philosophical problems of the body. Like ship-wrecked peoples on a desert island, the dancers bring a movement to the stage/ island/plateau in a way that allows them to take up the absence of themselves, imaginatively mapping and un-mapping the space. The organization of space, body and time is altered as a result of dancing, which oddly enough, despite the actualness of the dancing body, fulfills Deleuze's idea of the BwO to the fullest. As a phenomenological investigation of dance informed by Deleuze's work, this paper proposes that a re-configuration of our usual academic associations of 'dance' and 'philosophy' are long overdue.

⁸ Humphrey, Doris. "The Art Of Making Dances" in *The Twentieth Century Performance Reader*, Edited by Micheal Huxley and Noel Witts, Second Edition, Routledge Publishing, 2002 pg. 283

Section I. - Plateaus

In *A Thousand Plateaus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia* by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, the figurative, non-hierarchical network of the *rhizome* is urgently laid out. The concept of the rhizome exercises a self-producing thought process; an incessant webbing that connects all things in our public and private experiences. Through the lens of the rhizome, the concept of concept is revolutionized into a structure that is nonlinear, inter-fused, and resistant of binary terms. Valuing open attunement over pin-pointed knowledge, we are required as philosophers to think in terms that ‘gesture toward’ a figurative play of connections rather than a representation of social, political, and philosophical processes.

In order to develop the expansive conceptual workings of this thinking sense, certain requirements are made of the imagination in order to appeal to a more immediate, instinctual relationship to our thought processes. As a result, Deleuze taps into geography as a site for our collective imagination to engage in rhizomic play, one that claims not to be sustained by dichotomies and has no pure source. The following definition of rhizome by Deleuze contains directional imagery, perhaps encouraging us to inhabit an imaginative special-sense:

A rhizome as subterranean stem is absolutely different from roots and radicles. Bulbs and tubers are rhizomes. Plants with roots or radicles may be rhizomorphic in other respects altogether: the question is whether plant life in its specificity is not entirely rhizomatic...the rhizome itself assumes very diverse forms, from ramified surface extension in all directions to concretion into bulbs and tubers (CS 7).

Deleuze is contrasting the wide, underlying sense of the ‘subterranean stem’ with the hard vertical trajectory of ‘roots and radicles’ in hopes of eradicating our usual understanding of biology; in this case through botany. While the experience of this expansive framework, a sort of sporadic thinking-sense, is highly political and fundamentally social, the rhizome clearly summons this idea of geographic allegory. However, these geographic associations are not meant to be a figurative treatment of these terms or a symbolic representation in any way.

Wrought with vertical and horizontal tensions, the spatiality of these philosophical proposals is significant. Deleuze contrasts the vertical network of the tree and root system with the level plane of the plateau. “Any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be” (CS 7), according to Deleuze, but this is different from the plotted, ordered points of a tree or root system. He associates these particular plant systems, and a sense of verticality, as “structural” are broken down and depicted through “method” (CS

8). The rhizome on the other hand, as un-ideological, is unlike the vertical building blocks of branches and roots, partly because of its ‘Principle of multiplicity’ (CS 8).

Having no pure source and therefore, no beginning seed or final foliage, the rhizome is consistently an assemblage or an “increase in the dimensions of a multiplicity that necessarily changes in nature as it expands its connections” (CS 9). This multiplicity isn’t static. However rather than ‘building upon itself’ or becoming ‘over-coded,’ there seems to be an ever shifting and de-centering of what was previously known. This creates a sense of horizontal realignment, where “all multiplicities are flat, in the sense that they fill or occupy all of their dimensions” (CS 9). However it is also clear through the significant amount of vertical ‘root’ imagery invoked that a depth weighs upon this horizontal expanse, creating a vertigo like within a fault line. Planes of earth continually shift to reveal deep crevices that can collapse or re-route themselves in a moment of flight.

The rhizome ultimately relates to the plateau referenced in the title of the book. Each chapter is considered a plateau in which a rhizomic idea is laid out in it’s full connectivity. Contrasting the vertical network of the tree and root system with the level plane of the plateau that Deleuze is so interested in, seems to rely heavily on a spatial sense that may be too directional. How can the vertical/horizontal dualism create a mapping sense that is truly able to revolutionize our concept of concept? An alternative to this directional dichotomy is Deleuze’s insistence on the absence of source. By displacing origin itself, everything is at once in motion, with no beginning or end, north, south, east or west to travel toward. This phenomena is perhaps most acutely demonstrated in what Deleuze refers to as a line of flight. While it is clear that “*flat multiplicities of n dimensions* are asignifying and asubjective” (CS 10) within the rhizome, there necessarily exists some break in connection that will then be accounted for within the network itself. We experience this *line of flight* as a volatile ‘taking off.’

There is a rupture in the rhizome whenever segmentary lines explode into a line of flight, but the line of flight is part of the rhizome. These lines always tie back to one another. That is why one can never posit a dualism or a dichotomy....Good and bad are only the products of an active and temporary selection, which must be renewed (CS 10).

The momentary nature of the rhizome’s ‘temporary selection’ allows to Deleuze to avoid dualisms not by denying their existence, but by demonstrating that a particular dualism is under constant re-articulation and therefore, no longer a parallel concept.

It seems as though this line of flight does indeed exist inside of a network, but only as a movement of “deterritorialization” and a “process of reterritorialization” within the connectivity of the rhizome itself (CS 11). As a result, we are dealing with a vague, peripheral experience of our own mapping. In that moment we are lost; and yet, not without some intuitive orientation. Like typing on a computer with a slow hard-drive, the line of flight is that moment after typing a sentence too fast, when the computer must take

a moment to compute. When the letters, words, and sentences finally tumble out all at the same time, it does not always resemble what we originally intended to articulate. Nonetheless these symbols strewn across the screen are not completely random; they represent the choices we made which for a moment, both suspended and sped up in a re-configured movement.

This re-configured movement is the impetus for “deterritorialization” which defines the experience of “mapping” that Deleuze wants to advocate (CS 11). The line of flight is itself “movements of deterritorialization and processes of reterritorialization” and are “always connected, caught up in one another” (CS 11). Distancing us from our rooted location, mapping appeals less to directional outlines and more to the ‘coloring in’ of our collective geo-phorical horizons. This rhizomic application to mapping is depicted in the following statement:

The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group or social formation. It can be drawn on a wall, conceived as a work of art, constructed as a political action or as a meditation (CS 11).

This is quite different from our usual sense of ‘place’ traditionally determined by lines of longitude and latitude, and geographical coordinates. If it isn’t a matter of knowing where you are, your location and direction, what is at stake then for the plateau, for the ocean, and for the desert island? How are these landscapes disoriented in a way that gives them new meaning? Why does our imagination necessarily occupy them? It seems the significance of mapping itself is the way in which we can leave the “ready-made”, hierarchal “tracings” behind in order to “be oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real” (CS 13). If the real in this sense gestures toward the corporeality of these geo-phorical ideas, then the body itself could also be a viable landscape for such disorientation.

Deleuze’s use of the word “real” contrasts with my imaginative emphasis of his use of geographic allegory. However I intend the term ‘imagination’ to refer to an active commitment on the part of the conscious and unconscious with the real, representing the kind of engagement rather than assigning a quality to the matter we are engaging with. The plateau and the desert island are ideas inhabited metaphorically, and yet this collective mythos requires our imaginative faculties to reference the physicality of our environment. Deleuze resists the connection of the physical body to a collective mythos in imaginative play. And yet, the body as pure corporeality should be aligned with the plateaus and deserts. As physical facts, these tactile spaces can only be referenced in the first place because of their distinct corporeal placement in the real. The construction of these productive concepts within the un/conscious is then occupied and deserted by the imagination.

Deleuze asserts that “the map does not reproduce an unconscious closed in upon itself; it constructs the unconscious,” requiring a constant re-interpretation of our outer world as a playing-out that “has to do with performance” (CS 13). The thrust of this imaginative geography requires a mysterious and far-reaching immediacy in order to defy its own symbolic equation. Whether Deleuze’s support of this dynamic and yet ever-deserted imaginative can function theoretically comes into question, the question that will ultimately frame the role of the dancing body in this analysis. While Deleuze does not extend his sense of geography to the human body, the abstract articulation of the body in space is also a demonstration of the imagination playing out its special geographical instincts. Isn’t a space rendered ‘mapped’ by the dancing body, since it imaginatively deterritorializes and re-connects the room through the abstract performance of the body in space? Isn’t the body itself, despite its genealogical assignments, part of a rhizomic geography which, like the ocean and the desert, occupies a special place in our imaginative unconscious? Is the plateau not a stage?

Section II. *The Body Without Organs*

This plateau, as a rhizomic network at play, fosters a rich mapping sense which re/de/un/inscribes the notion of 'landscape' itself. While referencing the 'region, tract of land' of the dutch word *landschap*⁹, this more fully embodied account of 'landscape' is inclusive of a complex webbing of both corporeal and imaginative factors. Just as this word was taken up in the more artistic sense when used in the English language as a picture or painting depicting scenery on land, the notion of landscape is employed here as a term which references geographical corporeality in the service of some imaginative delineation of that corporeality. What is compelling in Deleuze's investigation is this unusual (and often unused) spatial sense and its application to the landscape of our consciousness, which could articulate the art of dance in profoundly new ways.

However significant theoretical work must be done to reconcile the role of the body in Deleuze's work, considering that he outrightly states that the body is not a site of interpretation or imaginative activity. "The concept is an incorporeal, even though it is incarnated or effectuated in bodies. But, in fact, it is not mixed up with the state of affairs in which it is effectuated."¹⁰ This is the mistake of "General Freud" according to Deleuze, who in the practice of Psychoanalysis, attempts to reduce the unconscious to a symbolic one through "Castration, lack and substitution: a tale told by an overconconscious idiot" (CS 131). Instead Deleuze describes the unconscious in terms of intensities, preferring the dynamic spontaneity of Schizophrenia as a concept more akin to the rhizome. As a result, 'the body without organs' (BwO) is employed as an unorganized pool, rippling with energy.

A BwO is made in such a way that it can be occupied, populated only by intensities. Only intensities pass and circulate. Still, the BwO is not a scene, a place, or even a support upon which something comes to pass. It has nothing to do with phantasy, there is nothing to interpret. The BwO causes intensities to pass; it produces and distributes them in a *spatium* that is itself intensive, lacking extension. It is not space, nor is it in space; it is matter that occupies space to a given degree- to the degree corresponding to the intensities produced (CS 153).

It is not that the BwO is actually devoid of organs, but that the body is without the organization that organs bring, making the body an implosion that marks or serves as a

⁹ "Landschap." Def. 2. The Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford University Press 2002

¹⁰ Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* Columbia University Press, 1994. pg. 21

gateway to various levels of multiplicities. The functioning of this schizo-mythology is difficult to conceive considering that the BwO forces us to think of the body as a 'non-space' or 'non-place' which, while remaining 'bodily,' eliminates our bio-logical understanding of corporeal parts.

So difficult is this concept, that Deleuze articulates how this idea actually induces a type of hysteria which he discusses in "Logic of Sensation." Crediting Artuad for discovering and naming this concept, which fosters the body as "a whole nonorganic life, for the organism is not life, it is what imprisons life"¹¹, a method is made to make presence visible. Avoiding representation, this concept of the BwO is motivated by the need for the body to escape itself, allowing a more pure experience of sensation and presence to be exceeded. However what is interesting in this specific account of BwO by Deleuze is that he specifies this disorganization of the body not as utter chaos, but actually as a focusing amidst galloping waves of intensities and sensations.

In short, the body without organs is not defined by the absence of organs, nor is it defined solely by the existence of an indeterminate organ; it is finally defined by the temporary and provisional presence of determinate organs...The variation of texture and color on a body, a head or a back (as in *THree Studies of the Male Back of 1970* [63]) is actually a temporal variation regulated down to a tenth of a second (CS 42).

A tension lies between the indeterminacy of the body's internal systems within a fleshy, nervous casing and the specificity of a corporeal part that is momentarily determinative, and therefore representative of the body as whole. Deleuze's interest in one of Francis Bacon's most famous paintings serve as a concrete example of this de-arranging of the body, discussed in *Section IV*.

Highlighting this tension perhaps invites a more subtle, complex reading of the type of work this concept could do. While Deleuze relates the BwO to the forces at work within Francis Bacon's paintings, the mechanics of which will be fleshed out in Section IV, an application of the BwO to the art of dance is applicable. How then, does the dancing body¹² resonate within this framework? Can the body articulate itself abstractly in a way which is "populated by multiplicities" (CS 30) that are rhizomic in nature? What would this dance look like? Generally dance is discussed as a formulated physical execution, the body reduced to parts that function as a mechanical whole, working to conceal and reveal negative space. The sequencing of an elbow to the wrist to the fingers for instance, which threads amidst a forward lounge of the right femur, serves to

¹¹ Deleuze, Gilles, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*. University of Minnesota Press, 2002 pg. 40

¹² The 'dancing body' is referring to the live, corporeal body in intentional and abstract motion, which is dynamically processing and interacting with phenomena in time and space. The term itself is a recognition of the ability of a biological part, in a fleeting but firm spacio-temporal assignment, to induce *disorganization of the body in movement*. This movement as dancing, de-centers the body, and in turn makes the 'dancing body' a operating BwO.

categorize dance technique and necessarily the body, with a narrative quality. This is precisely what the BwO attempts to avoid, resisting genealogical assignments in the service of nomadic intensities.(footnote for nomadic) How then can dance be an art which transposes the unconscious as a rhizomic network when this art must be delineated on a body without organization (BwO)?

While it is difficult to reconcile how an art composed of physical specificity can activate on the BwO, which at first glance requires a vibrant mass with no articulations, it is clear from the quotation above that a moment of articulation is necessary. While this moment is transitory, it is specific in time and space and acts as a portal to and from the indeterminacy of the rest of the BwO. As a result the body is in no way a site on which ‘something comes to pass’ (CS 30). Therefore there is no need to transpose the sequencing of the dancing body onto the BwO because the body is not a site for the dance to happen but a passage by which dancing is made legible. This is reinforced by the fact that the BwO is not actual or even virtual¹³, but imaginative. Perhaps we can distinguish these ideas by using the terms bio-logical and corporeal. Biology is not life but the science that studies life or ‘logia’; this methodology is often confused with the tactile nature of corporeality, which as quality of physicalness, is the sensation of body and body of sensation. Dance is traditionally diagnosed as bio-logical when perhaps a more authentic experience of dance is in fact corporeal. This distinction alludes to the dancing body as more of a bubbling membrane than a skeletal sculpture, which in abstracting itself in space, takes up movement as passage and therefore has the potential to act as a rhizome, a plateau and a line of flight.

There are several reasons why discussing the functioning of the BwO is necessary and yet not the frame which will provide the substantial evidence for why Deleuze’s work is conducive for the study of dance and the abstract performance of the body at large. Deleuze states that the BwO is made up of plateaus, making the dancing body not a body with or without organs but a activating line of flight that is not a site of deterritorialization but a movement of deterritorialization. Movement in this sense, is more concerned with the momentum itself than the source of it’s expulsion. As a second beginning then, since dancing indicates having danced before, having been before a body- the BwO is always in progress, even if just in our recollection of it. Within this percolating mass, lines of flight deterritorialize our consciousness causing not a remembered history as much as a re-called mythos that plays within our memory. “Lines of flight or of deterritorialization, becoming -wolf, becoming inhuman, deterritorialized intensities: that is what multiplicity is” (CS 32).

All of these are irreducible but bring us to a certain status of the formations of the unconscious. Let us try to define the factors involved:

¹³ The ‘virtual’ refers to a sensory experience that does not fulfill the presence or liveness of a real aesthetic phenomena. Philip Auslander discusses virtuality in relation to this liveness, stressing that while we ourselves are mediatized through virtual representations, live performance always provides a fuller experience requiring all the senses.

first, something plays the role of the full body- the body without organs. In the preceding dream it was the desert (CS 30).

For Deleuze, the unconscious at work here has geographical constructs. The BwO is not just a different formulation of corporeality, but a concept which creates demands on our imaginative instincts and insists that our physical world inscribes our consciousness and that our consciousness inscribes our world. Since 'the full body- the body without organs' is once again lent to geographic imagery, let us go back to the 'preceding dream' of the desert which will perhaps, better support how the dancing body is resonating within this work.

Section III. - Desert Islands

In his essay *Desert Islands* Deleuze recognizes this geographic notion as both a *movement* and a *moment* of the unconscious to appeal to some type of collective imagination or mythology. As “the material of this something immemorial, this something most profound”¹⁴, desert islands entertain the horizontal and vertical tensions of the root/tree duality, being either derived from a land mass or born from the ocean floor. Seemingly a plotted point of land, for Deleuze the island is wrought with both the fusion and fracture of the neighboring coast and the depths of the ocean, allowing a sense of suspension within a rhizomic play. However, the concept of the desert island is profound as a philosophic idea not because of its rich corporeal sense, but because of the desert island’s relationship to bodies; the peopling and the deserting of the island is what makes a desert island what it is. This thesis demonstrates Deleuze’s creative sense of the unconscious in its sublime appeal to terrestrial imagery, so that ultimately “geography and the imagination would be one” (DI 11). Bodies reveal themselves to be significant, if not at the crux of this interplay.

The term ‘movement’ is referred to extensively in this essay, treating both the islands themselves and the *élan* that draws humans there as a “double movement” (DI 11). This works in several ways, as a mirroring, remembering, and re-beginning.

The people who come to the island indeed occupy and populate it; but in reality, were they sufficiently separate, sufficiently creative, they would give the island only a dynamic image of itself, a consciousness of the movement which produced the island, such that through them the island would in the end become conscious of itself as deserted and unpeopled. The island would be only the dream of humans and humans, the pure consciousness of the island (DI 10).

Similarly to the BwO, the desert island is not vacant or stripped of life, but in fact is teeming with lush landscapes as an inhabitable whole. It is only deserted in the way the BwO is unorganized, maintaining a vibrant physical sense that is, as “pure consciousness”, constructed by the both the people and the organs themselves. For in fact, “Humans do not put an end to desertness, they make it sacred” (DI 10).

And yet, Deleuze maintains that humans are not identical to the movement which sets up the island as deserted. While the peopling and deserting of the island “takes up and prolongs the *élan*” we are unable to join with the movement itself. The peopling “is not actual but only imaginary” (DI 10), and “would require a collective imagination” (DI

¹⁴ Deleuze, Gilles, *Desert Islands and Other Essays (1953-1974)*. Columbia University Press, 2004. pg. 13

10) that is for Deleuze, too strenuous for the individual unconscious. Seemingly, the tactile bodies which people and unpeople the islands are dismissed as inconsequential, considering that the ‘collective imagination’ does not depend on bodies but an organized imaginative reference (mythology and literature) that the island provokes. The insistence on Deleuze’s part to separate the corporeality of this imagery from the philosophical workings of the island is curious, considering the spacial and temporal consequences of the *élan* setting forth the island, and the peopling or unpeopling (bodies or lack thereof) that propel this movement.

To rush, hurl, ‘eslan’ or *élan* refers to a liveliness that is the movement Deleuze is articulating. The term ‘movement’ throughout this thesis is used to describe the sweeping projections of a double function within the collective imagination. The draw of the imagination toward the island as a mythological concept is also a construction of that concept, composing the desert island as a imaginative trajectory that is fulfilled only in retraction. The deserting of the island can only take effect “insofar as it imagines and reflects itself in its first movement,” that is, in the memory of being peopled (DI 11). By sequencing these movements as ‘first’ and ‘second’, Deleuze places this imaginative act as temporal and spacial. Therefore these ‘movements’ are also ‘moments’ which while linear, retain a rhizomic tension since both movements/moments must reference each other in order to do their own work. It isn’t until the latter part of the essay that the term ‘movement’ seems to be replaced or at the very least, concurrent with the term ‘moment.’

The second moment does not succeed the first: it is the reappearance of the first when the cycle of the other moments has been completed. The second origin is thus more essential than the first, since it gives us the law of repetition, the law of the series, whose first origin gave us only moments (DI 13).

It is clear that as a ‘second origin’ distinguished from the first, that each ‘moment’ stands autonomously and yet, it is the connection of each moment, one following the other as a relational network or ‘law of the series,’ which allows the desert island to be what it is.

A sense of rhythm could be induced here, although Deleuze does not supply this term within this essay. As a series, a mark is made spatially and temporally which, in the recognition of the past mark, creates a second origin. This recognition must not be confused with “reaction”, since “the desert island...is re-creation, not the beginning but a re-beginning that takes place” (DI 13). Therefore this law of series is not a sequential, narrative based lineage, but a re-doing of what has been done, as if to vibrate rather than mark a measured time. This creates a unique rhythm-sense which is wrought with the same directional tension of the desert island itself.

The idea of a ‘second origin’ is also played out on stage, when the dancing body passes through space. The dancer has already been born - already learned to dance, and yet it is only in that moment of dancing, in knowing that the body has necessarily danced before,

that the dancing is legible. We only know the dancer to have learned the choreography when her movement is in progress, processing and becoming itself through performance.

Dance is a unique art in this way, in which the residue of the performance is the de-centering, dis-aligning and pooling of both body and space, rather than some hard art-product. Like ship-wrecked peoples on a desert island, the dancers bring a movement to the stage/island/plateau in a way that allows them to take up the absence of themselves, imaginatively mapping and un-mapping the space. Despite the genological assignments of our biology, it seems that the body in artful movement fulfills Deleuze's idea of the BwO to the fullest. The dancing body abstracts and disorganizes it's own organs, limbs, parts through the use of it's own organs, limbs and parts, allowing intensities to resonate and flicker away. How the BwO as a concept can be completely reconciled with the corporeal hardware of the our biology is a concern however, especially since Deleuze refrains from including the actual body within this essay.

Interestingly though, the relevance of bodies as a 'presence' on the desert island is curiously similar to Deleuze's use of this term in his work, *The Logic of Sensation*. 'Presence' is also of concern in this book on painting, artist Francis Bacon being his focus.

Painting, in short, discovers the material reality of bodies with its line-color systems and its polyvalent organ, the eye...objectively, it brings before us the reality of a body, of lines and colors freed from organic representation. And each is produced by the other: the pure presence of the body becomes visible at the same time that the eye becomes the destined organ of this presence (LS 45).

The 'pure presence' of the body becomes readily available through a hard corporeal organ; the eye. Presence in this case demands not a mere body, but a body which escapes itself through the discovery of it's own materiality. In this sense, Deleuze's idea of painting is some sort of 'practice of presence' which has to do with both bodies, the aesthetic phenomena of line and color, and the palette of sensation that resonates within our imaginative functions.

In searching for a solid stance upon which the body and corporeality can be at work in constructing the imaginative unconscious, Deleuze's work *The Logic of Sensation* is of service in isolating 'rhythm' as a methodology in Deleuze's work. The idea of rhythm could perhaps serve as a pivot to connect the concept of the rhizomic network while also making the body primary. Ultimately the question is whether we can reconcile 'sensation' (the rhizome) with the pulsation of rhythm (which pumps from the heart through the veins to the brain-the narrative-the tree). Rhythm becomes a strategy to reconciliation, in which the dancing body can be viewed in more expansive philosophical terms.

Section IV - Rhythm

For Deleuze, rhythm organizes our experience of sensation and thus is responsible for a sort of delineation of our sensical hardware. The crude viability of our nervous system is celebrated in its immediate tangibility, but also as movement-sensation that *brings about something else*; time, space, vital experience or visibility. This alignment of sensation and its various levels, relates to rhythm quite literally through the term's ability to stress simultaneously the individual thrust/beat/pulse with its collective grouping that creates a progressive thrust/beat/pulse.

The tension of this interlocked dichotomy creates an illogic of logic and yet, this haphazard orientation of sense productively maps an experience; in this case, painting. "*Painting... makes presence immediately visible*" (LS 45) and in doing so, necessarily puts bodies amidst the crucial workings of Deleuze's work on Francis Bacon through rhythm. While it would be clumsy to collapse the term *rhythm* with Deleuze's discussion of *sensation* (he clearly doesn't conflate these ideas), it is clear that an interplay between sensation and force culminates in his writings. This culmination, in turn, could perhaps be identified as rhythm. Rhythm becomes a generator that works with both visible and invisible forces as a dynamic logic of sensation.

As a self-titled *vitalist*, Gilles Deleuze, tries to articulate *a way of painting* and perhaps even re-telling the history of western art through his work on artist Francis Bacon. Using a lens of empiricism that privileges the far-reaching immediacy of the senses, *The Logic of Sensation* focuses on the figural art of Francis Bacon, as well as Paul Cezanne, in order to create a methodology or *logic of sense* which is in essence the non-sense of sense. This method does not promote a gross return to the senses as a pure and primary source, but rather is a rejection of abstraction in art and theory. In philosophical terms, Deleuze is rejecting transcendental concepts as creative, productive ideas within aesthetic scholarship. As an alternative, empiricism becomes an interactive approach that is generative. Deleuze re-articulates this field of inquiry as sensationalist (and yet, not sensational) as opposed to scientific, allowing rhythm and sensation to account for the art of painting in a way that is significant to dance. Enabling the text to engage the senses, and necessarily the body, the invocation of rhythm becomes a sensical rather than a biological force within sensation.

... the vital power that exceeds every domain and transverses them all... This power is Rhythm, which is more profound than vision, hearing, etc. Rhythm appears as music when it invests the auditory level, and as

painting when it invests the visual level.....what is ultimate is thus the relation between sensation and rhythm, which places in each sensation the levels and domains through which it passes (LS 37).

Deleuze situates Bacon's accomplishments within a specific historical framework. He credits French painter Paul Cezanne (b.1839-d. 1906), for laying the connective tissue between late 19th century impressionism and early 20th century cubism, a seminal movement for epic painters such as Matisse and Picasso. Emphasizing the experience of sensation in the perceiving eye rather than the subject, the Impressionist movement in general, relied heavily on the use of bright, fresh colors and thick brush strokes rather than form. As a post-impressionist, Cezanne set out to restore a sense of order in painting and yet, still insisted on the primacy of the eye. More specifically for Cezanne, the sensation induced by the subject takes precedence over the subject itself, or rather *is* the subject more decidedly. According to Deleuze, "Cezanne gave a simple name to this way of the Figure: sensation" (LS 31). What becomes interesting is when this tradition is taken up by Bacon in a way that reveals a certain trajectory within sensation. From this path, a logic emerges that paces, measures, and inaugurates the painting through/by/as experience.

This rhythm runs through a painting just as it runs through a piece of music...Cezanne, it is said, is the painter who put a vital rhythm into the visual sensation....we must say the same thing about Bacon (LS 37).

More than merely continuing Cezanne's work, Deleuze believed Francis Bacon (1909-1994) was at a cross-roads where something new happened in western art. Throughout his analysis, the act of painting develops a genuine possibility to challenge our way of seeing through sensation. In asking himself "how do I feel I can make this image more immediately real to myself?", Bacon is interested in getting at the rawness of the image (LS 35). This image must necessarily act "immediately upon the nervous system, which is of the flesh" (LS 31). As a bodily impulse which is experienced corporeally, sensation becomes a direct line through which to make something happen. Deleuze configures the productive quality of sensation below.

...it is Being-in-the-World, as the phenomenologists say: at one and the same time I become in the sensation and something *happens* through the sensation, one through the other, on in the other (LS 31).

This sensation becomes a saturation; this is evident in the bombardment of color in both impressionism and post-impressionism. An excessive amount of color for example, exceeds the paintings optical effect, spilling over into the *haptic*.

This term challenges painting, usually considered primarily visual, to engage our nervous systems in a more embodied sense. Dancing in general engages in this play between the visual aesthetic of the body with the fleshy materiality of its visceral force in space and benefits from being framed in these similar terms. Deleuze's discussion of the BwO induces a feeling of organ slippage that allows the internal parts of the body to bleed together, which in order to conceive, requires our visual experience of the body to invade the other senses. Exercising a rhythmic sense, the haptic becomes a conceptual base for all the bodily senses to culminate in painting, which can be aligned with the dancing body.

To elucidate on his understanding of Bacon, Deleuze organizes a broader history of western painting, which is distinguished by the opposition of the optic and the haptic (from the Greek *hapto*, to touch). This dichotomy is outlined through the basic principles governing Egyptian, Greek, Byzantine and Gothic art. According to Deleuze, one of the problems faced by painters in the past is this relationship between two factors in visual experience: the eye and the hand. This relationship between the optical and the tactile, or the optic and the haptic is referred to in the text and marks a debate among many influential art historians of the twentieth century. Cezanne's works are an example of Byzantine art where the focus on a kind of optic space creates a liberation of light and color. For Deleuze, the haptic and the optic are both alternatives to the tactile-optic (visible in classical Greek art) which attempts to subordinate the hand to the eye in a space.

The haptic that Deleuze emphasizes is not merely the use of both hand and eye, but the eye as hand, that Bacon is able to employ. This more expansive sense of haptic art summons the eye and hand in an equal partnership, in which the nervous flesh of the tactile realm and our optic viewing are conjoined in a sensory experience dictated by visual rhythm. 'Visual rhythm' in this sense fully includes and implicates the body (eye and hand) as a *haptic* experience of sensation through art. Deleuze's desert island and his geo-phoric sense at large appeals to the haptic, since the use of eye as hand demands the use of imagination in order to navigate an unorthodox combination of our visual and tactile awareness.

Rhythm acts as a pivot within haptic sensation here, which as both optic, bodily and musical (having to do with time in space), couldn't be more applicable to the dancing body. In the act of dancing, the body is able to reduce its bio-logical assignments to a more general sense of corporeal physicality in the service of abstracting the body not as a symbol, but as a interactive gateway to sporadically connect, isolate, and re/de/territorialize space, temporality, and our sensical hardware. Both in viewing dance and in dancing, these elements bleed into one another, disguise one another, conceal and reveal a play of wave-like intensities. As a result, dance is perhaps a more instinctual choice to exemplify this sense of sensation in art, and yet anything involving a transposition on a literal body proves to be dangerous ground for philosophers like Deleuze. The idea of sensation as a concept seeks to avoid thinking about the articulation of the body in hopes

of retaining the immediate viability of a mass of physicalness, and mass physicalness itself.

However the immediacy of this haptic reaction in Bacon's work is possible because the content is figural and characterized by force. However this violence of paint is not violence generally; similar to the distinction that Artuad makes. "Cruelty is not what one believes it to be, and depends less and less on what is represented".¹⁵ The violence that Artuad and Deleuze refer to is not literally depicted or narrated. There is an articulation of *invisible forces* that for Deleuze, represent a crucial moment resulting from the artistic contributions of Cezanne. Force works with sensation in order to dismantle both narrative and oppositional composition. Creating not a figurative or abstract way of painting, Deleuze navigates a figural conception of image which Bacon's work exemplifies. Rhythm as a force petals this experience and yet, not in the linear progression that the term often represents.

Since "sensation is that which is transmitted directly, and avoids the detour and boredom of conveying a story," it is clear that the figural in Bacon's work bypasses action that is processed as a piece of a linear whole (LS 32). In order for the image to avoid passing through the brain and to act "directly upon the nervous system" the painting must not depict a narrative action but in and of itself, be active (LS 32). The opposite of the ready-made cliché or the 'sensational', the figural seeks to avoid any association with a representational object and instead, induce a sensation that "fills the flesh at a particular moment of its descent, contraction or dilation" (LS 35). The practical question then, when viewing a figural painting, should not be '*what does this painting look like?*' or even, '*what does this painting feel like?*', but rather: is this painting immediately real to me? If successful, this style of painting exceeds the optic to the haptic form of sensation through raw, corporeal excitability, which is made legible through rhythm.

This emphasis on materiality does not equal a cold empiricism for Deleuze, and instead appeals to the lively physicalness of corporeality discussed earlier. As a project which is highly complex and subversive, rhythm is functioning as the propellant for sensation.

But this operation is possible only if the sensation of a particular domain (here, the visual sensation) is in direct contact with a vital power that exceeds every domain and transverses them all. This power is Rhythm, which is more profound than vision, hearing, etc (LS 37).

Here, the rhythm in visual art not only creates a sense of tension and flow through patterning (such as with alternating, progressive and flowing rhythms) for the eye to follow, but can also be used as a tool to thrust, forcefully, a bodily sense of the viewer 'in

¹⁵ In order to address the physicality of presence directly, Artuad breaks with the written text to emphasize the physicality of presence through *cruelty*. Artuad questions the traditional theatre world in order to advocate a new kind of rigorous incoherence in performance (*cruelty*), and thus a more tactile interpretation of *presence*.

place.’ For Deleuze, this occurs both inside the painting and within the viewer. “Rhythm is vibration,” and therefore stillness is re-inscribed as dynamic (LS 39). Instead of visual rhythm being a passive road-map of prescribed directionality, the thrust itself sets forth sensation, which does not exist outside the body. Just as Deleuze envisions a map that is far from our usual geographical conceptions, so is he re-inventing the parameters of what a painting is or includes. No longer a static representation of something outside itself, the map and the painting are as active ideas, providing and constituting a sensory experience.

The importance of the body not as a site, but as a gateway is evident in the tangible particulars of one of Bacon’s most famous works, ‘The Screaming Pope’. Since Deleuze declared that painting’s task “is defined as the attempt to render visible forces that are not themselves visible”, we must set this task in motion (LS 39). The example most prevalent in *The Logic of the Senses* was Bacon’s work featuring a ‘Screaming Pope’ motif which was first used in a portrait of Pope Innocent X after Velazquez in 1951 (LS 23). Bacon was interested in painting “the scream more than the horror,” as a way to *capture* the forces through the scream rather than *represent* these forces through horror (LS 34). Again, a physical corporeality is sought after in favor of a biological reaction to some prior concept.

Not only does the ‘horror’ point to a narrative delineation of the moments before and after the actual scream, but it is always and already representing and resulting from something ‘horrible’. There is a clear citational referent formulating the image. The scream on the other hand, as a spasm is how Deleuze declares Bacon a painter of abjection.¹⁶ The scream, as both sensation and affect, is pre-subjective and therefore actually constitutes the subject rather than being a symbol or synonym for an already constituted subject. This is similar to how the desert island constructs the unconscious itself rather than acting as a mere imaginative reflection. The island, as deserted, formulates it’s own legibility without the need for an original source. Similarly the scream as it is, provides all the information necessary to experience the scream itself. Freeing our bodies from our brains, a sort of surrendering of symbol in favor of sensation creates a momentum to process phenomena in a new way.

As a result, the scream (the island, the plateau, the body) becomes a gateway. To scream is to pass through, to make a passage by way of opening of the mouth, which becomes the whole of the body. In this case, Deleuze believes the body, as scream, is in the face of death.

Life screams at death, but death is no longer this all too visible thing that makes us faint; it is this invisible force that life detects, flushes out, and makes visible through the scream (LS 52).

¹⁶ Julia Kristeva explored this term as referring to a trauma which exists outside of ‘symbolic order,’ or that which is marginalized.

It is important to emphasize that the screaming mouth makes possible a space, particularly a bodily space, in which the self becomes itself, in the face of the fundamentally not-self: death.

This made space is radically substantive, and as a bodily space is also a radically temporalizing space, signaling the emergence of the figure into the time of its own hoisting of itself, which is fundamentally set apart from narrative, figural time. By putting “time inside the Figure- this is the force of bodies in Bacon,” a sort of legibility is given to the seemingly non-sensical experience of ‘scream’ outside of horror; for a moment, these invisible forces dominate the visual field (LS 48). The ‘passion’ that Merce Cunningham refers to is this force uncovered amidst the dance. It is interesting that a hard corporeal sense is induced here as a gateway to identifying and making visible forces that are less tactile. The body proves to be a gateway to deterritorialize and therefore unveil what is not bodily in a strict sense. As a theory emphasizing the intersections between chaos and legibility, Deleuze’s geo-phorical images work in a similar way. Deserting an island, which is in essence the disorganization of bodies constructs, is also done in the service of revealing; in the case of the desert island, the unconscious.

It is certainly true that Bacon, as a homosexual, felt the ‘invisible forces’ of his father’s discontent as well as the ‘invisible forces’ of two world wars. However, these instances of epistemological violence are so integrated with actual violence, such as the obvious realities of war and the abuse Bacon suffered at the hands of his father, that distinguishing among them becomes difficult. Similarly in his paintings, a sense of movement or force is acting on the figure, which as non-figurative is difficult to discern. Just as rhythm is generally understood as a set progression in both the musical and visual sense, this different experience of pulsing, the vibrating rhythm in Bacon’s paintings, does not send the eye from ‘here’ to ‘there’ but rather demands an active ‘now.’

And in fact, what interests Bacon is not exactly movement, although his painting makes movement very intense and violent. But in the end, it is a movement “in-place,” a spasm, which reveals a completely different problem characteristic of Bacon: the action of invisible forces on the body (hence the bodily deformations, which are due to this more profound cause) (LS 36).

This “spasm” “in-place” renders the action of invisible forces not exactly as visible, but as legible. If it possible that Bacon’s technique grants legibility to ‘invisible forces’ and simultaneously, re-constitutes legibility itself, then rhythm as a methodology is of service in our understanding of the body as geo-imaginative space/place which resists being eradicated, with or without organs. Rhythm seems to, in it’s measured thrusting, potentially identify, authorize, bring about and establish a particular cadence that expresses a particular phenomenological experience. Whether reflecting the present social

structures or confronting them with opposing rhythmic frameworks, musical, visual, theoretical and bodily (which is the essential working organism in all of these) rhythms seem to not only initiate and direct performance art but shows performance to itself in a way that is important to our consciousness, our methodology. Can rhythm truly deterritorialize logic, rationality, aesthetics and analogy in service to the far-reaching closeness of the senses? Is this methodology a way of seeing ourselves see? Whether or not this can be accomplished, at the very least, Deleuze articulates a way in which the art work itself confronts rhythm and sensation and records that force as wholly there, and bodily. It exists.

This logic is irrational. It does not follow ‘digital language,’ figuration, narrative, discourse, code or convention. As a sort of non-sense of sense, rhythm is instead a methodology following what Deleuze calls “aesthetic analogy” (LS 94). Understanding rhythm this way and investigating it’s workings as a methodology allows us to consider the ‘filling up’ of the senses as crucial information. Bridging the distance between biological concepts and the immediacy of sensation, rhythm as a functioning pivot allows for dance scholarship to be viewed in more expansive terms. The art of dance, as a cultural metaphor, is often stifled in philosophical theory by the very significant theoretical problems of mimesis¹⁷ and authenticity¹⁸ which are at stake with any live performance. Rhythm as repetition and as a second origin always in motion, proposes that authenticity itself, as a representation of origin, falsely claims authority in various social and cultural contexts. The dancing body when configured as a rhizomic landscape references the environmental phenomena of it’s context, but does not rely on a primary source to define the function of dancing. Through a rhythmic humming, the activity of constant deterritorialization of the body and of space also dismantles our usual concept of concepts and therefore, our social configurations.

However as true as our body is in the world as a thing, so are our social constructs that operate as productive discourse¹⁹ in the world we live. What is compelling is Deleuze’s attempt to use the materiality of the body, the desert, and the plateau in order to

¹⁷ Mimesis is a critical term referring to imitation. This act of resembling, of mimicry and of representation refers to the citation of something *that already is*. Consciously and unconsciously performed, Micheal Taussig suggests that there is a distancing of ‘the real’ in this process. The danger is in mistaking a copy for an original or in allowing a copy to do the work of the original and, consequently, claiming authority and authenticity. Homi Bhabha refers to this danger as a *menace*.

¹⁸ Authenticity as a critical term, refers to the social/political/cultural ‘original’ which is complicated and potentially compromised, through representation and reproduction. Walter Benjamin equates authenticity with authority. The abstract impressionists of the modern dance movement wanted to claim authenticity as a mark of ‘original’ emotion.

¹⁹ As a socio-temporal project, *discourse is an act* which authorizes, normalizes and regulates. For Foucault the key words making up this field of operations have histories that are policed and do policing. Institutional knowledge communicates, *but also creates* social/cultural/political material (codes, practices and language) that are used in a system of dispersal. This active authorization of knowledge disguises it’s own positionality by assuming a word to hold some intrinsic original meaning. As a result Foucault derives the meaning of words through their complex dynamic socio-historical realities (connotations) in order to disrupt ideas of origin that reinforce normative functioning.

revolutionize our previous conceptions of this materiality itself. In getting at a more primary experience of sensation, Deleuze highlights how this approach may have the ability to invert discourse, or at the very least, provide an alternative way of making sense of our senses. By looking at various expressive art forms in this way, some type of force is newly visible as a result of this methodology.

This force is directed by rhythm, providing a sort of analogical language of the figure to emerge as sensation itself in Bacon's work. Nurturing the temporal and spatial tension of this methodology as a second beginning, rhythm churns our experience as both immediately viable and expansively comprehensible. Painting as an example proves to put the workings of strategies such as Bacon's into a fussy focus, and yet, the materiality of the human body is profoundly central to the success of Deleuze's theory as a whole. While painting is considered a visual art, we can't forget that the eye is an organ, filled with the same blood, pumped from the same heart as the hand. The body in motion, the dancing body, is of this rhythmic character and can withstand the seemingly contradictory complexities of our usual biology and the BwO.

Deleuze states the relationship of the body to his art forms of interest, demonstrating a conscious inclusion of the body as a rhizomic field on which lines of flight activate.

In a sense, music begins where painting ends, and this is what is meant when one speaks of the superiority of music. It is lodged on lines of flight that pass through bodies, but which find their consistency elsewhere, whereas painting is lodged farther up, where the body escapes from itself. But in escaping, the body discovers the materiality of which it is composed, the pure presence of which it is made and which it would not discover otherwise (LS 47).

While the body is "lodged farther up" in painting and "escapes from itself", the power of the dancing body is the art form's ability to get at the 'pure presence' of the self without having to disappear from our own biology. Dancing references the materiality of the body readily, in each moment, while still employing a methodology to disorganize, re-territorialize, and escape the average everydayness of that material. The context of the body and the body itself is therefore always in a direct dialogue with its own re-articulation. An active interplay between the physicality of our parts and the imaginative de-centering of our usual conceptions, is arguably more prevalent in the dancing body than in any other art form, and demands our philosophical plots to accommodate a more innovative mapping.

Conclusion

By conceiving dance in Deleuze's terms, as a pulsing ex-pression of presence that is not alienated from environmental context, our philosophy of dance is perhaps freed from some of its usual constraints. Dance as an art has been kept at arm's length in spite of the arm itself, the biology deterring the investigation of dance as a practice capable of rhizomic play. Not only is dance capable, but Deleuze's theories relate in a way that, like the island and plateau, appeal naturally to our imaginative indulgences. By allowing our "imagination and geography to be one" through the dancing body, dance as a movement practice is a timed and spatial abstraction that connects and deconstructs our construction of 'concept' on various intensifying levels.

By re-conceiving of the work that dance can do and establishing significant connections between the post-structuralist momentum of Deleuze and the body, the study of dance critically should no longer enslave our corporeality to a static, authenticated social context. While relevant, rich scholarly inquiry exists in the delineation of dance languages as closed, socially symbolic systems, no traction is gained in the way of outlining the philosophical possibilities of the body in motion. Rather than debating dance as a commodity within our cultural commerce, Deleuze's work invites us to investigate the roots of these formulations through a more primary phenomenological experience of the dance itself. Employing the BwO as a nomadic network akin to the rhizome, the island, and the plateau, dancing is able to take up and play out these concepts while also re-integrating the hard corporeality of the body within these philosophical proposals. Rhythm, as a road map of the senses, guides this anti-narrative.

By placing the body as a significant factor within our actual and imaginative geographies, dancing becomes alive within philosophical scholarship. This approach is not a denial of the productive dynamics of social and cultural discourse. Instead, the characterization of the body as a rhizomic and imaginative landscape allows for the parameters of discourse itself to be re-arranged in a way that provides some type of visibility; we can see anew. This is the 'passion' Merce Cunningham seeks to set forth through the break-down of the body in parts. By separating the body from what the body can release, the dancing body becomes a gateway for more complex renderings of dance at large. While the exposing of passion or presence is the main objective, the expectation that some new information will culminate from this re-configured release also exists. This methodology of rhythm which makes marks within our collective mythology, should be a theory of consequence, having the power to provide a new way of seeing and sensing. A revolution of our understanding of dance is at stake here, and is meant to evade our usual intellectualism in the service of creating more expansive philosophical terms for this discussion.

The ideas proposed by Deleuze as applied here to dance, as a theory of disorganization, is possible because of the absence of source. In dance, the cultivation of the body in motion is contrasted with the live performance of it in space; it is not until the movement happens on a body that the body is dancing; and yet this intentional abstraction or artful deconstruction of the normal day to day use of the body requires some type of prior consideration. Like the desert island, a nostalgia is inherent in the concept of dancing itself. A reference to some former way of being, as peopled and organized, is cultivating desertion and disorganization itself. Rather than attempting to produce the prototypical art products associated with other arts, this theory of dance demands a de-centering of both the body and our thought processes.

This thesis proposes a staging of dance within our philosophical renderings that provides a new kind of platform for our viewing. The dancers no longer just skim the length of the floor, but create vertical virtuosity within the curation of broken-down parts serving to re-inscribe the space. Our bodies become part of an imaginative landscape that performs on and as, actual geography. Is then, the plateau a stage? It is a stage, re-envisioned. It is always becoming a stage by, through, and for dancing. The dancing body in it's dynamic processing, in stages, petals a rhythmic interplay that constructs the stage itself. The imaginative functions at work here rely on a materiality that places the body as necessarily at the crux of our experience of environmental phenomena, and in turn, creates a momentum that re-calls and redistributes our past formulations of dance, body, and philosophy.

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