

Moving Being, Being Moved:  
Critical Perspectives on the Practice  
of Authentic Movement

by

Shayna Danielle Keller  
Class of 2009

A thesis submitted to the  
faculty of Wesleyan University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Bachelor of Arts  
with Departmental Honors in Dance

## Acknowledgments

Many thanks to the Wesleyan Dance Department:

Nicole Stanton, for your guidance and patience throughout this process.

Pedro Alejandro, for three years of spiritual nourishment and artistic inspiration.

Katja Kolcio, for your endless curiosity and encouragement.

Susan Lourie, for your compassion, support, and generosity.

Rachel Boggia, for making my head light up and spin around.

Kim Root, for laying the foundations.

I am deeply indebted to the dancers who gave every bit of themselves to this project:

Mary Claire Abbot, Sarah Ashkin, Toni Craige, Margo Fernandez-Burgos, Jeremy

Finch, Devon Hopkins, Allison Hurd, Joella Jones, Audrey McGlinchey, Indee

Mitchell, Christian Morehouse, Maya Barros Odim, Tess Parker, Paolo Speirn, and

Maia Weiss. Your honesty, compassion and energy have made it all possible.

I am grateful to have worked with Adam Tinkle, a brilliant and generous collaborator.

To my housemates, friends, fellow dance majors, and Andrei, thank you.

And finally, thank you to my loving parents, Florence Ryza and Roger Keller,  
who keep my world intact.

## Table of Contents

Preface: First Encounters with Authentic Movement.....	4
Introduction.....	7
Chapter One: Authentic Movement and the Expressive Body of Modernism.....	11
Chapter Two: Body as Symbol, Life as Movement.....	28
Chapter Three: (Re)staging the Practice.....	41
Chapter Four: Embodied Extensions – Authentic Movement and the Choreographic Process.....	55
Conclusion.....	69
Works Cited.....	71

**Preface:**  
**First Encounters with Authentic Movement**

My first experience with Authentic Movement took place on a New York night this past July, at what was supposed to be a contact improvisation class. The contact community, however, had abandoned the city for the CI-36 Festival at Earthdance that week, and only one student showed up. The teacher cancelled class and left the space open for our use. I found some room on the floor and began practicing a tedious movement phrase that had been stewing in my body for several weeks, trying to see if anything new might come out of repeating it. After about half an hour, the other woman in the studio, named Marion, asked if I would be interested in joining her in a practice called Authentic Movement. My repetitions were not going anywhere interesting, so I happily agreed.

She explained the structure to me in fairly simple terms: There are two people, one is called the mover and the other is called the witness. The mover listens and waits for internal kinesthetic impulses, and then moves them with her eyes closed. The witness watches, not judging, not interpreting, but taking in her own experience of the mover's work. Afterward, the two have a structured dialogue and reflect on the experiences of moving and witnessing, recalling the specificity of the mover's physical actions in the space and finding possible personal resonances and meanings. She reiterated to me several times that it was a non-performative practice, so I should not worry about the compositional or technical qualities of the movement.

I chose to witness first, hoping to alleviate some of my anxiety about the vulnerability of being watched. I remember feeling transfixed by the quirky logic of Marion's movement, and at the same time gaining a heightened awareness of the way I was framing the experience, visually and conceptually. When we switched roles and I began to move for the first time with my eyes closed, I knew that Marion would be there to support me, but the emptiness and invisibility of my environment was still very intimidating. As I moved, I remember feeling like parts of my body were orienting themselves in new ways, relating to each other based on a need to sense things differently. The surrounding space was dense and malleable. Eventually, I began traveling beyond my kinesphere and investigating the space, defining the boundaries of my comfort, moving slightly past the imaginary lines, and ultimately retreating back toward the center of the room. Marion and I discussed this later, and she said she could immediately sense the tension I was creating at the periphery of the room. When we switched roles again, Marion kept me in a perpetual state of terror by continually transgressing the boundaries of the space. She moved slowly and steadily toward the window of the third-floor studio, with her arms wide and chest open. While the danger of her actually falling out the window was probably non-existent, her release into this precarious space viscerally transformed my witnessing experience. My muscles were rigid and my heart was pounding. It took me a few minutes to begin breathing again at a normal rate. As some of the tension began to unravel, I realized how much Marion had taught me through her serene walk to the ledge, not only about my own fears and uncertainties, but also about the extent to which we could recreate ourselves and our environments through the mover-witness

exchange. Our previous discussion about reinforcing spatial boundaries almost certainly played a role in her need to break through the barriers I had created. The dialogue we shared had affected her innermost impulses, and her explorations of the space made lasting imprints on my body.

Leaving the studio that night, I was filled with gratitude for this chance encounter. At the time, I had been conducting research on the feminine body in performance, paying close attention to theories of the gaze. Authentic Movement opened up a different way to approach the act of seeing, which depended on the witness's active support for the mover. I was drawn to the element of the practice that asked the witness to watch and speak self-reflexively. To me, it showed promise as an alternative to the voyeuristic gaze of traditional Western concert dance. I slowly began shifting my research in new directions that would allow for a more in-depth exploration of Authentic Movement. It did not take long before I realized how rich and complex this practice was, and how much it had to offer to contemporary research on the body, choreography and performance.

## **Introduction:**

In this essay, I hope to offer an analytical framework for locating the complexities, contradictions, and potentials for discovery in the practice of Authentic Movement. Patrizia Pallaro's recent collections of writing on the subject have provided a substantial body of scholarly work on the origins and evolutions of the discipline. Her first volume, *Authentic Movement*, is a group of essays by Mary Starks Whitehouse, Janet Adler, and Joan Chodorow, three of the primary figures in the creation and development of the practice. In the second volume, *Authentic Movement: Moving the Body, Moving the Self, Being Moved*, Pallaro uses interdisciplinary contributions from practitioners interested in psychoanalysis, spirituality, alternative medicine, and many other fields to extend the possibilities for future explorations. While these essays effectively assert the importance of Authentic Movement's methodological framework in therapeutic contexts, they do less to engage in dialogues with contemporary dance research. My intention is to start bridging this gap. My experience as a dancer and choreographer informs the approach to Authentic Movement utilized in this essay. Choreography was used as a vital strategy for exploring the issues at hand. I am coming to this writing with the conviction that Authentic Movement, like any movement practice, is implicitly a way of theorizing the body. The following work will consider various intersections between the body in Authentic Movement and the contemporary dancing body.

The first chapter of this essay will provide a historical framework for this analysis. I will give a contextual account of Jung's model of psychological growth

through creative dialogue with the unconscious, which inspired a generation of modern visual artists and choreographers to explore the depths of the psyche. Mary Starks Whitehouse, the founder of Authentic Movement, learned about Jungian analysis during her training with renowned choreographer Martha Graham. Whitehouse used the Jungian practice of Active Imagination as the foundation for developing her own form of movement therapy. In this chapter, I will describe Jung's theories of the relationship between body, psyche, and culture, as they relate to Whitehouse's adaptation of Jungian psychoanalytic principles. I will end the chapter with contemporary critical perspectives on the formulation of the body as primitive, feminine, and unconscious.

Authentic Movement and the aesthetic projects of modernism are linked in their shared belief that expression is a cornerstone of coming fully into one's subjectivity. Modern dancers and choreographers in America and Germany embraced this idea as fuel for their formal innovation. Martha Graham described her compositions as works that "fit her as her skin fit her," and coined the phrase, "Movement never lies," which became the prevailing ethos of American modern dance (Copeland 180). Symbolist poets like Mallarmé ascribed the deepest level of authenticity to dance as a form, with the particular justification that expression emanating from the body represents an ideal semiotic "nakedness" (Shaw 4). However, there are damaging assumptions inherent in this merging of authenticity and the body. The notion that the unconscious is singularly accessible through the body (and even located within the body) reinforces a dichotomy between the

conscious, ‘cultured’ self and the unconscious, ‘natural’ body. The body becomes an object external to the metaphysical subject.

Within Carl Jung’s model of Active Imagination and the creative arts therapies emerging from this modernist paradigm (including Authentic Movement), there exists what seems to be a paradoxical relationship between the psychoanalytic ideal of self-discovery—that is, seeing what already exists in the unconscious—and the necessity of consciously producing something in order to achieve an understanding of the self. While Authentic Movement therapists express a dedication to “moving toward center” and finding what is true and essential to the human, they also partake in practices that encourage the conscious amplification and development of the thematic content of personal fantasies (Chodorow 1990). In doing so, the mover actively engages in the creation of a new and ‘synthetic’ reality, within which self-reflection can occur. The second chapter will describe the ways in which Whitehouse challenges Jung’s theories of body and essence, as well as Western cultural constructions of the metaphysical subject. I will argue that Authentic Movement supports the notion that the ‘self’ is not a predetermined essence, but is rather constituted through its acts in the physical world. I will use contemporary perspectives on dance and performance to propose that Authentic Movement, like certain kinds of performance, utilizes the fundamental instability of an ontological ‘self’ to craft new ways of thinking through and about the body.

The third and fourth chapters of this essay will explore the possibility of bringing Authentic Movement into the choreographic process and performance. While Authentic Movement is framed as a non-performative practice, it depends on

the presence of a witness, who lends support and visual feedback to the mover. The identities of both mover and witness are created and transformed through social and sensory exchange. I hope to show that the relationship between performer and audience can be seen as a restaging of the relationship between mover and witness, which acknowledges the importance of dialogue as a way to open new possibilities of meaning. A discussion of my choreographic research will reveal the ways in which these new frameworks for understanding Authentic Movement can occur in practice.

## **Chapter One: Active Imagination and the Expressive Body of Modernism**

Jungian Active Imagination places a unique importance on the creative impulse and the use of visual forms as tools for self-reflection. Jung's approach to therapy helped to position his Analytic Psychology at the center of artistic practices among the late Surrealists, Abstract Expressionists, and particularly relevant to this analysis, within the compositional framework of choreographer Martha Graham. Graham's legacy of uniting artistic drives with introspective psychology was carried forward and expanded upon by her student Mary Starks Whitehouse, founder of Authentic Movement.

In this chapter I will begin by detailing Jung's structural theory of the psyche and his model of psychological growth through creative dialogue with the unconscious, called Active Imagination. I will then explore the relationship between the unconscious and aesthetics, noting some of the ways in which the unconscious has been used as a source of aesthetic inspiration. A consideration of Martha Graham's choreography will reveal some of the ways in which formal aspects of her work resonate with Jung's artistic philosophy. I will then describe Jung's main conceptions of the body, as they are explored in his *Seminar on Nietzsche's Zarathustra* (1935). These theories inform Whitehouse's application of Jungian analytic psychology to her developing form of movement therapy. Finally, I will conclude by employing feminist and post-colonial perspectives to complicate some of Jung's theories on body, self, and culture.

Jung describes the psyche as constituted of three main areas or layers: consciousness, personal unconscious, and collective unconscious. Consciousness is a collection of processes—including sensation, perception, recognition of objects and situations, evaluation, intuition, and dreaming—which together create the active, aware mind (Jung 1969a: 140-41). The personal unconscious consists of “all those contents that become unconscious either because they lost their intensity and were forgotten or because consciousness was withdrawn from them (repression),” and “contents, some of them sense-impressions, which never had sufficient intensity to reach consciousness but have somehow entered the psyche” (142). The collective unconscious is the “ancestral heritage of possibilities of representation,” common to all human beings. It “appears to consist of mythological motifs or primordial images,” (142) though, according to Jung, this can never be entirely verified because humans have such limited knowledge of this area. Neuroses and other mental disturbances that inhibit psychological wellness are caused by repressed contents of the unconscious (known as “emotionally toned complexes”) fighting their way to the surface (142).

Jung’s analytic psychology aims to rid the individual of neuroses through use of the “transcendent function,” which involves mediation, dialogue, and ultimately the union between the contents of the conscious and unconscious (Jung 1969b: 69). Because “civilized life today demands concentrated, directed conscious functioning,” there is a greater risk of dissociating from the unconscious, and therefore neglecting a key element of psychic functioning (71). Jung’s contemporary and one-time collaborator Sigmund Freud had approached the task of uncovering the unconscious

through dream interpretation; however, Jung drifted from this method because of his belief that it was “reductive,” and that the fragmentary character and discontinuity of these “superficial associations” were ultimately unsuitable for his more constructive approach (77). Instead, patients were instructed to actively, consciously follow and amplify the objects of their fantasies through writing, drawing, painting, or other types of creative work.

This process, known as Active Imagination, involves finding a point of departure (for example, an image from a dream or fantasy) and then developing the symbolic content. The subject gives “free reign to fantasy,” and at the same time maintains an “alert, attentive, active point of view” (Chodorow 1990: 305). Eventually, the particular complex takes a visual form and its symbols reveal themselves for interpretation. Robert Steele offers the following explanation of symbolic play and its functions within analytic psychology:

“... One must take the unconscious seriously, but by no means literally. The symbol is not a sign standing for something real to which it must be reduced. The symbol is pure fantasy and one must experience it by placing oneself within its drama. Thereby the fantasy becomes more real... and as lived reality it is worthy of our critical attention.” (Steele 298-99)

Jung clearly emphasizes the importance of lived experience for the therapeutic subject.<sup>1</sup> The process of acting out the fantasy, an engagement with the materiality of

---

<sup>1</sup> One of the assumptions inherent in his method is that empirically observed phenomena would be perceived as more “real” to individuals within his particular historical context (a period when Wilhelm Wundt’s “Psychometrics,” the quantitative

unconscious substances, yields as much knowledge of the self as possible for the subject, and is a necessary step toward the later effort of symbolic interpretation and integration. According to Jung:

“Often it is necessary to clarify a vague content by giving it a visible form. This can be done by drawing, painting, or modelling [sic]. Often the hands know how to solve a riddle with which the intellect has wrestled in vain.<sup>2</sup> By shaping it, one goes on dreaming the dream in greater detail in the waking state, and the initially incomprehensible, isolated event is integrated into the sphere of the total personality, even though it remains at first unconscious to the subject.” (Jung 1969b: 86-87)

This stage of personal development through creative dialogue with the unconscious is known as “individuation.” Donald Mayo, author of *Jung and Aesthetic Experience*, asserts that “individuation is Jung’s creative, and we might say, aesthetic, solution” to the problem of a divided psyche (Mayo 72). However, Jung is wary of the invasion of aesthetic objectives when the true goal of Active Imagination is to create something not subject to external—or rather, *internalized*, cultural—criteria of beauty. In fact, Jung is highly critical of the modern artist, who “seeks to create art

---

measurement of various mental processes and energies, was in high fashion). Jung held the belief that his contemporaries would better receive a psychological model that could be validated through sensory or perceptual experience. Tangibly articulated forms derived from the immaterial realm of the unconscious would appeal to those who valued ‘scientific’ knowledge and viewed his construction of the unconscious with skepticism.

<sup>2</sup> An implication here is that the unconscious is more easily accessed when creative play involves the *hands*, the body. Later, I will discuss the complexities of viewing the body as a vessel for the unconscious.

out of the unconscious.” In his autobiography, he states that “the utilitarianism and self-importance concealed behind this” are signs that one is not free from “the bigotry and hubris of consciousness which wants to believe that any halfway decent inspiration is due to one’s own merit...” (Jung 1962: 195). Jung himself, often ethically torn between the values of aesthetics and scientific rigor, tended to maintain that the visual forms generated from symbolic amplification, or Active Imagination, should be studied as scientific materials and not as art objects.

Mayo, however, is correct in insisting that Jung possesses a set of aesthetic principles, which, in process, do not fall far from ‘creating art out of the unconscious.’ The difference lies within the shifting contexts and intentions of the practice; one can take either a therapeutic or aesthetic approach.<sup>3</sup> Jung’s text dealing specifically with aesthetics, *The Spirit in Man, Art, and Literature*, reveals the secret of great art and its effect upon the viewer in terms of the role of the unconscious:

“The creative process, so far as we are able to follow it at all, consists in the unconscious activation of an archetypal image, and in elaborating and shaping this image into the finished work. By giving it shape, the artist translates it into the language of the present, and so makes it possible for us to find our way back to the deepest springs of life.”

(Jung 1966a: 82)

While Jung proposes that analytic psychology should not be used to create art, he claims that truly inspired art, which has the potential to reach multitudes, must have

---

<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this essay, it is important to distinguish between these two approaches. In my discussions of performance and the choreographic process, I will argue that the context within which Active Imagination or Authentic Movement occurs is of consequence.

origins within the depths of the unconscious. The artist is responsible for acting as a conduit between the archetypal memory common to all humans (which, Jung suggested, was physiologically embedded within the structure of the brain) and its symbolic expression in the present moment. Jung claims that the “visionary artist” is one who enters the realm of the symbolic. “He or she is an artistic shaman or seer, a god-artist, whose work comes from the unconscious, historical depths, from the realm of *mithos* [myth]” (Polcari 44). For this reason and many others, Jung's theoretical models of the self and psyche provided fertile ground for the visual artists and choreographers of the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>4</sup>

Stephen Polcari describes Jung's psychology as “both a product of its culture and a contributor to it,” reflecting the “interest in anthropology, ancient lore, folktales, myth, and ritual that began in America in the 1930s under different circumstances” (Polcari 43). These historical circumstances, most notably the devastation surrounding the First and Second World Wars, drove artists and theorists at the forefront of cultural production to seek alternate understandings of both the individual and humanity at large. The Jungian construction of the artist's mind relies heavily on a romantic fascination with the ‘primitive,’ ‘unconscious’ man, whose eternal, universal wisdom modern man can access by entering the “deeper levels of his psyche” (Polcari 44). Like many artists of the time, Jung argues that man reacts

---

<sup>4</sup> In 1943, founders of the National Gallery, Mary and Paul Mellon, set up the Bollingen Foundation in a deliberate effort to bring Jung's theories and practices into American artistic culture. Convinced of his potential positive impact on the development of American artists, the Mellons set up lectures and workshops with Jungian analysts. According to Polcari, “Jungian Psychology and the Bollingen amplification of it were part of the organic growth of modern intellectual and cultural life” (Polcari 47).

adversely to contemporary civilization's overemphasis on rationalism. Analytic psychology's purpose is to peel off "the hardened layers of moralism and intellectualism that had grown over life in order to recover the primal sources from which real living springs" (Guignon 49). In doing so, the subject can free his or her psychic energy from "the bonds of personal and institutional dogmatism in order to experience its ever-shifting manifestations in a multitude of forms" (Steele 299). A clear focus of Jungian study of the unconscious is to give formal expression to certain universal energies that reside within the individual.

Jackson Pollock is perhaps the most thoroughly researched, and highly regarded, artist to have engaged in visual explorations of Jungian principles. In *She Wolf*, one of Pollock's early paintings, he finds influence in Jung's writings on the wolf mother, who possesses the life- and death-giving powers common to all figures of the collective unconscious (Landau 302). In this work, Pollock's use of vibrant earth tones suggests a close relationship with the ground, the source of life and 'primitive' knowledge. The vigorous, energetic appearance of the strokes evokes the dynamism, chaos, and immediacy of his endeavor — that is, bringing forth and rendering an authentic, archetypal image on the pictorial surface. Like *She Wolf*, many of Pollock's creations from the early to mid-40s resonate with Jung's writings on the psychology of the myth.

Likewise, legendary American choreographer Martha Graham was dedicated to pursuing the eternal mysteries of the collective unconscious through physical exploration, and modernist reinterpretation, of ancient myth. She underwent Jungian analysis for many years; it was no coincidence that she shared many of the formal

concerns Pollock was concurrently facing.<sup>5</sup> Graham's relationship to the earth and awareness of libidinal energy invigorated her movement with a force never before explored in Western concert dance. In works like *Errand into the Maze* (1946) and *Night Journey* (1947), Graham utilizes both subject matter (Greek tragedy and mythology) and movement vocabulary stemming from her investigations into the personal and collective unconscious.

According to Jung, "the confrontation of [consciousness and the unconscious] generates a tension charged with energy and creates a living, third thing—not a logical stillbirth... but a movement out of the suspension between opposites, a living birth that leads to a new level of being..." (Jung 1969b: 90). In Graham's dances, meaning is generated in these moments, in the "movement out of the suspension between opposites." The whole human range of emotion exists between the contraction and the release. Dance scholar Elizabeth Dempster sees this as one of the defining characteristics of modern dance. She claims, "The modern dancer's body registers the play of opposing forces, falling and recovering, contracting and releasing. It is a body defined through a series of dynamic alternations subject both to moments of surrender and moments of resistance." (Dempster 224) This dialectic creates spaces where Jung's "living birth" can come into fruition.

Graham's published notebooks make frequent references to Jung's writings, specifically to those regarding the feminine archetype, *anima*. Graham's characters, various embodied forms of the archetype, have names like "She-who-sees," "Lady of the Labyrinth," and "The Immortal Woman-soul" (Graham 30, 169). In the dancers'

---

<sup>5</sup> For a more thorough discussion of the similarities between Graham and Pollock, see Copeland 2004, particularly chapters 2-4.

ability to summon and personify these timeless beings, Graham's characters perform the actions of the artist prescribed by Jung. They become shamanic figures, mediums of ancient human wisdom.

Polcari argues that for both Pollock and Graham, the act of making was “at least as much a *social and public act*” as a personal one (43). Though elements of their paintings and dances rely heavily on *self-expression* and sometimes contain autobiographical content, the artists' hope was to speak beyond the confines of their own voices and tap into the collective unconscious. In Graham's case, the dissemination of this collective wisdom would occur most directly in her studio, where she immersed her dancers in the teachings of myth and movement. During the 1950s, “the dominant forms of training for both method actors and modern dancers were fundamentally concerned with the elimination of ‘blockages’—sexual reticence, emotional evasion, intellectual equivocation—anything that might inhibit the exploration of one's ‘true inner self’” (Copeland 63). For Graham's dancers, the ultimate goal was to embrace the universal emotion behind movement, and in doing so, connect with an ancient lineage of myth and tragedy.

Mary Starks Whitehouse, trained as a Graham dancer, was introduced to Jungian analytic psychology during these formative years. As she gained interest in this system of self-discovery and healing, she underwent her own analysis and training. Based on a personal interest in improvisation (fostered by her studies with choreographer Mary Wigman in Germany) and a dedication to individual growth and development through dialogue with the unconscious, she began experimenting with ways to incorporate the principles of analytic psychology into a movement-based

therapy (Whitehouse 1972:18-23). She came to believe that “physical movement is an analogy to the psychic movement that leads to the center” (20). Eventually, Whitehouse would leave her dance-teaching career to dedicate her time more fully to explorations of movement therapy.

To better understand the complexities of Whitehouse’s development of Authentic Movement, it is necessary to understand Jung’s ideas about how the body functions in relation to the psyche, self and cultural environment. Jung explores these relationships in several complex and somewhat contradictory ways. He claims, first and foremost, that the body can be seen as a restrictive instrument for conscious functioning, through which consciousness can limit its perceptions and more manageably navigate the infinite plane of life. The body literally “restricts you to a certain place in space and a certain moment in time” (Jung 1998: 94). The biological body houses consciousness and helps the individual to perceive and generate meaning. In this sense, he proposes, “psyche depends on body and body depends on psyche” (Jung 1966b: 4). Our conscious involvement with the world is only possible through phenomenal experience of that world. In fact, even things as omnipresent as the collective unconscious reside within the human body: “the sympathetic nervous system... is the organ by which you have the possibility of such awareness; therefore you can say the collective unconscious is in the lower centers of the brain and the spinal cord and the sympathetic system” (Jung 1998: 175). Not only does our physical presence support the efforts of conscious activity; there are physiological structures and organs of the body designated for each element of the psyche.

Jung also proposes a body that exists as a physical manifestation of the immaterial realm. It is “a concretization, or a function of that unknown thing which produces the psyche as well as the body,” and thus, on a fundamental level, “the difference we make between the psyche and the body is artificial” (Jung 1998: 114). In this definition, the body departs from its position as a perceptual instrument for consciousness and instead fulfills a symbolic role (alongside the psyche) for that which cannot be otherwise expressed. This “body as symbol” definition plays a particularly interesting and challenging role in Authentic Movement, which I will discuss at length in the following chapter.

The final conception of body within Jung’s writings deals more closely with how the presence of a physical body relates to our cultural experience. This body is part of the “shadow”, the self we attempt to hide and neglect due to moral asceticism. According to Jung’s understanding, our culture’s constant insistence on bodily repression undermines our experience of its primal nature. Jung likens this body to an “ass” that the “respectable gentleman” keeps in a stable below his house and feeds very poorly (Jung 1998: 118-19). When the gentleman is caught in the act of feeding the ass, he goes to repent. This momentary repentance, however, cannot stop the feeding cycle: “if it is not done legitimately, then illegitimately.” The ass ravages a neighbor’s garden. Upon reflection, the gentleman realizes that this incident was not entirely outside of his control, that on some level, he actually willed it: he left the gate slightly ajar, did not properly fasten the ass to its place in the stable. Some part of the gentleman’s unconscious hoped the ass would transgress and be satiated. In a cultural environment that places such importance on the purity of the soul, the body

becomes the disobedient part of the self, the “moral problem,” the ass we keep in the stable. Jung suggests that instead of neglecting the body, we should find it a figurative meadow where we can nurture it in an acceptable way (119). By subjecting the body to forces that stifle its wellness, the growth of our whole selves is stunted. When we rid ourselves of the shame of having a body, we can come into a fuller sense of being.

This is the Jungian instance of body that resonates most clearly and consistently with the project of Authentic Movement. Like Jung, Whitehouse believes that as we grow up, the body becomes divided from the self. An early essay written by Whitehouse explores the ways in which the purity of a child’s body and movement becomes tainted through disciplinary cultural patterning. As little children, we are "put at desks for hours at a time, increasingly, and told to keep still and learn." Our "expression of feeling is relegated to a sketchy experience in the arts and the experience of movement is assigned to required gym or athletics" (Whitehouse 1956: 34). Eventually, we become "very efficient and very active but we are physically inexpressive and, therefore, uncreative-- our gestures are stereotypes of feeling, limited and unoriginal" (34). By engaging in a conscious movement practice, or active imagination through physical expression, we can regain freedom in the body and restore our vital energies.

Whitehouse looks back with nostalgia to the child, whose greatest triumph is learning to stand and walk. She asks, "Where did it all go? What happened? How are we now?" and answers, "Well, for one thing, the teaching which was out of our own selves gave way to being taught [...] We learned to curb our instant reactions

and we unconsciously imitated the movement around us" (33). It is the imitative quality of these movements that inhibits originality, and deprives the mover of personal authenticity. For both Jung and Whitehouse, the body is a vital part of our lived experience. It is a socially inscribed and constructed entity, where imprints of cultural values are clear and visible. However, this notion of the body also implies that underneath the daily forces that stifle and restrain our physical expression, there is a pure, organic body. Our return to the natural self can be achieved through the creative healing process, which puts us in touch with the unconscious. While this perspective asserts the importance of body-centered practices, it also implies a particularly close connection between the body and the unconscious.

The history and politics of Jung's association of the unconscious with femininity, primitivity, and the body cannot be overlooked when attempting to understand the theoretical foundations of Authentic Movement. During the height of Western imperialism, artists and scholars began looking to African, Oceanic, ancient Greek and Native American art objects and practices as inspiration for their work. Through these investigations, the new creative generation felt they could become involved with "deeper, more spiritually compelling kinds of expression"; the "primitive arts" demonstrated a "freer sense of plastic inventiveness and a greater emphasis on pictorial structure than any other art forms they knew, and... seemed to evoke a deeper and more universal sense of humanity" (Flam 3). Modern artists, choreographers and museum curators took romantic liberties when defining, contextualizing and historicizing these works of art. In doing so, the primitive person was "cast into a nebulous past and/or into an idealist realm of 'primitive' essences"

and “defined wholly in Western terms” (Foster 1985: 52). This natural, uncontaminated Other (and his cultural products) served as a foundation from which artists and theorists could launch a critique against the ills of modern society.

In *Merce Cunningham and the Modernizing of Modern Dance*, Roger Copeland provides a critical account of the impact of the primitivist ideology on the dance world. Copeland points to a crucial link between the ‘primitive’ and the individual artist: for those who subscribed to Jung’s model of the collective unconscious, the entire repository of ancient and primal knowledge was embedded within one’s own psyche. Because this past was seen as a shared past, artists were offered “a source of inviolable purity” and by digging deeply into themselves could escape the confines of contemporary culture (Copeland 15). European and American modern dancers were very receptive to this approach to self-discovery and expression. In Copeland’s view:

“The dance world’s conception of primitivism involves a dense constellation of interlocking and overlapping beliefs: the idea that dancing is the oldest and most Dionysian of the arts; physical gesture is more expressive and less duplicitous than verbal language; and above all, dance is a “holistic” phenomenon; it helps heal metaphysical divisions and can serve to therapeutically restore a sense of health and wholeness increasingly rare in the contemporary world.” (122)

Thus, modern dancers’ claim to the body as an enduring site of universal truths helped them establish a respected place among the arts. Cultural reception of this newly valorized dancing body, however, was a mixed blessing.

In many of Jung's writings, a close associative relationship between femininity, animality, the unconscious, and the lower parts of the body is apparent (Landau 302). The feminine archetype, called the *anima*, is a deceptive and mysterious figure. According to Jung, she is "a semi-human function on one side; through her head she denotes that she has connection with human conscious, but below she extends into the spinal cord and into the body" (Jung 1998: 174). His language here clearly poses a threat to the human status of the female body. The *anima*'s anatomy is divided between the cerebral portion, the "conscious" part, and the spinal cord and lower regions of the body, the "unconscious" portion, thus reinforcing the Cartesian split. Because elements of the collective unconscious like the *anima* are, as stated earlier, part of one's physiological constitution, this essential femininity is biologically inscribed and thus unchangeable.

In its state of feminine lacking, the body can become an empty vessel, a gateway through which the unconscious emerges. This term, 'empty vessel,' is a metaphor commonly used by Janet Adler to describe the body of the mover. Adler asserts that "language bridges experience from body to consciousness" (Adler 2002: xvii). Though Authentic Movement in many ways privileges physical experience, it also fuses it with unconscious experience. The danger of this use of the body is the same peril that the first modern dance pioneers had to face:

"Women modern dancers did not declare that being a woman led them to a closer connection to their bodies, but in espousing beliefs that body movement revealed natural instincts and feelings, they reinforced the

reduction of women to their bodies while at the same time celebrating the uniqueness and profundity of bodily expression” (Foulkes 35). The expressive body is at once revered and scorned for its access to the primal parts of the self.

Martha Graham deeply internalizes Jung’s construction of the feminine. In her *Notebooks*, she records her attempt to positively inscribe the feminine body as having a privileged connection to primitive knowledge, intuition, and nature:

“Thus the woman is the original seeress, the lady of the wisdom-bringing waters of the depths, of the murmuring springs and fountains, for the ‘original utterance of seerdom is the language of water.’<sup>6</sup> But the woman also understands the rustling of the trees & all the signs of nature, with whose life she is so closely bound up.” (Graham 10)

Feminist theorists like Elizabeth Grosz and contemporary dance scholars like Ann Cooper Albright have attempted to undo this construction of the body, which is particularly gendered (feminine), other-ed (primitive), and unconscious. In *Volatile Bodies*, Grosz claims that terms historically used to describe the female body function to define it in “nonhistorical, naturalistic, organicist, passive, inert terms, seeing it as an intrusion on or interference with the operation of mind, a brute givenness which requires overcoming, a connection with animality and nature that needs transcendence” (3-4). Albright insists, “we need to interrogate and deconstruct ideas that situate the body as precultural, as the ‘natural’ ground onto which society builds its own image” (8). While the language used by Authentic Movement practitioners at

---

<sup>6</sup> This quote is taken from Jungian analyst Erich Neumann’s *The Great Mother: An Analysis of An Archetype* (1955).

times appears to reinforce these paradigms, we might consider these linguistic choices to be products of the historical moment in which the practice was conceived.

Authentic Movement, I will argue, actually has the potential to dismantle these harmful assumptions about the body's essential and fixed relation to femininity, primitivity, and the unconscious.

## **Chapter Two: Body as Symbol, Life as Movement**

In this chapter, I will draw attention to the ways in which Authentic Movement's formal and conceptual contributions both reify and challenge those of Jung's Active Imagination. I hope to show that Mary Starks Whitehouse, in carving new pathways for both movement therapy and improvisational forms, found herself caught between conflicting ways of theorizing the moving body.

One fundamental difference between Jung and Whitehouse's understanding of the self is that for Jung, the immaterial essence of self stays constant, while the contextually embedded, material self actively moves toward achieving an ideal unity between the two. At first, it would seem that Whitehouse posits the movement of the body in a similar manner. Her notion that physical movement is "an analogy for psychic movement that leads toward center" lends itself to the interpretation that 'center' is the unchanging essence of selfhood to be realized by the physical body. However, further research reveals that Whitehouse places less of an emphasis on the acting self's movement toward the essence, and more closely attends to movement *of the essence itself*, achieved through physical expression.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Jung believes that the natural state of the self is undivided. Cultural measures are taken to restrict and reinforce certain behavioral and moral norms, which create roadblocks along the road to individual self-discovery. Through use of the transcendent function and other forms of creative

expression, man can fully become himself. Jung uses the Aristotelian term, *entelechia*, to describe this path of individuation:

“The instinct of individuation is found everywhere in life, for there is no life on earth that is not individual. Each form of life is manifested in a differentiated being... An innate urge of life is to produce an individual as complete as possible. For instance, a bird with all its feathers and colors and the size that belongs to that particular species. So the *entelechia*, the urge of realization, naturally pushes man to be himself. Given a chance to be himself, he would most certainly grow into his own form, if there were not obstacles and inhibitions of many descriptions that hinder him from becoming what he is really meant to be.” (Jung 1996: 4-5)

Jung’s sense of what one is “really meant to be” is predetermined. It is implied that the obstacles and inhibitions preventing man from becoming himself are those originating from the material, temporally situated realm of culture. *Entelechia* depends on the acting self’s ability to move toward an abstract, ideal essence specific to each individual. There is a clear asymmetry established between the value of the abstract self and that of the contextually embedded self: the latter is imperfect and incomplete, always in pursuit of the former.

Whitehouse is often placed in the position of reconciling her own research methods and ways of knowing with analytic psychology’s theoretical models. Though Jung insists on the possibility of a fixed individual essence, Whitehouse intimately experiences the shifting materiality of the body and understands that,

although the idea of an enduring essence is culturally pervasive, there can be no such thing. She explains her understanding of movement in the following terms:

“Non-movement is movement too. The movement means the growth.

There is a paradox — the growth or change, the unstatic quality of the whole person [...] goes back and back from the outer physical movement to the most invisible being.” (Whitehouse 1972: 32)

This “paradox” characterizes two central issues for Whitehouse. The first is that people are always changing, whether literally in motion or not. She insists on what choreographer Deborah Hay would so effectively articulate in later years, that “just by *being*, we are experiencing the cellular body’s momentary configuration” (Hay 82). The second issue is that we can only imagine and construct a “most invisible being” through our presence in the material world of acts, through our “physical movement.” This is the ground upon which philosophical movements like phenomenology and existentialism are predicated, and what Sartre meant when he famously claimed, “Existence precedes essence” (1946). Judith Butler’s notion of performativity, which I will discuss later, also heavily relies on this way of describing selfhood. When we establish any abstract, constant ontological truth about ourselves, we deny the possibility of experiencing and integrating the historical specificity of each act.

In his writings on the transcendent function, Jung envisioned Active Imagination as compatible with most forms of creative expression. He included dance among the artistic mediums with potential for dialogue with the unconscious. However, he warned:

“Those who are able to express the unconscious by means of bodily movements are rather rare. The disadvantage that movements cannot easily be fixed in the mind must be met by making careful drawings of the movements afterwards, so that they shall not be lost to the memory.”

(Jung 1969b: 84)

Whitehouse, very much aware of this concern, references the problem of repeatability and visibility of form in an interview:

“[Movement in depth]<sup>7</sup> has to do with the flow of the unconscious material coming out in physical form. Dear Papa Jung did not know this... because he assumed... that you had to have the structure of the outside form of the dance, which one had to learn and be able to repeat, then you could ask questions. Perhaps Jung didn't know that it flowed like a painting does and that anybody that knew movement could see the images as they came.” (Whitehouse 1972: 21)

For Jung, it was possible to look at the finished product of a patient's experience with the unconscious. Relationships between symbols and the form as a whole could help the analyst to detect their significance to the patient's complexes. In a movement-based reconfiguration of Active Imagination, the process, the *how*, becomes a necessary framework for interpretation. While there are imagistic layers often embedded within movement (or, at least, in the movement with which Whitehouse is concerned), they are not the only makers of meaning.

---

<sup>7</sup> At first, Whitehouse was hesitant to name or codify the practice in any way. In most of her writings, she refers to what is now known as Authentic Movement as “movement in depth” or the “tao of movement”.

Time adds a complicated layer to the form and problematizes any desire for a lasting product or concrete memory.

Although Authentic Movement is distinct from other dance practices, I will draw upon critical writings in dance and performance to illuminate some of the following issues. Like Whitehouse, feminist performance scholar Peggy Phelan proposes that the “disappearance” of the live act is central to the ontology of performance. Once performance is recorded or documented, it begins to “participate in the circulation of representations *of* representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance” (Phelan 146). In this sense, she claims, performance necessarily resists the “economy of reproduction” involved in other art forms because any reproduction “betrays and lessens the promise of its own ontology” (146). Dance scholar Ramsay Burt believes that normative methods of historicizing dance often refer to “a disembodied ideal essence conventionally called ‘choreography’ – rather than an analysis of the performance of that choreography by sometimes troubling and disturbingly material dancing bodies” (Burt 30). When we do pay attention to the materiality of the body, it has the potential to question and trouble “the idea of aesthetic truths that are timeless and thus ever present on a metaphysical plane” (30). The risk of “making careful drawings afterwards”, as Jung would suggest we do, is that we will diminish the actual significance of the moment (which implicitly involves the passing of the moment) by redirecting our attention to its formal preservation. To Phelan and, presumably, to those who practice Authentic Movement, the disappearance of the object is fundamental

because it “rehearses and repeats the disappearance of the subject who longs always to be remembered” (Phelan 147). Thus, the subsequent attempt to recover the lost memory becomes more important than the performative act itself for both mover and witness.

Whitehouse and other Authentic Movement practitioners have developed three central questions for framing the interpretation of movement: “(1) What was the body doing? (2) What was the associated image? (3) What was the associated affect or emotional tone” (Chodorow 288)? The first question helps to jog a memory and direct the focus toward the materiality of the body. It reframes the interpretation using the expressive body’s own terms. The second and third questions engage the viewer inclusively. They operate under the assumption that the witness is active in constructing the meaning of what has happened. These three ways of looking help to establish freely associative guidelines, necessarily tied to the intersubjective experience of witnessing a moving body.

In the previous chapter, I described several of Jung’s theories on the relationship between body, consciousness, and culture. Several of Jung’s frameworks posit an underlying interdependence and unity between body and psyche, extremely radical for their time. However, a more troubling approach is the theory that the body is a physical “symbol” for an unnamable, immaterial essence (Jung 1998, p. 114). According to Jung, “We use a symbol to express something which cannot be expressed by any other means; the moment you have a better expression it is no longer a symbol. A symbol immediately

collapses when you can see behind it” (Jung 1998, p. 110). In determining that the body acts as a symbol, and that a symbol loses its meaning “when you can see behind it,” Jung ascribes a certain aura of power to the essence, via the presence of the body. The body is significant because of its relation to what it stands for, the Being that lies beyond it. The body functions as a metaphoric vessel for conveying that which cannot otherwise be known.

Phelan creates a useful distinction between two categories of symbolic understanding. She believes that “in moving from the grammar of words to the grammar of the body, one moves from the realm of metaphor to the realm of metonymy” (Phelan 150). At first this would seem like a small distinction, but it has radical implications for the way we understand physical performance. Phelan argues, “Metaphor works to secure a vertical hierarchy of value and is reproductive; it works by erasing dissimilarity and negating difference; it turns two into one. Metonymy is additive and associative; it works to secure a horizontal axis of contiguity and displacement” (150). As metaphor, the body in Authentic Movement can only function as an erasable and expendable reproduction of what exists “beneath” its surface. She continues, “In performance, the body is metonymic of self, of character, of voice, of ‘presence.’ But in the plenitude of its apparent visibility and availability, the performer actually disappears and represents something else – dance, movement, sound, character, ‘art’” (150). In Authentic Movement, the metonymic aspects of the moving body allow it to transcend a strictly metaphoric relationship to the self. When the body is no longer attached to the pursuit of representing or becoming its “essence”, the body can become, more freely, its movement.

This is the basis upon which Deleuze scholar Claire Colebrook writes her article, *How can we tell the Dancer from the Dance?: The Subject of Dance and the Subject of Philosophy* (2005). In it, she proposes that if we can see dance as liberated from an external end, not as a set of movements within “an already determined image of life,” dance can become “a confrontation with life as a plane of open and divergent becomings” (5). Colebrook begins by discussing Aristotle’s understanding of two different kinds of potential – *entelechia* and *energeia*. *Entelechia*, or entelechy, describes “movements that aim at actualizing some external object,” like building a house or making a painting (7). As I mention earlier in this chapter, Jung considers the path of human growth to be a form of entelechy, the “urge of realization.” The second kind of potential, *energeia*, refers to activities that “are at each moment of their actualization fully actualized;” for example, “when I see I am not on my way to seeing, for at each moment of seeing I am realizing my potential to see” (7). *Energeia* is the kind of potential referenced by the concept of ‘becoming.’ According to Colebrook, dance might be a better way to allegorize human creative becoming than other activities because “in dance the activity itself is the realization” (7). In this form, the human “becomes a work of art... life appears in dance as self-creation and self-realization – a self-causing movement, rather than a movement produced by some external cause” (8).

While dance could simply be used as an example of human becoming, Colebrook proposes an alternate possibility. Dance might be thought of as “a motion or act that is not the realization *of* some proper form – the human – but a departure from *what is* — a pure becoming that is not the becoming of the human” (8). She

reminds us that it is in dance that Nietzsche's figure of the bacchanal "loses itself, becomes other than itself" (8). In Jung's *Seminar on Nietzsche's Zarathustra*, he attempts to explain the dialectic of the dancer's movement:

"...ritual dancing under primitive circumstances is symbolic; it is always a representation of the creative powers in our unconscious... And as a representation of the creative act, dancing necessarily symbolizes both destruction and construction. It is impossible to create without destroying: a certain previous condition must be destroyed in order to produce a new one." (Jung 1998: 39)

In this passage, Jung describes what Colebrook would consider a set of "counter-actualizations," movements that force a departure from things as they are. The dancers are not realizing a prior potential, but creating and realizing potentials with each new action.

Colebrook asserts that if we were to liberate dance from ends outside itself, we would have to give up the idea of "a self who dances in order to express meaning" (8). Instead, "there would be dancing *from which* one might subsequently conclude that dance *as act* was subtended by a proper potential of which it is a realization" (8). She points to Judith Butler's notion of the performative as an example of how the stylized repetition of acts can create the illusion of an underlying ontological self, or, more specifically, a gender identity (see Butler 1988). In this case, it is through the act of dancing that we might posit some underlying sense of life. She concludes, however, that if dance were liberated from essence or prior potential, "there would be no ground of life that subtended the dance; *life itself would be dance* [my emphasis] –

an acting or doing that creates life itself through style and variation: not the variation of a body, but body as nothing more than variation” (9).

During the 1930s, Martha Graham worked in collaboration with the sculptor Alexander Calder to create sets for several of her modern ballets. In her *Notebooks*, Graham transcribes excerpts from an essay on the movement of Alexander Calder’s mobiles, written by Sartre in 1946:

“A general destiny of movement is sketched for them, & then they are left to work it out for themselves. What they may do at a given moment will be determined by the time of day, the sun, the temperature, the wind. The object is thus always between the servility of a statue & the independence of natural events; each of its evolutions is the inspiration of the moment.

“...Mobiles do not seek to imitate anything because they do not ‘seek’ any end whatever, unless it be to create scales & chords of hitherto unknown movements—

“A mobile, one might say, is a little private celebration, an object defined by its movement & having no other existence.” (Graham 42)

The dance of Calder’s mobiles, to Sartre, is what Colebrook would consider a “confrontation with life as a plane of open and divergent becomings.” For the mobiles there is never a fixed moment in time or space. There exist no metaphysical beings governing their actions. “Defined by their movements,” these objects are never really defined at all. The presence of Sartre’s writing on Calder in Graham’s

personal notebooks clearly suggests that the notions of existence-as-becoming and dance-as-becoming resonated with her choreographic pursuits.

Nevertheless, Whitehouse became disillusioned with the state of modern dance by the late 1940s and 1950s. She saw choreographers' original insistence on the human significance of art beginning to fade away. Dance languages, once fresh and spontaneous, were becoming codified through the discourses of high modernism. To her, the new dance seemed "increasingly stereotyped in general content and form, increasingly skill-oriented. It had, in many ways become an activity to be learned..." (Whitehouse 1969: 58-9). Whitehouse describes the transition from teaching *dance* to teaching *movement* as guided by a desire to investigate process instead of results; her new goal was to "explore and extend [the students'] aliveness" (59). In the following passage from *Reflections on a Metamorphosis*, she dismantles assumptions about the origins and conditions of movement:

"As long as the body can be regarded as an object to be trained, controlled or manipulated, one [...] is still doing something to it or with it. But when it is somehow myself, impelled by impulses, feelings and inward demands for action waiting to be perceived and allowed, I am suddenly aware of being differently alive, differently conscious of myself." (60)

Instead of movement produced by an external cause, the body that Whitehouse describes is perceptive of its own needs and demands for action. The body continually experiences difference and variation through its motion. Movement disrupts the experience of an immaterial subject's reign over the body because

changes in aliveness and consciousness stem from the movement impulses and actions themselves – not from transformations in the self, expressed through movement. Whitehouse remarks in an interview, “body movement is Active Imagination in sensory or sensation terms” (Whitehouse 1972: 20). While images and narratives may emerge through the amplification, development and interpretation of energetic impulses, the mover is always responsible for staying connected to the initial sensations that drive these explorations. By constructing an open sensory landscape, the mover can find meaningful ways to later interpret and integrate the experience.

It is clear that what concerns Whitehouse, above all, is human growth through human movement. For her, the reconstruction of a whole subject is an important component of the practice. On this basis, it seems fair to say that Whitehouse’s use of movement might be comparable Colebrook’s category of dance as an allegory of human becoming. However, Whitehouse complicates this reading. She explains:

“The word ‘becoming’ moves, it is the movement aspect of eternity.

Being is the essence; becoming is the movement of the essence. After all, it is Life that dances.” (Whitehouse 1969: 62)

In this passage, Whitehouse comes within close range of Colebrook’s assertion that if we liberated dance from an external end, ‘life itself would be dance.’ While Whitehouse still approaches movement from a humanist perspective (there is still an underlying life that dances), she establishes a similar framework as Colebrook for viewing both life and movement as becomings. She and Colebrook share the idea that the body constantly transforms itself by acting and doing. For Whitehouse,

Authentic Movement is a way to reconsider an essentialist perspective of the metaphysical subject. Instead of using movement therapy as a way to lead the individual to her true, eternal nature, Whitehouse uses movement to reveal the dynamic quality of the self. The following chapter will explore some of the specific social mechanisms through which this self is constituted.

### **Chapter Three: (Re)staging The Practice**

This chapter will explore possibilities for bringing Authentic Movement into performance. While several contemporary Authentic Movement practitioners have proposed methods for using Authentic Movement in performance, their models neglect to ask critical questions about the ethics of a theatrical context. Additionally, their transpositions often disregard the fundamental principles of the mover-witness relationship. First, I will discuss the roles of mover and witness in Authentic Movement, detailing the function of dialogue within the practice. I will then draw comparisons between the interpersonal relationships in Authentic Movement and those of the theatrical setting, using Alice Rayner's concept of the audience as an unstable community of multiple subjectivities. I hope to show that, in many ways, the witness can stand for the greater social body. I wish to propose a model of Authentic Movement and performance that treats the theatrical space as a site of personal and cultural transformation through dialogue, repetition and variation.

When Mary Whitehouse passed away, Janet Adler established the Mary Starks Whitehouse Institute, and dedicated her attention to codifying the practice of Authentic Movement and conducting further investigations into the roles of mover and witness. In an essay called *Who is the Witness*, Adler illustrates the modes of attention required of each participant in an Authentic Movement dyad. In the beginning stages, she says, the witness carries "a larger responsibility for consciousness [...] She is not 'looking at' the person moving, she is witnessing,

listening, bringing a specific quality of attention or presence to the experience of the mover” (Adler 1987: 142). The witness creates a safe and nurturing space for the mover, providing stable ground from which the mover can explore the unconscious. She explains, “When the unknown is being explored through the arrival of and encounter with unconscious activity, there is often the element of fear and/or awe. The presence of another... can be a response to the human need for safety, containment or balance” (153). The witness must be able to respond energetically to the tension that inevitably occurs when the mover is accessing certain layers of consciousness for the first time. Through her presence in the space, the witness recognizes the mover’s challenges and reifies the material reality of the present.

Adler believes that although the mover’s experience is the primary focus at first, the witness’s inner reality is just as “vast, as complex, and as essential to the process” (142). The witness is responsible for sustaining the consciousness of both her mover and herself. Additionally, the witness attempts to stay distanced from the sensations and emotions that come up while seeing the mover. She does not “enact or engage in her own experience,” but rather witnesses it (143). In the dialogue at the end of the practice, she must determine what is appropriate to share and what information should be kept private. The witness always frames her own speech in terms of a personal account and never projects or enforces an interpretation of the mover’s work. This allows the mover to develop through introspective analysis, while still leaving room for multiple perspectives and generative exchange.

While the mover and witness at first have very distinct roles and presences, eventually their relationship becomes a permanent fixture in the mover’s

consciousness. As the mover cultivates a more refined practice, she can ideally “internalize the witness” and become conscious of herself as she moves (145). This internalization, or development of an ‘inner witness’, is key to the growth of the mover. The concept of an ‘inner witness’ is significant to this analysis because it relies upon a dialogic formulation of the person, wherein the presence of an other fundamentally changes the nature of what one identifies as a self.

In Adler’s written work, she begins to establish connections between the mover-witness relationship in Authentic Movement and the performer-audience relationship in concert dance. She finds some of the more superficial parallels between the two in their well-established functions. It is clear that “both performers and movers wish to be seen,” and that “both audiences and witnesses desire to see” (Adler 2002: 188). Adler overlooks the fact that the reverse is true as well: the viewer has a need to be seen, and the performer has a need to see. Both are incomplete without the ability to shift between these roles. Limiting each participant to one specific function supports Adler’s notion of ideal unity between the audience and performer, wherein a full subject, who can see and be seen, only exists when these counterparts become one. For Ann Cooper Albright, the “double moment of dancing in front of an audience is one in which the dancer negotiates between objectivity and subjectivity—between seeing and being seen, experiencing and being experienced, moving and being moved—thus creating an interesting shift of representational codes that pushes us to rethink the experience of the body within performance” (Albright 1997: 3). We can only posit the performer as actively engaged in self-creation if we recognize this dialectic of roles and functions.

Adler also sees certain patterns of growth in those who practice Authentic Movement, which support the performative pursuits of dance. As the inner witness strengthens, the mover can feel the difference between “being looked at and being seen.” Likewise, witnesses can distinguish between “looking at and seeing” (188). Adler uses the format of a witness circle with multiple movers to explore the possibilities of a constantly transforming exchange between dancer and audience. The relationship between movers and witnesses is slightly different than a traditional Authentic Movement structure. In this circle, “there are moments for individuals, and sometimes for an entire group, when there is no separation between the one who dances and the one who sees the dance” (188). In Adler’s ‘sacred’ or ‘mystical’ circle dance, the ultimate concern is the union of performer and audience through participatory ritual.

Authentic Movement practitioner Andrea Olsen describes another possible way of investigating the relationship between movers, witnesses, performers and audiences within a traditional theatrical context. She believes that performance is a way to awaken the audience’s collective unconscious, and to unite performer and audience in a communal journey:

The multiplicity of the human experience lives in each of us, and the stage provides an opportunity to embody our inner selves by moving as a performer, or by empathizing or projecting as witness [...] At first the collective mind of the audience supports the surrender of the performer to unconscious energies, but soon the audience surrenders its awareness of self and goes with the performer towards transformation as well. In

this context, transformation becomes an inclusive experience.” (Olsen 323)

Through complex exchanges of empathy and surrender, the audience relinquishes control over its own experience and allows the movement of the collective unconscious to occur in the performance space. Adler and Olsen transpose Authentic Movement principles to these new settings in order to create communal spaces and to help the audience transcend the status of passive onlooker. The audience contributes to the overall sense of transformation by providing energetic attention. In Olsen’s formulation, the audience even surrenders itself and vicariously takes part in the movement of the unconscious.

While there is a great deal of promise in drawing connections between Authentic Movement and performance, Adler and Olsen’s work demands critical revision. There are three central issues to confront with regard to their approaches. First, when an audience is absorbed into a performance through empathy, and “surrenders its awareness of self,” the ultimate result is a conversion of the performing subject into an object of the spectator’s desire. Second, an audience, comprised of multiple subjectivities, cannot be treated as a cohesive unit. Finally, when we do attempt to falsely (or, even, *coercively*) unify the audience, the work closes itself to possible meanings. The audience is no longer part of an intersubjective endeavor, but is rather observing an already constituted reproduction of meaning.

Alice Rayner’s essay, entitled *The Audience: subjectivity, community and the ethics of listening*, provides the framework I will use for this discussion. Rayner

explores the shifting meaning of the word (or sign) “audience” to explore the ethics involved in this role. She suggests that we might better understand the idea of “audience” if we draw upon the divisions between the word itself and its functions, and in doing so, interrogate our assumptions about subjectivity and collectivity. From her perspective, the audience can be seen as a model for intersubjective relations as opposed to a model for a unified community (252). I will argue that Authentic Movement, in practice, supports the former model, but that Adler and Olsen’s methods for approaching Authentic Movement in performance would tend to reinforce the latter.

According to Rayner, the sign “audience” can variously operate as an “I,” “you,” “it,” or “we,” depending on the structure of the performance setting and the mode of intention each audience member brings to it (253). The ‘I’ subject “takes in, feels, experiences, responds and sees and hears the performer as an extension of herself and as existing *for* herself, as a mirror that constitutes an imaginary unity” (253). This ‘I’ is unable to recognize the performer’s independent “language, consciousness and unconscious,” and sees the performer only as an image for consumption. The ‘I’ is concerned with the other “primarily as an occasion for its own singular stimulation and self-recognition” (254).

Certain types of theatrical performance reinforce this way of seeing. For example, the “naturalistic or realistic stage picture, [...] like the realistic actor who attempts to disappear into a role, asks the audience both to sit outside the stage picture and to identify with the world and characters of the play” (254). As early as the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, the ethics of the realistic stage have been called into question, precisely

for this reason.<sup>8</sup> In this type of theater, actors speak without acknowledging the performative nature of their endeavor. The audience, presumed to be a “monarchic” whole, is allowed to view this theater as its own projection. Realism in theater, Rayner argues, “eject[s] the audience from the scene yet allow[s] it to dominate from the dark. Through the processes of identification or absorption, the ‘subject’ [is] at once on stage, in the light, and in the ‘consciousness’ of the darkened house. Cast into the darkened space, the audience becomes the voyeur that is bound erotically to the image” (254). Though it may not be Olsen’s intention, this binding phenomenon is one danger of the way she brings Authentic Movement into performance.

Olsen provides a first-hand account of performance, which demonstrates this type of audience reaction:

“... In China during a solo concert, when I dropped my head, the heads in the room would drop; when I lifted my focus, the audience’s focus would follow my movement.” (Olsen 323)

As Olsen moves, the audience loses itself through identification with the performer, and the group reacts in complete physical harmony with the moving subject onstage. But because of the choreographic and energetic intentions of the performer, each member is left without the possibility of seeing self-reflexively. This leads to an illusion of unity between the two worlds of seer and seen, in which the performer

---

<sup>8</sup> In 1757, the political philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau expressed the belief that theater of this sort would detract from both actor’s and spectator’s “sentiment of being,” or personal authenticity. The actor on the stage, consumed by a role, “annihilates himself,” and “loses himself in his hero” (81). What is left of him can be “used as the plaything of the spectators.” Thus, while people “think they come together in the theatre, it is there that they are isolated” through their neglect of the social reality (16-17).

becomes an extension of the audience. As previously discussed, one of the fundamental principles of witnessing in Authentic Movement is that the witness must view his own experience as distinct from that of the mover. In doing so, he refrains from projecting his personal sentiments and interpretations onto the mover's inner experience. By attempting to move the audience in such a way, literally and figuratively, Olsen unintentionally redirects the focus of performance toward self-fulfillment by way of objectification.

While kinetic empathy is a crucial part of the experience of performance-based art, this empathy must be actively self-aware. Mikhail Bakhtin, an early 20<sup>th</sup> century Russian theorist, describes a particular kind of aesthetic empathy as a potentially creative act:

“I empathize *actively* into an individuality and, consequently, I do not lose myself completely, nor my unique place outside it, even for a moment [...] Empathizing actualizes something that did not exist either in the object of empathizing or in myself prior to the act of empathizing, and through this actualized something Being-as-event is enriched [...]”

(Bakhtin 1993: 15)

When the viewer is attentive to his own consciousness and still appreciates the separate consciousness of the performer, the collision and dialogue between these subjectivities becomes a constructive act. In Authentic Movement, this active empathy is the supposed foundation of the mover-witness relationship. However, Adler and Olsen's theories of Authentic Movement in performance do not preserve this approach.

The second concern with Adler and Olsen's methods is that they attempt turn the performative space into a ritual of communion and transformation in which difference is cancelled. In performance, "individuals are meeting as a collective and taking part in a social ritual" (Rayner 255). While this element of the theater is valuable and essential, it can also become a way of crafting unity from multiplicity, not only between performer and audience, but also between individual members of the audience. A ritualistic approach falsely assumes a sense of community and becomes a normalizing force, constructing a stable "we" where there is none. Rayner uses Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty as an example of a participatory theater, which "subsumes subjects and distinctive subjectivity in a sensation of community that presents itself as beyond articulation" (256). While the ultimate goal of this theater is to "create a 'we' as a fusion of identities in communion with elemental forces," Rayner suggests that "Artaud's theatre is bound to be impossible, and one often finds a sense of despair in those who attempt and fail to implement it" (256).

Ironically, merging the 'we' of the audience into the performer's consciousness (or vice versa) limits the potential to create new meanings from this union. It is through "proximity of the Other as opposed to identification with it" that one opens the performance to previously undiscovered meanings (256). Rayner proposes an alternative model for establishing a community in the theater, in which all members are "rhetorically" invited to partake in the act of witnessing. This 'rhetorical invitation' to the group "recognizes the joining together of multiple individuals as another possible dimension for human action in which the group has more force than the individual" (257). Participation in the audience, then, becomes a

temporal occasion of collectivity, bound predominantly to specificity of site and the common enterprise of listening and seeing. The rhetorical ‘we’ values agency, active participation, and recognition of the group’s unstable identity.

Mary Whitehouse often practiced Authentic Movement in large groups, utilizing multiple movers and witnesses. In determining whether or not to further pursue this work, she took into consideration the overall effect group sessions had on the individual. Often, “the impact of what happened to individuals had to be left hanging or was cut across by the democracy of the group reaction” (Whitehouse 1969: 61). Over an extended period of experimentation with both individual and group sessions, however, Whitehouse came to believe that:

“People need people. It was not long before I found that there were those for whom moving alone in a large space while I watched was less rewarding than participating in a group. Something about the energy built up in common, the sense that everyone shared a similar struggle, the mutuality of giving and receiving, offered a more satisfying experience, a more illuminating development.” (61)

The group identity in this context is produced through each person’s commitment to a similar action-based undertaking. Rather than assuming that the entire group is operating in a space of transcendental communion— as in Olsen’s “collective mind of the audience”—Whitehouse acknowledges and values difference. People contribute to the space both as givers and receivers, shifting fluidly between roles. While individuals must make ‘democratic’ concessions to the group, the compromises

facilitate a more ‘satisfying’ experience. This satisfaction occurs because the group is bound through individual and collective action, rather than self-transcendence.

There are also elements of these group relationships that are not due entirely to individual decision-making and personal agency. Rayner describes yet another possibility for understanding the audience, which acknowledges those forces that account for a broader historical and cultural moment. The ‘it’ status of the audience “identifies a cultural memory: the non-human residue of beliefs, orthodoxy, and values that go into creating an historical identity” (258). In this sense, “the ‘it’ positions the audience as a product of the stories of history, whether it knows those stories or not” (258). In Authentic Movement, this is comparable to some notion of the ‘collective unconscious,’ which imagines each individual as having access to a shared, unknown history. Rayner believes that audiences will “continually ‘exceed’ the status of ‘it’ because ‘it’ conceals not only constitutional differences within real audiences and the shifting contexts of their occurrences but the openness of subjectivity and intentionality” (258-9). However, the ‘it’ is a useful lens for understanding Whitehouse’s suggestion that within moments of contact between two people, there is more than ‘I’ and ‘you’. For Whitehouse, each moment of exchange between mover and witness is unique, consisting of “I and Thou and a third element – that which is between us, that which is not mine, though I am in it, and not yours though you are in it, but something more, something which contains us both and has its own feeling and its own development” (Whitehouse 1969: 62). This ‘third element’ might be understood as the specificity of the historical moment, which allows us to bring Authentic Movement out of the therapeutic sphere and into the

social, cultural realm. This restaging and reframing transforms the therapeutic endeavor into an ‘artistic’ one.

Rayner’s final construction of the audience is the ‘you,’ in which the audience can be understood as “the object of address from the perspective of the performer,” or “part of the constitution of a *relation* of subjects in a [...] direct address” (259). The ‘you’ construction “recognizes a simultaneous subjectivity in which each subject is also an other.” This type of theater “demands a high degree of both self-and other-directed consciousness that presumes both performer and audience are partners in dialogue” (259). While active empathy is still possible in this type of theater, full identification with the performer is precluded from the audience’s range of experience. The form insists on a performative environment where each partner is “distinctly other, engaged in the politics of otherness as a negotiation between needs (not desires) and limitations (of both resources and understanding)” (259). It is through these negotiations and limitations that change occurs for each party.

Whitehouse describes a similar dialogic relationship between movers and witnesses in Authentic Movement, in which:

“Questions of personal truth and individual impulse come up against different truths and different impulses—questions of how I can honor the reality of my own feeling without ignoring the reality of others, how I can be open to those others without over-adapting or over-assessing myself.” (Whitehouse 61)

Thus, the process of personal transformation in Authentic Movement occurs, in large part, through navigating difference. Participants expose themselves to a wider range

of meaning by witnessing the multiplicity of perspectives and realities. This opening toward possible meanings, as opposed to the recovery of a previously determined meaning, is a crucial mechanism for dialogic growth in Authentic Movement.

In performance, this direct dialogue is what Rayner considers relation of intersubjective ethics between performer and audience. The audience “legitimizes the performance not through knowledge of fact and law but through the ability to donate to the performer both presence and judgment,” thus returning the performer to himself “with a difference” (265-6). The audience is forced to remain more active when confronted with non-normative frameworks of performance, within which the obligation to see and listen is underscored. Meaning becomes possible through the act of exchange between speaker and listener, or between mover and witness.

Returning, *with difference*, is a vital strategy for generating change and meaning in both Authentic Movement and performance. Each form creates spaces for participants to restage and repeat their experiences. Authentic Movement practitioner Joan Chodorow sees active imagination as a “re-creative process,” aimed not at mending the past, but at opening future possibilities through dynamic action (Chodorow 298). People are able to heal and transform through performative repetition, variation and dialogue. Adler believes that repetition is “a central force within the body’s wisdom, a phenomenon necessary for growth” (Adler 2002: 35). By witnessing the repetition of physical patterns, we are able to establish and reiterate a communicative grammar of movement, making social exchange possible. By making slight alterations to these patterns, we can transgress certain boundaries and open both personal and social spaces toward new potentials for meaning.

The transposition of Authentic Movement to a concert setting can be considered a restaging of the relationship between mover and witness, or a variation of this structuring device. Like Rayner's notion of the temporary 'we' and relational 'you', Authentic Movement in performance calls for simultaneous awareness of self and commitment to the communal act of seeing the other. Movers and witnesses, performers and audiences, all take part in a creative and self-reflexive dialogue, transforming and constructing one another through this exchange.

## **Chapter Four: Embodied Extensions Authentic Movement in the Choreographic Process**

The two semesters of choreography involved in this research turned out to be very different, but complimentary processes. Both pieces were created in collaboration with the dancers and Adam Tinkle, who composed the musical scores. My investigations in the fall semester considered the inter-group dynamics of a community of movers and witnesses. The process became, primarily, an exploration of the ways Authentic Movement could be used to generate movement material for performance. We began with extensive group-building practices, working first as a large ensemble and then in smaller groups of two and three dancers at a time. The piece we presented at the '92 Theater, called *Aperture*, was a culmination of these few months of intimate work. My investigations in the spring were more grounded in spatial and environmental explorations. The dancers came to know each other through extended improvisations dealing with the composition of what I called 'dialogic' space. We utilized various rhythmic, spatial and energetic structuring principles to create a site-specific movement experiment, called *Aiou*, for Schönberg Dance Studio.

During the first rehearsals for *Aperture*, a primary focus was to explore various modes of witnessing movement, while interrogating the notion of personal authenticity. In our first meeting, I described the practice of Authentic Movement, and then asked the dancers to each give their own personal definition of authenticity. In doing so, I hoped to demonstrate the unfixed and indefinable nature of the concept

itself. There were a wide variety of answers, ranging from ideas about the expression of internal energies to the alignment of different parts of the self. When the dancers asked for my definition of authenticity, I let them know that I had no idea what it could mean for this process, but that the traditional meaning might be summed up as a unity between external form/action and inner essence. I asked the dancers to bear in mind that their definitions might change over time, and to be mindful of these shifts over the course of the rehearsal process.

We began that first session with bodywork in pairs, and eventually moved into a large group improvisation. To get the dancers comfortable with speaking openly to each other about movement, I asked them to simultaneously move and describe each other's physical actions in the space, starting with the words, "I see". Thus we were all able, as a group, to practice the self-reflexive act of seeing and verbally depicting movement. We then transitioned into a more traditional Authentic Movement practice, relocating the focus from ten movers and witnesses to a single mover and a single witness. The witnesses learned to resist translating the mover's actions into narratives, and instead to speak only of what had physically happened in the space. In the beginning, it was difficult for some of the witnesses not to project their interpretations onto the movers' experiences. Over the course of the weeks to come, each dancer began to find her voice as a supportive and non-judgmental witness.

In the next rehearsals, I asked the dancers to begin exploring alternative forms of witnessing. Instead of speaking their experiences, they moved them and had non-verbal dialogues with their partners, exploring the communicative potentials of movement that Whitehouse often speaks about. In other sessions, I provided colored

pencils and large sheets of paper for drawing the energetic and spatial pathways of the movement. The ‘moving witness’ became a structure we used many times throughout the process to select and remember specific movements for incorporating into the choreography. By using this method of selection, I hoped to give the dancers a chance to consciously decide what was most interesting to them about each other’s formal contributions.

Attempting to explore “authentic” movement in a choreographic process that questions the ethical foundations of the concept of authenticity can be tricky. For dancers who defined authenticity in a certain way and saw authenticity as a positive ideal, some elements of the process were difficult. When the time came to learn other peoples’ movement phrases and repeat them in set sequences, some dancers saw this as damaging to their sense of originality and uniqueness. This moment in the choreographic process coincided with the point in my written research when I began looking into contemporary perspectives on authenticity. Inspired by writers like Mikhail Bakhtin, Walter Benjamin, and Judith Butler, I began thinking more about models of creativity and self-expression as occurring through the reconfiguration and variation of certain historical, social and cultural paradigms. I started shifting the focus of rehearsals toward a process that would more fully recognize imitation as fundamental to the formation of a creative ‘self.’ I asked my dancers to use the mimetic functions of translation and reproduction as strategies for both reinforcing and undermining the structures they saw being utilized in our piece. In this sense, the work continually opened itself toward new possibilities through the critical decisions made by the dancers.

Another ethical and aesthetic challenge I faced in the choreographic process was that using the word ‘authentic’ tended to cue dancers to move almost entirely from their torsos and pelvic areas. It was fascinating and troubling to see gestural and peripheral movement removed from the dancers’ sensual experiences. It came as no surprise, however, given the Western historical lineage of associating the core of the body with the ‘organic’ and ‘primal’ parts of the self. Graham’s contraction of the lower abdominal region is a familiar trope of authentic expression in modern dance. As a way to de-centralize the dancers’ regions of physical expression and heighten their movement clarity, I asked them to isolate their movement practices to one specific body part or muscle group. They ended up creating complex and specific rhythmic phrases, more fully utilizing the kinesthetic and expressive potentials of their particular anatomical structures. One dancer made a captivating dance with her wrist joint, another with his facial muscles. Even dancers who chose to explore the lungs, belly or pelvis paid extremely close attention to the smallest details of these areas of the body.

Later that evening, we turned these phrases into sites for contact between the dancers. The contact duets, which turned out to be rigorous problem-solving exercises, became ways of accessing the instability of interpersonal dynamics. Negotiations constantly had to be made in order to accomplish the task of keeping two parts of the body joined in perpetual motion, while still maintaining the specific demands of each person’s phrase. As the dancers made their way through various permutations and possibilities for approaching this work, they developed specific styles of moving together. Perhaps the most intimate of these works was a knee-to-

diaphragm duet, created by Toni and Margo. It was foregrounded in the final choreography as the only duet onstage by itself for an extended period of time, unique in its slow and risky weight shifts. The audience responded in very mixed ways to this display of intense intimacy and vulnerability between the two dancers. Some saw it as a raw expression of love and were moved by their bond. Others felt it was a confrontational choreographic gesture that excluded the audience from the intimacy of their relationship.

In designing the stage space for *Aperture*, I had to determine how I wanted to frame the audience's approach to the viewing experience. I decided to open the side curtains of the stage, which revealed the architectural design of the '92 Theater and helped the audience refresh their vision after a long night of performances. In one sense, it was a way of revealing, as opposed to masking, the performative nature of our work in a theatrical space. For the dancers, there was no downtime in the bays. As they finished their movement, they found places to stand in stillness, as witnesses to each other, on the boundaries of the stage. Functionally, removing the curtains created more room for the musicians to play and for the dancers to set up onstage lighting sources.

Instead of using traditional stage lighting, I asked the dancers to bring lamps from their homes. Not only did this help to craft a very particular kind of intimacy in the theater, but it also detracted from the overly dramatic power of the stage lights. Dancers either turned their lamps on or off to mark their entrance or exit from the movement space. The number of lights turned on reflected the number of movers, thus creating a shifting metaphor for the energetic highs and lows of the stage. The

audience had to work much harder to see, and at times could only perceive faint silhouettes of complicated and intriguing movement. I wanted them to constantly feel invited inward by the domesticity of the lamps, but to remain aware of their positions as spectators due to the dimness of the light and the visual energy required to watch the performance.

In a similar choreographic decision, I chose to use mostly small duets, solos and trios to create a sense of warmth and accessibility, but then flooded the stage several times with an overwhelming crowd of dancers, performing similar movements with different timings. This made it impossible for the viewer's gaze to fix itself on a single place for more than a moment. Just as the audience was drawn back into comfortably watching a set of actions, something else would subtly occur to pull away their focus. Some audience members described this effect as 'unsettling' and 'difficult to watch.'

The music for *Aperture* was composed as a collaborative effort between Adam Tinkle and Cory Baldwin. Adam, Cory and I met frequently over the semester to discuss the theoretical issues involved in my choreographic and written research. Our starting point was an investigation of various modes of witnessing. To lay common groundwork for our independent research processes, we each decided to self-consciously select, mediate, and obstruct visual and auditory information within our works. While I edited the 'moving witness' materials generated by the dancers, Adam used computer-based technologies to accomplish this task. He came to rehearsals to record the verbal dialogues between dancers, and then developed an algorithm for manipulating their voices on a program called SuperCollider. During

the performance, he used a set structure for improvisation, using the recordings of the dancers' voices as well as the sounds of other homemade electronic instruments. Cory used her voice, a microphone and a looping pedal as tools for performance. By creating an improvisational dialogue between human voice, algorithmically manipulated electronic voice, and dancing bodies, we hoped to deconstruct the myth of a binary between mediated and non-mediated live performance, or between inauthentic and authentic expression.

Throughout the rehearsal process, I often let the dancers know of my choreographic intention to disrupt the boundaries between 'real' and 'performed' life as a way to explore the notion of authenticity. I wanted them to approach their dancing with the awareness that the performative nature of our practice did not preclude the authenticity of their experiences and expressions. Rather, acknowledging the performative character of our actions, onstage and off, would further enrich the creative process. The dancers' gestural vocabularies came from mundane experiences like wiping their foreheads or putting on socks, all repeated acts from personal histories that in some way contribute meaning to what they call 'self.' Bringing these personal idiosyncrasies into performance, as well as the intensely intimate environment they created for each other, made the transition from rehearsal space to theatrical space feel very fluid. Many of the experienced stage performers said it was the most relaxed and 'natural' they had ever felt in the theatrical setting. When I had the chance to watch from the audience, I saw the dancers sinking deeply into their weight and attending to the perceiving and sensing acts that are often lost onstage when the adrenaline kicks in.

Ultimately, *Aperture* was a dance about using Authentic Movement principles to craft intimate relationships and diverse movement vocabularies. During the process, my primary job was to facilitate the dancers' experiences as group of in(ter)dependent explorers. In the final stages of the process, my duties shifted toward editing and restructuring their work. The piece, as a whole, seemed to come together on its own. I felt like a witness to the movement of the choreography itself, which continued to reveal its many languages and voices each time the dancers restaged the work.

My second semester of choreography began as an interrogation of the relationship between performer and audience, grounded in the idea that performance could be considered an extension of the mover-witness relationship. I established critical research questions based on Janet Adler and Andrea Olsen's proposed methods of using Authentic Movement in performance. As described in the previous chapter, their work leaves a great deal of room for critical revision. I set out to explore practical alternatives to these models.

In the preliminary stages of this semester's choreographic research, I planned on once again using variations on the practice of Authentic Movement as a way to generate material for the dance. However, the group dynamic was so different from the previous semester that it became difficult to use the same set of compositional tools. Energetically, I was in a very different place this semester as a leader, and found it hard to devote the same attention to creating an intimate space for the dancers. After two rehearsals, I recognized the need to implement different strategies for movement invention. We used 'flocking' exercises to build group awareness, and

used mirroring as an alternative form of witnessing. Eventually, we spent most of our time experimenting with various improvisational scores. Using just a small fraction of the individual and group vocabulary the dancers generated, we began to assemble a structure for the dance.

As I read more about theories of performance-as-dialogue, my use of space started to become a more important element of the choreography. An essay called *Mikhail Bakhtin: Dialogics of Space* provided an invaluable bridge between these theories and my choreographic project. In this essay, Holloway and Kneale attempt to create a dialogical theory of space based on Bakhtin's writings. The authors suggest that Bakhtin's theories of 'Self' and 'Other' contain an implicit "emphasis on visuality and sight" (74). It is by placing ourselves in a specific space and time that we are able to posit some notion of a unique self, and by visually contextualizing the other that alterity is revealed. For Bakhtin, there is no way to become whole without the presence of another who can lend his sight; for instance, we cannot see our own foreheads or the spaces behind us, but these are defining features of what constitutes a 'self' at any given moment (74). Holloway and Kneale propose that through visual and spatial metaphors, Bakhtin "refutes the possibility of a monadic and privileged centre to the Self, denying the possibility of a static, immutable, least of all transcendental essence [...] Being is unique *and* unified, different *and* simultaneous" (74). The sense of spatial plasticity and fluidity transformed the way I approached the choreography for the rest of the semester.

I chose to use Schönberg Dance Studio as the site for the performance instead of the '92 Theater for several reasons. The first was that it would allow the audience

to look at the work from all sides. I liked the idea that looking in toward the dancers would also involve seeing members of the audience on the opposite side of the room. Each person, whether they were aware of it or not, would become a part of the performance's visual landscape. The second reason for using Schönberg was that this space already carried a set of associations for people who had danced and learned within its walls. Using the rehearsal space as a site for performance was a way of framing the dance as an unfinished work, still open to new meanings.

The musical score came out of another collaboration with Adam Tinkle. We sat down to discuss the new set of concepts involved in the piece, and I described my ideas about how 'dialogic space' might function in performance. This semester, our compositional processes took place quite independently of one another. We wanted to see what would happen when our separate works, based on similar theoretical principles, came together. Adam created a piece for four electric guitars, in which each musician stood in a different corner of the space. The music they played involved a series of changing rhythms and intervals based on Adam's interpretation of dialogic space. Because of the particular acoustics and reverberations in Schönberg, each part of the studio sounded slightly different when they played. The presence of an audience also dramatically changed the way sound carried.

The structural environment I built for *Aiou* was based on idea that 'self' is created at the marginal spaces of sensory exchange with an 'other.' By extension, meaning of the dance itself could be constructed through these intersubjective exchanges. Using the symbolic architecture of a permeable "membrane," we transformed Schönberg into a place where a conscious visual and energetic dialogue

between performer and audience could occur. The membrane was constructed from four eleven-foot wooden beams, ninety yards of sheer white fabric, and about one hundred yards of nylon rope. The musicians' amplifiers were tied to ropes, which anchored the poles, and the musicians' bodies stabilized the poles themselves. With the help of friends, I devised a system of hanging the fabric so that there were three layers: an inner rectangle, a middle rectangle, and an outer rectangle. The dancers moved in the innermost and outermost spaces, using the open corners to transition between the layers. The audience traveled only within the middle layer, and was surrounded by dancing on both sides. I asked the dancers to decide individually what kinds of interactions they wanted to have with the audience, and to fully commit to exploring these relationships during the performance. At every point in the room, the audience had to negotiate the presence of some visual obstruction. There was no privileged vantage point in the space, and no way for the audience to see everything that was happening in the room. My hope was that by blocking sight lines and providing too much sensory information, the audience would have to actively choose where to look and what to see. The impossibility of seeing everything also helps people realize how much they cherish their sense of vision as a way to interact with their physical and social environments.

Before the audience members entered the studio, I asked them to follow several rules within the membrane:

1. Keep moving as people filter into the membrane. Make room for each other.
2. Continue to move when you're inside the space. Do not allow your focus to settle on one thing for too long. Consider it an "exercise in seeing."

3. Do not stand in the corners because the dancers use these spaces to transition between layers.
4. When I draw back the curtain and open the door, it is time to leave the space. Please begin filing back into the lobby. The dance will not end until the last person leaves the room.

Because there were spoken rules for viewing the performance, the audience implicitly consented, on some level, to participate in a temporary experience of community when they entered the space. By asking the viewers to conduct their own experiments in seeing, I hoped to remind them of their active role in constructing the experience. It was much more difficult than I had anticipated to keep people moving inside the membrane. The audience turnout was so high that there was very little room between people as they walked. When one person decided to stop, it created congestion for the entire group. Some of the more outspoken members of the audience asked their neighbors to keep moving forward. Others stood still, especially in places where the fabric was hanging lower than eye level, where one could more easily fix the gaze on the dancing bodies. The audience could only begin moving again when larger groups of people decided to unlock the space. This phenomenon created a visceral sense of tension and anticipation for those who wanted to follow the rules. Another issue was that people refused to leave the space when they were asked to do so, and instead jumped in line for another walk through the membrane. In future performances, I would probably limit the audience capacity and make the middle layer of the membrane wider so that people could maneuver around those who wanted to stand still.

The choreography that ultimately found its way into the performance was a combination of set movements and sequences, traveling patterns, and task-based improvisational scores. We began the piece with three dancers improvising in the inner layer and four dancers walking slowly along the outer edges of the space as the audience filtered in. When the entire audience arrived, the dancers in the outer layer began to wake up the space, moving more quickly and incorporating their own gestural vocabulary. As the dancers came full circle, they initiated a transition between the inner and outer layers. The group of four traveled into the center area as the group of three scattered into the periphery. The new inner group moved in an intricate spatial pattern they had been practicing and developing during the weeks prior to the performance, based on an investigation of orbiting and spatial plasticity.

In the next section, the dancers again transitioned between the layers of the membrane, beginning to make percussive rhythmic patterns with their bodies. The dancers on the inside clapped a 3/4 rhythm and the dancers on the outside stomped a 4/4 rhythm. Structurally, the dialogue between these aural and kinesthetic markers of time charged the room with energy. As soon as the dancers determined that it had built up for long enough, they dissolved into the next part of the piece. Three couples came into the center and repeated set movement phrases. They varied the speeds of these phrases according to the timing of the other couples. All the while, one dancer orbited the outer layer. When he returned to the center, he disrupted the duets and moved the group into the section we called the “gesture circle,” in which dancers first defined and then deconstructed a circular spatial form through hops and backward runs. The next portion of the dance was a reconstruction of group work from early in

the semester. The final section of *Aiou* was an improvisation, which utilized a wide range of movements and tasks from the rest of the work. By reintroducing various elements of the choreography in this new context, the dancers were able to creatively re-inscribe and contextualize the events that had already occurred. Through repetition with difference, they returned to the original compositional materials with new perspectives, and subsequently transformed the work as a whole. The guiding choreographic strategy of *Aiou* was the establishment of different but simultaneously occurring systems. The dynamic interactions between these systems created a multitude of meanings, made possible through the multi-sensory event of dialogue between performers, audience members, and the specificity of time and place where this dialogue occurred. In this work, navigations of otherness provided the means to explore the formal potentials of Authentic Movement in performance.

## **Conclusion:**

By reconfiguring Jung's model of Active Imagination, Mary Starks Whitehouse was able to create a practice that recognizes the importance of movement as a way to investigate the changing nature of what she calls 'Being.' The temporality of movement denies any possibility of defining or fixing ontological truths about the self. Whitehouse posits Authentic Movement as a way to engage with the event of being, insisting, 'It is Life that dances.' By working around and through the concept of authenticity, Authentic Movement has been a way of deconstructing, rather than reinforcing, an essentialist view of the person. To me, the dialogic relationship between a mover and witness in an improvisational setting inherently suggests a more malleable and open construction of the self.

The use of Authentic Movement principles in performance is a liberating way to approach the relationship between performer and audience. The exchange that occurs between the mover and witness is both self-aware and actively empathetic. In practice, Authentic Movement reveals the potential for crafting spaces that recognize multiple perspectives and subjectivities rather than attempting to unify them. My first semester of choreographic research demonstrated the possibility of creating unexpected intimacies in a theatrical setting by utilizing strategies which minimized the binary between 'real' and 'performed' life, authentic and inauthentic self-expression. In my second semester of choreographic research, the dancers, musicians and I used tactics of visual, aural and kinesthetic dialogue and disruption to further

explore the roles of moving and witnessing in performance. Susan Kozel describes distortion in choreography as a powerful form of resistance because it “shows otherness within sameness” and the “unfamiliar within familiar territories” (103). In *Aiou*, we found ways to juxtapose a variety of similar but unfamiliar systems, which, through their spatial and temporal proximity, charged the performance environment with unknowns.

Authentic Movement, like many body-centered practices, is a particularly useful way to reinstate the importance of corporeal experience. In this analysis, I have revealed the ways in which the socially constructed body can also become an expressive body, capable of utilizing its material embeddedness to both reinforce and resist dominant ideologies and privileged narratives about its role in human experience. In Authentic Movement, the body enacts a series of dialogues: between consciousness and unconsciousness, seeing and being seen, moving and being moved. By presenting this research, I hope to open the floor for new dialogues on the practice.

## Works Cited:

- Adler, Janet. Offering from the Conscious Body. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 2002.
- . "Who is the Witness?" 1987. Authentic Movement. Ed. Patrizia Pallaro. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1999.
- Albright, Ann Cooper. Choreographing Difference. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1997.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. Toward a Philosophy of the Act. Ed. Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993.
- Burt, Ramsay. "Genealogy and Dance History." Of the Presence of the Body. Ed. André Lepecki. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004.
- Butler, Judith. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution" Theatre Journal, 20.4 (1988): 519-531.
- Chodorow, Joan. "The Body as Symbol: Dance/Movement in Analysis." 1986. Authentic Movement. Ed. Patrizia Pallaro. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1999.
- . "Active Imagination." 1990. Authentic Movement. Ed. Patrizia Pallaro. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1999.
- Colebrook, Claire. "How Can We Tell the Dancer from the Dance: The Subject of Dance and the Subject of Philosophy." Topoi, 24 (2005): 5-14
- Copeland, Roger. Merce Cunningham: The Modernizing of Modern Dance. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Dempster, Elizabeth. "Women Writing the Body: Let's Watch a Little How She Dances." The Routledge Dance Studies Reader. Ed. Alexandra Carter. New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Flam, Jack, Miriam Deutch, and Carl Einstein, Eds. Primitivism and Twentieth-Century Art. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.
- Foster, Hal. "The 'Primitive' Unconscious of Modern Art." October, 34 (1985): 45-70.
- Foulkes, Julia L. Modern Bodies: Dance and American Modernism from Martha

Graham to Alvin Ailey. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.

Graham, Martha. The Notebooks of Martha Graham. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1973.

Grosz, Elizabeth. Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994.

Guignon, Charles. On Being Authentic. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Hay, Deborah. My Body, the Buddhist. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2000.

Holloway, Julian and James Kneale. "Mikhail Bakhtin: Dialogics of Space." Thinking Space. Ed. Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift. New York: Routledge, 2000.

Jung, Carl Gustav. Memories, Dreams, Reflections. Ed. Aniela Jaffé. New York: Pantheon Books, 1963.

---. "The Spirit in Man, Art and Literature." Collected Works of C.G. Jung, Vol. 15. Trans. R.F.C. Hull. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966a.

---. "General Problems of Psychotherapy." Collected Works of C.G. Jung, Vol. 16. Trans. R.F.C. Hull. New York: Routledge, 1966b.

---. "Structure of the Psyche." Collected Works of C.G. Jung, Vol. 8. Trans. R.F.C. Hull. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969a.

---. "The Transcendent Function." Collected Works of C.G. Jung, Vol. 8. Trans. R.F.C. Hull. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969b.

---. Jung's Seminar on Nietzsche's Zarathustra, Abridged Edition. Ed. James L. Jarrett. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998.

---. The Psychology of Kundalini Yoga. Ed. Sonu Shamdasani. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Kozel, Susan. "'The Story is Told as a History of the Body': Strategies of Mimesis in the work of Irigaray and Bausch." Meaning in Motion: New Cultural Studies of Dance. Ed. Jane Desmond. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997.

Landau, Ellen. Reading Abstract Expressionism: Context and Critique. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005.

Mayo, Donald. Jung and Aesthetic Experience: The Unconscious as Source of Artistic Experience. New York: Peter Lang, 1995.

- Olsen, Andrea. "Being Seen, Being Moved: Authentic Movement and Performance." 1993. Authentic Movement: Moving the Body, Moving the Self, Being Moved. Ed. Patrizia Pallaro. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2007.
- Phelan, Peggy. Unmarked: The Politics of Performance. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Polcari, Stephen. Abstract Expressionism and the Modern Experience. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Rayner, Alice. "The Audience: Subjectivity, Community and the Ethics of Listening." Performance: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies, Vol. II. Ed. Philip Auslander. London: Taylor & Francis, 2003.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. Politics and the Arts: Letter to M. D'Alembert on the Theatre. Trans. Allan Bloom. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1960.
- Shaw, Mary Lewis. "Ephemeral Signs: Apprehending the Idea through Poetry and Dance." Dance Research Journal 20.1 (1988): 3-9.
- Steele, Robert. Freud and Jung: Conflicts of Interpretation. Ed. Susan Swinney. Boston: Routledge, 1982.
- Taylor, Charles. The Ethics of Authenticity. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- Trilling, Lionel. Sincerity and Authenticity. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972.
- Whitehouse, Mary Starks. "Reflections on a Metamorphosis." 1969. Authentic Movement. Ed. Patrizia Pallaro. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1999.
- . "Creative Expression in Physical Movement is Language without Words." 1956. Authentic Movement. Ed. Patrizia Pallaro. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1999.
- . "An Approach to Center." Interview with Gilda Frantz, 1972. Authentic Movement. Ed. Patrizia Pallaro. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1999.