

BEYOND CONVENTION:
Border Crossing From The Social Body To The Porous Body:
The Porous Body As Ontological Site - Interface For A-Located Realities.

Context:

The Porous Body

Discussion of the body is restricted to the role of the body in physical performative practice, where the body, as opposed to the text driven voice, is given significance and consideration as the ‘narrator’ in the making of performance.

One’s conception of the body is fundamental to its management as a tool and structure of communication within performative practice. The nature of that conception within one’s practice will influence significantly the potential of the use of the body as creative element in theatrical performative practice. In the author’s practice the body is fundamentally a plane of interface for the emergent devised physical performance and light installation; interface being the site of access to the performative – the gesture of performance - the site of the emergence of the phenomenal.

The body in the author’s practice is experienced as a density of energies, bounded at a gross optical level by skin, though fundamentally porous and in continual communication and exchange with its environment.¹ It is a body, furthermore, whose sentience is distributed not merely throughout its materiality, the gross and familiar physical body; but, as a consequence of its inherently and inescapably interactive existence², is also dispersed and a-located in its relation to and with its immediate environment, the subtle body³.

The features of the porous body that are fundamental to the nature and functioning of the body within the author’s practice is developed and discussed comparatively, through an analysis of the body and its use in the practice of Butoh. The art of Butoh is a particularly striking and visually distinct example of physical theatrical practice where the porous body is the *sine qua non* of its performative practice marking historically and irrefutably a significant development in the concept and performing of body within the practice of physical theatre.

Performance as ontological practice

a fetus
walked along a snow covered path.
it cleared a path
by spreading its clothes
upon the snow
after removing them
one by one
as in a secret
cosmic ceremony.
then it peeled off its skin
and laid that upon the path.
a whirlwind of snow surrounded it
but the fetus continued,
wrapped in this whirlwind.
the white bones danced
enveloped by an immaculate cloak.
the dance of the fetus
which moved along
as if carried by a whirlwind of snow
seemed to be transparent.⁴

Kazuo Ono’s dance of the fetus dissolving through the cosmos in a dance of porosity that subverts substantially the idea of the material and of materiality, (its own and that of its environment), is, the author suspects, not simply a poetic allusion to the spirit of the dance and of Butoh. It is rather, the author argues an expression of the materiality of an experience of the embodied voice of Butoh.⁵ The stark imagery

embodied in Kazuo Ono's dance of the fetus; its porous archeology of the structures of self and of nature; the cosmic backdrop to the narrative; the intense focus and Zen-like act of being both perform and express this very act of digging deep into the structures of being. This ontological practice is at the very core and heart of the nature of Butoh. Practice as ontology, an existential enquiry into performance and its role as a form of knowledge, lies also at the heart of this author's practice and is fundamental to the conception, materiality and nature of the porous body.

The body in Butoh, irretrievably in the act of becoming, outside of time, space and culture, is a body that is materially and substantially disengaged from the body of ordinary social living and its discourse with self, other and society.

The body in Butoh is managed, materially and substantively, in a manner that is mindful specifically of the purpose that this body in Butoh might inhabit a place and a space that is beyond the dimension and context of conventional, normal and normalizing social discourse.

Text:

The Porous Body as Ontological site – Interface for A-located Realities

The body in Butoh functions as both a place and a space where the interface between the individual and the cosmic, between the 'present' and living and the 'absent' and the dead in some way merge to spawn an emergent 'now' which is both beyond time and space: an a-located reality which exists as a consequence of this individual/cosmic interface, and which can, furthermore, exist only because it is outside of time and space.

This emergent 'now,' beyond time and space, the a-located reality, to which the author refers is not the now of the present instant, 'the one that tries to hold itself between the future and the past, and gets devoured by them,'⁶ nor is it the now that emerges from an attempt 'to constitute time on the basis of consciousness.'⁷ The emergent 'now' spawned by the body in Butoh in a state of porosity which becomes/effects an interface suspended somewhere from within self and its environment (cosmos), may be likened to the *now* referred to by the artist Barnett Newman.⁸ Newman's *now*, Lyotard explains, is 'no more than *now*.' It is 'a stranger to consciousness and cannot be constituted by it.' The emergent 'now' from the Butoh body in a state of presence and porosity cannot be constituted through cognitive consciousness or intelligence. Rather, as Lyotard argues of Newman's *now*, the 'now' of the Butoh body in a state of presence and porosity 'is what dismantles consciousness, what deposes consciousness, it is what consciousness cannot formulate, and even what consciousness forgets in order to constitute itself.'⁹

The familiar yet unknown guest

This 'now' so detrimental to [cognitive] consciousness, but clearly so present to sight and experience from the site of Newman's canvas and from the site and the horizon of the interface of the porous body of Butoh is the unharmonizable, the author ventures to suggest, that Lyotard seeks to reserve. This 'now,' uncomposable within [cognitive] consciousness, indeed decomposing consciousness as we know it, brings in some alterity, some Other. Might it be that this 'now,' the Other, bears witness to that which exists within the value of man that the humanists failed to interrogate: the inhuman to which Lyotard refers¹⁰; the message from the dead to which Hijikata and the practitioner of Butoh constantly allude; possibly even the gesture of the work of art?¹¹ The 'now' that is beyond the defining and limiting factors of cognitive consciousness is, the author suggests, that 'now' which 'the system,' [the social body contrived through practices] 'has the consequence of causing the forgetting of what escapes it.'¹² The anamnesis drawn forth in the 'now' by the porous body in Butoh and in the author's practice - brought about as a consequence of incessant becoming though the body's porosity in performativity - answers 'the anguish....of a mind haunted by the familiar and unknown guest which is agitating it, sending it delirious but also making it think...'¹³ causing it even to seek delirium for the sake of the hallucinated body that resides within. This mind haunted by the familiar and unknown guest agitating from within is the mind [cognitive consciousness] of the social body contrived in practices. The anamnesis brought forth by the porous body may be 'the remainder'¹⁴ which one suspects that Lyotard silently hopes is present, though lost, within the social body contrived in practices; the body that is silenced, the body that is made mute by the language that separates man from himself. This anamnesis knocks on the door, awakens the remainder [that infinitely secret one of which the soul is a hostage]¹⁵ within the social [constructed] body of 'the living being who, in language, separates and opposes himself to his own bare life and, at the same time, maintains himself in

relation to that bare life in an inclusive exclusion.¹⁶

To discover rules not yet existent – the postmodern task

When the 'now' of the porous body, visible through the interface consequent upon the passibility of the porous body that is suspended in an a-located space of representation, deconstructs the very consciousness [cognitive] of the social body that seeks to apprehend it, how might one proceed without the appropriation and comfort of nostalgic forms? It is Lyotard's plea that we 'be witness to the unrepresentable.' 'Let us activate the differences and save the honor of the name,' he suggests.¹⁷ May the artist bear witness to the unrepresentable without nostalgia, unlike the language of modernism, whose very form, 'because of its recognizable consistency, continues to offer...[us]...matter for solace and pleasure,'¹⁸ and which therefore fails by its very nostalgia to present the unrepresentable. It is the postmodern artist, according to Lyotard's argument, that is capable of representation without nostalgia, who produces works that 'are not in principle governed by preestablished rules...[that]...cannot be judged according to a determining judgment, by applying familiar categories to the text or to the work.' It is those very rules, not yet existent, 'that the work of art itself is looking for,' he emphasizes.¹⁹ Following Lyotard one would have therefore to agree that 'the postmodern would be that which, in the modern, puts forward the unrepresentable in presentation itself; that which denies itself the solace of good forms, the consensus of a taste which would make it possible to share collectively the nostalgia for the unattainable; that which searches for new presentations, not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unrepresentable.'²⁰ One might reasonably conclude, therefore, the artist's task to be to discover those very rules not yet existent. In her artistic practice the author considers this task from the perspective and the level of the exploration of the body as ontological site, in a state of passibility, of porosity. This is the substance and the focus of her investigation of the Other, of the Inhuman, of the Residue, that which cannot be constructed through cognitive consciousness; the momentary flash on the grid. Artistic practice may only ever create the grid, the trace. The artist cannot construct nor anticipate the form or content of that momentary flash on the grid, the gesture, that brings with it an alterity, a lucidity that escapes the language that created it. The artist's craft and discernment is therefore merely to perfect the grid, through the divination of craft, so that the alterity, the lucidity, might appear. And create such a space of representation that such lucidity might be intractable; that severe lucidity for which Artaud sought within his Theatre of Cruelty.

To be – the ontological task of art

'When we have been abandoned by meaning,' as indeed we have when we are present in that a-located space of representation that deconstructs consciousness, Lyotard's suggestion is that, 'the artist has the professional duty to bear witness that *there is*, to respond to the order to be...Being announces itself in the imperative,' he argues. 'Art is not a genre defined in terms of an end (the pleasure of the addressee), and still less is it a game whose rules have to be discovered. *It accomplishes an ontological task,*' 'It accomplishes it without completing it. It must constantly begin to testify anew to the occurrence by letting the occurrence be,' Lyotard insists,²¹ 'It is the task of writing, thinking, literature, arts, to venture to bear witness to it.'²² The a-location of the space of representation created by the interface of the porous body in a state of presence in the 'now' accomplishes this ontological task in the practice of Butoh and in the author's works *Performed Geometries*, through the incessant becoming of the body in a state of porosity sited within the catachrestic space of its own emergence as interface in the 'now.' The porous body in Butoh and in the author's artistic practice, accomplishes this ontological task through, and only through, the author suggests, its [the porous body's] state of a-location.

If it is indeed the case that that the porosity of the body in Butoh and in the author's practice residing in 'presence' in the 'now,' within that interface emergent upon its performativity, is that which accomplishes the ontological task of discovering those 'rules,' not yet existent, by which we might 'know' [it is with caution that the author refers to such an established epistemological methodology], what then is meant by the body in presence? How can the body full of holes, hallucinating from within itself – a necessary condition to witness the unrepresentable, the gesture – at the same time, or through that very condition, be present? And why must the [cognitive] consciousness of the social body contrived in practices find it so necessary to forget its own remembering? What absolute tragedy resides within the social body entrapped within its own 'system' and language[s]? What sight is so unbearable as to cause its own forgetting? What makes incessant becoming of the porous body full of holes surmount and overturn the forgetting of an absolute tragedy? What resides within the nature of the porous body and its border crossing, from the social body into an ontological site of visibility, that which this author calls the interface, that causes such material and critical re-ordering and re-alignment of the space of representation?

Presence as representational practice

‘Presence is the instant which interrupts the chaos of history and which recalls, or simply calls out that ‘there is’, even before that which is has any signification.’²³

‘An event, an occurrence – what Martin Heidegger called *ein Ereignis* - is infinitely simple, but this simplicity can only be approached through a state of privation. That which we call thought must be disarmed.’²⁴

Presence and the absence of landscape reside in the same space of representation when that representation emerges as a function of the body as ontological site and not as reflective mirror. When what is being represented is unrepresentable. When representation ceases to be mere mimesis. When representation becomes the site, the place and the space of a construction of meaning, a dynamic site of becoming. The kind of representation to which Kobialka refers as ‘the labor to compose place which will articulate the ensemble of movements and operations within it, a labor which collates heterogeneous place on the same plane; a labor that is a practice of space identification and the production of place.’ A dynamic site that does not erase those very objects that it seeks to present, those familiar but unknown guests, which when pursued through the practice of mimesis are, however, erased by that very pursuit. The ‘presence’ of the porous body in Butoh and in the author’s artistic practice, borrowing once more from Kobialka’s words, hopes ‘to disclose representational practices that might have been erased by us in the pursuit of objects caught in the mirror that we placed in front of ourselves.’²⁵ The porous body in the author’s practice is an attempt to create such a space that might reveal such practices. It is an attempt at a reconciliation of existence and signification, where presence as a representational practice is a mode of thinking[/becoming] and not a mode of presentation.

When presence as a representational practice establishes a space of representation where ‘the only ‘response’ to the question of the abandoned,’ as Lyotard would ask it, abandoned that is, in the absence of meaning... ‘that has ever been heard is not *Know why*, but *Be*.’²⁶ Where the only response to ‘*to be*,’ if it wishes to be that instant of presence which interrupts the chaos of history, is ‘*to be*’ outside the confines of time and place, those signifying confines called the social and the historical. When ‘*to be*,’ if it is enacted within time and place will simply become one, of many varieties, of socio-historical prescriptions. When ‘*to be*’ is enacted outside of time and place - its emergent face, visible and open to be experienced - becomes ‘a prescription emanating from silence or from the void.’ The ‘*to be*’ enacted outside the confines of time and place ‘perpetuates the passion by reiterating it from its beginnings,’²⁷ by contrast to the ‘*to be*’ within time and place which becomes merely a reenactment. *To be* enacted outside of time and place is the subflatus experienced through timbre rather than sound. Sound, by contrast to timbre, in being constructed and harmonized, is enslaved to time and place, its ineluctable fate when delivered through the hand of the human. *To be* is the subflatus by contrast to sound; the inhuman by contrast to the human; the passibility of the hallucinated and porous body by contrast to the social body constructed through practices, entrapped and enslaved by those very practices, forever silenced, made mute, separated and opposed to his own bare life by those very practices. The passibility and the porosity of the body in ‘presence,’ the body astonished by its own ingenuity, that body in a state of severe lucidity, as a consequence, becomes, a backdrop to all places. That backdrop to all places, performing not the horizon, but becoming a presence accessed and thus experienced; that backdrop where ‘no line separates earth from sky, which are of the same substance.’²⁸

The postmodern space of [re?]presentation

When ‘*to be*’ is enacted, or rather, when a space is created from within which ‘*to be*’ might emerge performatively, then ‘*to be*’ becomes. Quite simply, as an event, an occurrence, it becomes, incessantly, and without prescription. It is in this condition and in such a space of representation that passibility becomes a possibility; when identity, which pays homage to an order, is deconstructed. Identity is a stranger to passability and cannot be constituted by it. Identity is dismantled by the passibility of the porous body. It is deposed by it. Identity is what passibility cannot formulate. Identity is what passibility forgets in order to constitute itself. When a space of representation is created through the passibility of the porous body where ‘*to be*’ may emerge to a plane of visibility, then identity can no longer freeze the gesture of thinking, to borrow from Michel de Certeau’s form of declamation.²⁹ When a space of representation is created through the passibility of the porous body perched precariously in the ‘now,’ where the enactment of ‘*to be*’ is ‘a prescription emanating from the void’ which ‘perpetuates the passion by reiterating it from its

beginnings,' then, in the spirit of de Certeau, to 'think,' 'on the contrary, is to pass through; is to question that order, to marvel that it exists, to wonder what made it possible, to seek, in passing over this landscape, traces of the movement that formed it, to discover in these histories supposedly laid to rest, "how and to what extent it would be possible to think otherwise".'³⁰

'With-out' meaning

The creation of such a space of representation, a dynamic site of passibility allowing for possibility means 'approaching presence without recourse to a means of presentation.'³¹ It is in this space of passibility, this emergent interface of visibility, that the 'immaterial,' the 'an-objectable' in Lyotard terminology, may be allowed. This emergence, this 'matter' is, to borrow from Lyotard's argument, 'immaterial, an-objectable, because it can only 'take place' or find its occasion at the price of suspending these active powers of the mind;' by contrast to the 'matter' subject to sensibility which is made intelligible to understanding in that it accommodates a form, faculty or capacity of the mind.³² It is necessary to suspend the active states of mind in order for the body to bear witness, to be 'in presence,' beyond 'the sense of the *here-and-now*'.³³ When the body is in 'presence,' beyond the sense of *here-and-now*, when there is a mindless state, necessary so that the [cognitive] mind might not grasp, perceive or conceive matter. Then the body is in a state of passibility where there is possibility, emergence, 'so that there be something.'³⁴

This 'matter,' this 'there is,' this '*quod*' to which Lyotard refers, this 'presence' in the porous body filled with holes, 'designate[s] an event of a passion, a passibility for which the mind will not have been prepared, which will have unsettled it, and of which it conserves only the feeling of an obscure debt'³⁵ to a familiar yet unknown guest knocking at the door. The residue, the inhuman, the familiar yet unknown guest is resident though not recognized, nor referred, let alone revered, within the social body contrived by practice. This presence is the event of the instant, (though the author hesitates to refer to the time based instant lest it confound), that interrupts the chaos of history, that makes a 'visibility' 'with-out' meaning, that creates an experiential a-location performatively that is the living and dynamic 'being-in' '*to be*.' This a-location of the event 'with-out' meaning, a-located beyond the grasping cognitive mind of the body contrived by social practices, is an event within passibility; it is the being and witnessing of *there is*, 'even before that which is has any signification. This a-location of the event, 'with-out' meaning, is the transcendence of 'presence' 'always already caught in a signification.'³⁶ This space of representation created through the a-location of the event 'with-out' meaning, the interface, that space of the porous body where the state of passability creates the possibility that *to be* might emerge, is, the author suggests, 'the barrier resistant to signification.'³⁷

Absolute Lucidity: The Absence of Landscape

This event that interrupts the chaos of history that is here called 'presence,' resides in a landscape without horizon. There is no line which 'separates earth from sky, which are of the same substance' in this landscape.³⁸ This event which interrupts the chaos of history, the a-located performativity of the porous body in Butoh and in the author's artistic practice, 'with-out' meaning, is, the author suggests, an event of absolute lucidity, bearing no prescription. A state of absolute lucidity that may be likened to the severe lucidity for which Artaud sought in his Theatre of Cruelty. It is an event which bears no prescription. It is therefore, at the border and a barrier to signification.

Absolute lucidity challenges the deity, the theodicy of representational forms. Absolute lucidity challenges the theodicy of the consolation of correct forms. It brings in the precariousness of incessant becoming – a constant state of no fixed points. It offers no consolation. It allows no relation, to the mind, petrified through its own practices and languages that oppose it to its very being. When mind no longer requires consolation, or has an inability to be nullified by consolation, then it might exist and marvel, even wonder at the landscape through which it passes, yet can never recognize. Then in thinking otherwise it might even locate that movement that formed it, (beyond time and space). It might even, if not overwhelmed by wonder apprehend its own beginnings, and in so doing, re-unite itself with its own origins. Such wonder, such marvel, such unity, must surely console – but without nostalgia - for there exists no fixed points to which nostalgia might refer.

Absolute tragedy George Steiner argues is a negative ontology.³⁹ Absolute lucidity by contrast bears the potential of a positive ontology.⁴⁰ The vision of absolute tragedy is scarcely endurable, and thus its presentation can only be fragmentary.⁴¹ 'Only nothingness is acquitted of the fault, of the error of being,'

that which is absolute tragedy.⁴² If one challenges, for the moment the idea of the certainty of nothingness as expressed by Steiner – the absence of aberrant life, a negative prescription – and assert in its stead the nothingness of the void, where nothingness becomes instead a possibility, the pregnant possibility of the prescription from the void – then the hermetic messenger of lucidity, far from being nothing[ness] is pregnant with everything, merely awaiting form, merely awaiting that momentary flash on the grid that might give it visibility.

Absolute lucidity, the author therefore suggests, is an ontological anticipation that seeks merely ‘visibility’ in-being. *To be*, incessantly is a necessity. *To be* is an imperative. Absolute lucidity, in the performative act is fragmentary not because the vision is less than bearable, but because the unknown guest is unknown (though present), because the unknown guest is occluded (by mind). It is mind that finds the vision of absolute lucidity unbearable, because there is no place for mind to reside within its landscape. The landscape of absolute lucidity is too vertiginous for mind to find any foothold whatsoever. This landscape of absolute lucidity ‘draws its forces [what the landscape has ‘already] up against the mind, and that in drawing them up, it has broken and deposed the mind (as one deposes a sovereign), made it vomit itself up towards the nothing-ness [even no-thing-ness] of being-there.’⁴³

The absolute tragedy for the mind in absolute lucidity is not *to be*. In the landscape of absolute lucidity the mind is ‘with-out’ language. It is mind, and not man, that is unhoused in absolute lucidity. The void in absolute lucidity is not mute. It is merely that language, and the system of mind that sustains language is dissolved within it. In so doing, another ‘language’ might emerge. The timbre as opposed to the sound might emerge and its resonance be experienced through the passability and porosity of that space of absolute lucidity. When first deposed, the body ‘with-out’ language appears mute and unhoused. It is, however, simply, ‘with-out’ language, ‘with-out’ [cognitive] mind. The void is ‘with-out’ defining landscape. The void is ‘with-out’ meaning because it dissolves language and the system of mind that sustains language and meaning. Language has no medium within which it (or the mind) might ‘precipitate’ in the void. The void without landscape in absolute lucidity bears no prescriptive nor signifying marks that might cloud, or create a narrative which would cover over that landscape that may be ‘seen’ but not recognized. That landscape which is a becoming, that landscape which is pure matter [as Lyotard argues as opposed to form].

‘It is not estrangement [from language and from mind] that procures landscape,’ Lyotard argues, ‘It is the other way around.’⁴⁴ It is landscape that procures estrangement. It is the ‘absent’ landscape, the landscape without signifier, that landscape of absolute and complete lucidity that erases language and the mind. Not through a sensorial transfer from one field to another but ‘*by the implosion of forms themselves*, and forms are mind.’⁴⁵ ‘A landscape is a mark,’ Lyotard reasons, ‘and it [the landscape] (but not the mark it makes and leaves) should be thought of, not as an inscription, *but as the erasure of support*. If anything remains, it is an absence which stands as a sign of a horrifying presence in which mind FAILS and misses its aim. Fails, not because it was looking for itself and did not find itself, but’ fails, and here Lyotard searches for comparisons to illucidate his meaning, ‘in the sense that one can say that one missed one’s footing and fell, or that one’s legs gave way, as one sits on a bench, watching a window which is lit up but empty.’⁴⁶ The author suggests than mind did not fail because it faltered. It failed because it was dissolved. Mind failed not because it was displaced, but because it cannot exist within a landscape devoid of signifiers. There is no place in which mind may reside in the landscape of absence, that catachrestic space of passability and porosity. Thus the power of the landscape of absence to dissolve mind and the language[s] it sustains ‘really makes itself felt in the sense that it interrupts narratives.’⁴⁷

These landscapes of absence, ‘landscapes’ devoid of ‘narratives,’ do not exist topographically. They are not prescribed as a consequence of the ‘chronography of the mark that is landscape.’⁴⁸ Such landscapes do not come together to make up history and a geography, Lyotard explains. They do not even have family likenesses. They are not even the product of an imaginary space-time, he insists. They have nothing to do with imagination in the normal sense of the word he argues. They are not even a free synthesis of forms. Rather, ‘where and when they happen is not signalled. They are half seen, half touched, and they blind and they anaesthetize. A PLAINT of matter (of the soul), about the nets in which the mind incarcerates it.’⁴⁹ ‘A landscape is an excess of presence..... A glimpse of the inhuman.....Is it still a form of order, a different form of order?’ Lyotard asks ‘A displacement of the vanishing point? A vanishing of standpoint, rather?’⁵⁰ he suggests.

This landscape of absolute lucidity is opposed to the landscape of optical geometry, of the landscape of perspective and of representation. 'Optical geometry, the ordering of values and colours in line with a Neoplatonically inspired hierarchism, helped to encourage the identification of new political communities: the city, the State, the nation, by giving them the destiny of seeing everything and of making the world transparent (clear and distinct) to monocular vision.' Lyotard explains. 'Once placed on the perspectivist stage, the various components of the communities..... were put in order under the eye of the painter, thanks to the *costruzione legittima*. And in turn the eye of the monarch, positioned as indicated by the vanishing-point, receives this universe thus placed in order.....The modern notion of culture is born in the public access to the signs of historico-political identity and their collective deciphering.....it organizes his [the modest citizen's] space of identification'⁵¹

But let us re-member, there has been a displacement of vanishing point in this landscape without narrative, the landscape of absolute lucidity, even a vanishing of standpoint altogether. Let us remember, as Lyotard pleads, or even re-member as is the attempt in the author's practice, 'the INNOCENCE of walking' that is forgotten, through that countenance uncovered by the landscape [the landscape devoid of narrative, the landscape of absolute lucidity] and attempt to restrain the intrusion of prescription, restrain that law which 'takes a grip on the gaze. ...[for]..... The law sends signals across what was once a landscape....'⁵²

'Brief silence, the angel is passing.' is Lyotard's plea.⁵³

'Be careful. What if he were a messenger? Then they will make sure he is remembered, domesticated,' is his caution.⁵⁴

'Domestic language is rhythmic,' Lyotard concludes, 'Rhythmed wisdom protects itself against *pleonexia*, the delirium of a growth with no return, a story with no pause for breath.....'⁵⁵ 'The *domus* is the space-time of this reiteration.'⁵⁶

In that case, may we no longer be forever hostage within that domus. May we, rather, be unhoused, forever lost, traveling through this landscape. May we be no longer hostage to the social body contrived in practices, that is absolute tragedy. May we re-member, once more, the innocence of walking through landscape, in-passability, in-porosity, in-presence, in the, no longer vertiginous, 'now.' That is absolute lucidity.

¹ An understanding of the author's concept of the interactive and sentient physical body and its interconnectedness to and with its environment may be approached through the idea of the PostHuman Condition. See, for example, Robert Pepperell's concept of the 'fuzzy human.' See Robert Pepperell, *The Posthuman Condition. Consciousness beyond the Brain*, (Bristol: intellect tm, 2003), 21 - where Pepperell argues that "Our bodies consist in a complex matrix of senses that perpetually respond to the stimuli and demands of the environment. Since a human cannot be separated from its supportive environment for any length of time without coming to harm....it seems the human is a 'fuzzy edged' entity that is profoundly dependent on its surroundings, much as the brain is dependent on the body.' Pepperell recognizes how "deeply integrated into our environments we are. Because of this perpetual exchange between the living organism and its surroundings," he argues, "there can be no fixed state of a living human. *Ultimately we may never know the human as anything more than an approximation – a contingent nexus of substances and events.....neither bounded by skin nor isolated from the environment we are woven into, and woven of.*[The emphasis is the author's.]

²See also Hayles's discussion on the interactive nature of the body and consciousness - N. Katherine Hayles, "Flesh and Metal: Reconfiguring the Mindbody in Virtual Environments," *Semiotic Flesh: Information and the Human Body*, eds., Phillip Thurtle & Robert Mitchell, (University of Washington, Seattle: Walter Chapin Simpson Center for the Humanities, 2002), 52-68.

³ The author employs the term subtle body to refer to the physical and material body at a level of activity, sensation and perception that is proximal, that is, at the cellular and inter-cellular level. The subtle body in this definition exists within the gross and familiar level of physical body as well as within the space surrounding the body, which in some practices is referred to as the aura. The author's concept of the subtle body is paralleled in practices such as Chi-Gung, where the body and its energy is conceived of and described as, "a subtle organizing energy field" (SOEF), a dynamic force field that organizes the energies and elements within it into the integrated organic systems required to sustain any form of life. In human, for example, the SOEF organizes the atomic elements and energies into the form of the human body according to the design contained in the master template of DNA. Such energy fields are associated with all living organisms and represent the only force in the universe that resists the law of entropy i.e., the dissolution of all compound matter. These living energy fields therefore sustain organic life in material forms, but only as long as they maintain a state of dynamic polarity and constantly recharge and rebalance themselves by resonating in synchronicity with higher force fields....." Daniel Reid, *Chi-Gung. Harnessing the Power of the Universe*, (London: Simon & Schuster, 1998), 69.

⁴ Kazuo Ono, from "The Dead Begin to Run", *Butoh. Dance of the Dark Soul*, Mark Holborn, (New York: Sardev/Aperture, 1978), 36.

⁵ The term Butoh is here used to embrace collectively the various manifestations of practitioners who follow in the lineage of Hijikata and his philosophy of the body and of 'dance,' and not as an indication of a unifying or unified practice or philosophy that constitutes Butoh. This would be quite contrary to Tatsumi Hijikata's anarchic and subversive attitude in Butoh, and the highly individualist or singular (though cosmic) aspect to the embodied experience of Butoh.

⁶ Jean-François Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, trans., Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1991), 90.

⁷ This *now*, Lyotard states is 'one of the temporal 'ecstasies' that has been analyzed since Augustine's day, and particularly since Edmund Husserl....' (Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 90)

⁸ As, for example, in his artistic work especially the series *The Stations of the Cross*, and in his essay *The Sublime is Now*.

⁹ Lyotard, *Inhuman*, 90.

¹⁰ Lyotard's argument with humanism shows it to assume that 'man were a certain value, which has no need to be interrogated.' He asks the question, 'What if human beings, in humanism's sense, were in the process of, constrained into, becoming inhuman....' And 'what if what is 'proper' to humankind were to be inhabited by the inhuman?' He notes Appolinaire ingenuous observation that more than anything, artists are men who want to become inhuman; and Adorno's more prudent view that 'art remains loyal to humankind uniquely through its inhumanity in regard to it.' And he cautions that we do not confuse 'the inhumanity of the system which is currently being consolidated under the name of development (amongst others)' with 'the infinitely secret one of which the soul is hostage.' (Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 2)

¹¹ Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 1.

¹² Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 2.

¹³ Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 2.

¹⁴ Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 3.

¹⁵ Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 2..

¹⁶ Agamben, Giorgio, *Homo Sacer. Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans., Daniel Heller-Roazen, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1998), 8.

¹⁷ Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition, Theory and History of Literature*, trans., Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, Volume 10, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), 82)

¹⁸ Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, 81.

¹⁹ Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, 91.

²⁰ Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, 81.

²¹ Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, 88. (The emphasis is the author's.)

²² Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 7.

²³ Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 87.

²⁴ Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 90.

²⁵ Kobialka is here referring to his pursuit of medieval practices of representation embodied within the Regularis Concordia. See Michal Kobialka, *This is my Body. Representational Practices in the Early Middle Ages*, (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1999), viii.

²⁶ Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 87.

- ²⁷ Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 88.
- ²⁸ Gilles Deleuze, "Nomad Art: Space", *The Deleuze Reader*, ed. With introduction by Constantin V. Boundas, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 167.
- ²⁹ Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies. Discourses on the Other*, trans., Brian Massumi, *Theory and History of Literature*, Volume 17 (Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 194.
- ³⁰ Kobialka, *This is my Body*, 1.
- ³¹ Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 139.
- ³² Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 140.
- ³³ Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 140.
- ³⁴ Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 140.
- ³⁵ Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 140-141.
- ³⁶ Giorgio Agamben, *Word and Phantasm in Western Culture*, trans., Ronal L. Martinez, *Stanzas. Theory and History of Literature*, Volume 69, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 156. Agamben argues in his essay "The Barrier and the fold," that 'the original experience be always already caught in a fold, be already simple in the etymological sense (*sim-plex*, "once pleated") that presence be already caught in signification: this is precisely the origin of western metaphysics.'
- ³⁷ Agamben, *Word and Phantasm in Western Culture*, 156.
- ³⁸ Deleuze, "Nomad Art: Space", *The Deleuze Reader*, 167.
- ³⁹ George Steiner, *No Passion Spent*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1996), 129.
- ⁴⁰ May George Steiner pardon this alignment of absolute lucidity to his argument of absolute tragedy especially in view of the historic context within which he places his argument, of what he calls a century of a carnival of bestiality.
- ⁴¹ Steiner, *No Passion Spent*, 130.
- ⁴² Steiner, *No Passion Spent*, 129.
- ⁴³ Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 188.
- ⁴⁴ Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 199.
- ⁴⁵ Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 199. (The emphasis is the author's)
- ⁴⁶ Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 199. (The emphasis is the author's)
- ⁴⁷ Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 187.
- ⁴⁸ Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 190.
- ⁴⁹ Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 190.
- ⁵⁰ Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 187.
- ⁵¹ Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 119-120.
- ⁵² Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 190.
- ⁵³ Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 193.
- ⁵⁴ Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 193.
- ⁵⁵ Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 192.
- ⁵⁶ Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 193.