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THRESHOLDS OF REPRESENTATION: PHYSICAL DISABILITY IN DANCE AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE MOVING BODY

ABSTRACT:

Non-representational theory opens up ways to make sense of non-cognitive, bodily, emotional and affective processes in corporeal movement. Many theories of dance have focused on the continuity of movement, the process of passing seamlessly from one position to another. However, such expectations are readily disrupted by impaired bodies, which, despite their own internal continuity, are read through a normative body. This leads to registering movement in terms of an absence or lack of an expected movement. This prompts the viewer to shift from a direct consideration of the body-space relationship as a field of expression to representational structures that seek to explain the impairment. While this chapter approaches dance through non-representational theory, the authors argue that representation still shapes the conditions for affectual relationships in performance.

INTRODUCTION

There is an increasing interest in non-representational theory on dance's capacity to bridge the structural and representational distance between performer and spectator. At first glance there is a substantial difference between the sensual properties of the dance, coordinated by the dancer's kinaesthesic awareness, and the spectator's silent and immobile corporeal attitude. The spectator, by definition, gains access to the movement of the performer through vision rather than movement, or through the body's exterior rather in terms of the felt conditions of corporeal experience. However, this has been challenged by scholars working within the broad field of affect theory, who have promoted the idea of kinaesthetic empathy in which there is a direct transmission of motor feeling and, by extension, affect from dancer to spectator. In short, they argue that the conditions of seeing do not fully delimit kinaesthetic feeling or the broader notion of affect in movement. As Barbour and Hitchmouth (2014) suggest, dance is a means to "express an aesthetics of embodiment" that opens up the dancer and the observer to the possibilities of shared "embodied experiences of affect, feeling and emotion" (pp. 63-64). Likewise, Sklar argues that due to dance's grounding in kinaesthesia, it facilitates "a deeper understanding of movement itself as a way of knowing, a medium that carries meaning in an

immediately felt, somatic way" (Sklar, 2000, p. 70).[1] These arguments are certainly valuable in breaking down the affective distance between spectator and performer but immediacy cannot be too readily claimed without some attention to the specificity of performance. It is not that signification simply disappears in the constitution of a shared feeling, rather that it exists alongside any form of kinaesthetic reception. While this chapter approaches dance through non-representational theory, we also argue that representation can still shape the conditions for affectual relationships in dance performance. To address these issues, we focus on physical impairment in dance, because it presents its own peculiar set of challenges for theorising kinaesthetic and affectual engagement. Physicality disability is present to the spectator, and placed within a discourse of disability, even before the performance properly begins. The dancers are rendered visible by the absence of a limb or by the distinctiveness of their stance or gait before they are recognized as dancers, or, indeed, are felt as dancers. This visibility becomes the means through which affect itself is modulated. In support of our argument, we analyse a work by CanDoCo, Sophie Cunningham's 12 (2012), and focus in detail on how choreography can engage with the politics of representation and the aesthetics of non-representation.

DISABILITY AND PERFORMANCE

> The notion that disability is a kind of performance is to people with disabilities not a theoretical abstraction, but a lived experience (Sandahl & Auslander, 2005a, p.2).

In common with many postmodern and post-structuralist writings on identity Sandahl and Auslander (2005a) argue that disability is a performed identity rather than being "a static 'fact' of the body" (p.2). In contrast to other identities like gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity, they argue that disability is an often self-consciously, rather than unconsciously performed act. Whether it be through embracing the theatrical 'grand entrance' of using a wheelchair lift to board a bus or the daily attempts to 'pass' as being able-bodied on rehabilitation wards, or in prosthetic labs and speech therapy clinics, Sandahl and Auslander (2005a) demonstate the performative nature of disability. However, despite the persuasive nature of their argument,

[1] Even so there is considerable debate within philosophical aesthetics as to the nature of dance and how it is appreciated, experienced and perceived (see Albright, 2011; Foster Rothfield, & Dunagan, 2005; Langer, 1953; Manning, 2013; Sheets-Johnstone, 1999; Sparshott, 2004; Van Camp, 2009).

works that explore the performative nature of disability are relatively rare. Much more common are works that explore the ways that disability is represented in cultural texts and performances. This is, in part, explained by the entangled histories of the Disability Rights Movement in North America and the United Kindom, and the disability culture and arts movement which sought to tackle the often unjust and singular ways in which disability is represented in cultural life. However, there is an emerging literature that seeks to correct and move beyond the earlier medical model of disability (which stated that people are disabled by their physical impairments and differences, which need to be 'fixed') and the later social model of disability (which highlighted how society is organised disables physically impaired people). Instead attention is given to the ways in which creative and performative acts of disability might challenge reductive notions of the body, ability and normality and provide more nuanced understandings of disability. Broadly put, these works seek to draw attention to the ways that disability emerges in fluid and 'always in process' forms from specific confluences of material bodies, cultural contexts and social and physical environments (see, for example, Kuppers 2003; Rice, Chandler, Harrison, Liddiard & Ferrari, 2015; Sandahl & Auslander 2005b). In this chapter we highlight the importance of this emerging performative approach to disability, but we also advocate viewing performance through the lens of non-representational thinking because this opens up more nuanced understandings of the ways bodily movement constitutes space.

Learning to dance with a physical disability is akin to other forms of dance training insofar as there is a process by which the dancer becomes aware of the physical affordances of his/her body and learns to work with these limits while seeking to test them. The body's capacity is extended through training, such that the dancer increases his/her range of movements and, by working beyond habitual movements becomes aware of a greater range of kinaesthetic feeling. This feeling is the foundation of movement and is something that cannot be reduced to representational structures, whether this is the formal categorisation of movement afforded by the various dance vocabularies or the simple optical recognition of discrete movements. Sheets (1970) argues that dance is primarily grounded in this interior kinaesthetic awareness, which is the core through which the dancer performs the choreography but also the means by which the viewer experiences the performance. She states that in watching dance, the spectator is pre-reflectively aware of the dancer's movement because it is akin to the lived kinesis of his/her own body. The spectator's body is always present to itself in the perception of movement in a way that cannot be fully accounted for in a distanciated description of movement (Sheets, 1970). In dance, all movements are integrated into the kinesis of performance, primarily as a form of lived experience, and watching dance embeds the observer in this lived experience (Sheets, 1970).

The observer's own contours of feeling cleave to those of the performer without the necessary mediation of a set of visual structures and principles of representation. Movement is the very condition of feeling and as such always underpins and exceeds the visible; in a sense movement flows through the visible.

Massumi (2011), drawing on Langer's exploration of the notion of semblence, argues that in the dynamism of art works, there is no separation between 'form' and performance; in the act of reception, "[w]e see a movement that flows through the design" (p. 41; italics in original). In perception, there is a pre-reflective understanding of our "lived relation" to the object in terms of its volume, weight, texture, movability, and so on. Perception is not a staged process where we recognise the object, or one set of properties, and then infer another set, rather these properties are the very condition of seeing the object (Massumi, 2011, p. 42). Likewise, in dance, due to the foregrounding of actual human bodies in movement, we cannot fully separate the representational structure of the visual spectacle from the set of properties that inhere in the human form in our direct perception of it. As music psychologist Malloch (2005) argues, we recognise and sympathise with the humanly organised gestures in performance such as dance because "these gestures 'speak' to us, and move us; dance and music are communicative in ways that are often far more direct than words" (p. 14). To see the body is to see it through its kinaesthetic potential, in all its muscularity, rhythm, texture and volume. This idea of direct corporeal apprehension is something that should open up a space, and indeed a time, for the appreciation of performances that use physically disabled dancers, for it should circumvent cultural conceptions of disability.

The Visible Body and the Framing of the Non-Representable

> Bodies do not only pass meaning along, or pass it along in their uniquely responsive way. They develop choreographies of signs through which they discourse: they run (or lurch, or bound, or feint, or meander…) from premise to conclusion; they turn (or pivot, or twist…) through the process of reasoning; they confer with (or rub up against, or bump into…) one another in narrating their own physical fate (Foster, Rothfield, & Dunagan, 1996, p. xi).

Dance performance is not restricted to an internal conception of corporeal variation understood only in terms of proprioceptive and kinaesthetic qualities. There are also a range of other factors that underpin how the dancer is seen by an audience, which are not founded in a notion of transmitted feeling or the direct perception of the concrete attributes of a dancer. The

spectator's relationship to the movement is framed by the conception of what a body can or should do. As Franko (1996) argues, thinking in and through dance means working not just with the visceral elements of the dance form but also understanding how the body's movements are mediated through various sets of social relations that 'write' and discipline the body in various ways. The body is a vehicle for various discourses at the same time that it conveys movement, affect or empathy, and the degree to which these broader social discourses come into play, depends on the form of the dance. It is a particular issue with those performances in which dancers have visible and recognisable physical impairments, because the visual nomination of disability places them in a particular social category irrespective of how they dance.

Disability stands before the performance as a type of paratext, as the audience knows before attending a performance that it features disabled dancers. To refer to disabled dance groups or disabled dancers is already to conflate a wide variety of performers and performances into a general category based on a simple negation – to not be an able-bodied dancer. This issue is directly confronted by the British based dance company, CanDoCo, whose name negates a particular presumption about disabled people summarily expressed in the injunction 'you can't do', which is effectively a negation of a negation. Moreover, the idea of a text that stands before the performance is indicated in the very idea of disabled bodies. The physically disabled performer's body, by its mere differentiation from normative bodies, has the capacity to signify in a way that other performers' bodies do not. The shibboleths of disability – a missing limb, the fact of sitting in a wheelchair, the softness of a paraplegic's legs – all serve as a means of reading the performance even before the dancer moves. In the context of theatrical performance, Siebers (2016) argues that the disabled performer is "hypervisible" on stage, which lead to questions about why they are on stage and what role they play within the performance (p. 141). The performer does not only perform but is required to perform through the mediation of audience expectation:

> The disabled body has meaning – and necessarily so – because, when something as visible as a disabled body appears on the stage, without attendant meanings or explanations, the audience finds fault with the drama. The drama that fails to explain the appearance of a disabled body on the stage is a failed drama. The disabled body threatens to disable the theatre as a place for seeing. (Siebers, 2016, p. 141).

In contrast, the presence of nondisabled actors does not need to be explained (Siebers, 2016, p. 141), and they are largely judged in terms of their capacity to occupy the role or blend into the

performance. Certainly dance performance can be distinguished from theatrical performance because the the dancer does not necessarily have to embody a character, particularly in most contemporary dance performances that do not have narrative content. Here the foregrounding of the body can be linked to a desubjectification of the performance (Duffy & Atkinson, 2014). Nevertheless, when it comes to talking about disability and dance, disability can assert itself like a character, insofar as we judge the movements with respect to the fact that they are performed by a disabled person. It is not a question of an embodied movement through which the audience engages kinaesthetically, but movement that is grounded in a fixed body that could be replaced by a non-physically disabled dancer. In imaging a possible substitution, the particularity of feeling could be lost.

The discourse of disability visualises and exteriorises the body, and thus transforms it into a social fact that can be distinguished from the felt conditions of experience. The exteriorisation of disability becomes the basis for thinking of oneself as disabled, and thus conditions performance and conduct. This is due to the fact that dance is deeply embedded within the "socially constructed nature of human movement" (Reed, 1998, p. 503) and the "armatures of relations through which bodies perform individual, gendered, ethnic, or community identities" (Foster, 1995, p. 8; see also Sklar, 2000). Disability continues to signify as a lack irrespective of the dancer's performative capacity or virtuosity due to broader discourses surrounding the very nature of dance performance, and what it means to move properly. Indeed, Cresswell (2006) argues in relation to popular dance that the history of the dancing body "is an account of correct movement" (p. 55; italics in original), which is "refracted through the lenses of society and power" (p. 58; see also Franko, 1996). In disabled dance, these normative movements are overdetermined by the discourse of disability where there is not only an orthography of movement but an orthodoxy of the body. It is difficult for an audience to watch a disabled dancer perform without attending first to the fact of their disability, for "the social and cultural context of dance provides the conditions under which bodily movement can be creative" (Cresswell, 2006, p. 59). The question for a both a dance company and a choreographer that utilises dancers that can be readily nominated as disabled by an audience, is how to present their bodies in such a way that these normative expectations are deflected. We suggest that the directness that is sought in non-representational theories can only be apprehended through an indirectness of vision. What sits in the periphery of vision has a form and movement that resists discursive categorisation, and therefore can more fully realise its affective potential.

Claire Cunningham and the Repositioning of the Disabled Body

Even as the disabled body may be more visible when positioned within certain forms of dance performance, some choreographers are utilising non-traditional dance techniques in order to extend our expectations of what the body is and can do. One such choreographer is Claire Cunningham, a self-identifying disabled artist, who has developed a dance aesthetic based on personal experience in "the use/misuse, study and distortion of crutches" (Cunningham n.d.-a). Born with osteoporosis, Cunningham uses dance to communicate the ways non-normative bodies inhabit their bodies and place. This involves understanding "how the body moves, not bodies being cloaked in dance technique which, while useful up to a point, can make you feel you're seeing the same bodies over and over again" (Cunningham, quoted in Laurie, 2016). A significant influence on the development of her dance language was the choreographer Jeff Curtis, who, she explains:

> came from a world of improvisation that introduced me to a way of movement that wasn't about how it looked, or about following steps. It's a model of dancing that's sensorial, where movement comes from a more internal, psychological process. This was a huge change in the way I thought about my body; exploring how something felt as opposed to how it might look from the outside. It's kind of a cliché, but this was a genuine epiphany for me. It also helped me realise that a traditional kind of dance training didn't interest me. I wanted to investigate the potential of my body, as opposed to learning techniques that were developed for a non-disabled aesthetic (Cunningham, quoted in Boon, 2016; italics in original).

Cunningham, who has worked closely with CanDoCo, has experimented with how the able-bodied have responded to the disabled body through the practice of peripheral vision. The dance-theater duet Cunningham performed with the choregrapher Jeff Curtis, The Way You Look (at me) Tonight, included an experiment on the opening night, in which dancers and audience members took turns to keep each other at the edge of vision (Murphy, 2016). Cunningham explained to the audience that this manoeuvre serves to partly erase the person viewed, thus making the disabled body invisible or at least neutralising its potential impact (Murphy, 2016).

Cunningham's work, therefore, offers important insight into physical disability and dance. However, it is interesting that despite this emphasis on internal feeling, one of the most noteworthy aspects of her work is the use of speech and props, in particular crutches, which serve to project the body outward into structures of representation. The crutch is such a strong

marker of disability that one could assume that it would work against her other attempts to look askance at the performance and reduce attention to disability. Having said this, her aesthetic exploration of the crutch in performance actually enables a shift between representational and non-representational modes of movement that are articulated in and through dance.

BODIES, MOVEMENT, AFFECT

> *What are your crutches? What holds you up? Gets you through? What…or who?* And when does it tip over from something you love to something darker, a deeper need, that effects those around you? Does that mean it's bad? (Cunningham, n.d.-b).

Cunningham's piece, 12, was commissioned by CanDoCo as part of their Unlimited Commission for the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad. The impetus behind this piece was in the meaning of "crutch," not just the physical object but also the notions of emotional and psychological crutches. Cunningham created the choreography through improvisation workshops in which the twelve CanDoCo dancers were asked to respond to the questions outline in the above quote, beginning with what are your crutches? The idea was to "play with the idea of not using the crutches in the way they were intended, but rather as connections between people, effecting each other's movement and creating a puppet-like image of the dancer" (Cunningham, quoted on CanDoCo Dance Company website). The crutch as something that connects people underpins the entire framework of the dance. Often the crutch is brought to our (visual) attention when the performers hold their crutches in the air to extend the reach of the body, which also serves to create patterns that fill more of the space of the stage. In another scene, a dancer is pushed around the stage in a wheelchair by a performer with a crutch that is attached to the neck. The movement is a means of traversing the stage, but the crutch is also contraposed to the dancer's arm to indicate extension – similar in some respects to the splits and movement across space as in a grand jeté. Even when the dancer is manipulated as a puppet, the crutches are made visible in creating a pentagonal shape around the body.

In addition, the crutch is used from the opening sequence to connect the members of the ensemble to each other through the various sets of affective relations portrayed on the stage. The choreography can be quite brutal in its depiction of relations between the different the dance "subjects" or "characters," and this atmosphere of foreboding and constraint remains throughout the work. In the first scene, one of the dancers oversees the

activities of the others, verbally chastising and berating a number of the workers who continue working with the crutches or who break out into various types of shuddering, spinning, falls or hiding their faces in their hands. “It’s not all about you, Mr Anderson!” she shouts down at one worker, “Do you think I’m interested in your behaviours?” she sarcastically drawls at another whose trippy movements circle round her, “Get back to work!,” while to another she barks, “You’re not taking a break now!.” But these tirades are not delivered to all; some of those who break away from the repetitive construction and reconstruction of the crutches race around the workers or engage in dalliances with others, yet are barely acknowledged. Given this work was co-created with members of the CanDoCo company, these references to inequality are likely connections to life outside of the dance space. Nonetheless, the overseer figure is not immune to the bodies she moves amongst, as suggested in two examples in this first scene. In both instances, the overseer figure recoils from an individual then holds one arm to her chest while limping across the stage before returning to her overseer role. The first time it is unclear what has happened to initiate this movement, while the second very clearly follows the actions of a dancer who uses the crutch as a sword-like object and brings it across the overseer’s neck. In each of these examples, the crutch is foregrounded as an implement or an extension of the body only to be stripped of its actual purpose in supporting movement. Repurposing the crutch is a means of dissembling its function as a metonym of disability, and this is demonstrated from the very beginning of the performance where the dancers engage with the crutches as a collection of parts.

The Body and the Perception of Virtuosity

Experimenting with the physical form of the crutch is one means of undermining the discourse of disability, but it does not automatically orientate an audience with the dancers’ contours of feeling, in particular, a kinaesthetic experience. Watching dance is not strictly based on kinaesthetic empathy because the movements on stage are usually quite distinct from those that the audience is capable of performing, but there is nevertheless a felt relation that is based on the observer’s prereflective experience, and this is best articulated in the appreciation of virtuosity. Reason and Reynolds (2010) argue that spectators are often guided by an “admiration of virtuosity,” in which pleasure is found in seeing those movements that extended beyond the capacity of the normal body. This admiration is based on an appreciation of skill but also the the liveness of the performance and the risk of failing or falling (Reason & Reynolds, 2010, p. 58). This type of pleasure could be readily associated with disabled performance where

bodies extend themselves well beyond the particular capacities and expectations of the audience. Adam Benjamin (1998), one of the founders of CanDoCo along with Celeste Dandeker, suggests that recent dance that incorporates disabled performers is distinguished by its virtuosity and creative experimentation that is due, in part, to the very constraints posed by disability (p. 114). The choreography is often tailored to suit specific dancers with very specific abilities, which can be contrasted with the repertoire of many large ballet and dance companies which look for general body types (1998, pp. 115-17). Virtuosity is here linked to creativity because both indicate a degree of differentiation from the quotidian; as visual experimentation and corporeal expressivity. The audience sees bodies in unimagined configurations but also feels that body at the limits of their own pre-reflective experience.

In a dance performance, the perception of virtuosity is not limited to the felt perception of bodies, for all movement is also framed by the space of the stage. This is not a neutral space because it is always underpinned by the felt conditions of our own movement – high is different to low, left to right and forward to back. These differences are also underpinned by cultural values, for example where right is valued over left, high over low, etc. (Casey, 1993, p. 81). In the perception of virtuosity, the capacity to access particular dimensions of the stage can be attributed greater value than other aspects of dance, such as bodily control. The value of the lift in ballet could be contrasted with the constrained and grounded movements of Butoh. In a fMRI study of kinaesthetic empathy, Calvo-Merino, Jola, Glaser, and Haggard (2008) argued that the most common aesthetic criterion of virtuosity was a preference for movements that involve a high degree of vertical and horizontal displacement. The examination of the activation of the visual and premotor cortex “suggested that, on average, these areas of our subject’s brains preferred whole body movements, such as in jumping in place or with a significant displacement of the entire body in space (e.g., horizontal jump),” whereas those movements that invoked the least reaction, “involve mainly one limb and little displacement” (2008, p. 917). The movement that most readily comes to mind in classical ballet is the grand jeté, in which the dancer horizontally traverses the stage, elevates the body, and is seen to fully stretch the legs in mid-air. These movements can be seen as virtuosic even if the audience does not have the means to fully judge the type of skill and effort that is involved.

There is a discourse of virtuosity that is derived from both the capacity of the body to act but also for the body it extend itself within the space of the stage. This is of particular importance in the study of disabled dance, where the dancers, especially paraplegic dancers and those with lower limb amputations, often have difficulty in traversing the stage or achieving verticality

without some form of external assistance. For the paraplegic, the body can only be raised from the ground through the hands, and cannot be easily projected off the ground. The degree of visible extension is also limited because the legs cannot project themselves from the torso. Dancers with only one leg also find it difficult to move across the stage because the single leg cannot easily relinquish its role as a point of support to become a figure of extension, unless, of course, the dancer is in a hand stand position and the arms serve as both locomotion and support. This presents a particular creative problem for the choreographer, who has to work out ways of enabling the performers to traverse the stage without overly attending to limitations on movement.

In 12, Claire Cunningham addresses this in a number of ways. In particular, she draws attention away from the legs as a point of support and ensures that much of the performance, for those with and without lower leg disability, unfolds close to the horizontal ground of the stage. The performance begins with the performers sitting in a cross-legged position and symmetrically arranged across the surface of the stage, while assembling the crutches. The crutch is a signifier of disability but in this process of assemblage it adopts a series of formal relationships, in particular the oscillation between horizontal and vertical positions. This formal relationship is soon reproduced by the figures of the dancers, as a few stand and dance in an upright position, which creates vertical contrasts with those who remain sitting. The upright figures change but there is always a balance between upright and sitting figures, and what is most important about this structural logic is that in attending to the form, the audience does not attend to the fact that some of the seated figures have lower leg disabilities. It is only after the formal structure of the performance has played out for a couple of minutes that that a figure crawls and rolls across the floor without the use of his legs. While the figures sitting on the floor are still, there is no means of determining whether or not they are disabled. In a later section of the performance, a dancer with one leg moves across the floor, with one foot forward and arms providing the locomotion, and removes a chair from the set. She is highlighted by her lemon coloured dress and high key lighting, unlike in the opening scene, but by this point in the work the audience is already attuned to the horizontality of the performance. She departs the stage in a vertical position by lifting the chair before her. Although the chair is a support for her movement, the chair and dancer exit the stage together in a pas de deux, where the chair gives horizontal extension to the body. In this choreography, the formal features of dance stand before the recognition of the body as disabled, and thus also bypass the hypervisibility that is integral to a discourse of disability.

In occupying the horizontal, Cunningham's choreography not only masks the visibility of the disabled body but follows a shift away in dance from the verticality of the stage. Benjamin (1998) argues that the incorporation of disabled dancers into contemporary performances is part of a "democratization" of dance in general, with its emphasis the actual effects of gravity, rather than superhuman attempts to overcome them (p. 118). The dancer Carol Brown echoes this sentiment, arguing that the modern dance's challenge to the optical space of the stage, which is tied to the notion of the proscenium arch, is a way of emphasizing the corporeality of the body and its physical connection to the ground (1998, p. 62).

> Unlike classical ballet dancers, contemporary dancers have a strong relationship with the horizontal plane, as they explore the floor and the ground through touch, yielding weight and resistance. … Rolling, crawling, falling and stumbling put us in touch with the horizontal dimension and a mammalian, developmental corporeality through non-dominant bodily schemata such as radial geometry. (1998, p. 64)

This corporeality may be due to a connection to mammalian, or even reptilian movement, but the physicality of the horizontal body is largely due to the close relationship between the form and support. The chest, the back, the buttocks, the arms, etc. are all grounded and are therefore closer to the earth. However, in a common judgement of virtuosity, horizontality poses a problem because the prone or seated body disappears into the ground from the point of view of the stalls. It may extend beyond itself in the performance, but this is not readily accessible to an audience.

This focus on the gravity of the body and horizontality of the performance space presents a challenge to another aspect of the "admiration of virtuosity"; the degree with which the performance has "grace" and the feeling of "effortlessness" (Reason and Reynolds, 2010, p. 59). Montero (2016) argues that effortlessness is not judged only in relation to the amount of effort expended but in the capacity to produce the appearance of effortless movement in spite of the physical difficulty (p. 186). This illusion is created when the audience can appreciate the movement without being unduly distracted by the workings or limitations of the body. The appearance of effortless is part of a popular aesthetic, and thus is not readily applied to avant-garde dance, but is important insofar as it might prevent companies with disabled performers accessing the mainstream. To overcome this, the choreography has to both create situations of virtusosity but also disguise those aspects of the performance that indicate effort.

One way of doing this is through creating patterns of movement, which can draw attention away from the physical conditions of the body. In Cunningham's 12, this is largely achieved through aligning the dancer's movements irrespective of the difference of the dancers' bodies, such that the audience's gaze is drawn to patterns of movement on the stage, rather than the physicality of the individual body. In an early scene, two one-legged dancers perform together on stage in a vertical position using crutches. The absence of a limb and the role of the crutch as a form of support is clearly given at the start of the performance, unlike the opening scene, but here the disguise only occurs after the fact. As the performance proceeds, the two performers create arcs of movement with their crutches and the rotation of their bodies. The fact that they are performing similar movements means that movement is to some degree abstracted from the body. The movements form interlinked patterns that draw the eye away from the fixity of the leg or crutch as a pivot. In her theory of semblance, Langer (1957) argues that a performance produces a "virtual image" for our perception that supervenes the particular physical attributes of the dancer and the physical place of performance (p. 5). The physical or actual attributes of the dance disappear with an increased emphasis on the virtual features of the movement, such as rhythmic alterations of the "dynamic image" (p. 6). The dynamic image of movement has the capacity to supplant the static image of the disabled body, the one that stands as a culturally loaded sign at the beginning of the work, over the time of the performance. It is a process of representational erasure that draws out virtuosity and engages with the popular aesthetic of grace and flow.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have suggested that the aesthetics of dance offers a way to access the intricate, deeply entangled relations and representations of our social world and challenges our perceptions of what bodies can do. Dance's grounding in kinaesthesia opens up the possibility of shared and embodied experiences of emotion and feeling through the shaping of bodily movement. Yet, as Cresswell (2006) points out, the aesthetic forms of dance operate within specific ideas about the production of correct bodily movement. The term "disability" differentiates a dancer's body based on physical difference, and in doing so, renders this body hypervisible. This is significant to a politics of difference that challenges assumptions about lived experience and the perceptions of what these particular bodies can do. Thus we are in agreement with Cresswell's (2006) insistence on "the continuing importance of seeing bodily mobility within larger social, cultural and geographical worlds that continue to ascribe meaning to mobility" (p. 59). The significance of non-representational theory is that it enables us to conceptualise a dance performance in terms of an emergent potential, a "transforming moment

that releases from the grip of the present and opens up the future in a way that makes possible a new birth, a new beginning, a new invention of ourselves, even as it awakens dangerous memories" (Caputo, 2007, p. 19). Non-representational modes of moving can be foregrounded in terms of how they resist, transcend or stretch the existing category of disability. Thus, while the individual disabled body may visually signify as a (physical) lack, dance in the form of a non-representational event re-assembles bodies-within-movements. The basic bodily marker of physical difference cannot, of course, be fully erased, but we can nevertheless think about how the performance, or the idea of performing, operates within and against the categories of ability and disabilty.

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