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Department of Musicology and Performance Studies
University of Stockholm
S-106 91 Stockholm
Sweden

Abstract

This thesis is an interdisciplinary study of the aesthetics of movement in Gilles Deleuze’s writings and in Merce Cunningham’s choreographies. But it is also a study of the movement that arises when the two meet in a series of variations, where also their respective working partners Félix Guattari and John Cage enter. It is a textual happening where the random juxtaposition between seemingly unrelated areas, philosophy and dance, gives rise to arbitrary connections.

It is a textual machine, composed of seven parts. First, the methodological architecture of the juxtaposition is introduced and it is shown how this relates to the materials (the philosophy of Deleuze and the aesthetics of Cunningham), the relation between the materials, and the respective contexts of the materials. The presence of movement in Deleuze’s thinking is then presented and the figure of immobile movement is defined. This figure is a leitmotif of the analyses. It is argued that this figure of immobile movement is not only a stylistic element but has implications on a philosophical level, implications that materialise in Deleuze’s texts.

Then follow four parts that build a heterogeneous whole. The analysis of movement is continued through four juxtapositions of particular texts and particular choreographies. Through these juxtapositions, different aspects of movement appear and are discussed: the relation between movement and sensation, movement in interaction with other arts, movement as a means of taking the body to its limit, movement as transformation. Through these analyses, the aesthetics of Cunningham is put into new contexts. The analyses also put into relief Deleuze’s use of figures of movement, and these suddenly acquire another kind of importance. In the seventh and concluding part, all this is brought into play.

Key words: interdisciplinary studies, Gilles Deleuze, Merce Cunningham, John Cage, Félix Guattari, Francis Bacon, dance, philosophy, movement, choreography, the body, heterogeneity, juxtaposition, representation, happening, chance.

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