Who is Kazuo Ohno? What has he to say about dance, the body, gesture, performance, thought, memory, the soul, death, freedom and love? How has our experience of the body changed as a result of our encounter with Butoh, which he, along with Tatsumi Hijikata, created?

These are the questions that animate this book on an exceptional man, who in 1977 at the age of 71, with his Admiring La Argentina, would soon become an essential force in dance international—after a hiatus in public performance of nearly a decade.

Written and compiled by his son and closest collaborator, Yoshito Ohno, this book is recommended to those who wish to understand something more of what is hoped they have viewed on stage. For performers and creators, the book will return them to their initial reasons for having launched themselves into the art to enable them to clarify what sustains them and why. Its effects, like those that stem from Artaud’s writings, I believe, will grow in importance as Butoh diffuses through studios and schools and its origins in crisis become more historical than immediate.

The book has two sections in two voices. Yoshito Ohno writes the first, “Food for the Soul,” in response to 129 photos of his father’s dance creations, many never published before. He pays particular attention to the face, mouth, voice, eyes, ear, hand and back, then turns to the language of performance by discussing falling, standing, walls, fluidity, makeup, integrating photo documentation into the dance creation process and more. A biography of Kazuo Ohno’s family life, his nine-year service in the Japanese army with its traumatic World War II conclusion in New Guinea, his sudden impulses during curtain calls and his episcopal meeting with Tatsumi Hijikata in 1954 follows.

Part Two includes 154 aphorisms transcribed from recordings made during Kazuo Ohno’s workshops at his rehearsal studio, which he built with timber donated from a school where he worked. Twenty-four photos accompany the text. Kazuo Ohno speaks of many things, of course, from the common challenges we face in daily life to his relationship with flowers, insects and animals, and the dancer’s responsibilities in performance. He tells us:

Discard whatever mental fantasies and ideas you may have. Don’t think about where to place your feet. Forget all that, and follow your impulses. … Be spontaneous. How could words ever explain how to move? Just do it. I want dance to spring from an inexplicable source. … I want to dance in such a way that deeply touches you (p. 221).

And he notes, humorously:

There’s no need to memorize gestures and movements because, no matter what I do, I’ll forget them anyway. The essential thing is that the experience remains perfectly ingrained in my mind, in my soul. That’s what comes with repeated practice. It’s of little consequence if I forget what I practice because, despite myself, I’m constantly absorbing the fruit of my endeavors (p. 273).

I attended two performances by Kazuo Ohno at the Japan Society in New York: “My Mother,” in 1996, and “Requiem for the Twentieth Century,” with Yoshito Ohno, in 1999. Performing solo and in duet at the ages of 90 and 92, respectively, is more than admirable. Performing with poignancy, transparency, directness and strength, despite a body in decline, is more than astonishing; it is perfectly human, without condition or qualm. And that is the greatest compliment I can pay to this master of dance, Kazuo Ohno.

Oh, yes: After his 1999 performance in New York, he held a public question-and-answer session with a translator. From that session, I recall two questions and answers as much characteristic of his audience as of him. A New York actress I know asked Ohno how he prepared for a performance, and he replied: “I rise in the morning and drink tea.” Another woman asked what he would like for his epitaph. Ohno thought for a long time before responding: “What was the question?”

The book contains two appendices: a chronology of Kazuo Ohno’s life and his public performances.

**DESSERT ISLANDS AND OTHER TEXTS, 1953–1974**


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*Desert Islands* is, at first glance, a collection of essays, reviews, interviews and miscellany from the early to the middle part of Deleuze’s career. Arranged chronologically, the texts include philosophical investigations of Hume, Nietzsche and Bergson, literary reflections (on Rousseau, Jarry and crime novels) and engagements with contemporaries (such as Simondon, Guattari and Foucault). Stopping just after the publication of *Anti-Oedipus*, the collection contains mostly previously untranslated material.

So then, what does one gain from a collection of miscellany, after the dense, thick tome of *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*? What more can one know about Deleuze’s philosophy by reading book reviews, interviews and fragments? In one sense, nothing. A reader looking for insights into *Anti-Oedipus* or other books will be disappointed here. But, at the same time, Deleuze’s writing always attempts to de-totalize itself, to insistently and energetically open itself to still other concepts. From this perspective, *Desert Islands* is actually quite significant, and much more than a collection of previously untranslated texts. *Desert Islands* does not contain any neat summaries of Deleuze’s major concepts; it does, however, “capture” something of Deleuze’s thought: the fleeting, itinerant and errant quality of the concept. In this sense *Desert Islands* does for Deleuze’s work what *Dits et Écrits* has done for Foucault, and indeed what the whole of Blanchot’s work expresses. *Desert Islands* is not a “themed” collection, or an attempt to gather into a new book—a sort of meta-book—those utterances that have escaped. Rather, it is an attempt to do something extremely difficult: to let the errant quality of thought express itself in something as inclusive and enclosed as a book. Blanchot and Jabès, among others, have noted the tensions inherent in the concept of the “book”: it is at once a proliferation of thought and at the same time that which always encloses, expands, encircles. Arguably, Deleuze’s thought operates in a similar manner, deterritorializing at the same time that it constructs concepts.

This, of course, makes writing a review somewhat pointless, since one of the tasks of the reviewer is to thematize, summarize or otherwise re-present the work in a way that makes obvious its inherent organization or relevance. This ends up taking *Desert Islands* as a sort of secondary text, a text whose sole function is to be read by the “experienced” Deleuzian scholar or student. Instead, *Desert Islands* would be better...
served by a highly idiosyncratic selection of quotes: “Geographers say there are two kinds of islands.... Continental islands are accidental, derived islands. They are separated from a continent.... Oceanic islands are original, essential islands. Some are formed from coral reefs.... others emerge from underwater eruptions.... These two islands, continental and original, reveal a profound opposition between ocean and island” (p. 9).

“Dreaming of islands... is dreaming of pulling away, or being already separate, far from any continent, of being lost and alone—or it is dreaming of starting from scratch, recreating, beginning anew” (p. 10). “Hence the fundamental list of the senses of the word planetary: global, itinerant, errancy, planning, platitude, gears and wheels” (p. 75). “Who speaks and who acts? It is always a multiplicity, even in the person that speaks or acts. We are all groupuscules.... there is only the action.... in the relations of relays and networks” (p. 207). “If we look at today’s situation, power necessarily has a global or total vision” (p. 210). “Imperial unity gave birth to philosophical discourse.... Philosophical discourse has always maintained an essential relation to the law, the institution, and the contract.... traversing the ages of sedentary history from despotic formation to democracies” (p. 259). “Whoever reads Nietzsche without laughing, and laughing heartily and often and sometimes hysterically, is almost not reading Nietzsche at all” (p. 257). “An island doesn’t stop being deserted simply because it is inhabited” (p. 10). “The simple is not divided, it differentiates itself. This is the essence of the simple, or the movement of difference” (p. 39).

If anything, the errant quality of Deleuze’s thought points to a largely underexplored aspect of the work of Deleuze and his collaboration with Guattari: geophilosophy. In What is Philosophy?, they write that “thinking takes place in the relationship of territory and earth.” Desert Islands takes this further: “Islands are either from before or after humankind” (p. 9). Thus, “the island is also that towards which one drifts” (p. 10).

Les défis du Cybermonde


Reviewed by Stefaan Van Ryssen, Hogeschool Gent, Jan Devinnaan 115, 9000 Gent, Belgium. E-mail: <stefaan.vanryssen@pandora.be>.

In her introduction to this collection of short essays, Canadian journalist Paule des Rivières asks for a round-up of the unkept promises and the new challenges facing the Internet and the World Wide Web. Has the world become more democratic, and has the distance between governments and citizens really shrunk? Is the Internet economy just an inflated idea that has all but collapsed in the early years of this century, or is there a future yet? Does the future of cyberspace lie in new modes of creativity and multidisciplinary scientific research? How are we going to direct the ever faster movement of information along the superhighway?

In the spring of 2002, these questions were posed to a number of more or less distinguished artists, authors, philosophers and scientists from four continents, and the answers were published in the French-Canadian newspaper Le devoir. Now, 27 essays have been brought together in this wide-ranging lucky bag. This is not intended disrespectfully, but a collection of 27 essays of less than nine pages on average and on a range of topics from the myths of the cyber-economy to the nature of the universe, the future of on-line education and the development of new modes of authoring must have something for all. This is a strength as well as a weakness. Its strength lies in the fact that an uninformed reader at least gets to know what the issues are. In a very readable format, all philosophical, political, artistic and scientific facets of the current state of the cyberworld are covered.

However, the strength of a chain depends on the weakest of its links, and that is certainly true for this volume. Some of the contributions are of prime quality. Jacques Nantel, professor of e-commerce at the École des hautes études commerciales de Montréal (School for Higher Business Studies) does an excellent job of assessing the alleged virtues of e-business, and Diana Domingues from the Universidade Caxias do Sul in Brazil writes convincingly and lucidly about one aspect of art and magic in cyberspace. These are just two of the stronger links, and there are many others.

On the negative side, there are some very, very poor contributions that I would put down to an uninformed or unlucky choice of authors. Surely, more and better things have been written about cyberdemocracy and the Digital Divide or on the reality of the virtual?

Fortunately, only a small number of essays are really below standard, and this is compensated for by a number of really outstanding, original and often humorous pieces.

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT AND THE JOHNSON WAX BUILDINGS


Reviewed by Roy R. Behrens, Department of Art, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA, U.S.A. E-mail: <ballast@netins.net>.

Nearly 20 years ago, the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University organized a traveling exhibition that opened at the Smithsonian Institution’s Renwick Gallery in Washington, D.C., and was afterwards installed, during the next two and a half years, at 10 other major museums across the country. Titled Frank Lloyd Wright and the Johnson Wax Buildings: Creating a Corporate Cathedral, the exhibition focused on the planning, design and construction of the two major components (the Administration Building, completed in 1939, and the Research Tower, completed in 1950) of the corporate headquarters of the Johnson Wax Company in Racine, Wisconsin. To accompany the exhibition, a book-length study was produced by Rizzoli, of which this newly published book is an unabridged reissue. Its author is the (then young) architectural historian who curated the original exhibition and has since gone on to write other books about the architect, preside over the Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy and serve as an expert consultant for a number of Wright restorations. Born in 1953, only three years after the completion of the Johnson Research Tower, Jonathan Lipman has devoted much of his life to becoming an authority on Wright’s creative process and to preserving the structures that evidence that. Not surprisingly, this is a book of unusual detail, some of it fairly technical and, yet, because of the varied and interesting mix of vintage photographs, archi-