Butoh:

Granting Art Status to an Indefinable Form

By

Shane Thomas Caldwell

Submitted to the Victoria University of Wellington

in fulfilment of the requirements for the

Master of Arts in Philosophy

Victoria University of Wellington

2017

Abstract:

Butoh is a kind of art, but exactly what kind of art is not so easy to see. While traditionally considered a type of dance, there are a number of butoh works that are not readily identifiable as dance works, if in fact they count as dance at all. Through the use of Noël Carroll's narrative theory of art, I will show how butoh comes to be thought of as art even if it fails to match up exactly with any one pre-existing art form. I will show how the context in which butoh came into being is sufficient for granting butoh art status due to its relation to existing art forms. I compare butoh to its two most similar analogues, dance and performance art, and examine how it resembles and differs from each of them. I also show how the reason categorising butoh as only one kind of art form is problematic due to its being part of a non-Western aesthetic tradition that does not break the world up into such easily separable pieces.

Contents

A note on spelling: throughout this work there are variant spellings that turn up for certain words. For example, while writing in my own voice I will be using "butoh" as my chosen form of the word, however, when quoting others the word may appear as "Butoh", "butô", or "butō". I will also, while writing as myself be using non- American spelling, yet while quoting others will leave their spelling as it appears in their texts. So while I will write theatre, colour, or realise, in the words of others may be seen theater, color, or realize.

Introduction

Butoh, since its inception, has been categorised as a type of dance, and in particular a kind of dance-as-art. However, there are a number of butoh works that seem to fall outside the bounds of what we generally consider to count for a work to be a dance-as-art work, such as that it be performed for an audience. Could the fact that butoh does not clearly fit a conception of dance-as-art mean that butoh is not in fact a kind of art? This thesis will show how, even though it does not clearly fit into any one category of art, butoh still counts as a kind of art. In order to do this, I will appeal to Carroll's narrative theory of art, showing how the context within which butoh was created justifies its status as a kind of art. I will also show that the reason why butoh cannot be clearly categorised as dance, or theatre, or performance art, is in part because it belongs to a non-Western aesthetic tradition in which things are not able to be cleanly separated in such a way. We can also view butoh's combining of Western and non-Western traditions as a way of becoming an art form not tied to any particular cultural tradition. This will also lead to an examination of how and why we categorise things in the way that we do.

Before getting started, I think a brief word on the philosophical approach used throughout this thesis may be helpful prior to reading. I think of what I do as being rhizomatic; I am interested in looking at a multitude of small details and finding the ways in which they interact. This is in contrast to an arbourescent approach, the kind most often taken, when a single idea is followed, single-mindedly, towards a conclusion. I am not particularly interested in conclusions. Most any answer will be disproved one day anyway. The non-linearity of my thinking cannot be excised completely, and so while not every question asked will be answered, I find it worthwhile to raise them nonetheless. The point here is not to close any philosophical doors, but open them. In a way similar to butoh, it is the process that is important; the becoming, not the being.

Deleuze and Guattari note how the way that people think "is not arborescent" (2004: 17), so why write as though it is? One of the threads running through this thesis is the way that our upbringing, our location within a culture, shapes our view of the world. Deleuze and Guattari note how the rhizomatic-arbourescent distinction relates to the East-West distinction that will be considered throughout. In the West, when our understanding of the world was being formed, our interactions with nature were of the arbourescent type: the planting and felling of trees, the sowing of seeds; which we then mapped onto our process of worldbuilding, leading to

arbourescent thought processes. In contrast to this, the relation of people in the East to their environment was of a rhizomatic type: "a relation to the steppe and the garden... rather than the forest and field" (2004: 20), which they similarly mapped onto their way of understanding the world, leading to a different way of constructing their worldview. In terms of the present text, the start and end points are relatively arbitrary, the linear format imposed upon the work rather than a feature of the work itself. To quote Deleuze and Guattari once more, a "rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*" (2004: 27).

This thesis as a whole has two core threads. The first is what it means for something to be butoh, how butoh relates to the history of art, and how this relation helps to distinguish authentic butoh from inauthentic butoh; the second is how we decide what categories works, or even just things in general, belong to. While each section is roughly devoted to a separate topic, all three sections feed into each other in ways that may not be readily apparent. Something that may also be said of Hijikata's works in the 1960s.

The first section is concerned with giving a description of butoh's early works, and will examine what it means for something to be butoh. This is done so as to show how the context in which a work is produced is key in understanding how it is appreciated. I will not attempt to give a definitive definition of butoh itself, as doing so would be a very un-butoh thing to do. Why this is will become apparent as the thesis progresses. What I will do throughout this thesis is examine (1) what butoh means for those who practice it, in particular co-founder Hijikata Tatsumi, (2) what repeating motifs have become apparent within butoh over time, and (3) what it is that distinguishes butoh from other art forms. As these themes are expanded, a sense of what it means to be butoh should emerge. This lack of a precise definition can be seen in most of the writings on butoh. Miryam Sas writes that "*butō* cannot be defined in terms of a consistent "style", and most *butō* practitioners fiercely resist any crystallization of their work into a distinct set of methods and techniques" (2011: 159). Rosemary Candelario also writes how butoh's "impossible complexity and multiple conceivable meanings are precisely the point" (2013: 265). While Bruce Baird begins his book on Hijikata with the brief sentence "[b]utoh defies description" (2012: 1). The indefinable nature of butoh ties into the trouble of trying to give a correct categorisation for it, whether it be dance, performance art, or something else. This is in part a consequence of butoh's founders being brought up with a non-Western view of the world that does not break the world up into easily separable parts. It also suggests that art itself is increasingly difficult to break up into clear genres, with many artists letting their ideas dictate the media they use, rather than tying their ideas to a specific medium.

Although butoh can appear to take the form of theatre or performance art, one of the reasons it has been uncontroversially considered a form of dance is because it was designated as such by its originator, Hijikata Tatsumi, and so was considered as such from its first performance. This motivates the examination of what I take to be the two primary ways that determine how a work gets categorised. The first is whether the intention of the artist is sufficient in determining whether an artwork belongs within the category it has been placed in, while the second is how the context in which an artwork comes to be created influences the way in which that work is viewed, and the category into which it is placed.

The second section will be looking at what it means for a work to be a dance work, and I will begin to examine how dance differs from performance art. As dance is a common human activity, this section will also look at the difference between dance-as-activity and dance-as-art, and will look at how everyday movements, sounds, objects, come to be classed as works of art. This artistic-aesthetic distinction is important as a large theme of this thesis is how and why things get categorised as they do. This will primarily be done through an examination of two artistic theories; formalism, where a work of art is categorised based on the formal properties of a work, and narrativism, where a work is categorised by its relation to other existing works. This is important as I will be using Carroll's narrative theory as my main justification for why butoh counts as a type of art, even if the exact type of art that it is cannot be established. While not a main part of this thesis, this section will also briefly touch on what makes something count as a work of art.

This section will also contain an examination of what it means for a person or persons to count as an audience, a key point in distinguishing dance from performance art. Theatre requires an audience, and thereby so does dance as a sub-genre of theatre. This will be seen to be a reason why performance art cannot be a type of theatre, since it does not require an audience. As Graver notes, theatre "always involves spectatorship and performed representation[, while p]erformance art… [can] do without them" (1995). This is one of the reasons why butoh can appear to be more like performance art, as butoh also does not require an audience and so cannot be thought of as theatre or dance, even though it often resembles and uses techniques from theatre and dance.

The final section is based around performance art, as it appears to have shared a similar trajectory to butoh, from anti-establishment outlier to fully accepted art form. I will examine what it means for a work to be a performance art work, and how a number of early butoh works

fit within such a description. I will also return to butoh and look more at how it is practiced today, how it squares with its categorisation as dance, and whether those who practice butoh could be mistaken as to what they are doing. In examining the relationship between modern and classic butoh works, I will also discuss what it means for a butoh work to count as being authentic.

One possible answer to the problematic categorisation of butoh is that butoh involves a particular way of being, rather than a particular artistic style, so you can have butoh-dance or butoh-performance art, etc… This would seem to be the way that Hijikata felt about butoh. "Hijikata's butoh is a result of a new way of thinking, new kinds of activities. He would often say something is *butoh-teki*, butoh-like. 'Look, isn't he *butoh-teki*?' he would say, or looking at a dog, 'You see, this dog is butoh!' He would find essence of butoh even in non-human creatures including plants" (Tanaka Min, quoted in Cull 2012: 112). Here is one of the core aspects of butoh, and particularly authentic butoh. It is about exploring and understanding the differing relations between objects in their environment, and finding a way to express those relations through art.

It seems as though butoh itself is *more* than just a kind of dance. I propose that there are two related yet distinct kinds of butoh and what needs to be differentiated is the butoh aesthetic style from the butoh way of being, both of which can exist on their own or in concert. For a piece to be an authentic butoh work it has to have the butoh way of being as part of its core. Butoh works are attempting to express a view of the world that, while typically displayed in the form of dance, may be displayed through a variety of practices. The ideas are more important than the form. From its beginning, it seems as though butoh was not meant to be viewed as merely a kind of dance. Sas writes how Hijikata's writings can be seen as "of equal importance to his dances, as works of *butō* in themselves" (2011: 159). The visual aesthetic is contingent, and while it may be employed in a number of butoh works, it is not essential to their being one. Perhaps then, works that only have the aesthetic aspect of butoh are not truly butoh works, but merely butoh inspired works, or inauthentic butoh works.

Butoh is a cross-media art form that relies on an *authentic* butoh way of being to be considered a true work of butoh. Many works today that call themselves butoh are lacking this characteristic, as they are primarily focused on the formal qualities of past works. Most people who write on butoh recognise that Hijikata's butoh, particularly his earlier works, had a different character to most butoh as it is practiced today. Perhaps that is because Hijikata's butoh embodies the idea of it

being more than a dance, whereas later generations have become too preoccupied with the surface characteristics of the form, and are more clearly using butoh purely for aesthetic purposes, while those who continue with the core butoh ideals no longer consider what they are doing as butoh. It is due to this that you no longer see non-dance butoh works, even though such works were essential to what it meant for butoh to be butoh. So while there is a butoh infused style of dance, which we call butoh, butoh *itself* is not the dance. In response to the question of whether anything can be butoh, Hijikata replies "That's right. After all, since ancient times solemn ceremonies have gone smoothly with the help of dance. Paintings, too, are created by human beings and reveal their ultimate "butoh quality" [*butoh-sei*]. Really, it can be seen by anyone. But people stick to their own little world, their own particular genre and lose sight of it. Lots of people now are calling for an end to genres, but if they would just apply the idea of "butoh quality" to everything, the problem would be resolved" (Hijikata and Shibusawa 2000: 49).

Part One: The Birth of Butoh

While this section is largely intended to give the context surrounding butoh's creation, and how it fits in relation to the history of the arts, something to keep in mind is the question of whether there is, and if so what is, butoh's philosophy. While this will remain an open question, it is worth considering whether any of the intentions or insights of the creators of butoh can help in exploring important, or more importantly interesting, philosophical problems.

The main goal of this section is to give support to the argument that the context in which butoh was produced is sufficient in granting butoh art status, while also highlighting how butoh cannot be categorised as any one particular kind of art form. Because butoh is more concerned with what the performers are aiming to express, as opposed to how they go about expressing it, butoh can be realised in a variety of ways. A range of which will be discussed throughout. This section is also intended to begin highlighting the distinction between authentic and inauthentic butoh works. Coming into being in the late-1950s and early-1960s, butoh's originators are considered to be Hijikata Tatsumi and Ohno Kazuo. Jean Viala writes that if "Kazuo Ōno is the soul of butoh, then Tatsumi Hijikata is the architect" (1988: 62). Fumiyaki Nakamura points out a difference in the approaches of Hijikata and Ohno. While "both agreed that Form equals Life", Ohno believed "that Form should follow from Life" whereas Hijikata "insisted that Form should be leading Life" (2013). Another distinction between the two is that Ohno is generally considered to have been the light to Hijikata's darkness.

The main focus throughout this thesis will be the work of Hijikata, as his writings and choreography are primarily what shaped butoh. Hijikata originally called his form of dance *ankoku buyo* (dance of darkness); the word buyo, meaning dance, was later changed to butoh, an out-of-date term used to describe Western ballroom dancing. One reason for the change was to give a harder edge to the sound of the name, like judo or kabuki. Another is that butoh is tethered to the earth. The "*to*" in butoh means to step, but it also has a deeper cultural meaning connected with pantheistic religions. It can be expressed through stomping, as can be seen in sumo and kabuki, as an expression of drawing power from the earth. Yoshie Yoshida explains how this is connected to a belief that the gods are in the earth, and that their strength can be drawn up through the feet (2013). Hijikata wrote of his butoh that it started

"with what I learned from the mud in early spring, not from anything to do with the performing arts of shrines or temples. I am distinctly aware that I was born of mud and that my movements now have all been built on that" (2000: 74). Where classical dance styles like ballet are interested in rising up, extending, leaping into the sky; butoh is contracted and drawn down towards the ground. Fumiyaki Nakamura expands on this by stating how an important aspect of butoh "lies in its struggle against gravity" (2013).

The first butoh production is considered to be Hijikata's *Kinjiki* (*Forbidden Colours*), whose title was taken from Mishima Yukio's 1951 novel, and which was performed on the 24th of May 1959. It was due to this performance that Hijikata became friends with Mishima, one of the country's leading authors at the time. Baird notes that before "meeting Mishima, Hijikata was virtually unknown in the wider world… [and it] is entirely possible that without Mishima's help, Hijikata would have remained unknown" (2012: 32). *Kinjiki* examined the taboo topics of homosexuality (considered taboo at that time) and paedophilia (although Ohno Yoshito was in his early 20s at the time, he was portraying someone younger within the performance), presenting them for the first time on a Japanese stage. The performance made Hijikata into a notorious figure of the underground dance scene, in part due to the onstage death of a chicken (Lin 2009: 220, Curtin 2010: 57). This performance was part of a series organised by the Japanese Dance Association, and after the performance "several members of the association threatened to resign should similar pieces be sponsored in the future" (Viala and Masson-Sekine 1988: 62), though it was Hijikata and Ohno who ended up resigning. Charles Merewether writes that this "performance heralded the transformation of modernist dance experimentation into underground avant-garde theatre with a specifically Japanese character" (2007: 12).

Kurihara writes how *Kinjiki* "was quite different from what we consider Butoh now" (2000: 18), which could support the idea that there is a clear difference between earlier and later butoh works. Outwardly, Hijikata's butoh and other early butoh works could perhaps be more correctly categorised as performance art, and the reason why they are categorised as dance is merely due to the fact that Hijikata himself was a dancer, and so that was the medium in which he chose to express himself: through dancing and choreographing dances for others. Hijikata wrote that his "profession is the business of human rehabilitation, which today goes by the name of dancer" (2000: 44), implying that in another context his butoh could be something other than dance. That butoh is a dance form is a contingent fact related to the fact

that Hijikata happened to be a dancer. His intention that it be dance is one of the things that made it dance, or that has meant that it has been seen as dance by those who comment on it. These ideas will be explored in more detail throughout.

Even though Hijikata's work is the predominant focus of this thesis, it is important to point out that not everything Hijikata did automatically became butoh, not even his dancing. In the late-1950s and early-1960s Hijikata was still having to work for a living, and one of the ways he did so was by performing in nightclubs with his wife Motofuji Akiko. In 1959 they began performing as a duo named Blue Echoes, and then in 1962 expanded to a group named Dancing Gorgui. It was with this group that they developed the *Gold Dust Show*, inspired by the film *Goldfinger* (1964), with the dancers being covered in gold or silver paint. This style later shows up in the film *Horrors of Malformed Men* (1969), and can still be seen in the performances of modern butoh group Sasara Housara. The dances put on by Hijikata and Motofuji in this context were not butoh performances, but were primarily burlesque type shows intended to titillate an easily bored, easily distracted, audience. These dances do not count as butoh as they were explicitly done for making money, in contrast to the butoh goal of not using the body but allowing the body to be itself. This serves as a good example of the inauthentic nature of modern butoh. If you look at the performances by Sasara Housara, everything they do is taken from *Horrors of Malformed Men*, their costumes, their make-up, their props, their movements, which are in turn taken from Hijikata and Motofuji's non-art dance works of the mid-1960s. One of the reasons I consider this inauthentic is that, since butoh is about allowing the body to dictate the performance, copying the style of an earlier work, or being so directly inspired by the past, is not doing that. There is a conscious decision here to copy a particular style, and that runs counter to the butoh spirit. It is also important to note that even though it stars Hijikata, and uses a great deal of butoh imagery throughout the film, the butoh in *Horrors of Malformed Men* is just that, imagery, and so discounts the film as being a work of butoh itself. A butoh visual aesthetic is insufficient in making something butoh. Or more accurately, is insufficient for something to count as an authentic butoh work.

The Societal Influences of the Butoh Aesthetic

Butoh today has an instantly recognisable visual aesthetic, but that was not always present in the earlier butoh performances. Butoh's underlying aesthetic can be seen as a consequence of the effects that the aftermath of the Second World War had had on Japan (Lin 2009: 208, Kurihara 2000: 12). Kurihara Nanako writes that "World War II destroyed Tokyo physically but… liberated it artistically" (2000: 18). As well as the two atomic bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Tokyo itself was heavily firebombed, resulting in just as many casualties as the atomic bomb attacks. Although the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki had an effect on society in general, "virtually all butoh practitioners and most commentators repudiate a direct tie between butoh and the atomic bombings" (Baird 2012: 200). It was not the bombings themselves that shaped or influenced butoh, but what came after. Butoh was "developing contemporaneously with urbanisation, social and political unrest, and widespread artistic experimentation" (Eckersall 2013: 37). The setting up of American amy bases across the country, supposedly as a form of protection but in reality as a way of being close to their Cold War enemies, and the changing of culture that came along with that had a massive effect on the shaping of butoh. The main reason that Baird gives for repudiating the connection between the bombings and butoh is that something like an atomic bomb attack is an extremely rare event, whereas Hijikata was interested in ordinary, everyday suffering (2012 200-201). What "makes butoh universal is… the universality of suffering" (Baird 2012: 201). Lin describes how the wars influence is expressed in the "being-ness of a Butoh dancer's body[, which] presents a true facet of [the] Japanese people and the entire nation's state of being as traumatized, deformed, and collapsed after its defeat in World War II" (2009: 221). She goes on to quote Hijikata, who said that "through dance, we must depict the human posture in crisis" (Lin 2009: 221). It would be a mistake to view it as solely about Japanese people though. Hijikata was interested in all suffering, the kind that transcends national boundaries. He was interested in the ways that suffering causes people to relate to their environment; a person in pain will react differently to someone not in pain in the same environment.

Although now white body paint is what is used, when the all white look originally appeared in Hijikata's works it was a limestone clay which caused the bodies of those caked in it to blister and burn, inflicting pain upon them as well as making it look as though their skin was

cracking open. This can be seen as Hijikata's way of getting his dancers to move in a more authentic way, something which could not be achieved if they were merely acting as though they were in pain. Using this technique for whitening the body, as opposed to body paint, is a way for the performers to realise a more authentic butoh experience. The standard white paint seen these days comes more from Ohno Kazuo's cross dressing make-up, with a clear lineage to geisha and kabuki. The continued use of the white paint is due to its ability to "help the dancers suppress their personalities" and also to help them to "metamorphose into something else" (Baird 2012: 161). In an interview with Félix Guattari, Tanaka Min stated "I wish to become an agency that no longer has to think" (2015: 46). Lin refers to an analysis given by Muo-Lin Wang, which describes the meanings behind butoh's modern visual aesthetic. The painting of the body, white all over, is said to help sever the individual from their physical existence which, along with the shaved head and nude body help to make the dancers blank slates, genderless, classless, and free of ethnicity or cultural heritage (2009: 224).

She also notes that these characteristics "suggest a strong association with Buddhism, Zen philosophy, and idiosyncratic Japanese aesthetics" (Lin 2009: 238). This ties into the notion that butoh cannot be defined as merely a dance form, but carries within it ways of being in the world that are essential to a proper understanding of it. Saito writes how "the world as we experience it is our humanized construct and that the emptying of the human perspective is necessary in order to have a direct encounter with the world" (2011: 514-515).

Turning the dancers into blank slates can be seen as a direct response to the increasing individualisation that was occurring in Japan at the time. A Zen characteristic of butoh can also be seen in the "transcendence of ego [which] is facilitated by our recognizing and overcoming all-too-human schemes of categorizing, classifying, and valuing" (Saito 2007: 88). This also highlights how categorising butoh as just dance or just performance art may not be possible. There is greater interconnectedness in Eastern thought, for example Hinduism and Buddhism are mixtures of religion/philosophy/science, yet in the West they are denigrated to being 'just' religions. The reason why an art form like butoh is hard to fit into a Western classificatory system is because it was developed in an environment where things are not thought of as separate from each other in the way that they are in the West. Eastern styles are more integrational, which is something that Hijikata was reacting to with his creation of butoh – a fighting against the Americanisation and individualism that was coming to dominate Japan in the post-war years. Catherine Curtin notes how

Hijikata's works contained "a powerful critique of the cultural hegemony, rationality and increasing individualism that were the outcomes of intensifying western influence" (2010: 56). It is important to note though that butoh is not about rejecting the West, as many of Hijikata's direct influences were Western artists, such as Artaud and Genet, but about holding onto self-identity, or cultural identity. Fraleigh notes how from "the beginning, butoh artists produced postmodern amalgamations of East and West, moving their art beyond ethnic boundaries toward international participation" (2010: 45). The holding on to a cultural identity is about remembering what makes someone who they are, and embracing those things that have shaped them, no matter what culture they are from. The characters seen in Hijikata's works are not individuals but archetypes, a dancer is not *a* beggar, but all beggars, not *an* old woman, but all old women.

This integrational way of viewing the world can also be seen in the removal of a separation between audience and performers, such as in the work *Anma* (*Masseur*) (1963), where the audience were arranged so as to surround the performers. Bruce Baird notes how rather "than employing a facile assumption of empty space, Hijikata appears to have assumed that space has properties, and experimented with altering the quality of space" (Baird 2012: 167). This ties in with the Japanese concept of *ma* as the space which surrounds everything, making it so there is no empty space between things. As Yoshie Yoshida explains in *Piercing the Mask*, while Westerners would say that two people are a certain distance apart, Japanese would say that there is ma in between them (2013). The documentary *East and West* explains how while Westerners tend to view space as being empty, in the East they view space as containing energy, *ki* in Japanese, that connects surrounding objects to each other. This difference in ways of viewing the world can be attributed to the way the different languages are taught, and thereby the different worldviews that are formed. In Western languages, nouns are favoured, leading to more exact descriptions of individual objects. In contrast to this, Eastern languages favour verbs, and so are more interested in how objects act and interact. So while a parent in the West will ask their child what size or colour a toy truck is, a parent in the East will ask where the truck is going or what it is doing (2012). This relational aspect can also be seen in the becomings of butoh. The butoh practitioner seeks not to become a beggar, but to relate to the world as a beggar does. The "Japanese aesthetic tradition is noted for its sensitivity to, respect for, and appreciation of the quintessential character of an object" (Saito 2007: 85), like the way in which Hijikata wanted to let the body be the body, to follow the whims of whatever welled up from inside, to react to its environment on its own terms.

Saito considers the "Japanese aesthetic tradition to be morally based by promoting respect, care, and consideration for others, both humans and nonhumans" (2007: 85). This moral character of Japanese aesthetics and its relationship with how we live our lives has not traditionally been prevalent in the West, with our aesthetic practices more clearly disconnected from our everyday lives, though this has been changing in recent times. One of the reasons that this moral character is more prevalent throughout Japanese aesthetics is because it is "thoroughly integrated with everyday life" (Saito 2007: 85). In the East, the way of being in the world has traditionally been more about following the will of nature, as opposed to the West where it is more about imposing one's will on nature. Saito writes of how Japanese gardens are designed in such a way as to bring out the specific character of each piece of the garden, and that the way in which it is designed is dictated by the objects themselves and not due to the plans of the gardener. She also notes how this way of letting nature dictate design is becoming a more prevalent practice in such art forms as sustainable architecture (2007: 86- 88). This is similar to how, in butoh, the body is left to dictate the movements it makes, and is not in service to a self. This can also relate to the outdoor works of Dairakudakan and Byakko Sha, where the environment in which they perform is an integral part of the work.

This respect for each part of a whole can also be seen in the traditional Māori practice of praying to Tāne Mahuta, the god of forests and birds, before the felling of trees or the initiating of a hunt for birds to be eaten. It is a way of signaling to nature that though they respect that it has its own right to life, they also need to partake of what only it can give. This is echoed in the words of Hijikata, when he said that "over and over I apologized to the chicken I held while dancing" (quoted in Cull 2012: 126). There was something vital that Hijikata needed in his work that he believed he could only get from the chicken, yet he knew that doing so was against the wishes of the chicken. This can help to explain why Hijikata had a disdain for performance art which he saw as merely using the body instead of allowing the body to dictate its own actions. He stated how "what you see in Happenings or in the current *shingeki* [new theatre], where the body is used as a kind of triggering device… I find pretty questionable" (Hijikata and Shibusawa 2000: 50).

The inherent cultural aspects that arise in butoh can also be seen in the concept of *yūgen*,

often associated with Noh, the theatre form founded in Japan in the late-1300s. Yūgen can be approximately translated as grace, but is meant to express a depth to experience that goes beyond explanation. Graham Parkes notes how it does not "have to do with some other world beyond this one, but rather with the depth of the world we live in" (2011). This can be seen in Ohno Kazuo's philosophy towards his dance, which was "grounded in the belief that if we do not go beneath the surface of our everyday lives, then we cannot call what we are doing "dance"" (Fraleigh and Nakamura 2006: 35). This exploration of the depth of our world can also be seen in Hijikata's fascination with depicting suffering. His fascination with suffering and with the outcasts of society can also be seen as an expression of the Zen characteristic where we are "encouraged to recognize and appreciate a diversity of objects, not just those we ordinarily enjoy and cherish" (Saito 2007: 88). There is a beauty in the ugly that is often neglected. Another connection with Noh is the similarity between Noh aphorisms and butohfu, Hijikata's version of notation, each of which consists of short sentences intended to inspire the movements of the performer.

Even though Hijikata wanted to distance himself from the traditional arts, there are definitely similarities between butoh and Noh. Like Noh performers, butoh dancers do not *perform* butoh, they *are* butoh. In her book *Dancing Into Darkness*, Fraleigh writes that butoh performers "are not characters in a play or even an inner drama; they are impressions that pass by and transform in space and time" (1999: 24). In many butoh performances, you are not watching a person perform, as butoh performers seek to remove themselves from the performing body; rather, you are watching thoughts, feelings, emotions laid bare. Amagasaki writes how butoh is similar to Noh "in the sense that it is concerned with becoming rather than performing. It seeks primarily to bring to the surface a body which has hitherto been latent" (1996). *A* body is present in the performance space, but not a body that belongs to the performer.

A possible exception can be seen in some of Ohno Kazuo's works, such as *Admiring La Argentina* (1977) and *My Mother* (1981). Though I think in these cases it would be more appropriate to view them as portraying, not particular characters, but archetypes. This is another example of the relationary aspect of butoh, of seeking not to portray a character, but to understand the viewpoint of a type, and to relate to the world as though one were of that type. In *My Mother* he is not just portraying his own mother, but all mothers, and in *Admiring La Argentina*, he is not just portraying Antonia Mercé y Luque, but also the feelings for her

that he carried around with him. He took her name and look and performed the joy and wonder she made him feel. He is performing as an ideal, which can be seen in his noticing her in an abstract painting by Nakanishi Natsuyuki. He stated that in the painting he "could feel her presence… could see her there among the flowing curves" (Viala and Masson-Sekine 1988: 180). Even though the painting had nothing to do with her, it helped to inspire his dance. This reinforces the idea that butoh is different from theatre in that it does not represent specific characters in the way that theatre typically does. It could also be argued that *Admiring La Argentina* was one the first modern butoh works, where the aesthetic feel of the piece began to take on more or a central role. As Franko notes, this work was the first time that Hijikata and Ohno had produced a "self-consciously theatrical, and hence repeatable, butoh production" (2011: 115).

Admiring La Argentina can also be viewed as a becoming. Franko writes how in the dance, Ohno "does not so much dance La Argentina as he dances his gaze upon her in the time of memory" (2011: 109). The audience is not seeing the dancer Ohno, or the character La Argentina, but an Ohno-Argentina. Ohno Yoshito said of viewing the dance that he was "never quite sure whether Kazuo is quietly possessing her spirit, or if Argentina herself has entered his body… As they begin to merge and become as one, a metamorphosis takes place. Kazuo becomes Argentina" (quoted in Franko 2011: 117-119). Ohno says of his female roles, that his "intention in dressing as a woman onstage… has never been to become a female impersonator, or to transform myself into a woman… [but to] trace my life back to its most distant origins" (quoted in Franko 2011: 113). Becoming is not about changing into something, but about learning from the other to increase awareness of the world, and the way we interact with and interpret our environment. This notion of becoming will be returned to throughout.

Ivy Yu-Shian Lin writes how "the basis of Japanese aesthetics resonates with Zen Buddhist philosophy and has prompted a variety of artistic expressions which all centre on quietness, tranquility, simplicity, and subdued refinement" (2009: 230). While Hijikata was explicitly attempting to distance his ideas from Eastern religious and spiritual ideas, their prevalence within the culture means that some influence could not help but seep in. Although Hijikata said that his "butoh originates somewhere totally different from the performing arts related to religion - Buddhism, Shintoism or whatever - I was born from the mud" (quoted in Viala and Masson-Sekine 1988: 71), it is nonetheless easy to draw parallels between concepts

found in Zen and Shinto and those underlying butoh practices, such as the abandonment of the self. This underlying Zen character also gives a reason for the similarities in the practices of Hijikata and John Cage, such as their highlighting of the ordinary. Goldberg notes how Cage had a "deeply felt sympathy for Zen Buddhism and oriental philosophy in general" (2011: 124). This can be seen in his wanting sounds to be heard as sounds, without meaning, like the way Japanese gardeners follow the guidance of natural materials by working "*with*, rather than *in spite of* or *irrespective of*, the material's natural endowments" (Saito 2007: 86). It is also worth noting that Ohno Kazuo, probably the most famous butoh practitioner, was a firm believer in Christianity and imbued much of his dance with that spirit. Still, the underlying aesthetics of Japanese culture, and a Zen-like way of viewing the world can be seen in his teaching. Ohno's dance is about discovering a freedom within oneself, or rather a freedom absent of self. For Ohno, "[d]ancing freely means giving up the notion of oneself, reverting to the original memory of the body, and discovering the soul stifled within" (Viala and Masson- Sekine 1988: 22). In his dance classes, Ohno would urge his students to embrace this kind of freedom, where being free "means being liberated from thought and will" (Viala and Masson- Sekine 1988: 55). The inclusion of these kinds of concerns highlights the difficulty in ascribing butoh a clear classification, such as dance.

Butohs interest in exploring the relations between objects can also be seen in the importance that Hijikata placed on all aspects relating to his works, not just the performances. For Hijikata the posters and invitations were also integral parts of the work. Nakanishi Natsuyuki, who designed sets and costumes for a number of Hijikata's shows, noted how Hijikata had "told him that the audience would see the tickets and posters before it saw the dance, so the dance began long before the spectator took their seats and the action began" (Baird 2012: 75). Hijikata himself stated that he carried "the theatre round with me; the building itself is part of the dance, even the ticket. Thus, when the audience returns home, they carry part of the dance with them. Everything is interlocked: the dance, the building, the theatre. It is just a different way of viewing the structure of the theatre" (quoted in Viala and Masson-Sekine 1988: 186). This can be viewed as another example of relationality in butoh. Hijikata wanted audiences to not just view a dance performance, but also to consider the role of all objects related to the performance. This leads into Hijikata's way of playing with language. In the posters and invitations for the shows he would often use characters that sounded like the words one would expect, but would mean something quite different, something that can only be done in a pictographic language. In doing so, Hijikata was "remaking language so that it could say more

than previously possible, while also bringing into relief the arbitrariness of all language" (Baird 2012: 81). This also shows that because more than just the dance performance was counted as being an integral part of the work, it does not make sense to define the work as solely being a dance.

Transforming Language, Encountering Darkness

One of the things that Hijikata was trying to do was to develop a theatre that transcended written and spoken language, and to expand the language of the body. This was in part a challenge to his friend and mentor Mishima Yukio, who taunted Hijikata by stating that language will always be able to express more than a body can. Mishima wrote that we "have come to understand that compared with the language of written characters, the language of the body is significantly restricted" (quoted in Baird 2012: 39). Carol Martin, in an interview with Kawamura Takeshi, explains how in "butoh there is an attitude about the body. This attitude seems to express the belief that the body is transparent, that it reveals or expresses pain, misery, and pleasure more truthfully than language. The body can speak purely what language cannot" (2000: 113). Hijikata was inspired by Artaud, who also sought to create a theatre that transcends language, or return to a pre-linguistic way of moving, of creating a body free of learned conventions. This can explain why Hijikata was so interested in suffering, as intense pain can lead people away from a conditioned way of acting and towards a primal self. As Sas notes, both Artaud and Hijikata "worked toward the extreme edge of gesture and movement, in order to evoke something more primal than meaning, something intimately linked to pain" (2011: 171). Curtin affirms this idea of pain as a way of accessing a primal self, writing that Hijikata's dances "reverberated with excess and ruin, portraying it as a return to a primal and shamanistic reality removed from that of consumerism and accumulation" (2010: 61). Hijikata's experiments with language were essential for the way that his works developed. Baird notes how for the dancers working with Hijikata, there were "three main emphases: becoming (or transformation); allowing movements to emerge from the body; and using imagery to modify movements" (2012: 159). The way that he trained his dancers for this was by "combining small units of movement into larger sequences, and subjecting those movements to various constraints" (Baird 2006: 93).

The emphasis on becoming can be seen in the way that butoh practitioners imbue themselves

with the essence of inanimate and non-human objects. In an interview with Shibusawa Tatsuhiko, Hijikata states that in butoh the dancer becomes mere object, and that "a human being is transformed into something not human" (Hijikata and Shibusawa 2000: 53). Mikami Kayo relates a time when she visited Hijikata's studio and Ashikawa Yōko was "going around the studio clucking - she really had become a chicken" (quoted in Baird 2012: 160). This way of becoming needs to be seen as different from an actor playing a role; "becoming is never imitating" (Deleuze and Guattari, quoted in Cull 2012: 105). The notion of becoming, as opposed to being, can also be found in Buddhist thought. Yuriko Saito writes how, in "contrast to the Western philosophical tradition that privileges Being - an independent, discrete, and permanent substance - as the ultimate reality, Buddhism characterizes reality as Becoming or phenomena that are mutually dependent and interrelated" (2011: 500). Butoh is itself rhizomatic.

Although it is a concept that was developed decades after butoh's foundation, this idea of becoming can be seen in the concept of becoming-animal, developed by Deleuze and Guattari, which "is based on… affirmation of the continuity between human and nonhuman animals… [and] concern[s] the undoing of autonomous subjectivity and affirming the immanence of an 'other' within oneself" (Cull 2012: 117). It is "not a metaphor, but a metamorphosis" (Cull 2012: 120). This is what butoh practitioners aim to achieve. There are of course other becomings, other than becoming-animal, though the concept remains the same. What is important is the becoming itself, as it "produces nothing other than itself" (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 262). Using the example of disability, a "dancer had to want to see the world from the perspective of disability so badly that she wished she were born that way. She needed to wish that she did not even have any memories of not having been disabled" (Baird 2012: 160). They do not start as a dancer, and then transform into someone who his disabled, but become what Deleuze and Guattari would call a disabled-dancer, or something similar. Becoming does not transform one thing into another, but rather creates a hybrid containing the essence of both. They also suggest that this becoming-hybrid is the goal of aesthetic practices: "[s]inging or composing, painting, writing have no other aim: to unleash these becomings" (2004: 300).

Hijikata had a general interest in the darker aspects of life and its connection with death. Kurihara writes how Hijikata "created the term "ankoku butoh" [darkness dance] to denote a cosmological dance which completely departed from existing dances and explored the

darkest side of human nature" (2000: 12). This interest in darkness can also be seen in some of Hijikata's key influences - Antonin Artaud, George Bataille, and Jean Genet. There are connections between these artists that can be seen expressed in butoh. In the works of Genet, Hijikata found a "paradoxical world [that] captured Hijikata's imagination… [and became the] guiding aesthetic throughout his life: the ugly is the beautiful; death is life" (Kurihara 2000: 18). One of Hijikata's earlier stage names, his birth name was Kunio Yoneyama, was Hijikata Genet. Butoh has often been described as grotesque, a description that can be traced through Artaud and back to Alfred Jarry, who "opted for the grotesque, for the obscene and for travesty as an antidote to bourgeois sentimentalism and for abstract, anti-realist devices to jump-start the spectator's imagination" (Carroll 1993: 322). This description could equally be applied to Hijikata's works. Bataille, like Artaud, held a reverence for "so-called primitive society". For Bataille it was because in such societies "the needs for a balanced interaction between the imposition of taboos and moments of transgression are recognised and the extremes of sensual experience are sanctioned and given free play" (Curtin 2010: 61). Hijikata can be seen to have been expressing this need for the transgression of taboo in his works, for example in *Kinjiki*, which included the simulation of sodomy. For both Hijikata and George Bataille, "eroticism distorts the reproductive purpose of sexuality, as it serves no usefulness" (Curtin 2010: 61).

This ties into how Hijikata wanted to produce useless movements, movements that could not be used for any productive or economic gains, in a way similar to how performance art was conceived in part as a reaction against the institutions of the artworld and the removal of a commodity that could be placed on the art market. Hijikata's stance was a direct reaction to the unprecedented economic growth that Japan was experiencing at the time. Baird notes how in butoh, the "practitioners by and large see themselves as doing something that has no discernible utility or significance" (2012: 5). Hijikata himself wrote that "to a production-oriented society, the aimless use of the body, which I call dance, is a deadly enemy which must be taboo" (2000: 44). Could perhaps a core element of dance be the use of the body in a non-functional capacity? Meaning that the movements serve no practical purpose outside of the movement itself. Such an idea is implied by St. Augustine, who wrote that when "a motion, or sequence of motions, does not generate practical actions, and is intended to give pleasure through perception of rhythmic order, it is dance" (quoted in Beardsley 1982: 35). Though Beardsley goes on to say that "we cannot define dance in this negative way as excluding motions that generate practical actions" (1982: 35). While this would seem to place

butoh closer to dance than performance art, it is important to remember that Hijikata wanted butoh to consist of useless movements, whereas performance art consists in using the body to express a particular idea or perform a particular function. Performance art *uses* the body.

Another thing that may be said about butoh is that it was Hijikata's attempt to put into practice the writings of Artaud. Artaud writes that if "fundamental theatre is like the plague, this is not because it is contagious, but because like the plague it is a revelation, urging forward the exteriorisation of a latent undercurrent of cruelty through which all the perversity of which the mind is capable, whether in a person or a nation, becomes localised" (1995: 21). This relates to how Hijikata thought that through viewing the world from the viewpoint of someone that was suffering or in pain, different relations between performer and environment can be discovered. Curtin writes that Artaud's metaphor of the theatre as a plague "aims for the breakdown of self-control and self-containment in order to provoke radical transformation" (2010: 64). This seems like an accurate description of what was happening with Hijikata's butoh. As well as their shared interest in the darker aspects of life, Hijikata and Artaud were also both interested in a magical sense of reality that they thought was missing from the world in general, and the theatre in particular. Lin notes how "both Artaud and the original form of Butoh… are integrated with the sublime, the mystic, and the metaphysical" (2009: 56). The ingrained Zen-like character of butoh can also help to explain the similarities between Hijikata and Artaud, as "both Buddhism and Artaud argue that the unconscious and nonsensical are key to absoluteness and genuine totality… [and that] the ultimate truth lies beyond the reach of cognitive intelligence, conceptual knowledge, and the perception of rational thought" (Lin 2009: 135).

As well as developing a language of the body, in his choreography Hijikata experimented with using language to inspire movement. Kurihara notes how he "tied the body up with words, turning it into a material object, an object that is like a corpse" (2000: 17). In his writings Hijikata often used unusual combinations of words, or invented his own phrases, and Kurihara notes how his "language implies meanings and feelings that logical language cannot convey" (2000: 15). Hijikata developed his own unique form of notation that he called *butohfu*. Hijikata's butohfu were constructed through "studying paintings and other art works and observing various entities not usually thought worthy of dance representation" (Baird 2012: 148) with his student, and primary dancer of his later works, Ashikawa Yōko. These butohfu consisted of scrapbooks filled with magazine clippings of Western art works, such as

the paintings of Francis Bacon and the drawings of Aubrey Beardsley, and short descriptive phrases, such as "The image and feeling of attempting to reach for a pencil just out of reach on the floor in front of you" (Fraleigh and Nakamura 2000: 56). Curtin notes how in his work, Hijikata often used an array of objects so disparate as to obscure any connections they might share, in the same way that he used words with similar sounds but vastly different meanings in his writings and performance related paraphernalia. She goes on to write that in these "often chaotic arrangements, Hijikata violates representation, as such objects refer back only to themselves and revel in their own 'objectness', their incompletion rendering them irreducible to sense or purpose" (2010: 61). Baird writes how Hijikata "sought to expand the language of the body by finding new sources for movements and by subjecting the new movements to further operations to further increase the language of the body" (2012: 7). By removing the ability of a spectator to make any explicit connection between objects, Hijikata was forcing spectators to accept those objects at face value. This can be seen as similar to what artists like John Cage and Yvonne Rainer were doing, forcing spectators to view ordinary sounds and movements *as* ordinary sounds and movements. This highlights an aspect of the nature of authentic butoh works, they aim to express something *real*. Another correlation between Cage's work and Hijikata's is how the works are not meant to be interpreted as a whole, but the pieces of the work are meant to be appreciated merely for what they are. For example, in the removal of the self from the butoh body which is meant to show the body purely as body, or as emotions free from a self. Like Cage's works, butoh performances are not meant to be read, but experienced, felt. This can be seen in the original *Kinjiki* performance where only a small section of the stage was illuminated. By making it hard for the audience to see what was going on, Hijikata removed the ability of the audience to read a cohesive narrative in the work. They were forced to react purely to the sounds and movements that they were able to pick out.

Hijikata's use of Western art as inspiration in his butohfu shows that "just as *butō* is not a return to a primordial body, neither is it a dance form tailored to the specificities of the Japanese body" (Baird 2006: 97). Sas reaffirms this, writing that Hijikata's *butō* sought to express a way of moving that was "no longer either Japanese or not Japanese" (2011: 175). This explains one of the reasons why it is so hard to define butoh, because it incorporates themes and techniques from anywhere that it deems to be of use. This blending of disparate influences was a consistent theme throughout Hijikata's work, with Baird noting how "over the course of his career Hijikata was to continually draw on and experiment with the

surrealist technique of juxtaposing realities in order to alter both" (2012: 61).

The issue of notation comes up often when discussing dance, though that seems to be largely due to its flowing out of the philosophy of music. Although the score seems to be essential for determining works in classical music, it certainly is not for modern forms of music, and as there has not been developed any universally accepted form of notation in dance, it is safe to say that notation is also inessential in determining whether or not multiple dance performances of a similar kind are unique or separate art works. One problem often mentioned within the philosophy of dance is whether notation can be used to define a work in the way that a score can be used to define a piece of classical music. One of the problems when considering dance is that there are many variables that may not find their way into the notation, particularly with improvised works, and so the notation of dance is therefore incapable of capturing the nature of a dance in the way that a score can (supposedly) be a true representation of a song. Ohno Yoshito wrote of his father Kazuo that he had "no need of predetermined sequences or movements, his modus operandi doesn't require him to establish a choreographic structure or vocabulary" (quoted in Franko 2011: 189). In classical music the score is said to represent the type of which each performance is a token. But how does that fit in relation to modern musical styles? Is the recording the type and live performances tokens of that? But then what about performances that precede the recording of a song? Or songs that are performed but never recorded? Where is the artwork located? Butohfu is not used in the same way as regular notation, such as musical scores. Butohfu is a guideline, rather than a rulebook. Rather than just inspiring movements, butohfu is intended to inspire feelings. How would it really feel if bugs were crawling under your skin? Can you bring yourself to feel such a thing without merely putting on an act? The improvisational nature of butoh is another instance where butoh more closely aligns with performance art. As butoh works are rarely reperformed in the way that dance works are, the matter of notating a particular dance does not arise. The works just are the performances.

Shingeki **and** *Angura*

Butoh was part of a larger movement within the Japanese avant-garde that challenged the Westernisation of the country that had been occurring since the Meiji Restoration in 1868. It was at this time that the country was opened up to foreign trade after more than 200 years of relative isolation, of which the Second World War was just one of many consequences.

Though Japan had been slowly integrating Western culture with it's own, "the post-war period saw the uncontrolled imposition of western culture through the American occupation" (Holledge and Tompkins 2000: 126). The various avant-garde arts in Japan were dealing in their own ways with the effects of the war. In relation to the experimental opera works of Ichiyanagi Toshi, Peter Eckersall gives a good overview of the circumstances influencing many of these artists. He writes how "in marring and defacing canonical and popular forms, Ichiyanagi attacks the ideology that accompanied the adoption of the Western canon; for the modernisation/Westernisation of the country entailed nationalism, which then led to militarism, Japan as a colonial power in East Asia, fascism, and the disastrous consequences of World War II. This ugliness that destroys beauty calls into question the blind adherence of the Japanese to Western ideology, the lack of any coherent social structure in the aftermath of the war, and the collapse of Japanese identity with the mindless pursuit of modernity" (2013: 79).

This avant-garde was also in opposition to s*hingeki* (new theatre), the dominant form of theatre in Japan at that time. Shingeki was inspired by Western realist theatre, such as the works of Ibsen or Chekhov. Hijikata's dances were created in opposition to this new form of theatre which was moving away from the sensual and spiritual forms of theatre that he preferred. Curtin writes how Hijikata "rebelled against an imposed reality of rationalism, replacing it with an indistinct world of the grotesque and mutilated, while reveling in the sensual, sublime and profane", and that within his dances "he allowed for the possibility of transcendence, an opening to an encounter with states of consciousness that lie beyond notions of fixed and stable self, denied in modern society" (Curtin 2010: 57). Kawamura states that "Angura [underground] theatre practitioners denied the *shingeki* style of theatre with its tradition of realist acting and text-based productions. Shingeki did not explore the real possibilities of the theatrical" (2000: 109). You can see reality by being out in the world, the purpose of theatre is to show you something beyond that. Terayama Shūji's theatre works, as part of the angura movement, were also challenging the realist theatre practices at the time. Like Hijikata's butoh, Terayama was also working towards a similar goal as Artaud, looking to "reconnect [theatre] to its shamanic and ritual origins" (Sas 2011: 116). The term ritual is important within the angura scene, as Zero Jigen (Zero Dimension) called their performances rituals. The similar practices of Zero Jigen, a performance art group, and Hijikata is another indication that one of the reasons butoh was considered dance and not performance art is purely because Hijikata chose to call what he was doing dance. Another similarity between Terayama's thinking and Hijikata's is that Terayama believed that rather "than using the

mind... to make the body move, theater should involve a movement that begins in the body" (Sas 2011: 117).

In the avant-garde of Japan in the 1960s, many artists from various disciplines collaborated together and so in many ways it makes no sense to "isolate the works by medium" (Sas 2011: 132), which is another reason why trying to define butoh as a single art form is problematic. There was a close relationship between butoh and other experimental art forms of the time, in particular film and photography. One of the stand-out collaborations of the time is that between Hijikata and Hosoe Eikoh. The first of these collaborations was the 1960 short film *Heso to Genbaku* (*Navel and A-Bomb*), which starred Hijikata and Ohno Yoshito, the primary dancers in *Kinjiki*. This film features another instance of Hijikata's fascination with chickens, with a headless chicken shown writhing its last moment on a beach as it gets lapped by incoming waves. They also collaborated on *Kamaitachi: Hosoe Eikoh Shashinshū* (*Sickle-toothed Weasel: Photobook by Hosoe Eikoh*) (1969). This work ties into Hijikata's exploration of his cultural roots, with the two of them travelling to the Tōhoku region where they grew up (and also where Ohno Kazuo and Terayama were from) and taking photographs with the people that lived there. Part of Hijikata's butoh was allowing the body to dictate the actions of the performer. Related to that is the way that the body is shaped by its experiences, particularly those in childhood. Throughout his works, Hijikata "attempted to neutralize the conventions that were already present in his body-mind and his language by trying to account for everything that had formed him throughout his life" (Baird 2012: 9). Merewether notes how in this work they "attempted to create a record of their memories of childhood and wartime Japan" (2007: 26). Sas writes of how Hosoe's photographic and filmic works "hover at the edge of performance genres" (Sas 2011: 139), and are not merely documents of performances but are artworks in their own right. Sas notes how a work like *Heso to Genbaku* exists in a "liminal space between performance art and cinematic experimentality" (2011: 140). It is also worth noting how this film is often not regarded in terms of its relation to experimental film, but in terms of its place in butoh history. Sas notes how it is "one of the classic films of *butō*, often presented in conjunction with other records of *butō* movement" (2011: 132). The works by Hosoe show how butoh can be realised in ways other than dance, and so that whatever butoh is, it cannot be *just* a dance.

Butoh was "a reaction against Western dance and traditional Japanese dance forms, both of which are part of an urban and aristocratic culture" (Amagasaki 1996). Throughout Hijikata's career can be seen an interest in the experiences of the average person, and so he created works that could be understood by people of any social class. Hijikata wanted to remove the class-based nature of traditional Japanese theatre, making something less refined, and more connected to the interests of everyday people. Both Hijikata and Ohno "were inspired by western avant-garde artists who were hostile to bourgeois morality and industrial modernity" (Holledge and Tompkins 2000: 137), which was a common theme in the avant-garde at the time. Because butoh is "utterly graceless and the antithesis of the cultural refinement achieved by Noh and kabuki, it should demonstrate the falsity of contemporary culture" (Amagasaki 1996). While butoh was reacting against the upper-class elitism of traditional theatre forms, it could not help but be influenced by them as they were well integrated in Japanese society as a whole. In terms ok kabuki, Klein notes how Ohno and Hijikata "sought to incorporate Kabuki's intimate connections to the dark, taboo, repressed side of everyday life" (quoted in Franko 2011: 110). As well as challenging the elitism of these dance forms, they also "strove to create an alternative movement vocabulary for Japanese dance in relation to a dominant context defined both by Western forms and by Noh" (Cull 2012: 190). They were seeking to find ways of moving that had yet to be co-opted by mainstream theatre forms.

We can view the questing and experimentation of butoh, as formulated by Hijikata, as initially being a hybrid form of dance, performance art, and theatre, or perhaps as a conceptual art form, with the first decade being a process of seeing what forms fit within the butoh way of being. It could be thought of as a rhizomatic process, with a butoh attitude being applied to a variety of media and seeing which forms it better relates to. The ideas behind the movements are just as important as the movements themselves. It only became solidified as a dance form after years of refinement by Hijikata and his collaborators. *Bara-iro Dansu* (*Rose Colour Dance*) (1965) was "the last time Hijikata performed in duet with [Ohno Kazuo, and]… was an important turning point towards Hijikata's development of *ankoku* butoh and his so-called Tōhoku kabuki dance style and it's nativist fascination" (Eckersall 2013: 51). Rather than a point of development of *ankoku* butoh, this could be seen as the beginning of the movement away from the ankoku side of butoh, as the point where a distinction can begin to be made between authentic and inauthentic butoh works. This piece also marked a change in Hijikata's relationship with the author Shibusawa Tatsuhiko, the subtitle of the piece is *A LA MAISON*

DE M. CIVECAWA (*To Mr Shibusawa's House*), and can be seen as the peak of their mentor-mentee relationship. After this point, "Shibusawa was more of a friend than a mentor to Hijikata" (Sas 2011: 168), a deliberate move on Hijikata's part. This break between Hijikata and his initial circle of friends and collaborators can be seen as the point where Hijikata's works abandoned their hybrid character and became more clearly, specifically, dance works. Catherine Curtin notes how 1968's *Hijikata to Nihonjin: Nikutai no Hanran* (*Hijikata Tatsumi and Japanese People: Revolt of the Flesh*) marked a turning point in Hijikata's style, and could also be marked as the division between ankoku butoh and butoh as it is known today. Indeed the piece "culminates with Hijikata suspended from ropes and being raised upside down" (2010: 58), a technique which became one of the most recognisable aspects in the work of Sankai Juku a decade later.

Bruce Baird's description of the evolution of butoh into the form it is known as today reinforces the idea that the works that Hijikata was originally producing were more like performance artworks than danceworks. He writes that "what many today know as *butō* is a product of an evolution in the dance methodology of Hijikata Tatsumi in the late sixties and early seventies. Gone [are] the athletic, somewhat improvisatory, and homoerotic works, replaced by a complex dance form that reflect[s] *butō*'s status as a performance art at the crossroads of many artistic movements and theoretical debates" (2006: 93). The idea also seems to be supported by Laura Cull's description that "in its initial conception, butoh was not a 'style' or 'technique' within performance, so much as an experimental investigation of embodied movement as an event of metamorphosis or change" (2012: 112). Although Hijikata did not agree with what performance artists were doing, there is a similarity in the way he wanted to confront spectators. In his early works, like *Kinjiki*, he strove for "a kind of nonproductive tragedy without which theater… becomes frivolous… dishonest" (Baird 2012: 42). As much as he stated his dislike of performance art and Happenings, Hijikata actually did participate in at least one Happening of the time, Kazakura Shō's *Banquet to Commemorate Losing the War* in 1962. This led to the two working together in Hijikata's own work *Anma* which "came closest among Hijikata's works to the Happenings that were often staged in Japan during that time" (Kurihara 2000: 19). A reason for that being that it included performance artists, such as Kazakura Shō, who worked in that medium. *Anma* consisted largely of what would be considered ordinary movements, or athletic movements, such as wrestling and riding bicycles. *Anma* is also one of two cinédance works by Iimura Takahiko. These cinédance works, the other being *Bara-iro Dansu*, can be seen as essential

butoh works in the same way that Eikoh Hosoe's film and photographs were. While these films existed as performances in their own right, Iimura was imbedded in the performances as he filmed, blurring the distinction between film and performance. This is again an example of the fact that non-dance butoh works exist, and so butoh cannot be considered as merely a kind of dance.

The purpose of this section was to give a general sense of what butoh is. One of the reasons such a detailed look at butoh's history was required is that it is important to see the various ways that butoh can be instantiated, as dance and otherwise. It was also necessary to begin to explore the difference between authentic and inauthentic butoh works, and how a distinction can be made between the two. It was also intended to show the relations between butoh and various other art forms. Showing these relations is important as it is those relationships that allow butoh to be considered as a kind of art form, even though it is not easily categorised as any one particular existing art form. Works gaining art status based on their relationship to existing works is a feature of Carroll's narrative theory of art, which will be examined in greater detail in the following section. This section also began exploring the question of why we categorise things the way that we do, a thread that will continue throughout.

Part Two: Dance and Theories of Art

My interest in this section is in imagining a person shown a performance work, in this particular context a butoh work, with no knowledge of what they were seeing. After that, what would the person say that they had seen? There are many works performed in dance, theatre, and performance art that, seen in this way, could be seen as belonging to any of these classes of forms. Whether an untrained observer views a work as dance/theatre/performance art, will depend on the way in which they see the world; they will map the work onto the category that best fits their existing worldview. Because there are visual similarities between butoh dance works, theatre works, and performance art pieces, I will argue here that the only thing that can properly pick them out from visually indistinguishable pieces is the context in which they are presented, similar to the way that ordinary movements or objects become dance or art due to their context. That context is generally determined by the location of the presentation, such as a theatre, and/or the intention of the artist, whether they intend to choreograph a dancework or present a performance art piece. It is also determined by the history of the art form being produced, and how the work that is being produced relates to the history of the form. This is important when distinguishing authentic works from inauthentic ones, as what it takes for something to count as authentic is rarely something that can be seen.

A quick aside; the notion of what makes something count as a *work* is a philosophical question in its own right. But while I use the terms dancework, performance artwork, etc… throughout, I am not interested in the question of what a work is. So these terms should be read in relation to their ordinary usage, and not their philosophical counterparts.

Dance as an activity plays a part in many people's lives to a greater extent than perhaps any other art forms non-art correlates. Many people go out dancing in clubs, take up dancing as a hobby, or participate in dances as part of their culture or community. Yet although a number of such dances can be appreciated aesthetically, almost none of such instances would be classified as works of art. The reason that these instances of dance generally do not count as art performances is because they are often not intended to be viewed as such, and also because the context in which they are performed is not an artistic context. This does not mean

that they *cannot* be art, just that they usually are not. Could someone then go out to a club and intend to make art? They could, but it would either count as a work of performance art or perhaps as a specific form of dance that involves performing in non-art environments. In either case, either documentation would be needed to show that it was a work and not just a normal activity, or it would have needed to be contextualised in some way prior, such as advertising the occasion. This will be discussed more later in relation to Marina Abramović's *The Lovers*.

There are two immediate questions that this distinction between dance-as-activity and dance-as-art produces. The first is what makes certain performances qualify as dance-as-art works. As mentioned above, there are two reasons that I take to be essential in determining this, the first is the intentions behind the performances, and the other is the context in which they are performed. The point of this section is to examine in detail the distinction between visually indistinguishable objects or events and which side of the dividing line between art and non-art they fall. The purpose here is to show how butoh counts as an art form, and to continue building the argument that its categorisation as dance is mistaken. In order to do this I will be looking at how butoh, dance, and everyday movements fit in relation to some of the extant theories of art, and how dance as it is generally understood fails to accommodate butoh. Anna Pakes notes how, just because a dancework can be visually indistinguishable from a non-dancework, it is still counted as a dance due to the intentions of the author and the context within which it was created (2013: 96), though she goes on to write that "it is not simply the institutional context which counts here, rather it is the way in which certain actions, performed in relation to particular sets of conventions, are meaningful in a manner that mere movement… is not" (2013: 97).

I consider dance to be a sub-category of theatre, as both theatre and dance are defined by their requirement to be performed for an audience, and their presentation within a theatrical context; and so a brief discussion of theatre is needed. Theatre can be defined as a presentation by one or more people with the intent to portray a story or concept within a predetermined structure for an audience. The reason for stating that only an intent to portray a story or concept is needed is so that a work can still count as a work of theatre even if the performers fail in realising the story or concept. That is not to say that people cannot intend to portray a concept and fail in creating a work of theatre, only that the concept need not be

realised for it to count as theatre. This intent is of course only one of the conditions for a work to count as theatre. Only an overall structure needs to be determined, even if what is predetermined is that there is no overall structure. This need for some kind of pre-determination rules out spontaneous performances from counting as works of theatre, even if they attract an audience. In this way, wholly improvised works can still be counted as works of theatre. And the belief by the performers that what they are doing is for an audience means that a work will still be counted as a work of theatre even if no-one attends the performance. Theatre is for an audience, even if no-one turns up to see it. There is an expectation that an audience will be present, which underlies the way that the theatrical production is put together. While dance is primarily interested in the movements of the body, theatre is primarily an expression of either story and character, or concepts more abstractly. Theatre "ceases to be performance art… when it commits itself overwhelmingly to representing a particular world" (Graver 1995). While a theatrical performance can be about a heroic journey of love and courage, it can also be a critique of bathroom hand dryers. While both kinds of theatrical expression may be different, what they share is that *what* is being portrayed is more important than *how* it is being portrayed. While a story and characterisation may help to enhance a dance performance, they can never be the primary object of consideration in a dance performance. The most important thing in dance is always the movements of the body. Heyd writes that "in contrast to dance, actors always represent something and never just present the human body when acting" (2000: 23). Though a number of dances do represent, Swan Lake is the classic example, the representation is not the primary focus of the audience.

Some choreographers, such as Yvonne Rainer, Merce Cunningham, and Pina Bausch, think that an audience is not necessary for a work to count as an instance of dance-as-art. It could be that these choreographers who say that the audience is unnecessary are not merely expanding dances parameters, rather they are doing something *more than* just dance; creating dance-x hybrids. Since hybrid works are so prevalent in modern art performance, perhaps it no longer makes sense to count dance, theatre, performance art as separate genres. Perhaps even art itself is becoming, or has become, a genreless form. Art is no longer defined by medium.

This section is primarily concerned with two theories of art, formalism and narrativism. The reason I have focused on these two theories is because they seem the most suited for setting up the authentic-inauthentic distinction, which is key in understanding how we may

categorise butoh works. Narrativism itself is important in that it connects with the thread of categorisation running through this thesis. Because this section is intended to help show how butoh counts as a kind of art, and because this thesis as a whole is interested in whether correct categorisations of things is possible, it is worth briefly looking at the idea that there can be no way of defining art once and for all. The reason being is that to ask for necessary and sufficient conditions as to which art form butoh belongs to is likely to be more difficult if art itself is something that cannot have necessary and sufficient conditions. Weitz notes how "each philosophy of art, tries over and over again to establish the stated ideal only to be succeeded by a new or revised theory" (1956: 27). Because of this, it can be said that art "has no set of necessary and sufficient properties, hence a theory of it is logically impossible" (Weitz 1956: 28). No matter what conditions we may come up with for defining art, there will always be new problem cases that fall outside that definition, yet are still seen as being art. The same can be said for individual kinds of art as well. As an open concept, the kinds of things that can be called art will continue to increase. Even if the category of art itself is too varied to define, we should still able to define individual art forms, and determine whether individual works should be counted as a work of that type. However, like with art itself, there is no universally accepted definition of what makes a dance work into an art work. Following on from Weitz and his opinion of art in general, I do not believe there to be any necessary *and* sufficient conditions for what makes something a dance work. This is an opinion shared by McFee, though he does not see this as a major problem since "one can understand concepts without being able to define them" (2011: 271). This opinion is also shared by Heyd, who notes that there appears to be no one thing that can be applied to all danceworks, but that "dance today occurs within a distinct historical context" and indeed art as a whole "cannot help but be subject to a reading that relates to its earlier phases" (2000: 21). When deciding which category a work of art belongs to, "what is at stake is no factual analysis concerning necessary and sufficient properties but a decision as to whether the work under examination is similar in certain respects to other works" (Weitz 1956: 31-32) of the category into which the work is being considered for. This is problematic in the case of butoh as it is similar in almost equal degrees to dance and performance art. As performance art is the main focus of the following section, this section will be more concerned with butoh's relation to dance.

The Artistic-Aesthetic Distinction

As this section begins with the distinction between dance-as-activity and dance-as-art, the first thing to do is to distinguish art objects from aesthetic objects. Why can a painting of a sunset be art, but not a real sunset? One reason is that "artworks require interpretation" (Giovannelli 2015), that art is intended to *mean* something. Aesthetic value may be a common by-product of art, but it is not a necessary feature. This goes against a formalist understanding of art, where it is the surface characteristics of a work that determine its art status. The formalist attitude can clearly be seen in the work of Monroe Beardsley. Lopes writes of the fact that "Beardsley claims that all and only works of art afford experiences with a marked aesthetic character" (2008: 118). In Beardsley's words, a work of art is "an arrangement of conditions intended to be capable of affording an experience with marked aesthetic character" (1982: 299). This means that those works traditionally considered art give a feeling that similar non-artworks do not. There also needs to have been an intention for such an arrangement to produce such character. Lopes notes how window displays, sports, and so on, do not count as art. However, could a window display in a department store not be considered an artwork? Particularly if it were created by a recognised artist, such as those designed by Warhol for Bonwit Teller in 1961? Or prior to that, in Japan in 1954, when the Sogo Department Store in Osaka had the group of artists Zero-Kai (Zero Society) create window displays for them (Merewether 2007: 7). These examples of already established artists creating works for such displays show that window displays clearly can be considered artworks.

It also suggests that whatever art may be, it is not medium dependent. Art is a doing, not a being. Art is something that we project onto the objects in question, and not something inherent in the object itself. While that then means that all things could be considered art, in addition to classifying things as art, we also classify things as not-art, blocking the conferral of art status on an object. Related to forgeries, because our concepts determine how we feel about art, as long as the concept of forgery is not thought to apply, an object can be experienced as artistic. It is only when the concept of forgery is applied to the object that it loses its art-status. That is also because embedded within the concept of forgery is the concept of inferiority, as well as the concept of not-art.

In her analysis of artworks that use the sky as an integral element, Saito writes how the "works are rather *facilitators* of our experience of the sky and celestial phenomena" (2011: 507). This could be said of all art works. The works themselves are not art, but merely facilitate the artistic experience. Art is a concept we learn, and thereafter apply this concept to objects and events. The way the concept is learned and interpreted determines how it is applied. Because what determines whether or not something counts as art are its concepts, the more important question is then how these concepts are formed.

Also, is it not possible to have "experiences with a marked aesthetic character" through observing nature? Think of the sun shining through the canopy deep in a forest, or an expansive lake seen from atop a mountain. There has to be more to something being art than just a sensorial experience or feeling. This shows how having a context within which to view the work comes into play. One of the reasons natural aesthetic experiences cannot be art is because there is no artistic context through which to view them as such. There is also no intention behind them; the setting sun does not intend to paint the sky purple and orange. In her analysis of sky art, Saito writes that if "we transcend, forget, or overcome our knowledge that the celestial experience, whether of the sky or a sunset, is orchestrated by a specific artistic intention and extensive manipulation of physical materials, while we may still have an aesthetic experience of the celestial phenomena, we fail to have an *artistic* appreciation" (2011: 513). This can be related to the authentic-inauthentic distinction in butoh. While the inauthentic works can be appreciated aesthetically, an authenticity is required for butoh works to be viewed *artistically*.

A requirement thought to apply to all artworks is that they need to have been created by humans. As Graham McFee writes, "artworks are human products, requiring the possibility of an appropriate human audience" (2011: 187). Although other animals may create works that resemble artworks, they can only ever be appreciated aesthetically and not artistically. This ties back into the idea that for something to be classified as an artwork it needs to have been intended to be seen as such. Even in what we would consider to be animal mating rituals, where the male is intending to produce an aesthetically pleasing performance, it cannot count as art because it is not intended to be viewed as art, as animals have no concept of art that we know of. This can also be related to artworks created by children. While they are intending to create a work that is aesthetically pleasing, they have no concept of art as a

whole to which their works can belong. It is this joint artistic intention and artistic context that make works count as works of art. To relate this to dance, if someone were to start dancing randomly in the street, no matter how aesthetically pleasing the dancing was, it could not be viewed as art based only on the performance itself. There has to be more than just formal qualities taken into consideration when categorising something as art or non-art. And in relation to butoh, it takes more than having a butoh aesthetic for something to be butoh. In Terayama Shūji's films, such as *Grass Labyrinth* (1979) and *Pastoral* (1974), a butoh inspired aesthetic style is used on a majority of the characters. Yet something looking like butoh, or using a butoh aesthetic, does not make something butoh. While Terayama did know Hijikata, and was also part of the same avant-garde scene, his films are not considered butoh works as the aesthetic is used merely for visual flavour, and that aesthetic character alone is not sufficient to make something butoh. It takes more than looking like something to be something.

Related to the notion of categorisation is that of interpretation. The difficulties that we face in correctly categorising things also come up in our interpretations of them. If we categorise something in a certain way, then we are more likely to interpret the work based on that categorisation. In this way a great work can be seen as poor if viewed from the perspective of belonging to a particular category, and vice-versa. Beardsley thought that "all art criticism should make a serious effort to recognize its objects as special, autonomous, and important in their own right" (Wreen 2014), meaning that a work should be judged purely on what can be found in the work itself. This judging a work only on what is contained in the work is problematic though, as in butoh where a judgement based just on the content of the work could lead different observers to place the work into different categories. Beardsley would say that if two observers were to come up with different interpretations of a work, then one of the observers would be wrong, as "an aesthetic object cannot have incompatible characteristics" (1981: 48). Beardsley gives an example of two people discussing the architecture of a Gothic library. One of them considers the building to be graceful and sturdy, while the other finds it cheap and vulgar. The reason for the latter's opinion is that they know that the building has been built around a steel framework, while a true Gothic building has no such support. Although it looks identical to a true Gothic building, it is not, and as such the latter person cannot see it as such (1981: 50). To relate this to butoh, while earlier and later butoh works may look identical, when one knows that the later artists are missing some key component they cannot help but to judge those works as not being *authentic* butoh. However,

Beardsley goes on to say that such an observer is mistaken, and that the works should be judged only on what can readily be seen in the work, and not what can only be seen with some additional knowledge (1981: 52).

If Beardsley was right though, how is it that we distinguish between original works and forgeries? Forgeries display the same formal qualities as the originals, and so on Beardsley's view they should be judged as being just as good as the originals. Are forgeries bad works of art, or are they not works of art at all? It could be thought that creativity is an essential component of something counting as a work of art, yet something like a readymade, or Warhol's various sculptures of household products do not display any creativity on a visual level. In those cases it would be the concept behind the piece that is the creative aspect. With forgeries though, there is no concept behind the piece, they are created merely for the market. This is related to the distinction between early and later butoh works. A number of modern works lack any kind of creativity and could be considered similar to forgeries in the way that they merely copy earlier performances. This distinction is not something that can be observed though. One would have to recognise that the modern works were derivative of the early works in order to judge them in this way. An untrained observer could then be said to be able to appreciate the modern works aesthetically, but not artistically. But as Carroll writes, "the question of merit is independent of its art status" (1993: 322). In this way, modern butoh works maintain their categorisation as butoh works, however a number of them turn out to be inferior works. Modern butoh works are called butoh due to their visual similarity to existing works, even though the underlying intent may be different. This need to understand more about the larger context within which a work exists can be seen even in the early years of butoh. Baird writes how, as Hijikata's butoh developed, an understanding of the works depended more and more on audiences being aware of previous works. While the dances could be enjoyed on their own, in was necessary for audiences to attend "dance after dance, and also to attend other Happenings, neo-Dada events, and photographic shows in order to understand the dance" (2012: 97).

One reason for choosing to view butoh as dance rather than performance art is that Hijikata considered his art as dance. Hijikata also personally disliked performance art, and so differentiating butoh from performance art will tie into the question of how much weight should be given to the intentions of the artist. Can a work be excluded from a category merely because the artist refuses to identify it as such? Or can the intentions of the artist be put aside

due to some overriding feature? Carroll writes that even "though identifying the artist's intention is relevant for establishing art status, it may not be relevant for interpretation" (Carroll 1993: 323).

There are two kinds of intentionalism, only one of which is important to the arguments being made here. The first is when an artist intends the work to be considered as a particular kind of work (such as dance); the other is when an artist intends for the work to express a particular kind of meaning (such as despair at the loss of a loved one), regardless of whether that intention is apparent, or successfully achieved, in the work. The latter kind of intentionalism seems superfluous as, just because an artist intends to express a particular meaning, that does not preclude other observers from projecting their own meanings onto the work. The best that can be said for it is that it gives an indication as to how to begin to view a work. Though Beardsley's view on intentionalism is more to do with this latter type of intentionalism, where the idea that an "artist's intentions are utterly irrelevant to the descriptive, interpretive, and evaluative properties of [the] work" (Wreen 2014), it can also be applied to the former kind of intentionalism, which is what is being focused on here. This would mean that just because Hijikata intended for his ankoku butoh to be a form of dance, that does not automatically mean that it is. Even if the intention of the artist is found to be necessary in the correct categorisation of an artwork, it is not on its own sufficient. This is where the addition of placing a work into a specific context comes into play. It is not just that Hijikata intended for his work to be dance, but it was also intended to be viewed in relation to the kinds of dance that were being staged at the time, and those styles that had influenced its practitioners, such as the works of Mary Wigman or Martha Graham.

Ordinary Movement

Since formal qualities alone are insufficient in determining how a work is correctly categorised, I want to continue examining the artistic-aesthetic distinction by looking at performances that are appreciated aesthetically but not artistically. One question is how we differentiate sport from dance, as many people watch rhythmic gymnastics or ice-skating for their aesthetic value much in the same way as they would view dance performances. Can such performances really not be considered art? The argument would be that the sports person does not intend to present a work of art through their activity. What if the gymnasts

and skaters, in addition to striving to perform well, also had the intention of displaying an artistic work? This again highlights how it is the context that is the deciding factor as to whether or not a work is accepted as art. Even if the performers considered themselves to be producing art, the framing of sporting events prevents them from being categorised as such. To continue with the critique of formalism, just because it is intended to be viewed aesthetically does not mean that it is art.

Perhaps this is the distinction that needs to be made between different kinds of butoh works. There are some butoh works, primarily those created in the first few decades of the form, that count as art works, and there are other works that are purely aesthetic works. We could consider the butoh-as-art works authentic butoh, and the butoh-as-aesthetic works inauthentic. This distinction can be highlighted through a look at the difference between the traditional Chinese martial art *gungfu* forms, and their modern, government mandated *wushu* counterparts. A parallel can be drawn between the two kinds of butoh and gungfu and wushu. We can consider gungfu as authentic, and wushu as inauthentic, even though their forms are largely perceptually indistinguishable from one another. Wushu was created to be viewed aesthetically, and so removed anything from the practice that did not relate to how the forms looked while playing up the acrobatic and stylistic elements of the form. In contrast to this, to properly practice gungfu requires a cultivation of inner character that, while imperceptible, is essential for a form to truly be gungfu. This is similar to how being a true butoh work requires an inner character separate from its outer manifestation. Another similarity between butoh and gungfu can be seen in the concept of becoming-animal as discussed earlier. In a number of gungfu systems there are animal forms where the practitioners, rather than merely imitating the movements of the animal, seek to capture the essence of the animal. Through observation, they seek to understand the ways that the animals interact with their environment and then translate that into various systems of movement.

It is interesting to consider how we differentiate dance from sport and martial arts. Wushu has been described as dance-like, and there are a number of shows that tour the world giving demonstrations in the same venues that one would watch ballet or opera. There is also the Brazilian martial art capoeira which is also dance, created at a time when martial arts were banned. Martial arts have even been incorporated into some butoh works, such as Sankai Juku's *Tobari* (2008), which contains movements clearly influenced by, and visually indistinguishable from, martial arts forms. It may be useful to consider the difference as like

that between school plays and theatrical productions, it is the context in which they are presented that matters. In an ordinary context they may be martial arts, but placed into a theatrical context they can become art. To think of the obverse of this problem, imagine if ballet were included in the Olympics, such as wushu is being considered for the 2020 Olympics. The movements, while physically demanding, were created with the intention of being viewed aesthetically, yet even if they remain aesthetically pleasing, in an Olympic context such a view would be contingent to the purpose. It would be only the exactness and difficulty of the movements that would matter, no matter how aesthetically pleasing the performance. Perhaps this is why wushu, although aesthetically pleasing, and presented in venues to be seen as such, continues to lack categorisation as art. No matter how beautiful it is, it is still the execution of the physical techniques that are of primary concern.

When deciding whether instances of movement count as dance or as some visually similar activity, "the context of the event in which the movement is situated is more salient than the nature of the movement itself in determining whether the action is dance" (Carroll and Banes 1982: 37). Performing ordinary movements in the context of an artistic performance transforms the nature of those movements. An example of this is given by Arthur Danto. He writes of a set of tableaux painted by Giotto in the Arena Chapel in Padua, Italy. Each of the six images in the tableaux show Christ with his arm raised, yet in each image the meaning of the raised arm is different (1973: ix). If one were to think of the action of the raised arm in itself, there is nothing to distinguish the actions being made by Christ in each of the images. Yet by understanding the context of the situation in which Christ is making that action, it is possible to read separate definitions into each of the six images. Another example is Yvonne Rainer's *Room Service* (1963) in which "the movements performed are indistinguishable from those of ordinary life" (Bresnahan 2016). This could support the idea of dance being movement in the absence of utility, something which Hijikata was aiming for in his dance. While the movements in *Room Service* may have no practical application, they do have an artistic meaning. Carroll and Banes write how the "point of the dance is to make ordinary movement *qua* ordinary movement perceptible" (1982: 37). There is a similarity here with what John Cage was doing, with the presentation of ordinary movements or sounds intended to be viewed as they are and not as what they may represent. Yet the very action of presenting these ordinary movements for an audience transforms them from ordinary movements. If a group of people gathered to watch someone sweeping the street, that would not make it an art performance. One of the reasons *Room Service* is a dance is "because

through its aesthetic context it transforms an ordinary working… into an object for close scrutiny" (Carroll and Banes 1982: 38). It is also not just the immediate context that surrounds a work that is important, but also the history that created that context. It is because of that history that a work like *Room Service* is "an art dance, since the tradition it directly emerges from is that of the art world rather than custom, ritual, popular culture" (Carroll and Banes 1982: 39). In the same way, we recognise that butoh is an art form because it is related, in an appropriate way, to other, already accepted, artistic practices, such as modern dance and Noh theatre. The earlier art forms do not just give something like butoh the framework through which to be viewed as art, they also play a role in the more recent styles coming into existence, as Carroll notes, "the antecedent artworks and practices in question play a generative role in the production of the new work" (1993: 318).

Carroll writes that Cage and Rainer's works are meant to not only be "indiscernible from mere real things, but they are… [also intended] to lack what Arthur Danto calls *aboutness*", and as such "there will be no way in which to place them in separate ontological categories like art or music" 1994: 94). Because works containing ordinary sounds and movements do exist, we can see that a formalist theory of art is impossible, as such works are indiscernible from their non-work counterparts. Because they are meant to be viewed as ordinary movements, or everyday sounds, they should therefore lack any kind of artistic meaning. Carroll however rejects this view, stating that the mere drawing attention to these ordinary objects/sounds/movements frames them in such a way as to give them meaning (1994: 95). This is indeed what Danto would say. The intention to say nothing is itself *an intention*, and what it is that it is saying nothing about creates a context within which the saying of nothing acquires meaning. This can be seen in the example that Danto gives of an art show consisting of a variety of different paintings, all of which are simply red squares, visually indistinct from one another. One of the paintings is not a work of art, it is simply a red square included to show that it is not the visual qualities of a work that make it art, but something else. There needs to be some kind of meaning in a work, that can be indicated by a title for example, that is missing in an ordinary object. An imaginary person named J visits this art show, and refuses to see how the ordinary red square fails to be art when the other red squares are. J even goes so far as to submit their own red square, which they insist has no meaning and so should be viewed as exactly the same as the ordinary object. But this calling attention to the seemingly identical nature of the art and non-art works imbues meaning on a supposedly meaningless

object (1981: 1-3). Carroll also relates Cage's use of ordinary sounds to Nelson Goodman's idea of exemplification, where a sample of something is seen as a sample of all of that kind of thing. Cage's use of these sounds makes them cease to be *ordinary* sounds, they become symbols of the potential of sound. The kinds of sounds that you hear day to day cannot be symbols in this way, as "ordinary noise is not framed" (1994: 95). This gives a good indication of how new artistic contexts are created, as through his compositions Cage "provide[s] us with a new symbol with which to organize the world" (Carroll 1994: 96). Heyd also links this idea to dance as an art of the body. Heyd states Goodman's view that "all artworks symbolize or refer (even if only by exemplifying what they are samples of)" (2000: 22). In this way the movements seen in dance are exemplifications of those kinds of movements. This is also a good example of how ingrained the act of categorisation is in our thinking. Deleuze and Guattari write how Cage created a "process against all structure and genesis… experimentation against any kind of interpretation" (2004: 294), for example through his use of the I-Ching, and yet as we can see his work has been interpreted, and is easily fit into an existing framework.

Narrative Theories of Art

As the context in which a work is presented has been mentioned as being of importance in categorising a work, that is what will be examined now. Considering the context in which works are considered can help to answer questions like whether something can become art, regardless of intent, or if it needs to have been created with the intention of creating a work of art to be art. This can be related to the way in which cultural artefacts and traditional crafts have been presented in museums and galleries as works of art. It is undeniable that such pieces can be appreciated aesthetically, yet if they were not intended to be art, can they really be considered art? If great works of art were intended only to be viewed as merely aesthetically pleasing would that influence their art status? Who provided the original context? Could there currently exist non-art objects that will one day be considered art? The answer here seems to be yes. Danto writes how once the representational theory of art was accepted, "numbers of objects (masks, weapons, etc.) were transferred from anthropological museums… to *musées des beaux arts*, though… nothing had to be transferred out" (1964: 573). Artists are not only creating works, but by challenging the boundaries of what is accepted as art, they are also creating new contexts in which to view objects as artistically

significant. This shows how artistic intentions alone are insufficient, and sometimes unnecessary in determining the art status of a work. Philosophers like Carroll, Levinson, and Danto "note that the concept of art is historically conditioned: it is acquired at a certain time in a certain place and it spreads from there… [although some] go further… [with the implication] that there is no art at a time unless people have a concept of art at that time" (Lopes 2008: 112). This would cohere with the idea that works are determined to be art based on the context in which they are produced. If works needed a context for them to be classed as art, then the context would have to come first. Even if the creation of the works preceded the creation of the context, they would not be deemed art until they had been contextualised. As Danto writes, "one might not be aware he was on artistic terrain without an artistic theory to tell him so. And part of the reason for this lies in the fact that [that] terrain is constituted artistic in virtue of artistic theories, so that one use of theories, in addition to helping us discriminate art from the rest, consists in making art possible" (1964: 572). This discussion of context is intended to show that one of the reasons for butoh being categorised as dance is that it was, and continues to be, primarily presented in a dance context.

This highlights a problem with even trying to correctly categorise something, as the category to which something belongs can change if the context within which it is viewed changes. For Goodman, we "project predicates onto reality… [and there] is no difference in principle between the predicates we use and those we could use" (Giovannelli 2015). The reason we categorise things the way that we do, and the reason why other cultures have different ways of categorising things, is because we have constructed a particular worldview that makes certain categorisations more likely to cohere. If the way we had categorised things in the past had been different, then the current categorisations of things would be different also. For Goodman "something is a symbol, and is a symbol of a given kind, only within a *symbol system* of that kind, a system governed by the syntactical and semantic rules distinctive of symbols of that kind" (Giovannelli 2015). The categorisation of something only makes sense within the context in which it is intended to be categorised. So it makes sense to categorise butoh as a dance form but not soccer, and it makes sense to categorise gymnastics as a sport but not ballet. The activities exist within a broader system that determines how they are viewed, and what potential categorisations are appropriate. This is because "resemblances can be found anywhere, for anything resembles anything else in some respect or other… [and so it is] that which resemblances are going to be noticed depends on what the system of correlation employed makes relevant" (Giovannelli 2015). Because it is possible that

anything that is categorised in one way could be categorised differently, correct categorisation, as far as such a thing is possible, only works within the framework through which what is being categorised is viewed.

Carroll affirms the point made by Weitz that "later philosophers in the historical series are attempting to come to terms with certain recent mutations in the practice of art which were not accommodated by the proposals of earlier philosophers of art" (1993: 313). What it means for something to count as art is always going to be evolving and changing with the times, though unlike Weitz he does not think that this makes giving a definition of art impossible. It is because of this constant evolution of art that what it means for something to be art should be found in how the proposed work relates to already accepted works. So "the task of the philosophy of art… need not involve the production of a real definition of art" (Carroll 1993: 314), it need only produce conditions for how one would go about deciding whether or not a proposed work can be counted as a work of art. This is done when "the proponent of the work in question responds by telling a story that links the contested work to preceding art making practices and contexts in such a way that the work under fire can be seen to be the intelligible outcome of recognizable modes of thinking and making of a sort already commonly adjudged to be artistic" (Carroll 1993: 316).

The narrative theory of art could be seen as an extension of the institutional theory of art. The institutional theory of art claims that a work gains art-status when such a status is conferred on it by an artworld, in other words, due to the context in which it is presented. There are conflicting ideas as to who or what the artworld is made up of, ranging from more strict institutional based theories, which consider the artworld to be composed of those who have the proper authority and knowledge to nominate works as art, such as museum curators, gallery owners, and art critics, to looser views which can include the opinion or intention of the artist, or the opinion of any reasonably knowledgeable viewer who chooses to see a work as art. George Dickie describes the artworld as "a set of individual artworld systems, each of which contains its own specific artist roles plus specific supplementary roles" (1984: 75) such as producers, directors, dealers, reporters, and critics. Each type of art, such as painting or music, has its own artworld and the totality of these artworlds is what makes *the* artworld. It is this artworld that determines the context, and the narrative, in which works get categorised.

This primary purpose of this section was to examine why butoh is considered dance in the Western aesthetic tradition. One reason is because of the intention of the artists, in particular Hijikata. Butoh is considered dance because Hijikata considered what he was doing as dance. More important than this though is the context in which butoh was created. Although butoh was created in opposition to theatre more generally, rather than to dance specifically, it relates in enough meaningful ways so as to be comfortably viewed as dance. Such a conclusion shows why the discussion of formalism was important. Relying on the formal qualities of a work to decide its categorization, in the case of butoh, will lead to confusing authentic butoh works from inauthentic ones. This thread will continue to be built upon in the next section.

Part Three: Performance Art and the Evolution of Butoh

The early butoh works appear to resemble performance art more than they do dance, and so this section will give a fuller description of what performance art is, how it resembles butoh, and why it is that it is not the category that butoh has been placed in. Since butoh has always been considered to be a form of dance, it is key to discover what differentiates dance from performance art. While dance was examined in more detail in the preceding section, there is significant overlap in examining what it means for something to be dance and what it means for something to be performance art, as such dance will continue to have a strong presence throughout this section. While the lack of, or need for, an audience is one factor in distinguishing dance from performance art, it cannot be the main one. Performance art has been said to "push the limits of theatre" (Féral 1982: 171) which makes it tempting to think of performance art as a kind of theatre. But it is analogous to think of sound art as pushing the boundaries of music, while not itself being considered music.

Graver writes that one of the things that makes what Artaud did theatre and not performance art is that for Artaud "bodies continue to be transformed into signs" (1995). This is a difference from what Hijikata was doing with butoh. For Artaud, the theatre was "a conduit between artist and audience along which a particular kind of information is passed" (Graver 1995). Theatre seeks to present something to an audience, which marks it off from performance art. Another key difference is that theatre often maintains a barrier between performers and audience. Even Artaud, who may have wished "for a stronger effect from his spectacle than more conventional theatre… [maintained] the distinction between spectacle and spectator" (Graver 1995). This is another difference from butoh works, where the audience was brought closer into the performances, and performance art whose "anarchical practices… erase the time-honored psychical distance that traditionally obtains between spectator and spectacle" (Stradella 2012: 165).

One of the differences between dance and performance art is the need for an audience. While performance artworks can be, and are, performed in front of audiences, they are not explicitly performed *for* those audiences. Another difference is in how the performers present themselves onstage. While performance art works can also present stories and concepts just like theatrical

performances, performance artists are doing so as themselves, and not as characters or representations. One example of the ambiguous distinction between dance and performance art is the piece *Sholiba* (1979) by Sankai Juku, where the performers hang themselves upside down, with rope tied around their ankles, from buildings or other suitably high structures. It is intuitively difficult to picture how such a performance can be considered a dance. And yet it is, and so it presents an interesting challenge in defining something as a dance work as opposed to a different kind of physical display, such as a piece of performance art. One of the things that helps to makes it count as dance is that it is being done primarily for an audience and not for the performers.

Nature/Role of the Audience

Dance is a kind of theatre that focuses primarily on the body of the performer, as opposed to character or story. A necessary condition for a work to count as a kind of theatre is that it be created with an expectation of presentation for an audience. It does not matter whether or not anyone actually shows up for a performance, all that matters is that the work was intended for one. This is in contrast to performance art, where the works are created primarily for the performer. While many performance art pieces are performed for an audience, it is not a necessary feature of the work. A clarification of what an audience is is needed here. An audience must be observers not involved in the performance of a work – this includes people working behind the scenes such as directors, stage hands, and so on. An audience is a public, and specifically a public that chooses to engage with a work. The reason that people who work on works cannot count as an audience is because they "did not choose their roles as public" (Féral 1992: 152). They would only count as an audience if they attended the performance outside their capacity as members of the production.

The notion that dance requires an audience does two things: it shows that dance is a type of theatre, since theatre also requires an audience, and it also shows a key distinction between dance and performance art, as performance art can exist without an audience for the performances. While theatre needs an audience, a performance artwork could be planned and executed in an isolated location, and would still count as an instance of the work even if no-one happened by during the performance. This is what makes dance-as-art a sub-genre of

theatre, as for a dance performance to count as a work of art it needs to be for an audience. This also marks a difference between butoh and dance, as butoh need not be performed for an audience. Writing in relation to Marina Abramović and Ulay's *The Lovers: The Great Wall Walk* (1988), where the two started at opposite ends of the Great Wall of China and walked towards one another to meet in the middle as a farewell to their relationship, Féral notes how "the traces left from the adventure (the film, catalogues, photos, exhibit, commentary, narrative accounts) are the only means for the public to "see" it" (Féral 1992: 150). This applies to all works performed in an absence of an audience. Without this documentation they cannot be counted as works of art, as this documenting the event is what gives it the context needed to be a work of art and not just an event in the lives of two people. Graver writes how the "tenuous existence of performances without audiences demands that if they are to have any life beyond the immediate experience of their occurrence, they must enter the economy of culture and art as anecdotes, documents, or artifacts" (1995). The fact that works like *The Lovers* exist shows that since an audience is not a necessary component of a performance artwork, then "in the end, the performance is done essentially if not uniquely, for the artist himself/herself" (Féral 1992: 151). This ties performance art to butoh in two ways. The first is that, like performance art, butoh does not require an audience. The second is that, also like performance art, butoh is primarily for the performer. As stated, one aspect of butoh performances is that they can be performed in isolated locations such as forests or caves, as undertaken in works of groups like Byakko Sha, such as in their piece *Gyo Retsu* (*Parade*), and Dairakudakan, with no need for an audience.

Reperformance

One of the requirements for a work counting as dance that Graham McFee gives is that it needs to be in principle reperformable, and that if it is not reperformable then it is not an artwork, although it may resemble one (2011: 160). This could be used as a possible way of distinguishing dance works from performance art works as generally performance art works are not reperformed. Indeed part of what it means to be a performance art work is that it not be reperformed. This is another similarity that performance art shares with butoh. While a few butoh works have been reperformed, most often they are one-off occurrences. In contrast to performance art, Happenings are impossible to reproduce, as they could only exist in the

time and place in which they happened. While a performance art work can be reperformed, even if the reperformance does not count as art, a Happening is impossible to recreate, doing so would create an entirely new event.

Though one of the original goals of performance art was "that each piece essentially consists of its performance, making it in principle impossible to repeat or reproduce" (Heyd 2000: 20), that now appears to have changed. While when it first appeared, performance art "was part of a movement of contestation of the values traditionally attached to art, and it spurred itself on by rejecting the artistic work as object" (Féral 1992: 148), Marina Abramović's putting together recreations of her past works in *The Artist is Present*, her 2010 retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, highlights the changed nature of performance art. The original intent of performance artworks being that they are not reperformable, and that they stand outside normal institutions. "Performance art, like happenings, [were] supposed to be unique. [They] were not supposed to leave traces" (Féral 1992: 147). Does the fact that it was planned for, and performed at, a major art institution disqualify the works presented as part of it from being performance art works? If performance art is anti the art establishment, what then are the performance art resembling pieces that are performed for these establishments? *The Artist is Present* shows that no matter how an art form is initially intended to function, it will in time change to be something else. Heyd notes how "performance art and site-specific works precisely intended to escape assimilation into the artworld and subsequent appropriation" (2000: 20). Which brings up the question of whether *The Artist is Present* counts as a performance artwork, and if not, what kind of art it could possibly be. If performance art is specifically intended to challenge the art institution, what does it mean when it gets assimilated into that institution? Performance art *is* now shown in galleries. All arts, even those that seek to oppose the artworld at some point get absorbed into it. That is how the category of art expands over time. Because of the existence of *The Artist is Present*, and if we accept that it is a performance art work, then the one-off/reperformable distinction cannot be used in any way of categorising works. It is possible for danceworks to be created with the intention of their only being performed once. And as Abramović has demonstrated, it is possible to reperform, even with different performers, performance artworks. Although perhaps it could be more appropriate to consider them aesthetic representations and not art works, in a way similar to cultural artefacts that find their way into museums and galleries. As performance art works require the performers to be themselves, and not characters, what does it mean for someone to recreate another person's

performance? In a way similar to how later butoh works that merely imitate earlier works should be considered inauthentic, reperformances of performance art works by other performers, even ones sanctioned by the original performer, should be viewed as inauthentic instances of performance art.

An Art That Spouts Blood

Butoh also shares a similarity with performance art in that both are likely to be what Danto calls disturbational works. Works qualify as being disturbational when the "insulating boundaries between art and life are breached in some way the mere representation of disturbing things cannot achieve" (1986: 121). So it is not enough to just portray a disturbing image or evoke an idea that be thought of as disturbing, the work needs to pose some kind of risk to the performer, the audience, or both. Danto gives a description of what the disturbational artists are trying to achieve which could easily be applied to many butoh works, he writes that they are "undertaking to recover a stage of art where art itself was almost like … deep magic, making dark possibilities real, rather than shallow or illusory magic, where nothing really happens but it looks as though it has" (1986: 126-127). This description of disturbational works could also be applied to what Hijikata or Artaud were trying to achieve, as Danto goes on to write that the "disturbatory artist aims to transform her audience into something pretheatrical, a body which relates to her in some more magical and transformational relationship than the defining conventions of the theater allow" (1986: 131). This is precisely what Hijikata was trying to achieve. He wrote of how both "the "rose-colored dance" and the "dance of darkness" must spout blood in the name of the experience of evil" (Hijikata 2000: 39). Since performance art is meant to challenge the performers, as well as any potential audience, it highlights the importance in the reality of performance. It also shows a key difference between performance art and dance. While dance works can challenge an audience, that would tend to be an exception rather than a rule. Going to a dance performance is meant to be an escape, while going to a performance art work should ideally involve some degree of discomfort.

Similarities can also be seen in the ways that butoh and performance art have evolved over time. Féral writes of how "performance art in the seventies had a clearly defined *function*. It was part of a movement of contestation of the values traditionally attached to art" (1992:

148). Performance art "did not have a genre or specific form, with the result that a multitude of practices have been categorized under the name. The diversity of forms and practices available to performance art nevertheless cannot hide the fact that the performances all had the same function: to contest the aesthetic order of the time" (Féral 1992: 148). Early butoh can also be seen as having had the function of challenging the dominant theatre forms of the time, and of opposing the Americanisation of Japanese culture. Considering early butoh as a function, rather than a style, can help to account for the non-dance elements that were used at the time. In a similar way, "in the seventies, performance was a function more than a genre, and like any function, it belonged to different arts and practices" (Féral 1992: 148). Early butoh was a function that coalesced into a genre. Once its function had been fulfilled, or was no longer relevant, it had no choice but to settle into one particular form. Authentic butoh is a function, inauthentic butoh merely a form.

Butoh, at its beginning, used the techniques of performance art to explore what it wanted to be. When it was done with such widespread experimentation, it reigned itself in to its theatrical starting point. As butoh has moved toward the theatrical, greater weight is given to the image of the performance, rather than its earlier goal of pushing the limits of the language of the body. Groups like Byakko Sha and Dairakudakan explored the notion of alternate venues, of operating in isolated places, yet butoh has now stabilised into being presented in normal theatrical locations, such as theatres, galleries, or in street performances. However, with the street performances there is a tending toward an aesthetic spectacle as opposed to works of art. The experimental butoh works of the 1960s were over time distilled into perfectly displayed productions, as like performance art it "lost the primacy it once gave to process" (Féral 1992: 147). Butoh can be seen to have progressed in two ways: into the professional theatrical productions such as those put on by Sankai Juku, and into more amateur displays that more often than not merely copy the movements and looks of the early works, somehow imagining that there is authenticity in imitation. Sankai Juku are the paradigm modern butoh act. They are clearly, purely a dance/theatre group, designed to be seen by large audiences worldwide. This runs contrary to what Hijikata considered butoh to be for, as he felt that dance "for display must be totally abolished" (Hijikata 2000: 39-40). Founded by Amagatsu Ushio in 1975, Sankai Juku are "the best example of… post-Hijikata butoh" (Viala and Masson-Sekine 1988: 108). The example of Sankai Juku reinforces the idea that ankoku butoh and butoh are two separate, yet related styles. In Sankai Juku's works, "physical technique has been made to serve surrealism, leaving aside Ankoku Butoh's

obsession with violence and horror" (Viala and Masson-Sekine 1988: 108). The aesthetic character of the works became more important than the ideas behind them. Sankai Juku's works are also clearly works of theatre in a way that other butoh performances are not.

Byakko Sha made a number of tableaux works, which are another example of non-dance butoh. As Viala writes, Byakko Sha's "work goes beyond the sphere of dance and reaches into the plastic arts, not only through its work with sets and costumes, but also through the staging of actual living tableaux", the photographs of which "are as much a part of the company's work as the performances themselves" (1988: 116). These works are not staged in front of an audience, indeed many of Byakko Sha's works are performed in out of the way locations; they have performed in forests, on beaches, and in caves for example. Their work captures part of what Hijikata wanted his butoh to represent, and that is a return to performances of a magical nature. Like Byakko Sha, Dairakudakan also performed in out the way places, with no expectation of there being any kind of audience. So they were clearly doing something that cannot be counted as dance or theatre. But they were also more concerned with the visual aspect of their work, as opposed to the internal character. And you can see in their visual appearance the standard butoh look that you will see in almost every butoh performance to this day. Dairakudakan are another good example for the ambiguous categorical status of butoh. The company's director, Maro Akaji was from a theatre background, and tended to have a "preference for images over dance itself" (Viala and Masson-Sekine 1988: 100). This reinforces the idea that butoh is not a *dance* style, but rather a style that can be expressed through dance.

Another possibility is that butoh is a time specific style, which could be supported by the fact that many contemporary dancers and choreographers who are inspired by butoh do not define what they do as being butoh. Kuniyoshi Kazuko notes how a "post-butoh period… began at the end of the 1980s with… choreographers who were critical of what they considered the genre's stagnant situation after Hijikata's death [in 1986]" (2006: 155). Viala and Masson-Sekine concur with this sentiment, writing how the groups that followed Hijikata's lead were often bereft of creativity and experimentation, and were "becoming a purely aesthetic tool" and lacking in "any real point of view" (1988: 100). Holledge and Tompkins reaffirm this idea, writing that with the spread of butoh to countries all over the world, it is arguable whether there really is a "consistent choreographic movement", and that many view it as having "degenerated into exoticism". They also note that "Hijikata felt that *butoh* was being

commodified before reaching maturity" (2000: 198). Butoh became trapped in its categorisation as dance, where it had the potential to be more. Being trapped in this way it may be more appropriate to think of modern butoh works as butoh-inspired modern dance works. This same concern has occurred with performance art, with Féral noting how "a number of artists and critics have declared… performance art no longer exists… and what is taking place derives more from theater than from actual performance art" (1992: 145). She goes on to note though that rather than disappearing there are still an abundance of genuine performance art performances taking place, it is just that the public is more used to seeing such performances and so they no longer resonate in the way they once did.

Viala and Masson-Sekine note how even Hijikata's late works were not as well received as his earlier ones. They wonder whether "his desire to enrich butoh" through a more formalised system of movement had "destroyed the being" of butoh (1988: 92). Butoh was meant to be a reaction against more formalist systems of dance, and so Hijikata's experimenting with a formalising of butoh ran contrary to butoh's core. It seems that perhaps Hijikata himself had felt the same way, as "shortly before he died, Hijikata revealed a new tendency toward abandoning the spectacular and flashy techniques, concentrating instead on the expression of life and of being" (Viala and Masson-Sekine 1988: 94). The core of butoh is not in the look of the performers, or the movements they make, but in the internal struggle of their bodies.

Butoh was like other theatre forms of the 60s Japanese underground in that from "the beginning of the 1980s their aesthetics became static. They were not exploring any further. They had established their aesthetics and were enclosing themselves within what they had established. There was a feeling of closure of the possibilities of exploration. Their world closed down" (Kawamura and Martin 2000: 110). Sondra Horton Fraleigh writes that by the late 1990s butoh had become "more an aesthetic movement than a specific dance or theatre form" (1999: 6). Butoh became a way to look, to dress-up, a fashion statement, rather than something that had any kind of core that could be called butoh. We see an aesthetic character become formalised, and that formalisation has come to define butoh. Yet this aesthetic is not a necessary feature of a butoh work, and those works that focus on this aesthetic character alone cannot be considered authentic works of butoh. The modern works may be called butoh, but they lack that authentic core that made butoh what it was. And they have largely confined themselves to dance and theatre works. Although butoh is now a global dance style, Cull notes that "researchers may not agree on the extent to which all [the] diverse practices

can rightfully be called 'butoh', nor are they likely to consider all 'butoh' as belonging to a single 'genre'" (2012: 113). Holledge and Tompkins also highlight this point, writing that "critics argue whether there is any consistency in the work that can legitimate the present categorisation into a single genre" (2000: 198).

Conclusion

The main question guiding this thesis could be seen as "what makes butoh count as dance?" I reasoned that this was due to two reasons. The first is that its founder, Hijikata Tatsumi, was a dancer, and it was therefore his intention to create dance works. The second is that butoh was formulated in relation and opposition to contemporary forms of dance. However, if we ignore Hijikata's intentions and only think of the context, then butoh was also created in opposition to theatre more broadly, and also to performance art.

I reasoned that dance is a subset of theatre as they both require an audience. So butoh being contextually related to theatre as well as to dance seems not to matter. In relation to performance art, the intention of Hijikata comes back into play as he was opposed to performance art, thinking of it as an art form that merely used the body as a tool. The requirement of an audience is also important here, as performance art, like butoh, does *not* require an audience like dance and theatre do.

This seems to just take us in circles. The solution then is that butoh is none of these things, though it can be expressed through them. Butoh is more like a philosophy or an attitude, which can be applied to various art practices, giving rise to butoh-dance, butoh-theatre, etc... However, butoh itself is *not* any of these things in itself. Butoh can be thought of as a way of being that seeks to explore and understand differing relations between objects and their environments. This can be done through dance, but need not be.

Butoh counts as a kind of art, even though it fails to match up exactly with any one category of art. It does this through its relation to pre-existing forms that are accepted as art. The early butoh works were of a diverse kind, using techniques from across artistic media to express their core values. This cross-media tendency is shared by performance art and is a main factor in why early butoh performances resemble performance art works. Over time though, a formal set of qualities became a standard feature of butoh works, the white body paint, the shaved heads, the nude bodies. These qualities came to define butoh in a way that butoh was not meant to be defined. I have argued that by focusing only on these formal qualities, modern butoh works are lacking what makes a work authentically butoh, and so should be viewed as either inauthentic butoh works or as butoh-inspired works.

I showed that butoh can be considered an art form in the Western sense as it fits within the requirements set by the narrative theory of art. Butoh is related to accepted artistic forms both through inspiration and opposition. It contains features that can be seen in accepted art forms like modern dance and traditional Japanese theatre, while at the same time it was seeking to break the boundaries that these forms set. At the same time, I argued that to view butoh as only an art form is mistaken. Butoh, like other non-Western concepts such as Buddhism, are based on a way of viewing the world that is not easily categorised in a way that fits with the Western tradition.

The question of how we categorise things has been threaded throughout this thesis, though not dealt with explicitly in any particular place. That is because the way that we categorise things is implicit in all these questions of what is dance, and how do we decide which art form a certain work belongs to. The main argument I have tried to make is that butoh is such a problematic form for Western aesthetics because the way that we categorise things in the West is different from how they are categorised in the East. This is due to the way that we think of the world, with the West more interested in the nature of objects in themselves, and the East more interested in objects relationships with each other. It does not make sense to define a form that explores relationships between objects as being tied explicitly to any one of those things. In this way butoh can be thought of as being rhizomatic.

The answer to why butoh appears to straddle the line between dance and performance art is because it is both and neither. Butoh is butoh. While the predominant way of expressing butoh has been through dance, butoh itself is not dance.

Works Cited

Amagasaki, Akira. "Reinventing the body." *UNESCO Courier* Jan. 1996: 27+. *Expanded Academic ASAP*. Web. 26 Oct. 2015.

Artaud, Antonin. *The Theatre and its Double*, trans. Victor Corti. London: Calder Publications Limited, 1995.

Baird, Bruce. "Structureless in Structure: The Choreographic Tectonics of Hijikata Tatsumi's *Butō*". *Modern Japanese Theatre and Performance*, ed. David Jortner, Keiko McDonald, and Kevin J. Wetmore Jr. Plymouth: Lexington Books (2006): 93-108.

Baird, Bruce. *Hijikata Tastumi and Butoh: Dancing in a Pool of Gray Grits*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Beardsley, Monroe C. *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1981.

Beardsley, Monroe. *The Aesthetic Point of View*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1982.

Beardsley, Monroe C. "What Is Going on in Dance?" *Dance Research Journal*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (1982): 31-36.

Bresnahan, Aili, "The Philosophy of Dance", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/dance/>.

"Butoh – Piercing the Mask." YouTube video, 48:59. Posted by "ravachol20," December 21, 2013. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i2d5a3c1Gb0.

Candelario, Rosemary. "Hijikata Tatsumi and Butoh: Dancing in a Pool of Gray Grits by Bruce Baird (review)." *Asian Theatre Journal*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (2013): 263-266.

Carroll, Noël. "Historical Narratives and the Philosophy of Art." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (1993): 313-326.

Carroll, Noël. "Cage and Philosophy." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 52, No. 1 (1994): 93-98.

Carroll, Noël and Sally Banes. "Working and Dancing: A Response to Monroe Beardsley's "What Is Going on in Dance?"" *Dance Research Journal*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (1982): 37-41.

Cull, Laura. *Theatres of Immanence: Deleuze and the Ethics of Performance*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Cull, Laura. "Affect in Deleuze, Hijikata, and Coates: The Politics of Becoming-Animal in Performance." *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (2012): 189-203.

Curtin, Catherine. "Recovering the Body and Expanding the Boundaries of Self in Japanese Butoh: Hijikata Tatsumi, Georges Bataille and Antonin Artaud." *Contemporary Theatre Review*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (2010): 56-67.

Danto, Arthur. "The Artworld." *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 61, No. 19 (1964): 571-584.

Danto, Arthur C. *Analytical Philosophy of Action*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1973.

Danto, Arthur C. *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981.

Danto, Arthur C. *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Duattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi. LondonL Continuum, 2004.

Dickie, George. *The Art Circle: A Theory of Art*. New York: Haven Publications, 1984.

Eckersall, Peter. *Performativity and Event in 1960s Japan: City, Body, Memory*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Féral, Josette. "Performance and Theatricality: The Subject Demystified", (trans.) Terese Lyons. *Modern Drama*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (1982): 170-181.

Féral, Josette. "What Is Left of Performance Art? Autopsy of a Function, Birth of a Genre", (trans.) Carol Tennessen. *Discourse*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (1992): 142-162.

Fraleigh, Sondra Horton. *Dancing Into Darkness: Butoh, Zen, and Japan.* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999.

Fraleigh, Sondra. *Butoh: Metamorphic Dance and Global Alchemy*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2010.

Fraleigh, Sondra and Nakamura, Tamah. *Hijikata Tatsumi and Ohno Kazuo*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Franko, Mark. "The Dancing Gaze Across Cultures: Kazuo Ohno's Admiring La Argentina." *Dance Chronicle*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (2011): 106-131.

Giovannelli, Alessandro, "Goodman's Aesthetics", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2015 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/goodman-aesthetics/.

Goldberg, RoseLee. *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2011.

Graver, David. "Violent theatricality: displayed enactments of aggression and pain." *Theatre Journal*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (1995): 43+. *Academic OneFile*. Web. 24 Feb. 2016.

Guattari, Félix. *Machinic Eros: Writings on Japan*, ed. Gary Genosko and Jay Hetrick. Minneapolis: Univocal, 2015.

Heyd, Thomas. "The Real and the Hyperreal: Dance and Simulacra." *Journal of Aesthetics Education*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (2000): 15-26.

Hijikata, Tatsumi. "Inner Material/Material", (trans.) Nanako Kurihara. *TDR: The Drama Review*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (2000): 36-42.

Hijikata, Tatsumi. "To Prison", (trans.) Nanako Kurihara. *TDR: The Drama Review*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (2000): 43-48.

Hijikata, Tatsumi. "Wind Daruma", (trans.) Nanako Kurihara. *TDR: The Drama Review*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (2000): 71-79.

Hijikata, Tatsumi, and Tatsuhiko Shibusawa. "Hijikata Tatsumi: Plucking off the Darkness of The Flesh", (trans.) Nanako Kurihara. *TDR: The Drama Review*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (2000): 49-55.

Holledge, Julie and Joanne Tompkins. *Women's Intercultural Performance*. London: Routledge, 2000.

Kawamura, Takeshi, and Carol Martin. "New Ideas in/for Japanese Theatre." *TDR: The Drama Review*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (2000): 109-113.

Kuniyoshi, Kazuko. "Two Kinjiki: Diametrical Oppositions." *The Drama Review*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (2006): 154-158.

Kurihara, Nanako. "Hijikata Tatsumi: the Words of Butoh." *The Drama Review*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (2000): 10-28.

Lin, Ivy Yu-Shian. "A Quest Beyond Enlightenment: Buddhism as Counter-Enlightenment and Modernity's Other Being in the Practices of Antonin Artaud, John Cage, Tatsumi Hijikata, Kazuo Ohno, and Xingjian Gao." PhD diss., City University of New York, 2009.

Lopes, Dominic McIver. "Nobody Needs a Theory of Art." *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 105, No. 3 (2008): 109-127.

McFee, Graham. *The Philosophical Aesthetics of Dance: Identity, Performance and Understanding*. Hampshire: Dance Books, 2011.

McFee, Graham. "'Admirable legs', or the dancer's importance for the dance." *Thinking Through Dance: the Philosophy of Dance Performance and Practices*, ed. Jenny Bunker, Anna Pakes, and Bonnie Rowell. Hampshire: Dance Books (2013): 22-45.

Merewether, Charles. "Disjunctive Modernity: The Practice of Artistic Experimentation in Postwar Japan." *Art, Anti-Art, Non-Art: Experiments in the Public Sphere in Postwar Japan, 1950-1970*, ed. Charles Merewether and Rika Iezumi Hiro. Los Angeles: Getty Publications (2007): 1-33.

Pakes, Anna. "The plausibility of a platonist ontology of dance." *Thinking Through Dance: the Philosophy of Dance Performance and Practices*, ed. Jenny Bunker, Anna Pakes, and Bonnie Rowell. Hampshire: Dance Books (2013): 84-101.

Parkes, Graham. "Japanese Aesthetics", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2011 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2011/entries/japanese-aesthetics/.

Saito, Yuriko. "The Moral Dimension of Japanese Aesthetics." *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 65, No. 1 (2007): 85-97.

Saito, Yuriko. "The Aesthetics of Emptiness: Sky Art." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, Vol. 29 (2011): 499-518.

Sas, Miryam. *Experimental Arts in Postwar Japan: Moments of Encounter, Engagement, and Imagined Return.* Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011.

Stradella, Alessandra. "Performance Art and the Seduction of Theatricality." *Philosophy Study*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (2012): 163-171.

Viala, Jean and Masson-Sekine, Nourit. *Butoh: Shades of Darkness*. Tokyo: Shufunotomo Co., 1988.

Weitz, Morris. "The Role of Theory in Aesthetics." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (1956): 27-35.

*"*West and East, Cultural Differences." YouTube video, 45:42. Posted by "Christian R. Bueno," December 5, 2012. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZoDtoB9Abck.

Wreen, Michael, "Beardsley's Aesthetics", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/beardsley-aesthetics/.