Choreography and Corporeality

Relay in Motion

Edited by

THOMAS F. DEFRANTZ
AND PHILIPA ROTHFIELD

NEW WORLD CHOREOGRAPHIES

New World Choreographies

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Janet O'Shea is author of *At Home in the World: Bharata Natyam on the Global Stage*, co-editor of the *Routledge Dance Studies Reader* (second edition), and a member of the editorial review board for the *Routledge Online Encyclopedia of Modernism*. She recently received a UCLA Transdisciplinary Seed Grant to study the cognitive benefits of hard-style martial arts training. Her essays have been published in three languages and six countries. In addition to academic writing, she has published general non-fiction, dance journalism, and short fiction. A recipient of the Association for Asian Studies First Book Award and the SDHS Selma Jeanne Cohen Award, she is Professor of World Arts and Cultures/Dance at UCLA.

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Philipa Rothfield is an honorary senior lecturer at La Trobe University, Australia. She is a philosopher and occasional dancer. She was a member of the Modern

Dance Ensemble (Dir. Margaret Lasica), has had intermittent opportunities to work with Russell Dumas (Dir. Dance Exchange) and has recently joined Footfall Dance Ensemble (Dir. Alice Cummins). She writes on philosophy of the body in relation to dance, drawing on Merleau-Ponty, Nietzsche, and Ravaisson amongst others. She is a dance reviewer for *RealTime* arts magazine (Australia) and *Momm* magazine (Korea), is the Dancehouse Creative Advisor, and head of the editorial board for the *Dancehouse Diary*. She spent several years co-convening the Choreography and Corporeality working group (International Federation of Theatre Research) with Thomas DeFrantz.

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Nigel Stewart is a dance artist and scholar. He is a senior lecturer in the Institute for Contemporary Arts at Lancaster University, UK, and the artistic director of Sap Dance. He has published many essays on contemporary dance, dance phenomenology and environmental dance; and is co-editor of *Performing Nature: Explorations in Ecology and the Arts* (2005). He has danced for various European choreographers, and as a solo artist. Apart from Sap Dance, he has choreographed for Artevents, Louise Ann Wilson Company, National Theatre Wales, Theatre Nova, and many other UK companies, and worked for Odin Teatret in Denmark.

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CHAPTER 1

Relay: Choreography and Corporeality

Philipa Rothfield and Thomas F. DeFrantz

> *… from the moment a theory moves into its proper domain, it begins to encounter obstacles, walls, and blockages which require its relay by another type of discourse … Practice is a set of relays from one theoretical point to another, and theory is a relay from one practice to another. No theory can develop without eventually encountering a wall, and practice is necessary for piercing this wall. (Foucault, "Intellectuals and Power, A Conversation between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze," 206).*

The relay does not follow a predetermined pathway. It moves between theory and practice, without privileging either term. The relay is not a structural concept. It is, rather, a form of movement, a manner of thought which enters into and engages a dynamic terrain. The figure of the relay shakes up the notion of theory and practice, opening up both terms to a sense of the encounter. Deleuze and Foucault speak of theory's encounter with practice, and conversely, of the impact of practice upon theory. In

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so doing, they do not position theory above its encounter with practice. Theory belongs to practice—it is itself a form *of* practice. In short, the relay unsettles the distinction between theory and practice, opening up both terms to a more dynamic and fluid conception of thought.

The notion of a relay draws attention to the formation of lateral relations, felt between theory and practice, and made possible through their serial encounter with one another. These encounters enable theory and practice to move on, to develop, acquire, and accumulate insight. The encounter also underlies the thinking embodied in this collection, which itself arises from a series of encounters staged across multiple locations, cultures, and kinaesthetic contexts. This book is the work of the Choreography and Corporeality working group, which forms part of the International Federation of Theatre Research, an organisation which holds annual conferences around the world. Over the years, the group has met in a great variety of locations, inviting and enjoying participation from many corners of the globe. The mobility of these annual meetings made us think about the uneven nature of these locations and the ways in which this might impact upon the possibility of dance and, by implication, upon our own concerns and problematics. This sense of unevenness also highlighted the difference in our relationships to one another, making evident our distinct means and mobility to gather in these sites. That sense of difference was augmented by the generosity of local choreographers and artists, who shared their work and opened up for us a more nuanced understanding of the ground upon which we were standing, sitting, talking, and dancing. These meetings further helped us to imagine our differences of approach and concerns in dance and with dancing bodies. They also helped us think more broadly about how a relay of ideologies binds up and disperses ways to theorise choreography and corporeality. These experiences have evolved into the diversity of ideas contained herein. While they are collected under the proper names of their authors, and arise from the joint history of the group, they express and traverse a series of differences which cannot be situated within a single, overarching conceptual structure. Such is the nature of the relay: it runs in different directions, marking its own territories of thought, generating history out of its successive encounters.

The relay sets theory in motion. Theory avails itself of concepts along the way, concepts which are themselves marked through a series of unfolding events and interactions. The concept is thus indebted to practice. Hierarchical conceptions of theory and practice are only able to conceive of practice in terms of illustration, exemplification, and instantiation. They

confine practice to a supporting role. The notion of the relay activates practice, so that it can advance theory. This is why the relay does not signal a retreat into localism. The relay calls for a re-evaluation of the singular case, which may well find itself linked to a theoretical articulation, not as instantiation, but as a *provocateur* of its future theoretical self. Theory for its part takes up specificity, moving practice into a theoretical, conceptual register. The unfolding reciprocity of theory and practice is evident within the work of this volume. While its authors make use of their specific origins and local practices, these are thought through in a theoretical register. Their articulation of situation, itself a manner of practice, is not a mode of illustration, rather the means whereby theory is generated. The conceptual elaboration of these situations is an extension of thought into theoretical terrain.

If theory functions on a conceptual level, there is a sense here of difference within the concept. Philosophy's habit is to assume the stability and identity of concepts, while acknowledging difference only at the level of instantiation. But if we take the notion of mobility seriously, and take on board the idea of a relay between theory and practice, then we might consider the concept itself as less stable and more mobile. If we don't know what a body can do, we might likewise say that we don't know what a concept can do. Thus, the invitation of this collection is to experience the different ways in which concepts are mobilised and put to work, amidst very different concerns, embodied histories, and motivations. Its suggestion is that theory is itself marked, subject to material and corporeal forces, and is itself open to the different milieus that give voice to theory.

To that end, we begin with a part entitled *Rethinking Choreography,* which consists of four chapters that ostensibly address the same concept, yet propose a variety of linkages and practices as the means whereby theory might be put into practice. The first chapter, by Philipa Rothfield, poses the field of choreography as open to change from within. Rothfield examines the notion of creativity embedded in the idea of innovation through introducing the figure of subtraction. Initially posed by Gilles Deleuze, subtraction offers a way of looking at the production of the new in the field of art. Subtraction suggests that artistic creation must at some level involve an element of destruction. If the history of art is settled into its current state, then something must occur to open it to change. Subtraction targets that which maintains stasis, whether social and political constraint, kinaesthetic convention or cultural assumption. Its aim is to destabilise the forces of convention, as a means to foster the emergence of new pos-

sibilities. Deleuze's initial formulation was oriented towards the theatre, in particular the work of Carmelo Bene, who mounted classical works by taking away some central element. Deleuze focused on the social and political forces that maintain equilibrium. Shifting the conceptual ground of subtraction towards the field of dance raises specific questions around stabilisation within dance: asking what forces stabilise the dance work or indeed the practice of dance, and how might these become destabilised? Rothfield discusses Australian choreographers Natalie Cursio and Russell Dumas in order to investigate whether their work can be seen in terms of subtraction.

Muto Daisuke poses a different conceptual qualification, through linking the notion of meshwork with that of choreography. Where Rothfield's analysis speaks to the question of innovation within choreography, Muto's chapter is directed towards the figure of the choreographer as author. Drawing on the work of Susan Foster, Muto develops a genealogy of choreographic authorship that discerns its origins in the inception of choreography as a form of writing. Although the function of the choreographer has gone through a number of transformations, most notably, through the figure of postmodern dance, Muto argues that the authorial agency of the choreographer persists and founders upon the question of (multicultural) otherness. Through taking up the work of French choreographer Jêrome Bel, Muto evaluates the ethical and political implications of single-node authorship which, he claims, fall short of their purported ethics and politics of inclusivity. Enter Tim Ingold's concept of meshwork. Muto turns to a series of Japanese dance events as a means to explore the ways in which choreography could be seen in terms of meshwork. His examples activate the possibility of such a theoretical elaboration through offering a very different sense of choreography's work, one which runs in numerous directions. Ingold's term for this is meshwork. For Muto, the idea of choreography as meshwork avoids the pitfalls and limitations of authorship, including the structure of the author-subject (choreographer) presumed to know. Meshwork not only opens out a multiform process of choreographic elaboration, it allows for learning on the part of *all* participants, including the choreographer. In their distinct ways, Rothfield and Muto displace the creativity of the choreographer, Rothfield by looking at artistic creation through the lens of subtraction, Muto through opening up artistic agency to a distributed domain of relationality.

'Funmi Adewole and Nigel Stewart's chapters demonstrate how the same location can generate very different kinds of relay, in part because of the way they construct and represent their situation, but also because their

situation provokes a very different elaboration. 'Funmi Adewole's context is the critical appreciation of black dance in the UK. Her aim is to evaluate the way in which a British choreographer working with a Caribbean heritage can be understood according to hegemonic notions of black dance in the UK. Adewole's chapter shows how practice can collide with ('the wall' of) theory, thereby provoking new movements on the part of thought. It documents current thinking about hybrid, diasporic, black dance, showing how it cannot appreciate the singular breadth of Beverly Glean's choreographic *oeuvre*. Such limited thinking has a history, and Adewole traces its origins and development. She offers this critical history as a means to explain why Glean's hybrid combination of UK based contemporary dance training, Caribbean dance culture, and Reggae music culture cannot be grasped within the current terms of understanding that rigidly separate traditional from contemporary dance. If Glean's work exceeds a 'coherent' representation of tradition, then Adewole questions the basis of such disciplinary coherence. Adewole thus does two things with the concept of choreography. Firstly, she shows how its historical deployment functioned as a means of aesthetic devaluation. By doing so, she secondly opens up the concept to acknowledge the artistic value of Glean's work.

Nigel Stewart begins with a different theoretical formulation in relation to choreographic practice, by bringing dance into contact with philosophy, ultimately claiming that dance can offer new philosophical insights. Stewart argues that choreography is able to be viewed as a mode of philosophy, that dance is itself able to function in philosophical terms. He begins this argument with Jacques Derrida's characterisation of the western, philosophical tradition. According to Derrida, light functions as the central metaphor of knowledge within western philosophy. The notion of light construes knowledge as a form of seeing, rendering epistemology a question of vision. Stewart develops a term, dance photology, to explore the sense in which dance can generate its own understanding of light and therefore knowledge. According to Stewart, distinct notions of vision have historically found expression within philosophy and art. Totalising forms of vision can, for example, be discerned within colonial landscape painting and naturalist theatre. These represent a certain way of thinking light, in transcendental, panoramic terms. Stewart takes us through a number of choreographic works in relation to these questions of light, vision and, by implication, knowledge. His discussion ultimately centres upon Russell Maliphant's *Afterlight* which, Stewart argues, provokes a shift in how we might conceive of light in relation to knowledge. Stewart's dance photol-

ogy refuses a totalising vision of *Afterlight*, preferring instead a range of partial insights. In so doing, the work opens itself up to a series of perspectival understandings and eroticised experiences. For Stewart, *Afterlight* thereby offers a fickering photology, which exceeds and perhaps evades the epistemologist's grasp, so as to offer a new range of experiential and philosophical insights.

The mobility of the relay encourages us to consider how its action shifts possibilities for dance according to context. 'Dance' cannot be a singular or unified concept across geographies, even as the relay spreads its contents. The contents of dance are altered by their translocation, across time and social circumstance. In this part, *Circuits and Circulation*, four essays explore how circuits of communication open and close variously, depending upon who watches and what they know.

Commodification changes the nature of exchange, introducing concerns of marketplace capitalism into the very fabric of performance. As bodies, cultures, and kinaesthetic heritages shift location, contingency produces errant bedfellows. Commodification seems to be contingent upon the trends of the moment, and whether those trends take into account varied valuations of dance practices through time. Janet O'Shea and Franz Anton Cramer consider the ways that national projects create unexpected terms for choreographic expression. For O'Shea, the very concept of the 'dance festival' warrants scrutiny as a formation. Her exploration of two festivals, both born in Great Britain, demonstrate how festivals act and react to their own emergence. The Festival of India, created as a national project in the 1980s, sought to relay aspects of an expansive 'Indian culture' to foreign audiences. Around the same time, the Dance Umbrella festival emerged out of the British new dance movement, as a scrappy showcase of independent artistry. These two events could hardly be more different from each other in their ambitions, national profiles, and presentation of dance artistry. O'Shea's depiction of their changes over time confirms the ways in which festivals assert a relationship of dance to diplomacy, even as they create crucial possibilities for counter-events that can challenge an aesthetic status quo and advocate for social change outside of the festival stage.

Franz Anton Cramer wonders at the impossibility of an outside to the power-ridden capitalist relay of inter-cultural exchange in contemporary dance forms ported to foreign locations. With arch clarity, he explores the uses of African dance as a 'natural resource' for contemporary European choreographers in light of cultural capitalisms that accelerate aesthetic

turnover. Looking at the work of twenty-first-century collaborators, Gintersdorfer and Klassen, Cramer articulates the 'enlightened criticality' of performances that expose the paradoxical presumptions of speaking about, or for, 'Africa' in contemporary European dance theatre. Achille Mbembe's crucial concept of the postcolony allows Cramer to discuss the paradoxical creation of contemporary performance that references an unanticipated new reality, both discursive and factual, where 'Africa' might be performed.

Circuits of relay produce miscommunications and heighten differences in approach to corporeal exercise, even among seemingly stable cultural practices. Dance researcher How Ngean Lim probes the function of rhythm in contemporary Southeast Asian dance through the fact of his association with Amrita performing arts group in Cambodia, and world-famous Thai choreographer, Pichet Klunchun. In working through Deleuze's concept of subtraction, Lim identifies a continuous process of 'becoming-minority' that circumscribes repetitions of traditional dance rhythms. Lim demonstrates that the shifting affiliations of rhythm in traditional cultural forms can indeed become emblematic of explorations in contemporary choreographic form; the relay can produce dissonance among closely connected creative theories and practices.

The movement of practice across continents can create a different type of kinaesthetic dissonance, as choreographies 'feel different' in different venues and in relation to different practitioners. Susanne Ravn dances the tango in Buenos Aires and observes professional dance-sport practitioners of tango in Odense; the two locations produce surprisingly similar approaches to understanding how some of its theoretical possibilities operate. Ravn explores how participatory 'sense-making' is mobilised to realise an extended body—one that encompasses the partner as an integrated portion of the dance-making process of corporeal gesture. Across broad geographic distance, tango arrives with distinct articulation but complementary assumptions of a phenomenological attachment to the partner as endemic to the form.

The notion of the encounter offers a certain conceptual thickness to the idea of writing about dance. It fleshes out that which is implicit and makes possible dance scholarship. The encounter is a corporeal event, one that occurs between bodies. Writing about dance ensues from the encounter, whether on stage, in the studio or between audience and performer. Baruch Spinoza was particularly interested in the outcome of such encounters, basing his ethics upon their effect, conceived in terms of

affect.[1] While affect theory has become prominent within the humanities, the role and nature of affect within the field of dance is open to new conceptualisations. The chapters in this part titled *Affectivities* engage with questions of affect through the body, within and between bodies, in performance and between the work and its audience.

According to Elizabeth Dempster, affects have a life of their own. This is a legacy of human culture which has come to identify and privilege certain affects over others. Affects, for Dempster, are unruly. They threaten the boundaries of subjectivity because they are not under our control. Dempster's chapter focuses on the affect of shame in relation to dance, both on the part of the performer and the audience. Although shame is uncomfortable, Dempster refuses to construct shame in merely negative terms. She works the idea of shame into a positive sense of transformative possibility, firstly by contesting John Martin's disembodied rendition of kinaesthetic perception, preferring the affective complications of the body. Shame is a complication in part because it incorporates discomfort. On the other hand, its very complexity is what allows it to become something else. Thinking through her own encounter with Jennifer Monson's *ode to summer*, Dempster suggests another pathway for shame, beyond its origins in discomfort, towards the liberating conclusion of a dance that cannot fail.

Christel Stalpaert is also interested in the transformative possibilities of the encounter between the spectator and the work. She draws upon Deleuze's challenge to dogmatic thinking, which, when applied to art, calls for movement beyond the *cliché*. To that end, Stalpaert invokes Rancière's commitment to art which shakes up the monolithic body of the audience, towards a productive dissensus or movement of thought. Stalpaert stages such a movement through discussing Katarzyna Kozyra's, *Rite of Spring*, a video installation which features older bodies reworking a classic homage to youth. Although the monolithic body of the audience is experientially fractured through the work, Stalpaert argues that this is not the end of communality. Rather, it contests the normative force of the homogeneous social body, making room for new kinds of social (re)composition.

Affect signifies change, in the body, and in those composite bodies that make up larger bodies. A performance that affects creates an affect in the body of its audience. As a signifier of change, the notion of affect suggests the possibility of another future, different to today. Aoife McGrath and Thomas DeFrantz are both interested in a future that differs. McGrath invokes the notion of affective adjacency to suggest just such a possibility, while DeFrantz delves into (the) Afrofuture. McGrath turns to the affect

of joy, joy as surprise within a depressed social and political environment. Two works produced this affect in McGrath the spectator, suggesting an alternative economy of corporeal response. McGrath is interested in the trace of these affects, their residue as a basis for eking out another kind of future, beyond the dismal present. Even repetition is opened up to the possibility of future difference. McGrath looks at this question in relation to two works, *Bird with Boy* by Junk Ensemble (Jessica Kennedy, Megan Kennedy and Jo Timmins) and *Rian* by Fabulous Beast (Michael Keegan-Doolan). Their power, argues McGrath, lies in their transformative potential. Like Dempster, and Stalpaert, McGrath is interested in the ways in which performance can bring about change through the affective results of the performative encounter. McGrath develops the idea of affective adjacency as the way in which choreography can gesture towards a better future without denying the problems of the present.

Spinozan ethics discerns the good in the manifestation of greater agency.[2] The good, for Spinoza, is expressed in action, in, for example, the activity of dancing.[3] Thomas F. DeFrantz's chapter looks at the ways in which Afrofuture is danced into being. DeFrantz asks how and where Afrofuturism may be invoked, through delving into the sociality of dancing at a family celebration. DeFrantz draws out the ways in which these collective, corporeal events matter, in and for themselves, and for the Afrofuture. DeFrantz locates Africanist dance at the intersection of past and future, but also in the thickness of the not-yet. The rhythmic dancing of this Afropresent ekes out a future beyond racism. To say that Aforofuturism is speculative—how could it be otherwise?—is not to deny its very real social, corporeal connectivity, here and now, in the dance, in the house. It is from these relays of family, friends, music histories, technologies and memories to come that the Afrofuture will one day arrive.

Disciplines of dance studies grow in relation to pedagogies developed anew by creative researchers of choreographic and corporeal expression. For progressive researchers, these disciplinary formations tend to be based in political possibilities that privilege minoritarian presences: proto-feminist, anti-racist, anti-misogynistic, migrant, refugee, trans, and queer-affirmations. We don't arrive at any of these methods simultaneously or symmetrically, and our varied interest in any of these pedagogical approaches might change in time. And yet, we teach others, through the choice of our topics and sites of research. Our interests in the political surrounds of dance performance generate important prisms of analysis that

move us effectively into the classrooms and streets where audiences begin to form.

Students and passersby on the street might wonder, what sorts of epistemological politics are revealed in considerations of performance events? What kinds of danced politics, or representational politics, are enlivened by a turn toward dance? Where do bodies in motion, thought to be dancing, enact alternative routes of exchange that resist local hegemonies of conduct or habit? How can explorations of a dispersed, yet particular, 'local' inspire diverse understandings of what dance can do, and where its limits might lie? The five essays in this final section, *Sites of Representation*, seek to engage these relayed concepts by stretching pedagogical practice back through theoretical discourses of choreography and corporeality.

Yutian Wong and Hanna Järvinen connect the classroom and the presentation of dance performance as complementary points to ponder what is 'learned' through encounters with dance. Wong crafts a multilayered articulation of 'Asian American dance' and its bulbous discontents as she theorises through performances by Kimi Okada and Lenora Lee. Effectively working at the edges of interdisciplinary multi-tasking, Wong demonstrates many ways in which the relay between competing theoretical interests—some metaphysical, some physical—allows for a diversity of approach even as it forces some considerations to the backstage, college administrator's office.

Järvinen focuses on the disciplinary pressures brought to bear by her workplace as a researcher in 'dance history'. Her essay reminds us how the practices of dance historiography are indeed corporeal, and may possibly be enhanced by engagement of gestural interfaces with dances long gone. The practice-led research favoured by her students and their shared institution compels Järvinen to prioritise corporeal knowledge as a means for 'doing' historiographical work simultaneously embodied and written. Foucauldian genealogies of unlearning and not-knowing can then inform student-teacher interactions, making creative space for encounter across physical practice and theoretical relay.

The political container for performance becomes the unsteady theoretical ground engaged by Ramsay Burt, Adeline Maxwell, and, writing together, Susan Foster and Lena Hammergren. Burt reveals fault lines surrounding the presentation of social violence and its aftermaths in dance performances shown in Brazil and Ireland. Considering the class-based distances created by various precarities, he asserts ways in which these choreographies trouble dominant power relations that limit the recognition

of humanity, to create an experience of radical, relational plurality imbued with sensual violence.

Adeline Maxwell documents several ways that Chilean choreographer Francisco Bagnara engages the 'street-space' of Santiago to stage an emergent heterotopic resistance to quotidian urban transportations. Maxwell demonstrates how Bagnara's outdoor work fulfils a historical trajectory of experimental creativity in Chile that intends to suggest radical social transformations as it incorporates found materials of everyday movement by passersby alongside staged encounters with improvisational performers. Burt and Maxwell each offer a subtle take on the coherence of audience as a contingency that risks collapse, but can potentially revise political order in its self-recognition.

The volume ends with a conversational offering by Susan Foster and Lena Hammergren that debates methods of dancing the political in choreographic process and staged performance. Confidently and consummately, the two founders of the Choreography and Corporeality working group encourage us all to conduct intercultural analyses while also 'proliferating and interrogating the notion of the political' in dance. We end our volume on this fine directive, which guides our collective task to become ever vigilant as we research the transmissions of gesture and ideology that form theories of the corporeal and its choreographies.

Notes

1. Spinoza, *Ethics.*
2. Spinoza, *Ethics,* 70.
3. Rothfield, "Embracing the Unknown: Ethics and Dance," 91.

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PART I

Rethinking Choreography

CHAPTER 2

Tinkering Away: The Untimely Art of Subtraction

Philipa Rothfield

In 'One Manifesto Less', Gilles Deleuze writes about a mode of transformation found in the work of the Italian theatre director, Carmelo Bene.[1] By way of discussion, Deleuze refers to three of Bene's productions, each an adaptation of a work by an iconic author or playwright. In all three examples raised by Deleuze, Bene took away some key element from the original. In the case of *Romeo and Juliet*, Bene took Romeo out of the equation. In so doing, the character of Mercurio no longer dies early on in the play but continues to live, thereby constituting a new play from within the old. In his production of *S.A.D.E.,* Bene removed the master, thus provoking new outgrowths on the part of the slave.[2] Finally, Bene mounted a version of *Richard III* in which the monarchical system was removed, turning the action between Richard and the women of the play into something other than a question of royal succession. Deleuze calls this transformative manner of taking away, subtraction.

Neither critique (a form of judgement) nor a form of representation (a continuation of the language of the theatre), subtraction constitutes a dynamic interruption which destabilises the work so as to allow for the emergence of new possibilities. Deleuze's term for this is the release of a

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'new potentiality'.[3] Subtraction is an operation that provokes new becomings within the work. It 'multiplies the unexpected'.[4] In that sense, it is not a negative process that diminishes but is rather a dynamic of generation.[5] Subtraction thereby 'sets in motion a positive process'.[6] Subtraction allows a work to become available to other forces which lie beyond the confines of its conventional iteration. The major figures of the theatre are thus opened up to a different kind of potential, beyond their givenness as canonical avatars.

According to Deleuze, new possibilities are able to emerge because a stabilised set of forces is disrupted. The 'role' of subtraction is to subvert the extant power structures of the work and its milieu, the theatre. In the context of this discussion, 'power' represents the forces of convention that contrive to stabilise the field. Subtraction is an operation directed in the first instance towards and against this notion of power. It is a means by which to destabilise that which is normative within the theatre, thereby to provoke something new or 'untimely'.[7]

An untimely work sets itself apart from the historical:

> … without future or past, she has only a becoming, a middle by which she communicates with other times, other spaces.[8]

The untimely differs from political forms of representation which critique their historical moment.[9] The problem with representation in the theatre is that, however political, it remains upon the ground it critiques. By speaking of subtraction in terms of destabilisation, Deleuze raises the possibility of change as an intervention directed towards the theatre itself, rather than as a represented 'solution' or depiction which the audience is to swallow. Brecht grappled with this problem of the politics of change within the theatre. His solution was to try to block the affective impact of performance through alienation, while presenting a kind of objective representation of the real, an unsentimental, critically reinterpreted reality. The difference between subtraction and Brechtian theatre is that subtraction makes space for the emergence of the new at the level of performance itself, rather than aims to inspire change in the (outside) world from the force of its critical point of view.[10] Deleuze's critique of representation has to do with what representation does (or doesn't do) as distinct from what it says. It recalls Marx's writings on Feuerbach, that 'the philosophers have only interpreted the word, in various ways, the point is to change it'.[11] Subtraction is distinguished from representational critique insofar as it engages and subverts those normative power structures that operate

within the field of performance. While these modes of dominance may well have their origins elsewhere, and extend far beyond the confines of performance, subtraction nonetheless stands for a certain kind of efficacy. It is that which manages to destabilise (rather than offers an argument or polemic towards destabilisation). Subtraction is thus a mode of change in itself, the generation of alternatives from within. It is political inasmuch as it neutralises the dominant structures of the theatre, their modes of codification, normalisation and institutionalisation.

To what extent is the field of dance performance open to the operations of subtraction? The more theatrical and codified the field, the easier it is to discern its activity. Ballet, for example, is highly codified, normalised, and institutionalised, thus allowing for potential subversions aimed to release new kinds of possibility. Matthew Bourne's reworking of *Swan Lake* could be seen in this light.[12] By shifting the gender codes of an iconic work, Bourne was able to open up *Swan Lake* to a new dynamic, injecting fresh life into a well-established classic work.[13] It is more difficult to conceive of subtraction in relation to the less theatrical dance genres. For example, Yvonne Rainer's *Trio A* emerged as a moment in the movement against the conventional values of theatricality and proscenium arch spectatorship.[14] While *Trio A* was not itself an adaptation of some well-known work, it could be seen as an important subtraction of theatrical display within dance, producing the 'workerly' orientation of the postmodern dancer characteristically absorbed in the task at hand. *Trio A* also refuses the frontal orientation of classical ballet, breaking with the presentation of the dancing body within proscenium arch spectatorship. *Trio A* has since achieved a kind of canonical status in the field of postmodern dance, making it liable to comedic subversion, such as Richard Move's renowned 'attempt' to learn *Trio A* from Yvonne Rainer in the guise of Martha Graham.[15] It could be argued that Move subtracted the canons of postmodern dance from an iconic postmodern dance piece, plunging it back into the high dance modernism of Martha Graham. As he learnt and replicated the moves, Move resisted the 360-degree nature of the work by maintaining a frontal orientation, high muscular tension and facial intensity. As a result, the ordinary gestures of *Trio A* were converted into high camp. While Move's work could be seen as a take-off, there is a sense in which the dancing of *Trio A* was able to become something else through the actions of subtracting the codes and norms of postmodern dance. This was not a mere return to the past but an untimely means by which new material was able to emerge from within the work. Its becoming untimely