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# An Inquiry into the Creative Process of Butoh: With Reference to the Implications of Eastern and Western Significances

PhD Thesis

**Pao-Yi Liao**

Jan 2006

Laban
City University
London, U.K.

# Table of Contents


| | | Page |
|---|---|---|
| **Table of Contents** | | **II** |
| **Acknowledgement** | | **IV** |
| **Declaration** | | **IV** |
| **Abstract** | | **V** |
| **Chapter 1** | **Introduction** | **1** |
| 1.1 | The Nature of the Research Inquiry | 1 |
| 1.1.1 | Examining the Nature of Butoh Choreography | 2 |
| 1.1.2 | Phenomenology as the Point of Departure of the Inquiry | 2 |
| 1.1.3 | Perception as a Fundamental Issue | 3 |
| 1.1.4 | Aspects Involved in Creative Processes | 4 |
| 1.2 | The Aim of the Research | 5 |
| 1.3 | Methodology | 6 |
| 1.3.1 | Philosophies and Theories | 6 |
| 1.3.2 | The Analysis of Butoh Practice | 8 |
| 1.3.3 | Use of Source Materials | 9 |
| 1.4 | Delimitation | 15 |
| 1.5 | Format of the Thesis | 16 |
| **Chapter 2** | **Butoh Choreography: Philosophical Contexts** | **17** |
| 2.1 | Traditional Japanese Culture | 18 |
| 2.2 | The Impact from the West | 26 |
| 2.3 | Phenomenological Perspective | 33 |
| **Chapter 3** | **Perspectives on Butoh Practice** | **46** |
| 3.1 | The Viewpoints of Butoh Choreographers | 47 |
| 3.1.1 | The Search for Identity | 47 |
| 3.1.2 | Social Criticism | 49 |
| 3.1.3 | Seeking the Truth of Life | 50 |
| 3.1.4 | Ceremony or Festival | 57 |
| 3.1.5 | Body-Mind Coherence as a Means of Psychosomatic Therapy | 58 |
| 3.2 | The Empty Body | 59 |
| 3.3 | The Viewpoints of Butoh Researchers, Audiences, and Critics | 62 |
| 3.3.1 | The Origin of Butoh | 63 |
| 3.3.2 | Butoh and the Japanese | 65 |
| 3.3.3 | Butoh and Zen Philosophy | 68 |
| 3.3.4 | Butoh and Western Art Forms | 68 |
| 3.4 | The Viewpoints of Butoh Performers | 71 |
| 3.5 | Comparison of Viewpoints | 72 |

**Chapter 4** **The Network of Perception and Butoh Elements and Techniques** **75**

4.1 Obtaining Information from Stimuli ---------- 75
4.2 Processing Information through Neural Architecture ---------- 77
4.3 Top-Down Priming ---------- 79
4.4 The Functioning of Consciousness ---------- 84
4.5 Network of Perception and Movement ---------- 86
4.6 Summary ---------- 88

**Chapter 5** **The Diversification of Significance in Butoh Creative Processes -- Phenomenological Perspectives** **90**

5.1 The Analysis of Choreographic Materials and Related Significances ---------- 91
5.1.1 Sensational Intention and Visceral Perception ---------- 93
5.1.2 Signitive Intention and Texts ---------- 97
5.1.3 Pictorial Intention and Painting ---------- 108
5.1.4 The Intentionality of Action ---------- 109
5.2 Graded Fulfillment and the Multi-Faceted Androgynour Character ---------- 122
5.3 On Structuring Dances ---------- 129
5.4 Summary Conclusion ---------- 132

**Chapter 6** **The Diversification of Significance in Butoh Creative Processes -- Dialectical Perspectives** **136**

6.1 Texts ---------- 136
6.1.1 Categorial Intentionality and Intuition ---------- 136
6.1.2 Texts and Conceptual References ---------- 142
6.2 Visual Arts ---------- 146
6.3 Actions ---------- 147
6.3.1 Social Structure ---------- 147
6.3.2 Cultural Patterns and Symbolism ---------- 152
6.4 Dance Elements: Western and Eastern Perspectives ---------- 156
6.4.1 Western Viewpoints of Dance Elements as Dialectical Options of Butoh ---------- 156
6.4.2 Eastern Forms and Philosophies as Dialectical Options of Western Dance -- 162
6.5 Summary Conclusion ---------- 168

**Chapter 7** **Conclusion** **171**

**References** **183**
**Bibliography** **196**
**Appendix** **Butoh Exercises** **209**

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## Author Declaration

1. During the period of registered study in which this dissertation was prepared the author has not been registered for any other academic award or qualification.

2. The material included in this dissertation has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.

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**Abstract**

This thesis investigates the creative processes of Butoh choreography. A phenomenological perspective is used in this thesis to explore the implications for choreographers of the choreographic options employed in Butoh creative processes.

Phenomenology corresponds to the Japanese philosophical context which gave birth to Butoh, elucidating the worldview *merging with the universe* which underpins Butoh. In terms of phenomenology, *merging with the universe* is firstly understood as a state of inter-subjectivity or transcendental consciousness, and secondly as the interweaving through *actions* of individual worldviews and a greater *world* of shared socio-cultural significances contributed by different people. The inter-subjective relationship between self, other self and objects is used to examine and elucidate the juxtaposition of various kinds of imagery in Butoh. The phenomenological notion of *actions* is used to examine bodily movement with respect to a greater *world* in Butoh.

Phenomenology particularly corresponds to some of the fundamental processes used by Butoh choreographers. The choreographers' initial options for treating materials, namely visceral sensations as media for *merging with the universe*, texts as media for perception, paintings as media for presenting images, and *actions* as building blocks of an inter-subjective *world*, are inclined to guide the creative processes to develop the manifold of a spiritual imagery and bodily *actions.* These options and treatments are elucidated in this thesis through the *network of perception* and the phenomenological notion of *graded fulfillment*. The choreographer's treatment of the materials requires that the *network of perception* operates differently for different materials. The results of the operations are then integrated by the choreographer, through a process of *graded fulfillment,* into a holistic perception of the imagery or into a greater *world,* of which every image on stage is a part. In contrast the dialectical choreographic options, namely texts as tools for reasoning, paintings as representative structures of the subjects, and *actions* as representative units of social structure and cultural patterns, are inclined to guide the choreographers towards a focus on the development of formalised postures and gestures. The dialectical options are underpinned by rationalist, sociological or anthropological perspectives. It is argued that both the initial and dialectical options have value.

The initial and dialectical options have co-existed and merged over the course of Butoh's development. Through their use different significances are incorporated into dance through the creative processes. Those significances can be identified as mainly rooted in Eastern philosophy, but later expanded to include Western philosophy when Butoh began to develop in a global context. Accordingly, Butoh creative processes are enriched by the use of a variety of choreographic options and by incorporating viewpoints from different people and perspectives.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 The Nature of the Research Inquiry

This thesis is an investigation of the creative process of Butoh choreography. It elucidates the choreographic options a Butoh choreographer may have at hand, particularly with regard to potential ways of generating and manipulating materials and organising imagery for the purpose of incorporating a variety of significances into the choreography. This thesis discusses central issues relating to the creative processes of Butoh choreography, including the notion of the *empty body*, the techniques of *encountering* and *transforming*, the development of imagery, the principles of inter-subjectivity, and the use of signs and symbols as a choreographic tool. This thesis also proposes that these issues are underpinned by a more fundamental issue of perception, which becomes a point of departure for analysing the manifold of Butoh choreography and the layers of significances incorporated in the process.

Given this proposal concerning Butoh choreography, the main research question that underlies this thesis is: how do the options a Butoh choreographer chooses in the creative process give rise to the diverse significances which are incorporated into his/her dance work?

In addressing this question, this thesis looks specifically at questions concerning:

(1) The sources of Butoh dance materials.

(2) The relationship between these materials and the imagery, symbols, and signs generated in the choreographic process.

(3) The way that relationship might influence the development of Butoh dance movement.

(4) The way these materials might contribute to the significances of a dance.

(5) The way in which the significances of a dance may be diversified through the choices of choreographic options afforded by adopting viewpoints from choreographers, performers, and audience.

### 1.1.1 Examining the Nature of Butoh Choreography

There has been little in depth investigation into the nature of Butoh choreography in previous research on this dance form. Literature on Butoh dance to date predominantly comprises documentation of performance events in film form (Akiko 1990; Minoru 1987; Waguri 1998) and journal reviews (Fraleigh 1999; Viala and Masson-Sekine 1988; Ichikawa 1989; Stein 1986). Systematic investigations of Butoh are limited in number (Laage 1993; Klein 1988), and mainly examine the structures of Butoh *performances* in terms of socio-cultural analysis. Little, if any, systematic research has been conducted into the creative process of Butoh or on the issues of perception which may have a bearing on the development of Butoh choreography. Previous research into this dance form tended to draw on structuralist methodologies (Laage 1993), and, to a lesser extent, post-structuralist philosophy (Klein 1988). It is proposed in this thesis that, in addition to these methods, an approach to Butoh choreography which draws on the phenomenology of perception to elucidate the creativity of the choreographic process would be of value.

### 1.1.2 Phenomenology as the Point of Departure of the Inquiry.

This thesis suggests that a phenomenological perspective offers a productive framework for an investigation into the creative process in Butoh choreography. Butoh choreographers specifically address concerns such as "stripping off the social mask", "uncovering the hidden facets of life", "presenting the *world* as it is" (Hijikata 1983, 1987, 1988, 1991), and "dance of being and becoming", "exploring the memory" (Ohno 1994, 1997, 1998). These are compatible with the concerns studied in phenomenology, particularly the phenomenology of perception.

Phenomenology has been used in the study of performing arts since the late 1960s, notably by Sheets-Johnstone (1966 & 1979) and States (1985). In the 1970s and 1980s, when analyses of theatrical productions were greatly influenced by studies in linguistics and semiology, discussion of theatre performances tended to emphasise the codified referential concepts of themes, and neglect the perceptual aspects of performances on which the codification was

based. Similarly, directors tended to be limited by the conceptual frameworks applied to these themes (States 1985; Melrose 1994). To extend these perspectives phenomenology was adopted, together with semiotics, as another means of examining theatrical performances (States 1985; Garner 1995).

Phenomenology had been used for dance research since 1966 when Sheets-Johnstone applied the phenomenological ideas of Husserl, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty to the understanding of the dynamic flow of force and the imaginative space of the performance of dance. Fraleigh (1991) also acknowledged the applicability and contribution of phenomenology to the study of dance noting that: "of particular interest is that the body...has been ignored and denied by traditional philosophy, but is important in phenomenology, and is a central theme in existentialist phenomenology" (p.11). Fraleigh set about reclaiming the study of phenomenology for dance, turning the attention of performing dance and dance studies back to dance phenomena. A more profound study of the phenomenology of dance was presented by Susan Kozel (1994). Based on a reworking of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, she regarded phenomenology as a process, and proposed a *phenomenological dynamic* instead of a codified structure, framework or determining principles. By this, she expected to release and set in motion ideas for other dance practitioners to take further in their own thinking and dancing practices.

However, a study of Butoh choreography from a phenomenological perspective has not yet been proposed. This thesis rectifies this omission. It draws on phenomenology as a research/analytic strategy, and through it develops an approach to the investigation of Butoh creative processes.

### 1.1.3 Perception as a Fundamental issue

Perception has been investigated extensively within the contexts of disciplines other than dance. Studies have been undertaken in phenomenology (e.g. Husserl 1901; Merleau-Ponty 1962), neurology (e.g. Grossberg 1999; Dodwell 1970), cognitive science (e.g. Lakoff and

Johnson 1999), and psychology (e.g. Gibson 1966). These theories of perception are derived from different interpretations of the phenomena of perception. For example, there are two contradictory theories of perception in psychology (Eysenck & Keane 1995, p.73). The first is termed "bottom-up", "data-driven process", or "direct perception", and considers perception to be the collective whole of sensations. This is a materialist point of view, proposed by scholars such as Rey (1991), Crick (1994), Crick and Koch (1990), and Searle (1987; 1997). The second is termed "top-down", "conceptually driven process", or "indirect perception", and considers perception to be constructed by external stimuli, internal hypotheses, expectations, and motivational and emotional factors. These internal factors are provided by the brain memory banks where previous experience and knowledge is stored. This is an idealistic point of view, proposed by scholars, such as Bruner (1957), Gregory (1980), Gordon (1989), Palmer (1989).

This thesis suggests that in the context of Butoh choreography it is advisable to return to the phenomena of perception from a phenomenological point of view, particularly *phenomenological reduction* (Husserl 1901), to identify the fundamental aspects and characteristics of perception (Merleau-Ponty 1962; Grossberg 1999; Velmans 2000). The central issues in Butoh creative processes such as the bodily state of *emptiness,* the *encountering* and *transforming* of imagery and the formation of an inter-subjective *world* can be better understood. Aspects and characteristics of perception also provide a firmly rooted framework that can be used for a more detailed analysis of Butoh creative processes.

### 1.1.4 Aspects Involved in Creative Processes

Two main aspects of Butoh creative processes are discussed in this thesis: the manipulation of dance materials and the organisation of dance imagery. Many kinds of dance materials may be involved in the Butoh creative process, including texts, bodily experiences, fieldwork, visual or aural information. These materials may be managed by the choreographer, using different treatments and perspectives, and be examined so as to reveal the relationship between the

manipulation of materials and the diversity of significances in the dance. Many kinds of imagery may be generated in Butoh as a result of the manipulation of dance materials. The resultant imagery can be used to form symbols and signs in the dance, for example when they are organised, associated, juxtaposed in accord or in conflict, or situated within different personal, historical, social, or cultural contexts. In this thesis an examination of the different ways of organising the materials and the contexts mentioned above reveals the relationship between the organisation of imagery and the diversification of significances in the dance.

In order to discuss the two aspects and the relevant issues involved in Butoh creative processes, this thesis will initially discuss traditional Japanese culture and the impact of Western culture on Japan, which is the greater context for Butoh creative processes. It was within this context that Butoh was initially developed and understood in the 1960s. This thesis then compares Eastern philosophy with the phenomenological framework and finds that certain similarities between the two make the use of the latter particularly appropriate as an approach to an investigation of Butoh creative processes.

## 1.2 The Aim of the Research

To investigate the research questions mentioned above, this thesis has six sequentially related aims:

(1) To elucidate the cultural and philosophical context of Butoh choreography.

(2) To introduce phenomenology as an approach to the analysis of Butoh creative processes.

(3) To clarify issues and viewpoints related to Butoh dance.

(4) To elucidate the *network of perception* in relation to the choreographic elements and techniques in Butoh.

(5) To elucidate the choreographic options in the Butoh creative process in relation to the diversity of significance through a phenomenological perspective.

(6) To elucidate the choreographic options in the Butoh creative process in relation to the diversification of significances through dialectical perspectives.

These aims will be approached and fulfilled through the methodology outlined below.

### 1.3 Methodology

The methodology used in this research to investigate Butoh creative processes includes two areas of concern: A conceptual examination of relevant philosophy and theories, and an analysis of the practice of Butoh creative processes.

#### 1.3.1 Philosophies and Theories

Butoh was developed in the 1960s when the socio-political atmosphere was greatly stirred by the tension between America and Japan and issues raised by the modernisation of Japan. Artists at the time were under the influence of this situation, criticising Westernisation and seeking a way to return to the traditional Japanese life style. Butoh choreographers such as Kazuo Ohno and Tatsumi Hijikata were no exception, exploring through their choreography traditional Japanese cultural values which are grounded in Japanese philosophy. The development of Butoh is thus deeply rooted in traditional Japanese philosophy.

Accordingly, if traditional Japanese philosophy is taken to be the foundation of Butoh dance, it becomes the first layer of the methodology for an investigation of Butoh creative processes. Three strands are generally recognised to be the major components of the formation and development of traditional Japanese philosophy, namely Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhist Zen philosophy. This thesis will examine these components, and apply them to the identification/analysis of cultural significances embedded in Butoh creative processes.

By virtue of the relationships found between Eastern philosophy and phenomenology this thesis also suggests a phenomenological perspective as an approach to Butoh creative processes. Many viewpoints in phenomenology, such as the notions of inter-subjectivity, perception, and a phenomenological sense of *Truth* correspond with the notions of *merging*

*with the universe*, *intuiting* and an Eastern sense of *Truth* expressed in traditional Japanese philosophy. Phenomenology also provides a detailed analytic framework for analysing the manipulation of choreographic materials and the organisation of imagery in Butoh creative processes. The phenomenological ideas that the thesis refers to are mainly those of Merleau-Ponty (1962, 1964, 1973), Husserl (1901, 1913) and Heidegger (1962). Further reference is made to phenomenological scholars who succeeded them, such as Plügge (1970), Scarry (1985), Young (1990), Sokolowski (2000) and Spiegelberg (1994). This thesis will examine these notions, and apply them to the analysis of Butoh creative processes.

However, as the development of Butoh is not only deeply rooted in traditional Japanese philosophy but also reflects the tension between East and West and the impact brought by Westernisation in Japan, this thesis also suggests that perspectives such as the rationalist or post/structuralist viewpoints used in sociology or anthropology (e.g. Foucault, 1977; Douglas, 1970; Cassirer, 1955; Jameson, 1994) may be useful as dialectical perspectives in an examination of Butoh creative processes. Thus the phenomenological perspective may be considered appropriate to elucidate the influence of traditional Japanese culture on Butoh, whereas the dialectical perspectives are appropriate to elucidate the influence of Westernisation on Butoh.

This thesis uses the terms "dialectics" and "dialectical" in their broader senses to suggest that relationship between theories in which two theories might contradict each other with respect to their different contexts or philosophical grounds. In contrast to Kant's suggestion in *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781)[1], such contradiction does not necessarily relate to logic, nor does it necessarily generate a synthesis of *Ideal* or a unified system based on one hypothesis, as in Hegel's idealistic philosophy in *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1806)[2]. Rather, Adorno (1973) argues, such contradiction demonstrates the need to take into consideration the different perspectives for approaching the facticity of subject matter instead of allegedly general concepts such as the *Ultimate*, and suspend the intention to form a total philosophy. In this

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[1] Translated into English and reprinted in 1993.
[2] Translated into English and reprinted in 1979.

respect, dialectical perspectives may provide a different insight into the subject matter of this thesis, exploring the potential significances embedded or incorporated in Butoh choreography through the application of the perspectives.

### 1.3.2 The Analysis of Butoh Practice

Butoh practice is analysed in this thesis predominantly through a phenomenological framework. The framework is based on the *network of perception* drawn from the phenomenological study of perception (Husserl, 1901; Merleau-Ponty 1962) and supplemented by other studies from neurological research (Grossberg, 1999; Velmans, 2000) and psycho-physiological research (Gibson, 1966; Dodwell 1970; Gregory, 1997). The *network of perception* analyses the ways an object is perceived by a subject, and as such offers insight into the ways choreographic materials and resultant imagery may be generated, manipulated, and perceived by a choreographer. Furthermore, the *network of perception* develops into a process of *graded fulfilment*. The *network of perception* operates on diverse fields according to the different kinds of objects/materials such as texts, photos, paintings, bodily experiences, movement or action, memories, and imagination. The perception of these materials will then be integrated to form an overall perception of the *world,* or to form the perception of a certain imagery that bears the significances derived from the perception of those materials. This process of integration is termed *graded* or *cumulative fulfilment*, and as such offers insight into the manifold of significances that may be embedded in the imagery through the phenomenological approach. References will also be made to scholars such as Schutz (1972) and Polanyi (1977) whose viewpoints are similar to the phenomenological viewpoint of *graded fulfilment*.[3]

In addition to the phenomenological framework mentioned above, Butoh practice will also be analysed through dialectical frameworks. A Butoh choreographer can manipulate the same kinds of materials, namely texts, photos, paintings, bodily experiences, movement or action, memories, and imagination, through ways other than those identified by the phenomenological

[3] The *network of perception* and the process of *graded fulfillment* are parts of an analytic framework that is used in this research to help elucidate the nature and specific characteristics of Butoh creative processes. They can be equally applied to the examination of other dance activities for the purpose of elucidating their distinctive characteristics of those activities.

perspective. These are the dialectical choreographic options available to a Butoh choreographer. With these options a choreographer can endow his/her choreographic work with different significances to those endowed by the options elucidated through the phenomenological perspective. The use of the dialectical frameworks alongside the phenomenological framework is for the purpose of elucidating those choreographic options and the resultant integration, revelation, and concealment of related significances in the creative processes.

### 1.3.3 Use of Source Materials

The source materials used for the verification and analysis of a choreographer's viewpoints, intentions, and possible choreographic options in the creative process of Butoh come from different types of resources. These include writings by Butoh choreographers, writings by Butoh practitioners and participants, documentation of Butoh training, video recording of live performances, reviews and critiques, and scholarly research.

#### (1) Writings by Butoh Choreographers

These writings offer first-person accounts by Butoh choreographers, which reveal personal backgrounds, experiences, and inner feelings relating to their creative processes. The analysis of Butoh practice in this thesis focuses on Ohno's creative processes. Ohno's publications on his process include *The Palace Soars through the Sky—Kazuo Ohno on Butoh* (1998) and *Kazuo Ohno* (1997a) [4], both of which contain choreographic notes, ideas, and dance notations composed in his particular manner. Another book *Workshop Words (Keiko no Kotoba)* (1997b)[5] is a collection of extracts from Ohno's teachings in his workshops. Ohno's books provide many details which are used in this thesis as evidence to support the analysis of

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[4] Parts of the contents of the first two books have been translated into English and published in *Butoh—Shades of Darkness* (Viala and Masson-Sekine, 1988), *Dance of the Dark Soul* (Hoffman and Holborn, 1987), and *The Drama Review*. Vol.30. (1986).

[5] *Workshop Words* has been translated into English and published as the second part of *Kazuo Ohno's World: from without and within* (Ohno and Yoshito, trans. Barrett, 2004). When reference is made to this book in this thesis, the publishing date refers to that of the Japanese edition, while the page numbers refer to those in English edition.

his choreographic options and creative process.

Another Butoh choreographer who is referenced in this thesis is Hijikata. He has likewise published *Blue Sky of Beauty (Bibou no aozora)* (1987), *A Sick Dancing Princess (Hijikata Tatsumi: Yameru Maihime)* (1983), and the two-volume *The Collected Works of Hijikata Tatsumi (Hijikata Tatsumi Zenshu)* (1998)[6] to elucidate his creative processes. These books contain comments, choreographic notes, explanations of dance imagery, and discussions about Butoh skills.

Other Butoh choreographers' writings/notes have been collected in *Butoh—Shades of Darkness* by Viala and Masson-Sekine (1988), *Dance of the Dark Soul* by Hoffman and Holborn (1987), including those of Ushio Amagatsu (*Sankai-Juku*), Isamu Ohsuka (*Byakko-Sha*), Min Tanaka (Mai-Juku Performance Company), Akaji Maro (Dai-Rakuda-Kan), and Anzu Furukawa (Dance-Love-Machine).

The writings of all these Butoh choreographers will be used as evidence to support the analysis in this thesis and to ensure that a variety of choreographic options and viewpoints are presented.

(2) Writings by Butoh Practitioners and Participants

Apart from writings by Butoh choreographers, writings of other Butoh practitioners and participants are also valuable, both for their insight into the works of those Butoh choreographers and for their critical engagement in the creative processes of Butoh choreography. Major references are made to Yoshito Ohno, Ashikawa, Fraleigh, Laage, and Kasai in this thesis.

Yoshito Ohno is Kazuo Ohno's son. He has participated in Butoh performances since the very

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[6] Parts of the contents of these books have been translated into English and published in *Butoh—Shades of Darkness* (Viala and Masson-Sekine, 1988), *Dance of the Dark Soul* (Hoffman and Holborn, 1987), and in *The Drama Review*. Vol.44. (2000).

beginning of the development of Butoh. In 1959 Yoshito performed in Ohno's dance *The Old Man and the Sea* and in Hijikata's dance *Kijiki*. These two performances marked the birth of Butoh dance. In addition to assuming the role of performer, in 1985 Yoshito started to direct, and has produced Butoh performances for Ohno up to the present day. Thus, Yoshito Ohno's description of his father's dance, life, and craft in the book *Food for the Soul (Tamashii no Kate)* (1999) becomes the most intimate testimony to Ohno's creative processes.[7]

Yoko Ashikawa is a highly acclaimed Butoh dancer. She learned Butoh from Ohno and Hijikata and had long term experiences of working with them. She also choreographs and teaches Butoh workshops. Her writings and notes about Butoh creative processes are published in books such as Viala and Masson-Sekine (1988), Hoffman and Holborn (1987), or cited in Fraleigh's book *Dancing into Darkness* (1999).

Akira Kasai was one of the first to dance with Hijikata and Ohno in the 1960s. He later began to choreograph and gives Butoh performances in festivals worldwide. A valuable interview with Kasai appears in Fraleigh's book, in which Kasai articulates his acknowledgment of the cultural significance underpinning Butoh, and the ways he choreographs/performs on the basis of the Eastern viewpoint of bodily movement shared by most Butoh choreographers/practitioners.

Sondra Horton Fraleigh, a scholar and Butoh practitioner, has many year experiences of living in Japan. In her book (Fraleigh 1999) she reflects on her experience of moving from a position of aesthetic response as an audience member to that of assimilation as a student of Zen and Butoh. She thus provides many critical insights into Butoh training and creative processes. Joan Elizabeth Laage, also a well-known scholar who researches Butoh, was Ohno's student. Her PhD thesis *Embodying the Spirit: the Significance of the Body in the Contemporary Japanese Dance Movement of Butoh* (1993) provides experiential evidence of reflections on the cultural significances involved in Butoh training exercises and creative processes. With their academic background these two scholars provide invaluable critical insights into the

[7] *Food for the Soul* has been translated into English and published as the first part of *Kazuo Ohno's World: from without and within* (Ohno and Yoshito, trans. Barrett, 2004). When reference is made to this book in this thesis, the publishing date refers to that of the Japanese edition, while the page numbers refer to those in English edition.

training and creative processes they participated in as practitioners

In comparison with the writings of Butoh choreographers/masters, the writings of these practitioners present possibilities of choreographic options afforded by exploring Butoh creative processes through the ways inspired by contemporary Western theatres. Their viewpoints also incorporate viewpoints which are initially derived from an audience's position. The reasons for this may be derived from the fact that they have had more access to resources worldwide than the originators of Butoh, and have had more contact with Western culture, and that some are researchers themselves. Thus, their writings offer evidence to support the analysis in this thesis of a possible exchange of viewpoints between different people and roles (choreographer, performer, audience), and the possible choreographic options in the creative processes.

Apart from the writings mentioned above, other writings by Butoh participants have also offered insights into the creative processes of Butoh choreographers. *Together with Hijikata Tatsumi (Hijikata Tatsumi to tomoni)* (1990) was written by Hijikata's wife, Motofuji Akiko. She discusses the reasons dancers paint their bodies white and the origin of the name *Ankoku Butoh*. *Complimentary notes on Hijikata Tatsumi (Hijikata Tatsumi Sho)* (1987), written by Yoshioka Minoru, a famous poet and an old friend of Hijikata, describes their twenty year relationship and comments on his life. These writings whilst not necessarily referred to directly in the thesis were part of the preliminary studies on Butoh undertaken during the research.

(3) Documentation of Butoh Training

Butoh training exercises help sensitise Butoh practitioners for their understanding of the viewpoints involved in the creative processes. They will be discussed in this thesis as and when appropriate. The source materials of Butoh training exercises come predominantly from the following resources. *Butoh Kaden* (1998) is a CD-ROM which documents many Butoh training exercises that derive from Hijikata. The CD-ROM also contains excerpts of dances choreographed by the Yukio Waguri & Kohzensha Butoh Company, together with reviews and

short essays on Butoh. *Transforming of Life: the Practice and Concept of Butoh Dance* (1996) is a first-person documentation of Butoh practices by this author. This book, originally published in Chinese, contains articulations of Butoh training exercises currently used by Tomoe Shizune & Hakutobo and Sankai Juku. They were originally devised by Hijikata.

(4) Video Recording of Live Performances

Live recordings of performances have been used as evidence to support the explanation of perception-in-the-making presented in this thesis. Kazuo Ohno's performance *Admiring La Argentina* (premiere in 1977, recorded in 1982) is the main reference in the discussion. Other recordings are used as supplementary and preliminary references, including these works by Kazuo Ohno: *Dead Sea* (1995a), *Water Lillies* (1995b), *Flower, Bird, Wind, Moon* (1990), *Wolf* (1992), the following works by Sankai Juku: *Unetsu* (1986), *Shijima* (1996), and a documentary on Hijikata: *Tatsumi Hijikata and Butoh* (1990). Works by Eiko and Koma: *Undertow* (1988), *Husk* (1987), *Wallow* (1984), *Bone Dream* (1986), *Land* (Eiko & Koma 1991), an interview with Kazuo Ohno: *Kazuo Ohno and Butoh* (1994), and a general introduction to Butoh dance: *Body on the Edge of Crisis* (1990), *Piercing the Mask* (1991) have also been used.

(5) Reviews and Critiques

Published material on Butoh includes journal reviews and critiques which are not necessarily of Japanese origin. The reviews and critiques used in this thesis have been drawn from a wide selection of magazines, newspapers, programme notes, websites and newsletters issued by Butoh companies, together with essays published by Western academic journals or conferences. These Reviews and critiques offer viewpoints initially made from an audience's position and thus are valuable supplementary materials. A comparison with the viewpoints articulated by Butoh choreographers and practitioners themselves indicates that some viewpoints are shared by choreographers, reviewers, and critics. As such these reviews provide evidence of the possibility of the exchange of their viewpoints.

(6) Scholarly Research

As noted earlier, systematic investigations of Butoh mainly examine the structures of Butoh performances in terms of socio-cultural analysis. Whilst there is reflection on the creative processes, Laage (1993) mainly focuses on examining the parallel characteristics shared by the body in Butoh and the body in everyday Japanese life, suggesting that Butoh dance may be viewed as a microcosm of the greater Japanese cultural world which encompasses it. Similarly, while providing many invaluable critical insights on Butoh training and creative processes, Fraleigh (1999) mainly presents a personal journal which charts her experiences of learning Butoh and Zen.

Susan Blakeley Klein's MA dissertation *Ankoku Butoh: the Pre-modern and Post-modern Influences on the Dance of Utter Darkness* (1988) presents a general introduction to Butoh dance, which includes its historical background and descriptions of various Butoh techniques. Klein relates Butoh to post-modern cultural phenomena, asserting that Butoh is a post-modern dance form.

Toshiharu Kasai is a Butoh dancer and a professor in the Department of Clinical Psychology, Sapporo Gakuin University, Japan. He researches the mind-body relationship as a psychologist and teaches a mode of dance therapy based on Butoh. He has published many conference papers (1994; 1998a; 1998b; 1999; 2000a) relating to the role Butoh can play in a course of treatment for a patient's mental illness.

The scholarly research noted above does not directly involve the investigation of choreographic processes. However, the viewpoints/perspectives taken in these writings can stand as dialectical choreographic options, and are being accepted more and more by Butoh choreographers and practitioners who are aware of a wider range of possible choreographic options now at their disposal.

In this thesis references which relate to the above source materials predominantly relate to Ohno, as his creative processes constitute the central example in the practice analysis undertaken in this thesis. Additionally, in order to analyse possible choreographic options available in the creative processes and elucidate the possibility of exchanging cultural significances through the choice of choreographic options, those viewpoints taken from different positions such as those of choreographers, practitioners, audience, critics, and researchers are discussed.

## 1.4 Delimitation

This investigation of the creative processes of Butoh choreography is delimited as follows:

(1) The subject matter of the study of Butoh choreography taken in this thesis differs from that of a socio-cultural analysis of Butoh performances. Butoh choreography is considered throughout the thesis as a creative process rather than as a final product of dance or a historical documentation of Butoh choreographers' activities. Accordingly, this thesis explores the potential development of the meaning making in a Butoh creative process rather than making an analysis of choreographic structures of the dances thus produced.

(2) The creative processes of Butoh choreography are examined predominantly from a phenomenological perspective and framework. Other perspectives and frameworks such as those of sociology, anthropology, structuralism, or post-structuralism are involved only when they are considered as dialectical viewpoints and helpful for the elucidation of potential choreographic options and significances, and as such are discussed at limited length as and when appropriate. Thus, this thesis is a phenomenological study of Butoh, rather than a comparative study of diverse perspectives applied to Butoh or a comparative study of East and West theatre traditions.

## 1.5 Format of the Thesis

The aims and delimitations outlined above direct this study towards several major areas of investigation, which will be discussed in the chapters which follow this introduction. Chapter 2 examines the greater context of Butoh, including discussions of Eastern philosophy and aesthetics, and offers a justification for the use of existentialist phenomenology as an analytic methodology. Chapter 3 examines the viewpoints of both choreographers and audiences, as a preparation for an investigation of the possible choreographic options available in the creative processes and the possible exchange of viewpoints between them. Chapter 4 applies the phenomenology of perception to an examination of Butoh choreographic elements and techniques, in order to provide insights into central issues of Butoh creative processes such as the *empty body*, *encountering* and *transforming*, imagery perception, and inter-subjective *worlds*. Chapter 5 examines the diversification of cultural significances in Butoh from a phenomenological perspective, using Ohno's creative process as central example. Chapter 6 examines the diversification of cultural significances from several dialectical perspectives, using Hijikata and second generation choreographers as central examples. Chapter 7 concludes the possible choreographic options available to Butoh choreographer, and elucidates the introduction of cultural exchange into Butoh by means of managing choreographic options in such a way as to incorporate integration, revelation, and concealment of culturally related significances in the creative processes.

It is suggested that the analysis of Butoh creative processes through the phenomenology of perception contributes to the current body of knowledge in research into Butoh.

## Chapter 2: Butoh Choreography: Philosophical Contexts

Butoh first made an appearance as a dance form around the 1960s. The socio-political situation of that time influenced artists, many of whom criticized westernization and modernization, seeking a way to return to the traditional Japanese life style or to generate a Japanese Renaissance. It was within this trend that a small group of artists developed the form which has become known as Butoh. The impact of Westernization and of traditional Japanese culture therefore provides the initial reference point for developing an understanding of Butoh choreographers' intentions, ideas, and creative practice. Furthermore, in order to explore the creative process in Butoh choreography, a phenomenological perspective is introduced. Phenomenology does not only correspond to the Japanese philosophical context which gave birth to Butoh, but also to some of the fundamental processes used by Butoh choreographers, for example the use of intuition to generate imagery. It thus can provide a detailed analytical framework for an investigation of Butoh creative processes.

This thesis suggests that apart from phenomenology, which can help examine hidden layers of Butoh choreography, certain dialectical perspectives can also help investigate issues that were not initially considered as significant by Butoh choreographers and practitioners. These dialectical perspectives have frequently been used in examinations of Western modern dance. For example, in *Liminal Acts: A Critical Overview of Contemporary Performance and Theory* (1999), Susan Broadhurst examines Pina Bausch's Tanztheater, the Theatre of Images of Robert Wilson and Philip Glass, the Social Sculptures of the Viennese Actionists, Peter Greenaway's Painterly Aesthetics, Derek Jarman's Queer Politics and digitized sampled music and neo-gothic sound through perspectives taken from the writings of Kant, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida, Baudrillard, and Lyotard.

This chapter thus discusses Butoh from several perspectives. The relationship between the philosophy of Confucianism, *Tao*, Zen, and the issue of what is known in Eastern philosophy as *Truth* and the contemporary form of Butoh is examined. The impact of Westernisation on Japan since the Meiji period (1868-1912) is also discussed and the contribution phenomenology could

make to Butoh examined. Finally the tension generated by the different hypotheses of phenomenology, rationalism, structuralism, and deconstruction is elaborated as a preparation for the use of dialectical perspectives in the analysis of Butoh creative processes.

## 2.1 Traditional Japanese Culture

Three strands are generally recognized to be the major components of the cultural nexus in the formation and development of culture in Japan, namely Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhist Zen philosophy.

Ancient Chinese philosophy had made a major contribution to the culture of Japan since the third century A.D., and continued generating an active effect on modern culture of Japan after the nineteenth century (Xu, 1993; Piovesana, 1989). The classic writings of Confucianism and Taoism were imported into Japan as early as the third century. During and after the 17th century Confucianism was particularly emphasized and taught in educational institutes, and underpinned governmental practice. Confucianism centres on the idea of filial piety, on the basis of which the relations between father and son, sovereign and minister, husband and wife, old and young, and friends, can be regulated.

> The sage *Shun*...appointed *Xie* to be the minister of instruction, to teach the relations of humanity: how, between father and son, there could be affection; between sovereign and minister, righteousness; between husband and wife, attention to their separate functions; between old and young, a proper order; and between friends, fidelity. (*The Works of Mencius,* p. 358-9)[1]

Among Chinese and Japanese the above are commonly known as the *five relations of humanity*. As pointed out by Chien (1995) and Fung (1966), filial piety remains for the Chinese the central concern and essential morality to the present day. But for the Japanese, a shift from filial piety to national piety can be noted in the nineteenth century (Tetsuro, 1996; Donahue,

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[1] The classics of Confucianism include *The Great Learning, The Doctrine of the Mean, The Confucian Analects, and The Works of Mencius*. They are collectively termed *The Four Books* in China, and often published together as one book. The English edition of *The Four Books* used in this thesis was initially translated by James Legge in nineteenth century, and revised by Po-Chun Yang in the late twentieth century. When references are made to it, the thesis will use the title of one of the four books instead of "The Four Books".

2002). This eventually contributed to the emergence of Japanese nationalism in the twentieth century. However, disregarding nationalism during this time, the *five relations* were still followed as personal guidelines of morality by ordinary Japanese people in their daily lives (Tetsuro, 1952; 1996).

According to the classic writings (Lao-Tsu, 1973; Zhuang-Zi, 1995) Taoism centres on the notion of *Tao*, which manifests itself through the metamorphosis of natural phenomena, such as seasons, blossoming and withering, life and death. Furthermore, from a Taoist perspective, the evolution of human society and the development of the *five relations of humanity* between people are considered part of the metamorphosis of natural phenomena. From a Confucian perspective, however, the metamorphosis of natural phenomena is understood to be based on the *five relations of humanity*. In other words, natural phenomena symbolically bear the significances of humanitarian concerns (Fung, 1966; Moore, 1986a). Despite their difference both Taoism and Confucianism agree that everything in the natural world and human society is part of *Tao*. The natural world and human society are inseparable from one another (Fung, 1966; Lao, 1984). Even now the Japanese are still influenced greatly by Taoism in their daily lives, for example in the practice of gardening or architectural and spatial design (Moore, 1986b).

Buddhism was imported to Japan through China from India around the mid-sixth century. At the time of its arrival, Buddhism had integrated its viewpoint of the universe with the Taoist notion of *Tao*. In addition, Buddhism emphasized the notion of emptiness (空性). According to Nagarjuna (150-250 A.D), who is often referred to as "the second Buddha" by Tibetan and East Asian Mahayana (Great Vehicle) traditions of Buddhism, emptiness is pointed to the incessantly changing and so never fixed nature of all phenomena (Nagarjuna, 1995).

The Buddhist notion that phenomena incessantly change, together with the Taoist notion of every phenomenon being inseparable in the universe, contributed to the development of the philosophy of Zen in Japan, particularly after the mid-twelfth century. The central idea of Zen is that people need to learn the ways of appreciating natural processes, submitting themselves to a given condition, and nourishing an egalitarian attitude towards everything (Sekida and

Grimstone 2003; Suzuki 1991, 1996; King 1993).

Saito (1997), for example suggests that objects can change colour or shape as a result of natural ageing processes or other unpredictable elements beyond human control. In Zen the appreciation and understanding of such ageing or transformation encourages people to submit their egos to this natural process and to the materials that guide their own development. Dogen (1200-1253), one of the pioneers of Japanese Zen Buddhism, explains that everything is part of nature, and should be seen from a more egalitarian perspective, rather than a particularly human one. Accordingly, imperfect objects are equally valuable and capable of manifesting their own Buddha nature. For example, he identifies Buddha nature with blossoming and withering grasses, full and half moons, old and young trees, new and broken brushes, mountains, rivers, bricks, the body and mind, delusion, enlightenment, and birth and death. (Dogen, 1995)

The development of Buddhist Zen philosophy and practice in Japan has been influenced through its interaction with political, historical, cultural, economical, and geographical factors. The notion of emptiness, the submissive attitude, and the egalitarian perspective are traditionally not only applied to the appreciation of nature, but also to that of society, life, and artistic works. That is, up until the mid-twentieth century Zen philosophy and practice was integrated into Japanese daily life. Many subjects are particularly linked to Zen, for example painting, gardening, flower arranging, calligraphy, tea drinking, meditation, and martial arts. (Suzuki 1991, 1996; King 1993)

Between the twelfth century and the mid-twentieth century, Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhist Zen philosophy became integrated in both China and Japan. This synthesised philosophy has become the core of Japanese modern culture within which the Japanese worldview and its emphasis on spirit, aesthetics, and the notion of *Truth* have been established and articulated.

The worldview generally shared and discussed by the Chinese and the Japanese focuses on

the *merging with the universe*. There is no conflict between Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism in this context (Fung, 1966; Lao, 1984; Starrs, 2004; Moore 1986a and 1986b). However, they have different emphases. The Confucian notion of *merging with the universe* holds that human society and nature follow humanistic rules such as the *five relations of humanity* rather than the natural law. Confucius proposes,

> While there are no stirrings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, or joy, the mind may be said to be in the state of *Equilibrium*. When those feelings have been stirred, and they act in their due degree, there ensues what may be called the state of *Harmony*. This *Equilibrium* is the great root from which grow all the human actings [behaviour] in the world, and this *Harmony* is the universal path which they all should pursue. Let the states of *Equilibrium* and *Harmony* exist in perfection, and a happy order will prevail throughout heaven and earth, and all things will be nourished and flourish. (*The Doctrine of the Mean*, p.25-7)

Similarly, the importance of *benevolence* or *kindheartedness* is also stressed in *The Works of Mencius*. Mencius (孟子) is a disciple of Confucius who was known as "The Second Sage". He considers *Benevolence* as the point of departure for cultivating or developing a society. Drawing from these teachings, the rules that encompass both society and nature are those mainly relating to morality. The *merging with the universe* thus refers to a situation or viewpoint in which a person considers him/herself as a moral exemplar of human behaviour, sharing the same or related moral values with other people, and acknowledging symbolic, moral significance within natural phenomena.

The Taoist notion of *merging with the universe* holds that the rules society and nature follow are the natural law. Adopting an egalitarian attitude towards oneself and other natural objects is particularly emphasized in Taoism (Fung, 1966; Moore, 1986b). For example, Zhuang-Zi dreamed of a butterfly flying happily in the sky. He wondered: did I dream of the butterfly, or did the butterfly dream of me, or is there no difference between a butterfly and me? (Zhuang-Zi, 1995) *Merging with the universe*, then, refers to a viewpoint in which a person perceives him/herself as one of many natural objects, sharing similar processes of metamorphosis of forms and identities.

Zen philosophy also brings forward the notion of emptiness, which does not refer to "void", but

to an "open-minded" attitude towards the changing nature of phenomena. Correspondingly, with respect to the viewpoint of *merging with the universe*, Zen philosophy stresses an open-minded attitude as a point of departure for perceiving the metamorphosis of phenomena emphasized by Taoism. Within this open-minded attitude everything is potentially included to form an integrated universe. This state is considered by Zen philosophy as the *merging with the universe*. (Sekida and Grimstone 2003; Nagarjuna, 1995; King 1993)

The worldview of *merging with the universe* is underpinned by a state of mind, a mood, or a sense of self-perception for which Confucianism, Taoism, Zen philosophy also offer explanations. These explanations are considered, if not the same, at least parallel, related and complementary. Confucianism suggests that, in order to achieve the state of *merging with the universe*, sincerity at heart or a sincere attitude is the required state of mind

> Wishing to cultivate their persons [people], they [sages] first rectified their hearts. Wishing to rectify their heart, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts. Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended to the utmost of their knowledge. Such extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of things. (*The Great Learning* [Confucius and Mencius], 5th century B.C., p.3)

Sincerity helps people avoid preconceptions and habitual thoughts, so as to open the mind to interactively accept diverse moral significances within perceived phenomena, and eventually to achieve the state of *merging* with others (Moore, 1986a). A school of Confucianism (represented by Chiu-Yuan Lu and Shou-Jen Wang in the Sung Dynasty, twelfth century) particularly emphasizes meditation as a means to preserve the sincerity at heart. The other school of Confucianism (represented by Hsi Chu and Hao Cheng in the Sung) alternatively emphasises that, to nourish sincerity at heart a person must first investigate daily affairs and natural phenomena to gain knowledge (Fung, 1966).

The Confucian notion of the removing of preconceptions and habitual thoughts parallels the Taoist or Zen notion of emptiness, and also can lead to the enlightenment of mind (明照). This enlightened mind (虛靈) or state of emptiness will generate a transcendental effect such that a person would perceive him/herself and observed objects as an integrated entity, eradicating the

distinction between subject and object (Zhuang Zi, 1995). Nishida (1965) offers an example:

> When we intuitively acquire the perception of an object, we should have no awareness of either ourselves as an observing subject, or the object as an observed object. Rather, we would only notice the beauty of the object in the same way when we listen to music, as if there is only music existent in the universe, but no me or any objects (p.45).

By eradicating the distinction between the observer and the observed, and thus perceiving them as an integrated entity, the enlightened mind or the state of emptiness helps achieve the state of *merging with the universe*. This is termed in China by Zhuang-Zi as *forgetting* (坐忘), and in Japan by Nishida as *pure experiencing* or *intuiting*,

The Confucian notion of morality, the Taoist and Zen notion of emptiness or the open-minded attitude, and their worldview of *merging with the universe*, contribute to the emphasis on spirit in both China and Japan. Spirit can be seen as referring to the overall attitude towards life and universe, an attitude that is manifested through daily behaviour, feelings, or intentions. Although spirit relates to the value or meaning that people acknowledge as the urge for living, spirit should be distinguished from will, thoughts, concepts, or established viewpoints of world and life. For example, Chinese people in the Han dynasty (206 B.C. – A.D. 220), as Chien (1995; 2000) elucidates, tended to manage daily matters with an optimistic attitude and stress polite manners, presenting a diligent and down-to-earth spirit. Japanese people in the Meiji period (1868-1912), such as Xu (1993) and Donahue (2002) articulate, tended to seek an alternative approach to daily affairs by adopting techniques from the West such as industrialization, land reformation and police systems, and in doing so presenting a pragmatic and open-minded spirit. These diverse inclinations of attitude or spirit are not the same as thoughts or worldview or will. They function at a more essential layer of decision-making for the development of life. Spirit helps to explore potential meanings in the processes of daily life, guiding directions for these processes.

It is worth noting that spirit may occur in many guises in our daily lives. In relation to morality, for example, there is a positive spirit, the attitude of constantly searching, enthusiasm, or hoping whole-heartedly, and a negative spirit, confusion, indecisiveness, suffering and fragility. In

addition, there is an ambiguous spirit in which no obvious attitude can be discerned. In relation to the metamorphosis of phenomena, there is also what is known as the open-minded spirit, and the attitude of being natural.

Traditional Japanese aesthetics has consequently been influenced by both the synthesised philosophy of Confucianism, Taoism, Zen and the diverse kinds of spirit. The most typical example of this is the *aesthetics of imperfection*, which can be found in classical writings from as early as the tenth century, for example *The Pillow Book of Sei Shonagon* (trans. 1982). The *aesthetics of imperfection* appreciates the natural ageing process, the obscuring effect, and transience of everything that exists due to wear and tear. Yoshida Kenko (1283-1350), a Buddhist monk and Zen master who served the Japanese emperor and tutored the young prince and the aristocrats as an aesthetic consultant, teaches that

> If man were never to fade away like the dews of Adashino, never to vanish like the smoke over Toribeyama, but lingered on forever in the world, how things would lose their power to move us! The most precious thing in life is its uncertainty. (Kenko, 1967, p.7)

By celebrating the aesthetic value of those worn-out objects and the natural ageing process, life's contingencies are well respected and aestheticised. People therefore have opportunities to learn ways to cope with the challenge of the transience of everything existent, particularly of human life.

The *aesthetics of imperfection,* as a way of cultivating wealthy merchants and patrons of *shoguns* (local governing bodies), also relates to the moral values of humbleness, moderateness, and modesty. Shundai Dazai (1680-1747), a Confucian scholar, elaborates that, as those patrons became increasingly tempted to display their growing political powers and wealth, simple objects and activities such as drinking tea in a mountain hut, the wearing of worn-out items, or using unpolished wood and defective objects were adopted to counterbalance their ostentatious display and remind them of the virtue of being humble. This can be seen as being derived from Confucius' teaching of *Equilibrium* and *Harmony* cited earlier from *The Doctrine of the Mean.*

The *aesthetics of imperfection* emphasises egalitarianism which relates to Taoism and Zen philosophy. Dogen (1995) identifies Taoist or Buddhist nature with grasses, trees, bushes, mountains, rivers, bricks, tiles, chairs, ceremonial brushes, body, birth, and death. Thus, egalitarianism is embodied in the aesthetic elevation of these objects, no matter whether they are perfect or defective. In acknowledging the egalitarian attitude and appreciation of everything, as Saito (1997) points out, people learn of their indivisible relationship with the greater universe and share equal but not dominant roles in nature.

In addition to the *aesthetics of imperfection*, particular nuances of aesthetic value can be discerned in Japanese arts and daily lives in relation to Confucianism, Taoism, and Zen philosophy. For example, Confucianism emphasises morality. Here imagery that bears the humanitarian spirit or presents the character of a person is considered as revealing the beauty or an aesthetic value of humanistic nature or personality. This has been the main nuance of aesthetic value in Chinese folk dance and drama theatre, and Japanese Noh and Kabuki theatre (Chang and Kuo, 1998; Fenollosa and Pound, 1999; Scott, 1999). Taoism emphasises metamorphosis. Here imagery that presents the manifold or natural processes of evolution is considered as revealing an aesthetic value of nature. Zen philosophy emphasises emptiness. Here imagery that elucidates an unfixed or changing nature is considered as revealing the beauty of emptiness (Hsing, 1999; Marra, 2001).

The synthesised philosophy outlined here also brings insights into the issue of *Truth*. The notion of *Truth* in the West and in the East differs significantly. In the West *Truth* is associated with verifiable "fact". However, *Truth* in the East is grounded in a different philosophical context. *Truth* is termed *Tao* in China and Japan. Two kinds of *Truth* are generally acknowledged by Chinese and Japanese (Fung, 1966; Lao, 1984; Moore, 1986b; Xu, 1993). The first is the presence or presentation of the phenomena of nature and of virtue. Since humanist nature or natural law is manifested through the moral behaviour and the metamorphosis of nature, the presentation of behaviour and natural phenomena is considered the revelation of *Truth of Humanity* (人道) or *Truth of Heaven* (天道). In Chinese and Japanese arts the presentation of

human behaviour and natural phenomena is articulated through imagery of human characters, spirits, flowers, trees, natural objects, etc. (Chang and Kuo, 1998; Hsing, 1999). The second kind of *Truth* is concerned with symbolic significance. Human behaviour and natural phenomena may bear symbolic significance which constitutes more profound teachings about morality, *Tao* or Zen philosophy. In Chinese and Japanese arts the use of symbolism, apart from the presentation of imagery, has been an approach frequently used to convey such significances (ibid)

Significantly, the synthesised philosophy of Confucianism, Taoism, and Zen philosophy, which underpins traditional Japanese culture, stands as a point of departure for creative processes in Butoh choreography (Fraleigh 1999; Laage 1993). Butoh choreographers often share the traditional worldview of *merging with the universe* (Ohno 1998, 1997a; Hijikata 1998). Many Butoh practitioners took part in training methods which involved martial arts, meditation, calligraphy, and the Japanese tea ceremony in order to help them understand traditional Japanese culture (Klein, 1988). Butoh choreography, like Confucianism, Taoism and Zen, aspires to the exploration of moral values and the spirit of being natural, egalitarian, and human. Butoh choreography also aims at the appreciation of the metamorphosis of natural processes and the beauty of personality (Viala and Masson-Sekine, 1988; Hoffman and Holborn, 1987). Therefore, traditional Japanese culture provides an initial reference for the understanding of Butoh choreographers' intentions, ideas, and creative practice.

## 2.2 The Impact from the West

The impact brought by Westernization provides another reference point for understanding Butoh choreographic processes. Westernization in Japan started as early as the Meiji period. Nishiamane (1829-1897) was considered the first philosopher who systematically introduced Western philosophy to the Japanese. His efforts established a new arena of discussion in Japan, the reconsideration of Chinese philosophy through reference to Western philosophy. Philosophers such as Chomin Nakae (1847-1901) and Kitaro Nishida (1870-1945) also made a contribution to this arena, introducing Western thoughts and science to the Japanese. In the

Edo period (1598-1868), which preceded the Meiji period, the influence of Chinese philosophy in Japan reached its peak. In the Meiji period the foundation of Westernisation in Japan was laid down. From then on, a tension brought by this cultural impact can be seen in Japan and a dialogue concerning the implications of the relationship between East and West commenced among scholars.

Within this dialogue the influence of Chinese philosophy on Japanese culture was examined. Yukichi Fukuzawa (1834-1901) held that a lack of scientific methods and the notion of individuality in Confucianism resulted in the backwardness of Japan at the end of the Edo period. The Meiji Restoration, the policy of Westernisation and the denouncement of Confucianism was the means necessary to make Japan strong again (Fukuzawa, 1959; 1980). Nishida (1966) had no objection to the claim of a lack of scientific methods in Confucianism. However, he also argued that, instead of resulting in Japan's backwardness, Confucianism had led the Japanese society to move forward. It was one of the indispensable foundations and momentums of Japanese society. Morishima Michio, a professor at London University and a politician in Japan, supported Nishida's argument, commenting that a sense of the rational mind, similar to the reasoning and logic in the West, can be found in Confucianism, and was one of the reasons to account for the success of the Meiji Restoration (Michio, 1986).

Within this dialogue, the attitude towards Western philosophy was also examined. Fukuzawa (1959) and Nishida (1966) both acknowledged the political, social, and economic progress made through the pragmatic approach suggested by Western philosophy. They also strongly suggested that reasoning and logic may be the most important lesson Japanese needed to learn from the West. Motoda Eifu (1818-1891), however, argued that Westernisation could be one of the reasons for the decadence of morality since the Meiji period (Eifu, 1879[2]). Xu (1993) held an intermediary viewpoint that progress or decadence of society was such a complicated phenomenon that explaining it merely through Westernisation or Confucianism would be over-simplifying the fact. In other words, Westernisation or Confucianism was not the only criterion for judging the development of society.

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[2] Reprinted in 1976.

The similarity and difference between East and West philosophy was another subject discussed among scholars. Nishiamane (1950) considered that the rational attitude held in Confucianism might generate a similar effect to that of reasoning held in the Western tradition of Plato and Descartes. However, the Western tradition could provide a more pragmatic and analytic approach to national or social affairs such as the administration of government, which was essential for the modernization of Japan. In comparison, he considered that the tradition of Confucianism offered moral lessons, which were used mostly in education rather than in politics or social affairs and were useful to a feudal system rather than a modern government. Similarly, Nakae (1984) considered the Taoist notions of metamorphosis and Yin-Yang to be compatible to the findings of natural science in the West. However, natural science seemed to investigate issues with a more positivist attitude, which was essential for the development of modern technology. Nakae thus realized that the ancient wisdom embedded in the Japanese or Chinese tradition, which may become vague or obscure in modern times, can be rediscovered and re-examined through the prism of Western thought. In this case, he suggests, the East and West should be treated as complementary.

The use of the terms East and West was later re-considered by other thinkers. One of the attempts to formulate the distinction of East and West can be seen in the Orientalism proposed by Edward Said (1979). He brought forward the notion that the study of Eastern countries was derived from the need of the dominant Western powers in the nineteenth century to find a way to exert control over their colonies.[3] He also identified a list of vaguely defined characteristics of East and West that tend to be used in the West, and sometimes the East (Cowell, 1994). According to these the Eastern countries seem to be more spiritual, dream-like, backward, mystic and inactive, whereas the Western countries seem more pragmatic, material, fact-oriented, progressive and active. These characteristics have become stereotyped impressions of East and West among the general public.

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[3] Foucault (1980) proposes an analogous notion of power/knowledge, which will be discussed in Chap. 3.3.1 and 6.1.2.

On issues of stereotyped impressions, the above characteristics, and the presence or absence of ancient wisdom in East and West, Nakamura (1960) argued that, although East and West scholars indeed often have completely different concepts or attitudes towards the same subject matter, the distinction of "East" and "West" is superficial and problematic as no characteristic can be identified as exclusively Eastern or Western. Thus, the terms East and West are better used in terms of geography than in terms of the political or social structures of colonisation. They should be used to help identify, no matter how superficially or substantially, vaguely or clearly, the characteristics of particular cases, rather than generalized cultural models of East and West. Piovesana (1989) agreed with Nakamura. However he commented that, even in terms of geography or culture the signification of the two terms still involves often no less than half of the earth and no shorter a period than a few hundred years. Therefore, there is a need to be more specific in discussions using the two terms. In the light of the above this thesis will use the terms East and West following Nakamura's suggestion whilst bearing in mind Piovesana's comment.

In the context of the increasing contact between East and West, scholars such as Nishiamane, Nakae, and Nishida have devoted themselves to the cultural exchange of West and East in order to broaden their worldviews and benefit from diverse cultural systems (Xu 1993). The same spirit underpins many scholars' research projects in the twentieth century, projects which endeavour to compare critically the similarity and difference between these diverse cultures (Piovesana 1989). For example, Nakamura (1960) re-considers and elucidates the doctrines of Buddhism through the perspectives suggested in the Western philosophical tradition. Some scholars such as Risaku (1951) and Yoshimi (2005) particularly bear in mind that, underneath the comparative studies of cultures, which oscillate between the dialectical poles of a unified total philosophy or *philosophia perennis* and heterogeneous and parallel conceptual systems, an open-minded attitude in research is needed as the point of departure for acquiring an insight into the cultures in question.

Piovesana (1989) understands the spirit of Risaku and Yoshimi and finds its parallel in the writings of Ferguson (1992), who suggests that the *acculturation of culture* in one country is

often processed through "borrowing" thoughts or technologies from other cultures. The term 'borrowing', instead of signifying the superior and dominant role of the lender and the inferior role of the borrower indicates an interactive relationship between the two parties involved, within which cultural significances may be re-discovered, inspired, examined, or exchanged so as to enrich each other. This notion of borrowing is adopted by Piovesana to understand the success of Westernisation brought by the Meiji Restoration together with the effort to introduce Western thoughts into Japan exerted by those Japanese philosophers mentioned above. In the Eastern countries the same spirit for managing the tension between East and West still plays an important role in many researchers' projects in a variety of fields, in artistic creative processes and in much of people's daily lives. Butoh is one example of such a spirit.

The tension between East and West is reflected not only in philosophy but also in social events and in the performing arts. In the twentieth century, the acceptance or rejection of a Western style of life has become a complicated phenomenon. 1960, for example, was a year of turmoil for Japan. Triggered by the revision of the US-Japan Mutual Security Treaty, the debates and arguments which appeared after the end of the Second World War became even more heated. Confusion arose over several issues: whether Japan should adopt a policy of general and complete disarmament, or one of limited rearmament; how, in the modernisation of Japan, a balance could be found between extreme Americanisation and pure Japanese tradition; what the role of Japan should be in the world (Raz 1988). These issues became the undertone of political activities and identities in Japan at that time:

> The hitherto enemy was now best friend. The conservatives (the former 'nationalists') who had cooperated with the occupation [of China] now supported the renewal of the treaty. The leftists (the former 'traitors') now sought an independent, more 'nationalist' policy. (p.10-11)

Japan's social structure underwent radical changes after the war. The new civil law defined new relationships between men and women, husbands and wives. As a result, each member of the traditional family ceased to have a rigid role, transforming the family into a more flexible structure of social interaction. Agricultural land reform and rapid urbanisation reshaped the appearance of daily life. The emergence of huge condominiums put an end to the intimate

relationships of neighbourhood and village. As a result, Japanese society in the 1960s both suffered and benefited from a diversity of value systems and the economic boom. Traditional viewpoints which embraced the *five relations* of Confucianism and metamorphosis in nature thus established a nexus with Western viewpoints of family, social roles, and urban lives, within which new social problems arose and opportunities emerged for exploring new meanings in life.

Thus, post-war Japan experienced a mood of progress, but was also in a state of psychological chaos. Akira Iriye (1997), a history professor at Harvard University, reviews those years in retrospect:

> The time seems to have come for Japan to establish a new ideological basis for its diplomacy. Japan's future should not be defined simply in terms of its own security or economic interests . . . but also of certain ideals that would connect Japan to the world so that the Japanese would dedicate themselves to achieving, besides their safety and prosperity, some sense of participation in world affairs. (p.154-155)

The social and political situation influenced artistic activities, which also reflected the tension between East and West. In literature, a reappraisal of the values of pre-war Japanese writings was seen in literary works and criticism. Writers such as Junichiro Tanizaki, Yasunari Kawabata, Osamu Dazai and Yukio Mishima reclaimed traditional values by rejecting the moral, political or philosophical judgements of the Western world. A new folklore also emerged, which centred on the works of Kunio Yanagita. These literary works were seeking a means of escaping the effects of Westernisation. They were stirring up a mood of nostalgia through the use of conventional word-play and a fragmentary style of description. Raz (1988) notes:

> In the days of defeat and despair, lyricism and gentle melancholy, or a sense of the ephemeral quality of life were features that best expressed the period's mood of confusion, sorrow and insecurity. Sometimes seeded with existentialist or Marxist ideas, this mood took nihilistic, absurd, or lyrical forms. The strong feeling for design and convention, the use of word-play, the fragmentary style—all these were no longer rejected as weakness. (p.11-12)

In the performing arts, performers began to collaborate with musicians during the early stages of creation of a work. Traditional music was mixed with Western music. The two forms had been previously considered incompatible. Theatrical works were conducted as experiments exploring the excessive use of clichés and melodrama, as a way to jibe at urbanisation and

Westernisation. The stage for a performance was often similar to a flea market, decorated with rags and strange combinations of Japanese and Western costumes, symbolising a wasteland or the backyard of a dying civilisation. These avant-garde artists in dance and theatre, like their compatriots in the West

> ...expressed a strong aversion to art. They attempted to break up all structures into fragile, seemingly meaningless fragments. Often this was done in a merry, childishly happy, party-like atmosphere, as if the artists chose to look at the existential suffering and confusion with laughter. (Raz 1988, p.14)

In Japan the *aesthetics of imperfection* was re-discovered and re-addressed at the junction of two trends: the mocking of Westernisation and the revival of the Japanese tradition. The *aesthetics of imperfection* is considered a legitimate feature of both Japanese folk tradition and classical art:

> The grotesque dance of the twisted-faced *Hyottoko*; the *modoki*, whose function was to ridicule sacred rituals; the *namahage* festival in the north, where young men, wearing gruesome masks enter houses with their boots on, shouting and roaring, threatening and frightening children or pinching the bottoms of brides; and the *akutai matsuri*, where participants use abusive language and gestures against fellow participants and priests. (Raz1988, p.15)

The *aesthetics of imperfection* reappeared and underpinned the works of many Japanese artists during the 1960s. For example, the graphic artist, Tadanori Yokoo, established a personal style of "bad taste", through addressing banal, the ugly, and embarrassing subject matter. The forms of Butoh dance had also been affected since the cooperation between Tadanori and Hijikata.

Butoh and other arts forms were under influences of the context outlined above. The contents of Butoh can be seen as depicting those faces and lives seen in nature, in the farms, in villages, and in the city. Imagery from the daily lives and memories of the choreographers and performers contributed to the diversity of significances of the dance, presenting the multiple facets of the interaction between East and West. Traditional Japanese and Chinese philosophy and the impact from the West provide initial reference points for an understanding of Butoh. As a result of centuries of cultural exchange, Butoh has an open-minded spirit as its point of

departure. Additionally the creative processes of Butoh are an example of a broadening or diversification of cultural significances in the arts which have benefited from the tension between East and West.

## 2.3 Phenomenological Perspective

A Phenomenological perspective is also used in this thesis to explore the creative processes employed in Butoh choreography. This thesis holds that existentialist phenomenology does not only correspond to the Japanese philosophical context of Butoh, but also to some of the fundamental processes used by Butoh choreographers.

Several aspects of Japanese traditional philosophy may be compared to the subject matter in existentialist phenomenology. The notion of spirit emphasised in Chinese and Japanese culture and philosophy has a parallel in the attitude of phenomenological inquiries. A sincere attitude is required by Confucianism to avoid preconceptions and habitual thoughts. An open-minded attitude is likewise encouraged by Taoism and Zen philosophy in order to accept the metamorphosis of nature and to explore its symbolic significances (as discussed in 2.1). Phenomenological inquiries similarly begin with an open-minded attitude for the eradication of preconceptions and habitual thoughts. As Spiegelberg (1994) argues, phenomenology

> ...expresses a revolt against an approach to philosophy that takes its point of departure from crystallized beliefs and theories handed down by a tradition which only too often perpetuates preconceptions and prejudgments... emancipation from preconceptions is perhaps the most teachable part of the phenomenological method. It can be one of its chief tangible contributions to an enriched philosophy. (p.680)

The open-minded attitude is embodied in each phenomenological inquiry through questions such as "what is this" or "whether it is a phenomenon in our actual experience", and metaphoric phrases such as "opening the eyes", "not getting blinded", or "looking and listening". These bear a resemblance to the recommendations in Eastern philosophical traditions.

In this respect, it can be argued that an open-minded attitude guides the directions of phenomenological inquiries in the same way that spirit guides the development of a process of

human behaviour in Chinese and Japanese philosophy and cultural lives. Heidegger's notion (1962) about inquiry could be taken as a support for this claim:

> Every questioning is a seeking [Suchen]. Every seeking gets guided before-hand by what is sought. Inquiry is a cognizant seeking for an entity both with regard to the fact that it is and with regard to its Being as it is. This cognizant seeking can take the form of 'investigating' [Untersuchen], in which one lays bare that which the question is about and ascertains its character. Any inquiry, as an inquiry about something, has that which is asked about [sein Gefragtes] (p.24 ).

However, phenomenological inquiries rarely involve a concern for moral spirit, which is emphasised in Japanese and Chinese culture and philosophy. What is more, in the East, moral spirit refers to Tao which, as discussed previously, constitutes the natural laws underpinning the metamorphosis of both nature and culture. The moral spirit is not concerned with a right or wrong regulated or stipulated by God or the laws of society, as it is when used in Western sense of moral law. Phenomenological inquiries rarely involve an investigation of Western moral law or indeed Eastern spiritual morality.

The notions of *intuiting* by Nishida and *forgetting* by Zhuang-Zi discussed in section 2.1 may also be seen as other aspects of Eastern philosophy that can find their parallels in phenomenology, particularly in the notion of returning to the phenomena through *intuiting*. Nishida (1966) explains that *intuiting* is to perceive an object or a situation without, at least in the beginning, analysing and theorizing it. *Intuiting* involves an effort made to suspend all common assumptions about phenomena and remove theoretical or analytical biases. Accordingly, for Nishida, what is perceived through *intuiting* are the phenomena *per se*.

The notion of *intuiting* for perceiving objects and situations *per se* can also be seen in Husserl's work. Husserl (1901)[1] suggests that *intuiting* is different from merely passively receiving stimulation from environments. His *intuiting* actively grasps phenomena through "effort" (Erschauen). In other words, the perceiving subject has to "put out of action" (ausser kraft setzen), "turn off or fail to use [the logical mind] " (ausschalten, keinen gebrauch machen), and "bracket [select the phenomena for intuiting]" (einklammern) (cited in Spiegelberg 1994,

[1] Reprinted in 2001.

pp.104-5, 120).

Husserl's ultimate concern is "with the things themselves" (Zu den Sachen) (Husserl 1911, p.147)[5]. He tries to establish an epistemological basis for knowledge in the things or phenomena (Sachen) through *intuiting*. Husserl's hypothesis of returning to the phenomena has generally been accepted with little disagreement among the phenomenologists who succeeded him. Indeed, it is at the core of almost every phenomenological inquiry (Spiegelberg 1994).

The worldview of *merging with the universe* present in Japanese philosophy which underpins Butoh can also be understood through the notions of the *phenomenal body*, inter-subjectivity, life-world, and corporeality discussed in phenomenology. According to Confucianism, Taoism, and Zen philosophy, as discussed in section 2.1, *merging with the universe* refers to a state of mind by which a person and the environment seem to be integrated as one entity, sharing the same moral values and the similar processes of metamorphosis of forms and identities. This relationship between a person and the environment is also examined in phenomenology. From a phenomenological perspective, the analysis of the relationship of a perceiver and what is perceived starts with the examination of the human body, identifying its dualistic characteristics of being both a perceiver and a perceived object. Garner (1995) argues that

> The body is that by which I come to know the world, the perceptual ground against which the world has existence for me; at the same time, it is an object in this world, much (though not all) of which is available to my direct perception. In short, my body constitutes my primordial awareness of such dualities as subject/object, inside/outside, *Leib/Korper*, but it also occasions my earliest understanding of their ambiguous relationship. (p.50)

Merleau-Ponty (1962) terms this duality of the body *double sensation*, explaining it in these terms:

> What is meant by "double sensation" is that, in passing from one role to the other, I can identify the hand touched as the same one which will in a moment be touching... The body catches itself from the outside engaged in a cognitive process; it tries to touch

[5] Reprinted in 1965.

> itself while being touched, and initiates 'a kind of reflection' which is sufficient to distinguish it from objects. (p.93)

Thus, he argues, "the body is never completely constituted as an object. It is neither tangible nor visible in so far as it sees and touches. The body is therefore not one of the external objects and always is there" (p.92). Merleau-Ponty terms it the *phenomenal body*. This may be seen as for a Westerner the first layer of the understanding of the Eastern sense of *merging with the universe* from a phenomenological perspective.

Phenomenologists since Merleau-Ponty have further explored the *phenomenal body* and its duality. Plugge identifies *double sensation* as *Leib* and the *Korper*. According to Plugge, *Leib* is "the body as it is subjectively lived, the experiential ground of perception, knowledge, intention, and self-extension beyond the body's physical boundaries", and *Korper* is "the physical body, observed from the outside and subject to biomechanical laws" (recited in Garner1995, p.109). He argues that the *Leib* and the *Korper* intertwine with each other, both in the case of a patient in pain, and in that of healthy people. For the patient, the corporeality of the diseased body is no longer felt as being one's own. This disassociation suggests a fundamental self-estrangement or self-alienation, the presence of something "thinglike and objectal" at the heart of subjectivity itself. For a healthy person, the *merging* of the *phenomenal body* with space as a result of action or movement simultaneously generates a sense of transformation, both of the external object or space into a subjective field, and of the *phenomenal body* into a thing-like object with the texture of materiality (Plugge 1970).

Scarry (1985) suggests that the body in extreme situations, such as exhaustion, pain, or hunger, may experience a paradox: on the one hand, "...the pain, continually amplified within the person's body, is also amplified in the sense that it is objectified, made visible to those outside the person's body..." (p.28), therefore, the pain becomes a thinglike, localised burden, which seems to be alienated from the subjectivity of the person. On the other hand, "it [the pain] differs from these events, and from every other bodily and psychic event, by not having an object in the external world... pain is not 'of' or 'for' anything-it is itself alone. This objectlessness...cannot easily be objectified in any form, material or verbal" (p.161-2), the pain, then, "is an intentional

state without an intentional object" (p.164). This paradox of objectification and objectless intentional state reveals the inextricability of *Leib* and *Korper*.

The viewpoint of the *phenomenal body*, or the inextricability of *Leib* and *Korper*, has been generally accepted among phenomenologists. As an integral part of the viewpoint, the notion of the merging of the two roles of a perceiver and a perceived object within one body is first acknowledged. The notion of the merging of the two roles is then extended and applied to examining the relationship between two people, thus introducing the notion of the other-self and the merging of self and other-self. Each of them may be the perceiver or the perceived.

Merleau-Ponty (1962) initially reflects on the daily experiences of such relationships between two people.

> It is well known that there is a problem of other people...If the other is truly for himself alone, beyond his being for me, and if we are for each other and not both for God, we must necessarily have some appearance for each other. He must and I must have an outer appearance, and there must be, besides the perspective of the For Oneself -- my view of myself and the other's of himself, a perspective of For Others -- my view of others and theirs of me. Of course, these two perspectives, in each one of us, cannot be simply juxtaposed, for in that case it is not I that the other would see, nor he that I should see. (preface: xii)

Thus, he suggests that there is experience in the distinction between the perception of oneself and that of others. Here, Merleau-Ponty points out a problem:

> Hitherto the Cogito [consciousness] depreciated the perception of others, teaching me as it did that the I is accessible only to itself, since it defined me as the thought which I have of myself, and which clearly I am alone in having, at least in this ultimate sense. (preface: xii)

Accordingly, the dualist division of oneself and others induces a dualist viewpoint of subjectivity and objectivity, which are seen as mutually exclusive and incapable of communication. In order to solve this problematic dualism, Merleau-Ponty suggests that:

> For the 'other' to be more than an empty word, it is necessary that my existence should never be reduced to my bare awareness of existing, but that it should take in also the awareness that one may have of it, and thus include my incarnation in some nature

> and the possibility, at least, of a historical situation. The Cogito must reveal me in a situation, and it is on this condition alone that transcendental subjectivity can, as Husserl puts it, be an inter-subjectivity...Transcendental subjectivity is a revealed subjectivity, revealed to itself and to others, and is for that reason an inter-subjectivity. (preface: xii-xiii; p.361)

In this manner, Merleau-Ponty defines as inter-subjectivity or transcendental consciousness an existence which not only takes in one's own awareness, but also shares in others' awareness. The example of a newborn baby perceiving the movement at the adult's mouth and repeating it with its own mouth may be regarded as a demonstration of inter-subjectivity, as the baby perceives the intentions in both its own body and that of the adult's. The merging of the two roles, in this case, may be acknowledged as the sharing of the state of roles merging between the two people. This viewpoint of inter-subjectivity has also been generally accepted by most phenomenologists. This may be seen as the second layer of the understanding of *merging with the universe* from a phenomenological perspective.

The notion of inter-subjectivity can be applied to examining more complicated relationships, suggesting that the sharing of the state of roles merging between two people can be further extended to include more people and objects in nature. Merleau-Ponty (1962) suggests that there could never be a purely subjective or objective world, but only a constantly inter-subjective one. It is on the basis of the latter that communication and understanding between people becomes possible:

> The act of transcendence is first encountered in the acquisition of a pattern of behaviour, then in the communication of gesture: it is through the same power that the body opens itself to some new kind of conduct and makes it understood to external witness...We must therefore recognise as an ultimate fact this open and indefinite power of giving significance-that is, both of apprehending and conveying a meaning-by which man transcends himself towards a new form of behaviour, or towards other people, or towards his own thought, through his body and his speech. (p.193-4)

As a result, a greater world is assumed, of which any single individual, any single perspective, and any physical environment is merely a part. Husserl (1901) terms this greater world *lebenswelt* or *life-world*, to indicate the intertwined relationship between everything within it. Alternatively, this greater world is termed as *being-in-the-world* or *ek-stase* by Heidegger (1962) and Merleau-Ponty (1962), to emphasise the inter-subjective relationship between one another

within it.

From a phenomenological perspective the Japanese and Chinese worldview of *merging with the universe* may be understood as the sharing of the state of roles merging between people and objects, not in the social sense discussed by Merleau-Ponty but in nature. In other words, the establishment of a resultant *world* derived from the *merging with the universe* may be seen as initially come from the merging of two roles of the perceiver and perceived within the *phenomenal body.* Then the state of merging is extended to include two people, and more people and objects in the inter-subjective relationship. In Western philosophy, the term "corporeality" is used to refer to a similar world, emphasising that it is a worldview obtained through a bodily rather than a scientific or mathematic perspective.

It is worth noting that, in comparison with the Japanese worldview of *merging with the universe*, the phenomenological perspective of roles merging seems to focus mainly on the sharing of processes of metamorphosis of forms and identities, but rarely on the sharing of moral values. In other words, the Western bodily perspective of inter-subjectivity involves the ways people perceive the *world*, rather than the ways people make moral judgement about the *world*. Thus, phenomenological inquiries are generally inclined to distinguish between perception and morality, whereas moral values are considered an integral part of natural phenomena and the perception of natural phenomena in the Confucianism which underpins Chinese and Japanese philosophy (section 2.1).

Drawing from the comparison made above between existentialist phenomenology and traditional Japanese philosophy, it can be argued that the phenomenological perspective of the world is considered parallel to that of the synthesised Japanese philosophy, and those notions such as the open-minded attitude, the *intuiting* of the phenomena themselves, and an inter-subjective *world* are all related to perception. It is also suggested that the study of perception in phenomenology provides details of the manifold of perception, which might be of value to a discussion of activities which are grounded in Eastern cultures. For this reason, this thesis adapts the phenomenology of perception as a framework for an investigation of Butoh

creative processes.

However, it is also noted that, just as existentialist phenomenology and traditional Japanese philosophy hold distinctive viewpoints on the relationship of perception and morality, their viewpoints on the notion of "meaning" are also different. In Japan and China *meaning* is taken as a parallel term of *Tao* and *Truth*. These three terms are interchangeable. As discussed previously (section 2.1), there are in Eastern thought two kinds of *Truth* or *meaning*, namely the presence or presentation of the phenomena of nature and of virtue, and the symbolic significances of human behaviour and natural phenomena. In phenomenology, the term "meaning" is used mainly to refer to the knowledge obtained through inferring from perceptual data or reasoning.

Merleau-Ponty (1962) distinguishes two layers of "meaning". *Primary meaning* refers to the acquisition of perception, which varies from person to person. Thus, *primary meaning* is specific and transitory, which may be taken as corresponding to the metamorphosis of phenomena. *Secondary meaning* refers to the further conceptualisation or interpretation of *primary meaning*. This lies at the conceptual level. The use of symbols and signs falls into this category. It may be seen that Merleau-Ponty's notion of "meaning" is generally parallel to that of Japanese and Chinese philosophy.

However, other scholars' discussions are inclined to emphasize *secondary meaning* and overlook *primary meaning*. Sokolowski (2000)[6] for example, introduces three levels of structure in "meaning", when summarizing discussions on "meaning" in phenomenology. The three levels are: syntactic combinations that yield meaningful propositions, the consistency of propositions, and the coherence of the statements we make. These three levels, he claims, are related to linguistics.

Sokolowski (2000) argues that in phenomenology, syntax, consistency, and coherence are initially derived from our consciousness which intuitively establishes the relevancy of the

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[6] Chinese edition is published in 2004.

perception of objects, and is then further developed into linguistic rules of inferring or reasoning. This notion can be seen as being derived from Husserl's notion of *categorial intentionality* (Husserl 1901). Accordingly, the criteria for judging whether the syntax is meaningful or whether a statement is consistent or coherent are based on perception and potential experiences. For example, the reason for "my uncle" and "bald head" to be able to form a meaningful statement is because they are potentially existent phenomena and possible to be found associated in daily life which may be acknowledged through perception.

Although the notion of syntax, consistency, and coherence being derived from perception seems to correspond to Merleau-Ponty's notion of *primary meaning*, as far as the term "meaning" is concerned, Sokolowski (2000) points out that it usually refers to the developed rules and the statements rather than perception. In other words, Sokolowski has shifted the area of concern designated by the term "meaning" to the conceptual level of inferring and reasoning.

Drawing on the notions of perception, morality, and what is known as "meaning", it can also be seen that the viewpoint of what is known as *Truth* in phenomenology substantially overlaps with Chinese and Japanese viewpoints, albeit being different in their undertones and application in life.

Sokolowski argues that two kinds of *Truth* are discussed in phenomenology, namely the *Truth of disclosure* and the *Truth of correctness*, the former being the presence of an object acknowledged through perception, and the latter the confirmed judgement previously made through inferring or reasoning. This can be seen as parallel to the two Kinds of *Truth* held in Chinese and Japanese philosophy, which are the presence or presentation of the phenomena of nature and of virtue, and the symbolic significance of human behaviour and natural phenomena.

With respect to their different undertones, *Truth* in Chinese and Japanese philosophy is usually discussed with a sense of moral significance. Therefore, the notion of *Truth* applied to daily life

often serves as a guidance of behaviour. Conversely, *Truth* in phenomenology rarely bears moral significances, its application being the establishment of knowledge rather than as guiding behaviour.

The phenomenological viewpoints of "meaning" and *Truth*, which shift the concern to the area of inferring and reasoning, are not unlike the viewpoints generally held in the rationalist tradition of Western philosophy. Within the rationalist tradition, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) argues that *a priori* knowledge can be considered as knowledge which is universal and necessary therefore constantly true. *A priori* knowledge can be further divided into two types: first, analytic *a priori*, which consists of propositions of judgements to be confirmed without reference to experience but solely on the base of the terms employed. The statement: "A red rose is red" is analytic *a priori*. Second, synthetic *a priori*, which might contain information not purely of a logical nature and yet does not depend on empirical or experimental information for its truth. The statement: "A straight line between two points is the shortest" or any mathematical proposition is synthetic *a priori* (Kant 1781; Popkin 1998).

Alder (1997) supports Kant's notion that true knowledge can be seen as falling into the "realm of certitude". It cannot be proved untrue by any newly found evidence, or by adopting another perspective or inferring process. Accordingly, Alder acknowledges two kinds of true knowledge, tautologies, which are parallel to Kant's analytic *a priori*, and self-evident knowledge, which compares to Kant's synthetic *a priori*. Alder considers self-evident knowledge as the form of analysis that we use for the study of a subject in order to gain understanding greater than can be acquired through superficial observation. However, most inferring processes used in daily life, as Alder holds, do not fall into the "realm of certitude" but the "realm of doubt". When making a better choice among many options, the results of those processes are judgements with "moral certainty" rather than "genuine certitude". Any new evidence or different perspective may change the previous judgement of inferring.

It can be seen that in the rationalist tradition, as demonstrated through Kant and Alder, what is considered as "Truth" is centred on a particular type of inferring and reasoning. From this

viewpoint, the two kinds of *Truth* proposed in phenomenology can be questioned and criticized. Alder (ibid) states that perception as *Truth of disclosure* can be taken as apparently true only in the very moment of perceiving. Beyond here and now, perception as memorised would fall into the "realm of doubt", as the existence of the perceived object needs further verification, and the memory could be influenced by imagination. Similarly, symbolic significance of inferring as *Truth of correctness* is considered moral judgement that is not the same as self-evident knowledge or *a priori*.

The criticism may be extended, as seen through the notion of post-structuralism which claims that perception is illusive and an analysis of perception is required in order to find the verifiable true facts (Jameson, 1994). It may yet go further, as proposed by the notion of deconstruction which does not acknowledge the notions of perception and self-evident knowledge. Derrida (1981; 1982) states that before conceptualisation and contextualization there is no means through which to access knowledge of the world. In other words, concepts and textual or spoken language instead of perception are the basic building blocks for establishing knowledge. Moreover, such knowledge cannot be proved as constantly true or untrue, as the criteria for being "true" vary due to diverse inferring processes and contextualization. In brief, "true" or "Truth" is a problematic term from a deconstructionist viewpoint.

Drawing on the above discussion, it can be seen that different viewpoints of "Truth" are held in Japanese philosophy, phenomenology, and the rationalist tradition of Western philosophy. In the East, perception, morality, and symbolic significances are well integrated as a whole and are the same subject matter. In contrast, these are three distinctive subjects in the West, each being studied through diverse disciplines. From the point of view of the philosophical tradition of the West, the notions of spirit, *Truth*, and *meaning*, which are taken as a foundation of life in the East, may be regarded as personal moral judgment or religious belief.

Accordingly, the tension can be observed between phenomenology and rationalism. It parallels a cultural tension between East and West. Considering this tension, philosophers such as Polanyi (1977) attempt to find constructive significances within the conflict, not through

establishing a unified philosophy, suppressing one and insisting on the other, but through exploring them as being dialectical and complementary.

Polanyi (1977) re-examines those verifiable facts or self-evident truths held in rationalist tradition, taking science as the exemplar. He notes that

> Even within the same academic community contradictory judgments of plausibility can be upheld by different groups. This fact proves that these judgments, which underlie every empirical inference, rely to a decisive extent on grounds that are not specifiable...our modern scientific education teaches us an even more absurd view about the nature of things when it affirms that all coherent systems of our experience-including our own conscious existence-can ultimately be represented by their atomic particles interacting according to atomic forces...the fact is that all empirical knowledge is rooted in subsidiaries that are to some extent un-specifiable...in the history of science there are many instances of partly true ideas that were totally rejected by some scientists because of their erroneous content while others accepted them in spite of all their errors. (p.145-6)

Accordingly, Polanyi agrees with Derrida's notion that knowledge is not universally verifiable. However, Polanyi does not denounce the notion of *Truth.* Rather, he suggests that every discipline has its own "sense of plausibility", which allows its research to be undertaken within a given range of plausibility. In this case, as long as each research project has been ascribed its range of applicability, diverse disciplines may be considered as mutually dialectical and complementary.

Polanyi also proposes that the sense of plausibility in a discipline may be seen as rooted in our ability to make a connection between one object and another on the basis of intuition and experience. Inferring, used in no matter which discipline, is by nature tacit integration. Archaic myth, literature metaphor and metonymy, semiotic sign and symbol, modern science and philosophy are all functioning on such tacit integration of their studied material. Polanyi's notion of tacit integration can be seen as derived from Cassirer's notion of symbolism, to what the ancient people believed as the sacred power of life and nature (Cassirer, 1955). To sum up, Polanyi suggests that, by allowing/acknowledging a certain range of plausibility, issues such as the existence of *Truth* and *meaning* can be studied rather than being avoided, and that studies of these issues can be undertaken through different disciplines.

Bearing in mind the open-minded attitude held in phenomenology, and taking up Polanyi's position, this thesis initially adopts phenomenology as a framework for analysing the manifold of Butoh creative processes, with an adjustment made to allow for the inclusion of the consideration of morality and spirituality when discussing issues relating to the perception of imagery. In addition, notions from other disciplines that hold similar viewpoints to those of phenomenology and Eastern philosophy are referred to, including the notion of symbolism (Cassirer, 1955), the notion of *action* and *life world* (Schutz, 1972), and the notion of neural networks (Grossberg, 1999). Furthermore, perspectives such as rationalism, which hold a different viewpoint of "Truth" from that in phenomenology and the East, will be used wherever appropriate as dialectical and complementary perspectives for an investigation of the creative processes in order to elucidate the choreographic options that may lead to the diversification of significances in the choreography.

## Chapter 3: Perspectives on Butoh Practice

A Butoh choreographer has available a multitude of choreographic options, which allows him/her to take into consideration different perspectives and viewpoints in order to reveal/conceal a variety of significances, both cultural and otherwise, through the creative process. In view of the continuing incorporation of Western values into the Japanese cultural framework it can be suggested that, rather than representing a specific set of *Japanese* cultural values, as might initially appear to be the case, Butoh also affords the possibility of presenting a multitude of different viewpoints and cultural values. Accordingly, detailed research on Butoh creative processes could serve to elucidate the possible ways in which significances of a dance may be diversified through an extended choice of choreographic options available to the choreographer.

These may come from audiences, from choreographers, or from both. In Butoh not only can the choreographer's intention be acknowledged by the audience, but also the audience's viewpoints may be incorporated into future choreographic considerations. For example, a choreographer may choose to adopt the viewpoint an audience might use for analysing a dance performance as one of the choreographic options he/she employs in the creative process. Conversely, as an interpretative option, an audience may deliberately try to identify the materials and ideas used by the choreographer in the creative process in order to understand what kind of significances the choreographer might intend to convey through the dance performance. As a result of this the choreographer's and the audience's viewpoints are likely to overlap and find analogies one with the other.

That said, this thesis acknowledges that a choreographer's, performer's, and audience's viewpoints of a dance work differ, inasmuch as options available for a choreographer to generate dance imagery, for a performer to present the intended imagery, and for an audience to understand the imagery are usually adopted by each in different ways. As a result, the significances of the dance are usually seen differently in the creative process, in the moment of performance, and in the reflection of the dance.

Within the above context, this chapter will start by examining the viewpoints of Butoh choreographers and the viewpoints of Butoh's audiences including researchers and critics, and offering a review of the similarity and difference between them. It will also examine the depth and scope of the issues involved in Butoh creative processes. In the light of the understanding of both, an analysis of potential choreographic options can then proceed in the succeeding chapters.

## 3.1 The Viewpoints of Butoh Choreographers

Butoh choreographers' viewpoints[1] can be seen as concerning several themes. They include (1) the search for identity, (2) social criticism, (3) seeking the *Truth* of life, (4) ceremony or festival, (5) body-mind coherence as a means of psychosomatic therapy. These themes are associated with the developments which have taken place progressively in Butoh between the 1960s and the turn of the century.

### 3.1.1 The Search for Identity

Butoh choreographic processes were used by the originators of the form, Tatsumi Hijikata and Kazuo Ohno, as a journey in their search for personal identity. Hijikata, for example, made use of his childhood experiences in his choreography and regarded it as a means of exploring diverse aspects of his personality. Hijikata's choreographic works as a whole symbolised his journey through life. He believed that these experiences and aspects of personality had a direct link to his identity (Hijikata 1983, 1988,). Ohno (1988, 1998) admitted that he started dancing when faced with the confusing issue of identity. He believed that the answer could be found within his own body, and that the body was capable of moving in a particular manner because of his past experiences and memories.

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[1] This thesis uses 'perspectives' to refer to those of disciplines such as phenomenology, sociology, or anthropology, and 'viewpoints' those of people such as choreographers, performers, or spectators.

Hijikata used the word Ankoku (暗黒)[2] to imply that the gestures, postures, and movements of his dance were derived from some hidden corner of his body and mind, which were usually suppressed by social conventions but were directly linked to his worldview. He explored subject matter in relation to societal taboos but might link these from time to time to personal alternative experiences of life which were distinct from the norms of society (Hijikata 1988; 2000a; 2000d). In *Forbidden Colours* (*Kijiki*) (1959), Hijikata arranged for himself, Yoshito Ohno (Kazuo Ohno's son), and a chicken to appear on the stage together. A sequence of movement was developed for the two performers. At the end of the movement sequence, Yoshito Ohno squeezed the chicken between his thighs and smothered it. This motif of "killing a chicken" was repeated again in *Revolt of the Flesh* (1968). This motif reveals the passion in a dancer's life, which is usually suppressed and hidden behind ordinary bodily actions but which is constantly disturbing the dancer (Hijikata, 1998) and, as Goda (1983) suggests, signifies sexual relationships.

> In the dance motif of "killing a chicken", which *Forbidden Colours* and *Revolt of the Flesh* share, one could plainly see the turbulent passion of the boy's youthful flesh, an expression of a dark sexuality which he could neither control nor be set free from. (p.82)

The bodily gestures, postures, and other elements such as costume and sound in these dances all helped to disclose suppressed aspects of Hijikata's life. In *Revolt of the Flesh,* Hijikata wore a pink dress with knee socks, together with his wild mane-like hair, beard, and moustache, to present the rebellious image of a man. At times, his body was distorted, or hung in the air. These were by no means bodily expressions based on the norms of the society. On the contrary, they were specific, unusual expressions linked to the dark side of personal experience.

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[2] The term Butoh is an abbreviation of Ankoku Butoh (暗黒舞踊派). This term was coined by Hijikata. It incorporated the concept of his specific way of using the body and movement as the main characteristic of Butoh choreography (Hijikata, 1988). The word Butoh (舞踏) originated in China and came to Japan around 1000 years ago. Its etymology refers specifically to dance through the character bu (舞), while toh (踏) implies stomping. Together, the two syllables signify a particular bodily movement, which is inclined to descend or be close to the ground. Hijikata notes, "I would never jump or leave the ground; it is on the ground that I dance" (cited in Holborn, 1987, p.8). In his choreographic works, he invented many strong dynamic movements that rebounded from the ground.

The use of the term *Ankoku Butoh* also implied that the choreography of Butoh dance was based on Hijikata's memories of Tohoku, his home province. Tohoku is a remote, rural backwater in the north of Japan, and is where Hijikata obtained most of his experiences and inspiration. These served as preparation for his choreographic creativity, and formed his notions of body, movement, space, and dance (Hijikata, 1988). In *Tohoku Kabuki* (1972), for example, Hijikata adopted many gestures and movements of the Tohoku people of the early Showa era (the same period as Hijikata's childhood) as the basis for the movement in this dance.

Accordingly, it can be seen that a central intention of Butoh choreographers was to use the creative processes as a means for exploring identity, reflecting on past experiences and bodily actions.

### 3.1.2 Social Criticism

Social criticism also became one of the Butoh choreographers' intentions in the socio-political context of the 1960s and 1970s. Following Hijikata's and Ohno's footsteps many artists began to develop their own Butoh works. These included artists such as Akaji Maro and his company Dairakuda-Kan, Isamu Osuka and his company Byakko-Sha, Min Tanaka and his company Mai-Juku Performance Company. Like Hijikata and Ohno they were all influenced by the political situation and changes in social structure after Japan's defeat in the Second World War. In their works and those of Hijikata and Ohno social criticism was presented alongside the exploration of identity. They strove to establish what could still be considered Japanese whilst the country underwent rapid Americanisation and modernisation. For example, Hijikata (2000a) states very clearly:

> I will no longer be cheated by a bad check called democracy. No future correspondence will reach me from slightly soiled pigeons set free by society's hands and I am enforcing silence too on my youth, when I was not even a dog licking the wounds of capitalism...all the power of civilized morality, hand in hand with the capitalist economic system and its political institutions, is utterly opposed to using the body simply for the purpose, means, or tool of pleasure. Still more, to a production-oriented society, the aimless use of the body, which I call dance, is a deadly enemy which must be taboo. (p.43-4)

The works of the Butoh choreographers mentioned above adopted the *aesthetics of imperfection*. The use of choreographic elements such as twisted-faces, gruesome masks, Japanese and Western costumes, fragmentary style, word-play, threatening behaviour, shouting, roaring, abusive language and gestures, Japanese and Western music, clichés and melodrama, rags and other garbage-like material, and banal or ugly graphic art can be seen in several choreographic works created by Hijikata, Dairakuda-Kan, and Byakko-Sha (Viala and Masson-Sekine, 1988). Their works became, in part, a parody of Americanisation and modernization, and Butoh dance became a means for them to examine their own individual identity in relation to the Japanese national identity, and enabled them to direct social criticism towards the Japanese socio-political situations of the 1960s and 1970s.

### 3.1.3 Seeking the *Truth* of life

By the end of 1970s, Butoh had been recognised internationally as a new dance genre which went beyond its Japanese origins. Since the 1980s Butoh dance has been practiced and performed not only by the Japanese in Japan, but also by non-Japanese around the world. In January 1978, a Butoh company, Butoh-Ha Sebi and the Ariadone appeared at the Nouveau Carre Theatre in Paris and gave the first documented Butoh performance in Europe. In October of the same year, Yoko Ashikawa performed Hijikata's work at the Ma Exhibition - Time and Space of Japan, held at the Louvre Museum of Decorative Arts under the sponsorship of the Festival d'Automne. Since the 1980s, Kazuo Ohno, Sankai Juku, Min Tanaka, Byakko-Sha, Akaji Maro and Dairakuda-Kan, and a number of other Butoh dancers have toured Europe and North America. These Butoh performances have enthralled audiences. Kuniyoshi (1999) comments that Butoh has created an impact on the Western world. As a consequence of this many scholars, such as Yoshihiko Imaizumi (1999), Akira Amagasaki (1999), and Bonnie Sue Stein (1986), have claimed that Butoh might have originated in Japan, but by the 1980s Butoh could be considered universal.

From this point onwards, Butoh seems to develop in a new direction. Instead of concerning

themselves with issues of identity or social criticism, choreographers are now interested in seeking the *Truth* of life, and consider Butoh as a means to fulfill that search. Butoh choreographers believe that *Truth* can be accessed through a variety of means. For example, Hijikata and Ohno both emphasise the importance of memory and past experience. They believe that the reference of memories and past experiences can help choreographers create a Butoh dance as a personal log of the journey through life, and help audiences to perceive its more subtle aspects (Hijikata, 1998; Ohno, 1998). Ushio Amagatsu and his company Sankai-Juku have utilised theatrical means such as lighting and stage design to facilitate a perception-in-the-making in which a corporeal *world,* expected to be shared by performers and audience, is revealed (Fraleigh, 1999). Min Tanaka explores conscious and subconscious bodily movement in order to allow an emergence of a body speaking on its own terms. In so doing, the body which Tanaka names a *thinking body* reflects the state of constant change both inside and outside the body (cited in Quincey, 2001).

As can be seen, different aspects of *Truth,* for example, origins, the journey of life, the *world,* are explored by various choreographers.

(a) Returning to the origins

In the 1980s, many choreographers, such as Hijikata, Ohno, Amagatsu, or Tanaka, felt that a *true* sense of life had been lost in contemporary society, which inflicted too many artificial, thus unnatural, regulations on life and distorted its *true* course (*true* here referring to the Eastern notion of *Truth* as discussed in Chapter 2). A means of countering this is suggested by Sankai-Juku's choreographer Amagatsu, who believes that by returning to the origins from which contemporary society arose a *true* sense of life can be recovered. Examples can be seen in his works, *Amagatsu Shoh (Homage to Ancient dolls)* (1977), and *Jomon Shoh (Homage to Prehistory)* (1982). These titles give an indication of the intention of the choreographer. In the programme notes for *Jomon Shoh*, descriptions of pre-historical imagery such as cave paintings of hunters and their prey are offered to help the audience meditate on and perceive that "original" state of life. Amagatsu explains:

> We are reaching for the origins of being. The vast chaos, so confusing, so marvellous. Our legs move, as do our fingers, and our entire body is in motion. It is the history of our existential origins which we interpret on stage. (cited in Viala and Masson-Sekine, 1988 , p.108)

As noted, Amagatsu integrates modern theatrical means to manipulate performers' perception-in-the-making, and help audiences to acquire a perception of the origins of being. Lighting and stage design not only reinforce the atmosphere of the performance but also provide certain textural details of the pre-historical world. They also contribute a magnifying effect, which helps the performers and audience to focus on certain images. For example, in *Hibiki* (2001), a dance exploring the hidden memory of an embryo and the origin of life, 13 large, lens-like saucers lie on the sand-covered stage. Four glass pendulums are hung high above, dripping red water into the saucers which have already been half filled. The lighting effect makes the dripping more prominent and the red water more like blood. These settings are explained in the programme notes: "...the sound of blood circulating inside a mother's womb is like the motion of the waves..." (*Hibiki* 2001, p.14). Accordingly, the dripping red water is intended to be perceived as the circulation of the blood, and the saucers as the mother's womb, and thus a return to origins.

> The origins of that which is happening on stage are from the mountains and the sandy beaches. People are drawn to the theatre today precisely in the same way as one in former times went to special places in nature to experience certain feelings. Every one in the audience comes from different environments and has different feelings within themselves when they sit down in the theatre. I want them to come in harmony with the performance and go back to the original within themselves. (Amagatsu, 1991, cited in Bergmark, 1991)

(b) Depicting the journey of life

The *Truth* of life has also been explored by Butoh choreographers through tracing and clarifying the life path from birth in their works, in other words, depicting the inner journey between life and death, which is considered by Butoh artists to be the *true* course of life. In many of Sankai-Juku's choreographic works imagery of sand, water, and embryos is repeatedly used. Amagatsu (1999) explains the reason:

> I want to take out everything that is within me, and honestly and simply line it up - that is the only way I have to look at that which is in myself and around me. I was born by the sea, so, taking fish, sand and water - I can measure those elements, touch them and feel them. (p.10)

In this instance, imagery relating to sand, water, and embryos depict Amagatsu's life journey. Similarly, in many of Ohno's performances several items are frequently used which are resonant with his life. These include a small rectangular table, which is a prominent object in many important moments in Ohno's childhood, imagery of Ohno's mother and imagery of La Argentina (Antonia Mercé), the Spanish dancer who impressed Ohno in his early years. These items depict Ohno's life. As he explains:

> I don't believe that the body can transform itself, unless it undergoes the fundamental changes of life and death. Therefore, when I try to prove my own existence, it is impossible not to follow the thread of my memories until I reach my mother's womb; for it is there that my life began. So I try to carry in my body all the weight and mystery of life; and I believe dance is born of this experience. (cited in Viala and Masson-Sekine, 1988, p.41)

Nakajima Natsu, a student of both Hijikata and Ohno, choreographed *Niwa (Garden)* (1982), another example of a Butoh choreographer depicting the journey of life. The dance is divided into seven sections: *Nanakusa* (dance of seven autumn flowers), which presents a girl's childhood and playing with flowers in the garden; *The Infant*, which presents the young girl's feeling about being evacuated from Sakhalin, which was occupied by the Soviet army after the Second World War; *The dream*, which presents the girl growing up into a woman; *Izumeko*, which presents the girl as a new born baby eating, sleeping, and playing in the cradle; *Masks and Black Hair*, which presents the woman's memories of love; *Ghost*, which presents the woman growing old, her failing strength, and regret for lost days; and *Kannon*, which presents the woman becoming Buddha, understanding Zen and *merging with the universe*. These seven sections together present factors drawn from her life which articulate the path from life to death.

(c) Presenting the *world*

In addition to "returning to the origins" and "depicting life's journey", another aspect that has

been explored in Butoh choreography since the late 1970s is that of presenting the *world*. The intention of Butoh choreographers is to perceive and present the metamorphosis of natural phenomena, which is taken as *true* imagery of the *world* (Ohno, 1998; Hijikata, 1998), these two terms being understood in the context of Eastern philosophical systems. Accordingly, a Butoh technique has been developed, which is termed *encountering* and *transforming*. *Encountering* is the way in which a dancer initially acquires a perception of the surrounding environment. Ohno (ibid) explains that to *encounter* a situation within an environment is to live through the situation at that very moment without being influenced by habits, preconceptions, or any intellectual considerations, thereby exploring the situation afresh and acquiring a perception of the *world*. As an example of this, Ohno describes his performance in *Divine* (1960), a dance adapted from Jean Genêt's novel and choreographed by Hijikata.

> If we decide intellectually what we wish to do, the dance we perform will be dead...I did not know Genêt's work, but Hijikata told me, 'you will be Divine, you will be a transvestite'. And without having read Genêt, without understanding him, I became Divine...This performance was my *encounter* with Genêt, my *encounter* with Hijikata, my *encounter* with myself...My dance is an *encounter* with Mankind, an *encounter* with Life. (cited in Viala and Masson-Sekine, 1988, p.24, 26)

Eiko and Koma also speak of *encountering*, using their choreographic process as an example. They explain that to *encounter* is an interaction between the environment and the perceiving body. In order to develop bodily gestures or movement in a creative process, Eiko and Koma first set up an environment where the dance is to take place. The environment can be actual or virtual; for example, in *Hust* (1987), a dance about the lives of creatures in nature, the environment is a virtual country landscape established by covering the stage with fallen leaves and dry branches. The chirp of creatures can be heard. In *Wallow* (1984), a dance depicting the origin of Mankind when creatures emerged from the sea, the environment is an actual sandy beach being washed by sea waves. In the creative processes Eiko and Koma start to develop bodily gestures and movements which interact and correspond to the environments. Formalising a complete sequence of movements for a dance might take on average two years[3]. According to Eiko and Koma this long process of development is

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[3] These notes are based on the discussion session after Eiko and Koma 's performance, *Wind*, at Queen Elizabeth Hall on 17th November 1998.

*encountering*.

The process of *transforming* takes place in the perceiving body immediately after the process of *encountering* has been experienced. According to most Butoh artists *transforming* comprises two stages. First the perceiving body *merges* with the environment to generate a special "space"[4], then the body gradually *becomes* any of the imagery which inhabits that "space" so as to present the latter to the audience and allow the audience to perceive the *world*. Several examples of this can be found in Butoh works. In around 1972 Hijikata choreographed several short dance works. One of them began with Hijikata sitting on the ground, staring into space; this was his *encounter* with the environment. As his eyes gradually focused on the whole space, his motionless body shifted to a standing position, from where he *transformed* his body into many different kinds of imagery that inhabited that space, such as his mother, his sister, silkworms, and "wind darumas" (the legless doll of wind). These images were taken from Hijikata's childhood, his intention being to present the *world* he had perceived since that time. It should be noted that prior to the *transforming* sequence Hijikata's gaze shifted from an inward focus to the inclusion of the entire performance area, thereby inducing gestural changes and body postures. This change of focus is the first stage of *transforming* - *merging* with the environment to generate a special space.

The concepts and techniques of *encountering* and *transforming* (*merging* with the space and *becoming* the imagery) as demonstrated in the short dance described above have been developed in detail by Hijikata and documented by his students and dancers. In particular Hakutobo, a Butoh company established by Hijikata and Ashikawa, preserves most of Hijikata's training exercises and still uses them to teach Butoh students.[5] These training exercises assist the performer/choreographer in "readying themselves" to engage in fundamental Butoh processes such as *merging with the universe*, *encountering* and *transforming*, which facilitate their search for *Truth*.

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[4] The "space" refers to a personal *world* resulting from the perceiving person *merging* with the environment.

The first step of *transforming* - to *merge* with the environment and generate a special space, is formalised in the two training exercises: *Merging with the Space* and *Walking*.[6]

Merging with the Space

Stand in a corner of a space. Observe and feel the space. Try to move the body. Find the gesture/posture that is felt to best correspond to the space. In other words the bodily gesture/posture should best represent the sensations given by the space, such as its length, width, and depth, whether it is spacious or crowded, bright or dark, warm or cold, the air flow if any, the texture of the wall...

Stand further away from the corner. Repeat the previous sequence until a new gesture/posture has been found. Change the standing locus for a third time. Repeat the same sequence.

Compare the bodily gestures/postures obtained in the three loci. Examine and feel how they link to the whole space and are influenced by the change of loci.

Develop a sequence of bodily movement, moving from the first locus, through the second, to the third locus. The bodily gesture/posture in each locus should keep corresponding to the space, and the transition from one bodily gesture/posture to another should also keep corresponding to the space. (Liao 1996, p.23-4):

The way the body corresponds to the space and the loci in which it is immersed is *merging* with the space. The space when *merged* with the body becomes a special space. The body becomes a special body, and the relationship of correspondence becomes a special relationship. Another exercise serves a similar purpose.

Walking

Stand with feet parallel. Relax the knee joints and bend slightly. Imagine a line hanging from the ceiling to the top of head, gently pulling upwards. Imagine other lines attached to the chin, ears, shoulders, various sections of the spine, elbows, wrists, hands, pelvis, knees, ankles, and feet. Feel as if the body is floating up from the ground. Meanwhile, feel as if another force is pulling the body and sinking it into the ground. The two feelings are kept in balance.[7]

The eyes are presumed not to function as human organs. They are regarded as transparent glass balls, passively reflecting the external world, without any active intention to search for images.

Furthermore, imagine that the body is divided into 500 pieces. One piece after another gradually slides towards the front, back, right and left sides, by which the

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[5] Waguri has produced a comprehensive CD-ROM, *Butoh Kaden* (1998), which includes most of Hijikata's Butoh exercises and dance notation.

[6] The exercises referenced here were documented by the author when the author participated in the workshops conducted by Hokutobo Butoh Dance Company who toured to Taiwan in 1996.

[7] This part of the *walking* exercise is similar to a fundamental element of the training systems developed by Western "postmodern" and "new" dance practitioners and those who engage in somatic training systems such as Feldenkrais and Body-Mind Centering.

> 500 pieces fill the room or space. Each piece has lines connecting it with the other pieces. Begin to walk. Imagine a line pulling at the chest. The body moves in a manner as if shifting from one piece to another. (cited in Liao 1996, p.4-6)

through these exercises the body is prepared for Butoh practice. In terms of the choreographic intention to present the *world* as it is Butoh is called by Hijikata (2000d) as a dance of "being" and "becoming" (存在と生成) (p.53-4). Similarly, as imagery in a Butoh performance is presented in such a way that it is incorporated into a greater *world*, the Butoh creative process is called by Ohno (1998) as the "creation of the *world*" (天地創造) (pp.37, 41, 108). In Butoh this *world* is created through bodily practices such as those noted above, which focus the attention of both choreographer and performer on particular perspectives and sensations.

Through these three means, returning to the origins, depicting the inner journey of life, and presenting the *world*, the Butoh choreographer addresses the issue of *Truth*.

### 3.1.4 Ceremony or Festival

In addition to being a dance form which addresses personal history Butoh dance is sometimes compared to a ceremony or festival. Inasmuch as it is the intention of some Butoh choreographers to uncover what happens here and now, as a way to grasp *Truth*, Butoh dance can be compared to a ceremony or festival. Isamu Osuga, Byakko-Sha's choreographer, argues "...happenings on the stage are to be not mere shadow-graphs of culture but real physical expressions in space..." (Osuga, 1988, p.195). Osuga and Byakko-Sha's performances always present a festive rhythm. Viala and Masson-Sekine (1988) describe one such performance

> The group of musicians, *Marupa*, forms an integral part of the company, composing and playing explosive music which floods the stage with chaotic and catchy sounds...The dancers invade theatre and stage accompanied by cymbals and drums, like medieval players entering a village square. They create extravagant choreographic games, grotesque, provocative and extremely spectacular, in a clown-like universe, erotic, joyful, colourful. Rabbits hop around the dancers, watermelons are tossed about, and the audience participates in the fun. (p.116)

In comparison to Byakko-Sha's performances, those of Sankai-Juku are more like ritualistic ceremonies, in which audiences join performers in experiencing the revelation of the *world* or a disclosure of the journey through life. Amagatsu notes that

> [t]he performance is a ceremony for the audience... their entry to the theatre, seating... these are all part of the ceremony. The space itself participates... empty-full-empty... together with the performers. (*Kinkan Shonen* programme notes, 1978)

Thus, audiences and performers are expected to experience the *transformation* of a theatrical space, starting with a bare stage, which becomes a particular space in the *world*, and finally returns to the reality of the theatre building situated in the cultural context of society. This magical experience is compared by Amagatsu to a ritualistic ceremony. Audience and performers join together to experience what they are making *here and now*, to see what is revealed at that very moment. What is more, it may be the intention of the choreographer that the *here and now* experience of dance can be extended to the life after the performance. Hijikata (1988) notes

> I carry the theatre round with me; the building itself is part of the dance, even the ticket. Thus, when the audience returns home, they carry part of the dance with them. Everything is interlocked: the dance, the building, and the theatre. It is just a different way of viewing the structure of the theatre." (p.186)

### 3.1.5 Body-Mind Coherence as a Means of Psychosomatic Therapy

For some scholars and Butoh practitioners Butoh dance is also considered as a method for exploring body-mind coherence, and has a use in psychosomatic therapy. Toshiharu Kasai (1999), a scholar from the Hokkaido Institute of Technology and a dancer with his own Butoh Company GooSayTen, has systematised relevant Butoh training exercises and developed them into a *Butoh dance method* specifically for the treatment of psychosomatic illness. He has compared this method with various Western methods including Alexander technique, sensory awareness, Gestalt therapy, Bioenergetics, the Feldencrais method, and with two Japanese physiotherapy exercises invented by Michizo Noguchi and Toshiharu Takeuchi. Kasai proposes that exercises involving breathing, wave-making, and distortion are very likely to set off a chain reaction between bodily movement and the psychological state of mind.

These exercises have been included in *Butoh dance method* to help people release their suppressed emotions, or understand a hidden part of their mind. Since the 1980s, *Butoh dance method* has been practiced in a number of mental hospitals in Japan. Psychological studies have reported its effectiveness in facilitating patients' recovery. It is interesting to note that somatic training techniques in the West are also used for therapeutic purposes.

### 3.2 The Empty Body

Regardless of whether Butoh is considered a personal dance style, an art form for social critique, or a philosophical project for seeking *Truth* the dancing body is the central concern for choreographers. Therefore, it is necessary to review how the dancing body has been investigated by Butoh choreographers.

The stress on the corporeal existence of the body in Butoh may be seen as starting with *Revolt of the Flesh* (1968). As a result of this, in 1970 Hijikata and Ashikawa organised a group of dancers to manifest "*Hangi Daitokan*", which literally means "the great experience of dance as a sacrifice ritual with the cremation of the body". This statement can be considered to be the encapsulation of Hijikata's philosophy concerning the dancing body. With the metaphor of the cremation of the body Hijikata implies that the body has to cease being itself, that is, no longer being the dancer's body, so that other kinds of imagery of the *world* can use the body to present themselves through the bodily techniques of *encountering* and *transforming*. In this case, the dance is seen as a "sacrifice ritual" which relies on the *transformation* of the body, and which starts with "cremating itself". Since then, this metaphor has developed into the notion of the *empty body*, which has become the core concept of Butoh dance.

The term *empty body* has been used to describe a particular attitude towards the dancing body. During the development of Butoh dance, the notion of the *empty body* has been explained from different perspectives and considered using a variety of terms. Two terms that have been used in the late 1950s are *nikutai* and *karada*. The word *nikutai* began to be used

during the Meiji Period to mean a body that is stuffed and packed up tightly. *Karada* was used after the Second World War to mean a body that is empty. The character *kara* implies "empty", and *da* implies "standing". At first, Hijikata adopted *nikutai* to describe the dancing body, but eventually he used the term *karada* explaining that only when the body is *empty* or cremated, can all nature go through it and be presented (Waguri 1999). *Karada* in Japanese or the *empty body* in English is now the term widely employed by Butoh practitioners to articulate this concept.

Ohno uses *dead body* to mean the same as the *empty body*: "Butoh revolves around the idea of the 'dead body', into which the dancer places an emotion which can then freely express itself" (Viala and Masson-Sekine, 1988, p.22). Hijikata also once used the term *dead* to describe the concept of body: "Actually, all those people are just carrying a dead shape" (Ashikawa 1988, p.199), "We are only corpses standing in the shadow of life" (Hijikata 1988, p.187).

One of the pioneers of Butoh-Mitsutaka Ishii also speaks of the *empty body*: "Just as sound is born of silence, calm envelops all movement. The being within the total void allows the body to discover the new strings which will move it" (cited in Viala and Masson-Sekine, 1988, p.152). Ishii holds the notion that everything begins from the void of the body. Similarly Akeno Ashikawa, one of Hakutobo's principal dancers, also considers the *empty body* as "the beginning of Butoh". She explains: "Butoh begins with the *empty body.* Only when the emotions and ideas previously occupying the body are *emptied,* can the being of everything be possibly filled and revealed through the body" (cited in Liao 1996, p.9). Thus, the metaphor of the cremation of the body refers to the *emptiness* of pre-conceived emotions and ideas. The state of *emptiness* thus signifies a body that ceases being itself as it was.

The notion of the *empty body* is nowadays understood as not being culture-specific. Rather, it is seen as a point of departure for many kinds of Butoh choreography and performances internationally. However, the *empty body* was first related to the context of traditional Japanese agricultural life by Hijikata, who came to an understanding of the *empty body*

through his experiences in Tohoku. Hijikata (1988) explains that most parents in Tohoku were working in the rice fields during the day. They left their children in the cradle. Their feet had been tucked under so that they would not be able to move or stand. When night came, the parents returned and removed the children from the cradle. The children had lost the feeling in their feet and could not straighten their legs, let alone stand. Hijikata comments, "Western dance begins with its feet planted firmly on the ground whereas Butoh begins with a dance wherein the dancer tried in vain to find his feet. What has happened to the tucked-in feet...what has become of our bodies?" (p.189), "What is a hand? What is a foot? What is walking?" (cited in Kasai 2000a, p.1) It was this that led Hijikata to the concept of the *empty body*.

The *empty body* is the starting point for the technique of *encountering* and *transforming*. Because the body will *encounter* and *merge* with the environment or the whole performance space, the *empty body* is metaphorically described by Hijikata (1988) as forming a part of a greater chaos. Akaji Maro (1988), a disciple of Hijikata and the founder of Dairakuda-kan, expands on the metaphor of chaos in the context of Butoh

> ...to construct a body as a larger fiction...this fiction is almost chaos. Catching some parts of chaos and creating a total chaos. Catching some parts of the other chaos and creating the other chaos, and you'll find this chaos is completely different from the first chaos. Such a process exists innumerably. (p.197)

Accordingly, chaos is a state of ambiguity. It is dynamic, in the sense that it can influence perception of the environment and *transformation* of the *empty body*. Chaos is re-ordered whenever the *empty body* has an *encounter* with imagery in the environment.

Min Tanaka, who established Mai-Juku Performance Company and Body Weather Laboratory in the 1970s, articulates the relationship between the body and space, or the body and the environment, and the way the body and space *merge*: "I don't dance in space, but I [the dancing body] am the space" (cited in Viala and Masson-Sekine, 1988, p.158). In his performance notes about *Waterlillies*, Kazuo Ohno (1994) reinforces this, by metaphorically articulating the relationship between the body and the space, and their *merging*.

> When I take off all my costumes and put them on the floor, I feel that my flesh and skin are gradually detached from my body, then I wrap myself with the cosmos. The cosmos is the costume of Butoh." (p.16)

Having *merged* with space, the body will next *transform* to the image of one of the objects within the space. However, bodily *transformation* into, say, a flower is not an imitation of its shape or colour. On the contrary, it is the change in the way the body moves, into the way that a flower moves or grows. Ohno argues:

> If you wish to dance a flower, you can mime it and it will be everyone's flower, banal and uninteresting; but if you place the beauty of that flower and the emotions which are evoked by it into your *dead body*, then the flower you create will be *true* and unique and the audience will be moved. (cited in Viala and Masson-Sekine, 1988, p.23)

According to these perspectives, the body as an element in Butoh choreography is understood by Butoh choreographers through the metaphor of cremation and the notion of *emptiness*. It links to the technique of *encountering* and *transforming*, and is presumed capable of *becoming* imagery in a particular *merged* space.

### 3.3 The Viewpoints of Butoh Researchers, Audiences, and Critics

The viewpoints of Butoh researchers, audiences, and critics have made a substantial contribution to the elucidation and exploration of the significances of Butoh performances. Some of the significances can be taken as corresponding to what Butoh choreographers intend to present, whereas others can be taken as researchers' and/or viewers' interpretations of the genre and of performances.[8] It is suggested here that these viewpoints can be incorporated into the creative process as possible choreographic options, and thus are worthy of discussion before embarking on an examination of the central choreographic issues of Butoh.

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[8] This thesis will use "audience" as an umbrella term to discuss views of choreography generated from the positions of audience, critics, researchers, and other viewers who are not involved in the creative

Audience's perspectives and viewpoints on Butoh revolve around several issues which include: (1) the origin of Butoh, (2) Butoh and the Japanese, (3) Butoh and Zen philosophy, (4) Butoh and other art forms.

### 3.3.1 The origin of Butoh

Many scholars, particularly American critics such as Kisselgoff (1984) and Sanders (1988) connected the origin of Butoh with the aftermath of the Second World War, and the subsequent social conflict that emerged during the 1950s and 60s. They considered Butoh to be a direct outcome, a product, of the USA's nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Their discussions may be seen as resonating with the notion of power/knowledge proposed by Foucault. Foucault (1980) argues that knowledge generated by a discourse is linked to power politics.

> ...in a society such as ours, but basically in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterize and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse. (p.93)

A discourse that forms knowledge is defined by Foucault (1994) as "a discursive practice", which "is so complex a reality that we not only can, but should, approach it at different levels and with different methods" (p.14). Those different levels and methods involve interactions between different authors who write about similar subject matter, and between different discussions which express related viewpoints, and between different activities which exercise certain power (Foucault, 1972).

However, the relationship between a discourse, its resultant knowledge, and power structures of society do not always reinforce each other.

> Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are. We must make allowance for the concept's complex and

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process.

> unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it. (Foucault, 1990, pp.100-1)

In order to keep power structure stable, the ruling class within that structure such as the government, educational institutes, and police system adopt the forms of imprisonment and other punishments as a means to supervise the formation of discourse and knowledge of the subservient individuals not to become a hindrance to the established power structure. (Foucault, 1977)

Thus, prison and legal punishment become tools of discourse/knowledge, and discourse/knowledge becomes a tool of power. The relationship between discourse/knowledge and power gives rise to a relationship of defying/complying between ruling institutes and subservient individuals. In the end, Foucault (1980) notes that "we are judged, condemned, classified, determined in our undertakings, destined to a certain mode of living or dying, as a function of the true discourses which are the bearers of the specific effects of power" (p.94).

Drawing on Foucault's notion of power/knowledge, it can be seen that Butoh dance seemed to be a part of the discursive practices relating to the discourse of modernisation/Westernisation in the 1960s. It was under utmost surveillance by the Japanese Modern Dance Association, which was one of the ruling institutes in Japan in theatre dance and initially was a part of a greater scheme of Westernisation proposed by the Japanese government. When Butoh labeled itself as a rebellion and intended to elucidate the traditional Japanese culture instead of Westernisation, the practice of Butoh became a potential hindrance to the Westernisation of Japan in general. When the performances of Hijikata, Kasai, and Tanaka went beyond the norms, they were punished and thrown out of the Japanese Modern Dance Association and their memberships were revoked. Punishment by the dominant dance culture was used to suppress resistance to the status quo, and thus the emergence of a new dance discourse.

Thus, researchers' viewpoints on the origin of Butoh reflect the different aspects of the "potential hindrance" generated by Butoh's criticism of contemporary socio-political structures. Butoh's defiance of the norms regulated by the Japanese government is pointed out by Ichikawa (1989). She considered that the distorted bodies, the sense of terror, and the absurd situations in Hijikata's *Revolt of the Flesh* (1968) were symbolic postures and gestures of criticism, and that Butoh was a denial of the Establishment: "The students [audience] sympathised with Hijikata's view that the body had become a container which was only there to accept the Establishment and he had to deny it if he was to deny the Establishment" (p.16).

Butoh's defiance of Western culture is also noticed by Viala and Masson-Sekine (1988). They consider Butoh dance to be an art form that questioned the validity of intellectual thinking and the emphasis on reason, in a context where intellectual thinking and reason derived from the Western tradition of rationalism are considered the main features of Japanese modernisation. Ichikawa (1989) had a similar view:

> All there was to be seen was his brave denial or destruction of the body. His dance was so excessively erotic and full of violence that it couldn't be done without breaking up the body. He must have been dissatisfied with the way his body was tamed and had become a slave to reason. (p.14)

With respect to the above viewpoints raised by researchers, it can be noted that for researchers the understanding of the origin and development of Butoh dance in terms of a compliance with or defiance of the Westernised Establishment of the time allows them to examine Butoh dance from a societal standpoint.

### 3.3.2 Butoh and the Japanese

Viewing Butoh as a means of reclaiming Japanese identity, as the choreographers did, can be seen as parallel to considering Butoh as a form of defiance against modernisation. For many Western and Japanese researchers Butoh performances are understood through the prism of traditional Japanese society and culture (Laage, 1993; Fraleigh, 1999). Butoh postures and gestures are associated with Japanese physicality (Laage, 1993; Viala and

Masson-Sekine, 1988) and Butoh forms compared with *Noh*, *Kabuki*, and other Japanese art forms that were prevalent before modernisation (Masakatsu 1973; Klein 1988; Laage 1993). Discussions of this kind can be seen as identifying parallel features between social structures, cultural behaviour, and artistic activities, using frameworks developed in cultural studies.

Laage (1993) can be taken as an exemplar of this line of discussion. She proposes that "The Butoh art culture may be viewed as a microcosm of the greater cultural world which encompasses it" (p.10). She supports this statement with an analysis of the Butoh body. Firstly, she argues, the positioning of the chin and jaw may reflect a particular social background. For the Japanese, the chin is always pulled in towards the neck. This, she argues, indicates an individual's subservience within a group-oriented society. In contrast, for Westerners, the chin is encouraged to stick out, as in the phrase "heads up". This, she suggests, is related to an individual's vitality, personality, and determination (Laage 1993, p.51).

Secondly, she notes that Butoh eyes are often non-focused or half-closed, which is linked to Zen meditation and Japanese daily life. Laage argues that the Japanese dislike direct confrontation, and would rather communicate through a combination of gesture and language. The half-closed, non-focused Butoh eyes are thus, she argues, a reflection of social conventions (Laage 1993, p.47).

Thirdly, she observes that the Butoh body is close to the ground, which gives a certain emphasis to the lower part of the torso and pelvis. This analysis is comparable to the Japanese concept of *Hara* (belly) and *Kyusho* (an area below the navel). The Japanese consider *Hara* and *Kyusho* to be the centre of life and death, as well as the centre of gravity within the body. This area is believed to be able to elevate spiritual qualities of the mind, soul, heart and emotions. Laage holds that Butoh's postures are based on this concept, and therefore, the aim of bodily training is to enhance the ability to explore the spiritual aspect of life through the dance (Laage 1993, p.49).

Fourthly, she notes that several postures, namely *ganimata* (bow-legs), *sonkyo* (squatting), and *onnagata* (female impersonator) are considered by scholars such as Nario (1983), Sanders (1988), and Klein (1988) to be derived directly from Japanese life. *Ganimata* and *sonkyo*, as explained by Hijikata (1988) and cited by many scholars and critics (e.g. Klein 1988; Viala and Masson-Sekine 1988; Hoffman and Holborn 1987), are shaped by agricultural society, in which people have to work hard in the rice fields, constantly keeping their bodies and legs bent or lowered. *Onnagata* is a feminine way of walking that keeps the knees close together, making the feet slightly pigeon-toed, so as to enable walking elegantly, at a slow pace, with tiny steps. These postures are seen in Butoh, and are interpreted by scholars as presenting the physicality of the traditional Japanese (Laage 1993, p.57).

Butoh dance has also been related even more explicitly to the context of an agricultural society. Hoffman and Holborn (1987) claim that the stomping pattern of movement, which was thought to be the inspiration for the birth of Butoh dance, can be found in the dances of many agricultural societies, for example, southern India or Spain, as in Japan. The function of the stomping pattern is vividly described in mythology in these cultures. In Japan the Sun Goddess *Amaterasu* is said to have retreated into a cave, after her undisciplined brother *Susano*, the Storm God, has driven horses rampaging through her rice fields. As a result, the world becomes cold and dark. The crops are dying. In order to bring the world back to normal, other spirits gather around the cave, stomping wildly, and performing a bawdy dance. Provoked by the sound and dance, the Sun Goddess eventually leaves her cave and joins in with the other spirits, and then returns to the sky. The crops begin to grow again. Accordingly, it has been suggested by Holborn that Butoh dance originally signifies the need for light, the battle between light and darkness, and the praise for fertility.

However, as has been seen, the agricultural connections constituted only the initial conditions of the Butoh choreography. This thesis argues that the link between Butoh and the agricultural context, and indeed the specifically Japanese body, may need to be re-considered in the light of contemporary Butoh practice. The stomping movement pattern is no longer present in current Butoh practice as a particular dance element, although Butoh indeed

emphasises the relationship between the body and the ground (Hijikata, 1988). It seems that the only justifiable trace of the link between Butoh dance and an agricultural context is the etymology of the term *Butoh* (舞踏). *Bu* (舞) means dance, and *toh* (踏) means stepping or stomping. In this case, the agricultural context may be regarded merely as a latent context.

Additionally, Butoh forms are often compared with *Noh* and *Kabuki* performances by scholars such as Laage (1993) and Klein (1988). Laage argues that the *holo* (slow walking), which is a basic posture and the core of Butoh training, can be found in both *Noh* and *Kabuki* training. The use of white paint on the body and face, and the traditional kimono costume can also be seen in *Noh* and *Kabuki*. Many masks and facial expressions used in Butoh are similar to those used in *Noh* and *Kabuki*. Here again traces of traditional Japanese culture are found in Butoh.

### 3.3.3 Butoh and Zen philosophy

Many scholars and critics suggest that Zen philosophy is an integral part of Butoh, and that Butoh has developed in the light of Zen since the 1960s. Laage (1993) notes that many choreographers either developed their choreographic materials in correspondence with Zen-related subject matter, or accepted that their dance was being interpreted in terms of Zen. Fraleigh (1999) also documented the fact that many Butoh practitioners took part in other training methods such as martial arts, meditation, calligraphy, and the tea ceremony in order to help them understand Zen. As has been seen in Chapter 2, Butoh practitioners found no conflict between Zen and the Japanese identity they were trying to depict. They considered the world they wanted to present in Butoh to be analogous to the worldview of Zen.

### 3.3.4 Butoh and Western Art Forms

Scholars and critics such as Klein (1988), Nanako (2000), Viala and Masson-Sekine (1988), Philp (1986) and Stein (1986) identify resemblances between Butoh and other art forms, particularly Western art forms. The perspectives through which these scholars discussed

Butoh are resonant with post-modernist cultural theories such as Jameson's characterisation of post-modernism, Derrida's notion of *graft*, and Baudrillard's notion of *simulacrum*.

Indeed resemblances between Butoh and other art forms can be located in Butoh's appropriation of the elements used in other art forms, both Western and Eastern, and the incorporation of these into Butoh choreography. Viala and Masson-Sekine (1988), Stein (1986), and Philp (1986) have noted that, in Butoh, Western clothing was very often used with traditional Japanese music, or a whitened body danced to Western classical music. Klein (1988) also argues that, unlike *Noh* and *Kabuki,* Butoh performances had been using movement patterns and forms taken from other arts such as Tai Chi, martial arts, and Zen practice.

Resemblances may also be associated with the concern in Butoh with the expression of inner emotions through movement, a factor shared with some Western dance forms. Ichikawa (1989), for example, was interested in the comparison between Butoh and the German *Ausdruckstanz*:

> "Neither Hijikata nor Ohno studied German *Ausdruckstanz*...Ohno and Hijikata heard a lot from Eguchi about *Ausdruckstanz*. They were especially interested in Mary Wigman and how emotional and dark her dance sounded. For them Wigman was a legend and they probably thought of *Ausdruckstanz* as such as well. They felt they had something in common with her..." (p.16-18)

Resemblances may also emerge from the appropriation of certain concepts of Western theatre and the presentation of performance which accompanies them. Nanako (2000) identified the influence of Antonin Artaud's notion of theatre on Butoh performance:

> The performance [Hijikata's *Revolt of the Flesh*] shows the influence of Antonin Artaud's *The Theatre and Its Double*, Translated into Japanese in 1965. Artaud influenced the new generation in the Japanese theatre, and Hijikata was no exception. The entrance with a golden phallus was reminiscent of passages in Artaud's *From Heliogabalus*, or *The Anarchic Crowned*. (p.20)

Klein (1988), however, considers that the appropriation of elements, expression, patterns, and forms from Western sources are used without consideration of their contextual or

philosophical frameworks and thus links Butoh to post-modernist practices:

> Butoh's pastiche style, which picks and chooses among modern and pre-modern dance techniques, elite and popular forms, with little or no regard for their original context or meaning certainly accords well with Frederic Jameson's characterization of the post-modern as the random cannibalisation of all styles of the past, the play of random stylistic allusion. (p.21)

Further discussions allude to postmodernist factors. Laage (1993), for example, notes that a strong sense of artificiality can sometimes be observed in Butoh. Viala and Masson-Sekine (1988) note that, in Byakko-Sha's performances, exaggerated plastic props and costumes are invented to replace real objects, such as sexual organs, and the shape of the landscape. In this respect, it seems that Butoh has been seen as a superficial synthesis of different art forms, like a game of cut-and-paste, without any concerns for issues of genuineness or authenticity. For these scholars this seems to correspond to the notion of deconstruction and *graft* proposed by Derrida (1981, 1982).

Interestingly, Western dance/art has incorporated Butoh postures and gestures into performances, films and/or concerts. Here Butoh postures and gestures are imitated and become a *simulacrum*, a copy of a copy which subverts the legitimacy and authority of its model (Baudrillard, 1994; Jameson 1991, 1994; Foucault 1980, 1990; Deleuze 1986, 2002). A *simulacrum* can be seen more precisely as a copy without a model. *Simulacra* replace reality; a sense of de-realisation replaces the sense of authenticity, as suggested by Sartre (1972).

In a postmodernist context of *simulacrum*, *images* become the criteria of aesthetics. *Images* here refer not only to the appearances of *simulacra* but also to the mould that a *simulacrum* comes from, and the mass production which is its background (Jameson, 1994; Debord, 1994; Brayerman, 1999). Indeed the way Butoh has been incorporated into pop concerts, for example, Madonna's concert *Drowned World* (2001) in which bodies were hung from the ceiling like Sankai-Juku performers, can be understood from the perspective of *simulacrum* and *image*. One of Sankai-Juku's original movement motifs is bodies hanging in the air, as seen in *Jomon Sho* (1982) and *Shijima* (1988). "Hanging upside down by ropes tied around their ankles, Sankai Juku's shaven, white-powdered bodies are lowered from the roof of the

Los Angeles Dorothy Chandler Pavilion." (Stein 1986, p.107). In Madonna's live concert, this original Butoh motif is copied and turned into *images* of violence, sex, and the consumption of post-modern society. Bodies are hung from the ceiling of the stage, and gradually descend to the ground. Other *images* are juxtaposed, such as those of Japanese warriors, swords, samurai, Japanese costumes, violent scenes, and rays of red laser beams. The bodily postures and gestures which present these *images* are performed by Madonna and her dancers without considering their philosophy or original background. In this case, dancing Butoh bodies have been commercialised and become *simulacra*.

### 3.4 The Viewpoints of Butoh Performers

Butoh performers' viewpoints lie in an intermediary area between the viewpoints of choreographers and those of audience members. On most occasions the performers' viewpoints would be similar or parallel to those of the choreographer, as they are involved in the same creative processes, and the performers are trained to learn the choreographer's viewpoints in order to present them. For example, Hijikata choreographed for Tanaka in 1984. When they worked together, Hijikata gave Tanaka thousands of images from nature such as wind and sunshine to work on the bodily *transformation*. Tanaka gradually mastered the technique of *transforming*, and they together generated a theme called "Love Butoh" based on the shared viewpoint that "never to dance without feeling" and "the body becomes a receptacle of images" (Tanaka, 1986, pp.64-6).

However, Butoh performers also seem to have a wide range of freedom for developing movement by themselves, as Butoh dance is a dance of "being" and "becoming". In the creative processes and the moment of performance, a performer can have recourse to different resources to go through the process of his/her bodily *transformation* and to "be" or to "become" the intended imagery. The invoked resources may include the audience's viewpoints. In other words, the performer seems to step out of the creative process temporarily, and reflect on the process with a critical attitude similar to that of an audience. For example, Ohno and Yoshito have different approaches to the performing of "falling into

the ground" onstage. Yoshito (1999) notes the way Ohno performs the action.

> The atmosphere Kazuo evokes onstage doesn't in the slightest hinge on the actual physical location or conditions in which a performance takes place. Rather, it depends on the way in which he draws forth his inner world and renders it perceptible...he was able to fully incorporate the invisible realm beneath his feet into his performance. (p.43)

In comparison to Ohno's "falling" originating from his inner world, Yoshito (ibid.) admits that he would inevitably perform the action with reference to the understanding of the physical space onstage through an outer inspection of it, an inspection as made by an audience.

> One could describe the universe "down there" as some sort of "horizontal plane", or perhaps to put it more simply, the "ground". It's remarkable that many dancers – and again I myself am no exception – are completely unable to integrate the floor's full potential as part of the scenic space into our performances. It inevitably acts as a physical barrier to, rather than a continuum of, the stage. (p.43)

Considering the above, when discussing viewpoints that are potentially relevant to Butoh creative processes and choreographic options, this thesis will address issues mainly categorized by the two domains – viewpoints of choreographers and viewpoints of audience, and consider the viewpoints of performers according to their affinity to either those of choreographers or those of audience.

### 3.5 Comparison of Viewpoints

Comparing the viewpoints of researchers/audiences with those of Butoh choreographers, it can be found that researchers' viewpoints on the origin of Butoh echo the choreographers' intention of offering social criticism. As has been seen, Butoh was developed as an art form to deliver the choreographers' criticism of the aftermath of the Second World War. To a certain extent those choreographers were aware of the defying/complying relationship of tradition-based Butoh activities and the Westernised dominant power of society. Indeed Butoh once labeled itself as a rebellion governed by a critical attitude towards modernization, and as noted Hijikata, Akera Kasai, and Min Tanaka all had their memberships revoked by the Japanese Modern Dance Association

However, this thesis argues that other evidence shows that the development of Butoh dance since the 1960s has never solely corresponded to the rise and fall of the dominant social powers, or to a change in the Establishment. Rather, Butoh dance has developed its own philosophy of body, space, movement, and its own worldview. Butoh choreographers have always considered the *empty body* and the technique of *encountering* and *transforming* to be a point of departure and the core of Butoh creative processes. The sociological perspective has not yet offered satisfactory concepts which will allow the choreographers to address these issues from that perspective.

The researchers' viewpoint that Butoh's postures, gestures and movement parallel the daily behaviour of the traditional Japanese echoes Butoh choreographers' intentions to explore their personal and national identity as Japanese. Similar characteristics have been identified between Butoh bodily movement and traditional Japanese behaviour by scholars such as Laage (1993). The movement/behaviour was used by Hijikata to develop Butoh vocabularies as a means for claiming his Japanese identity. In addition to the appropriation of the traditional behaviour, other means for claiming Japanese identity were used by Butoh choreographers, for example, distinguishing the difference between a modernised life style and a traditional one, and examining past experiences and memories (Ohno and Hijikata). There is, therefore, no doubt that Butoh reflects traditional Japanese identity.

Nevertheless, this thesis argues that more and more characteristics of Butoh are culturally parallel in the context of Japanese and Western culture. Therefore, in the twenty-first century the concept of Japanese identity as a dominant fundamental feature of Butoh needs to be re-considered. Likewise, constraining the development of Butoh choreography to the imitation of the movement vocabularies of the traditional Japanese or Butoh pioneers such as Hijikata is limiting. This detrimental limitation of Butoh creative processes has been pointed out by Laage (1993), and will be further elaborated in the following chapters.

Further, despite the resemblances between Butoh and other art forms identified by

researchers, and the post modernist slant put upon them, the sense of artificiality and the notion of *graft* and *simulacrum* seem to be initially contradictory to the original idea of Butoh: a dance of being and becoming. What should be particularly noted is that the term "imagery" is used in Butoh to refer to fundamentally different matter from that referred to by the term *image* used among post-modernist philosophers. Butoh practitioners hold that *Truth* is accessible through the metamorphosis of natural phenomena, which can be grasped perceptually and presented through the *empty body* using the technique of *transformation*. These phenomena, which are presented through the body, are specifically termed "imagery" in Butoh. The nature of Butoh performances is to present the *world* as it is. The issue of genuineness and authenticity, in these terms, is considered to be of utmost importance. Neither "imagery" of the metamorphosis of nature nor the *empty body* is analogous to the body-cum-simulacrum *images* claimed by scholars who approach Butoh from a postmodernist perspective.

It has been suggested in this chapter that, although the choreographer's intentions are paramount to Butoh choreographic practice, the viewpoints of researchers/audiences can offer Butoh choreographers further choreographic options which allow them to incorporate cultural significances into dance through introducing them into their creative process. However, this thesis holds that the verification and analysis of a choreographer's viewpoint, intention and creative process requires a different framework to underpin the practice, and argues that the phenomenological perspective can serve this function. Although an extended discussion of viewpoints and choices which are available to an audience potentially offer a choreographer more choreographic options, and can be framed using non-phenomenological or dialectical perspectives, it is argued here that the latter are a complement to the phenomenological perspective which lies at the heart of this investigation of Butoh choreography.

## Chapter 4: The Network of Perception and Butoh Elements and Techniques

The central issues in Butoh creative processes such as the bodily state of *emptiness*, the *encountering* and *transforming* of imagery, and the formation of an inter-subjective *world*, can also be understood through a phenomenological framework known as the *network of perception*. The *network of perception* encompasses four aspects of perception: obtaining information from stimuli, processing information through neural architecture, *top-down priming*, and the functioning of consciousness. It is the intertwining of these four aspects that allows the perception of different choreographic materials utilised by Butoh choreographers to be integrated as a *gestalt*.

In this chapter these four aspects of perception will be examined and their relevance to the creative process of Butoh choreographers discussed.

### 4.1 Obtaining Information from Stimuli

Obtaining information from external stimuli is the first aspect of perception. The exploration of the role of stimuli in perception has been significantly enriched by the research conducted by J. J. Gibson (1904-1979). In common with the empiricists (Locke, Hume), Gibson (1950, 1966) states that the information needed for perception can be obtained from the environment, and that the transmission of information from the environment to the perceiver relies on the medium which lies between the two. For example, Gibson (1966) argues that for visual perception that medium is ambient light. The ambient light is reflected from the surfaces of objects into our eyes in different ways in relation to the layout, the pigmentation, and the shadowing of surfaces. The layout refers to the differential facing of surfaces, which reflect differing amounts of light to the convergence point. The pigmentation relies on the different chemical composition of surfaces, which possess differing reflectance. The shadowing originates from the surfaces facing away from the source of illumination. By reflecting different amounts of light, information such as colours, borders, contours, motion, and depth is obtained. It is this that constitutes visual perception.

However, it has been noted that obtaining information from the environment under certain conditions will generate perceptual illusions. Gregory (1997) describes several examples of perceptual illusion caused by the optical disturbance (the medium) intervening between the object in an environment and the retina of the eyes. For example, in mist the retina receives stimulation from the external environment but is unable to either formulate any clear information or recognise a clear image. Gibson (1979) uses this example to demonstrate the distinction between what he terms *stimulus energy* and *stimulus information*, *stimulus energy* being the stimulation received by the retina in the absence of *stimulus information*. The mirage seen in the desert in which condition light refraction between the object and the eyes displaces objects or parts of objects is another example of an illusion caused by optical disturbance.

The deliberate generation of perceptual illusion can be used to establish a virtual environment for a Butoh dance. For example, in *Tales of Light and Shadow* (1993) Waguri uses a lighting effect to change both the performer's and audience's perception, and to transform the stage into a special space, such as a forest or an ancient site. The mists produced by a smoke machine can achieve a similar effect, or a veil, hung between the stage and the auditorium, whose translucent quality will influence the perception of dance.

However, obtaining information from the environment cannot stand alone to generate perception. Phenomena such as force, power, energy, distance, three-dimensional space and *amodal* percepts[1] cannot be perceived merely by obtaining physical or sensory information from the environment. Rather, neural architecture and the perceiving body with a functioning consciousness also provide information and have to be involved in the act of perception. In the light of this, Gibson's statement that the information needed for perception can be obtained from the environment is complemented by his later research. Gibson (1979) points out that a person also constructs perception using his/her present needs as a basis for the

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[1] *Amodal* is defined by Michotte, Thines, & Crabbe (1964) as what can be consciously recognised but cannot be seen and is thus perceptually invisible. *Modal*, on the other hand, is what can be consciously and perceptually recognised and seen.

shape and detail of the perception. These he calls *affordances*. The notion of *affordances* is proposed as a measure of the usefulness of the received information, corresponding to the perceiver's needs. Information will be synthesised into a structured perception on the basis of its usefulness to the person at that time. This is analogous to the involvement of the neural architecture and *top-down priming*, which will be discussed in succeeding sections.

## 4.2 Processing Information through Neural Architecture

Information processing through neural architecture is the second aspect of perception. When information is obtained from an environment, the information is decoded through the specific neural architecture responsible for the acquisition of perception. These two aspects, neural processing and 'information obtaining' offer a foundation for the Butoh technique *encountering*.

Neural architecture is capable of processing many kinds of information. In visual perception for example, the retinal receptive fields are small areas on the retina. Different but overlapping receptive fields link to diverse neural cells in the eyes, lateral geniculate bodies, and the cortex, which are organised into a complex structure that allows us to recognise such information as contour, shape, orientation, movement, and depth. This information is later further processed through other aspects of perception.

The mechanism of neural architecture responds to incoming stimulation consciously or unconsciously, by decoding the information before it is processed further, either through other aspects of perception or by intellectual interpretation. In this respect, neural architecture pertains to the biological body and stands as a basis for the perceiving body.

According to neurological and physiological discoveries (Dodwell 1970, 1995; Stoerig and Cowey 1995; Grossberg 1999; Lakoff and Johnson 1999; Gregory 1980, 1997; Gibson 1966; Hubel and Wiesel 1962; Velmans 2000; Petty 1998), information processing within neural architecture operates in two main states: conscious and unconscious (or subconscious). For example, Dodwell (1995) notes that the retina could be stimulated by various means apart

from light, such as arrays of electrodes or focused magnetic fields. However, none of these can provide the same visual experience as light does. In other words, light gives rise to visual perception whereas the other means merely provoke a mechanical response in the retina to the stimulation. Stoerig and Cowey (1995) argue that visual perception is acknowledged and becomes conscious only in the data processing of the cortex, but not in the processing prior to that of the cortex, that is, from the sense organs to the lateral geniculate bodies.

Thus, visual perception is an example of conscious neural mechanisms, whereas the processing of visual information in the neural architecture between the sense organs and the lateral geniculate bodies may be considered an example of unconscious or subconscious neural mechanisms. The two states of neural processing are mutually complementary. As conscious awareness is selectively aware, any part of the neural processing that is not currently under the awareness will operate unconsciously to support decisions made consciously. Accordingly, the neural mechanisms should be regarded as a holistic system in the context of the act of perceiving, inasmuch as the conscious and the unconscious processes complement each other[2].

Drawing on this notion, the Butoh technique *encountering* acquires new significance. In neurological terms, the Butoh act of *encountering* is to confront the environment or the situation, firstly by accepting the stimulation and obtaining the information, and secondly, by generating the neural responses needed to process and decode the information. In Butoh this corresponds to the *intuiting* of the original or *true* state of being before it is interpreted through social conventions or norms.

Although these processes are present in all aspects of action, Butoh dancers' explanations of *encountering* (3.1.3) can be understood quite clearly from this perspective. Indeed, it could be claimed that Butoh choreographers deliberately invoke these two aspects of the *network of perception* in their practice. "Setting up the environment", which Eiko and Koma consider a

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[2] Probably Helmholtz (1866) was the earliest scholar who claimed that an unconscious process must be involved in perception. He terms it "unconscious inferences".

necessary condition for *encountering*, corresponds to the first aspect of perception. "Removing preconceptions in mind", which Ohno considers as the required effect of *encountering*, corresponds to the second aspect. "A *thinking body*", a body speaking in its own terms and reflecting the state of constant change both inside and outside the body, which Tanaka considers the result of *encountering*, may be seen as the presentation of neural processing. Thus, the first two aspects of perception can be seen to have a direct connection with the concepts and practice that underpin the choreographic processes in Butoh.

### 4.3 Top-down priming

*Top-down priming* is the third aspect of perception. It is supported by a particular neural architecture. *Top-down priming* not only allows perception to be interactively integrated with the value system and past experience of the perceiving subject or a broader socio-cultural background, but also affords perceptual learning. In the context of Butoh dance, *top-down priming* offers a neurological foundation for the *empty body* or *phenomenal body*, and the technique of *transforming*. *Top-down priming* also offers an explanation for the ways personal, social, or historical backgrounds influence the perception of imagery in Butoh dance.

*Top-down priming* and its relevant neural architecture are explained by Stephen Grossberg (1999), one of the founders of the study of neural networks. He distinguishes two levels of neural architecture in the short-term memory (STM)[3]. F1 contains a network of nodes or cell populations, each of which is activated by a particular combination of sensory features through inputs. F2 contains a network of nodes which represent recognition codes or categories drawn from the long-term memory (LTM)[4], which are selectively activated by the activation patterns across F1. The activation pattern generated by the sensory input data in

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[3] In the context of sound short-term memory (STM) is defined by Grossberg as follows: "Before an entire pattern of sounds, such as the word GO, can be processed as a whole, it needs to be recoded, at a later processing stage, into a simultaneously available spatial pattern of activation. Such a processing stage is often called a working memory, and the activations that it stores are often called short-term memory (STM) traces" (Grossberg, 1999, p.2).

[4] Long-term memory is defined by Grossberg as follows: "In order to determine which of these patterns represents familiar events and which do not, the brain matches these patterns against stored representations of previous experiences that have been acquired through learning. Unlike the STM traces that are stored in a working memory, the learned experiences are stored in long-term memory (LTM) traces" (ibid. p.2).

F1 is sent through the bottom-up pathways to F2, where it is compared with and filtered by the LTM traces. This filtering results in the generation of a number of F2 nodes[5] encoded according to the recognition categories, which are relayed back through the top-down pathways to level F1. The relay from F2 to F1 is termed *top-down priming*[6] and the F2 relayed filtered patterns are termed *top-down expectations*.

The *top-down expectations* trigger an *attentional subsystem,* which helps the brain to pay attention to expected sensory experiences, binding them into coherent representations and suppressing incoherent noise, which would otherwise overwhelm and erode the memory and destabilise the perceptual process. If the *top-down expectations* are very different from the original F1 activation pattern an *orienting subsystem* will be triggered that changes the *vigilance parameter* used as the matching criterion between the LTM traces and the STM pattern, resulting in a resetting and new search for a more appropriate F2 representation code and corresponding categories in LTM, or even the creation of a new one. This searching and matching process continues until a satisfactory match between the F1 activation pattern and the F2 filtered nodes can be confirmed. An attentive *resonance* then develops and learning of the attended data is initiated in the LTM.[7] LTM stores all the data related to previous personal experience, learned socio-cultural conventions, knowledge from past history, and so forth. In other words, LTM stores data which may be seen as diachronic contexts of perception. Accordingly, *top-down priming* drawn from LTM will impart diachronic data inherent in the memory to the sensory input data, forming the perception. In other words, perception is transcendental in terms of temporality. Perception is a synthesis of *time.*

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[5] Grossberg (1999) terms the generation of the F2 nodes as "making a hypothesis" about an input at F1 (ibid. p.27). Gregory (1980; 1997) holds a similar notion, terming perception as "hypotheses" predicting yet unsensed characteristics of objects.

[6] Grossberg defines *top-down priming* as follows: " It implies that, when a top-down expectation is read-out in the absence of a bottom-up input, it can subliminally sensitise the cells that would ordinarily respond to the bottom-up input, but not actually fire them, while it suppresses cells whose activity is not expected." (ibid. p.12) He also terms the *top-down priming* as "testing the hypothesis" or "reading out the prototype" (ibid p.27). Routes for this *top-down priming* are found, for example, from the layer 6 of cortical area V2 to the layer 4 of cortical area V1 (Grossberg 1999), or from the cortex through thalamus to the LGN (lateral geniculate bodies)(Sillito et al. 1994)

[7] This neurological discovery indicates that the contradiction between two conventional psychological accounts for perception (Eysenck & Keane1995), namely the top-down/indirect perception and the bottom-up/direct perception, has been potentially resolved or compromised by virtue of the fact that both top-down and bottom-up processes are found within the neural architecture, and furthermore, the two processes have to be co-ordinated and work together.

In the light of the notion of *top-down priming,* the *empty body* can be explained from a new perspective. The state of *emptiness* can be compared to the clearance in the F1 of STM, and the resetting of the *vigilance parameter* and F2 representation codes. The state of *emptiness* is the precondition for perception. The *empty body* is ready for *encountering.* In this case, whenever new information is input into the perceiving body, the body will generate new *top-down priming* and search for a new state of *resonance* in order to confirm the perception.

An exercise devised specifically by Hijikata to change a Butoh practitioner's body into an *empty body* can now be understood from this perspective.

> Insects Biting
>
> Stand with feet parallel, the knees slightly bent.
>
> Walking forwards, feel as if there are insects crawling on the surface, and inside, the body.
>
> > The first insect: crawls from the right hand towards the right shoulder.
> > The second insect: crawls from the left ear and goes down through the spine to the pelvis.
> > The third insect: crawls from the left foot to the pelvis.
> > The fourth insect: crawls from the right ear and goes down through the chest to the abdomen.
> > The fifth insect: crawls from anywhere inside the body. The route can be decided by the practitioners.
>
> Then, feel as if there are more insects crawling everywhere, biting the body, especially weak parts of the body, such as the sides, the palms, the joints, the ears, the eyes, and hairs.
>
> The insects bite and crawl from the surface of the skin, deep into the body. Gradually, the body is eaten, leaving only the skeleton.
>
> The insects come out of the empty body, and fill the entire space, so as to make no difference between the inside and the outside of the body. (Liao, 1996, p.8)

In this exercise, the biting insects are a metaphor enabling practitioners to erase their habitual recognition of the human body image. This erasure can be understood as the clearance of the STM and a resetting of the *vigilance parameter.* Under such conditions new *top-down priming* can then be activated through fresh *encountering.*

The erasure also links to the suspension of ego. When habitual recognition of the body is *emptied*, but the new perception of the body-to-be has not yet been acquired, due to the lack

of fresh *encountering* the consciousness of the body is, itself, in an intermediary state, a state in which the intellectual mind no longer functions, and in which the self is no longer the centre of concern. This state is the suspension of ego, and it is this state of consciousness that becomes the common ground of Butoh dance.

The notion of *top-down priming* also allows the Butoh technique *transforming* to be explained from a new perspective. Having reset the dancing body to a state of *emptiness*, *transforming* the body into an image is achieved by using bodily gestures, postures, and movement as data input, to trigger the selection of F2 representation codes for that specific image, and arrive at the *resonance* which allows the dancing body to be recognised as the intended image. Furthermore, *top-down priming* stands as a foundation not only for the technique of *transforming* devised for Butoh performers to present images, but also for the choreographer and audience's *intuiting* of those images.

*Top-down priming* also supports perceptual learning. Dodwell (1995) suggests that there are two types of perceptual learning: synthetic and analytic. Synthetic perceptual learning relies on *top-down priming* to develop a match or *resonance* between fields, for example, sights and sounds. The match between fields leads to the perception of a single or synthesised image. Analytic perceptual learning relies on *top-down priming* to develop a separate state of resonance for each field. Consequently, each field is perceived as a separate image. In each of these two types of learning, a differential *vigilance parameter* will be adjusted. The *vigilance parameter* for *resonance* must be set low for synthetic learning so as to allow generalisation to take place, whereas the *vigilance parameter* must be set high for analytic learning so as to allow differentiation to take place (Carpenter and Grossberg 1987, 1994; Grossberg 1999).[8]

A way of organising imagery has been developed and used by most Butoh choreographers that may be seen as corresponding to the notion of synthetic and analytic learning and the

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[8] Grossberg (1999) describes it as follows: "Low vigilance leads to broad generalisation and abstract prototypes. High vigilance leads to narrow generalisation and to prototypes that represent fewer input exemplars, even a single exemplar" (p.31)

adjustment of the *vigilance parameter*. The strategy is to juxtapose imagery for presenting the *world*. Through juxtaposition, Butoh choreographers believe that the analogy and difference between images are revealed, illustrating the relationship between images and nature. This analogy and difference may be seen as being obtained through *top-down priming* while perceiving, and can be related to synthetic and analytic learning respectively. Viala and Masson-Sekine (1988) provide an example of the use of juxtaposition in Butoh that illustrates this point. They note Ohno's choreographic idea for *The Old Man and the Sea* (1959): "There was the sky above the boat, the boat on the sea, and the fish under the water. Life is everywhere and I wanted to express all of this at once" (p.25). They then suggest that, "as in Ohno's dance performances, they [bodily postures and gestures] are presented as a series of imagery which undergo continuous *transformations* by means of analogy and juxtaposition" (p.26).

Another example in relation to the notion of synthetic and analytic learning and the adjustment of the *vigilance parameter* can be found in the development of slow movement in Butoh creative processes and performances. This is used as a means of fine-tuning a performer's perception to the detail of the choreographic materials. In other words, instead of large movement or obvious changes of gestures, the performer's attention is drawn to more subtle expressions in the body, and from there to feel the intensity of the underlying emotions. This could be seen as being linked to the adjustment of the *vigilance parameter*, by which means more specific details can be distinguished in perception. By viewing slow movement an audience's perception may be similarly fine-tuned. Aloff's description of a performance by Eiko and Koma supports this speculation:

> In *Naruse* the faces are immediately expressive; whole lifetimes are conjured with a turn of the head, accepted or refused with a look... A friend found *Thirst* soporifically meandering. She was following how long it took a figure to cross the stage, while I was trying to calculate how a sequence of creeping affected the contour of emotions moment to moment, For her, this was sheer minimalism; for me, it was as densely packed as grandmaster chess. (*The Nation*, 14th June 1986)

In addition to offering a foundation for the *empty body* and the *transforming* technique, and justifying the use of juxtaposition and slow movement, *top-down priming* also offers an

explanation for the ways the personal, social, or historical background influence the perception of imagery in Butoh dance. Amagatsu, for example, always gives information about his dances in the programme notes, indicating the historical scene of an event, such as that of a hunting activity related to *Jomon Sho/Homage to Pre-History*, or indicating the relevant images, such as a dream about the origin of life, a shaven headed young boy, a fish flapping helplessly on the shore, the sea, the shore, the birth of an egg, as in *Kinkan Shonen/The Kumquat Seed*, or indicating the personal memories, such as fish, sand, water, and a sea site town, linked to *Shijima*. When these programme notes are read, it is expected by Amagatsu that they leave certain impressions in the audience's mind, which will influence the selection of the F2 representation code and, through *top-down priming,* influence the perception of imagery in the dance. In this case, the personal or historical background is integrated into the audience's perception of dance.

## 4.4 The Functioning of Consciousness

The functioning of consciousness is the fourth aspect of perception. It helps us to acquire perception by organising the information obtained by different sense organs and from diverse perspectives. Without this, perception would become merely a collection of fragmentary information.

Scholars and scientists recognise that two sets of phenomena are related to consciousness, the phenomena of mental activities such as thoughts and reasoning, and those of physical activities such as neural mechanisms, biological requirements, anatomical structure, and bodily behaviour. Various theories are proposed to explain these phenomena. Some (Foster 1991; Sherrington 1942; Eccles 1980, 1989; Berkeley 1972) propose that the two sets of phenomena are two parallel domains, independent of each other, and that consciousness pertains to the mental domain whereas neural mechanism the physical domain. Others (Place 1956; Smart 1962; Rey 1991; Crick 1994; Searle 1987, 1997; Sperry 1969, 1970, 1985) propose that consciousness is a state or function of the brain, that is, consciousness can be reduced to the physical body or neural networks. Still others (Spinoza 1677; Lewes 1970;

Gunderson 1970; Nagel 1986; Chalmers 1996; Velmans 1991a, 1991b, 2000) propose that consciousness and neural mechanisms are two aspects of a greater system in which they are both embedded.

An examination of these theories reveals that several common phenomena of consciousness can be identified. Firstly, the functioning of consciousness is supported by certain neural networks. For example, consciousness is considered to be activated by the interaction between the brain stem and cerebral cortex, and controlled by the reticular formation (Petty 1998). Moreover, the neural networks underlying attention have been discovered to perform particular operations or computations (Posner, Grossenbacher, et al. 1994). These neural networks can be specified anatomically. What is more, in a Darwinian context, the fact that consciousness exists as an integral part of human life indicates that consciousness has important functions for survival. These functions are closely related to the matter of perception.

A deduction from these phenomena leads to the presumption that the functioning of consciousness encompasses the following aspects. Firstly, consciousness is generally referred to as awareness or conscious awareness (Edelman 1994; Velmans 2000).[9] It gives the perceiving body a focus of attention. Secondly, consciousness helps organise information obtained by different sensory organs from diverse perspectives to form perception (Merleau-Ponty 1962). As a result, phenomena are perceived as being outside the head rather than inside the brain. Furthermore, perceptual constancy or object permanency is preserved. This explains how a person can be recognised ten years later in a different place, how a face in a convex mirror or similar device is recognised as being the "same", or how an object is recognised as being the same object from different angles or distances. What should be particularly noted is that the sensory information involved in perception is derived not only from eyes, but also from other sense organs (Gibson, 1966). Thirdly, consciousness helps perceive other people's intentions and emotions. Merleau-Ponty (1962) notes that:

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[9] Edelman (2001) divides consciousness into "primary consciousness" and "higher order consciousness", and other neuroscientists (e.g. Damasio 2000) into "core consciousness" and "extended consciousness". Primary and core consciousness is sited in the deeper levels of neuro-physiological activity, whereas Higher order and extended consciousness is our paradigm for what we consider to be conscious.

> A baby of fifteen months opens its mouth if I playfully take one of its fingers between my teeth and pretend to bite it. Its mouth and teeth are apparatus to bite with; my jaw is capable of the same intentions. Biting has an inter-subjective significance [which is based on the functioning of consciousness]. It perceives its intentions in its body and my body with its own, and thereby my intentions in its own body. (p.352)

It is mainly the functioning of consciousness that allows the baby to understand intuitively the correspondence between the adult's jaw and its own, and to understand perceptually the adult's intention of biting. This example indicates that consciousness may well render perception by nature inter-subjective.

The functioning of consciousness can be taken as the fourth aspect of perception. The functioning of consciousness synthesises different perspectives to generate a gestalt percept. In other words, perception transcends spatiality. Perception is a synthesis of *space*. The functioning of consciousness has links to Butoh dance. For example, in Ohno's dance *Admiring La Argentina*, it is through the functioning of consciousness that the manifold of emotions such as joy, sorrow, indulging and snuggling, devotion, submission, praying, frustration and disappointment, anger, desire, fragility and emptiness, endurance, excitement, doubt, suffering and bitterness, cherishing and loving, are recognised as different facets of the same character that Ohno intends to portray. Further, through the manifold of the imagery Argentina's *world* and her life journey is revealed as a whole. Similarly, the underlying emotions and intentions of the character presented through Ohno's bodily gestures, postures, and movement, are presumed to be perceived by the audience of the dance performance through the complex functioning of consciousness discussed above.

## 4.5 Network of Perception and Movement

It has been argued that the *network of perception* is formed by the four aspects of perception, namely, obtaining information from stimuli, processing information through neural architecture, *top-down priming*, and the functioning of consciousness. The *network of perception* is also

supported by movement, which not only stands as the resultant response to perception but also as an active search for new stimuli and information (Grossberg 1999; Gibson 1966).

Grossberg (1999) distinguishes two kinds of processing, sensory processing and motor processing in the coordination between the *network of perception* and movement. Sensory processing pertains to the *network of perception*. It consists in the development of *resonance* between the input activation pattern and *top-down expectation*. This *resonance* is termed *excitatory matching*. It initiates the learning process and memorises the experience. Grossberg claims that, in the state of *resonance*, learning and memorising are integrated conscious operations. If they were not the process would become destabilised and nothing could be learned at all. However, Grossberg also agrees that there exist subliminal or unconscious processes that support excitatory matching and the development of resonance.

Motor processing concerns the generation of movements. It is a *mismatch learning* or *inhibitory matching*. Defining the expectation of the goal and direction of the movement as *motor expectation*, Bullock and Grossberg (1988) explain that when picking up an object the *motor expectation* is matched against the location of the hand in relation to the object. After the hand actually moves to the desired position no further movement is required to satisfy the *motor expectation*. The *motor expectation* will then be reset and neither learning nor memorising will take place. In this instance, the match between the *motor expectation* and the actual desired position is termed *inhibitory matching*, which will erase the confirmed *motor expectation* in the STM and inhibit the initiation of learning in the LTM. Grossberg (1999) suggests that motor processing is unconscious, so as to be able to continually forget old parameters, and install new ones that are required to control the body in its present form and situation.

Sensory processing is coordinated with motor processing in normal situations. This coordination keeps a dynamic balance between the complementary demands of stability and plasticity and of expectation and novelty (Grossberg 1999). The perception of an external situation will thus generate a movement, and the movement will lead to a new situation.

Accordingly, coordination between the *network of perception* and movement could become an infinite, interactive loop.

The notion of coordination between processing systems can be applied to the understanding of movement development in Butoh dance. The function of bodily gesture, posture, and movement in Butoh is to trigger a special *top-down priming* to allow the dancing body to be perceived as the very imagery that the dancer intends to present. In this case bodily gesture, posture, and movement are coordinated with the *network of perception*. This coordination is an ongoing process, searching for *inhibitory matching* between bodily postures and the *motor expectation* in order to allow the *phenomenal body* to perceive itself as the expected imagery[10]. Accordingly, Butoh movement can be seen as an extension of the perceiving body.

The notion of coordination can also help explain the body-mind coherence in Butoh dance. Particular psychological states of mind and memories relating to specific experiences will generate certain movements, while certain movements will trigger the *top-down priming* of those particular states of mind. Kasai (1999) notes:

> While doing a fixed pattern of movement repeatedly, if the initiative shifts down from your consciousness to the sub-consciousness, then unexpected changes will occur in the movement because of the changes derived from internal or external stimuli, and this process leads you to the unknown (or at least unplanned) province of mind-body. Distortion, vibration and breathing are the key components of the process of change and of the mind-body exploration.[11] (p.315)

4.6 Summary

The *network of perception* offers a perspective for the understanding of the choreographic elements and techniques used in Butoh creative processes. The *empty body* is understood as the clearance of STM and the resetting of *top-down priming* of the *phenomenal body*, which stands as the point of departure for *encountering* and *transforming*. *Encountering* is

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[10] Merleau-Ponty (1962) terms this type of movement *concrete movement*, whilst Gibson (1966) terms it *exploratory movement*.

[11] Using this chain reaction, Butoh dance has been employed as a therapeutic method for psychosomatic illness. (Kasai 1999, p.311)

understood as being made through the *empty body* interacting with stimuli, movement, and memories. *Transforming* is understood as being completed through arriving at a state of *resonance* between the bodily posture, gesture, movement, and the image to be *transformed.*

## Chapter 5: The Diversification of significance in Butoh Creative Processes -- Phenomenological Perspectives

The *network of perception* does not only offer a new perspective for the understanding of Butoh elements and techniques, but also offers a framework that can be used for a more detailed analysis of Butoh creative processes. The central aim of such an analysis is to investigate the manifold of Butoh creative processes from a phenomenological perspective, and elucidate the choreographic options at the disposal of choreographers. These options include the exploration of treatments of choreographic materials, the related incorporation of significances, and the resultant employment of choreographic elements for the purpose of conveying those significances.

The following discussion is mainly centred on Ohno's *Admiring La Argentina*. Ohno's dance career spans the entire development of Butoh, and his choreographic works reflect all the themes generally explored by Butoh choreographers. These themes are the search for identity, social criticism, and seeking the *Truth* of life (Chap. 3.1). In contrast to Hijikata's exploration into taboos to search for identity (Chap. 3.1.1), Ohno draws from his past experiences and memories underpinned by traditional Japanese culture, and elucidates the viewpoints within them through his dance. Also unlike Hijikata's direct criticism of Japan's Westernisation (Chap. 3.1.2), Ohno's criticism is made indirectly by elucidating those traditional Japanese values of life in such a way as to imply his disagreement with Westernisation. In the exploration of the different aspects of *Truth*, namely origins, the journey of life, the *world* (Chap. 3.1.3), Ohno examines his relationship with his mother, his understanding of the implications of human relationships derived from his war-time experiences, his *encounter* with Argentina, his reading on literary works, his inner life, and an overall *world* of which his interactions with people and nature are the constituent parts. In *Admiring La Argentina* all these themes and materials are interwoven and synthesised. For these reasons the creative process underlying this dance can be taken as an exemplar for an investigation of Butoh creative processes.

This chapter will elaborate on the phenomenological framework developed for such an

investigation, and then use Ohno's practices to demonstrate the relevance to the multi-faceted dimensions of Butoh creative processes.

## 5.1 The Analysis of Choreographic Materials and Related Significances

A phenomenological framework is used for the analysis of treatments of choreographic materials in Butoh creative processes, because the former incorporates specific aspects of the *network of perception* which resonate with special processes of Butoh choreography and types of choreographic materials. These materials include texts, photos, pictures or drawings, bodily experiences, movement or *action*, memories and imagination. They are different kinds of stimuli and relate to different types of functioning of consciousness. In developing (and perceiving) a dance the *network of perception* will operate differently according to the different kinds of materials. The perception of these materials will then be integrated to form an overall perception or the *world*, or to form the perception of a certain imagery that bears the significances derived from the perception of those materials. This process of integration is termed *graded* or *cumulative fulfilment* in phenomenology.

The most particular characteristic of Kazuo Ohno's creative process is that his dance is inseparable from his life (Ohno 1998, 1986b; Stein 1986). Ohno explores many questions concerning his life and his perception of it through the creative processes of dance choreography. On the one hand, the way Ohno perceives the *world* guides the development of particular choreographic materials. On the other hand, the choreographic processes lead Ohno to new perspectives on life and perceptions of his life. It could be argued that the dance *world*, through the creative processes of choreography, becomes for Ohno a crystallised version of the daily-lived *world*. Dance and life for Ohno are but one.

Ohno (1997b) clarifies what the term *reality* means in relation to Butoh and to his life.

> We can't fully grasp reality, or realism as some call it...A true understanding of life isn't reducible to barren facts...Don't our deeply felt emotions also constitute an integral part of our reality? Doesn't the matter in which we perceive something constitute a reality in itself?...breaking it down into readily understandable segments

> won't suggest the underlying reality the poet [Ohno's friend who is very ill] was faced with. To truly grasp a poem's intent, one has got to bear in mind the circumstances under which it was written. Grasping the poet's sentiments is the starting point in fathoming what lies beneath his words; you've got to take into account the emotions he felt on being faced with an imminent death. (p.251)

Accordingly, *reality* here includes facts, dreams, wishes, emotions, perception, and the environment as a whole. This definition is different from many Western viewpoints of reality, and is more deeply rooted in the Eastern philosophy of *Tao* and *Truth* (Chap. 2). Drawing on the relationship between dance and life, Ohno (ibid) holds that choreographic materials should therefore be found in the above mentioned facets of reality, and in the images that consist of aspects of the greater *world* and its constituent individuals, including people, animals, plants, stones, earth, river and ocean, wind and cloud, and so on. The perception of choreographic materials drawn from these diverse facets leads to the development of the core in Ohno's dance themes, that is, the characters and spirit of people, the *world* they inhabit, and the nature they connect with.

Phenomenologists argue that the perception of different kinds of materials gives rise to different kinds of perception (Husserl, 1901; Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Sokolowski, 2000; Schutz, 1972). Husserl (1901), for example, explores different types of perception by distinguishing diverse *derivative forms of intentionality*, including *sensational intention*, *signitive intention*, *pictorial intention*, and the *intentionality of action.*[1] These Husserl (1913) terms *noesis*. These modes of intention are used to examine the role of different kinds of materials such as sensations, texts, visual images, *actions* and experiences used in Butoh, which in a phenomenological context are termed *noema*.

Husserl (1901) explains that it is through intentionality that the sense-data (*Empfindungen*) in the stream of consciousness is understood and related to the perceived object (intentional

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[1] In *Logical Investigations* (1901), Husserl distinguishes two aspects of an action in terms of intentionality. *Act-matter* is the aspect of an act that determines *what* it is conscious of. In contrast to this, *act-quality* of an act is the aspect that determines the *way* the act is conscious of its object. *Act-matter* and *act-quality* of an act together form the *intentional essence* of the act. In *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy* (1913), Husserl considers *intentional essence* under the concept of *noesis*. This thesis uses the umbrella term "the *intentionality of action*" to refer to both *act-matter* and *act-quality* that lead to the perception of what an action is for the person who is doing the action.

object), and organised into a multi-dimensional referential pole. Different aspects, perspectives, and stages of the object are then linked to the pole. An identity of the object is thus established, from which a variety of perceptual phenomena concerning the object are derived. This variety of perceptual phenomena is usually termed the multiple facets of the object, each facet or phenomenon consisting of a diverse grouping of sense-data, aspects, perspectives, and stages involved in the functioning of intentionality or the stream of consciousness.

### 5.1.1 Sensational Intention and Visceral Perception

*Sensational intention*, for Husserl (1901), is the intentionality that organises the sense-data derived from the multiple sensory systems present in our bodies to establish a coherent perception of the spatial environment and a sense of the *state of affairs* between objects in that environment.[2] Merleau-Ponty (1962) suggests, in line with this, that every perception is inter-sensory. Sokolowski (2000) describes the phenomena as follows.

> The recognition of a single object given through the various senses distributed throughout our own bodies. These varieties of sensible parts, both *noetic* and *noematic*, serve as manifolds through which objects become identified from more and more perspectives: the tree is seen, heard (in the wind), touched, smelled; we walk around it and climb it; we trim its branches and break off pieces of dead bark; and in all this, one and the same tree is registered in its identity and its many features. (p.126)

Studies in physiology and neurology support the phenomenologists' notion of inter-sensory perception. Gibson (1966) proposes that analysing sense data obtained through sense organs may lead to an understanding of the integrated perception of an object. An experiment has been documented by neurologists (Watanabe and Shimojo, 2001). An image of two objects approaching each other is shown to a group of people, while a sound of clashing is played at the same time. The same image is then shown to another group of people without the sound being played back. The result of this experiment indicates that the first group perceives the image as the two objects clashing which resulted in feeling a tense sensation, while the second group perceives the image as the two objects merging which resulted in feeling a

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[2] More discussion on the notion of the state of affairs between objects in an environment will be made in Chap. 6.1.1.

harmonious sensation. The neurologists conducting this experiment concluded that the sense data obtained through different sense organs indeed integrate, and influence the resulting perception, different combination resulting in a different perception. This suggests that the notion as brought forward by Husserl (1901) that *sensational intention* is the initial form of perception acquired from the perceiving body's direct contact with its environment is supported by contemporary scientific studies.

In Butoh, sensational perception derived from the use of *sensational intention* or the external stimuli is one of the initial choreographic options that choreographers such as Ohno choose for creative processes. This can be examined from a choreographic perspective in three contexts. 1. *visceral sensation* (deep bodily sensation) 2. *bodily sensation* 3. the Eastern concept of the body.

*Visceral sensation* can be used as a preferred vehicle for the communication between performers and audience. Ohno (1997b) states that in his work visceral rather than cerebral response is expected from the audience.

> I wonder what you mean when you say, "I understand"? When someone tells me that, I really don't [know] how to respond. Why not dance without trying to comprehend everything. The audience can be moved without having to comprehend all that goes into making your performance. Isn't that the very reason we dance—to engage the audience on a visceral level? That is why I'm at a terrible loss to hear people talk of understanding my performance. Of course, you can use your brains to think, but when it comes to dancing, just forget all that. (p.198)

It can be seen that what Ohno intends to establish between performers and audience through the performance is not a rational link based around reasoning on subject matter. Rather, it is an *emotional* link derived from experiencing the performance viscerally. This is, in Ohno's own words, to "*link hearts*" (ibid. p.224, 257). Goda comments: "it is different to understand by the brain than to perceive by the senses. Resonance between the performer and the audience is without total understanding of the brain" (cited in Fraleigh, 1999, p.175-6).

Secondly, *bodily sensation*, here referring to the more surface sensations of the body, is a basic element of Butoh techniques. Training exercises are used to heighten body awareness.

Ohno (1997b) for example, states that different parts of the body have to be sensitized so as to be open to receive stimuli from the surroundings. A training exercise, *Walking with Eyes*, is used by Ohno for himself and his students for this purpose

> Stand in parallel, with the joint of knees bending slightly.
> Begin to walk. In the exercise, *Walking*, the body is led by the line pulling from the chest, whilst here different parts of the body are to be pulled, in other words, different part of the body is in turn leading the movement.
>
> The part of the body to be pulled is termed an *eye*. Walking with *eyes* means allowing the body to be led by different parts, attending to manifold relationships in the environments.
>
> At first, put the *eye* on the forehead, walking forward.
> Change the position of the *eye* to the chest, then the pelvis, the knees, and the toes.
> Then put the *eye* on the heels, walking backwards.
> Change the position of the *eye* to the back of the knees, the buttocks, the upper spine, and the back of the head. (Liao, 1996, p.7)

In this exercise, a metaphoric *eye* is a centre of conscious awareness which can be directed to any part of the body. It *encounters* the environment and receives the stimulation so as to receive sensation and generate bodily movement. When the *eyes* lead the bodily movement to *encounter* the surrounding space and objects, there is a sense of *transformation* both of the external object or space into a subjective field and of the *phenomenal body* into a thing-like object with the texture of materiality (Chap. 2). In this case, the *eyes* can alternatively be seen as the *other self* functioning symbiotically with the *self*. The exercise *Walking with Eyes* synthesises *Körper* and *Leib*, the *empty body* and the environment, hence presents an inter-subjective *world*. It does it through sensitising the awareness of a multitude of body parts.

Although Ohno's teaching aims to sensitise the body directly through exploring the *visceral* and *bodily sensations*, the body can also be sensitised through oral instructions which may initially deflect attention from the body. Ohno's son, Yoshito Ohno, was one of Ohno's students. Yoshito (1999) describes that, when he listened to his father's teaching for the first time, he had to contemplate in his mind what Ohno means by the term *eyes*, presuming this to be the distinction between the metaphoric *eyes* and the physical eyes. Afterwards, he could turn his focus to the actual bodily experience of sensitising.

Here contemplating and making presumptions in the mind *may* be considered as an approach to understanding which contradicts the principles of Butoh, as it entails learning a lesson through the medium of words. It is inevitable that to some degree, although Butoh exercises communicate complex dance concepts primarily through bodily movement, the instructions for these exercises are given in verbal or textual forms. This example shows that, although the Butoh techniques based on visceral sensations are rooted in traditional Japanese philosophy and in experiential learning, the understanding and learning of those techniques potentially involve the use of options which are not directly experiential, for example the use of words and texts.

Nevertheless Yoshito (ibid) depicts the way that Ohno's dance movement is developed experientially through the use of the eyes exercise:

> Instead of using his eyes to guide him through the scenic space, he relies on his hands to help him feel his way around. On such occasions, it often seems as though the hand itself turns into some kind of light-sensitive membrane. This phenomenon isn't exclusively restricted to the hand. At other times, the elbow, along with various parts of the body, become sensitized in a similar manner. This characteristic feature of his dance, whereby the entire body becomes covered with eyes, so to speak, has evolved over many years. (p.29-31)

The third context of sensation perception suggests that the emphasis on this reveals an *Eastern viewpoint of the body*. Kasai articulates that the first step to apply the notion of the *empty body* to Butoh is to use our sense organs, allowing the change of sensations to guide the development of bodily movement. "When the senses change, consciousness changes, and the physical body itself changes...*maya* [Hindu term for *matter*, physical body] as illusion or the veil of this existence" (cited in Fraleigh, 1999, p.233).

Kasai further elaborates that the notion of the physical body changing, which is inherent in Butoh, is an Eastern viewpoint, and sits in contrast to the Westernised concept of body. "Generally we believe that in dance no matter what happens in our senses the physicality does not change...In the West, *matter* is body. In the East, there is ultimately no *matter*" (ibid, p.233-4). This distinction may have led to the development of different dance techniques and styles in the East and in the West. Instead of establishing precise forms and shapes of bodily

movement, Butoh dance "eliminates the physical self" and spans from the body of matter to the nonmaterial larger body" (ibid. p.233-4). The bodily movement freely develops to explore the bodily metamorphosis of diverse kinds of imagery. Kasai terms this nonmaterial larger body *community body.*

> The body of a human being does not grow apart from the community. It grows with the community, and that community includes all things in nature, not just the human community...your body does not develop unless you develop the community as well. (ibid. p.236)

Developed on the basis of bodily sensations the Butoh *empty body* becomes the *community body*, which connects and integrates with all things in nature. In Ohno's dance, *Admiring Le Argentina*, for example, Ohno's body becomes many kinds of imagery – bird, bull, flower, men and women, young and old. Ohno's own choreographic footnote underpinning all of these is: "feel the world around us, the sun, your mother, children...how do you stretch your arms out in their midst?" (Ohno, 1997b, p.207) Fraleigh (1999) observes the significance within Ohno's dance: "Connections to others and the past are more important than individualism" (p.230)

Drawing from the discussions on the above three aspects, it can be noted that the Butoh creative process in Ohno's work encompasses significances mainly related to traditional Japanese philosophy. The emphasis on communication between performers and audience at a visceral level and the development of Butoh techniques on the basis of sensations both reveal a spirit of making contact with the *world*, of reaching out for others. Moreover, the metaphoric *eyes* and the *community body* demonstrate the viewpoint of *merging with others* and the philosophy of an inter-subjective *world*, within which the metamorphosis of natural imagery takes place. These are the significances embedded in Butoh through creative processes such as Ohno's.

### 5.1.2 Signitive Intention and Texts

With respect to this initial form of sensational perception, in phenomenology Husserl (1901) identifies *derivative forms of intentionality. Signitive intention*, as described by Husserl, is the

intentionality for the perception of textual forms such as words and texts. Husserl argues that, instead of generating a conceptual representation of an object, the perception of texts initially leads us to the object itself. In other words, the object reveals itself to us not directly through its appearance but indirectly through the intermediary texts which underpin the absence of the object but lead to acknowledging the existence of the object. Merleau-Ponty (1962) similarly argues that two kinds of significance may be revealed through texts, *primary significance* being the existence of the object brought forward by the texts, and *secondary significance* being the conception of the object represented by the texts. Using a sheet of paper inscribed with texts "The Burritt Hotel" as an example, Sokolowski (2000) notes that

> Signitive intending is not the same as imagining. We might be tempted to say that when the words stand out for us, we suddenly have a visual image of the Burritt Hotel, and that this image is what serves as the meaning of the words. This explanation would be false; internal images are not the meaning of words. We might well have such a visual image, but then again we might not, and we could still have the same meaning. The image that comes to mind when we hear a word might be only accidentally related to the word: the name "the Burritt Hotel" might call up in my mind the image of John Smith, the owner of the hotel. The "arrow" of the signitive intention goes right through the perceived word toward the real Burritt Hotel, not to an image. (p.78)

Viewpoints and attitudes towards texts similar to this can also be found in other disciplinary studies.[3] For example, in an ancient myth in which the magical control of persons and divine powers is made through calling their secret names, Polanyi (1977) argues that those names for ancient people are not merely the representation of persons and divine powers, rather, they 'beckon' the named persons and powers to appear. Polanyi relates his notion of names to Cassirer's principle of the *pars pro toto.*

> The whole does not "have" parts and does not break down into them; the part *is* immediately the whole and functions as such. This relationship, this principle of the *pars pro toto* has also been designated as a basic principle of primitive logic. However, the part does not merely represent the whole, but "really" specifies it; the relationship is not symbolic and intellectual, but real and material. (Cassirer, 1955, p.49)

Thus, names or texts are connected with objects in the same way that parts relate to the

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[3] The notion of texts revealing *Tao* (文以載道) is rooted in Confucianism. *Tao* in the Eastern context refers to the metamorphosis of phenomena in nature and society. In other words, *Tao* is the presentation of natural and cultural phenomena with respect to the revelation of their inner path of metamorphosis, rather than the conceptualisation of those phenomena. Accordingly, in the East it is a primary assumption that texts reveal *Tao* and beckon the presence/revelation of phenomena.

whole.[4] Their connection is not based on reasoning, but on intuitive perception, or in Polanyi's own term *tacit knowing* (Polanyi, 1977, pp.34-5).

In Butoh, texts are used in many ways. In exercises, verbal instructions are given to the practitioners as guidance to an intuitive grasp of intended imagery. In choreographic processes, texts are read or stories are told by the practitioners to acknowledge the significances or spirit underpinning the imagery. In daily conversation, words help to generate imagination, or lead to conception, or represent wishes, intentions, and behaviours. These can be related to the perception of significances and imagery. In research on Butoh, textual frameworks are formed by scholars to articulate and analyse the perception involved in creative processes, or to infer, and/or analyse symbolic meanings derived from the significances or perception of a dance.

In each of the above, texts may be used as medium for perception or as tools for reasoning. For Butoh choreographers, the initial option for the treatment of texts is as the medium for perception, which corresponds to the *signitive intention* discussed previously.[5] The various uses of texts to 'beckon images to come forth' in Butoh are examined in turn in the following discussion.

(1) Texts used in Butoh exercises as instructions to 'beckon' the textures and qualities of images

In Butoh exercises, verbal instructions are given to the practitioners as guidance to help them to intuitively grasp the intended imagery. It has been noted that, in the example of Ohno's teaching of *eyes*, Yoshito Ohno contemplated on the concept of *eyes*, making rational presumptions alongside the bodily exploration of *eyes*. However Ohno himself holds that making rational presumptions on the basis of the words is not necessary and students may even be encouraged to avoid this in the process of practicing (Ohno, 1997b). Fraleigh (1991)

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[4] The relationship of part and whole will be further elaborated in Chap. 6.1.1.
[5] Texts used as tools for reasoning potentially stand as a dialectical option for choreographic processes, as will be seen in the next chapter.

also states that, from the teaching of Ohno and other Butoh practitioners, she understands that it is unhelpful to analyse and theorise in the beginning her bodily experience in her practising Butoh.

Hijikata, like Ohno, always provided verbal guidance for his dancers. Waguri paid attention to verbs that relate to crucial characteristics of imagery, such as become entangled, cramp, wander, always changing, transform, float, become cool and solid, smoulder, tremble, disappear, vanish, sink, overlap, and so on (Waguri, 1998). For Waguri, these verbs 'beckon' the emergence of certain *actions*, which may be part of an integral situation. Therefore, the overall situation may be perceived and embodied through the sequence of *actions* revealed through those verbs. Waguri also paid special attention to adjectives relating to specific textures of imagery, such as clothes made of steaming pus, heavy overcoat which is soaking wet, parched internal organs, marshy ground, dry parts of the stuffed bird, and so forth (Waguri ibid). For Waguri, These adjectives 'beckon' the textures to come forth to be perceived, as one of the manifold of the imagery's presence. Waguri thus did not understand those images through the rationalisation or reasoning of these words. On the contrary, these verbs and adjectives merely helped him to recognise the manifold of the imagery.

Fraleigh (1999) also provides first-hand experience of practising Butoh through the help of verbal instructions. Ashikawa uses several metaphoric terms in her instructions for practising a walking posture in Butoh: "Smoke is coming out from all your joints. There is a big plate of water on your head and razor blades under your feet" (cited in Fraleigh, 1999, p.144). In order To feel the smoke "coming out" from the joints, Fraleigh's joints start becoming looser and moving more freely. In order to feel a plate of water "on" the head and razor blades "under" the feet, her movement becomes gentle and light, with the centre of gravity becoming lower and the knees bending softly and slightly. Moreover, the word "smoke" beckons a drifting texture or smokiness in the movement, while "razor blades" gives rise to a texture of lightness in the steps and a texture of emptiness in the torso. Overall, the walking posture feels like floating, "like a ghost above the earth" (p.144), and "like the smooth pace of Noh theatre but more in the manner of a smoky dream" (p.145). It should be noted that, in the above processes, no

analysis of the attributes of smoke, razor blades, and water, which would ascribe similar or parallel attributes to the movement through inference, has been invoked.

(2) Texts given in the form of *haiku* to help practitioners perceive the nature of things.

The verbal instructions used in Butoh are often given in the form of *haiku*, which is a form of Japanese poetry written in three short lines. However, unlike conventional poems, *haiku* is not about the use of elegant or exquisite vocabularies. Rather, the goal of *haiku* is to acknowledge things in nature or daily life. Fraleigh (1999) notes,

> anyone can make *haiku* poems, since they are not nearly so much about mastery or finding the right word as they are about noticing nature, and their content shakes hands with daily life as well. Zen *haiku* often detail seasonal changes and are especially serene, but paradoxically, they can challenge perception and stimulate reflection. (p.149)

(3) Texts given in the form of *koan* to help practitioner disrupt logical thinking habits

Another form that is sometimes linked to the verbal instructions used in Butoh is *koan*, which is a form of riddles. The form of *koan* may be traced back to the Middle Ages when Zen philosophy started to spread in Japan. Its function is to disrupt logic. One of koan used by Butoh practitioners is "what was my face before my parents were born?" (cited in Fraleigh, ibid, p.87) If one thinks logically, this question does not make any sense. However, if one contemplates philosophically, *with reference to bodily experiences*, this question may be linked to the understanding of the notion, *merging with the universe*, and the attendant change in a person's state of mind. Indeed, a question such as this may well lead the person to reflect on the daily experience that he/she shares awareness with others, feeling intimate to family members, or communicating with his/her children simply with a glance without words.

As the treatment of texts or verbal instructions adopted by Butoh practitioners is to 'beckon images to come forth', this 'beckoning' and the resultant 'presence' of images may be seen as reflecting a spirit of emphasising the *presence* of objects in nature, and a viewpoint of considering the perception of imagery as the acknowledgement of the existence of those

objects. This perspective is derived directly from traditional Japanese culture (Chap. 2).

(4) Texts adopted from everyday life for the use in Butoh to contribute significances to the perception of images

It has been noted earlier that words used in daily conversation have many functions (generating imagination or conceptual reasoning, expressing wishes or intentions, referring to behaviours). For Ohno, the words of everyday life present significances that may be used to underpin the imagery developed in a Butoh creative process. Mizohata, a Japanese scholar who was responsible for founding the Ohno Dance Studio Archives and was an editor for Ohno and Yoshito's publications, analyses the relationship between the everyday words, their significances, and dance imagery. Strictly speaking, he observes, "the words he [Ohno] employs at a workshop are in no way related to how he structures his dance", and everyday words "do not, as such, constitute a dance" (cited in Ohno, 1997b, p.191). This refers to the fact that those words are not *specifically* addressing the issues of the creative processes in choreography. However, here two options are available. Firstly, those words may be irrelevant to the choreography in hand, merely being used as explanations or to communicate conceptions of other matters. Secondly, those words may not be directly involved in structuring a dance, but may be used as hidden layers that contribute significances to the overall perception of the imagery generated through the creative process. In this case, everyday words are, instead of being parts of a dance structure, parts of a creative process. Mizohata thus argues that Ohno does not use everyday words directly in a dance structure, but uses them together with other choreographic materials such as sensations, experiences, and memories in creative processes, which aim at the same dance theme and overall perception of choreographic imagery on stage.

> Seen from this particular perspective, his words dance; his movements talk. In his case, language and movement unify, evolving as a single syntax. While the mediums ostensibly differ, he is ultimately saying the same thing with movement and with words. (cited in Ohno, 1997b, p.192)

(5) Texts in the form of novels read by choreographers to help them 'beckon' scenes of actions and incorporate significances into dance

Ohno admits that he writes everyday, from short notes to essays. Ohno also reads poems, *haiku*, and novels. In this way, Ohno absorbs the significances in the writing and the related subject matter and transforms them into the manifold of dance imagery developed in the creative processes (Ohno, 1986b; Yoshito, 1999). For example, Jean Genet's novel, *Our Lady of the Flowers* (1944), has influenced Ohno in his creative processes and the performing of *Divinariane* (1960) and *Admiring La Argentina* (1977). *Divinariane* was choreographed by Hijikata, who was also greatly influenced by Genet's novel. It was a dance portraying the last moments of Genet's male prostitute, Divine, who consorted with thieves, pimps, murderers, and other criminals. In Genet's novel, Divine struggles for a living in a society where humanity is distorted. In this respect, Divine's behaviour symbolically becomes criticism of the hypocritical society, and a new moral order seems to be suggested, in which criminals are saints, evil is glorified, and conventional taboos are freely violated. *Divinariane* was later integrated into *Admiring La Argentina* and became the first part of the dance, which was developed by Ohno and co-choreographed by Hijikata.[6]

The significances of the novel, which were embedded in the dance, may be analysed from three perspectives. Firstly, Genet wrote the novel, *Our Lady of the Flowers,* in the middle of World War II when Hitler was at his most triumphant point. Divine struggling against a hypocritical society may be taken as a symbolic scenario for individuals claiming their freedom and human right against the Fascist regime of Nazi Germany. The reassertion of individuals and the refusal of being restricted by social norms in the context of the defeat of Nazi Germany

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[6] Ohno's Admiring La Argentina, which consists of six scenes:
Scene One: Death and Rebom—The death of Divine and the rebirth of Argentina.
Scene Two: The Daily Meal—The spirits and characters of Ohno are presented.
Scene Three: The Marriage of Heaven and Earth—Their spirits and characters merge with the cosmos.
Scene Four: With Tango—The imagery of bird and bull are presented and merged with the imagery of Argentina and the cosmos.
Scene Five: The Imagined Scene with Argentina—The imagery of Argentina and Ohno are merged.
Scene Six: The Dialogue between Ohno and Argentina.

thus become the spirit and significances of Divine's struggling in the novel. It is worth noting that, whilst the spirit of the individual and the refusal of norms are part of the Western cultural heritage derived from the Renaissance, in traditional Japanese culture, the centre of concern is always community life and the connection with others. The individual has never been the focus of concern, although the emphasis on community does not necessarily conflict with the idea of individualism. When Genet's novel was taken by Ohno and Hijikata as a choreographic material, the spirit of individualism and the refusal of norms became both an embedded spirit and significances underpinning *Divinariane* and *Admiring La Argentina*.

Secondly, Genet's novel read in the social context of Japan in the 1960s may imbue the scenario of Divine's struggling against a hypocritical society with another significance. As discussed in Chapter 2, Japanese society underwent a process of rapid modernisation or Americanisation after the Second World War. Modernisation brings improvement as well as new problems to daily life. Many people at this time mocked modern society. Hijikata was one of them. When he read Genet's novel, the hypocritical society Divine struggles against seemed to become the metaphor of modern Japanese society, and Divine's suffering and refusal to the social norms becomes the focus of concern (Hijikata, 1998; Yoshito, 1999). Thus, instead of individualism the "bleeding nature" of life (Hijikata, 2000a, p.43), and the resultant suffering that people endure becomes the significance of the novel and of the character, Divine. Accordingly, Hijikata and Ohno portray the character, Divine, in the dance through the expressions of sorrow, grievance, anger, loss, and through vulgar bodily imagery. This may be seen as reflecting a tension between modernisation and the traditional ways of life, a tension dating from the Meiji period when the Japanese government and some scholars at that time introduced Western thoughts and technology into Japan with the intention of changing the value of traditional culture and philosophy (Chap. 2).

Thirdly, apart from individualism and the mocking of modern society, a more universal spirit is revealed through Divine. For Ohno, Divine's struggling is not only against a distorted society, but also against a universal situation of life, that is, the need to confront one's own desires, wishes, dreams, and to overcome distress, grievance, unexpected situations. Overall, Divine's

struggling is a way of testifying what he considers to be a wishful and meaningful life, through the revelation of both positive and negative aspects of daily life. This is Divine's spirit and life situation which could be found in everyone's life. Yoshito (1999) comments on Ohno's presentation of Divine in the dance:

> While thoroughly tainted by vulgarity, this low-living prostitute is nonetheless blessed with a spiritual dimension to his life...Kazuo personifies both the criminal and saintly aspects of Genet's antihero, both the male prostitute hustling on the sidewalk and the saint in everyone. He brings to the surface a hint of the divine hidden within each and every one of us. (p.153)

Fraleigh's testimony to Ohno's performance verifies that Ohno's choreographic intention to share such a universal spirit is fulfilled.

> In Ohno, we can see ourselves, our human fragility, transitory hopefulness, and contradictions. His body is full of conscience and abandon. He celebrates and grieves, embodying a human condition and evoking the mystery of the body. He universalizes...Certainly I project myself into the dance as I identify the qualities I value in Ohno's dancing. (Fraleigh, 1999, p.159)

Moreover, the spirit of sharing human characteristics and life situations can be seen as connecting with the spirit emphasised in traditional Japanese culture discussed in Chapter 2, which eventually leads to the acknowledgement and fulfilment of the philosophy of *merging with the universe*.

Through this reading of a character in Genet's novel, it has been concluded that diverse significances have been absorbed and embedded through the creative processes into the dance. In the case of reading Divine, Ohno seems to integrate the spirit of Western individualism and the Eastern spirit of universal humanity and life situation in harmony, without risking over-emphasising either the individuality or universality. The choreographic options drawn from the reading of Genet's novel and Divine, whether emotionally into the sentimental mood of the individual character, or spiritually into the Zen significance of death and ageing, are seen as being kept in balance in this work.

(6) Texts in the form of poems read by choreographers to help them perceive spiritual significances

Another textual source that is related to *Admiring La Argentina* by Ohno is a poem called *The Ribs and a Butterfly*, which can be analysed to elucidate the focus of concern that Ohno prefers and the way the related choreographic elements are developed. This poem was written by his friend, Inui Naoe, who had serious lung disease and was about to die. The poem depicts the story that a butterfly was drawn to the fragrance of nectar on the poet's chin, starting to make its way up the poet's rib cage. Eventually, the butterfly reaches the nectar, with eyes lighting up in joy. Ohno (1997b) states that his main concern with respect to the nectar-loving butterfly climbing up the ribs is not about the delicacy of the butterfly's movement. Rather, it is the spirit embodied in the circumstance that, although facing death, the poet still ponders on the bitter-sweet condition of reaching the wishful goal. This is the spirit acknowledging that death and life are both parts of the process of natural metamorphosis, one leading to the other, as such revealing the praise of life, not the mourning for death. This spirit is rooted in traditional Japanese philosophy.

Drawing on the above, it is clear that Ohno's reading of the poem demonstrates a preference of focusing on its spiritual aspect rather than on technical know-how. The spirit later becomes one of the potential significances of *Admiring La Argentina,* with the butterfly climbing integrated into the dance of bird and bull in part four (Ohno, 1998).

From this it can be surmised that Ohno's choice of movement development was then, and is generally, not concerned with the technical skills of precise postures and gestures. Ohno (1997b) noted that this position was supported by many friends:

> Mishima would constantly advise me, as would Shibusawa and Hijikata, not to concentrate on technique. My son, too...They all urged me to avoid being deliberately artful and ostentatious. Demonstrating technical skills, as far as they were all concerned, was really beside the point. (p. 247)

Eventually, in order to present the very spirit of the butterfly striving for the wishful goal, Ohno's movement, unlike the "delicate" movement which might have been expected, is performed with great gusto and physical energy, echoing the fact that the poet plunged right into his fears of death.

(7) Texts in the form of story read by choreographers to help them perceive spiritual significances

A story written by Swedenborg is another textual source for *Admiring La Argentina.* Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) was a Swedish scientist, philosopher, and theologian. Ohno is particularly fond of one of the stories written in his book about a husband and wife who, upon their death, went to heaven. The two people had entirely different personalities when they were alive. They also frequently had quarrels with each other. Naturally, everyone would expect them to be two distinct souls in their future life. But for some inexplicable reason, it turns out that they were united as a single angel in heaven.

It may be supposed that what Swedenborg wished to address through this story is life after death being more real than our day-to-day existence. This is a Christian belief. However, although Ohno is a Christian, he was not drawn to this very idea. Instead, from this story, Ohno was touched by the significance that two people can merge with each other and become one (Ohno, 1997b). This is a notion closely related to Eastern philosophy of *merging with the universe*. Furthermore, it may be considered that, through Ohno's selective elucidation of the significance of the story, the notion of souls in Christianity seems to be magically transformed into the emphasis of spirit and character, as such, which is rooted in traditional Chinese and Japanese philosophy.

The significance of *merging* with one another can be seen as the backbone of *Admiring La Argentina.* In the dance, the existence of old Divine, young Argentina, old Argentina, young Ohno, old Ohno, Ohno's father, and Ohno's mother seem to be present on stage in turns. Yet more often these characters are integrated into a single image, an androgynous character with

manifold expressions and movement layers. In Yoshito Ohno's words, "life engenders death and death gives birth to life" (Yoshito, 1999, p.78), and in Fraleigh's words, "He is at once young and old, male and female, one moment elegant and fresh as a flower and the next spent and withered. He transforms temper and character throughout the work, and I change with him as he crosses time and reverses gender" (Fraleigh, 1999, p.159).

Within the contexts of the examples discussed above, it has been suggested that the treatment of texts in Butoh creative processes to 'beckon images to come forth' is one of the initial choreographic options. This can be elucidated through the phenomenological notion of *signitive intention.*

### 5.1.3 Pictorial Intention and Painting

*Pictorial intention* corresponds to photos, pictures, drawings or other similar visual stimuli. Husserl (1901) explains that, when we look at a photo, the presence of the object in the photo is embodied through those lines and shapes. Sokolowski (2000) elucidates the functioning of *pictorial intention* by comparing it with *signitive intention.*

> In signification the "arrow" of intentionality goes through the word to an absent object. It is outward bound. It goes away from me and my situation here to something somewhere else. In picturing, however, the direction of the arrow is reversed. The object intended is brought toward me, into my own proximity. (p.82)

States (1985) uses Van Gogh's painting of a pair of peasant shoes as an example.

> Recognize these forms as shoes. But that does not mean that we consciously refer to a shoe-concept somewhere else, or earlier, or to something packed up in the mind's closet of known things...What is before us, the painting itself, offers a different kind of here than we 'usually tend to be' in...the painting is a place of disclosure, not a place of reference. What is disclosed cannot be found elsewhere because it does not exist outside the painting. (p.4)

Here, a pair of shoes is embodied in the painting as a place of disclosure. The embodiment is acknowledged through the *pictorial intention* of the spectator.

In the creative process of *Admiring La Argentina*, a painting by Natsuyuki Nakanishi directly

presents to Ohno a character and spirit that Ohno considers as Argentina. It was a painting of geometrical curves painted on a zinc sheet, displayed at Nakanishi's exhibition in 1976. Ohno perceived the presence of Argentina's spirit through the painting the moment he saw it. Ohno (1998) states, "I could see her there among the flowing curves" (p.100). The painting thus 'beckons' the presence of Argentina to come forward in front of Ohno, and becomes for Ohno a choreographic material that contributes to the imagery of Argentina to be presented on stage.

### 5.1.4 The Intentionality of Action

The *intentionality of action* is another *derivative form of intentionality.* Husserl (1901) and Merleau-Ponty (1962) both consider movement as an extension of the *phenomenal body*, helping exploring and perceiving the outer environment (Chap. 4). Sokolowski (2000) also argues that

> The parts of the body can move in relation to one another, and the body itself moves through the space of the world. But we do not move only to introduce motion into other objects; even our perceptions, and hence our thinking, involve motions of some sort or other; we move around to see the other side of the cube, to get a better spot to hear the violin, to get a better whiff of what is cooking....In fact, points in objective space are established for us only when we are able to move around in space; if we were immobile, we could visually experience some surfaces as occluding others, but we could not get the sense of a fixed point around which things can circle. (p.126)

The *intentionality of action* not only helps perceive, but also leads to the establishment of a *world* as expected, wished, or intended. Schutz (1972) suggests that two kinds of movement can be recognised, the first being *action* as human conduct which is driven by (anticipatory) *in-order-to motives* and leads to the fulfilment of a plan or the establishment of a situation, and the second being an *act* or an objectified sequence of bodily gestures and postures which are the result of a (causal) reason given previously. A creative process such as the course of everyday life or the undergoing of an experience is concerned with the former type of *actions.* Through *actions* underpinned by *intentionality of action*, an expected *world* or situation is 'beckoned to emerge' step by step.

This *intentionality of action* functions not only in the present mode but also in the future mode. Schutz explains that an *action* is sometimes contemplated in mind before it is executed, in order to have a sense about what the situation would be like when it is finished. This presumed future mode may be assessed in relation to past experience, personal background, education or training, dreams, wishes, and expectations of the action conductor. In this respect, *actions* in each moment of temporal flow may be considered an inseparable part of an eventually emerged *world*, a *world* as a whole in a status that the *action* conductor acknowledges as meaningful.

Similarly, Sokolowski (2000) introduces the phenomenological notion of the displacement of self. An action can be experienced at the present, or memorised and brought back to be re-experienced, or anticipated in the imagination. In remembering something past, a person displaces him/herself into the past to relive a past perception.

> What we store up as memories is not images of things we perceived at one time. Rather, we store up the earlier perceptions themselves...when we actually remember, we do not call up images; rather, we call up those earlier perceptions. When these perceptions are called up and re-enacted, they bring along their objects, their objective correlates. What happens in remembering is that we relive earlier perception. (Sokolowski 2000, p.68)

Sokolowski (ibid) further argues that the displacement of oneself also occurs in imagination and anticipation. The objects in imagination may be taken from the real perception at present, or from memories, but they are now projected into situations and transactions that have not yet occurred. A person then lives through that imagined situation with the functioning of *intentionality of action*, and other relevant types of intentionality, in order to acquire the perception of that situation. For example,

> Suppose that we wish to buy a house...part of our deliberation involves imagining ourselves living in each of the houses, using the rooms, walking outside, and the like...since the future has not yet been determined, we can realistically anticipate ourselves in several possible futures and not only one: we imagine how we will have been if the choice has been made...we project ourselves as living in three or four different homes; we try them on for size. We might do so while actually visiting the houses or else afterward, when we day-dream about what it would be like. (ibid. p.73)

Accordingly, the *intentionality of action*, as well as other types of intentionality, can function in the present mode, past mode, and future mode. Moreover, when reliving a perception in the memory, or anticipating a perception in the imagination, which is similar to perceiving objects through texts, the existence of the related objects are acknowledged through the relevant intentionality, even though those objects are absent in the present mode. Sokolowski's notion may be seen as complementing Schutz' notion of two kinds of movement, anticipatory and causal intentions. The following statement from Merleau-Ponty (1962) may well be used to summarise the above:

> It is true neither that my existence is in full possession of itself, nor that it is entirely estranged from itself, because it is action or doing, and action is by definition the violent transition from what I have to what I aim to have, from what I am to what I intend to be. (382)

The *world* established by a person through *actions* underpinned by the *intentionality of action* may well be intertwined with the *world* established by another person. In other words, the established *world* is an inter-subjective *world* shared by people, and the situation is an interactive situation in which people participate. As Schutz (1972) elaborates, our past experiences, education, and training involve the exchange of different people's viewpoints. A person's *action* plans thus inevitably interact, overlap, and subsequently integrate with other people's *action* plans. In this respect, *actions* allow people to communicate, to share the same *stock of knowledge at hand,* to develop from and contribute to the shared social structure. Schutz's notion of *actions* leading to an inter-subjective *world* can be seen as corresponding to the notion of *being-in-the-world* discussed by Husserl (1901), Merleau-Ponty (1962), and Heidegger (1962), and also as parallel to the Eastern viewpoint of *merging with the universe.*

In anthropology, a similar viewpoint of *action* is developed. Polanyi (1977) argues that underpinning the performing of a ritualistic *action* or an ancient myth is the link between *action* and meaning:

> All observation...is based on our interpretation of the reactions of our sense organs, and also of deeper parts of our body, to the impact of external stimuli. These bodily reactions are experienced subsidiarily; what we perceive is the joint meaning of these subsidiary reactions. The moving of our limbs has a similar structure...it

> consists in mobilizing a set of muscles that jointly bear on our deliberate movements, and this movement is in fact their joint meaning...our perceptions and deliberate bodily motions have therefore the same structure that we have ascribed generally to meaningful relations. (p.138)

Applying this notion (that the structure of *actions* is the structure of meaning) to the analysis of myth and rituals, Eliade (1963) proposes that a myth is "a source of truth", and that it narrates the way "a reality came into existence, be it the whole of reality, the Cosmos, or only a fragment of reality—an island, a species of plant, a particular kind of human behaviour, an institution" (p.5-6). Each character and each *action* in a myth thus reveals one piece of the reality or one layer of the truth. Analysing the relationship and organisation of characters and *actions* leads to the understanding of the overall meaning of the myth. Cassirer (1955) states that by performing those *actions* and acting as those characters, people learn the knowledge of life, nature, and history. Polanyi (1977) elaborates on these notions, arguing that, through performing and perceiving people's *actions*, the "sharing of lives" becomes the reality, and a shared *world* is established.

> To observe a meaningful relation is to integrate its subsidiaries as bearing on their focus; hence it is to handle these subsidiaries as if they were responses inside our own body. In this sense the structure of such an observation is...achieved by our dwelling in its subsidiaries. Generally, all comprehensive entities are known by our dwelling in them, and to this extent we participate in them as if their subsidiaries were parts of our body. (p.138)

Drawing on the above discussions, it may be argued that, in addition to acknowledging movement as the extension of the *phenomenal body* (Chap. 4), the body and movement can be regarded as the same subject matter in the sense that they are inseparable layers of *action*. In other words, in terms of the notion of the *intentionality of action* discussed by phenomenologists, action blurs and integrates not only the distinction between what is commonly considered as the flesh-and-bone body and the line-and-shape movement, but also individual worldviews and a greater *world* of shared socio-cultural significances contributed by different people. In this respect, the notion of action suggests that the analysis of the exchange of not only social but also cultural significances between people, and the relationship between individual, social and cultural worlds, can be made through the analysis of *actions*.

In Butoh, the notion of body and movement is deeply rooted in Eastern philosophy. The *empty body* introduced by Hijikata and Ohno is intended to erase the aggressive ego of self so as to be capable of more openly interacting with others (Chap. 2 and 4). The *community body* articulated by Kasai is more actively reaching out for others and establishing connections (Chap. 5.1.1). They both assume not only an open-minded and sensitive attitude towards others, but also a viewpoint that the body and its movement *is* one and the same subject matter, which *is* also a part of a greater universe. In this respect, the Eastern notion of body and movement as seen in Butoh can be considered analogous to the notion of *actions* discussed above.

Furthermore, Ohno's notion of a "small cosmos" interacting with a "large cosmos" may be taken as corresponding to the notion of action being the medium between individual worldviews and a greater *world* of shared socio-cultural significances. Ohno (1986b) uses the term "small cosmos", mainly with reference to human beings, particularly the presence of human spirit and character. Ohno terms as the "large cosmos" the greater *world*, with which everything in nature is presumed to merge. The large cosmos can be seen as the context of the small cosmos. Ohno believes that dance is derived from the interaction between the two kinds of cosmos: "At the start there is a small cosmos...I have to use my relationship with the cosmos as my motivation. I dance at the place where the large cosmos meet the small cosmos" (p.165). The creative process corresponds to the "creation of the *world*" (Ohno 1998, pp.37-39, 41-2). In this respect, it may be surmised that the small cosmos is the *world* established through personal *actions*, and that the large cosmos is the interweaving of individual *worlds* or the shared socio-cultural entity. Butoh dance is, therefore, the interactive *actions* conducted by people, or the further refinement of such *actions* for the purpose of performance.

(1) Life experiences and the contribution of their significances to Ohno's dances

Part of the analysis of Butoh choreography may be made through examining the relevant mundane *actions* that have been taken into the process of refinement as diverse layers of the

dance. Accordingly, *actions* for Butoh creative processes may be seen as including actual *actions* such as past experiences and memories, and potential *actions* such as an imagined scene or dreams. In developing *Admiring La Argentina*, several such *actions* have been part of the creative process for Ohno.

The most important experience for Ohno may be childhood family life, particularly the influence from his mother. From her, Ohno realises many teachings in life. Ohno admits that, when he was a child, his mother suffered much from his childish behaviour. As Yoshito (1999) notes, "Kazuo dreamt of a hairy caterpillar that kept crawling over his hand all night long. On recognising this creature to be his mother, he screamed out her name in his sleep" (p.114). From this nightmare Ohno comes to the realisation of the selfishness inherent in his personality, and is greatly touched by his mother's unconditional giving and taking care of daily life. The bitter-sweet feeling, as Ohno (1998) ponders, must be a burden in his mother's life, oscillating between the sorrow and grievance she had to endure and the joy and honour she subsequently obtained.

Ohno realises that one's happiness and sorrow, glory or grievance, instead of feeling for oneself, are all connected with or derived from other people's lives. In other words, the significances in life are shared by people. This is the very spirit that his mother has taught him, a spirit that is the core of traditional Confucianism (Chap. 2). Bearing in mind this spirit, Ohno (1997b; 1998) states that dance, particularly when he dresses in a feminine style, is a way of expressing his gratitude to his mother, and of elucidating all the teachings he absorbed from her.

In his creative process, Ohno focuses on the exploration of hidden stories, whether true or imaginative. Those stories may reveal potential significances of diverse emotions as the spiritual teachings felt and acknowledged by Ohno. This explains Ohno's endeavour to visit Argentina's home and graveyard and collect personal effects and information, for example, photographs of Argentina, descriptions about her by her family members and relatives, a stone from Argentina's grave, Argentina's personal correspondence, autographs, paraphernalia, and

the music to which Argentina once danced. The purpose for Ohno is not to establish a personal history of Argentina or clarify her socio-cultural background. Rather, his goal is to find a means of learning those emotions and teachings of life from Argentina.

In fact, those emotions and teachings of life that Argentina presented to Ohno through her dance and personal belongings had been in his mind for several decades, since he saw Argentina dancing for the first time in 1929. Ohno (1998) reflects that he was deeply impressed by her enthusiasm and charisma. For several decades, that impression remained in his mind as a constant guidance for an inquiry into life. When the explorations into Argentina's life are culminated into the dance, *Admiring La Argentina*, Yoshito (1999) comments that Ohno's performances are enriched by an in-depth grasp of the causes hidden behind those emotions endured by Argentina, his mother and similarly by other people.

Expanding on his gratitude to his mother, Ohno further comes to the realisation of a specifically Eastern notion of time and space. Ohno (1997b) gives an example. When travelling by plane, we cross from one time zone to another. The change of time can be calculated through a mathematical formula. The distance between two areas can also be gauged geographically. In this case, there seems to be precise units for measuring time and space. However, Ohno argues,

> The units, so to speak, we employ to measure the differences in time and distances in space in our everyday material world are not applicable in the timeless world of spirits, [considering that] when conversing with our mothers, we've no need to voice our thoughts to discern each other's feelings. The same applies for a child; it doesn't have to utter a single word for its mother to understand what's going on in its mind. (pp.246-7)

The time and space, in this respect, are spontaneous and nearby, therefore timeless and without distance. Ohno (ibid) concludes that "these worlds are fundamentally so different that they simply aren't comparable" (p.248).

In the light of these notions of time and space, and Ohno's relationship with his mother, Ohno further contemplates that, when she was alive, they could be so intimate that the two persons

feel like merging into one, in the sense of sharing joy, sorrow, and life together. When she passed away, Ohno still feels that his mother is around him, blessing and supporting him in everything. The feeling of *merging* with his mother remains. As such, Ohno believes that we are all under the influence of dead people's spirit and characters. "Dead people do not talk, but they influence you" (Philp 1986, p.63). Dance, Ohno (1997b) states, allows us to make contact with these spirits and characters, and argues that "the spirits of the dead come to life during the course of a performance" (p.218).

Ohno's acknowledgement of the state of one self *merging* with other self is further supported by exploring the birth of a child and the status of a foetus in the mother's womb. Ohno (1998) notes that a foetus is physically connected with its mother through the umbilical cord. The mother feeds the foetus with her own flesh and blood. In this case, the foetus and mother *is* literally of one entity, from which our sense of merging with others is originated. The sense of merging and the imagery of the foetus in the womb thus become an important embedded significance in Ohno's dance.

The experience of pregnancy and the relationship between a foetus and its mother are also studied in phenomenology. Garner (1995) argues that "by its very nature, pregnancy subverts the integration of bodily experience, blurring the distinctions between inside and outside, myself and other, and compounding the experience of subjectivity" (p.216). The pregnant body is practically a symbiosis of oneself and the other, which demonstrates and expands the notion of the inextricability of *Leib/Körper* (Chap. 2). Young (1990) similarly states: "I experience my insides as the space of another, yet my own body" (p.163).

Perhaps as a result of these notions Ohno often starts his workshops with the exercise of *being a foetus inside the mother's womb*, as a means of guiding the students towards understanding the significance of *merging* with others or the universe. Again, Ohno's instruction is "not to think about it, but to move from the feeling of it" (cited in Fraleigh, 1999, p.61). Ohno's preference for bodily movement is not to develop imitative postures and gestures, but to focus on the ways the foetus confronts its environment inside the womb,

listening to the stimulation and feeling the connection with its mother. In addition, the foetus' longing for the freedom and the frustration of being separated from the mother after its birth, Ohno suggests, are the emotional aspects to be considered in the creative process.

Other experiences such as being a prisoner of war also influenced Ohno greatly. The terror of war has left an in-erasable impression in Ohno, which becomes an undertone hidden beneath the emotions of characters presented on stage. Ohno seldom talks about those wartime experiences, for as Yoshito (1999) observes, "it would cause Kazuo almost unendurable suffering to be questioned in a judgmental manner about the war—even by close members of the family" (p.110). But one can feel the intensity the emotions when Ohno performs related subject matter, for example, a sorrowful or distressed expression, or a distorted bodily posture. Yoshito believes that "Kazuo's battlefront experiences during World War II provided him with more than ample insight into the horrors of a living hell" (ibid, p.13).

In order to understand Ohno's dance and creative processes, it is not necessary to analyse the specific terrible scenes that Ohno saw at war. Rather, Ohno, in relation to this talked about more common situations that people would experience, not only in war times but also in daily life. Those situations were amplified in the war, but their significances are equally inspiring to lives in peaceful times. For example, Ohno describes that there were around 8000 prisoners in captivity in New Guinea jungle at the end of Second World War. However, 6000 or so died due to starvation or the hardships endured after losing their way in the depth of the jungle. This made Ohno believe that one's survival is attributed to others' sacrifice, as Ohno feels indebted to his colleagues who died during the war and its aftermath. Similar harsh situations can be seen in the homebound journey at the end of the War that Ohno, along with several thousand other returnees, took from the internment camps in New Guinea back to Japan. In the middle of the passage people were crammed like sardines in a tin. Many died due to illness and the vessel's cramped conditions. The dead were then wrapped in cloth and dropped into sea. Ohno observes that human life is as fragile as insects' life in nature, and that living conditions sometimes become harsh, from which people's suffering is great. However, sorrow and joy often come alongside each other or give rise to one another. This is the metamorphosis of life.

(Yoshito, 1999; Ohno, 1997b)

Ohno (1998) expresses similar understanding when noting that sperm lives when it unites with an egg, whereas many others die. In this respect, Ohno (1997b) consolidates his belief that "we are interdependent; we are interconnected. We've got to concentrate on improving our relationships with others" (p.211), and even more, that we have to acknowledge "the possibility of sharing in an awareness of each other. We are all united by our awareness of the universe...if we acknowledge the universal spirit in us, our bodies, in themselves, have the ability to fulfil our mission in life" (P.217).

It is worth noting that Ohno's words of "sharing in an awareness of each other" may be seen as parallel to Merleau-Ponty's words of "not only takes in one's own awareness, but also shares in others' awareness" for explaining the notion of inter-subjectivity (Chap. 2). These words may also be seen as parallel to the traditional Eastern philosophy of *merging with the universe* and the notion of spiritual time and space discussed earlier.

It can be seen that, directly deriving from Ohno's experiences at war, the realisation of the fragility, the harsh condition, and the metamorphosis of life, and the philosophy of inter-subjectivity, of *merging with the universe*, have become significances underpinning Ohno's bodily movement and *actions* in his dances and in *Admiring La Argentina* in particular.

In order to inculcate these significances, Ohno sometimes uses training exercises in the workshops for students to help them to reach a sense of the experiences and an understanding of them. *Walking* is a basic exercise usually practised in the very beginning of a workshop. The sequence of *Walking* has been described in Chapter 3, and in an earlier section (Chap. 5.1.2) the way verbal instructions are used for guiding the grasp of the bodily textuality has also been discussed. Here, the focus of the exercise or the different experiences and significances it may help recall is examined, using Fraleigh's experiences as exemplars.

(2) Ohno's techniques for sensitizing practitioners' reflections on life experiences

There are many kinds of walking adopted in exercises for diverse dance genres. Yoshito (1999) notes that in Butoh, Ohno and Hijikata teach students to practise firstly unhinging, metaphorically speaking, the joints of the body to allow more awareness to focus on the environment rather than one's own bodily limitation. In contrast, as Fraleigh (1999) notes, early exercises in modern dance classes help students adjust alignment of the body and focus more on one's own body, so as to execute more precisely the intended postures or gestures. Bearing in mind this difference, when doing Butoh exercises Fraleigh relaxes the body in her practice and casts her attention to the surrounding space and people. She notices that she becomes very sensitive to other people's gaze and starts to establish interaction with those people.

> There were several people observing the class...I could not escape the on-looking gaze of the woman directly in front of me...my vision exploded softly, unexpectedly, to meet hers and the alert intuitive attention of the others watching. I felt unified with them and with the subtle ebb and flow of the other dancers, as a common dance of filling the body passed through us. (ibid, p.88)

Ohno (1986a, 1997b) and Hijikata (1998, 1988) also teach students not to calculate what step or movement would come next, or focus too much on the dynamic flow of the bodily *actions.* Rather, it is the spontaneity and togetherness that is required for the *actions.* Also, it is the ways a person responds to the surrounding situations or the attitude of confronting those situations that is reflected upon and explored by the practitioners. This awareness of inner attitude and the overall situation will subsequently lead to the revelation of the significances underpinning the situation acknowledged by the practitioners. Feeling peaceful, humble, and touched by the wax and wane of natural processes, Fraleigh (1999) notes the

> Softening [of] the proud bearing and broad chest cultivated in extroverted Western dance. The class began with a slow meditative forward pace and softening of the breath to empty the torso...commenced a gradual appearance or filling of the body with breath as the dance moves smoothly forward. This was not an expansion of energy and persona, but more a dawning of being like the gathering of moonlight on water...All became a part of the moment and the hot tears of relief at the apex. (p.88)

After a while, verbal instructions will be given to students to help further work on specific stimulation or situation, so as to generate *actions* and 'beckon imagery'. Instead of providing a conceptual framework for organising *actions*, those words are *haiku* or *Koan*-like questions, to help disrupt logic, and encourage a deeper reflection on one's own attitude or spirit when confronting situations. (Yoshito, 1999; Fraleigh, 1999)

Having been through an hour and a half of exercise, Fraleigh (ibid) finds herself recalling the experience of birth: "I was keenly aware...of a bodily emergence that I associated with birth. I experienced a purification and regression of my limited self, a melting sensation of being unlimited" (p.87), and a sense of *merging with the universe*: "when I feel divisions of gender blur and the otherness of others disappear in Butoh, my skin dissolves, and the universe wells up" (p.95). Finally, an image emerges through her bodily *actions*: "killing the body (ego) and my chest's shell of pride, desiring nothing, letting go my self, I saw my mother's face" (p.88). Seeing her mother's face as a starting point, a process of metamorphosis of imagery may then begin.

It can be seen that the experiences recalled by Fraleigh are similar to those Ohno obtained in his inner life journey. This demonstrates that the significances within the experiences are the layers underpinning most of the imagery in Ohno's dance, and that exercise, in addition to fieldwork or first-hand encounters, may be used to help recall and select similar experiences and realisations in everyone's life. The principles of the exercises, as given by Ohno (ibid) and Hijikata (ibid), may also be seen as implicitly bearing many characteristics of traditional Japanese philosophy, namely the emphasis on spirit and attitude, sharing awareness and therefore an inter-subjective *world*, *intuiting* instead of inferring.

Apart from training exercises such as *walking*, the development of bodily movement in a creative process follows similar principles as those in exercises. The link between movement and significances requires the practitioner or performer to explore firstly through improvisation, and secondly through trial and error.

For improvisation, Ohno advises three principles: finding the inner urge, sharing emotions, and no calculation of next moves. Finding the inner urge is considered by Ohno the central work of movement development, as what movement reveals are not merely aesthetic shapes or forms, but human *actions* confronting varied situations in life. In other words, movement or *actions* reveals what a person intends to achieve in that situation.

Many scholars have different approaches to the exploration of those situations and *actions*, such as focusing on social structure influencing individual *actions* (Schutz, 1972), or cultural patterns underpinning personal behaviours (Cassirer, 1955). For Ohno, Butoh's way of exploration is to *intuit* past experiences, such as those discussed above, by putting oneself into those situations again so as to generate spontaneous responses. In so doing, one can explore deeply into emotions and their hidden significances, revealing the spirit of life. Ohno (1997b) finds an example in daily life that Butoh practitioners may use to understand the above approach.

> When nursing her child's illness, doesn't a mother almost worry herself sick? She doesn't know where to turn if her child shows no sign of recovery. Even if a mother couldn't save her child's life by sacrificing her own, she would be willing to do so. We've all had occasion to find ourselves feeling so desperate. Confronted with her child's illness, do you think a mother counts her paces one, two, three, four? (p.249)

By placing oneself in the mother's situation, a practitioner may realise the very urge of life, that is, unbearable love. A practitioner may well develop a series of *actions*, as a natural and spontaneous result of the urge. The spirit and significance in this situation, the caring love and relationship, is therefore disclosed. Ohno thus comments, "that's what I'm trying to get through to you: I want your dance to step straight out of your heart; to be imbued with your soul. What I don't want to see are movements and gestures that you've figured out in your head" (p.249).

When encountering situations, sometimes the movement development may not be successful, as the situation gets over-complicated, or stimulation becomes obscure, or emotions flood uncontrolled. In this case, Ohno (1997b) suggests that those mistakes or imperfections may be taken as a new situation to be explored. This reflects the Zen philosophy of imperfection.

> Don't concern yourself with moving skillfully. Don't abandon hope if a perfect solution isn't found. Failure is a powerful stimulant; it only makes you all the more determined to be more painstaking...there's no standard approach; find your own way. (p.300)

It can be seen that, deriving her practice from Ohno's approach, Laage learns to create situations that would release her instinctive movement, as a means for developing her dance (Fraleigh, 1999, p.212). Similarly, Eiko and Koma also use real environment and imaginative situations to help develop movement and clarify their inner attitude and emotions (Chap. 3). It is interesting to note that the results of this approach, namely the clarification of inner life and the development of spontaneous *actions*, can be seen as parallel to the results Western psycho-drama aims to reach (Karp, 1998; Moreno, 2004). Moreover, other approaches to human *actions* and situations would lead to diverse goals and discovery of varied significances, such as social norms and behavioural patterns, which may be taken as dialectical perspectives to Ohno's approach. This will be discussed in more depth the next chapter.

## 5.2 Graded Fulfilment and the Multi-Faceted Androgynous Character

In phenomenological terms the perceptions of the above choreographic materials do not associate with one another through inference or reasoning, but through a process of *graded fulfilment*. The term *graded fulfilment* is used by Husserl (1901) to refer to the synthesis of *derivative forms of intentionality*, and therefore the synthesised imagery derived from the perceptions of diverse materials. Merleau-Ponty (1962) supports this notion of synthesised imagery, stating that perception is a synthesised product derived from the collaboration of consciousness and all the sense organs. Sokolowski (2000) also argues that to reach a *graded fulfilment*, in which the presence of an object is perceived and the multi-facets of its existence are acknowledged, "sometimes a series of steps is required, or at least is possible, that goes from one *intermediate fulfilment* to another until at last the object itself is reached" (p.38). Taking the example of seeing Jack Nicklaus playing a golf tournament, Sokolowski notes

> I had read about him in the sports pages. I saw his picture in the newspaper. I saw him being interviewed on television. After I got to the tournament ... I saw the leader

> board with his name on it...but not yet seeing him, I still intended him signitively or emptily, but now I was closer to fulfilment...then I saw his caddy...a further indication of his presence. Finally, I saw Jack Nicklaus himself. At that point I entered into perception and left the empty, signitive intentions, the pictorial intentions, the associative ones, and all the other intermediate kinds. (p.38-9)

In this example, each material, namely newspaper, picture, interview, leader board, and caddy, provides Sokolowski, through related derivative forms of intentionality, a pre-vision of the presence of Nicklaus, who is still absent at the moment, but whose existence has been acknowledged. These pre-visions, in phenomenological terms, are *intermediate fulfilments*, offering different insights into the eventually-appeared Nicklaus. The insights may include his appearances, activities, habits, and life style.

The process of *graded fulfilment*, in terms of phenomenology, mainly leads to the perception of an object or a situation. The insight offered by those *intermediate fulfilments* is mainly related to physical characteristics. In comparison, when applying the notion of *graded fulfilment* to Eastern art forms the perception and the insight will usually be extended to include spiritual characteristics, moral significances, personalities and characters (Chap. 2). An example of the application of this kind can be found in Liao (2005) who analyses the perception of the imagery of Mother Goddess, *Mazu*, presented in the Taiwanese folk dance, *Joss Sticks—The Heritage*. The multiple facets of the imagery elucidated through the dance include *Mazu*'s blessing in response to people's suffering, joy and sorrow, Mazu's mysterious sacred power to generate blossoming and withering of life, people's spirit and courage in daily life, filial piety and the universal love for mankind. All these can be seen as rooted in Chinese Confucianism and Taoism.

(1) Felt imagery

In Butoh, the imagery can be analysed likewise. Imagery, as Ashikawa points out, is the central concern of Butoh choreography:

> Butoh grows out of felt imagery...internalising idea or image is the difficult part, because you must get rid of the conscious effort of visualising before you can internalise...the audience for Butoh might not receive the exact image the dancer

> internalizes, but they cannot mistake the imagistic process. (cited in Fraleigh, 1999, p.142)

Ashikawa's notion can be traced back to Ohno's teaching. Ohno (1997b) states that Butoh dance is being rather than imitation. When one is in a state of being something else, the bodily posture and gesture would change spontaneously. The clarity of the superficial appearances is not the concern in Butoh. Rather, Butoh's creative process and presentation evolves around a revelation, be it the status of inner life or the overview of the world of metamorphosis. Using a tree as an example of the topic to be performed, Ohno explains,

> The trunk of your body is healthy; your feet are firmly planted in the ground. But, don't let your hands fade and wither away; allow your life force flow throughout the body. Though one can't actually see a tree grow, it's still possible to detect that it has grown—even after several days. Life functions in an unostentatious way; it doesn't need to call attention to itself. The audience doesn't need to see you move, but they certainly must be able to sense that you're growing. (cited in Yoshito, 1999, p.32)

The reason that the audience can still discern the growing of the tree through the body, although the postures or gestures are obscure, can be analysed through the *network of perception*. The functioning of consciousness and the *top-down priming* would eventually engender the perception of a tree growing, or maybe the sense of a tree growing as discussed in Chapter 4, although each viewer may not 'see' the 'same' tree. What is interesting to note is that Ohno's focus of presenting imagery rather than clear appearances may be seen as being in contrast to those Westernised forms of theatre and dance whose main focus is to present clear bodily postures and gestures, lines and shapes, in order to generate signs for inference, rather than to reveal states of being. This dialectical difference will be further elaborated in the next chapter.

In the light of this chapter's discussions on *derivative forms of intentionality* and *graded fulfilment*, the imagery of the tree may be endowed with different significances by the choreographer's incorporation of *haikus,* sensations, stories etc. as choreographic materials into the creative process. Through reading *haikus* about trees, sensations of touching a tree are obtained, and stories about trees are experienced, the tree's identity remains recognisable, whilst the significances of the different choreographic materials become the manifold of the

imagery of the tree. The choreographer and viewers therefore have a wealth of potential resonances to draw on in their understanding of the imagery.

(2) Facets of character

Similarly, in the example of Ohno's *Admiring La Argentina*, the imagery of the androgynous character has many facets, underpinned by those significances obtained through Ohno's experiences, readings, and bodily sensations. In terms of identity, the androgynous character may be seen as the story of Argentina, or the story of Ohno, or the story of Divine, or simply the story of a man or a woman. Overall, it may be argued that this is a story of contemporary people. Ohno finds the common themes of love, joy, sorrow, and dreams shared by those representative characters. In terms of the manifold of the androgynous character, many aspects of emotions are vividly presented, such as wishing and searching, innocence, joy, indulging and snuggling, devotion, submission, praying, frustration and disappointment, anger, desire, fragility and emptiness, sadness, enduring, sorrow and memories, concentration, excitement, doubt, suffering and bitterness, cherishing love, and transience. These can almost be seen as a crystallisation of the general inner emotional passage from birth to death for human beings. Again Ohno and viewers have a wealth of potential resonances to draw on. Furthermore, the imagery of the character is, so to speak, not a physical body, but a place of disclosure for the metamorphosis of natural forms, such as Argentina, Divine, Ohno's mother and father, bird, bull, and flower. The movement of the character is designed to help process the metamorphosis, and reveal the spirit underpinning the metamorphosis. The spirit, as analysed in the previous sections, may be related to the positive and negative moral spirit elucidated by Confucianism, and the Taoist spirit of accepting imperfection as natural, and the philosophy of *merging with the universe*. The Western spirit of individualism and the notion of soul emphasised in Christianity may also be related to the dance.

(3) Life situations reflected in actions

The diversity of situations in life is also presented through the character's *actions*, which relate

to the significances, spirit, and emotions in the dance. The *actions* are, for example, falling, standing, going forward and backward, up-reaching, playing, and so on. Falling, metaphorically speaking, is a life situation when reality does not go as expected. In Ohno's dance, it is embodied by Divine's collapsing onto the ground at the end of the first scene. In Ohno's reading of Divine (Chap. 5.1.2), the form of falling confers a sense of ageing and withering as a part of natural metamorphosis. In the light of Ohno's reading of the poem, *The Ribs and a Butterfly* (Chap. 5.1.2), falling also bears a significance of going towards death but still aiming at the sweetness, the youth, and the wishful. Together, falling connects to the mood of mourning for the dead and the spirit of cherishing life, reflecting the aesthetics of imperfection.

Standing, similarly, is a life situation when a person strives against issues and progresses as intended. In Ohno's dance, one of the examples is right after the falling of Divine. On the same spot where Divine collapses, Ohno changes the costumes and becomes young Argentina, gradually standing up and reaching out. Life blossoms. Bearing in mind Ohno's *encounter* with Argentina (Chap. 5.1.4), the form of standing is used by Ohno to vividly presenting her enthusiasm and charisma. In the light of Ohno's experiences in the war (Chap. 5.1.4), standing is also underpinned by a longing for survival, reflecting a spirit and courage of sacrificing oneself. Standing, like falling, also reflects the metamorphosis of nature.

Going forward and backward is a situation when there are many options at the junctions of life's journey. Hesitating or determining reflects the diverse aspects of the significances in life. For example, at the beginning of the dance, Ohno dresses as Divine, sitting in the auditorium with the audience. When the theatre lights dim, Ohno rises from his seat, heading toward the proscenium. However, he hesitates, tottering to and fro on the steps before slowly climbing onto the stage to encounter Divine's death (Yoshito, 1999). This *action* reveals the character's struggling between the inevitable ageing and death and the nostalgia for youth and life. In the light of Ohno's experience, the struggling may be seen as presenting the dilemma of being a killing soldier or an unharmed prisoner or corpse, or the dilemma of a mother unconditionally giving for her child but suffering from the burden. The significance conveyed through the action

is the moral or spiritual undertone of loving and caring.

Reaching up is an often seen form for expressing wishes and emotions. In *Admiring La Argentina*, an example can be found at the beginning of the third scene, *The Marriage Of Heaven And Earth.* Ohno stands still, with his head looking straight up and the mouth open. His arms are stretching towards the sky. The fingers are stiff. When the piano continues playing throughout this part, there are no more large movements in any part of the body, only tiny, trembling movements can be seen from time to time. As Ohno (1998) notes himself, the audience would perceive a very strong presentation of the inner spirit and emotions of the character, without the need to see the body moving. Moreover, the still posture, the open mouth, the stretching arms, the stiff fingers, jointly give a sense of penetrating into the surrounding space and integrate with it as a whole, bearing in mind Ohno's emphasis of *merging* with others and universe.

Playing is a situation that everything involved within interacts with one another. In *Admiring La Argentina*, an example can be seen at the fourth scene, *With Tango*, the action presents Ohno *transforming* himself into a bird and a bull. This, as Ohno (1998) notes, reveals a bird in all its exquisite beauty, surrounded by an infinite universe. Moments later, the bird *transforms* into a Spanish fighting bull, with the body lowered and poised, full of tension. In the light of Ohno's notion of small cosmos interacting and integrating with large cosmos (Chap. 5.1.4), this scene can be analysed as the bird, bull, and Ohno himself, interacting with one another and integrating into a greater *world.*

Similarly at the fifth scene, *The Imagined Scene with Argentina*, the action sometimes seems to indicate an invitation from Argentina for Ohno to dance together, as if saying "Shall you dance now with me" (Ohno 1998, p.108). At other times, the action seems to show the joy shared by them: The arms fold in front of the chest while the body sways, then they open up and float in an unbound manner as if fettered, drawing circular trace-forms. Whether these are the imagery of Ohno or Argentina cannot be distinguished. In the light of Ohno's realisation from his experiences that we are all connected (Chap. 5.1.4), the fluent, indirect, and energetic

action can be taken as the revelation of a joyful spirit shared by Ohno and Argentina.

(4) Time and space

The sense of time and space in Ohno's dance and the notion of bodily movement are presented through the *actions* within the context of Eastern philosophy. In the light of the significance analysed above, it is thus argued that the temporality and loci of *actions* cannot be taken physically. Rather, *actions* take place in a spiritual world. For example, the sequence of *actions* in Scene one, in which Divine's death is followed by the coming into life of young Argentina, shows the spiritual theme of death giving birth to life and the inter-connection of everything in nature. The temporality here is not concerned with the physical time span from birth to death but with a different time span.

Another example can be found in the articulation of the loci of Ohno's falling and standing *actions*.

> As he drops to the floor, one has the impression that he's embarking on a limitless free fall, continuing to tumble further and further into the depths of the universe. It's as though one never sees his body hitting the solid surface below him...where is Kazuo Ohno when standing onstage? By this, I don't have in mind the physical spot where his feet touch the floorboards, but rather the "where-about", so to speak, of the character or spirit he inhabits. The illusory height he attains determines how his inner world is perceived by the public (Yoshito, 1999, pp.45, 52)

The reason that the time and space of *actions* should be taken spiritually lies in the perception of the significances of diverse choreographic materials, which are synthesised through the process of *graded fulfilment* into an integral *world* of metamorphosis, and are grounded in a *world* mediated through Eastern philosophical concepts.

Overall, through the process of *graded fulfilment*, the multiple-facets of the androgynous character and the *actions* are not presented as fragmentary appearances of gestures and postures. Rather, they are presented, as intended by Ohno, as an integral, multi-dimensional character. Moreover, through the androgynous character, the life of Ohno is merged with that of Argentina, and that of Divine, and similarly with that of other anonymous men and women.

Thus, the dance and its creative process present a greater *world*. Butoh dance here becomes the medium of the interaction between the small cosmos and the large cosmos, that is, between personal worldviews and a greater universe.

## 5.3 On Structuring Dances

In Butoh, the treatment of choreographic materials alludes to the emerging of a possible choreographic structure at the end of the creative processes, as those images "beckoned" by the treatments of texts, visual arts, or *actions* and their significances can be further related to one another so as to be presented as an integrated *world* on stage. Ohno suggests two principles for the organisation of images into a structure. First, a balance between the too concrete and the too abstract has to be found. Ohno (1988) states: "If it remains too close to daily life, it reminds us of mime and cannot throw light on the confusion of reality. If too abstract, all connection with reality disappears and the audience fails to be moved" (p. 22). This notion is consistent with the notion of presenting the state of being rather than superficial appearances.

It may be argued that Ohno's statement involves several choreographic options. A natural way for presenting the state of being of an object may initially come to mind, namely the way we see objects in daily life, such as a table in the living room, a tree in the garden, or a stone in the river flow. This would possibly satisfy a scientific viewpoint of seeing, but for Ohno, the inner relationship between these objects is not elucidated through this means. The other option, in contrast, is to directly articulate the relationship through inference and deduction, which is abstract. For this, Ohno (1997b) reflects, "do I really need to step out onstage to get my ideas across to an audience? Wouldn't they grasp them just as easily by reading a book?" (p.245) Ohno's answer is to present the state of being in terms of a character's emotions or spirit instead of appearance and ideas (Ohno, ibid). In other words, what Ohno intends to put across to the audience is emotions or spirit rather than rationalised ideas. The style of presentation is more like a dialogue rather than a lecture. This is supported by Ohno's testimony,

> "I'd rather hear them [audience] say, "watching your dance made me feel good to be alive." Or, "I was moved to tears even though I couldn't figure a thing out." But, as soon as someone says to me that they understood my performance, I become instantly discouraged. (Ohno, ibid, p.246)

According, Ohno's preferred option for the presentation of imagery is not the clarity of the bodily posture or gesture, but the attitude of the performer to believe in a state of being. Kasai has a parallel choreographic choice: "Referential movement is not the goal [of Butoh] as in Western mimesis, symbolism, or exemplification. Neither is movement-in-itself the goal as in much modern/post-modern dance." (cited in Fraleigh, 1999, p.231) This choreographic preference of Butoh seen in both Ohno's and Kasai's thinking may well be seen as running parallel to, or under the influence of, German expressionism in the 1930s which also emphasises the free expression of inner emotions. Yoshito (1999) comments,

> Kazuo acquired...many other technical skills during the six or so years in the mid-1930s when he studied German modern dance under the tutelage of Misako Miya and her husband, Takaya Eguchi. Under their guidance, Kazuo made a determined effort to master the physical skills involved in contemporary dance, persevering until such time that he felt that nothing further was to be gained from such training. (p. 47)

Ohno's second principle suggests that the main structure of the dance usually does not change. It is the details that change at each *encountering*. Ohno (1998) terms this "structural improvisation" (p.170). The notion may be considered as consistent to the notion of finding the urge as the central concern of movement development. Ohno (1997b) notes,

> Nowadays, it strikes me that dance is often structured in such a way that the spectators are meant to comprehend readily what's happening onstage; the structure is meticulously worked out so that they clearly understand the story line. In my way of looking at things, however, such a programmed approach ensures nothing more than an illustration of the ideas that go into the making of a performance. (p. 245)

Thus, Ohno holds that, since imposing a structure does not give birth to dance, performances are better developed and performed in a spontaneous manner. "Our physical responses need to be spur-of-the-moment and not simply mechanical reactions to preset arrangements." (cited in Yoshito, 1999, p. 131) Ohno's choreographic plan is then summarised by Yoshito (1999).

> Once we grasp what lies at the core of a work, the individual components, such as the music, the costume, the lighting, and so on emerge of their own accord without having to be forced...imagine how strange it would be were flowers, for instance, to exist in a birdless world. If related by an inner necessity, the individual elements constituting a performance fall naturally into place. (pp.167-9)

This core and the inner necessity may be understood initially as the urge and its resultant *actions*, as demonstrated in the example of a mother worrying for her sick child (Chap. 5.1.4). It may also be demonstrated in Amagatsu's exploration into the human's kinship with animals, birds, fish, and insects, as seen in Sankai-Juku's choreography. (Fraleigh 1999)

This core and the inner necessity may alternatively be understood as finding a main theme for the dance. Ohno (1997b) explains,

> Dance doesn't need a structure, but it must be as detailed and lifelike as a miniature portrait. Performing inevitably involves the use of intentional and non-intentional elements...what's happening with the sky? Accept with good grace all that spontaneously emerges from inside of you. What on earth is happening to those clouds? Spread your.limbs freely. (p. 286)

Bearing in mind the notion that chorography is like a portrait, a method, Butoh-Fu, was developed by Ohno and Hijikata as a way of organising dance imagery and adjusting choreographic structure. Different names of imagery are firstly written down on a paper. The choreographer then starts to draw lines between these names, to indicate their relevancy. The result on the paper is thus not a linear narrative of a story development, but a multi-dimensional scenery that may be viewed from different perspectives. In the development of movement, a performer may choose any one of the names on the scenery as a starting point, *transforming* the body into the imagery, then following any of the lines to develop the metamorphosis of bodily *transformation*.

*Admiring La Argentina*, as far as Ohno and Hijikata can remember, was the first Butoh performance that was systematically structured and notated in the way of Butoh-Fu. In this piece, Ohno initially decided the theme, as the core of the work, to be the significances of death and life manifested through the portrait of Argentina. The relevant elements thus would

involve Argentina, Ohno, Divine, objects in nature such as flower, bird, and bull, and daily *actions* such as dancing, cleaning gutters, repairing water pipes, working in the garden. Although these elements can be performed in any order, having discussed with Hijikata, Ohno agreed to use Divine's death as the opening scene, followed by a scene of Argentina's birth, to emphasise the theme of death linking to birth. They also decided that the first three scenes would focus on the portrait of an androgynous character, which subsequently reveals, according to their inner necessity, the relationship between contemporary people such as Ohno and Argentina and their family members. The following three scenes would focus on the character's relationship to the surrounding world, which elucidate the link between natural objects and people. This has become the official version of the dance. (Ohno 1998, 1997b)

## 5.4 Summary Conclusion

This chapter sets out to explore from a phenomenological perspective those choreographic options at the disposal of Butoh choreographers in the creative processes, using Ohno's *Admiring La Argentina* as an example of that process. The options include those which relate to the ways of managing choreographic materials such as texts, photos, pictures or drawings, bodily experiences, movement or action, memories, and imagination, and those which relate to choreographic techniques such as movement development and structural styles. Choices of choreographic options indicate the ways significances are embedded into the dance through the creative process. For the analysis of the choreographic options and significances a framework is developed on the basis of the *network of perception* and the process of *graded fulfilment*. In a creative process the *network of perception* operates on different fields according to the kinds of materials resonating to *derivative forms of intentionality*. The perceptions of those materials are then integrated in a process of *graded fulfilment* to form an overall perception or a certain imagery that bears the significances derived from the perceptions of the materials.

The choreographic options in relation to materials and significances are analysed through these frameworks. The body and movement used in Ohno's dance and in Butoh generally is

one and the same subject matter, bodily *actions* that reveal the imagery's state of being and, overall, a greater *world* of metamorphosis. Likewise, the temporality and loci of *actions* in Butoh cannot be taken physically, but should be taken spiritually as aspects of the greater *world* perceived through the *graded fulfilment* of *actions*. It can be seen that the notions of body, movement, time, and space in Butoh are different from those embodied in Western theatre in general. They are mainly derived from the principles of Eastern philosophy, and are analysed through the *intentionality of action*. Moreover, it has been argued that the texts used in Butoh creative processes such as Ohno's process are used mainly to 'beckon the presence of imagery' rather than generating conceptual inferences. Texts in this usage are analysed through *signitive intentionality*. The presentation of Butoh imagery focuses on its state of being or the situation it inhabits rather than the clarity of its postures and gestures. When structuring Butoh dance, instead of following a clear structural scheme, Ohno prefers to consider the dance as a portrait and allows it to undergo improvisation in its presentation.

The choreographic options related to the different ways of managing materials demonstrate Ohno's idiosyncratic choreographic style. Other Butoh choreographers may look more into the issues of postures and gestures, or give more consideration to the structure and less to improvisation. In reading texts, more conceptual thinking may be adopted by other choreographers, alongside the bodily exploration of imagery, to give recourse to the study of social structure or cultural patterns, as suggested in sociology and anthropology. These may all be considered as dialectical perspectives to Ohno's creative process.

The cultural significances in *Admiring La Argentina* mainly incorporate those rooted in traditional Japanese philosophy, and elucidate viewpoints such as *merging with others and the universe*, filial piety, and universal love for human beings. These are in contrast to viewpoints emphasised in Westernised societies such as individualism, religious soul, and rationalised egotism. Zen philosophy and Taoist viewpoints are also revealed in Ohno's dance, elucidating an egalitarian attitude towards everything in nature, the metamorphosis of natural forms, and the *aesthetics of imperfection*. In contrast, although Westernised societies similarly preserve the notion of equality for all, human rights and viewpoints are held to supersede the

perspectives of other non-human objects and animals. Human society and nature are not at an equal position in the West as they are in the East. A supposed superiority of the mind over nature is claimed, as seen in the rationalist tradition of philosophy. The East's understanding of nature underpins Butoh dance.

The choreographic options in *Admiring La Argentina* show that Ohno's Butoh dance is not only rooted in traditional Japanese culture, but also reflects a tension between the traditional values and the values brought by Westernisation. What is particularly worth noting is that the options in relation to Eastern and Western significances are not mutually exclusive. They can be complementary to each other on occasion. Ohno and Hijikata's reading Genet's novel and the character, Divine, is an example of this, introducing the Western notion of soul and the courage of individualist striving, and merging them with the Eastern viewpoints of spiritual sublimation.

Moreover, an undertone hidden behind Ohno's notion that the imagery in Butoh may not be fully discerned simply by its postures and gestures suggests that, although the choreographer has his own source references embedded in the dance imagery, the audience may have their own references derived from their own similar or different experiences. Likewise, Butoh exercises, which are used with the intention of evoking similar experiences of practitioners to those of the exercise conductor, must acknowledge that there will be different significances involved in each individual's practising processes, due to the fact that no-one's experience is exactly the same as that of another person. Even the verbal instructions used in Butoh exercises may be perceived differently and lead to different details of the imagery. As Fraleigh (1999) notes in Ashikawa's workshop, "students spontaneously added their verbal interpretation of the movement imagery to Ashikawa's original poetic text that served as improvisational motivation" (p.141). Accordingly, the referential significances of a piece for a choreographer will always be similar but at the same time different from those for performers. This is even more so for audience members, who may not even be involved in the creative process at all, and for audiences from different social and cultural contexts. Further discussion of this topic goes beyond the scope of this thesis, but alludes to a need for further investigation

of the ways in which cultural significances are synthesised, put across, re-considered, and re-developed from one person to another, one generation to another and one culture to another.

Although this chapter examines the choreographic options and significances revealed in Ohno's dance from a phenomenological perspective, and the focus of the examination remains within the frame of Ohno's preferred choreographic choices, it is suggested that other dialectical options and perspectives are also available for Butoh choreographers. These will be discussed in the next chapter.

## Chapter 6: The Diversification of Significance in Butoh Creative Processes – Dialectical Perspectives

This chapter will discuss choreographic options which may be considered as dialectical to those generally used in Ohno's creative processes. These dialectical options are concerned with different ways of managing choreographic materials, rather than the ways adopted by Ohno in his early choreographic endeavours. Through these a diversity of Butoh styles are open to development by different Butoh choreographers, and a diversification of significances open to exploration by those choreographers. For the analysis of these dialectical options and significances, several analytic perspectives have been employed, including sociological, anthropological and rationalist perspectives. The following discussion will be arranged according to the types of external materials used in Butoh choreographic processes, namely texts, visual arts, *actions*, and dance elements.

### 6.1 Texts

Texts may be seen as the intentional objects of *signitive intentionality* which leads to the 'beckoning of imagery to come forth' (Chap. 5.1.2). Texts can also be seen as a form which represents that which is derived from the functioning of another *derivative form of intentionality, categorial intentionality*.

#### 6.1.1 Categorial Intentionality and Intuition

Husserl (1901) articulates in some detail the notion of *categorial intentionality*. According to Husserl, there are elements that cannot be accounted for by logic or through sensibility. Even in the most common forms of logical proposition these elements exist and stand as the basis of our understanding of the *world*, elements related to the terms "unity" or "similarity". Husserl argues that it is *categorial intentionality* that helps us acknowledge these elements. The elements he termed *categories*, and their perception *categorial intuition*.

Sokolowski (2000), however, proposes that *categories* may be understood as the ways perceived objects relate to one another, forming a *state of affairs*. In other words, a person not only perceives surrounding objects with *derivative forms of intentionality*, but also perceives their inner relationship with *categorial intentionality* at the same time. Sokolowski gives an example of *categorial intuition*. Initially, a car is perceived with its manifold sides, aspects, and profiles. Then, some abrasions on the body of the car are noticed. The abrasions become the focus of attention not only in terms of its materiality but also of this feature, this abrasiveness. Thus, a relation between the whole (the car) and the part (the abrasions) is registered and articulated. The statement "the car is damaged" is a form representing the achievement of *categorial intuition*, and reveals the *state of affairs* acknowledged by the speaker. In daily life a term "situation" is used to describe such relationships of objects within an inhabited environment. This thesis suggests that "situation" may be taken as an alternative term for *categories* or *state of affairs* in discussions.

*Categorial intuition* can be used to understand the way in which the relationship between the presentation of Butoh imagery and its underlying significances might be registered by spectators. It has been suggested in this thesis that the central concern of Butoh creative processes is not merely the presentation of imagery, but also the way in which the presentation of imagery focuses on its state of being or the situation it inhabits (Chap. 5). It is suggested here that, when the imagery is perceived, the details of the diverse aspects of the imagery would be related to the greater whole of a situation through *categorial intuition*. For example, in Ohno's *Admiring La Argentina*, a manifold of the image of an androgynous character is presented. The different details of the character's costumes are expected by Ohno to be related to either Divine, to Argentina, or to Ohno, as potential elements of their appearances. In scene one "a flower made from a ribbon of soft paper" is linked to young Argentina, and in scene two and three "formal black attire along with a man's starched, white, dress shirt" is linked to Ohno. Furthermore, these details are related by Ohno to daily life. The formal attire and shirt are related to the category "mourning wear" which relates to a situation of death/funerals in life. The ribbon flower is related to the category "youth wear" which relates to a situation of birth/marriages in life (Yoshito, 1999, pp.81, 155). Here the relationship of part

and whole is seen as that of costume details (part) and Ohno/Argentina/Divine (whole), and that of costume details (part) and the greater situations of life/death (whole). The relationship between the two is perceived through *categorial intuition*.

The relationship of part and whole may be further extended by spectators, including Ohno himself, to include other folds of imagery or scenes in the dance. For example, in the light of the correlation that the struggling of Divine before his death could be taken as analogous to the striving of Argentina to explore/embrace life after her birth, Ohno/spectators could be led to the *categorial intuition* which acknowledges notions such as "death engendering life" (Ohno, 1997b, p.293), "we connect ourselves with those around us" (ibid, p.198), or "everything is so beautiful" (ibid, p.270). Likewise, the underpinning significances of Butoh, such as *merging with the universe*, sharing inner spirit, metamorphosis of nature, and so on may be simultaneously acquired when imagery such as that described above is perceived on stage. However, it is worth noting that through *categorial intuition*, individual spectators may focus on diverse details of the imagery, and relate to different situations. In this case, the significances of the dance are even more enriched, beyond Ohno's original choreographic intention and plans.

A further development of *categorial intuition* leads to logic and propositional or judgmental reflection (Husserl, 1901). As Sokolowski (2000) notes

> Once we have constituted categorial objects, we can formalize those objects...instead of dealing with the categorial object, "the car is damaged", we can deal with the pure form, "*S* is *p*", in which the content of the object is rendered indifferent and the syntax is kept in place. Instead of "car" we deal with "any object whatever", and instead of "damaged" we deal with "any attribute whatever." Then, we can examine the relations among various forms and see, for example, that the form "S is not p" is not consistent with the form "Sp is q"... (pp.103-4)

The pure form that articulates the relation of categorial objects is logic. It is also the syntax of language or texts. In the domain of logic and syntax, the subject matter is concerned no longer with the presence of an object, but with the representative textual form of the object, that is, with propositions. Phenomenology terms this the *secondary meaning* (Chap. 2.3), which may be considered as parallel to "meaning" derived from structural linguistics and rationalist

reasoning.

Sokolowski (2000) also points out that the syntactic forms or propositions involve the examination of consistency and coherency.

> Inconsistency means that one part of what we say contradicts another part in regard to formal logical structure: we say both "S is p" and "S is not p". Incoherence, on the other hand, means that the content, as opposed to the form, of our judgment is not properly assembled. It means that we are using content words that make no sense when they are put together...examples of such...are "the book is tall"; "my cat is a filibuster"... (pp.107, 171)

Based on logical consistency and coherence, people form concepts and make conceptual judgements. Subsequently, systems of thoughts and social codes are established. Logic, syntax and verifiable knowledge are considered by the rationalist tradition of Descartes and Kant as being the only "true" knowledge. This position implicitly criticizes and conflicts with the acquisition of perception held as *Truth* by phenomenologists (Chap. 2). The development of the *secondary meaning* or logic thus departs from the phenomenological tradition. This thesis suggests that, as the "truth" of logic is different from the *Truth* acknowledged in Butoh and Eastern philosophy (Chap. 2 and 3), logic and syntactic forms are rarely the point of departure for Butoh choreographers when developing choreographic materials in their creative processes. Therefore it may not be appropriate to use logic as a framework through which the relationship of imagery and significance in Butoh is analysed.[1]

However, although logic and syntactic forms are rarely the point of departure for Butoh choreographers, they can be incorporated into the creative processes as a dialectical option for the choreographers. For example, signs may be used in Butoh, although the use of them is generally occasional and usually manifested in an ambiguous or loose manner. In *Admiring La Argentina* the cloak may be taken by Ohno as a sign which signifies multiple layers of the emotions and memories of Divine and Argentina (Ohno, 1998; 1997a). The cloak is initially a

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[1] Many analyses of western theatres since the late 1960s focus on the statements made through performance events. The interpretations of theatrical productions, both drama and dance, by commentators and scholars are underpinned by rationalist or linguistic frameworks. Semiotic schemes were adopted for the analysis of performing arts in general (Elam 1980; States 1985; Foster 1986; Pavis 1982; Lamb 1965; Melrose, 1994).

part of Divine's appearance in the first part of scene one. At the end of this part, when Divine is about to meet his death, the cloak is taken off and laid on the floor. Divine slowly lowers his body, trembling subtly and swaying from time to time. For Ohno, the bodily movement presents a mixture of feelings: regret, sorrow, joy, love, wish, fragility, as if summarising every emotion presented previously. Divine finally falls down on the cloak, as if dying. The light dims. When the second part of the scene starts, young Argentina appears, sitting up and looking at the cloak. For the next few moments, young Argentina stands up, playing with the cloak in different ways, wrapping it around her body, caressing it, or dragging it behind her. In so doing, various emotions are presented: joy, sorrow, reminiscence, emptiness, loss, and love.

In this scene the cloak suggests several ideas: "The cloak is a part of Divine's appearance", "The same cloak is also a part of Argentina's appearance", "Divine has died", "Argentina is born", "Divine looks at the cloak emotionally", and "Argentina plays with the cloak also emotionally". These ideas may then be organized consistently and coherently by Ohno and spectators, providing a reasonable interpretation of the scene on the grounds that, for example, the same cloak can be a part of both Divine and Argentina only when the cloak is passed from Divine to Argentina, or that Divine's emotional expression relates to the cloak, and so does Argentina's. Thus, for Ohno and for spectators, Divine's emotional contents may be considered the same as Argentina's emotional contents, or the emotional contents may be considered as being shared by both of them. The cloak can thus be taken as representing the shared emotional contents that are passed from Divine to Argentina. In the context of Butoh the signification of sharing emotions can be seen as parallel to the philosophy of "people connecting with one another" and "*merging with the universe*" that Ohno intends to reveal through the imagery of the dance.

Drawing from the above discussion, it can be seen that, for phenomenologists like Husserl and Sokolowski, logic and syntax are derived from *categorial intentionality* and *intuition*, rooted in perception, and related to those *derivative forms of intentionality*. This viewpoint is in contrast to the rationalist tradition of Western philosophers, for example Descartes, who considers logic

and syntactic grammar as a closed, self-sufficient system of reasoning, and Kant who holds the hypothesis of the idealistic *a priori* as the origin of logic and syntax (Chap. 2). Sokolowski (2000) articulates the difference between them.

> The syntactic parts of language obviously serve to link words...This linguistic work, however, is not all that they do. They also function in intentionality: the syntax of language is related to the way things can present themselves to us, to the way we can intend and articulate them. Syntactic parts of language serve to express the combinatorics of presentation, the way things can be presented to us in various part-whole relationships. Phenomenology does not just consider the linguistic role of grammar, as structural linguistics does; it also relates syntax to the activity of being truthful, to evidencing. (p.109)

Thus, phenomenology investigates both *primary* and *secondary meaning*, emphasizing the importance of exploring different kinds of perception and intentionality. In the same spirit, Butoh dance mainly focuses on the presentation of imagery revealing its state of being and *state of affairs*. Nevertheless, syntactic forms and significations derived from *categorial intuition* and further developed into logical inference and reasoning may still be considered as dialectical choreographic options available for Butoh choreographers in their choreographic processes.

It is worth noting that in *Admiring La Argentina* Ohno presents an integrated, androgynous character relating to Divine, Argentina, and Ohno. The significances underpinning the character are mainly integrated by a creative process that can be analysed and elucidated through the notion of *graded fulfillment*, (Chap. 5.2). Syntactic forms or logical inference are not used as a point of departure for Ohno's creative process. Indeed Ohno constantly notes that his choreographic options are not to communicate with an audience through rationalized framework, reasoning or inference (Ohno, 1997b; 1998). Nevertheless, examples of the use of signs can still be found in Ohno's works, the cloak in *Admiring La Argentina* being an example which more or less helps to elucidate the philosophy Ohno intends to reveal. Thus it could be argued that to some extent a Western rationalist approach or logical framework has been, as a dialectical choreographic option, a hidden layer of Ohno's creative processes. This could be seen as being a result of the tacit integration of East and West which has taken place throughout the years of Japan's modernisation since the Meiji period.

### 6.1.2 Texts and Conceptual References

Expanding on the above discussion, as well as being a means for "beckoning imagery", written texts may be treated as a form of *categorial intuition* and rational inference. In the latter case the focus of the choreographer is diverted from imagery back to the textual form itself. The concern is thus put on the conceptual references associated with the textual form. Taking Genet's novel *Our Lady of the Flowers* (Chap. 5.1.2) as an example, it is suggested here that the character Divine can be read in different ways. For example, Divine's struggle against Fascist Nazi may be seen as corresponding to the framework of the defiance/compliance relationship proposed by Foucault (1977; 1980; 1994), and analysed accordingly.

Foucault's notion of a defiance/compliance relationship is derived from Kant's investigation of Enlightenment. According to Foucault (1984), Kant argues that Enlightenment is a process through which people develop from the status of "immaturity" to that of "maturity". The former status refers to people's blind obedience to an authority, whereas the latter refers to people's learning the distinction between "the realm of obedience" and "the realm of the use of reason". Enlightenment is thus defined by "a modification of the pre-existing relation linking will, authority and the use of reason" (p.35). Kant further proposes that there is a distinction "between the private and public uses of reason", and that the use of reason has to be considered in context. Foucault notes:

> The distinction he [Kant] introduces is between the private and public uses of reason. But he adds at once that reason must be free in its public use, and must be submissive in its private use...he finds himself thereby placed in a circumscribed position, where he has to apply particular rules and pursue particular ends. Kant does not ask that people practice a blind and foolish obedience, but that *they adapt the use they make of their reason to these determined circumstances*; and *reason must then be subjected to the particular ends in view*....Enlightenment is thus not merely the process by which individuals would see their own personal freedom of thought guaranteed. There is Enlightenment when the universal, the free, and the public uses of reason are *superimposed on one another*. (ibid. p.36, *my italics*)

Drawing on Kant's notion of the generation of reason with reference to different circumstances and the superimposition of the use of reason on one another by people, Foucault (1984; 1980;

1988) argues that the application of reasoning is limited, and that each individual, nation, and historical period has its own limitations and system of thought, due to living in a specific spatial and temporal zone in history. This limitation of reasoning can be seen as one characteristic of "modernity", which is defined by Foucault as more of

> an *attitude* than as a period of history. And by *attitude*, I mean a mode of relating to contemporary reality; a voluntary choice made by certain people; in the end, a *way of thinking and feeling*. (Foucault, 1984, p.39, *my italics*)

Accordingly, each historical epoch may develop distinctive characteristics derived from its particular kind of modernity. In the process of modernisation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, modernism and post-modernism may thus be taken as two exemplars of thought.

Foucault further suggests that the process of developing from "immaturity" to "maturity" and the exploration of modernity since the Enlightenment is still in progress.

> I do not know whether we will ever reach mature adulthood. Many things in our experience convince us that the historical event of the Enlightenment did not make us mature adults, and we have not reached that stage yet. However, it seems to me that a meaning can be attributed to that critical interrogation on the present and on ourselves which Kant formulated by reflecting on the Enlightenment. (ibid. p.49)

Within the above context, that is, that systems of thoughts continue to diversify in society and history, Foucault (1977; 1980; 1988) proposes the notion of a defiance/compliance relationship. According to Foucault, the dominant power of society will use the knowledge resulting from its own process of reasoning/rationalisation to impose control over individuals that may have different processes of reasoning/rationalization and systems of thought. Individuals either comply with or defy the dominant system to claim their position in relation to society, generating their debates verbally or through bodily *actions*. In the modern world individual behaviour which demonstrates compliance or defiance may be seen as on the one hand reflecting and on the other reconsidering, or criticising issues relating to the use of reason, the notion of modernity, and modernisation. In addition to Foucault's notion of a defiance/compliance relationship, within the context of modernism, post-modernist theorist Jameson (1991, 1994) proposes that the characteristics of modernism include those of anomie,

isolation, solitude, revolt, and Van Gogh-like madness.

From the perspective of a Foucauldian conceptual framework, Divine's condition of struggling in Genet's novel, in addition to relating to Ohno's reading of Divine as the elucidation of a universal human spirit confronting situations in life, suggests a conceptual framework used to criticise Japanese government and to mock the modernisation of Japan since the Meiji period. Indeed Hijikata (1998; 2000a) reads Divine in this way, as an exploration of the significances of the character in relation to the notion of modernity and modernisation. Additionally the characteristics of modernism identified by Jameson can be identified in Hijikata's dance *Rebellion of the Flesh* (1968). It is in this way that audience/researchers' viewpoints that conceive Butoh as a means of criticising Westernisation and as one of the results of the Second World War (Chap. 3) may be incorporated by Butoh choreographers into their choreographic plans as a dialectical option through which to treat textual materials and adjust choreographic structures.

This thesis proposes another example of treating texts as forms of conceptual inference Swedenborg's story is used by Ohno as choreographic material in relation to *Admiring La Argentina*. It is a story about two people *merged* into an angel after their death. Ohno reads it and considers it as 'beckoning the image' of an androgynous character and as revealing the significance of *merging with others and the universe* (Chap. 5.1.2). This story can also be read in another way. It may be argued that the two people can merge with each other only when they are dead. In other words, it is their souls rather than their bodies that can be merged together. This viewpoint supports the notion of the division and distinction between soul and body, which is a central characteristic of the rationalist tradition (Descartes, 1637). This viewpoint also corresponds to Kant's notion of the superiority of the rational mind over the material body (Kant, 1790)[2]. Drawing from these arguments, it may be seen that the rationalist way of reading this story could lead to an interpretation that incorporates a conceptualized structure of body and mind, rather than a process of *merging with the universe*.

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[2] This book was reprinted in 2001. Further discussion of Kant's notion is in Chap. 6.3.2.

This viewpoint of the distinction of body/mind leads to an emphasis in dance on the rational mind and reasoning, through which the body tends to be arranged into precise postures and gestures. Here the development of abstract forms such as shapes and lines often become the main concern of the creative process, rather than the perception of imagery. Along the same lines of thought, such a performance becomes, in contrast to Ohno's intention of communication with audience at an emotional and visceral level, a communication with the audience through the means of reasoning and inferring.

In Butoh, many choreographers who came after Ohno have been inclined to accept more willingly the influence of Westernisation, integrating conceptual schemes into their choreographic plans, and considering in more detail ways through which they can formulate and arrange postures and gestures (Barbe, 2005). For example, as a Butoh dancer Ashikawa is known for her mastery of the technique of presenting imagery through bodily *encountering* and *transforming*. However, when she choreographs Ashikawa shifts her concern from this to the adjustment of the overall choreographic structure and viewing angles for audience after the imagery has been developed. Fraleigh (1999) notes,

> The spaced directions of the movement become choreographed...as two groups of men performed the images, they became choreographically shaped in clear spatial orientations and blended feeling tones. Each man's revelation of the imagery compounded the whole. A similarly choreographed phrase for women was developed from Ashikawa's image of a peacock walking on the diagonal line of the room with the eyes and face looking askance on the opposing diagonal. (p.147)

Performance texts considered from this perspective can be seen as rooted in the Western rationalist tradition and in the western tradition of performance texts that involve issues of the diversification of reason, the issue of modernity, and ponderings on modernisation. This more rationalist approach to performance texts may be used by Butoh choreographers as a dialectical choreographic option, and those issues, if taken up by choreographers, become a potential extension of significances underpinning their dance.

## 6.2 Visual Arts

Scenography in works of many Butoh Choreographers such as those of Sankai-Juku is related to the concerns of Visual Arts. Take paintings for example, on the one hand, the subject of a painting may be 'beckoned forward' to emerge in front of a spectator by means of the particular composition of the lines and shape of the painting and the *pictorial intentionality* (Chap. 5.1.3). On the other hand, the painting is a two dimensional object, which transforms a multi-dimensional reality into a two-dimensional form. Reality is formalized and stylized through a process of abstraction. Instead of the imagery being 'beckoned forward', a representative structure is established, a structure that relates to the subject and symbolises other subject matter through encouraging the employment of reasoning and inference in understanding the work.

Some Butoh choreographers seeing paintings from this perspective may shift their choreographic concerns from a focus on imagery's spiritual state of being to a focus on abstract forms, lines, and shapes, leading them to emphasize the externalized scenic spectacle. Sankai-Juku's dance *Hibiki (2001)* may be taken as an example of this line of thought. The stage is covered with sand. There are thirteen transparent, lens-like sources with four pendulums hung from above gently dripping bloody-red water (Chap. 3.1.3a). Five dances coil in foetal positions at the beginning, and then gradually uncoil and rise. These elements together generate a mysterious and magnificent spectacle on stage (*The Independent Sunday*, 25/3/2001). This is expected by the choreographer, Ushio Amagatsu, who explains in the programme notes that the visual spectacle is intended to symbolise the inside world of a mother's womb and the process of birth.

In contrast to Sankai-Juku's successful emphasis on stage spectacles, an unsuccessful example of the use of stage spectacle is noted by Fraleigh after she attended a performance of Kasai in 1997. Kasai's performance was described as 'awful' by the audience (Fraleigh, 1999, p.238). The reason, Fraleigh argues, is that Kasai focused so much on the presentation of inner feelings that he got lost in the dance, with a complete lack of consideration of the

choreographic structure and scenic arrangement. The stage spectacle therefore was not integrated into the dance. Kasai testified to this analysis later in an interview with Fraleigh, admitting that he is simply dancing and 'letting go' of his body and concepts altogether. (ibid, p.239)

## 6.3 Actions

*Actions*, in terms of phenomenology, may be taken as building plans leading to individual worldviews or a shared inter-subjective *world* (Chap. 5.1.4). In that respect, *actions* afford communication, allow people to share the same *stock of knowledge at hand*, and to develop from and contribute to a shared social structure. In the context of Butoh, through analysing this kind of *actions* the overall significance of the *world* may be elucidated. (Chap. 5)

### 6.3.1 Social Structure

*Actions* may be considered with specific emphases. Sociologist Schutz (1972) suggests that the reason why people's *action* plans can be inter-connected, overlapped, and intertwined is because they share the same social structure. In other words, social structure is the point of departure for *action*, offering codes of communication and a shared value system, becoming the very foundation from which people develop their lives and generate knowledge.

What should be noted however, is that the point of departure considered by Schutz is not a starting point for a progressive linear development of life. Rather, it is on the basis of social structure that people develop their lives and knowledge, which gradually re-shape the social structure and give rise to social reformation. In this case, social structure, as a point of departure, refers to an initial point from which, metaphorically, a circular or spiral process of life and knowledge development starts and to which it returns. In other words, a constantly developing social structure may be taken as representing the overall entity of the integration of individual *worlds*, and the relationship of individuals and a shared *world*.

Schutz's viewpoint of social structure may be compared to Douglas's notion of the interaction between a social body and a physical body. According to Douglas (1970) a physical body is an individual agent for the fulfillment of an *action* plan and a social body is the collective whole of individual agents. A social structure is established through the interaction of the two kinds of bodily experiences.

> ...the social body constrains the way the physical body is perceived...the physical experience of the body, always modified by the social categories through which it is known, sustains a particular view of society. There is a continual exchange of meanings between the two kinds of bodily experience so that each reinforces the categories of the other. (p.65)

In contrast a more linear viewpoint, which emphasises social structure as the superior framework maintained by the dominant institutional powers of society to supervise the development of individuals, is found in earlier sociologists' writings such as those of Durkheim (1972, 1982), Mead (1968), and Mauss (1935). In the words of these writers, *significant symbols* are defined as the verbal or gestural forms whose meanings are established and shared within society. Social structure consists of sets of *significant symbols*. A process of *social stratification* is thus manipulated by the dominant institutional powers to distribute resources of society, mainly to people with "good" and coherent" behaviour. In this way social structure is maintained and stabilized.

No matter whether social structure is considered as the overall entity of the integration of individual *worlds* or as the superior framework, the emphasis of social structure may be applied to the examination of people's activities and experiences. In the following discussion an example of the structural analysis of Japanese society that may be used in the context of the development of Butoh is offered.

The development of Japanese society after the Second World War can be divided into several stages. The first stage was up to the end of 1960s. In this stage the social structure evolved around the axis of defiance/compliance relationship between the Westernised government and individuals (Chap. 3.3.1; 6.1.2). In this respect, people's *actions* and social activities could be understood and categorized into two domains. One domain is defiance, which includes people

such as those protesters striving to change their marginalised position in contrast to the central government and the dominant institutes in society. The other domain is compliance, which includes those people in the dominant institutes expecting to obtain more social resources. This social structure may have provided a structural model for Butoh choreographers of that period with respect to their arrangement of dance imagery. For example, choreographic elements developed in a Butoh creative process could be categorized as belonging to the two domains, and used to present the stratification of, or contrasting positions in, society. Hijikata's *Revolt of the Flesh* is an example of this.

At the beginning of *Revolt of the Flesh*, Hijikata's body is carried through the auditorium in a litter. The unbalanced, swinging litter generates a sense of danger. Meanwhile, animals are hung around the litter. Their struggling enhances the sense of danger. On stage, Hijikata crashes onto metal plates from time to time. He dances in a spasmodic rhythm that seems to disclose a struggling and battling against the harsh environments. The bowlegs, Hijikata (1988) explains, give a sense of crisis, because this position makes the dancer stand on the edge of the feet and become inclined to overbalance.[3] These bodily *actions* could be seen as representing the threat of destruction from the dominant powers (Hijikata, 1998; Barber, 2005). Hijikata states, "Through dance we must depict the human posture in crisis, exactly as it is." (cited in Mishima, 1987, p.123)

Similarly, contra-contextual appearances of Hijikata's body appeared in the second part of the performance, where he wore a long pink gown and a pair of white satin trainers, and danced in Waltz and Flamenco. This presented the body as distorted imagery, a body that was not in a harmonious state, perhaps implying an inability to prevent itself from being torn apart by dominant powers. The performance of *Revolt of the Flesh* climaxes with Hijikata suspending himself spread-eagled by ropes and gradually pulled across the audience, emphasising the imagery of a body in destruction that is central to the work. (Hijikata, 1998)

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[3] Another example is found at the end of the first part of the dance where Hijikata killed a chicken by breaking its neck. The same motif of killing a chicken had been seen earlier in *Forbidden Colours* (1959).

It is arguable whether Hijikata consciously follows the defiance/compliance model to develop this dance. However, scholars and critics such as Ichikawa (1989) and Viala (1988) indeed adopt this defiance/compliance model in their interpretations of Butoh dance in the 1960s (Chap. 3.3.1). Further, it can be seen that the presentation of Hijikata's dance echoes the results of the structural analyses of these writers, and Hijikata indeed takes into consideration social criticism as an aspect of his choreography (Hijikata, 1998; 2000a). Therefore, it can be argued that the defiance/compliance model may be used implicitly by Hijikata to help adjust the choreographic structure of the dance in the creative process.

The second stage of the development of Japanese society, and of Butoh, was around the 1970s. The social structure in Japan started to evolve around the axis of a reconsideration of traditional Japanese culture and its integration into a Westernised society. It was evident that Japanese regained their enthusiasm for gardening, traditional folk arts, learning meditation, martial arts, and tea ceremony which were prevalent in the nineteenth century (Marra, 2001). New codes of social manners were developed. People dedicated themselves to societal sub-groups such as business companies, scholarships consisting of predecessors and successors, and private institutions. In these sub-groups the traditional spirit of togetherness of oneself and others was preserved without risking it growing into an aggressive nationalism (Starrs, 2004). The Western idea of individualism was also put into effect in Japan at this time without it becoming corrupted into selfish confrontation and exploitation between people (ibid). The worldview established in Japan at this time may be seen as a further development of the traditional viewpoints which were being resurrected.

A structuralist model may be formed by linking choreographic elements to characteristics of Japanese physique and life styles. Such a model may have been implicitly used to represent Japanese culture by the Butoh choreographers influenced by developments in social structure in this stage. For example, the postures and gestures *ganimata* (bow-legs), *sonkyo* (squatting), and *onnagata* (female impersonator) which appeared in Hijikata's choreographic works in the 1970s were adopted from people's daily behaviour in his hometown *Tohoku*. Other choreographic elements, such as the positioning of the chin and jaw, non-focused or

half-closed eyes, emphasis on the lower part of torso/Hara (belly) and the pelvis/Kyusho (an area below the navel) were all derived from Japanese people's daily lives, and used by Butoh companies such as Dairakuda-Kan and Byakko-Sha (Chap. 3).

However, the application of the structural analysis model based on linking choreographic elements to characteristics in daily life proved to be limited (Laage, 1993), and the link between, for instance, choreographic elements in Butoh and Japanese physicality may need to be re-configured. Certain issues have been identified by choreographers and researchers which give rise to this notion. Japanese society has been changing greatly throughout the years since the Second World War. Because more people are traveling the world and experiencing a wide variety of lifestyles and customs, they are not inclined to comply with previously established social patterns that underlie traditional relationships in employment, family, marriage, and social circles. Japan is no longer an agricultural society, as more people work in offices and few people actually work in the rice fields. Further, as a result of modern food technology and the convenience of imported Western food Japanese people now obtain more of their intake of protein and fat from meat and other readily available products than from traditional food as in the past. As a result of these changes in eating habits, along with other factors such as sitting on chairs rather than on the floor, sleeping on beds instead of *tatami* (grass mats), and proper exercise as opposed to hard labour, the Japanese physique is changing: the legs are longer, the body is straighter and taller. Official statistics have been published in newspapers to support this discovery (Dietrich 1993). In this context, Laage (1993) acknowledges that the previous Butoh appearance of the bow-legged, distorted or whitened-body no longer presents the reality of life in this new era. Thus, the resultant questions for contemporary Butoh choreographers are: How can new Butoh works be choreographed? How can new dance materials be developed? Laage concludes:

> To imitate Hijikata's dancing, to simply duplicate his vocabulary of images would be a misuse of the model that he offers...already, critics and artists are uncomfortable with what they consider to be the codification of Hijikata's movement and image vocabulary. Their reaction is understandable when we realize that Butoh is not a dance of imitation, nor one that is based on perfection of pre-existing forms. (p.158, 164)

This thesis agrees that the answer to the question regarding the potential ways to develop Butoh materials may not be found simply through the imitation of movement vocabularies developed in relation to characteristics of different social structures by acclaimed Butoh pioneers such as Ohno or Hijikata. Instead, this thesis suggests that the answer can be explored through analysing the ways Butoh imagery is developed in the creative processes, and as such has been discussed in Chapter 5, which considers the phenomenological framework of perception as the approach most often adopted by Butoh choreographers. Other frameworks such as the defiance/compliance model derived from the analysis of social structure may then be taken up by choreographers as dialectical choreographic options that help adjust dance structures instead of generating dance materials.

### 6.3.2 Cultural Patterns and Symbolism

Apart from the sociological perspective, *actions* can also be considered through an anthropological perspective. Cassirer (1955) and Polanyi (1977) hold that the reasons for people's action plans can be inter-connected, overlapped, and intertwined is because they share the same cultural patterns. Moreover, these cultural patterns have been recorded by ancient people through the symbolism in mythology. Analysing the symbolism in myth leads to the understanding of cultural patterns, and therefore of the sources of human behaviour in daily life. These can be drawn on by Butoh choreographers. In the following, two examples of the symbolism derived from myth that have been used in Butoh are discussed, one being the double facets of *mother goddess*, the other being the distinction between male and female.

*Mother goddess* in Ohno's dance *Admiring La Argentina* is represented by imagery of a mother. Mother's unconditional giving and sacrificing for her child may be taken as one of the main characteristics of *mother goddess*. Other characteristics of *goddess* may also be symbolised by the imagery of a mother. Fraleigh (1999) points out that many cultures have similar characters and symbolism, such as *Tara* in Tibet, *Kwan-Yin* in China, *Isis* in Egypt, *Kali* in India, *Oya* in Nigeria, *Demeter* and her daughter *Persephone* in Western mythology.

In all these mythologies, *mother goddess* has two facets. On the one hand, the goddess is open and receptive, always bringing forth the fruits of earth in springtime, blessing people, and giving rise to new life. On the other hand, the goddess is also a destroyer, dancing with fire, like natural disasters bringing forth death, or like the cold winter emptying the colorful view of landscape. Thus, the symbolic significances of *mother goddess*, as noted by Fraleigh, may involve those related to Taoism and Zen philosophy. For example, *mother goddess* 'beckons' the winter to set in, in order to return the summer's prosperous appearance to a starting point of nothingness. This symbolises the evolution of life and death, revealing the metamorphosis of nature. Furthermore, goddess's power of winter may be seen as that of purification and emptiness of one's aggressive ego, the elimination of which leads to a healthy ego of giving and sharing. Similarly, the goddess's power of spring may well be seen as that of rebirth and fulfillment, humble enough to accept guidance and nourishment from others. Overall, *mother goddess* reveals two teachings on humanity that people need to love and to be loved, and that people have the urge toward bondedness and identification with others.

Derived from *mother goddess*' two facets of power and their manifestation, *mother goddess* as deity is not immutable and fixed. In other words, *mother goddess* reveals itself through the form of male and female, young and old, human and non-human. In this respect, *mother goddess* symbolises the philosophy of *merging with others and the universe*. Furthermore, as Fraleigh (1999) notes, "On an individual level, the Goddess stands for the inner dance of feminine and masculine principles in each person, and on a cultural level she stands for partnership between men and women" (p.95)

Drawing from the above, the symbolism of *mother goddess* presents a worldview consisting of the metamorphosis of nature, the four seasons, the blossoming and withering of life, and the relationship of everything within nature. Accordingly, it potentially provides a structural model for choreographers in the arrangement of different kinds of dance imagery. Amongst these would be the presentation of both genders, and the juxtaposition of human beings with natural objects, and phenomena of blossoming and withering in nature, both common in Butoh choreography.

The other symbolism relating to Butoh is the distinction of male and female. This can also be seen as a further elaboration from the symbolism of *mother goddess*. The two categories, male and female, can be used as a framework to examine various elements in nature. In Chinese and Japanese philosophy the female is regarded as *yin* and male as *yang*. They complement each other and give rise to the manifold of natural phenomena. Thus, Ohno (1997b) states that male and female had better to be seen as two layers of characteristics of everything: "all of us contain both female and male energy, irrespective of gender...before birth, there is no such thing as being a man or a woman" (p. 79). Also, regardless the biological difference and individual appearances, everyone and everything are still considered and acknowledged as parts of a greater entity. This viewpoint of male and female can be seen as firmly rooted in Eastern philosophy (Chap. 2).

In the West, however, female is often related to natural force or the earth. This association may give rise to more complicated significances when it is connected with Kant's notion of human and nature. Kant (1790) states that "we found in our mind a superiority over nature itself in its immensity...it reveals in us...an ability to judge ourselves independent of nature" (p.145). This statement thus marks the separation of mind and body, of human culture and nature, and claims man's superiority over nature, 'man' tending to be seen as male in this case. This is presented in contrast to 'female', which symbolises nature, whereas 'male' symbolises mind's superior power of reasoning, human society, and culture. From this rationalist viewpoint, male and female seem to be in constant conflict rather than in complement.

Accordingly, the symbolism of male and female differs in the East and West, and leads to different worldviews. The structural models commonly used by choreographers to arrange dance imagery are also different in the East and the West. Pina Bausch's dance theatre may be taken as an example from the West. Tension between two genders is frequently a topic in her choreography, in which a gendered social structure is scrutinized and criticized. Sanchez-Colberg (1992) argues that

> one can identify a recurrent theme of antagonism between the sexes which is rooted in gender power relations and patterns of dominance...In a scene from *Arien,* Bausch uses the difference in height between Lutz Forster (who is very tall) and Isabel Libonati (who is very petite) to develop the physical image of a mismatched kiss. The dancers touch lips, but in order to do so the female dancer is lifted and carried across the stage without once touching the ground". (p. 216-7, 234-5)

In comparison, Ohno's androgynous style may be taken as an example of attitudes to male and female from the East. Ohno (1997b) states that the androgynous character on stage is a spiritual symbol of his mother. He also articulates that the significances derived from the imagery of mother and the androgynous character are those related to the worldview of *merging with the universe and others* (Chap. 5).

However, neither Bausch's nor Ohno's choreographic structures and creative processes are specifically taking the perspective of symbolism or cultural patterns as their point of departure, although they might be implied in the work. For Ohno, revealing the state of being is the point of departure (Chap. 5).For Bausch, the central concern is "what moves people, rather than how people move" (Sanchez-Colberg, 1999, p.5). The manifold of significances that Bausch aims to create is achieved not merely by allowing but also by encouraging audiences to freely associate dance images presented on stage through the prism of their diverse personal, social, cultural, or political backgrounds so as to generate a multiplicity of varied interpretative perspectives (Sanchez-Colberg, 1992).

However, the dance imagery and significances seen in the examples of Ohno's and Bausch's choreography may be considered as parallel to those emphasised in the symbolism of *mother goddess*, male and female. This demonstrates the reason why an anthropological perspective is often used by dance scholars, critics, and audience to help understand and interpret dance. Furthermore, this perspective may be taken as a dialectical option that helps choreographers to adjust choreographic structures so as to make prominent or emphasise specific symbolic significances.

## 6.4 Dance Elements: Western and Eastern Perspectives

In a broader context of East and West, where philosophies and art forms are developed differently, the incorporation of diverse cultural viewpoints into choreographic plans in Eastern and Western dances reflects an exchange of cultural significances. The exchange has been two ways between East and West. On the one hand, Western philosophies and forms have been taken into consideration in Eastern choreographic works and have become dialectical options for Eastern choreographers. Butoh's appropriation of Western dance elements is an example of this direction of exchange. On the other hand, Eastern philosophies and forms have been integrated into Western dances and have become dialectical choreographic options for Western choreographers. Western post-modernist choreographers such as Steve Paxton, Deborah Hay, and Lulu Sweigard and their incorporation of Eastern philosophies and forms into their works are examples of this.

### 6.4.1 Western Viewpoints of Dance Elements as Dialectical Options of Butoh

The viewpoints of body, movement, space, and time considered in Western dance may be taken up as dialectical choreographic options by Butoh choreographers. The Western viewpoints can be traced back to the beginning of the twentieth century when dance was for the first time considered as an independent art form. This perspective on theatre dance was subsequently underpinned by the rationalisation of dance elements by pioneers such as Laban (1966, 1971, 1974), and later by dance scholars such as Adshead et al. (1988), Preston-Dunlop (1987), and Sanchez-Colberg (1988; 1992).

Initially, Laban's aim was to clarify the prominent elements that make dance an independent art form rather than a form dependent on music. Within those elements movement is acknowledged as the indispensable and central element of dance. Movement is examined through its dynamic contents, spatial features and abstract forms/shapes, as dance in the West was considered an expression of inner emotions and a revelation of natural laws rather than a presentation of metaphysical spiritual imagery or the state of being as it is in Butoh.

Laban articulates in his theories of Effort and Choreutics that emotions are expressed through the dynamic contents of movement (Laban, 1974), and that natural laws are demonstrated through the abstract forms and shapes of bodily postures and gestures derived from the anatomic structure of the body (Laban, 1966). Thus, movement is formalized through a rationalized formulaic spatial, temporal, and dynamic system.

Interestingly enough, Laban's notions of movement reflect two main dance styles in the West, namely the emotional expressionist dance of the early to mid modernist period and the motional abstract late modern/early post-modern dance. In comparison, although Butoh may be seen as a branch of expressionist dance that emphasises the expression of inner emotions, Ashikawa (cited in Fraleigh, 1999) argues that Butoh's movement is not simply the dynamic flow of force expressing emotions, but more concerned with the perception of imagery. Kasai (cited in Fraleigh, 1999) also suggests that abstract movement-in-itself is not the goal in Butoh as in much modern or post-modern dance, and that from Hijikata's dance forward, Butoh dissipates Western material form and aesthetic mirroring. (Chap. 5)

The notion of body has been discussed by many theatre scholars in the West. States (1985) expresses his disagreement with putting the central concern of a performance in the inference of its significance instead of in the perception of the multi-faceted spectaculars on stage, suggesting that "If you were interested in *Macbeth* for the density of its significations, it would be better to stay home and read the text" (p.28). This statement seems to parallel Ohno's disagreement with structuring dance in order to manifest specific ideas rather than presenting imagery and sharing emotions (Chap. 5). Ohno similarly notes that were it the aim to get ideas across to an audience "...wouldn't they grasp them just as easily by reading a book?" (p.245)

However, what may be distinguished is that, shifting the focus away from inference, the spectaculars mentioned by States and the imagery mentioned by Ohno are actually different. The imagery of Ohno refers to the perception of a non-material or spiritual body (Chap. 5), whereas the spectaculars of States refer to the perception of a material or physical body.

The materiality of the body is also emphasised by Garner (1995).

> The actor's body never ceases asserting itself in its material, physiological facticity. On one level, of course, it does so by endowing the character-body with 'borrowed' physicality, in the same way that a wooden stage device, makes 'real' the stocks in which Kent is placed: the Lear-body is experienced as *there* through the actor's corporeality. But the body inserts a much more fundamental and intrusive actuality into the field of dramatic representations, an actuality that charges even verbal reflections (and evocations) of bodily presence. A point of independent sentience, the body represents a rootedness in the biological present that always, to some extent, escapes transformation into the virtual realm. (p.44)

This material body includes not only the physiological characteristics of the body, but also those biological functions of the body. Scarry (1985) emphasises that the body is subject to biological need and sentience, as when in pain, injured, exhaustion, or hunger. Garner notes that "driven by hunger and other forms of need, bodily life involves a biological need for the material, a physiology of nurture and exchange with the world's substance" (p.99).

Under the emphasis of the material body, the subtleness of the body seen in slight trembling, rhythmic breathing, unconscious facial expressions, and characteristic physique becomes a prominent element in Western theatre. This may be considered as parallel to Butoh's making prominent the subtleness of the body and the subliminal movement, as seen in Ohno's bodily expressions in *Admiring La Argentina* (Chap. 5). However, when drawing on the subtleness of the body, Butoh explores more deeply than in the West spontaneous movement development and explores a more flexible structural improvisation, as can be seen in Ohno's choreographic processes. Ohno does not wish to establish a rigid choreographic structure with a fixed sequence of forms and shapes. Rather he seeks movement vocabularies that are not too concrete or too abstract (Chap. 5). The Western theatre, on the other hand, develops those subtle bodily aspects into either concrete mundane postures and gestures or abstract minimalist forms and shapes. Sanchez-Colberg (1992) notes that "within the context of theatrical dance, bodies kiss, pinch, pet, slap, stroke, spit, cry, eat, sweat, pant, dress, undress, show their tics, scars and habits" (p.241). Bausch's choreography may be seen as an example of this. She reclaims the body with its functions and all the layers which are hidden, repressed, or inside the body but close to the skin.

Another difference that may be pointed out for discussion is that it is the individuality of the body that is emphasised in Western dance/theatre rather than the body's integration into a shared *world* that is emphasised in Butoh. This may be seen as being rooted in the rationalist tradition of Descartes. The confrontation of subject versus object as defined by Descartes (1637)[4] is based on the notion that the only fact directly verifiable by a subject is the status of knowing that s/he is thinking, from which the existence of the subject as a precondition of thinking is presumed. Descartes further argues that the existence of other individuals or objects may only be verified through reasoning. Consequently a rationalist worldview is established, which is underpinned by the notion of individuals in pairs of subject and object. This finds its way into Western dance.

Other frameworks through which bodies as individuals are analysed are derived from sociology, anthropology, or literary studies. Susan Leigh Foster (1996) notes:

> Recent scholarly focus on the body grows out of anthropological and historical interest in non-documented human endeavours and from the complementary interest taken within literary studies towards non-Written texts. It equally results from the feminist problematisation of gender a concept that repeatedly forces an interrogation of the relationship between biological and cultural bodily constructions. Bodily subjection, disciplining, appropriation, colonization, mobilization, and agency have also occupied the centre of crucial theoretical debates gathered loosely under the rubric of body politics. (p.12)

Foucault's notion of the *docile body* may be taken as an example of the analysis of bodies as individuals. Foucault (1977) argues that each body is not only an individual but also a social unit. Bodily behaviour is regulated by social norms, its rhythm following the working timetables shared by every social member, and its activities being allocated to defined public or personal areas. These timetables and defined areas are re-enforced by laws and conventions maintained by institutional, educational, and governmental powers. Thus, the body is tamed and the social structure remains stable. This individual body as a social unit is termed the *docile body*.

An example of Western dance/theatre production that reflects Descartes' rationalist viewpoint

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[4] Reprinted in 1988.

of the individual body and Foucault's notion of the *docile body* may again be found in Bausch's dance theatre. Sanchez-Colberg (1992) notes that a general topic of genders can be seen in Bausch's dance.

> The gestures through which the dancers relate to each other and to their environment, demonstrate their position within society. As a consequence this position contains a certain degree of power by which it becomes political. Moreover, these gestures are generally determined by the individual's gender. (p.255)

The individuals behave according to the specific gestural codes attributed to the genders and to diverse social positions. These are the norms for the *docile body*. However, apart from simply demonstrating these norms, Bausch goes further to deconstruct and re-consider the rationalized bodily system.

> The men are assigned the roles of the aggressors, the pursuers, the controllers, regulators, masters of ceremonies, rapists and terrorists. Women, by contrast, are the victims. They are pursued, punished, dressed, undressed, raped, terrorised. However, these initial stereotypical gender classifications are disintegrated throughout the course of the work...the audience's conventional meanings of 'male' and 'female' shift via the juxtaposition created by the layering of seemingly incongruous visual signs...Bausch opens up what had been closed gender signifiers. (Sanchez-Colberg, 1992, p.236)

Derived from the rationalist tradition, viewpoints of body, movement, space, and time in the Western dance/theatres have gradually been formalized and categorized. Janet Adshead et al. (1988) term external features such as the movement, dancers, visual settings, and aural elements as "the four components of the dance". Similarly, the concept of the *strands of the dance medium,* which highlighted body, movement, space, and sound as "the four major strands of dance elements", was introduced by Preston-Dunlop in 1987, and further developed by Sanchez-Colberg (1988; 1992). It can be seen that these formalized dance elements, which were developed in a Western dance/theatre context, are different from the choreographic elements developed in Eastern dance/Butoh context where bodily movement, space, and time are integral parts of a greater synthesised entity.

Although the Western notions of body, movement, time, and space are different from those in Butoh, the former may be, indeed have been, adopted as dialectical choreographic options for

Butoh creative processes. Scholars such as Klein (1988), Nanako (2000), and Viala (1988) have pointed out the resemblances between Butoh and other dance/art forms (Chap. 3). The resemblances are in fact derived from an appropriation of the elements used in other dance/art forms by Butoh choreographers, which are not only Japanese but also those from the West.

An example can be seen in Ohno's *Admiring La Argentina*, in which Western music and costumes are used. In Kasai's Butoh performance in the 1997 San Francisco Butoh Festival spontaneous bodily movement is seen to mix with balletic movement. Minako Seki, who was a dancer in Japanese Butoh company "Dance Love Machine" and later established the first Japanese-German Butoh group "Tatoeba Theatre Dance Grotesque" in Berlin, teaches her dancers that "first the dancer must become acquainted with the foundation, the crossing line between horizon and the line which divides the body vertically in the centre" (Seki, 2005). This rationalised approach to the body may be seen as parallel to the notion of alignment in modern dance.

Similarly, Shinichi Momo Koga and his Butoh company "inkBoat" annually perform in Europe, Japan and North America. The choreographic style is a hybrid of Butoh and Western physical theatre and experimental dance, using imagery and forms, mundane movement and abstract patterns to explore the state of being of our existence. Koga articulates that "performance is all artifice...but within the artifice exists *truth*. Anything that's stylized is not necessarily the way people act on the street, but stylization is sometimes more *true* than plain speech" (Koga 2003). This statement reflects Koga's notion of *truth* being the synthesis of traditional Japanese philosophy and Western rationalist philosophy, and emphasising both the presence of an object's natural state of being and the representative forms of objects.

Butoh's appropriation of elements used in Western dance forms demonstrates one direction of the exchange of cultural significances, which is the incorporation of Western viewpoints and forms as a dialectical option for Eastern dance.

### 6.4.2 Eastern Forms and Philosophies as Dialectical Options of Western Dance

It is interesting to note here that not only did Butoh draw on Western dance forms, but also Western postmodern dance artists who developed their work in the 1960s drew extensively on Eastern movement forms and philosophies. Tai Chi Chuan, Yoga and other meditative movement forms have been common movement training devices amongst post-modern dancers in the US and 'New Dance' in the Britain (Banes 1979, 1980). These Eastern forms and philosophies underpinning Butoh became dialectical choreographic options for those choreographers supplementing older traditions of compositional technique in the Western context.

Ann Halprin, for example, incorporated Eastern viewpoints of nature and intuition into the movement development processes she conducted for students/practitioners. On the one hand, on the basis of anatomy and kinesiology she asked students to understand and analyse the physical changes they experienced in the course of a movement improvisation. On the other hand, she also encouraged students to follow intuition and impulse in improvisation, "to set loose all conceivable movements, gestures, and combinations of anatomical relationships, ignoring connotation, and bypassing habit and preference" (Banes, 1979, p.22), and "to be closer to nature" (Banes, 1980, p.xvii). It can be seen that the notion of "set loose" of all bodily gestures seems to echo Kasai's notion of "letting go" of one's body (6.2), and the notion of "bypassing habit and preference" echoes the notion of *emptiness* in Butoh (Chapter 3 and 4).

Steve Paxton embraced some of the ideas of Zen and Eastern philosophy, and considered the use of chance, collage, and automatism in dance choreography as "ways to free oneself from the tyranny of the self, to put oneself freely in the larger stream of the cosmos, or the unconsciousness, or God" (Banes, 1980, p.63). Richter (1964) notes that "by appealing directly to the unconscious, which is part and parcel of chance, we [Paxton and other choreographers of the Judson group] sought to restore to the work of art something of the numinous quality of which art has been the vehicle" (p.51). Richter further elaborates that the

use of chance processes and the link to unconsciousness was related to the criticism of Western rationalist tradition.

> The official belief in the infallibility of reason, logic and causality seemed to us senseless – as senseless as the destruction of the world and the systematic elimination of every particle of human feeling. This was the reason why we were forced to look for something which would re-establish our humanity...We had adopted chance, the voice of the unconsciousness – the soul, if you like – as a protest against the rigidity of straight-line thinking. (ibid. pp.57-9)

It is interesting to note that the embrace of numinous Zen ideas and the criticism of rationalism in Paxton's dance may be seen as analogous to the elucidation of traditional Japanese culture and criticism of Westernisation/modernisation in Butoh choreography (Chap. 3.1; 3.2). Paxton's use of chance and his exploration of unconsciousness in dance creative processes also seems to parallel Tanaka's emphasis on unconsciousness in Butoh creative processes (Chap. 3.1.3).

Deborah Hay likewise incorporated Eastern forms and philosophies into her dance choreography. She conducted a breathing exercise generating a similar effect to that of meditation in Eastern practice or the Butoh exercises of *Walking* and *Merging with the Space* (Chap. 3). This breathing exercise was a central part of the creative processes of *Circle Dances* (1974) and *The Grand Dance* (1977). The practitioners were given the instructions:

> Feel the blood carrying it everywhere; through your toes, under your arms, around your scalp, under your fingernails and in the palms of your hand. Sensitize the surface of your body to the particles of air surrounding, and gently bombarding you. (Hay and Rogers, 1974, p.6)

This part of the exercise seems to parallel the emphasis of visceral perception and sensitizing performers' bodies in Butoh (Chap. 5.1.1). Then the practitioners were given further instructions in relation to specific images.

> Think of a line down the center of your body from the top of your head along your face and neck, your chest, stomach, genital, dividing you in half. Slowly open out from this centre, all of you falling gently away from it, like turning inside out. (ibid. p.7)

According to Hay, this part of exercise was to help practitioners moving attention slowly through different parts of the body to creative a flow of sensations and relaxations. Although in Butoh there is no such a notion of an abstract central line of the body, as different parts of the Butoh body are equally treated and become different centres of bodily movement, and Butoh choreographers do not focus on precise postures and gestures (Chap. 5), the effect of relaxation and opening up to the space may be seen as analogous in both Hay's work and Butoh.

The focus of these practitioners was gradually expanded to include awareness of other people. They made contact by standing in a circle and holding hands. Instructions were given such as "feel the circle, feel its energy", "walk in rhythm with the others around the circle", or "naturally, flowing" (ibid. p.7). Next the sensing of practitioners moved beyond the group and explored their interrelations to the space. Finally, practitioners concentrated again on breathing and on the infinitesimal movement of the spine. "Spine to vertical position vertebra by vertebra, lengthening, fresh oxygen lifting you to standing" (ibid. p.7). Hay (1977) described the overall effect of the exercise:

> It is as if we are no longer isolated entities but rather a dynamic network of relationships...as we turn, we merge, we join...we cross and re-cross the performance area as long as the meditation happens, washing the performing area with these two energies and the transformation of the one into the other. (cited in Banes, 1979, p.130)

It can be seen that Hay's exercise seems to generate an effect/understanding analogous to the Eastern philosophy of *merging with the universe*. What may be particularly noted is that further movement developments on the basis of Hay's breathing exercise tend to focus more on the perception of the physical condition of the environment than the spiritual state of being of the environment as in Butoh. In Hay's choreographic works, she often substituted real time for virtual time, and real space for theatrical space. Banes (1979) notes,

> An action may take the time it takes to perform that action...in *Hill* (1965) Hay exploited the natural and unnatural elements in the landscape: she and Paxton wrestled each other to the ground; he drove off in a golf car; she stacked up bricks and ran down the hill (pp.115-6).

Accordingly, in the light of incorporation of both Eastern and Western movement forms and philosophies, Hay has given herself varied choreographic options. For example, there are three different arrangements of movement:

> One movement realized on time (for instance, taking the whole song to move the head gradually from facing forward to facing the left shoulder); one movement repeated slowly in one's own time (based on one's breathing rhythm); one movement done in time to the song's rhythm (e.g. bouncing, jumping, step-hop, or step-step-step-hop). (ibid. p.121)

Traces of the approach to dance in relation to body-mind coherence adapted from an Eastern philosophical perspective were common in the 1960s and 70s. This remains amongst many present day independent choreographers in both the USA and Britain. Many now use somatic movement techniques, which share a concern with Butoh choreographers with the presentation of imagery and the *merging* with the environment, both in their choreographic work and in their movement training. Mable Todd (1937) for example, who has been an influence on Western dance artists since the 1970s, considers the entire body as a sensitive instrument.

> The correlation of visceral, psychic and peripheral stimuli, underlying muscular response, involves the whole of a man. It is the very perception of nerves, viscera and organic life. The whole body, enlivened as it is by muscular memory, becomes a sensitive instrument responding with a wisdom far outrunning that of man's reasoning or conscious control. The neuromusculatures of skeleton and viscera interact, always conditioned by what has been received, as well as what is being received; and this because of emotional and mental evaluations. (p.3)

It can be seen that Todd's notion of the body as a sensitive instrument seems to parallel the notion of spontaneous movement generated through *encountering* and *transforming* in Butoh (Chap. 4 and 5). Lulu Sweigard further developed Todd's notion, and proposed a teaching method and philosophy that she termed *ideokinesis*. According to Sweigard (1974), the aim of *ideokinesis* is to reduce "all voluntary contribution to a movement to a minimum to lessen interference by established neuromuscular habits" (p.6). The method is to ask practitioners to concentrate on an "image of movement" that will let the central nervous system to choose the most efficient neuromuscular coordination for its performances, namely, the innate reflexes and feedback mechanisms" (p.6). Her research of *ideokinesis* involves the following areas of

concern: "(1) The location and direction of movement in the skeletal framework in response to the use of imagery, and (2) the alignment of the skeletal framework in relation to the line of gravity in the upright position" (p.6).

It can be considered that the coordination of mental activities and the simultaneous physical performance in *ideokinesis* parallels the body-mind coherent practice in Butoh creative processes. However, the context and application of *ideokinesis* are different from those of Butoh creative processes. Sweigard notes that *ideokinesis* "depends upon a thorough knowledge of the universal laws of mechanics, the skeletal structure, and the principles of muscular and neurological function" (ibid. p.7). In contrast, the skeletal mechanics and the universal laws are the lesser concern in Butoh which relies on spiritual and perceptual processes of *encountering* and *transforming* (Chap. 3, 4, 5). The application of *ideokinesis* is for "teaching both physical education and the performing arts – specifically, the dance" (Sweigard, 1974, p. 6) to "promote a better balanced structure and, most importantly, greater efficiency in movement" (ibid. p. 7). In contrast, a balanced structure and greater efficiency in movement has never been the aim of Butoh creative processes, the aim of Butoh being the attainment of the state of *merging with the universe* (Chap. 3, 4, 5).

The Feldenkrais Method is another somatic technique used by some Western dance artists. Moshe Feldenkrais in *Awareness through Movement* (1991) considers that the image of oneself and the person's action/movement/behaviour are closely linked to each other.

> Each one of us speaks, moves, thinks, and feels in a different way, each according to the image of himself that he has built up over the years. In order to change our mode of action we must change the image of ourselves that we carry within us. What's involved here, of course, is a change in the dynamics of our reactions, and not the mere replacing of one action by another. Such a change involves not only a change in our self-image, but a change in the nature of our motivations, and the mobilization of all the parts of the body concerned. (p.10)

Thus, in order to find the coordination between the two, Feldenkrais aims to enhance the awareness of this through movement, and encourages practitioners to be more sensitive to the perception of changing environments. It can be seen that the coordinated relationship between the image of oneself and bodily movement in Feldenkrais Method parallels the

phenomenological viewpoint of the coordination between perception and movement, and the body-mind coherence in Butoh (Chap. 4).

Likewise, Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen develops the somatic technique of Body-Mind Centering, which is an approach to the acknowledgement of one's image through movement. It is underpinned by anatomical, physiological, and psychophysical principles. In a Body-Mind Centering process elements such as touch or voice are employed to explore the way the mind is expressed through the movement and the movement influences the mind. Moreover, each practitioner is both an explorer and the subject matter in the process, learning to engage oneself and others non-judgmentally (Cohen, 1994). Body-Mind Centering has an almost unlimited number of areas of application. It is currently being used by people in movement, dance, yoga, bodywork, physical and occupational therapy, psychotherapy, child development, education, voice, music, art, meditation, athletics and other body-mind disciplines. It can be seen that the body-mind relationship in Body-Mind Centering parallels that in Butoh, although the anatomical principles underpinning Body-Mind Centering do not underpin the spiritual and perceptual imagery-based Butoh creative processes.

Overall, it can be seen that those Eastern forms and philosophies underpinning Butoh, and those somatic techniques developed in the Western context, become for Western choreographers dialectical choreographic options that complement conventional options in modern dance which evolved out of codified technical dance vocabularies authored by significant pioneers in their field, pioneers such as Merce Cunningham, Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Eric Hawkins and Paul Taylor.

It has been suggested that the choices of choreographic options in Eastern and Western dances embody the exchange of cultural significances. The exchange has been two ways between East and West. The appropriation of Western dance elements can be seen in Butoh, and the cultural significances of modernism and post-modernism can be identified in many Butoh works. Along side the characteristics of modernism such as anomie, isolation, solitude, revolt, Jameson (1991, 1994) proposes that the characteristics of post-modernism include

those such as fragmentation, *simulacrum*, and derealisation. The same characteristics can be identified in some Butoh choreographic works, as Laage (1993) and Klein (1988) point out (Chap. 3). Likewise, Eastern philosophies such as *merging with the universe*, body-mind coherence, and viewpoints on nature and intuition are identified as a prominent part of development in some Western dances. Drawing on the exchange of cultural significances, it is worth noting that the influence of East on West occurred at about the same time that Butoh was being developed and influenced by the West. This fact indicates that a productive cultural exchange was a feature of the arts in both parts of the world, and that its traces remain in Butoh choreography.

## 6.5 Summary Conclusion

This chapter has discussed those choreographic options which may be considered as dialectical to Ohno's creative processes, and open to be used by Butoh choreographers in general. Those options that manipulate choreographic materials through perspectives other than Ohno's not only lead to the diversity of Butoh choreographic styles featuring different focuses of performances but also explore the diversification of significances potentially acknowledged by different choreographers, performers, and audience.

Drawing from the discussions in this chapter, the dialectical choreographic options may be summarized in four categories. The first is to understand and use choreographic materials such as texts and images through logical reasoning/inferring and syntactic forms (Chap. 6.1.1). In so doing, the focus of the creative processes in Butoh shifts from the presentation of imagery to the formation of signs and the establishment of schemes of signification. The cultural significance underpinning the dialectical options of this kind relates to the elucidation of rationalist values.

The second kind of dialectical option is to understand and use choreographic materials with reference to particular conceptual frameworks such as those of sociological studies on powers and social structure, anthropological studies on cultural patterns and symbolism, and

metaphysics of body and soul (Chap. 6.1.2; 6.3). In so doing, the focus of the creative processes in Butoh shifts from the synthesised imagery of experiences as layers of *graded fulfillment* or *sedimentation* (Chap. 5) to the formation of postures and gestures as units of social structure or conceptualisation of subject matter. The significance underpinning the dialectical options of this kind relates to the elucidation of the notion of modernity, the use of reasoning, the issues relating to modernisation, and the reflection on modernism and post-modernism.

The third kind of dialectical option is to understand and use choreographic materials such as paintings and other visual information in terms of their abstract forms and shapes (Chap. 6.2). In so doing, the focus of the creative processes shifts from the presentation of imagery's state of being (Chap. 5) to the presentation of objects' appearances and choices of angles for the audience's inspection. The significance underpinning the dialectical options of this kind relates to the elucidation of the aesthetics of abstract forms and shapes.

The fourth kind of dialectical option is to understand and use choreographic materials in terms of a rationalised system of dance elements (Chap. 6.4). In so doing, the focus of the creative processes in Butoh shifts to the organisation of representative elements of reality such as physiques, patterns, lines, shapes, areas, metrical tempos, and dynamics. In contrast, Butoh pioneers such as Ohno initially consider choreographic elements in terms of mundane behaviour and *actions* which do not conceptualise action in terms of body, movement, time, and space respectively, but treat them as the presentation of personal and integrated overall worldviews (Chap. 5). The significance underpinning the dialectical options of this kind relates to the elucidation of action into body, space, movement, time through the analytical mind.

These four kinds of dialectical choreographic options may give rise to the presentation of different styles of Butoh performances, and the exploration of diverse cultural significances amongst choreographers and audiences. The diverse cultural significances underpinning the dialectical options discussed above may be seen as being derived mainly from the rationalist tradition of Western philosophy. Although it was scholars, critics, and audience who first

incorporated those Western cultural significances into Butoh through their discussions and interpretations, these viewpoints were gradually accepted by Butoh choreographers and used to help them to devise their choreographic frameworks and dance structures.

Even Ohno, whose works are rooted in Eastern philosophy, has been influenced by these developments. As Japan has made contact with the Western world since the Meiji period, Western values of life and philosophy have been more or less integrated or incorporated into Japanese culture and the modernisation of Japan. Under these circumstances, Ohno has inevitably been influenced by those Western thoughts consciously or sub-consciously, as evidenced through the existence of signification in his dance analysed in this chapter. Hijikata may be seen as being even more under the influence of Western rationalism, as evidenced in his early dance choreography. Butoh choreographers after Ohno and Hijikata such as Sankai-Juku, Kasai, Seki, and Koga coming later, had more available resources and access to the understanding of the West (Barbe and Ricoux, 2005). As a result, they are more aware of the dialectical choreographic options in their creative processes, which results in their Butoh works incorporating more Western cultural significances, theatrical elements, and techniques than those of their predecessors.

In this chapter it has been suggested that Butoh has integrated many different forms and philosophies into its creative processes, Butoh's choreographic style becoming a hybrid of Eastern and Western forms, and its significance being diversified through dialectical choreographic options and perspectives.

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

This thesis set out to investigate the creative processes of Butoh choreography, particularly with regard to potential choreographic options that incorporate varied significances into that choreography. The investigation evolves around the core issues of Butoh creative processes, including different treatment of choreographic materials, the synthesis of the significances drawn on those materials, and the development of imagery on the basis of the perceptions of the materials. As this thesis considers the phenomenological perspective of particular relevance to Butoh creative processes and Eastern philosophy, and the dialectical perspectives of particular use for elucidating relevant viewpoints relating to Butoh, the investigation is underpinned by a phenomenological perspective/framework supported by the phenomenology of perception and the notion of *graded fulfillment*, and complemented with dialectical perspectives, This thesis has argued the following with respect to the various choreographic options available for use by Butoh choreographers.

(1) The Phenomenological Perspective

A phenomenological perspective is used in this thesis to explore the implications for choreographers, and to a lesser extent for performers and audience members, of the choreographic options employed in Butoh creative processes. Phenomenology does not only correspond to the Japanese philosophical context which gave birth to Butoh, but also to some of the fundamental processes used by Butoh choreographers.

Phenomenology elucidates and helps understand the worldview *merging with the universe*, which is the core of traditional Japanese philosophy and underpins Butoh. In terms of phenomenology *merging with the universe* is firstly understood as a state of inter-subjectivity or transcendental consciousness, an existence which not only takes in one's own awareness, but also shares in others' awareness, not in the social sense discussed by phenomenologists such as Merleau-Ponty but in nature (Chap. 2.3). The inter-subjective relationship between self, other self, and objects in nature is used to examine and elucidate the juxtaposition of

various kinds of imagery in Butoh (Chap. 5).

In terms of phenomenology, *merging with the universe* is also understood as the interweaving of personal worldviews and a greater *world* through *actions*. *Actions* being the building blocks of worldviews, a person's action plans inevitably interact, overlap, and subsequently integrate with other people's action plans. Thus, *actions* blur and integrate not only the distinction between flesh-and-bone body and the line-and-shape movement, but also individual worldviews and a greater *world* of shared socio-cultural significances contributed by different people. The phenomenological notion of *actions* is used to examine bodily movement with respect to a greater *world* in Butoh (Chap. 5.1.4).

It has been argued that the *network of perception* particularly resonates with the functioning of Butoh elements and techniques such as the *empty body*, *encountering*, and *transforming*. The reason that these techniques can integrate different memories, bodily experiences, and socio-historical contexts to establish the manifold of imagery on stage is because within the perceptual network the memories, experiences, and contexts are linked through *top-down priming* to the perception of the imagery (Chap. 4). Likewise, it has been argued that the phenomenological notion of *graded fulfillment* resonates with the synthesis of perceptions of different choreographic materials and their significances in Butoh. The choreographer's treatment of different materials requires that the *network of perception* operates differently for different materials. The results of the operations are then integrated by the choreographer into a perception of the intended imagery or into a greater *world*, of which every image on stage is a part. In the light of the *network of perception* and the process of *graded fulfillment*, Butoh choreographic options are elucidated with regard to the different kinds of materials and their differentiated treatment (Chap. 5).

The phenomenological perspective stands as an approach to the elucidation of Butoh creative processes and the choreographic options. It makes a practice based on Eastern philosophy such as Butoh understandable and capable of being analysed by researchers using Western terminology. It also makes it possible for Eastern practitioners be more aware of the possible

choreographic options involved in Butoh creative processes and the potential diversification of significances that can be generated through their use to enrich their choreographic creativity.

(2) Significances

This thesis suggests that the choices of choreographic options relate to the ways different significances are incorporated into dance through the creative processes. Those significances can be identified as mainly rooted in Eastern philosophy and thought, but later expanded to include Western philosophy and thought when Butoh began to develop in a global context.

The notions of body, movement, space, and time involved in the initial choreographic options of Butoh creative processes are derived from traditional Japanese philosophy. Butoh choreographers consider the body not as a material body, but more as a spiritual body or *community body* that *merges with the universe* (Chap. 5.1.1). Movement is also considered an inseparable part of the body. They are treated as the same subject matter by Butoh choreographers, and discussed under the terms such as "bodily movements" or *actions*. Likewise, space and time in Butoh cannot be taken physically, as they are in the West, but are taken spiritually as aspects of the greater *world* perceived through the *graded fulfillment* of *actions* (Chap. 5.1.4).

Apart from the notions of body, movement, space, and time, the significances incorporated into Butoh creative processes through the initial choreographic options, which are viscerally based, are linked to Confucianism, Taoism, and Zen philosophy. For example Ohno reveals a loving and sacrificing spirit in his choreographic works through the presentation of images related to his mother. The spirit and images echo filial piety emphasised in Confucianism. Ohno also reveals a variety of inner emotions and the manifold of personality in his dances through the use of characters such as Ohno's mother, Argentina, and Divine. The manifold of emotions and personality echoes moral teachings in Confucianism. In addition, scenes of *transformation* between diverse images are commonly seen in Butoh. This reflects the central idea of Taoism, namely an egalitarian attitude towards everything in nature, the metamorphosis of nature, and

*merging with the universe*. The Butoh theme of life journey from birth to death and the Butoh images of ageing and withering also echo the Taoist notion of being natural, and the *aesthetics of imperfection* derived from Zen philosophy. (Chap. 5)

Significances drawn on Western cultural and philosophical tradition are also incorporated into Butoh choreography through the use of dialectical choreographic options. The use of logic and the reasoning of a rational mind are characteristic of rationalist tradition, which helps Butoh choreographers adjust choreographic structures to present specific themes such as social criticism (Chap. 6.1.2; 6.3.1). The notion of individualism can be found as synthesised into the presentation of a character's struggling within situations in life, as seen in Ohno's presentation of Divine in *Admiring La Argentina* (Chap. 5.1.2). The reflections on the notion of modernity and issues of modernisation by Western scholars such as Foucault and Jameson can be found to parallel the reflections on Japan's Westernisation by Butoh choreographers. This is evidenced in the presentation of characteristics such as those of anomie, isolation, and revolt relating to modernism and those of fragmentation, *simulacrum*, and derealisation relating to post-modernism in some Butoh works such as Hijikata's *Rebellion of the Flesh* (Chap. 6.1.2; 6.4).

The synthesis of the significances drawn from East and West is made through ways that can be elucidated by the phenomenological notion of *graded fulfillment* (Chap. 5.2), or through ways that can be underpinned by dialectical conceptual frameworks such as the rationalist framework of the distinction between body and mind (Chap. 6.1.2), the sociological framework of defiance/compliance relationship between dominant social institutes and individuals (Chap. 6.1.2; 6.3.1), and the anthropological framework of cultural symbolism (Chap. 6.3.2). In general the initial choreographic options discussed in Chapter 5, which centre on the visceral perception, tend to suit the former phenomenological strategy, whilst the dialectical options discussed in Chapter 6 tend to suit the latter.

Significances incorporated into the creative processes by Butoh choreographers through their choreographic options do not need to be acknowledged equally by others such as performers,

audiences, and researchers. In each performer's practicing process there are different significances involved because everyone has different experiences to draw on in association with the materials involved in their practice. Audiences generate more different viewpoints when they relate to the dance imagery personal, social, or cultural contexts as diverse layers of *graded fulfillment* or frameworks of signification. By acknowledging the possible existence of those differences and being more aware of their embodiment in Butoh dance, Butoh choreographers can have more choreographic options drawn on the differences (Chap. 6).

In the light of the examination of these significances undertaken in this thesis, Butoh creative processes should not be taken merely as processes of cut-and-paste from other art forms, a pastiche style. Nor should Butoh dance be considered as a post-modern *simulacrum.* Rather, Butoh creative processes are firmly rooted in traditional Japanese culture, and extended to incorporate Western philosophical and cultural values in their ongoing development within a global context.

(3) Choreographic Options.

The choreographic options available to Butoh choreographers can be elucidated, not only for their own sake, but also in the light of the phenomenological and dialectical approaches to understanding Butoh imagery discussed above.

Butoh creative processes are enriched by the use of a variety of choreographic options and different treatments of materials applied to each, which might be derived from phenomenological or dialectical perspectives. The choreographic materials used in Butoh draw mainly on visceral sensation, and are supplemented by the use of texts, paintings/photos or visual stimuli, and life experiences. It has been suggested in this thesis that, through the use of diverse treatments to the choreographic materials discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 the development of a range of structural styles in Butoh choreography is facilitated, and the range of the art form broadened.

a) Initial Choreographic Options

Most Butoh choreographers and performers emphasise visceral sensations as the foundation of their choreography and consider them as the medium for the development of imagery and for *merging with the universe*. It is here that the phenomenological perspective taken in this thesis has the most resonance. The *empty body* is the foundation for obtaining visceral sensations. Through Butoh exercises such as *walking* (Chap. 3.1.3) or *eyes* (Chap. 5.1.1) a Butoh performer can eradicate preconceptions and habitual thoughts and sensitize the body so as to *encounter* environmental changes sensitively (Chap. 4). Some Western exercises such as Hay's breathing exercise can generate a similar effect (Chap. 6.4.2). It has been noted that when obtaining visceral sensations, the Butoh *empty body* becomes the *community body* which connects and integrates with all things in nature. Butoh choreographers and performers use visceral sensations as an initial choreographic option to bring forth a process of metamorphosis of bodily imagery, as seen in Ohno's *transformation* between images of Argentina, Ohno, flower, bird, and bull in *Admiring La Argentina* (Chap. 5).

For Butoh choreographers, the initial option for the treatment of texts is to use texts as the medium for perception. When being read by a choreographer, texts 'beckon imagery to come forth' as if the absent imagery becomes present and emerges in front of the choreographer. As discussed in Chapter 5, in terms of phenomenology this 'beckoning imagery to come forth' is derived from the functioning of *signitive intention*, which brings the perceiver to the 'real' intended object/imagery rather than a representative abstract form or conception (Chap. 5.1.2). For example, texts such as verbs and adjectives used in Butoh exercises, as seen in Waguri and Hijikata's choreographic processes (Chap. 5.1.2), help the performer/choreographer to grasp specific textures and qualities of the intended images. Texts of stories and novels read by Butoh choreographers such as Genet's novel *Our Lady of the Flower* (read by Ohno) provide intermediary scenes relating to the intended imagery (Chap. 5.1.2). In a process of *graded fulfillment*, the textures, qualities and the intermediary scenes are then synthesised for the perceiving choreographer or performer into the perception of the developed imagery on stage. Texts in this usage enrich the manifold of the development of Butoh imagery.

b) Dialectical Choreographic Options

In addition to the foundational choreographic options centring on visceral sensation, Butoh choreographers also draw on other choreographic materials and strategies. These include an appropriation of the analyses undertaken by Butoh researchers which are drawn variously from rationalist, sociological, anthropological perspectives. These offer new approaches to the materials used in the creative processes which offer different resonances to the choreographer, performer and audience member.

Apart from treating texts as a medium for perception, treating texts as tools for reasoning stands as a dialectical choreographic option for Butoh choreographers. As discussed in Chapter 6, in terms of phenomenology, the relationship of objects/images within a situation can be acknowledged through *categorial intentionality.* The pure form that articulates that relationship is syntax or logic. Thus, texts organized by syntax can be used for reasoning with respect to the relationship of objects, as seen in the Western rationalist tradition. A Butoh choreographer's use of signs in his/her creative process makes use of this mode of reasoning, even when text is not used. For example, when Ohno uses the cloak as a sign to signify multiple layers of emotions and memories of Argentina in *Admiring La Argentina*, syntactic rules help regulate the formation of signs and the establishment of a scheme of signification, which can be examined and adjusted by choreographers through textual articulations (Chap. 6.1.1).

It has been argued that treating texts as a medium for providing conceptual frameworks is another dialectical option for Butoh choreographers. When texts are seen as forms of rational inference, the focus of a choreographer is drawn to the conceptual references associated with the textual form. For example, when Hijikata read Genet's novel *Our Lady of the Flowers*, his focus was on the defiance/compliance relationship between the main character Divine and the society Divine lived within. In accordance with this Hijikata reflected on the relationship between himself and the Japanese society he lived within. This reading of Divine and the

resultant reflection helped Hijikata adjust the choreographic structure of his dance, *Rebellion of the Flesh* which was initially grounded in visceral sensation (Chap. 6.1.2; 6.3.1).

With respect to the use of visual arts as a choreographic option, Butoh choreographers initially treat pictures, paintings, and photos as a medium for presenting images. The subject of a painting reveals itself to a choreographer not merely as the profile of the subject but also as its spiritual state of being, which becomes one of the constituent layers of *graded fulfillment* of the imagery on stage (Chap. 5.1.3) for the choreographer and performer. Butoh choreographers' dialectical option for treating pictorial materials is to shift their central focus of concern from this spiritual state of being to the abstract lines and shapes of the painting which is a representative structure of the profile of the subject. An emphasis on the abstract structure of images makes choreographers exert more effort to refine representative postures and gestures in the creative processes, and less effort to grasp the spiritual state of being of images (Chap. 6.2). Ultimately the former supplements the latter.

It has been noted that the use of experiences as choreographic materials include many kinds of experience, including bodily *actions*, past experiences, memories, and expectations. The initial option for Butoh choreographers is to treat experiences as building blocks which lead them to the establishment of an inter-subjective *world* underpinned by a specific worldview. For example Ohno's childhood experiences and war time memories lead him to envisage a *world* where everything in nature is inter-connected and shares the same spirit of giving and loving for one another. This *world* is embodied and presented in his dance *Admiring La Argentina* (Chap. 5.1.4).

However, it has also been noted that another way for Butoh choreographers to manage experience-materials is to treat them as representative units of social structure or cultural patterns. According to the code of communication followed, *actions* can be classified as pertaining to different stages of the development of society. For example Ichikawa (1989) considers Hijikata's distorted bodily *actions* seen in his 1960s choreographic works as presenting the turmoil of war and pertaining to the first stage of the society development after

the war. Laage (1993) considers the bow-legs and squatting posture appeared in Hijikata's works in the 1970s as presenting a reconsideration of Japanese traditional culture and pertaining to the second stage of society development. Different kinds of *actions*/behaviour thus offer Butoh choreographers varied movement vocabularies. (Chap. 6.3.1).

In addition to relating them to social structure, experiences used by Butoh choreographers have also been related to cultural patterns. As has been seen (Chap. 6.3.2), cultural patterns have been related to mythological symbolism, inasmuch as it is classified/represented by the *actions* of characters in myth (Polanyi, 1977; Cassirer, 1955). Analysing the symbolism used by Butoh choreographers leads to an implicit understanding of cultural patterns, and therefore of sources of human behaviour in daily life (Fraleigh, 1999). These sources of human behaviour provide Butoh choreographers with varied movement vocabularies which are brought into their work. For example, the symbolism of *mother goddess* has been an inspiration to Butoh, and has been used in the development of some of its imagery (Chap. 6.3.2). Treating experience-materials as representative units of social structure or cultural patterns stands as a dialectical choreographic option for Butoh choreographers, and indeed has provided movement vocabularies for them

It has been suggested that different treatment of materials leads to the development of diverse structural choreographic styles. Butoh choreographers' initial options, namely visceral sensations as medium for *merging with the universe*, texts as medium for perception, paintings as medium for presenting images, and *actions* as building blocks of an inter-subjective *world*, are inclined to guide the creative processes to develop the manifold of a spiritual imagery and bodily *actions* (Chap. 5.2). Ohno (1997b) states that an appropriate way to arrange the choreographic structure so that this development of spiritual imagery occurs is 'structural improvisation'. He argues that finding the urge of the imagery is the core concern of movement development, and that our physical responses need to be spontaneous movement and not simply mechanical reactions to preset arrangement. When spontaneous movement is guided by the urge, dance images will link to one another by inner necessity, and individual elements constituting a performance fall naturally into place. This is 'structural improvisation'(Chap. 5.3).

In contrast to the perception-based initial options which result in spontaneous images, the dialectical options (texts as tools for reasoning, paintings as representative structures of the subjects, and *actions* as representative units of social structure and cultural patterns) are inclined to guide the choreographers to focus on the development of precise postures and gestures. In so doing, formalised individual dance elements as seen in Western dance theatres are used. The structural arrangement of choreography which results from these strategies tends to be strictly defined, rather than appearing open-ended and intuitive (Chap. 6.4.1).

Over the course of Butoh's development, the initial options and dialectical options have not been mutually exclusive. They frequently co-exist, although at any given time one set of options may be more prominent than the other. As a result of the merging of these options, Butoh has developed as a composite form which draws both on Eastern and Western modes of movement practice, keeping the presentation of imagery's spiritual state of being as the core of an open ended improvisation, but introducing the more 'pictorial' imagery of western theatre practice, as seen in the works of Seki and Koga (Chap. 6.4).

This thesis has shown that the diversity of choreographic options used by Butoh choreographers offers a multitude of ways to treat materials, and a multitude of ways to arrange choreographic structure which are consonant with the aims of Butoh as an art form.

This thesis has also found that Butoh choreographers can not only acknowledge that the significance of dances may be perceived and understood differently by choreographers performers, audiences, and researchers, but also benefit from the transformation of those different perspectives into choreographic options.

Finally, this thesis suggests that the choreographic options are enriched by incorporating viewpoints from different people and perspectives, among which the phenomenological perspective is of particular relevance, as it resonates with the Japanese philosophical context

which gave birth to Butoh, and with the fundamental creative processes used by Butoh choreographers. It thus stands as perhaps the most appropriate means of analysing Butoh creative processes and elucidating Butoh choreographers' intentions. It is suggested that if it is taken up by choreographers, it would greatly enrich the multitude of ways of manipulating choreographic materials. The use of supplementary/dialectical perspectives such as sociological or anthropological perspectives also helps choreographers incorporate viewpoints from researchers and audiences. By taking up these perspectives, choreographers can enrich the choreographic contents and potential significance of Butoh dance.

The research undertaken in this thesis can be considered as part of a greater investigation of issues relating to communication. When choreographers incorporate viewpoints of performers, researchers, or audiences, this involves the ways they understand one another, so that dance performances can be shared by all of them. Further inquiry into communication modes and tools such as linguistic and meta-linguistic systems would be of value but are beyond the scope of this thesis.

This research may also be taken as part of a greater investigation of cultural exchange in Eastern arts practice. Since the Meiji period Japan has been through many forms of cultural exchange. For example, the establishment of political systems was based on Western ideology and thoughts. Japanese economic and military systems were partially integrated with Western nations, particularly America. The introduction of Western performing arts into Japanese theatre arts is also another form of cultural exchange. Although this thesis has touched on cultural exchange in relation to Butoh choreographers' options for incorporating Western viewpoints and forms into Butoh, this would benefit from further analysis. However, it is beyond the inquiry of this thesis.

In addition, this research would be further developed into more detailed research into choreographic methods in Butoh, as each choreographic option initially suggests a different way to manage choreographic materials. This too must be left to further researchers.

Nevertheless, within the context of this research, it is argued that this thesis has made a contribution to inquiries into the richness of choreographic options in Butoh, and that it could stand as a background for further research.

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## Appendix—Butoh Exercises

Many of the exercises described below particularly those marked with '* *' have been used since the 1960s by Western dance artists who have adopted what has become known as 'post-modern' or 'new' dance.

Exercise 1: sense the weight * *

Stand in stance, i.e. straight, with knees slightly bent and feet parallel. Assume there is a central line penetrating the body from the top of the head, through the spine, to the ground at a spot between the feet, which is the direction of gravity, and the axis of body whilst we stand straight.

Try to tilt forward a bit, sensing the central line as falling slightly in front of you. Then, tilt backward slightly, and sense the central line moving to the back of the body. Then, tilt to the right and left, sensing the fall of the central line as it changes. Make circles, by tilting in all directions; gradually diminish the circle around the central line, until you reconnect with the line through the centre of the body and the spot between the feet.

Swing the head from side to side. Sense the weight of the head.

Reaching out the arms at both sides, swing them in a horizontal plane, i.e. keeping the feet still, twist and turn the upper part of the body, the arms leading around the central line. Sense the weight of arms.

Jump up from the floor with both feet, and sense the impact at the moment the feet make contact with the floor. Sense the weight of the whole body.

Stand in stance. Tilt the upper part of the body forward, but keep still from the pelvis to the feet. Let the weight lead the upper part of the body to drop towards the floor, and rebound. Sense the effect of weight.

Change to another way of rebounding. From a standing position, one leg remains straight and lifts up and forward, while the other leg bends and lets the body fall straight down following the central line. Rebound back to the standing position. Change the stretching direction to sideways. And change over the movement of the legs.

Exercise 2: making waves * *

Kneel down, with two hands on the floor, and relax the body. The movement begins from the pelvis. Feel as if there is a line hanging from the pelvis. It is pulled upwards a little bit. Then shift the spot where the line hangs, towards the head following the spine. As a result, the pulled body part shifts towards head, making a wave on the trunk. Try to do this wave the other way round.

Lie on the floor, using the same method described above to make waves. Thus, making the body move like a worm or snake, crawling on the ground.

Stand in stance. Begin moving from the knees. Feeling a pull on the knees, they bend and move slightly forward. Imagine the pull being made on different part of the body; as if there were lines pulling, in sequence, parts of the upper legs, pelvis, stomach, chest, neck, and finally, the chin, nose, and forehead. In this way, every part of body moves towards the front and upwards consecutively, making a wave.

Grotowski, whose explorations into the nature of acting gave rise to the concept of "poor theatre", described another way to make a wave, which he called "River". Stand in stance. Step to the right with the right leg, then with the left leg, step to the right, and close the space. Mirror the same sequence, starting with the left leg stepping to the left. This is the basic step pattern, corresponding to the movement of the spine. While stepping, a sense of resistance to the ground is felt, at first, by the lower spine, as it drops downwards at the beginning of each step. As soon as the foot pushes against the floor, in trying to stand straight, the push transmits to the lower spine, by moving the energy backwards and upwards. Then, transmit the movement/energy to the other parts of the spine, all the way to the head. Thus, a wave is made by resistance to the floor, i.e. resistance to the pull of gravity.

Whilst making waves, relaxation of the body parts is critical. Only one force exists i.e. a pulling of the virtual line, which the body parts respond to. By relaxation, the wave gains a quality of fluency.

With regard to River, the correspondence between the pushing of the feet and the pulling of the lower spine is crucial, as this gives rise to the sense that the movement is derived from resistance to the floor and gravity.

Exercise 3: relaxation * *

One person lies down on the floor, and relax totally, thinking of nothing but the weight of the body and the feeling of touching the floor. The other person pushes his/her different body parts such as the pelvis, legs, and shoulders, or lifts the arm by grasping the fingers and slightly shaking them, to ensure that the person lying down is relaxed. Observe the natural rebound of the body part whilst it is being pushed.

Lift the legs slightly off the floor. Shake them horizontally to transmit the wave from the feet through the trunk to the head. Note how the waves travel, either fluently, or if it is blocked somewhere. Then change roles.

Another position for practising relaxation is to kneel down with the hands on the floor. The second person pushes different parts of body as above. Note the natural rebound, which occurs in the whole body.

Exercise 4: light and strong * *

This exercise is carried out with a partner. The first person (mover) relaxes their arms, whilst the second person (assistant) lifts one of the arms. At first, the position of the arm is maintained entirely by the assistant, who then gradually lets go. The mover must exert the same amount of energy that the assistant withdraws, in order to maintain the arm in the same position. Finally, the arm is held solely by the mover.

In this instance, the energy being put into the arm is merely sufficient for supporting the weight of the arm, which is described as being "light". However, if the energy exerted is much more than is needed to support the arm, the situation is described as being "strong". The arm can easily be moved if it is light, and hardly at all, when strong.

Exercise 5: figure eight of arms * *

Based on the exercise of making waves, add a movement of the arms to the wave-like motion of the trunk.

Put the arms in front of the waist. The pull of the knees transmits to the upper legs, pelvis, waist, chest, and head, making the body parts move consecutively forwards and upwards. The arms, led by the wave of the trunk, naturally move forwards and upwards, indicating exactly the direction of the pull on the waist.

When the pull appears in the chest, open the arms outward, and make circles around two diagonals (hfr-dbl, hfl-dbr). The arms come together again, closing the circle, when the pull appears in the head, and projecting outwards together with the head towards the front. Then, feel a contraction in the abdomen, which bring the arms back towards the body. When the arms are close to the body, open them out again and make circles at the back of the body around the two diagonals. The arms are led by the forward movement when the pull appears in the knees again. Close the arms and put them back in front of the waist. Repeat the sequence.

Exercise 6: Breeze * *

Two persons stand face to face, a few steps distant. One person begins to wave his arms and hands to send "wind", while the person receiving the "wind" uses his body to react.

The sender can use his body movement to indicate which part of the receiver's body is to react to the "wind". The receiver reacts to the blowing of the "wind" with fluent movements, moving certain parts of the body and relaxing the rest.

Change the strength of the "wind". Use different parts of the body to react.

All the movements preserve a fluent quality. The "wind" represents the relationship between the two people, which is the same idea as the "line" we will introduce in subsequent exercises.

The movement of the receiver is passive, which is similar to the one in exercise 3. The only difference is that, in this exercise, the sender does not touch the receiver when giving the energy that makes the latter move. Rather, the receiver has to perceive the force that is sent to him and imagine that he is moved by that outside force, although he himself exerts the force.

This is a simple exercise to practise the establishment of a relationship between different people within a space, with one person controlling others, or allowing others to control him/her. The movement of the two people symbolises the action and reaction made in the relationship, the movement being a further development based on the effect of gravity and its projection.

Exercise 7: ball game * *

> The persons involved presume that there is a ball passing from one person to another, and they are trying to hit the ball in different ways, with different amounts of effort. While hitting the ball, the whole body is involved in making the movement. It is no longer only a single part of the body that is activated.

This exercise is a variation of the previous exercise, changing the "wind" into a virtual ball, thus giving a freer and wider range of movement to the players. This exercise needs a little bit more imagination. Apart from practice in establishing a relationship, attention to the ball is also practised. Without enough attention, the virtual ball would gradually lose its shape, weight, ways of flying, and positions in the air.

Exercise 8: rolling up like an egg * *

> Stand in stance. Presume that the head is suspended from the ceiling by a thread. Cut the thread suddenly, so as to drop the body weightily/suddenly to the ground. Completely relax for a while. Then try to get up and back to the standing position.
>
> Use only one part of the body at a time to lead the moving and rolling up of the body. Exert the least effort into the part, so that the movement is slow and fluent.
>
> Explore the whole sequence of rolling up, and the successive body parts which lead each movement.
>
> Practise the precise exertion of energy into certain body parts, and the relaxation during rest periods, to preserve a sense of weightiness.

Exercise 9: combination 1

Stand in stance.
Begin to walk slowly in any direction.
Cut the imaginary thread on the head, so as to suddenly fall on the ground.
Go through the sequence of rolling up like an egg.
Find a different direction and walk again.
Find a place then stop walking. Begin to feel the wind blowing.
Send or receive wind from each other. Establish a relationship.
As the wind is getting stronger, everyone moves and gradually gathers within a small area. Then the wind stops. Think of the body as a flower, slowly blossoming in the sunshine.
Pose in a position where the flower is most beautiful.

This is a combination of the previous exercises. Only the ways of walking and the blossoming of the flower have not been practised before. Nevertheless, in the following exercises, these will all be explained in detail.

The focus of the combination is concerned with the sense of weightiness, relaxation, fluency of movement, exertion of effort and its projection. All of these are related to the weight of the body and the effect of gravity.

Exercise 10: imagination * *

Lie on the floor with eyes closed. Listen to the sound of the environment. Distinguish the different sources of sound. Try to feel the quality of the sound.

Feel the other elements of the environment, such as temperature, the quality of the floor, the breeze passing by, etc. Perceive all these incoming messages, explore the feelings that they bring about.

After a while, everyone should be able to distinguish various features of the environment, defining their qualities in terms of colour, shape, space, speed, weight, etc. All these features and qualities are generated by feelings and imagination, which are not an intrinsic part of the room.

Through the process, everyone establishes his/her own virtual space which comes from the heart. It is a world of imagination, which has clear features for us.

Through imagination and feelings, this exercise helps us establish an inner world that is a reflection of the outside world (we perceive the world). We act and react between and within the inner and outside world, grasping their features and qualities, both practical and virtual,

evolving/developing them in correspondence/accordance with our conscience, thoughts, and values. This is how we develop our lives, achieve our goals, and react to the world.

Exercise 11: acting in and out * *

A person stands behind a curtain that covers the whole body except his head.

The person begins to think of something that would make him feel happy. After a while, he thinks of something that would make him sad. Whilst thinking, he tries not to show his feelings through facial expressions, keeping only a neutral appearance.

Other people observe him from in front of the curtain. Try to perceive the subtle changes in his facial expressions and the feelings that he projects outwards. Try several times and change the people being observed.

After everyone has experienced observing and being observed, put three chairs on stage. Feel the scene of the empty chairs for a while. People then walk up to the chairs and pose, using any kind of gestures, whilst thinking about something sad or happy. Another person only comes up to the chairs when the previous person has posed his gesture and stayed still. People who have not come up to the stage observe and feel the scene. After everyone is on stage, the first person that came up to the chairs exits, followed, eventually, by the others. Finally, only the empty chairs are left on stage. Feel the scene of the empty chairs again. Compare the two different feelings towards chairs. What are the differences? What features are added to the chairs after everyone has come up on stage?

The differences being perceived are the "acting in", which is added to the chair by people. The "acting in" derives from people's inner life, i.e. the spirits, emotions, thoughts, feelings, attitudes etc. They are revealed through the body. No matter how hard we try to hide them, "acting in" always unfolds/reveals itself through the presence of the body.

In contrast, "acting out" is behaviour or movement or the visible form of expression, which is bound up with "acting in".

"Acting out" that reveals "acting in" in a static way includes:

Painting
Sculpture
Interior design or decoration of a room
Architecture
Garden
Costume design etc.

"Acting out" that reveals "acting in" in an active way includes:

Movement
Event
Character

"Acting in" relates to the *meaning* or the "theme" of a performance, whilst "acting out" relates to the form or the style.

Exercise 12: walking * *

Stand with feet parallel. Relax the knee joints and bend the legs slightly. Imagine a line hanging from the ceiling to the top of head, gently pulling upwards. Imagine other lines attached to the chin, ears, shoulders, various sections of the spine, elbows, wrists, hands, pelvis, knees, ankles, and feet. Feel as if the body is floating up from the ground. Meanwhile, feel as if another force is pulling the body and sinking it into the ground. The two feelings are kept in balance.

The eyes are presumed not to function as human organs. They are regarded as transparent glass balls, passively reflecting the external world, without any active intention to search for images.

Furthermore, imagine that the body is divided into 500 pieces. One piece after another gradually slides towards the front, back, right and left sides, by which the 500 pieces fill the room or space. Each piece has lines connecting it with the other pieces. Begin to walk. Imagine a line pulling at the chest. The body moves in a manner as if shifting from one piece to another.

The parallel stance of the feet is to help improve the potential mobility of the legs, making it easy to change their direction of movement over a larger range.

The concept of lines is important for Butoh training. Lines are a metaphor representing the relationship between subjects, to induce the action and reaction of their movements. Using the lines, the performer would find it easy to adjust the precise position and gesture of the body, according to its relationship to other subjects or environments.

Having the knees slightly bent is also to help perceive a sense of weightiness and lightness, whereby the body is kept in a neutral state. The neutral state is another point of departure in Butoh, alongside the sense of weightiness. The metamorphosis of images must begin from the neutral state or the sense of weightiness. The walking body is called "primary position", with which many movements begin and change into certain images.

The notion of the 500 pieces of the body is also important. As the 500 pieces spread out within the whole space, body and space merge and become one. Each piece could be regarded as a crystallisation of the whole space, representing certain images, then changing into another piece of the body i.e. another image.

Exercise 13: walking with eyes * *

Stand with feet parallel, and the knee-joints slightly bent.
Begin to walk. In the exercise, *Walking*, the body is led by an imaginary line being pulled from the chest, whilst here different parts of the body are pulled, in other words, different parts of the body are, in turn, leading the movement.

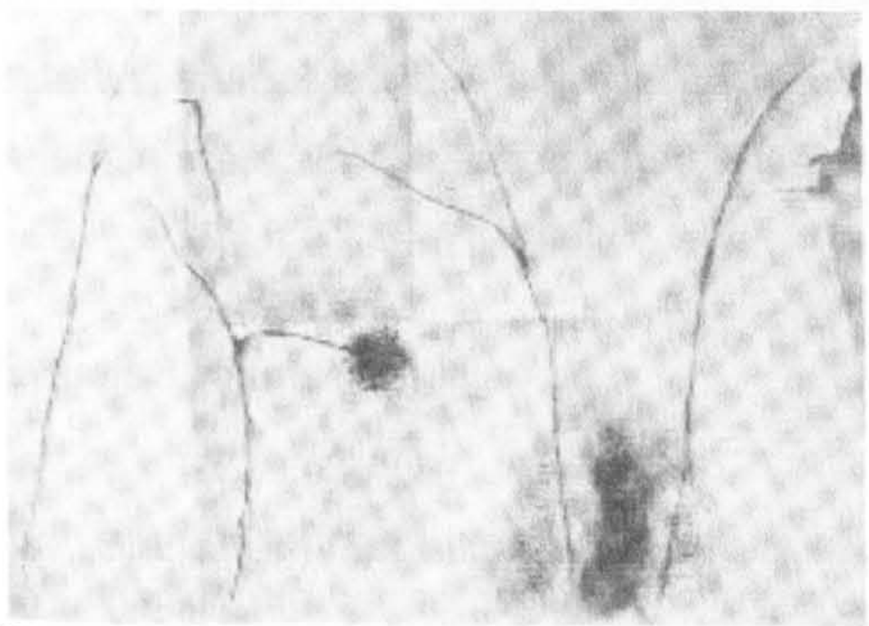
The part of the body to be pulled is termed an *eye*. Walking with *eyes* means: allowing the body to be led by different parts, attending to manifold relationships in the environment.

First of all, walk forward using an *eye* on the forehead.
Change the position of the *eye;* to the chest, then the pelvis, the knees, and the toes.
Then put the *eye* on the heels, and walk backwards.
Finally, Change the position of the *eye* to the back of the knees, the buttocks, the upper spine, and the back of the head.

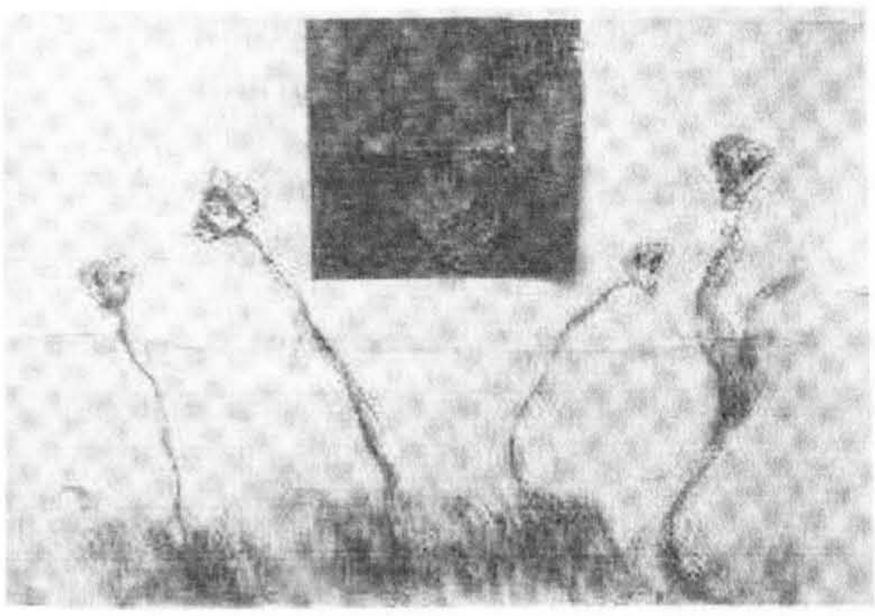
The meaning of the eye in relation to the body is that the eye is the impulse of the movement, which leads the body in a certain direction, in correspondence with a specific relationship. On the other hand, in terms of the whole space, the eye means the relationship between the body and the environment. Therefore, the function of the eyes is to perceive messages from the environment, then to initiate the bodily movement. Moreover, the eyes are the focus of concentration for the energy, whereby the inner emotion is projected into external space, to act, react or communicate with other subjects in the same space.

Exercise 14: withering weed

Try to touch the weed to feel its quality and observe it in its environment. Try to distinguish different kinds of weed, e.g. a newly grown weed is quite different from an old and withering weed. Having established a certain understanding about weeds, try to transform the body into the weed, i.e. to represent the weed.



Picture 1



Picture 2

There are four weeds in each of the two pictures, representing different phases of growth. First of all, stand in primary position. Meditate that you transform yourself into one of the weeds, and imitate its quality and action. After successful transformation, try to perform the next weed image. Practise all eight images of the different phases of the weed in this way.

Stand in primary position. Begin to walk. At first, transform yourself into the youngest weed (the first one), then the trunk of the weed becomes harder and stronger (the second one). The third one is a weed with a kind of blossoming in the tip of its stem, and has a branch dividing off from the middle of the stem. The fourth one is the one about to wither, with a fallen tip.

Keep on walking. Move on to the images in the second picture. These are all withering weeds but with diverse characteristics. These characteristics represent the relationship of the weed to the environment.

Accordingly, the actions and movements for the eight kinds of the weed should be different. Try to practise the exercise several times to find the various possibilities of performing the images of the withering weed. Try to combine it with the ideas in the previous exercise, to find the lines of manifold relationships and where the eyes are in varied movements.

**Specific usage of terms**: "Meditation" and "imitation" are sometimes mentioned in Butoh classes. They relate to the *transformation* of the "lived body" into another substance, and presenting diverse qualities. If we perform an image of the weed, we have to "be the weed" in terms of physicality, ways of moving, and relationship. Performing is not merely a copy of external shape, but the imitation of the entire inner and outer aspect. This concurs with what Aristotle stated in *On Poetics* that "imitation is to act as they ought to be".

Exercise 15: insects biting

Stand with feet parallel, the knees slightly bent.
Walking forwards, feel as if there are insects crawling on the surface, and inside, the body.
The first insect: crawls from the right hand towards the right shoulder.
The second insect: crawls from the left ear and goes down through the spine to the pelvis.

The third insect: crawls from the left foot to the pelvis.
The fourth insect: crawls from the right ear and goes down through the chest to the abdomen.
The fifth insect: crawls from anywhere inside the body. The route can be decided by the practitioners.

Then, feel as if there are more insects crawling everywhere, biting the body, especially weak parts of the body, such as the sides, the palms, the joints, the ears, the eyes, and hair.

The insects bite and crawl from the surface of the skin, deep into the body. Gradually, the body is eaten, leaving only the skeleton.

The insects come out of the empty body, and fill the entire space, so as to make no difference between the inside and the outside of the body.

The insects function in the same way as the lines or eyes, representing the relationship between the body and the environment. The meaning of the insects filling the entire space, is the same as when the 500 pieces of the body do. These both reveal the merging of the body with space, in other words, the insects symbolise the breaking through of the boundary or kinesphere between the body and the external space.

Exercise 16: water

Stand with feet parallel. Imagine there is a river running around your body. Reach out to touch the water with the right hand; feel the temperature and its momentum. Then, reach out the left hand and do the same. Next, step into the water with the right foot; feel the flow of the water and the stone on the riverbed. Then, do the same with the left, feeling the same features.

Begin walking, and picture the water flowing around the whole body. Then imagine the body gradually *transforming* into water, with the same temperature and momentum. At first, the *transformation* takes place in the hands and feet, followed by the arms and legs, and finally, the whole body. Flow freely, like the water.

Exercise 17: wind

Stand in primary position. Meditate on wind blowing around.

Then the wind blows the arms upwards. There are different kinds of wind: strong, light, from different directions etc.

Then the wind blows the body away from its original position. The arms, feet and body move like the wind.

Meditate on the whole body transforming into the wind with its features and impetus. Imitate the movement and floating of the wind.

Exercise 18: seed and earth

Lie on the floor. Meditate on being a seed. Feel the earth and its temperature and pressure. Imagine that the seed begins to absorb fertiliser. Imitate the movement of a new shoot growing from seed, in the hand, wrist, shoulder, spine, pelvis, knee, and everywhere in the body.

The shoot turns into a young plant, continuing to absorb the fertiliser from the earth. Then the whole plant grows lush, with lots of branches.

When the wind blows, the rain falls. The water flows down on the surface of the plant, while inside, the fertiliser rises to the tip of it. Feel all the relationships between wind, rain, water, and the plant.

Meditate and feel the quality of the plant and its relationship to the environment. Imitate its movement.

This is the life situation of a seed and a plant. This exercise may be followed by the exercise of *Insects Biting*, or *Thundering and Fire*.

Exercise 19: thunder and fire

Firstly, one transforms oneself into a plant, such as a tree. Meditate that the branches and the trunk are green and lush. They gain fertilisers from the earth.

Then the wind and rain begin to strike the plant. At first, the thunder is felt at the shoulder, charging the body of the plant with energy. Then the thunder is in the head, then other places in the body. There are great amounts of energy accumulating inside the plant.

Meditate on the quality of the plant, including such energy features as heat, impetus, etc. Imitate the movement of charging.

When energy is accumulated to a certain degree, it begins to discharge. At first, the energy comes out of the body of the plant from the root, i.e. the feet, then, from the knees, pelvis, and other joints. At last, when all the energy has gone, the plant becomes a dead, withered plant.

Try to repeat the process of charging and discharging several times.

Exercise 20: horse

At first, we imitate the shape of a horse: the hip sticks backwards out a little bit, while the chin juts out. The hands and fingers contract like claws or hooves.

There are four movements for horse:
First: the horse usually raises its head and is led by the chin to change direction. This time, raise the chin and head forwards, to the right.
Second: do the same movement but change the direction to forward left.
Third: the same movement, backward right.

Fourth: do the movement forward left with the left side of the face reaching outwards, instead of the chin, as if the horse would like to greet and get close to someone.

This is a simple state of a horse.

There are four movements of the same horse, which is the same case as in the withering weed; there are eight different representations of a weed. These divergent movements and presentations are termed "images of a subject" or "branches of a subject". The term "branch" also means the way we present the various aspects of a subject.

Exercise 21: incense and smoke

Observe the way incense burns; it gradually burns down from the top. As it burns, the incense turns into ashes and smoke. The smoke floats on the air.

Meditate on the nature of the incense and the smoke. Imitate the burning and the floating movement of the smoke.

Feel that air comes into the body from the top, turns into smoke through burning and floats up. Feel the opposite directions of the air and smoke, and their relationship.

Exercise 22: paper

Slightly shake or move a piece of paper around, at the bottom of which, two short sticks hang to represent a person with two legs. Observe the movement of the paper.

Meditate on the nature of the paper. Feel its quality. Imitate its floating movement. Feel the wind blowing gently.

Take away the two sticks to see how it changes the way it floats. Meditate on its nature and imitate the movement again.

This time, get the paper wet, to see the different floating quality. Meditate on and imitate the wet paper.

There should be three kinds of movement with diverse qualities that we have done.

Exercise 23: practice for legs

One person carries another person on their back. The carried person uses his legs to surround the legs of the carrier and tries very hard to pull them outwards. The carrier does his best to resist, by pressing his legs inwards.

In this way, the carrier has to maintain his balance and keep his legs in an appropriate position, while trying to walk forwards, step by step.

Try to squat and walk fluently. Keep the body stable, without shaking. Keep the spine straight.

This exercise is predominately focused on training the strength of the legs and maintaining body position. Good bodily strength can improve the quality of the image.

Exercise 24: expressions—Hania

This is a special facial expression in Butoh.
Stand in primary position. The spine is straight. The upper part of the body tilts forwards a little bit. Push the chin out slightly. The arms stretch downwards, and the fingers bend towards the palm like claws.

There are wrinkles in the forehead. The eyebrows stretch/arch up as if they hanging from lines connected to the ceiling. Open the mouth in a square shape. Tendons are seen in the neck.

Expressions in the face appear naturally after the body has been transformed into a special state. Meditate on a specific situation that would make the entire body tense or nervous and generate mental pressure.

Exercise 25: expressions—wrinkles

We can see wrinkles in the bark of a log. They are generated by pressure generated throughout years of growing. The wrinkles in a person's face are also the result of ageing. Each wrinkle might represent a specific experience or event.

In order to help the practising person feel the pressure, two other persons grasp and squeeze him intensively.

Meditate on the mental and physical pressure from the environment.

The mouth is round and pushed forwards. There are wrinkles everywhere in the face.

Feel the body become a thin stick.

Exercise 26: baby

Observe the face of a baby. Notice that there is light reflecting from its skin. Observe a grain of rice to see the same light reflecting from not only the surface, but also the inside. Imagine that there is a grain of rice in the abdomen of the baby. Thus, the light reflects not only from the skin of the baby, but also from inside; it is the baby's light of life.

Meditate on the nature of the baby and the light. Imitate the position of a baby kneeling on the floor.

First, transform the surface of the body into the skin of a baby. Then the body's insides turn into the body of a baby with a piece of rice in its stomach. The light emanates from the rice, through the insides, to the skin, and shines outwards.

Feel the warmth and brightness of the light. The whole body gradually turns into light. Feel that there is something attractive in front of him. Begin to move towards that thing, still shining.

Suddenly, the attraction in front disappears. The baby is aware of this and stops crawling forwards. Instead, there is a force pulling the baby backwards. The environment becomes cold and dark. The light from the body of the baby dims and fades away. This is the death of the baby.

After a while, the attraction appears again. The light gradually shines from inside of the body of the baby. The baby is revived.

Compare the two situations of the baby. Feel the differences in quality between alive and dead.

Exercise 27: transparent cup

Stand in primary position. Walk forwards. Meditate on the nature of a cup. Feel that light is coming from the right side. The right half of the cup is full of light; the cup is transparent. Then the light changes its origin. It now comes from the left side, then the front, the top, and the back, so that the whole body is filled with light.

This is another exercise about light. But in this one, the light comes from outside rather than inside the body. There should be two qualities existing inside the body, which are the quality of the glass and that of light.

Exercise 28: expansion of light

Repeat the exercise of *thunder and fire*. But add the quality of light into the body.

Meditate that when the body is filled with energy and about to discharge, the emission consists of the heat and the light from every part of the body.

Exercise 29: expressions—big eyes

This relates to the exercise of the eyes. This time, imagine *a large eye* in the forehead. As well as the eye, there is a big smiling mouth, stretching to both sides of the face. Relax the body. Walk forwards.

This expression is characteristic of a sense of humour or irony. Meditate on a situation that would make you feel strange or funny. This is the nature of the expression.

Exercise 30: Buddha

Stand in primary position. Tilt the body slightly forwards. The spine is straight. The eyes are fixed on the floor in front. Lift the arms forwards slightly, with the palms facing the front. Meditate on the nature of the Buddha and that there is a steam of golden sand flowing out of your palm, pouring onto the ground.

Walk slowly forwards. Feel *the space that* you are walking through and your relationship to the space. Imagine there is light emanating *from the body of the* Buddha and it shines on the area that we pass through. Enjoy the reaction to the whole space.

The image of the sand is a metaphor for giving, whilst the light is a metaphor for kindness and Buddha's love of all life. These are the spirits of the images that we have to manage. Meditate on the spirit deriving from our past experiences. Try to remember similar moments and attitudes of experiences in our own life.

Exercise 31: play with sound

Listen to music.
Generate a "figure of music" with its shape, quality, speed, colour, etc.
Assume that there is an *eye* in the right palm, playing with the figure of music.

Change the place of the *eye* to the forehead, then the back, the knees, etc.
The figure of music also changes according to different melodies or pitches of music.
React to the change of the figure of music.

Two people sit together, face to face, reaching out their arms. Let the figure of music lead the movement of the arms. Two people play with the figure at the same time.

If one of them perceives the shape or the movement of the figure of music, the person must use the hands to express this message to the other person. In this way, the figure of music is interactively formed by the two people.

Exercise 32: division—light and sound

Listen to music. Meditate that the right arm transforms into the music figure. Then feel that there is light shining from the left, which turns the left part of the body into light.

Accordingly, there are two diverse subjects—music and light existing in different parts of the body at the same time. They have their own specific natures and qualities, which lead the movement in various ways.

This is an example of "division". Division is the situation when two or more diverse subjects appear in different parts of the same body. This is the other basic method used to manipulate images or subjects in Butoh.

Exercise 33: focus and spread of eyes

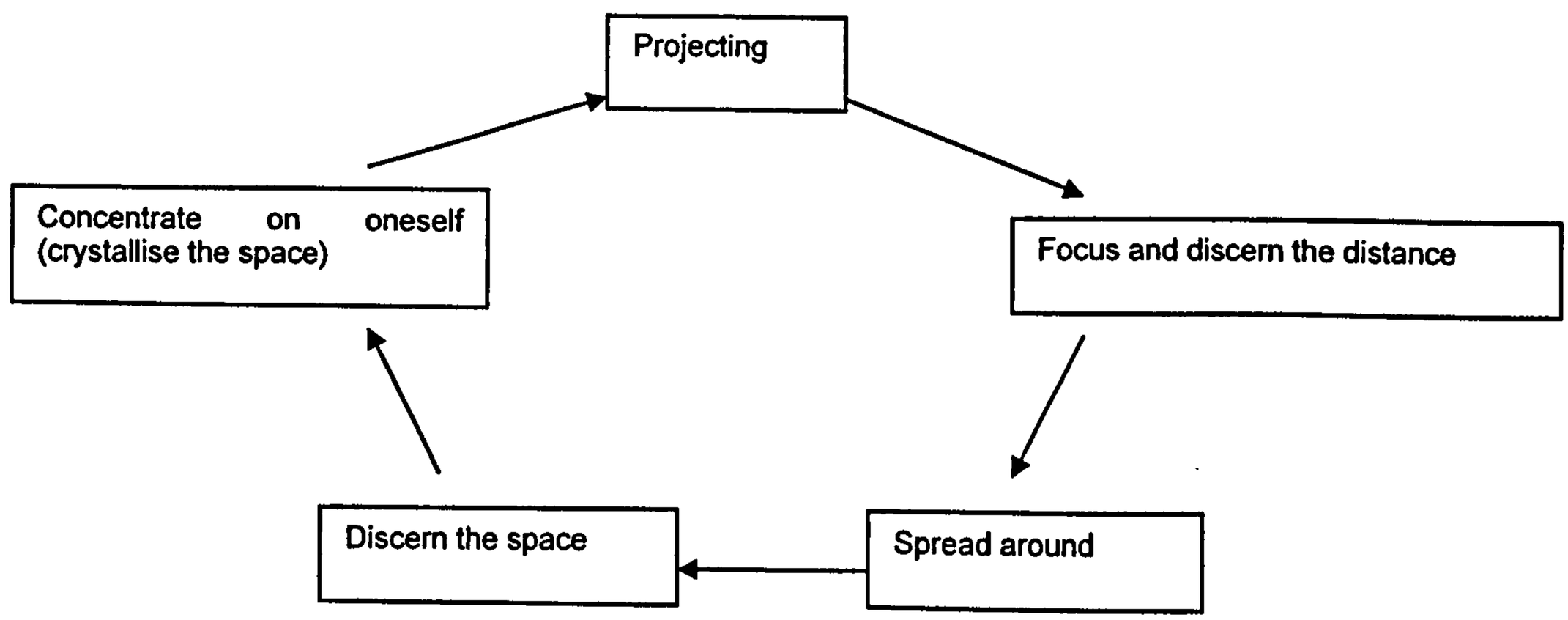
Select a subject and look at it. Try to concentrate the focus of the eyes on that subject without any distraction.

Then enlarge the area of focus from the surrounding area of the subject to the whole space. With such a wide focus, we should be able to see almost the whole scene in front of us.

Repeat the changing focus of the eyes several times. Feel the differences between them and the relationship between the environment and ourselves. Observe the other person doing this exercise and the difference in their eyes.

Exercise 34: discerning space—individual

First, concentrate on yourself. Feel that there is energy accumulated inside the body. Find a point in the environment. Project the energy to that point, i.e. focus on that point. Discern the distance. Then use the skill in the previous exercise, spreading the focus of the eyes around. Begin to discern the whole space. Try to expand the area of focus and let the expanding or discerning of the space lead the turning or movement of the head, then the body as well. After a while, when we have a sense of the space as a whole, try to find another point in the environment. Diminish the area of focus and concentrate the eyes on that point, discerning the distance for a second time. Then spread the focus again, repeating the above process. The sequence of the exercise forms a circle circuit as follows:



In comparison with the exercise in *figure eight*, the projection and concentration are the same. What is added is the discerning of space.

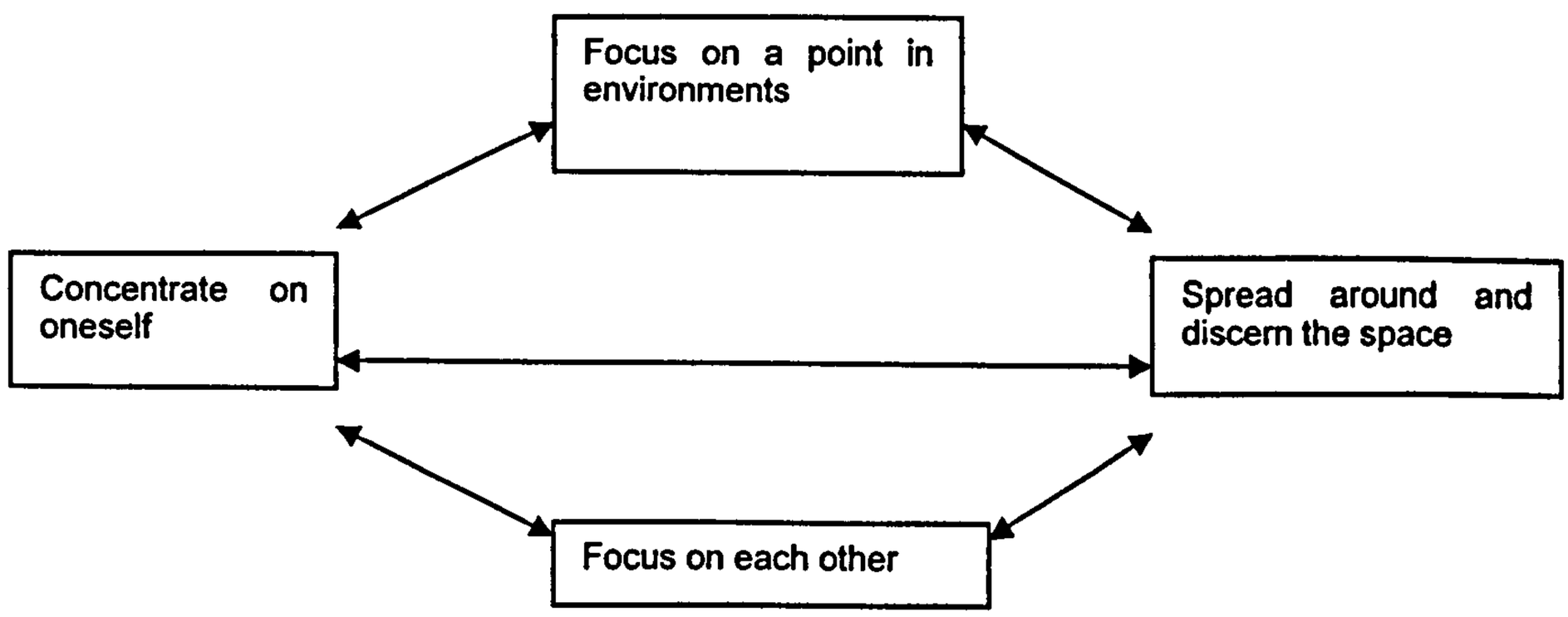
Exercise 35: discerning space—two persons

> Two persons stand face to face. Concentrate on yourself. At first, simply look at each other's chests without any projection of energy. Then, slowly look up at the head, gradually increasing the degree of projection. When your eyes meet, project all your energy at the other person. After a while, spread the focus and break the connection, gradually concentrating on yourself again.
>
> A gesture of bending the knees could be added at the beginning of the exercise. During the process of the lifting of the gaze, gradually straighten the knees, to gain a sense of resistance to gravity, which would help the projection.

This is the same principle as in the exercises about the sense of weightiness (1-9). One can also use the exercise in *figure eight* to practise the same objective as described above.

Exercise 36: discerning space—group

This is the combination of the previous exercises of discerning space. The sequence of the focus and spread could be as follows:



By concentrating on ourselves, we have more choices to make: either focusing our efforts on something or discerning the entire space.

Actually, this happens in daily life all the time. When we want to talk to someone, we are aware of the distance, to make sure that our voice, the effort of sound, can be heard by the other person. The way we talk to someone is different from the way we give a lecture to a group; we are very aware of the area and space that we are going to address. When we enter a room, we notice the size of it, to make sure that we are comfortable and have enough space to move. These are all examples of the above procedure. If we stop discerning space, we might run into a wall, fall over, break something, or even get hurt. In fact, we discern space (control space) at every moment; the exercise only helps us to do it more consciously and precisely.

Exercise 37: control distance

In a similar fashion to the previous exercises, we now have to discern distance more precisely. Select a subject. Stand at a distance. Try to focus on that subject. Then slowly walk towards it. Discern the difference in the process. Remember the feeling of discerning.

Remove that subject. Stand at the same starting point. Walk slowly towards the place the subject was originally displayed. Compare the difference between this time and when the subject was still there. If we are very controlled when discerning, we should be able to repeat the same process, no matter whether the subject is in the same place or not, as every detail of the way it is discerned is remembered.

Exercise 38: control space—merging into the space

Stand in a corner of a space. Observe and feel the space. Try to move the body. Find the gesture / posture that is felt to best correspond to the space. In other words, the bodily gesture / posture should best re-present the sensations given by the space, such as: its length, width, and depth; whether it is spacious or crowded, bright or dark, warm or cold, the air flow if any, the texture of the wall...

Stand further away from the corner. Repeat the previous sequence until a new gesture / posture has been found. Change the standing locus for a third time. Repeat the same sequence.

Compare the bodily gestures / postures obtained in the three loci. Examine and feel how they link to the whole space and are influenced by the change of loci.

Develop a sequence of bodily movement, moving from the first locus, through the second, to the third locus. The bodily gesture / posture in each locus should keep corresponding to the space, and the transition from one bodily gesture / posture to another should also keep corresponding to the space.

The way the body corresponds to the space and the loci is *merging into the space.* The space merged with the body is a special space. The body is special body, and the relationship of correspondence is a special relationship.

*Space control* can be understood in terms of the concept of the 500 pieces of the body. *Space control* is the change between different pieces of the body. In other words, *space control* is movement. The movement or *space control* is the continuous flow of changes of space. Moreover, the different levels of *space control* enrich the possibilities of movement and the relationship towards environments.

*Space control* is used for the transformation between image and *subject. The change in levels* of *space control* is to shift from one piece of the body to another. Each piece is a crystallisation of the space, presenting different images. Therefore, each time we change the level of *space control* or movement, the image we present also changes. The divergent pieces of the body merge into, or separate from, the original piece of the body during the process of movement.

Drawing from the above, several kinds of descriptions can be considered as being the same: the change of *space control*, the shifting of pieces of the body, the change of kinesphere, the flow of movement, the change of images. Take the following paragraph as an example:

A person is looking at a beautiful, scenic view. He walks forward (movement), smelling the various kinds of fragrance in the air. He feels like a flower blossoming in a bed of earth, surrounded by warm air and sunlight (the change of images). He can extend his "branches" to touch almost everything, even far away (*space control*), at which point, everything seems to lose their boundaries (the change of kinesphere).

All these descriptions in literature can be considered to possess the same significance. In this regard, literature (especially poetry) and movement are mutually transformable. This is the reason why texts are useful in helping the performer to manage a Butoh performance. The above paragraph can be transformed into movement as follows: Stand in primary position. Walk forwards. Meditate on the nature of a flower. Feel the fragrance, the colours and its blossoming. Develop the movement of its stretching branches. Meditate on its relationship to the environment and its merging into the sunshine.

Exercise 39: peacock

> To transform the body into the shape of a peacock: Close the feet together as if they are long and thin. Bend the knees slightly. Tilt the upper part of the body forward, a little, but keep the spine straight. Imagine there is a long tail behind you. Lift the

upper arms slightly, but point the hands and fingers downward, palms facing each other.

Turn your head and look up at a tree in the near distance to your right. At the same time, the body moves forward slightly and turns to the left, in the opposite direction to the head. Meditate on the nature of the peacock and its relationship to the tree. This is the first *branch* image of the peacock. React to the tree using varying degrees of effort. Try to develop *space control* with different actions. These actions can be very subtle or slight.

Next, perform the same process in the opposite direction to the phrase above, i.e. to the left, to create a second *branch* image.

Then, look at the infinite horizon. Meditate on a third mood and its relationship to the horizon. This is the third *branch* image. Develop *space control* as before.

Look at a cloud to the right; repeat the process for the forth *branch* image.

Gradually, concentrate more on yourself. Walk backwards slowly as if towards a perch at a nest. Meditate the fifth mood and the relationship to the perch and the nest. This is the fifth *branch* image. Develop the movement and walk back to the perch.

These are the phases of the movement of a peacock.

This is an exercise synthesising all previous exercises. There are at least five choreographic aspects in Butoh, which enrich the content of the performance and the impact of the theme. Take this exercise as an example:

The first aspect is that of *division*. As there is only one peacock, there might not be *division* in this exercise. The layer remains latent in this instance. Nevertheless, if the performer wants to change the image of peacock into a tree or a cloud, i.e. to perform two or more roles, this is *division*. Usually, there are many roles or subjects for a Butoh performer to present in a performance.

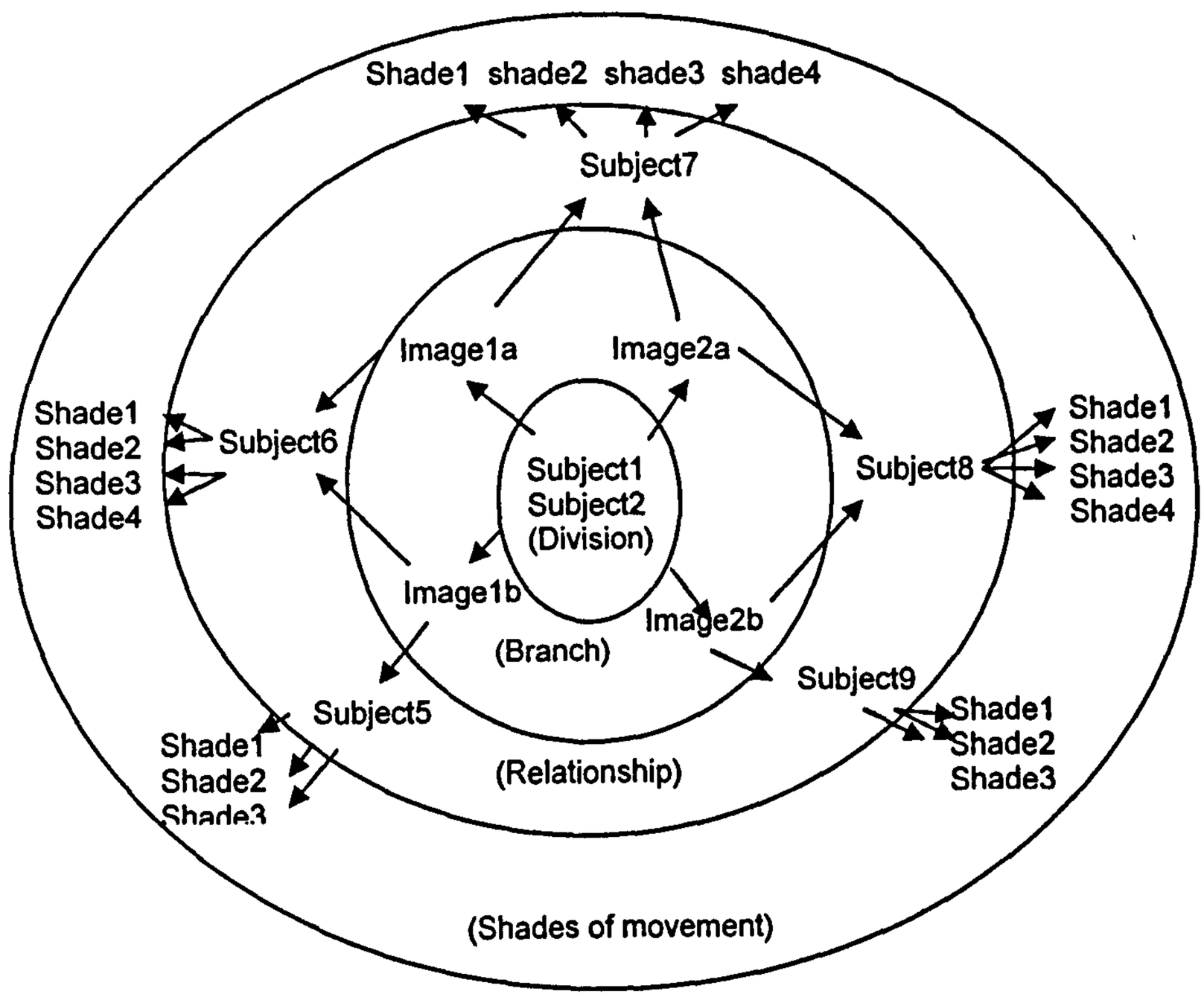
The second aspect is that of *branch*. In each phase of the exercise, we meditate on a different kind of mood, to present at least five *branches* of the peacock.

The third aspect is that of relationship. In each phase of the exercise, the peacock has a different relationship to other subject. We may add subjects in each phase to engender more relationships.

The fourth aspect is shades of movement. Shades of movement refer to different levels of *space control*, differing degrees of effort, various trace-forms, and actions.

The fifth aspect is the creative process of the performance.

The layers of choreography in Butoh can be illustrated as below:




(The creative process / context)

Exercise 40: stone statue

In Japan, there are many stone statues situated at the side of the road, which have manifold expressions and gestures. The Japanese love them, as they are believed to bless people with their magic powers. People always have them dressed in many styles, sometimes with hats to protect them from the rain. People also tie red threads on them to represent a wish they have made. Therefore, the stone statues symbolise the dreams of Japanese people and their wishes in daily life.

Look at pictures of all the stone statues. Feel their qualities and characters. Select your favourite. Select a place to begin the process of transformation. From any position, meditate on becoming the favourite stone statue. Explore its nature. Discern the environment and feel each element. Listen to sounds, such as the sound of birds, children, insects, the flow of the river, the wind, etc. As you gradually become familiar with the environment, grow into the gesture of the stone statue.

Then, night comes: the stone statue plays around, visiting trees or weeds, singing with birds or insects. Sometimes, you might lift your head to look at the stars. Meditate on the character of the stone statue and its relationship to the environment.

Imitate the same movement as above. Develop the aspects of *space control*, effort, etc.

Dawn breaks the silence of the night. When the stone statue hears the first sounds of people awakening, he becomes static again, listening to people's hearts. From time to time, people will come and tie a red thread on the body of the stone statue, speaking of their wishes, asking for a blessing; the stone statue just listens with slight smile on his face. Meditate on the relationship between the stone statue and the people, imitating the reactions between them.

This exercise is a synthesised practice with a much freer possibility to make use of all the aspects of choreography. We can shape the relationship of the stone statue by ourselves, and select what subjects to visit or play with. There are many different spirits and characters of the stone statue. Develop different levels of *space control*, to see how they work.

Exercise 41: combination 2

Find a suitable place to start. Imagine there is a river flowing or the wind is blowing. Hear their sound. Feel the quality. Then reach out your hands or feet to touch them. Meditate on the nature of the river or wind and transform into one of them.

Then feel that there is a seed inside the body, beginning to grow into a shoot. Absorbing fertiliser from the earth, the shoot stretches and becomes stronger. Gradually there are lots of leaves and branches. It becomes a big tree. Meditate on the nature of the plant and imitate its growing process.

The storm comes. Thunder and lightning hits parts of the trunk, the tree stores energy. When enough energy has been accumulated, it seeks a way out of the trunk. The discharge emits light and heat. After the storm, the tree is exhausted and withered. Meditate on the nature of the storm. Imitate the way it charges and discharges energy into the tree.

The tree turns into a withering weed. Meditate on the nature of the weed. Then transform the weed into the horse and then the peacock. Meditate on both of them. Then transform into a baby. Meditate on the life and death of the baby. The baby turns into a Buddha. Then the Buddha becomes a stone statue. Meditate on them and their relationship.

This is a practice synthesising all the previous exercises. Apart from *branch* and *division*, *overlap* is another basic method for dealing with images, which we have practised in many previous exercises. *Overlap* is the state in which different subjects exist in the same part of the same body. This occurs when we want to transform from one subject to another. For example, when we want to transform from a river to a tree, the body of the river expands, through *space control*, and turns, first into earth, and then into the tree. In the process of the transformation, the body of the performer can possess both the nature of the river and the tree at the same time. This is the state of *overlap*. After *overlap*, the body gradually turns into the tree completely.

Exercise 42: improvisation

Find a theme. If there is no clear theme, find several images or subjects that interest you. During the development of the meditation and imitation, it is very likely that their relationship will consequently be established. The images or subjects are the basic structure for the improvisation.

Start with one of the images or subjects. Meditate on its nature and relationship to the environment. Choose two or three natures and subjects that it will connect with, in order to establish the relationship. Imitate the process of reaction and develop their shades of movement.

Follow the same procedure for the other images or subjects.

Work it out on paper, if necessary. Try to work out the different layers of choreography. The relationship between images or subjects can then be clarified and lead to the establishment of a theme.

During the above process, the three basic methods of dealing with dance materials can be adopted, i.e. *branch, division,* and *overlap*. Special music can be used as an aid to meditation. Try to find many ways of interpreting the theme. Revise the structure of the theme in terms of the layers of choreography.