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Photography, dance and the concept of punctum

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PHOTOGRAPHY, DANCE AND THE CONCEPT OF *PUNCTUM*.

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23/11/2007

Bachelor of Arts Honours (Dance)

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INTRODUCTION

...catching the underground home from the performance. Alone...tears streaming down my face... but I feel warm, uplifted, acutely sensitive. I can't pinpoint exactly what part of the performance or what idea is particularly affecting me. There is a broadening in my screen of vision, an excitement in previously unnoticed detail ... an older wisdom (Journal 2007).

“Reality” is always, already encoded, it is never *raw*” (Fiske in Underwood.2003, p5). Codification negates abstraction or loss of information. “We do not live among and relate to physical objects and events. We live among and relate to systems of signs”(Underwood.2003.p3). If communication must always occur through coded systems does this means the viewers experience is therefore a *lesser* experience, or, can an artwork defy the inevitably reductive systems society builds for itself? Can codification be bypassed to create something that is *raw*, that “exists” for the viewer.

My concern is for the medium of dance. Can the dance “exist” in such a way that the viewer experiences it as “reality”? Does the dance performance, with all its parts incorporated, have the capability to affect its audience in such a way that is at once “wounding” and revelatory? Can dance rumble the history of a body?

Roland Barthes states a Photograph (1) has the ability to “wound” or “prick” him. This instinctual, almost physical response to a photograph is the factor which, for Barthes, defines the existence of the Photograph¹. This phenomenon he names *punctum* and this is the main point of

(1) Photograph with capital “P” refers to photographs containing *punctum*.

interest in his text *Camera Lucida*. With this notion of *punctum* Barthes offers that *something* that will cut across the maze of code systems and “wound” the viewer with a mnemonic experience of their own, individual “reality”.

I henceforth propose to pursue the existence of this *punctum* within the medium of dance.

Through an exploration of the photographic medium, Barthes’ *Camera Lucida*, and my own

experience of the photographic *punctum* I hope to arrive at an understanding of the contributing factors, optimal conditions, and medium-specific traits that amount to the Photograph’s *puncta*. These findings will then be combed through the medium of dance. Through a parallel process of analysis I intend to discover the element/s exclusive to dance that testifies to its “existence”, to its essential feature or being-ness.

ROLAND BARTHES AND CAMERA LUCIDA

Camera Lucida; Reflections on Photography is a short book Roland Barthes wrote in the final year of his life. Barthes, although evidently fascinated by the medium, is an inexperienced photographer himself. His writings are concentrated in the domain of the viewer and the photograph. The text is concerned with finding the essential “genius” universal to photography, with identifying the feature that makes a photograph leap forward from the greater mass of images and essentially live.

The text is unlike much of Barthes’ main body of work on semiotics and codified systems. With *Camera Lucida*, he does not aim to discover the nature of photography through the application of a conventional system. The text is alternatively a documentation of his journey; starting from the place of “no more than a few Photographs, the ones I was sure existed *for me*” (Barthes.1981.p8) and travelling towards the place of a “*mathesis singularis*” for photography, “a formula for the fundamental feature, the universal without which there would be no Photography”

(Barthes.1981.p9), “I wanted to learn at all costs what Photography was 'in itself... I wasn't sure that Photography existed, that it had a 'genius' of its own” (Barthes.1981.p3).

Throughout *Camera Lucida* Barthes documents and analyses his personal reactions to these few Photographs. Through this unfurling of his spectator experiences he arrives at a fundamental distinction between photographs and a Photograph, a division that defines for him the “genius” of photography. He describes feeling impartial to or unaffected by the majority of photographs he views. Whilst he may take an interest in the spectacle's information, the commitment is self motivated and unconcerned. In comparison he describes the occasion where the wash of photograph is *pierced* or *broken* by a chance detail which voluntarily attacks the passive viewer. It is this “piercing” phenomenon or *punctum*; that is the definitive feature of photography for Barthes. It is in the distinction between these spectator experiences that Barthes centers his investigation.

The photographs which in the first case inspire a general, but dispassionate interest are said to contain the element of *studium*. *Studium* is the elements which are understandable, informative and appealing to the viewer's logic. “The *studium* is that very wide field of unconcerned desire, of various interests, of inconsequential taste...(these photographs) please or displease me with out pricking me”(Barthes1981.p27). The *punctum*, however, is the element which will break or puncture the *studium*. “This time it is not I who seek it out, this element which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me”(Barthes p.26). Barthes chose this Latin word *punctum* because it means a mark made by a pointed instrument and also refers to the notion of punctuation.

“*Punctum* is also; sting peck, cut little hole and also a cast of the dice. A photograph's *punctum* is that accident which pricks me, but also bruises me is poignant to me”(Barthes.1981.p27).

These physical, tangible sensations to which the word *punctum* refers encapsulates the way in which the element of *punctum* bypasses logical thought patterns and conscious comprehension to affect the viewer at a deeper, bodily centre.

“Wordless and disorderly the punctum creates a cognitive space and permits the immediate, inexpressible identification between the photographic subject and the viewer” (Hoft-March in Gane.2004, p274). The *punctum* is often a minute detail . The existence of *punctum* in a photograph is highly subjective and ultimately viewer dependent. “Punctum is an addition: it is what I add to the photograph and what is nonetheless already there” (Barthes. 1981, p55).

Punctum as Barthes intended it, is exclusive to the photographic medium, it exists as the feature that is definitive of photography. My challenge to find the element of *punctum* in dance therefore contradicts the term’s very existence. I believe there is however something to be learned for dance, for choreography from what Barthes discovers in *Camera Lucida*. Perhaps it is not *punctum* (not as Barthes conceived it), but rather a parallel phenomena, different in form and methodology, with a function that replicates that of *punctum*. In order to discover how a reflective notion may exist for dance I think it is first necessary to work backwards, to examine photography as a model of practice to find its hooks; the points, specific to the in the photographic communication process, upon which the notion of *punctum* relies.

THE PHOTOGRAPH

The photograph is a curious phenomenon. It resists categorization and inspires its own set of exclusive rules. The nature of photographic communication has attracted great interest and debate throughout the twentieth century in regards to photography’s semiotic structure, its place as an art, and its validity as a language. To examine the photographic medium in pursuit of the explicit properties which foster *punctum*, I will look at these characteristics; Trace, Mutation, Time and Space, The Viewer and Within a Coded Reality.

TRACE ELEMENTS

The property most exclusive to the photographic medium is the closeness between the sign and the referent. The photograph is connected to the object, to the world it signifies in a relationship unlike other art forms.

“Saussure saw language as being an ordered system of signs whose meanings are arrived at

arbitrarily by a cultural convention, because that group agrees that that particular sequence is linked to that particular concept" (Underwood.2003, p6). The element of arbitrariness is diminished in case of photography. Unlike verbal language where convention or society and its history joins sign and signified, the photograph is a derivation that retains trace elements of the signified object. The photons, light units, emitted by the object, react with the film's emulsion, creating a chemical imprint of the object, which is further reacted upon to create the photographic print.

The absence of a coded system in this phase of the communicative system has led to much debate on photography's validity as a language. A semiologist of recent times, Mandolo, refers to the photograph as a "hard icon", the term he also uses to describe X-rays, the "acoustic image" generated by an ultrasound, hand impressions on cave walls and thermo-grams (Sonesson.1989, p25). Also for Dubois "the photograph should be compared to such phenomena as smoke, dust and ruins, as well as to sperm and sunburn, and to a shadow and cicatrices" (Sonesson.1989, p63). In recognizing the photograph as a "trace", as a residue or evidence of what came before it, we recognize a fundamental difference between photography's communication model and that of a conventional language.

"...for there to be a sign there must be a mark; deprived of a principle of marking, photographs are signs which don't "take", which "turn", as milk does. Whatever it grants to vision and whatever its manner, a photograph is always invisible: it is not it that we see. In short, the referent adheres" (Barthes.1981, p6).

Thus the photographic sign is not a separate entity to the referent in the way in that the *living dog* is a separate entity to the *written word dog*, whose only connection is conventional. The photograph cannot come to be without the referent. It is the referent derived or existing in a transformed state.

MUTATION

Viewing a photograph is a very different experience to viewing the photographed.

A consideration of the viewers experience highlights the inevitably reductive or mutative nature of this communication system. The photograph only deals with visual information, thus the sound, smell, taste and feel of the experience is left behind. The camera is also a much simpler

mechanism than the human eye. From the photographed event to the photographic print information or *authenticity* is progressively lost.

“A photograph shows us “what we would have seen” at a certain moment in time from a certain vantage point if we kept our head immobile and closed one eye and if we saw with the equivalent of a 1500mm or 24mm lens” (Snyder & Allen in Sonsson.1989, p73).

The writings of both Gubern and Ramirez identify how and where of reduction or mutation occurs. These include: *Abolition of the third dimension with the possibility of modifying perspective*, *Delimitation of space through the frame (cropping)* and *The exclusion of movement* (Sonsson.1989, p45-46). Consider the token tourist photograph of a person positioned to appear to support The Leaning Tower of Pizza, or the photograph of a capsicum framed so that its identity is unrecognisable but conjures figurative curves, or, in the case of movement exclusion; a body suspended mid-air snapped during a fall. These are each mutative factors which separate the world and the photograph. When harnessed with wit or creativity this room for intervention can in fact add rather than subtract from the photograph.

“...it is the very reductionism of the photograph, together with its’ frame, which, by introducing a principle of pertinence makes us see features which had escaped our notice in the motive itself”(Sonesson.1989, p68).

Further information is sacrificed by both the analogue and digital processes of rendering the projected light rays. Vanlier believes that even the analogue processes mildly imitates digitalization “that is to say (the photograph) may be analyzed as a series of choices between points which are blackened and which are not”. We must also account for post-production alteration. In the case of the analogue process the developer controls lighting, contrast, hue, saturation and framing in the case of digital editing or post production near endless manipulations are possible.

It henceforth may be seen that as the photograph travels toward the viewer its integrity to the referent splays. The system which begins as linear and defined, loosens with accumulative mutations, eventually fanning out to connect with the individual viewer.

SPACE AND TIME

Space becomes integral in the absence of time. Yet time and the photographs defiance of its passing, are an immensely powerful elements of the medium.

Photography is often described as “freezing” time, but the photograph is in truth a preservation of passing time. All that occurs whilst the camera’s shutter is open is recorded. Unlike film however it is recorded over the top of itself on the one piece of film, hence the ghost like effect of motion- blur. It is in the object of the photograph / film that time is still. The two dimensional space is stationary, as the world around rushes forward. For Barthes the Photographs defiance of time is “the return of the dead”. The moment recorded is in that instant passed and never to be repeated; essentially “dead”, “...the Photograph carries its referent with itself, both are affected by the same amorous or funereal immobility, at the heart of the moving world” (Barthes.1981, p6). It is with this property that the photograph brings the past into the present and into the future. "What the photograph reproduces to infinity has occurred only once"(Barthes.1981, p6). Consequently photography has significant responsibility in connecting society to its history. The absence of passing time in the Photograph allows the viewer to experience the fraction of time in unlimited time. “In the moment and flow and flux of everyday life, the photograph preserves what the eye might otherwise not capture....The observer of the photograph can manipulate time, not simply look at a moment torn from a continuum”(Burnett.1991, p.3). As Burnett also identifies the narrowness of the time fraction allows the Photograph to isolate a point, which in a continuum of points remains insignificant, forgettable, but when framed solo becomes interestingly de-contextualised.

With this abolition of sequential chronology, the element of space becomes integral. It is with space that the photographic Spectator interacts. For Peter Wollen in his comparisons of film and photography, Photography is described as “spatial rather than temporal... simultaneous rather than consecutive” (Wollen in Wells.2003, p76). The absence of time negates a spatial tension, a war for the viewer’s attention. The Photograph, served in its entirety at once, has little consideration for the viewer’s inability to digest entree, main and dessert simultaneously. Spatial factors of composition, juxtaposition, negative space, asymmetry and weight become consequently imperative as they function to direct the viewer’s attention and create a more progressive, digestible experience. It therefore becomes apparent that the spatial mechanisms of the still, photographic object have the ability to divide and assign time, and thus manipulate the viewer’s experiences of time.

THE VIEWER

The viewer is integral in any communication system. The viewer like the photograph is body of information. Barthes recognises the viewer's body; its individual history, its socially formed values, and its perception of itself with the term *heautoscopy*. Communication is the meeting of the *heautoscopy* and the Photograph. Burnett designates the phenomena of the *image* as the site of this meeting, as the place of comprehension. He says "...the (image) is the result of an act of consciousness... a product of perception and thought"(Burnett.2007, p2). The image essentially exists in the cognitive space of the individual viewer, not in the two dimensional frame of the photograph, hence Barthes statement "the photograph is always invisible; it is not it that we see" (Barthes.1981, p33). This infers that the light ray transmitted information from the Photograph is in a sense enveloped by the *heautoscopy* upon its arrival in the realm of the *image*. The image is inevitably tainted, weighted and transformed by the perception of the individual. The *image*, and therefore the photograph is unfixed. From this "instability of meaning" (the concept at the heart of postmodernism) the photograph may be viewed as a liquid structure, a phenomena which is constantly changing, transforming and reforming for the individual viewer.

WITHIN A CODED REALITY

Fiske states "reality is always encoded... There is no universal, objective way of perceiving and making sense of reality. What passes for reality in any culture is the product of the cultures codes, so reality' is always, already encoded, it is never raw" (Fiske in Underwood.2003, p4-5). This is to admit that we have no way of perceiving the world without sign-systems. Because we (the viewer) exist within the sign system created by our society, an unbiased view of the world becomes impossible. Barthes is of the belief that photography, at least, in its initial "trace phase" is un-codified. "Since every photograph is contingent (and thereby outside of meaning), Photography cannot signify" (Sonesson,1989, p14). This may be true if the subject matter and the photograph existed in a vacuum free of spectators. However, as Fiske said, this "raw" state is

impossible and the Photograph within society will inevitably signify.

Barthes describes a leveled system of signification in an earlier text “the Rhetoric of the Image”.

The photograph operating at the initial level is *denotative*; the viewer makes a visual connection between the photograph and the world. This is coded in that our society presumes and thus

searches for the connection. Would a cave man make the same connection between photograph

and world? Once this initial level of comprehension occurs an unavoidable *connotative* layer of signification occurs. The sign established by the first layer now operates as the signifier which

then signifies in a broader conceptual realm, attaching and associating the initial referent to

external circles of information and essentially codifying the Photograph (Sonesson.1989, p16).

In Camera Lucida Barthes describes this codification as the Photograph “assuming a mask” and

connects it to concept of “myth”. Barthes suggests that society pulls upon stereotypes and

generalisations (codified systems) because they “mistrust pure meaning” or are scared of its

“acuteness”(Barthes.1981, p33). The viewer is often unfamiliar with the photographed person or

situation and therefore draws upon more general, familiar icons to create a meaning beyond what

they see. The icons recognised and the ideas to which the viewer attaches them are ruled by the

social structure inside of which they live. Codes express and support the social organisation of

the culture that produced them.

BARTHES'S PUNCTUM

Deconstructing the nature of photographic communication reveals that whilst the medium

contains properties that elevate it beyond the confines of conventional language, it inevitably

exists within the organism that is society. To live it must function within the structures of this

organism and thus must succumb to the encoded airways through which it breathes. What

Barthes offers with *punctum* is however an sense of Fiske’s “raw reality”, an un-coded,

unreduced experience. In examining the photographs which Barthes perceives punctum in,

against the frame of this deconstruction, I intend to sketch the key to the *puncta's* existence. Due

to the highly subjective nature of this field I feel my analysis’s of what trigger’s *punctum* for

Barthes is inadequate. Therefore I will also analyse (with the intention of identifying optimal

conditions rather than searching for a formula) photographs which have affected me in such a

way that I find them to have the element of *punctum*.

The first photograph Barthes discusses as truly “existing” for him is Koen Wessing’s *Nicaragua* (1979).

“I was glancing through an illustrated magazine. A photograph made me pause. Nothing very extraordinary: the photographic banality of rebellion in Nicaragua: a ruined street, two helmeted soldiers on patrol; behind them two nuns. Did this photograph please me? Interest me? Intrigue me? Not even. Simply it existed (for me)” (Barthes.1981, p23).

The punctum is a result of “...the co-presence of two discontinuous elements (the two nuns and the two soldiers), heterogeneous in that they did not belong to the same world” (Barthes.1981, p23). It would consequently seem simple to identify the technique of juxta-positioning as a tool for creating *puncta*. However Barthes finds this “duality” to be a common thread in much of Wessing’s work, photographs which for him disappear into the realm of *studium*. He also describes a photograph by Bruce Gilden which portrays a nun and some drag queens (New Orleans 1973), “the deliberate contrast produces no effect on me” (Barthes.1981, p42) “The overall casualty explains the presence of the 'detail'. From my spectators view point the detail is offered by chance and for nothing”(Barthes.1981, p42). the detail of the *punctum* is therefore not a single part of the photograph, but rather the overall "casual" tone with which something extraordinary (the co-existence of nun and soldier) is presented. The *punctum* of this photograph consequently lies in the absence of the photographer. The "trace" property of the photograph is overriding the photograph itself and the mutation undergone so that it "exists" unquestionably for the viewer.

“The *studium* allows me to discover the Operator, to experience his intentions...It is as if I have to read the Photographers myths... fraternizing with them but not quite believing them”(Barthes.1981, p26). Photographs that carry an awareness of the photographer and his intended “myth” are devoid of *punctum*, because the photographer obstructs the viewer’s reality. In the case of *punctum* the viewer does not seek to comprehend, to see the “right” reality, or, to

experience what the photographer's experience. Photographs with *punctum* are alive and "true" for their viewer, with no consideration of an alternative reality.

The occurrence of *punctum* in Wessing's Nicaragua strongly rests on the photographs "trace element". The tightness with the original event is fundamental to the viewer's disregard of mutation and their "forgetting" of the existence of the photographer. The medium of cinema also contains this key property of trace elements. The continuum of a film however fails to isolate a precise fraction of time. The "prick" for Barthes is the co-existence of the two such extreme worlds, separate, yet unified by the singular space and time of the photograph. This property of time, this isolating of a precise fraction is thus an integral element of the Photograph's "genius".

A second photograph in which Barthes discovers *punctum* is A. Kertesz's *The Violinist's Tune*. *Abony, Hungary*. The photograph:

"...shows a blind gypsy violinist being led by a boy...What I see is the dirt road; its texture gives me the certainty of being in Central Europe; I perceive the referent (here the photograph really transcends itself: is this not the sole proof of its art? To annihilate itself as medium, to be no longer a sign but the thing itself?), I recognise with my whole body the straggling villages I passed through on my long ago travels in Hungary and Romania" (Barthes.1981, p45).

"A detail overwhelms the entirety of my reading; it is an intense mutation of my interest, a fulguration. By the mark of something, the photograph is no longer 'anything whatever'. This something has provoked a tiny shock, a satori, the passage of a void (it is of no importance that its referent is insignificant)" (Barthes.1981, p46). In this case Barthes describes that he is seeing with a "thinking eye" which makes him "add" something to the photograph. The detail, the texture of the dirt, upon contact with Barthes' *heautoscopy* reacts with a poignant memory. The image in the cognitive space slides between that which he sees in front of him in the photograph and the stored images of the memory. The photograph, devoid of sound, smell, taste and touch, creates the absent sensory information from the memory triggered by the visual sensors, giving Barthes his "certainty being there" as opposed to remembering.

Because of this transformative detail, is the remainder of the photograph needed for it to have *punctum*? Would Barthes if he came across a similar patch of dirt in real life be struck by the

same phenomena of transportation? Perhaps, but I believe the context of the detail supports the occurrence of *punctum*. The image contains definite codes: the people, their dress, their actions, their surroundings, all signify a place, time and culture. It is the detail of the road which takes Barthes' experience into the realm of the personal and that of an individually *raw* reality, but without the surrounding codes it is uncertain that the detail would alone achieve *punctum*.

This photograph thus defines the element of *punctum* as intensely viewer dependent. The photographs mutative and codified properties undeniably move the photograph away from the referent, from the initial "real". The *puncta* is a *new reality*, wholly specific to and owned by the viewer. Yes, in response to Fiske's impossible *raw* reality, the viewer also lives within this greater organism, and is thus manipulated by its cultural codes and ideologies so this "new reality" does not achieve the term "raw" as Fiske intended it. Whilst a universal reality that is devoid of codified weightings, may be impossible, the intensity with which Barthes describes his *punctum* experiences, highlights the conception that reality is an individual experience and all the more valuable and "real" because of it.

IDENTIFYING PUNCTUM

My process for selecting photographs from which to discuss *punctum*, defined the notion itself. Whilst I was sure I had experienced a phenomenon that echoed what Barthes described, my search for photographs that may have *punctum* failed. I instead found myself having to re-find photographs which I already knew, that had affected me in such a way they were already etched into my memory. Upon re-finding them however I was jolted by how different they were to that image I had carried with me.

One of these photographs is Nan Goldin's *Guido watching the World Cup, Brides-les-Bains, France, 2002*. Unlike Barthes, I am unable to refine the *punctum* to a single specific detail, but in relaying what hits me I hope to clarify the trigger point. The room is for me a cold, green unwelcoming void, with pointed, tightly, tucked corners and motel patterns. The energy sucked from the space is channeled into the fierce linear vortex between the TV and the person. His entire body is contorted by the energy line, by the sucking power of the TV. It is this detail

which had remained with me. It is connected in some sort of man-sport -TV lineage that existed within me, a lifetime of “Don’t walk in front of the TV while the footballs on!” lineage. What resonates is a feeling of familiarity, of camaraderie with the photograph, a more defined self. Strangely in coming back to the photograph I am now struck by the window and the beautiful sunny day rendering it almost entirely white. I realise the *punctum* which was at first incomprehensible is actually a sadness, no, an impending doom, a nagging guilt that I am not outside being a part of the rest of the world on this beautiful day. This exists for me. The sensation is not a reflective one confined within my head, but an encompassing, felt experience.

Another photograph in which I have identified *punctum* is Fiona Fleurie’s *Ben with Eva*, *Australia*, 2006. It is something of duality, the formidable tattooed arm encasing the soft fragile bundle. I find there exists two knots of tension that pull at the rest of the photograph. They are the vein protruding from the subjects hand and his fiercely pursed lips. I experience in my body a charge, an aching from adoring something so extremely that the only response my body knows is an overwhelming need to crush it to me and almost inflict it with pain. It is these points of exposed need which pierce me. The angelic softness of the contours of the of the baby’s skin I find poignant for the way in which they oppose and thus trigger the fierce knots of tension. Memories emerge for me, but they slip and slide as images and sounds and none are specific or fixed. The physical response I experience is instantaneous and resounds.

The third photograph I have selected is Eugene Richards photograph from “the wore-out farm series.” I don’t feel a sense of ownership for the photo, in the sense that I have for the past two examples. Nonetheless the photograph leaps from its page and affects me, but it is superior, it is not mine. It is definitely the suspended silhouette of the gun and the meat- hooks that wound me. I know they must exist but there is no logic as to how. They hang, haunting, somewhere inside or behind the banality which is the car. I shift my focus to the background in search of the answer, but I also am left hanging, curious but simultaneously tentative, afraid of the unknown. The photograph exists for me, I do not question its reality, but I am left wanting more.

Each case of photographic *punctum* is extremely different and depends wholly upon its own unique equation of world – photograph - viewer interaction. The *punctum*, by nature defies

logical analysis, and to attempt to define it through properties is difficult. However in this analysis there is evidence of all of the identified photographic properties working in each photograph at varying intensities. The ultimate union of the viewer and the world is the fundamental key to the occurrence of *punctum*. The unification is a consequence of the “traces” power to annihilate the existence of the photograph and the photographer, and its ability to act as a catalyst between the world and the viewer. The photograph that traces its referent in such a way has the potential to wound or inflict upon its viewer the sensation of *punctum*.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS

At this point I would like to offer an alternative viewpoint of the system which cultivates *punctum*. Our dealings thus far been primarily driven by the experience of the viewer, due to the highly subjective and viewer dependant nature of *punctum*. Nevertheless I feel a perspective, informed by my practice as a photographer (*the operator*) may have something interesting if not valuable to bring to the investigation of *punctum*. In discussing the role of the photographer and my experience in that role, I seek to pinpoint that which moves the photographer to take a shot, and what ramifications this has for *punctum*.

The photographer cannot aim to create *punctum*, nor can they design or control its existence. One of Barthes’ main specifications is that any awareness of the photographer or his intention disintegrates *punctum*. Yet the practice of the photographer is not a wholly random act. There is an explicit something that motivates the photographer to photograph, a visual sensitivity for the world around them (inevitably informed by their past practice) which moves them to select to isolate a particular point or detail over any other.

In examining my own practice I do not intend to define what does and does not equate to *punctum* but to relay that which moves me to photograph. There are no formalized tools or technical structures to which I adhere but rather an instinctual attraction to a piece of the world around me.

One thing that I am interested in or attracted to photographing is the place in-between important points. The human brain is programmed to save and recall the largest or most spectacular

moments from a continuum and what happens in-between, on the way to these important points is often discarded or lost. To photograph these important points means the photographer is essentially photographing what he or she anticipates, or has already seen elsewhere and the result is pre-conceived or designed. This process often produces exquisite photographs, but photographs that are of a genre that pleases and that comforts logical thought processes, as opposed to puncturing or dislodging them. I have found photographing the space in-between points interesting because it catches the subject in places that are often considered unusual or unfamiliar, because the brain normally skims over these parts.

For example in "El in Bath" the subject is neither in, nor out, she is on her way somewhere. It is a moment that is not visible in real time. This approach creates the element of intrigue or curiosity that results from seeing something we do not understand.

I have also found there to be a higher intensity of truthfulness, or believability in this type of shooting. Because the subject has its own purpose, is focused on making it from point A to point B, they have little concern for the photographer, and thus appear as unposed. Only if the viewer is convinced the subject is unaware of the photographer, will the viewer also be able to forget his presence and to ultimately enter into the world of the photograph. One of the clearest examples of this is a photograph I took when I was myself unaware of the photograph being taken. In "Green Dress", I had paused to adjust the light meter and took the particular photograph just to check the lighting conditions. The subject, oblivious to the camera was caught in the act of adjusting her dress, preparing to be photographed. Although subtle there is a definition to the posture of the body that testifies to this, it makes me (as the viewer) feel like an intruder. I find the effect a potently honest and to be clear evidence of how diminishing the presence photographer creates a more powerful experience for the viewer.

Another point of interest for me is to photograph the main or important points, but in such a way that compositionally they are inferred unimportant. For example "Luke" places the main body at the edge of the frame, so that only a fragment of the point of interest is visible. In terms of composition the wall is structurally the centre of importance. This way of photographing is in a sense playing with the viewer's desire, because what one wants to look at, they cannot.. The large amount of negative space somehow makes the cropped body of greater intrigue, and yet it remains allusive. I think it is this allusiveness that excites me about this way of photographing.

By fragmenting subject matter the viewer is forced to create their own version of the rest of the picture and thus to engage their *heautoscopy*, essentially to make the photograph their own.

I have a similar attraction to photographing reflective surfaces: mirrors, windows etc, such as that seen in "Tuesday 25th". The phenomena of seeing something behind because it is reflected in a mirror in front, is an imperatively three-dimensional occurrence. To reduce this to the two dimensions of the photograph creates a trick of perspective that I am intrigued by. There is a displacement of surfaces, a lot like an M.C. Escher print, where that which should be flat and continuous has depth and volume. This way of photographing is to take advantage of the mutative property of the photograph to extend it beyond the realm of the "real" world.

Something that has also dominated my photography recently is extreme close-up photography.

By photographing only a portion of a subject at close range the focus is brought to the texture and intricate detail of the subject, as opposed to its overall form. This may be seen in

"Maylands" and "545.49". Using the camera in this way brings attention to the surfaces, textures and details that surround us constantly, but in enlarging them gives them the value of a complete or whole object, creating a displaced, or previously unnoticed view of the world.

These ways of photographing cannot independently be responsible for creating a photograph's *punctum*. What they are effective in is dislocating the viewer's ordinary seeing mechanisms so that the viewer must become a more active agent in the process. The curiosity, or confusion triggered is reflective of *punctum*, but fundamentally different. The photographer's treatment of the world, is unique and specific to the set of conditions present in the individual case. It is almost, an improvised performance, (particularly that outside the studio), because one can only prepare to a limited degree and the rest is a trust that in the moment you will, reduce the world with the camera, in a way that is intriguing and that may present a new perspective or enlightenment..

The reflection on practice has revealed the photographers manipulation of the gap between the world and photograph, (the property of mutation) is also a powerful factor capable of affecting the occurrence of *punctum*.

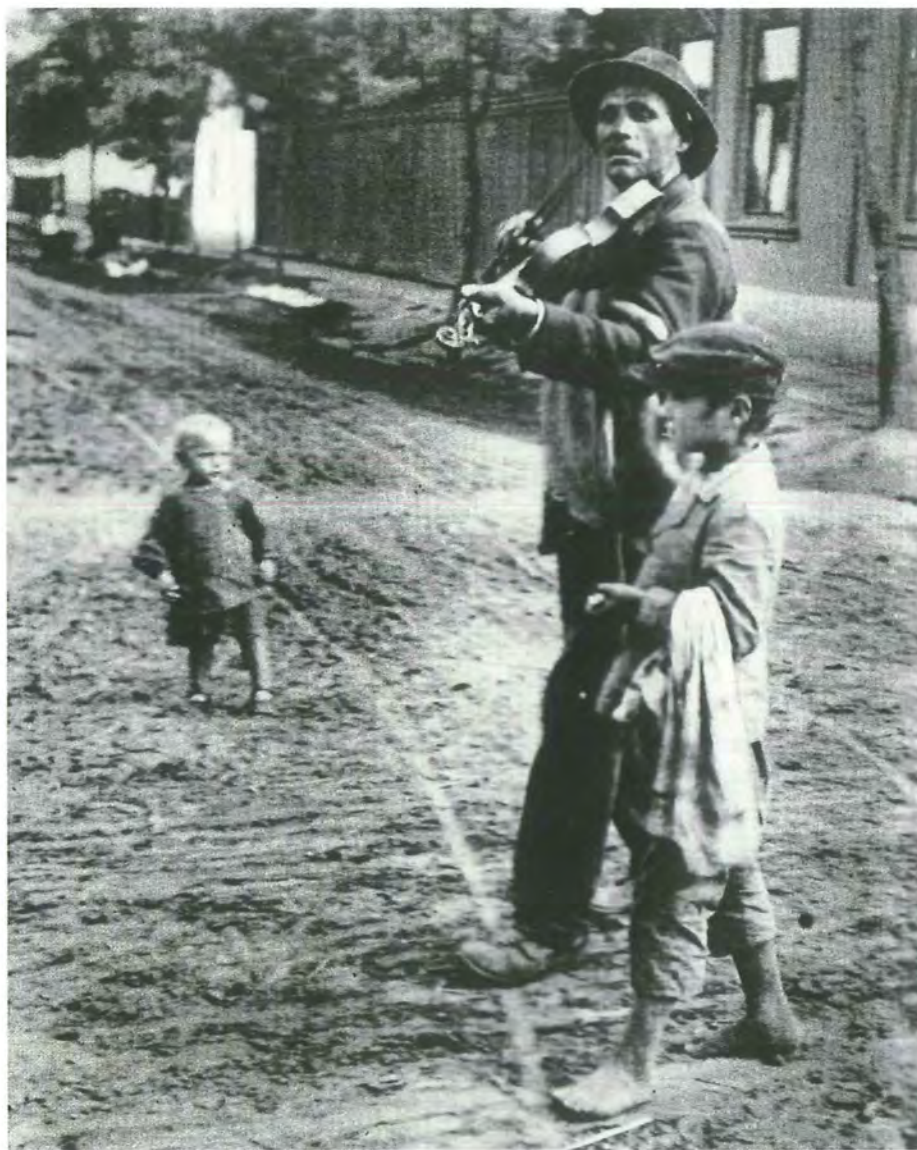
The distinctive immobile nature of the photographic time and space is another denominator underlying and key to the photographs ability to wound. The *punctum*'s bypassing of the viewers

logic, is an instantaneous phenomena inherently linked to the timeless, compact nature of the photograph. The majority of *puncta* examples are centered on the human experience. Thus the photographs ability to capture a sense of humanness is also pivotal to its piercing attribute and even though we seek with *punctum* a raw un-codified reality, that persistence of the code, and the connotations it bring retains an imperative role in many instances.

The overarching factor inevitable in all occurrences of *punctum* is the viewer's ownership of the phenomena. So whilst it is identifiable that the photographers practice, time, trace, space, mutation, and code are all integral, in varying ratios, the concept as a whole is implicitly viewer dependant. The subjective nature negates that the concept of *punctum* cannot be wholly pinned to a particular property or set of properties specific to the photograph. Instead we find it is the way in which the properties interact; the specific set of relationships, existing between the varying phases of the system, that equates to *punctum*. Thus the photograph may be seen as a schemata that upon contact with a certain viewer (and their internal schemata) balances in such a way that a passage way is opened through which *punctum* is fired.



KOEN WESSING, *Nicaragua*. 1979



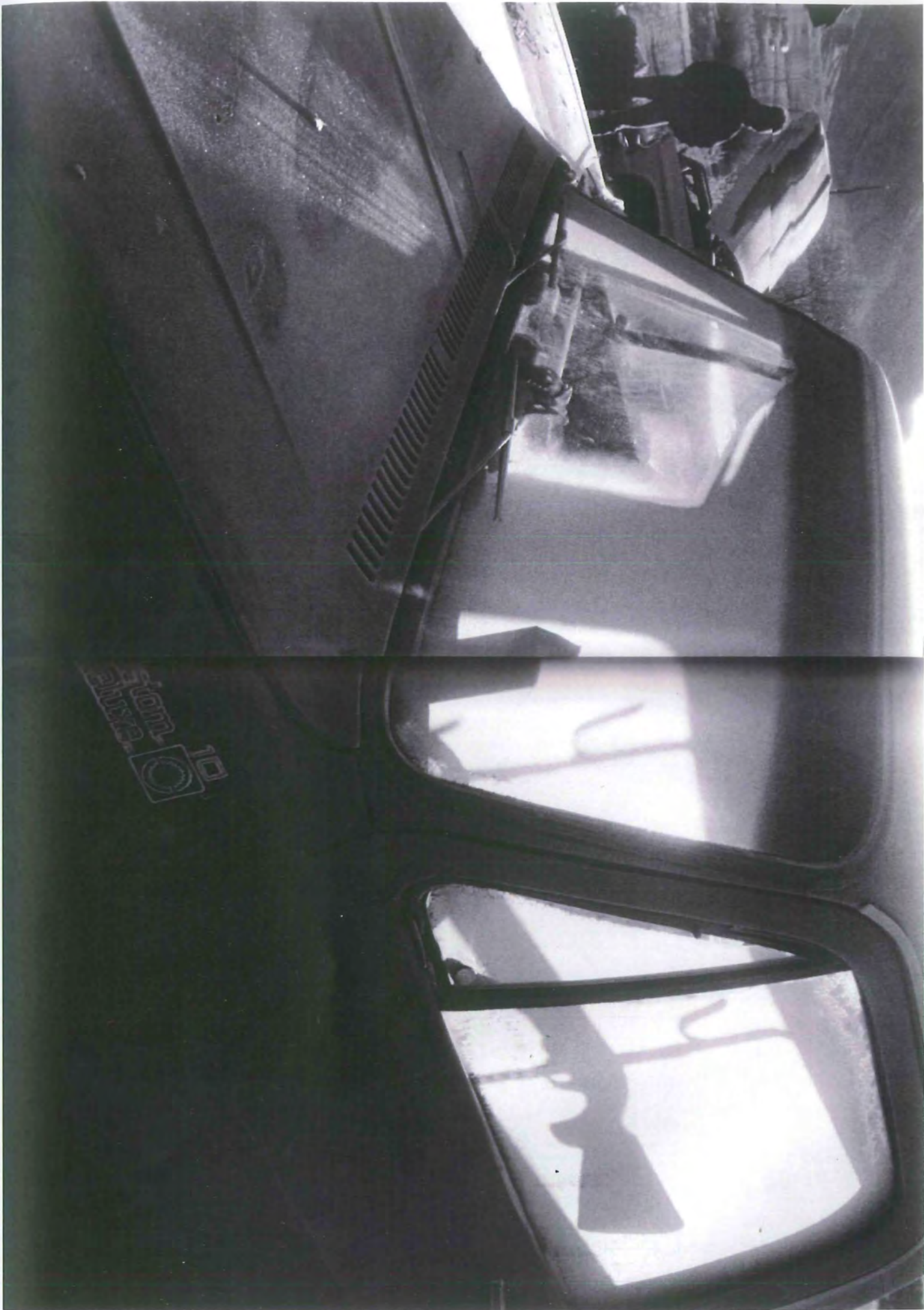
A. KERTESZ: *The Violinist's Tune*. 1921

NAN GOLDIN: Guido watching the World Cup, 2002.





FIONA FLEURIE: *Ben and Eva*. 2006



EUGENE RICHARDS: The wore-out farm series. 1995



RHIANNON NEWTON: *El in Bath*. 2007

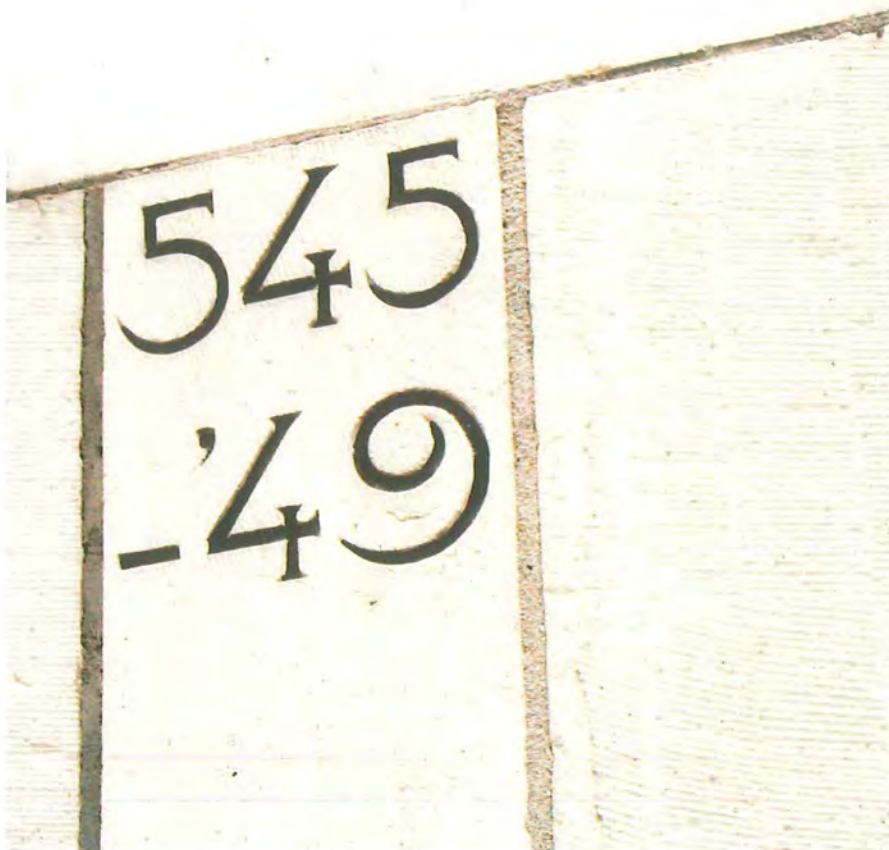


RHIANNON NEWTON: *Tuesday 25th. 2007*



RHIANNON NEWTON: *Luke. 2007*





RHIANNON NEWTON: 545.49.2007



RHIANNON NEWTON: Pipe. 2007



RHIANNON NEWTON: Maylands, 2007

THE DANCE

TRACE

The trace property of photography deals with how the photograph is linked to the world.

The connection between the world and the dance is a more complex relationship dealing with greater degrees of abstraction. Analysed like a photograph, the dance first exists at the denotative, first level of signification, where the dancer circling her arm is simply a person in a space circling their arm. What exists is not transformed or residual (as the photograph is), but is in fact a part of the world designated to be dance. The human being (the dancer), most objects (props) and all natural sound (voice and pedestrian sounds) are continuous from the world to the dance. This is different from the “trace” nature of photography, because the object from the world does not undergo a transformation of state.

The dance imitating the world, referring beyond itself, may be seen to work at Barthes second level of signification, that of the connotative realm. Here a qualitative fragment of the external world extends into the current and appeals to code and convention to be understood. The dancer moving their arm in a circle is here referring the hand of a clock. There is a flimsy element of “trace”, the shape and perhaps the motion, but all other information is discarded. Thus in the case of the dance referring beyond itself the gap between the world and the sign is great, particularly in comparison to the photograph.

MUTATION

The dance, unlike the photograph, does not begin with a solid referent. The dance essentially begins with the choreographer, the dancers and the studio space (plus any objects and sound that may come to play in this early phase) and grows from the interaction of these elements. The dancers and the choreographer carry with them a history, an experience of the world which is inevitably channeled into this space and which feeds both the content and structure of the dance.

In the formation of a photograph information from the source is progressively lost. There is an inevitable mutation, or degree of abstraction throughout the process. Dance inherently involves abstraction. In examining how a movement links to something from the world, we see that abstraction is unavoidable. To connect movement and world a dancer can focus on particular qualitative aspects of the subject, such as, its energy, its texture, its shape or its weight. In imitating a bouncing ball the dancer may identify the vertical trajectory, the acceleration and gradual decrease in size. The distinctive gap between the actual signifier and the sign that occurs in the dancer's body defines movement as fundamentally abstract. The language of movement is therefore an open sign system, as it has no rigid reference structure in which the meanings of its signs are consensually agreed upon

It is also necessary to recognize how the language of gesture has informed movement and its meaning. Bodily language or gesture, is considered by some theorists to be a coded communication system that one learns from birth. "Gestures are body movements and are part of an everyday language associated with mundane activities and functions. Onstage, gestures gain an aesthetic function; they become stylized and even technically shaped" (Fernandes.2001, p7). Communication in dance can thus be considered to act through this system and to invoke meaning through the culturally understood language of gesture. Laban was alternatively of the belief that every man has an individual internal rhythm and that natural, expressive movement patterns are a realisation of this internal flow". Consequently the inherently individual nature of movement and the instability of the gestures meaning (for reasons of cultural diversity), means the language of the human body may be noted as a loosely coded system and significantly abstracted.

Unlike the specific "trace" connection between the photograph and the subject, the choreographic journey is guided by the perception of the individual dancers and the choreographer. The factor of *heautoscopy* and the variability it negates, is therefore present from the very beginning of the dance communication system. It was often the Photograph's specificity that facilitated Barthes experience of *punctum*. However, the very different and inherently abstract way in which the dance traces the world creates a more open system that places more emphasis on the role of the viewer.

TIME AND SPACE

The dance performance occurs in time. This breadth of time brings into play elements of chronology, rhythm and progression. The meaning of any point in the dance is inseparably informed by the recent past, and will, in turn, influence the future of the dance.

The dance occurs in three-dimensional space. The theatre space carries particular codes which displace it from the surrounding world. The viewer understands upon entering the theatre that they are entering any time period or place.

The audience and the dance live together in the one time and space. The dance does not exist beyond this time and space. It is essentially temporal.

John Dewey in *Art as Experience* discusses art and its communication as “The Live Creature”. He views art as the product of interaction between the living organism and its environment, an instantaneous occurrence in which energies and materials are coded, transmitted and decoded. The dance actuality therefore encompasses all that exists within the time and space. According to Vermeij’s *A Choreological Perspective of Choreography* (2005) the dance consists of the movement, the setting, the sound and the persons. The movement recognizes the vaguely coded yet powerfully tangible language of dance we have discussed. Setting refers to the space in which the interaction occurs, recognizing, for example, that a small intimate space has different connotations to those of an outside, site specific space. Sound incorporates the significance of music in a work and also involves a consideration of environmental sounds and voice. A consideration of the people, involves an examination of how all the people present (viewers and performers) interact and affect meaning. The dancer forms a large part of the substance with which the audience interacts and thus the history they carry with them, as well as their physicality, gender and appearance is inevitably influential.

It is at the convergence of all its facets that the “organism lives”. Therefore it is seen that the dance’s unity lies not in its origin but in its destination.

THE VIEWER

The viewer remains a constant, non variable factor from photography to dance.

The viewer is an integral part of the dance event and the dance and audience exist in a two-way relationship of dynamic exchange. The viewer does not just receive they also project a response, which in turn influences the experience as a whole.

As with the photograph, the meaning and significance of the dance is viewer dependent. The dance exists and becomes meaningful when it meets the viewer's frame of reference, their *heautoscopy*. The unity between dance and viewer negated by the properties of time and space makes these points of comprehension almost simultaneous with the event that provokes.

However, unlike the photograph, it does not allow time for reflection, for as the instance occurs it has passed, to be reflective would be to miss the *present* dance.

Also the information penetrating the viewer is no longer just that of the visual spectre. Kinetics, weight speed, dynamic texture, also comes into play, as does sound information. This arms the dance with a broader, more sensually diverse range of ammunition to trigger *punctum*, as it attacks the bodies history of sound and movement experiences and as well as just visual its memory.

The degree of abstraction that occurs earlier on in the process allows the viewer to "add" more. The looseness of the movement code opens it to a broader scope of signification, thus arming the viewer with more power, creating greater opportunity for the dance to hit points within the *heautoscopy*.

SUMMARY

Cross applying the structure used to deconstruct the nature of the photographic communication system with that of dance reveals the fundamental differences and similarities between the two disciplines. These are summarised in the table below:

	PHOTOGRAPHY	DANCE
TRACE	Close, derivative relationship between world and sign.	Large gap between the world and the sign, except if the dance is considered as being the world.
MUTATION	Progressively reductive from world to sign.	Movement language inevitably abstract. Mutation occurs throughout entire system
TIME	Record of a fraction time. Time does not pass within frame.	Time passes, but the dance does not exist outside the time of the performance.
SPACE	Compact, two dimensional, separate spatial entity to the viewer, does not change or evolve.	Three dimensional, place of convergence of all parts, shared by the dance and the audience.
VIEWER	<i>Heautoscopy</i> . Visual info triggers other sensors, the site of the <i>Image</i>	<i>Heautoscopy</i> . Receives movement, sound and visual info. Human relating to human. Site of meaning.
CODE	Trace elements considered un-codified, however inseparable from coded, connotations.	Largely appeals to code.

The semiotics of the photography and dance become coherent in the latter phase of the deconstruction. The viewer is essentially a common, invariable factor. This factor is slightly more complex in the case of the dance, but the development is one that will facilitate rather than impede upon the occurrence of *punctum*. The fundamental differences are the way in which the dance signifies the world beyond itself and the time and space of the dance. The time and space of the dance performance is an expanded and more complex mechanism. There is a greater amount of surfaces and trajectories for interaction with. The fact that all live together in a shared space and time of will serve only to increase the instantaneous, lightning like, exchange between the dance and the viewer that characterises *punctum*.

The problem lies at the alternate end of the semiotic system, in the fundamentally different way in which each medium is derived from the world outside itself. Whilst the most iconic trait of the photograph is the specificity with which it refers to the world, the most note-able trait of the dance is the lack of specificity, or the extremely subjective way in which it signifies the world. The specificity of the photographic trace is integral to *punctum*, essential to the viewer's experience of the photograph as "existing" with no awareness for the medium or process that has transposed what they feel to exist. The dance's non-linear, but abstract or qualitative tracing of the external world cannot claim the specificity that unites viewer and world in the case of the photograph.

I however, would like to propose that the dance is inseparably embedded within its surrounding contextual world, connected by bonds that are intrinsic, autonomous and essentially unbreakable. The schema through which the dance relates to the world is a more complex weaving of signifying relationships than the mechanical rigidity of the photographs linear journey from world to sign. By embracing and enhancing the gap between itself and the world, the dance's essentially different and more complex system, achieves an autonomous unification between dance and world that is equally as valid as the photographs specificity. The *wounding* sensation that the dance seeks to provoke is therefore a result of a different but parallel reactive system of properties. Through a case study of dance performances that have affected in me a bodily response that I connect to Barthes concept of *punctum*, I hope to show how the world-dance-viewer system has the potential to unify the viewer and the world in an electric exchange that ignites an experience reflective of *punctum*.

CASE STUDIES

William Forsythe: *Three Atmospheric Studies*.

It is a single moment of this dance that *pierces me...wounds me*. I recall feeling a need to look away, because I was overcome by the hurt of the experience.

Though the moment was minute fraction of a scene it lived because of its surrounding context.

...there has been a tragedy. The single female figure is attempting to report the loss of her son in a suicide bomb attack via a translator. The translator is failing to find adequate, words to make the report, communication is failing.

This is the contextual, 'world' information I understood at the time of watching. As the figure's frustration grew into hysteria, her conversation with the translator began to snap between her internal and external expression. The moment of *punctum* came from the animalistic howls and the inhumane contortions that periodically infested the composed woman trying to communicate. It is this moment of pain that wounds because it activates stored sensory information, memories in my own body, for which she was an embodiment.

What is presented of the world in this scene is selective and representational but weighted with humanity. The translator is an isolated representational field; his Arabic dress is an articulation of the cultural code of the world he signifies, as is the market-like booth in which he sits and his form of speech. The simple dress worn by the female figure, adds a thin layer of code that ensures the viewer of her feminine persona. The remainder of the stage is an empty codeless void. The element of speech and the appeal to cultural code attaches this scene to the external world. Whilst these elements are effective, they are only a slippery partiality of the world event which motivated Forsythe. The powerful, electric factor which, for me, erases all grey matter and bombards with reality, is the *human* factor. I see, hear and feel a fellow human, only meters away from me, experiencing immense pain. The theatre, the dance, is irrelevant; it, just for this instant, annihilates itself. Here the dance does not transform, as the photo does, it does not codify, and I don't even consider it an imitation of something in the past. It just "existed" and it "hurt". The humanness of the dance in this case disposes of the need to find a link between the world, the dance, and the viewer, because it remains a continuous, unchanged factor throughout the communicative system.

SPLINTER GROUP: LAWN

This performance is saturated with richly connotative, yet brutally raw experiential moments. It is a complex overlaying of movement, sound, props, setting, people, concept and metaphor and thus difficult to isolate a singular moment of *punctum* from. What I recall as being poignant, was an instance in which the chaos ceased to be chaotic, a momentary aligning of all elements. The effect wasn't a physical sensation of pain like that described previously, but a revelatory moment of clarification, of broadened vision, of acute awareness. I remember wanting to freeze the moment to take it with me, but as it is in the case of the dance, it had passed forever.

The space from ceiling to floor and wall to wall is dissected by streams of plastic wrap. One of the three male dancers moves impossibly, yet effortlessly, upwards on the back wall, whilst a second is bound in a cocoon of plastic to a dining room chair, and all takes place in the setting of a small dingy apartment. The dance here signifies two worlds; the world of the spider or bug and the world of the man. It is thus operating as a metaphor to convey the idea of entrapment.

In linguistics the metaphor is defined as *"proposing a different entity as having 'equivalent' status to the one that forms the main subject of the figure. Thus in the metaphor 'the car beetled along', the movement of the beetle is proposed as 'equivalent' to that of the car"* (Hawke.1977, p77)

Jakobson describes the metaphor as a "binary opposition" that creates a "sparkling force" (Jakobson in Hawke1977, p77). The metaphor by presenting two simultaneous pieces of information creates a more instantaneous comprehension of the first through the cognitive model, or map, of the second. The "sparkling force" Jakobson refers to is the instantaneous conception, the bypassing of the brain's normal process of progressive comprehension.

So here in the instance of "Lawn" the 'model' of the bug provides a base of information to enhance the viewer's understanding of the man's experience of entrapment. This lateral association acts with efficiency and speed, but does not refine or minimise. It stimulates sensory associations; images, emotions sensations, which are un-prescribed and more honest than any derivative representation. The metaphor does not aim to connect the dance to a specific referent, rather it "clings to the outside of things" (Copeland.1981, p5); it is concerned with the fleshy, qualitative, sensory elements that bring life to a skeleton.

The *punctum* is however not solely achieved by metaphor, I would rather describe the point of convergence of all the performative parts and my own frame of reference to be that that metaphorically allows a moment of unified breath, before the instance of *punctum* has passed.

These two examples of dance arrive at two different solutions to the problematic gap between the dance and the world. Forsythe's approach is deconstructive. He strips the dance of all unnecessary codification and connotation, laying bare the fundamentally humanitarian nature of the dance medium. Splinter Group engages metaphor. The added frame of reference colors and qualitates the original information, and connects it to a world the viewer already knows. These performances thus demonstrate the mobile, amorphous nature of the dance semiotic structure. The multitude of signifying trajectories and the layering of codified and un-codified parts means there exists an endless number of outcomes for how a structure of the dance may be arranged. "Lawn" and "Three Atmospheric Studies" demonstrate how this complex system has the ability to arrange itself in such a way that the world, the dance and the viewer create an instantaneous site of a phenomena that strongly resembles Barthes' description of *punctum*. The result is dance performances that are wounding, revelatory, self-defining, piercing and yet often incomprehensible, but which testify to the ultimate purpose of the dance art form; the purpose of moving the viewer to a place greater awareness or even wisdom.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS:

The 'tanztheatre' genre worked in and largely defined by German choreographer Pina Bausch has much to offer this discussion of “the element which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces” (Barthes.1981, p6). For Bausch the gap between the world and the dance is an exciting space of endless possibilities. To address how Bausch’s process unites the viewer and the world and cultivates potentially *wounding* dance I would like to discuss the choreographic process of former *Wuppertaler Tanztheater* member, Michael Whaites's creation of "Heavens Above".

Firstly, the process of Pina Bausch is worthy of an entire thesis, but I would like to just recognise three main points about her work which provide valuable insights to key factors underlying *punctum* in dance.

“Through fragmentation and repetition Bausch’s works expose and explores the gap between dance and theatre... Gestures and words do not compliment each other providing clear communication; the body does not complete the mind to create a whole self, female and male do not form a unity liberating the individual from loneliness. Repetition breaks the popular image of dancers as spontaneous beings revealing their dissatisfactions and desires within a chain of repetitive movement and words” (Fernandes, 2001 p.8)

Fragmentation or repetition takes the movements or speech further away from the world it seeks to signify. Essentially these mechanisms aim to strip the move or word of its signifying capability, to reduce it to a single unit, isolated from the socially coded system through which conventional language communicates. What is key about this forcefully reductive mechanism, is that Bausch does not just give the viewer the final stripped unit, she shows the viewer the progressive loss of connection between sign and signifier and thus gives them a taste of the air beyond the beast that is the sign system society swims inside of. Hence Bausch’s embracement and extension of arbitrariness is what achieves an experience of the *raw* reality.

I find Hawke’s description of the function of a poem imperatively reflective of this approach.

“ The function of poetry is to point out that the sign is not identical with its referent” (Erich in Hawkes.1977, p.70) “What is important in any poem is not the poet’s or the reader’s attitude to reality, but the poet’s attitude towards language which, when successfully communicated, ‘wakes

up' the reader, and makes him see his 'world', anew" (Hawkes. 1977. p.70).

Thus in likening the dance to the non-linear, self regulating structure of the poem, it is seen that the dance is possibly at its most powerful when it in fact challenges the world which fed it and clothed it in code.

Whaite's process exemplified this. The the process consisted mainly of answering questions. Examples of such questions include: "*Melting into pleasure?*", "*Dependencey?*", "*what makes you happy?*", "*If only...?*" ,and "*After the party?*".

Some responses to these question were directly transferred into the choreography, some were used a starting point for development and many were discarded. Each of the dancers also created an individual phrase that was a splicing together of singular moments from across all their personal responses to the questions. The resulting sequences of fragments I found incredibly interesting. None had a central unify idea, but yet each had vibrancy of texture and intricacy of detail, that was cheekily suggestive of the world but imperatively non-committal. These phrases were rich with intention because the dancer understood the origin of each single fragment. This almost montage like approach, this joining together of unrelated fragments, has no concern for what lay behind it (for the world it departed from), only for the present and the future and how it may through new relationships create a new experience of the world.

"Bausch's dance theater explores the body map acquired through repetition from childhood to adolescence. The dancers of the Wuppertaler Tanztheater often re-enact moments from their childhood during performance, showing the audience how they incorporated social patterns" (Fernandes.2001 p.9)

The process of asking question means that the dancer is engaged in such a way that their whole history, their life time of experiences is being pulled upon for the purpose of the dance. I was constantly overcome by a desire to answer the question in a way that was truthfully specific to my *heatoscopy*. I found myself calling on very personal memories... re-occurring dreams I had as child, my first kiss and even banal little memories I thought lost forever. This embeds the performance (once the responses are shaped and developed) with an integrity and depth of

human quality that, underscores the seemingly chaotic work.

“Basically one wants to say something that cannot be said [for the expression of inner material would imply its transformation into language], so what one has done is to make a poem where one can feel what is meant” (Bausch in Fernandes.2001, p.10)

THE IMPLICATIONS FOR DANCE

Roland Barthes defines *punctum* as an element in a photograph which has the ability to *wound* or *prick*. The presence of this factor designated for Barthes whether the photograph "existed" or whether it subsided into the mass plethora of images from which society is desensitized. By analyzing the photographic communication through its properties of trace, mutation, space, time, viewer and code it was seen that each property contributes in functionality towards the event of *punctum*. However it is ultimately the photographs annihilation of itself and the existence of the photographer that achieves the unification of viewer and world which has proven to be the fundamental key to *punctum*. Examination of photographic evidence revealed the implicit role of the viewer and the immensely subjective way in which the viewer's chemistry reacts with the photograph to create an experience of *punctum*.

From a structural and functional comparison between the photograph and the dance it was seen that in the latter half of the two semiotic systems (the signifier-viewer section) both are quite similar, however in the former half (the world-signifier section) of the semiotic system the two function by opposing means. The photograph's tracing of its referent, was found to be imperative to the viewers experience of *punctum*. The fact that this phenomena rests on a property that is largely absent in the dance communication system is the primary problem in the application of Barthes concept to dance. However by using "Camera Lucida" as a template I tracked Barthes journey through the sea of dance, starting with just a few dance performances, those which I was sure to have been moved by, and proceeding from that place forward into a parallel analysis. I became progressively aware of the way in which the dance structure acted through a more complex web of significations to create its own *new* world that encompasses the viewer. This revealed the dance to be a powerful, alive system that certainly allows and fosters occurrence of

punctum, or the dance's equivalent phenomena. The restriction that arose for the dance is that its vastness and complexity in time and space means that it is a greater challenge for it to achieve the perfectly balanced structure that will channel the wounding, revelatory bullet that can rumble the history of the receiving body.

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