

RECONSTRUCTING THE PRESENT THROUGH KINESTHETIC
HISTORY: AN INVESTIGATION INTO MODES OF PRESERVING,
TRANSMITTING, AND RESTAGING CONTEMPORARY DANCE

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Abstract:

Methods of dance preservation have evolved alongside conceptual themes that have framed dance's historical narrative. The tradition of written dance notation developed in accordance with notions that prioritized logocentricity, and placed historical legitimacy on tangible artifacts and irrefutable archives; whereas the technical revolution of the late twentieth century saw dance preservation practices shift to embrace film and video documentation because they provided more accessible, and more convenient records. Since the 1970s video recordings have generally been considered to provide authentic visual representations of dance works, and the tradition of score writing has begun to wane. However, scholarly criticism has unveiled both philosophical and practical challenges posed by these two modes of documentation, thus illuminating a gap between theories of embodiment and the practice of dance preservation. In alignment with contemporary discourse, which legitimizes the body as a site of generating and storing knowledge, this dissertation suggests 'kinesthetic history' as a valid mode of dance preservation. Operating as a counterpart to oral history, and borrowing theoretical concepts from contemporary historiography, existential phenomenology and ethnography, the term 'kinesthetic history' suggests a mode of corporeal inscription and transmission that relies on the reciprocal interaction of bodies in space. The use of 'kinesthetic history' as a methodological approach to the preservation, translation, and reconstruction of movement material reflects the elements of

fluidity, plurality and subjectivity that are often characteristic of contemporary choreographic practices. This theory is interrogated through a case study, which explores the ways in which both a written and digitized score, video recordings, and the 'kinesthetic history' of an original cast member operated as modes of transmission in a 2013 restaging of William Forsythe's *One Flat Thing, reproduced* (2000) at The Juilliard School. Conclusions drawn from the case study challenge the traditional notions of reconstruction and restaging and suggest 'regeneration' as an alternative term to describe the process of preserving and transmitting contemporary dance works.

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Introduction

In my various roles as a dancer, teacher and rehearsal assistant I have always been curious about the process of documenting, sharing, and preserving choreographic works. I have experienced the transmission of choreography from written notes, oral histories, and video recordings as both a participant and an observer, yet the task of recreating dances continues to beguile me. In discussions of documentation and preservation, comparisons are often made between dance and other performing arts such as music and theatre. In 1992 at the *Dance ReConstructed* Conference held at Rutgers University, Stuart Hodes made the following comparison: “the designs, in theatre and music, are preserved as text in scripts and scores. Dance designs, throughout the centuries, have been preserved almost entirely in memory” (97). Similarly, in her book *The Body, Dance and Cultural Theory* (2003) Helen Thomas explains, “dance, unlike other arts, does not leave a record of its existence in the form of a tangible object, like a painting, a script or a musical score” (121), and in *Screendance* (2013) Douglas Rosenberg describes dance as “the most ephemeral of the art forms” (176). References to the ephemerality and elusiveness of dance are commonly found across the body of dance and performance studies literature, with scholars such as Maxine Sheets-Johnstone

(1979), Peggy Phelan (1993) and Marcia Siegel (1972) all commenting on the inability of live performance to be fixed to a certain time and space. The following statement by Siegel is often cited by others, and serves as a seminal reference to the ephemeral nature of dance:

Dance exists at a perpetual vanishing point. At the moment of its creation it is gone. All of a dancer's years of training in the studio, all the choreographer's planning, the rehearsals, the coordination of designers, composers, and technicians, the raising of money and the gathering together of an audience, all these are only a preparation for an event that disappears in the very act of materializing. No other art is so hard to catch, so impossible to hold. (1972 1)

There is, however, a contrasting school of thought represented by scholars such as Sally Ann Ness (2008), Tomie Hahn (2007) and Gabriele Brandstetter (2000) who suggest that gestural movement becomes inscribed into a dancer's body through corporeal experience, thereby creating an embodied record of a dance's existence. Subsequently, dance historians and practitioners have continuously grappled with the challenges of how to document and preserve adequate records of dance. Though historically, the practice of preserving and transmitting dances has relied heavily on oral traditions, the advent of Beauchamp-Feuillet notation at the end of the seventeenth century marked a shift towards a reliance on written notation that persisted through the twentieth century, and has resulted in the development and codification of numerous dance notation systems. In the latter part of the twentieth century, technological advancements provided opportunities to challenge the tradition of the written score, and practitioners began to experiment with film, video, motion capture, and graphic animation as alternative modes of documenting dances. Though there are certainly merits to both written

scores and video recordings in the documentation of many dance forms, the twenty-first century has given rise to a wide range of contemporary choreographic strategies that demand a reconsideration of the topic of dance preservation.

The preservation of dance is necessary if we are to be able to theorize about dance's social, historical and cultural implications. Ritualistic and social dance practices and choreographic works are often used as objects for critical analysis throughout an array of academic disciplines including history, anthropology, feminist and post-colonial studies. However, contemporary scholarship no longer assumes singularity or linearity in historical records. Therefore, I propose that it is time to look beyond traditional modes of documentation, and to consider the ways in which poststructuralist concepts such as plurality and subjectivity can be applied to the practice of dance preservation. By tracing the historical evolution of dance notation and documentation, in this dissertation I interrogate the ways in which the grand narrative has influenced the development of preservation practices, and in turn, the types of dances that have been preserved. The aim of this research is to suggest that 'kinesthetic history' can be employed as an additional methodological approach towards dance preservation, one that continues to legitimize the role of embodiment and recognize the dancer's agency in historiographical discourse.

Pushing at the boundaries of structure and form that have traditionally been associated with classical dance practices, contemporary artists often explore additional performative and choreographic approaches, resulting in works that are in a constant state of flux. Experimentation with concepts such as improvisation and audience participation, as well as the incorporation of various technologies, contribute to the sense of plurality that often is characteristic of contemporary dance. As a result, modes of dance preservation that were designed to encapsulate 'complete' dances in the form of a fixed tangible record no longer seem capable of capturing the porous features of a contemporary work. As an alternative, I propose that we must look towards a method of dance preservation that more closely resembles that which it is intended to preserve, one that considers contemporary issues such as multiplicity and fluidity, and allows an opportunity to reconstruct the present, rather than the past.

This dissertation seeks to answer the following question: based on the supposition that dance is not entirely ephemeral, and gestural movement is actually inscribed into a dancer's embodied memory, how can kinesthetic history contribute to the records generated by other forms of dance documentation? To address this question, I first offer a critical analysis of a selection of established notation systems and documentation methods, and discuss their functionality in relation to the practices of reconstructing and restaging dances. I then suggest the notion of kinesthetic history as an alternative mode of dance preservation, and assess its viability in the archivization of contemporary dance. Finally, I

explore the ways in which each of the aforementioned modes of preservation operate in contemporary practice in a case study, through which I analyze a 2013 restaging of William Forsythe's *One Flat Thing, reproduced* (2000) at The Juilliard School. Drawing from this case study, I suggest that the term 'regeneration' might be a suitable alternative to the more traditional concepts of 'reconstruction' and 'restaging' in relation to the practice of preserving and transmitting contemporary dance works.

In order to frame the arguments that support my primary assertion that kinesthetic history is a legitimate mode of dance preservation, this inquiry is guided by the following subset of research questions: are traditional written dance notation systems complete in the documentation of contemporary dance, and in particular the work of William Forsythe? If not, where are the gaps and how might they be filled? Do video and related technologies suitably address these gaps? How does kinesthetic history augment the records attained through written notation and video documentation? These research questions are based on the following assumptions. Firstly, I subscribe to the opinion that traditional written notation systems and video face challenges in the documentation of dance, and in particular, the documentation of contemporary choreographic works. In addition, I suggest that contemporary dance is often fluid in its authorship and that meaning is constructed through subjectivity, and I propose that kinesthetic history reflects similar characteristics.

My personal interest in the field of dance preservation has evolved over the course of my career as a dancer, but specific questions began to emerge while I was working at The Juilliard School in 2007. Every year Juilliard's dance division produces a concert where the students perform a piece of repertoire from one of the twentieth century's most celebrated choreographers. In 2007, when I was first at Juilliard, the concert showcased Jiří Kylián's *Soldier's Mass* created in 1980 and Twyla Tharp's *Deuce Coupe*, which had its premiere in 1973. In both cases, company members from Nederlands Dans Theatre and The Joffrey Ballet, who had extensive experience performing the work, came to Juilliard to set the dances on the students. As part of my assignment as an assistant stage manager for *Deuce Coupe*, I was required to attend all the rehearsals and to provide the rehearsal director and stager with technical assistance. I quickly became fascinated by the process of recreating Tharp's choreography on this group of young dancers, and began to question the methods that were being utilized.

The reconstruction process has often been compared to an archaeological dig of sorts, whereby the participants are required to sift through a collection of sources in order to locate and piece together a series of clues that will eventually make up the work. This process was no different. There were videotapes from early rehearsals with Tharp and recordings of performances. There were photographs, newspaper clips, programs, and a few handwritten notes. Every so often these source materials were referred to, especially in piecing together the

choreographic architecture of the piece. However, what struck me most was how the stylistic qualities and artistic nuances, so specific to *Deuce Coupe*, were recalled primarily through the embodied memory of the original cast member. This process has resonated with me for a number of years, and I have continued to ask questions about the nature of embodied memory and its effects on the ways in which contemporary dance works are preserved and restaged.

My experience at Juilliard as an observer of the restaging process encouraged me to think more about my own practice, and the ways in which I have participated in various reconstructions and restagings as a dancer. Upon reflection, I believe that learning pieces of repertoire and restaging previously performed works were invaluable to my dance education. However, I do remember these experiences as being encumbered by a certain amount of ambiguity. Learning movement phrases from a written score always seemed to be a complicated process, riddled with confusion for us as dancers as to what the words or symbols on the page really meant. Frequent disruptions to the flow of rehearsals occurred every time a dancer had to refer to the score for guidance on the next steps, and issues of interpretation inevitably marred what we perceived to be the primary aim of the process, which was to produce a version of the dance that resembled the original as closely as possible.

The process of learning choreography from video was equally troublesome, though it presented an entirely different set of challenges. We constantly

referred back to the recorded images, rewinding, fast-forwarding, and pausing the frames, in search of as much information as we could gather from the two-dimensional record we had in front of us. One of the primary challenges with working in this way was the act of translating the mirror image figures on the screen into our own bodies and this process significantly hindered our learning of the choreography. It has been these experiences that have urged me to consider the issue of dance preservation, not from the perspective of an archivist or a notator, but from that of a dancer. It is important to clarify that I am not formally trained in any type of dance notation. Though I have studied a selection of notation systems to better understand their governing principles, I am not fully literate in any one form. On the basis of this admission one might question my ability to challenge the practice of dance notation as a non-practitioner. However, there have been numerous allusions to the fact that most dancers share my limited notation literacy. In reference to an article written by Judy Van Zile, Helen Thomas notes “choreographers and dancers of today, unlike their counterparts in music, are generally not literate in movement notation” (2004, 33), and Linda Tomko suggests, “because most dancers do not read notation, works are generally staged by a professionally trained notation expert” (2004, 325). In this way, I represent the vast majority of dancers, and seek to illuminate the issue of preservation in a manner that more relevantly engages the dancing body from a dancer’s perspective.

As a student I had little to no use for dance notation. It seemed tedious, cumbersome and irrelevant. As a member of what is termed 'the millennial generation', research suggests that my peers and I are most concerned with issues of immediacy and efficiency. Though we are considered to be technologically sophisticated, we are also perceived to be impatient and demanding (Nilson 11); neither trait aligns with the process of scoring dances by using traditional written methods. In fact, this research initially set out to expose the pitfalls of written dance notation and question the effectiveness of its fundamental principles. Instead, what I found was an array of information supporting the use of written notation in certain contexts. Particularly resounding were conversations that I had with practicing notators, where they convincingly argued for the merits of traditional dance notation. Their narratives about notating dances have unveiled an entire branch of oral history that seems to have been hidden from generations of dance students.

I was similarly unconvinced by the general acceptance of video as an adequate alternative to written notation systems. Although this research has revealed examples of impressive technological innovation, I remain dubious about a future of dance documentation that relies entirely on video. This dissertation does not attempt to destabilize the entire practice of dance notation and documentation. Instead, it interrogates the theoretical underpinnings of dance preservation, illuminates the practical and philosophical challenges associated with current

practices, and seeks to consider the ways in which kinesthetic history can be used to supplement, rather than supplant, the practices that are already in use.

The research methods employed in this study are intertextual and interdisciplinary. I have drawn upon the textual analysis of a variety of sources from within dance studies, history, social studies, ethnography, and philosophy, and contextualized them through movement analysis, interviews and observations. In order to better understand the ways in which the translation of movement material occurs in the restaging of contemporary dance, I conducted a case study that allowed me to further investigate the functionality of embodied memory, and its practicality as a mode of transferring embodied knowledge. Through the employment of participant-observation and interviews I gathered qualitative information about the ways in which embodied memory not only augments traditional preservation methods, but also provides an unparalleled type of knowledge that is essential to the practice of restaging contemporary dance.

I chose to conduct my fieldwork at The Juilliard School, where my initial inquiry about the process of restaging dance works began. I focused my study on an in depth analysis of the process of restaging Forsythe's *One Flat Thing, reproduced*, in preparation for Juilliard's 2013 spring repertory concert. The aim of the case study was to closely observe the ways in which the written score, video recordings and the single original cast member's embodied memory

interacted in the process of restaging the work. In order to further interrogate these modes of information transmission, I employed a selection of research methodologies specifically aimed towards the apprehension of qualitative, experiential and participatory evidence.

The entire six-week rehearsal process was observed and recorded through detailed fieldnotes, which followed a two-part documentation format. First, I recorded detailed descriptions of my observations as perceived through my attendance at the daily rehearsals. Then, I reflected on each day's field notes in a manner that contextualized my initial observations within a set of phenomenological and ethnographic concepts as offered by dance scholars such as Sondra Horton Fraleigh (1987), Maxine Sheets-Johnstone (1979) and Tomie Hahn (2007). This method of collecting fieldnotes resulted in a qualitative analysis that is grounded in experiential reflection, but guided by philosophical and corporeal theory. In "Dancing in the field: notes from memory", Sally Ann Ness examines the difference between 'writing down' and 'writing up', with the former term referring to the immediate collection of fieldnotes while immersed in the experience, and the latter referring to the post-experiential act of crafting a textual representation of that experience for written dissemination. She considers the 'writing down' process to be "subjective, spontaneous, private, unpublishable narratives" (1996 133), and by comparison much of the experiential content is lost in the process of 'writing up'. To address this concern, in addition to fieldnotes, I have included interviews with dancers, students,

choreographers, rehearsal directors, and dance notation practitioners in order to provide experiential accounts of the ways in which various modes of dance preservation are utilized, valued, and perceived.

I recognize that there are hundreds of published notation systems, as well as an indeterminable number that have been developed and used by individual choreographers and dancers. For the purpose of conducting a critical analysis of commonly used methods of dance notation I will discuss the following three systems: Beauchamp-Feuillet Notation, Benesh Movement Notation and Labanotation. I have chosen these three systems because they are often referred to as the most widely used dance notation systems. Although they were devised in different time periods and their popularity has peaked at various points in history, these three systems have remained at the forefront of dance notation discourse. The familiarity of these systems found amongst dance educators and scholars provides context to this discussion without the need for detailed explanation of their structures and operational guidelines.

Similarly, the discussion of technological developments in the field of documentation could be much more extensive. However, I have chosen to focus primarily on video because it is a medium with which most dancers and choreographers are familiar. Many of the philosophical implications of video documentation can be similarly applied to other technological applications. Finally, in light of my position as the researcher, I have chosen to work within the

scope of my own personal experience. This dissertation focuses on western theatrical dance practice as the movement medium and English as the linguistic reference, although it is my hope that theoretical concepts and conclusions drawn will be applicable across a wider range of dance forms and studies. It is necessary to differentiate between the uses of the terms 'notation' and 'documentation'. These terms are often used interchangeably, but within this dissertation require specific definitions. My use of the term 'notation' refers specifically to dance preservation systems that utilize symbolic images to translate a dance's choreography into written form. The end result of the notation process is a tangible written score of a dance, which can either be archived or published. Hutchinson Guest provides the following definition:

Dance notation is the translation of four-dimensional movements (time being the fourth dimension) into signs written on two-dimensional paper. Dance notation is (or should be) to dance what music notation is to music and the written word to drama. (1984 xiv)

Unlike notation, the process of 'documentation' is not necessarily one that results in the production of a written document, despite the obvious contradiction within the word itself. I recognize that primary source documents such as programs, press releases, and reviews are often collated and included in the archivization of a performance. However, in this context I have chosen to use the term 'documentation' to refer specifically to the practice of capturing movement material through video and graphic animation, with the intention of creating a visual record of a work. Documentation is distinct from notation in its representation of realistic visual images rather than abstract symbols.

Furthermore, video documentation allows for the recorded material to be manipulated by the viewer through the ability to stop, start, pause, fast-forward and rewind the video, thus exposing its unique relationship to temporality and repeatability. Though many employ these terms interchangeably, I have elected to use the term 'notation' only when referring to written notation systems, and the term 'documentation' when discussing video recordings and graphic animations.

A discussion about methods of dance preservation requires further elaboration on the intended meaning of the actual term 'preservation'. Since this dissertation focuses on the process of restaging a contemporary choreographic work, the following definition provided by Hutchinson Guest is relevant: "preservation is concerned with both the recording of a dance work and also with the production, the bringing to life from that recording" (2000 65). This notion suggests that the act of preservation differs from those of notation and documentation, which are intended solely to create a record. I proceed on the basis of the above definition, which assumes that preservation must consider issues such as translation and repeatability.

In discussions of dance preservation, there are numerous terms that are used interchangeably when referring to the repeated performance of a choreographic work. I use the terms 'reconstruction' and 'restaging' as opposed to other possible options such as 'revival', 'reproduction', and 'recreation'. I use the term 'reconstruction' when referring to the topic of dance preservation in a wider

context. This choice reflects the breadth of the term, and is in accordance with Hutchinson Guest's definition of 'reconstruction' as "constructing a work anew from all available sources of information, aiming for the result to be as close as possible to the original" (2000 65). Her explanation of 'restaging' is more ambiguous and suggests that it could mean either "arranging the mise-en-scène" or "putting it on stage, producing it" (ibid). With specific reference to the forthcoming case study of *One Flat Thing, reproduced*, 'restaging' seems to be an appropriate term to describe the process that was undertaken, as the piece was taught to the students with the primary intention of putting it on the Juilliard stage. I also use this term in accordance with the request of Christopher Roman, the ballet master who set the piece at Juilliard. In response to my use of the term 'reconstruction' in discussions of *One Flat Thing, reproduced* he explained, "it tends to sound like it has been in a chest somewhere and dusted off after 50 years like *Sacre du printemps* (1913). That is just not the case here, it is more of a restaging" (Roman). Roman's distinction refers to the fluctuating qualities of *One Flat Thing, reproduced*, which he considers to be a work that continuously evolves in the present, opposed to one that has been resurrected from the past.

A clarification of the term 'contemporary dance' also is vital to this discussion, as it hinges upon philosophical considerations of the nature of contemporary dance, and the characteristics that identify it as such. Historically, dance has passed through many artistic movements, each one establishing a new set of choreographic ideologies. The contemporary dance movement began taking

shape in the early twentieth century as part of broader cultural developments in philosophical and aesthetic discourse. According to historian and art critic Laurence Louppe “contemporary dance, like the cinema, was born at the end of the 19th century” (25), and he explains that “dance has shared the 20th century’s currents of ideas, questions and disasters” (24). Shirley McKechnie and Catherine J. Stevens describe contemporary dance as being “at once non-verbal, communicative, and expressive; it is visual, spatial, temporal, kinesthetic, affective, and dynamic” (38). This particular description is problematic, as it does not altogether differentiate contemporary dance from other forms. The characteristics mentioned above are indeed present in many contemporary choreographic works, but it is by no means an exhaustive list, nor is it obligatory that a contemporary work should possess all these elements. In actuality, a comprehensive definition of contemporary dance is difficult to grasp, as the hybridization of the form seems to be in a constant state of evolution.

Contemporary dance can be seen as a fusion of sorts, as it marries the aesthetic principles and choreographic strategies of a wide range of dance forms, whilst often referencing the minimalist and pedestrian qualities seen in postmodern choreography. According to McKechnie and Stevens contemporary dance is:

A work in which the major medium is movement, deliberately and systematically cultivated for its own sake, with the aim of achieving a work of art. It shares with other art forms the possibility of being viewed either as non-representational/non-symbolic (typically termed ‘formalist’ in aesthetic theory), or of being representational or symbolic in some sense. (38)

Further to this description, I think it is appropriate to add that contemporary dance offers a generous allowance for experimentation with movement vernaculars, conceptual ideas, production elements, and technological innovation. Gabriele Brandstetter describes contemporary dance in the following way: “the peculiarity and precision of its work with the body is rooted in a fundamental mistrust in the self-evident processes of known movements – whether these are virtuoso dance steps, mechanized working movements, or schematic acts of communication” (122). The absence of defining parameters makes contemporary choreography exciting and unpredictable, yet increasingly difficult to document and repeat. As André Lepecki explains, “contemporary European dance poses radical challenges to the choreographic art object precisely at the level of the possibility of its reproduction” (2004 177). William Forsythe’s work epitomizes that which is contemporary through his innovative treatment of the classical ballet vocabulary, as well as his experimentations with technology and theatricality. Much of Forsythe’s work is based on themes of fluctuation and ephemerality, and therefore rejects traditionalist notions of repeatability and objectification. For this reason, a restaging of one of Forsythe’s dances serves as an ideal microcosmic lens through which to consider broader issues related to the reconstruction and restaging of contemporary choreographic works.

Chapter one of this dissertation establishes the contextual framework for the rest of the study. The first section provides a review of relevant literature that situates this study within the wider context of philosophical, historiographical, and dance

studies discourse. Issues such as the institutionalization of historiography and the developing role of embodiment in contemporary scholarship are considered through the seminal works of Georg Iggers (1997), Alexandra Carter (2004) and Susan Leigh Foster (1995). The second section summarizes Forsythe's career and introduces the characteristics of his choreographic practice, while the final section illuminates some of the considerations associated with reconstruction and the ontology of performance. Chapter two provides an historical overview of traditional dance notation systems, and examines their suitability in the preservation of contemporary dance, with a specific focus on Forsythe's choreography. Chapter three unveils some of the challenges presented by video recordings and other technologies, and explores the advantages and disadvantages of visual records. These discussions about written notation and video documentation consider the ways in which dance preservation practices have developed alongside the institutionalization of historiography within the academy.

To address the challenges associated with written scores and technological records, chapter four introduces the notion of 'kinesthetic history' as an additional element of dance preservation. The philosophical implications of kinesthetic history as a methodology are interrogated, in order to provide an alternative theoretical framework through which to situate the case study. These three distinct modes of preservation, notated scores, video recordings, and kinesthetic history are contextualized, and their practicality analyzed through the observation

of a specific restaging of *One Flat Thing, reproduced*. Chapter five outlines the methodological approach to this case study, describes the components of the work, and details the process of its restaging. An analysis of the ways in which the written score, video records, and kinesthetic history intersect through the restaging process is contextualized through practical examples gathered from the study. In summary, I suggest that kinesthetic history be considered as a legitimate aspect of contemporary dance preservation, which offers possibilities that reach beyond the scope of those available through traditional modes of documentation.

Chapter One

Setting the Stage: Research Context

For decades dance historians and practitioners have engaged in a controversial discourse about dance preservation. Some believe that the preservation of choreographic works is vital to the development of dance's historical narrative, while others suggest that the ephemeral nature of dance does not lend itself to being preserved at all. The topic of dance preservation is multi-faceted, and involves the consideration of numerous philosophical and practical issues ranging from the ontology of live performance to the various ways in which dances have been recorded through history. Ann Hutchinson Guest's *Choreographics* (1989) remains a seminal reference in the field of written dance notation, in which the author provides a thorough overview of the development of notation systems from the fifteenth century to the late twentieth century. Hutchinson Guest outlines the key concepts of most of the notation systems that have been used to notate western theatrical dance, and provides historical context through which to consider the wide range of notation systems. Structured as a comparative analysis, Hutchinson Guest provides detailed descriptions and sample scores, and comments on the advantages and disadvantages of each notation system. Her extensive knowledge on the topic of

dance notation is evidenced through additional publications, such as *Dance Notation* (1984) and *Labanotation: The System of Analyzing and Recording Movement* (2005). Hutchinson Guest has remained active in the field of dance notation and her work continues to be at the forefront of dance preservation discourse.

Despite the efforts of dance notation practitioners to preserve the art of score writing, in the latter half of the twentieth century traditional notation systems have become overshadowed by video as a mode of documenting dances. As technological advancements have continued to alter the practice of dance preservation, a body of literature has emerged that illuminates alternative forms of documentation. Situated within performance studies discourse, Matthew Reason's *Documentation, Disappearance and the Representation of Live Performance* (2006) explores issues related to the ephemerality of performance and its ability to at once appear and disappear in recorded forms. Discussions of representation and the transformative effect of documentation inform Reason's views on the ways in which video and photography operate as records of live performance. More recently, Douglas Rosenberg's *Screendance* (2012) addresses similar issues relating to dance's ephemerality and the translation from live performance to fixed visual record. Encompassing a selection of modalities, Rosenberg's study reaches beyond the scope of video to include other forms of screendance such as digital photography, motion capture and graphic animation. Rosenberg grapples with philosophical themes and presents

a theoretical dialogue through which to consider the hybridization of screendance techniques.

With the field of dance documentation growing rapidly alongside the advancement of new technologies, the 1980s and 90s brought forth new possibilities for the practice of dance preservation. Conversations turned to the topic of legacy upon the realization that there was a generation of aging choreographers whose work was at risk of being lost. In 1997 a conference entitled *Preservation Politics* was held at the University of Surrey in conjunction with the Roehampton Institute, and the proceedings were later published in a book edited by Stephanie Jordan. *Preservation Politics: Dance Revived, Reconstructed, Remade* (2000) grapples with issues related to preservation and reconstruction, and includes papers from some of the foremost dance scholars working in the field of reconstruction at that time including Millicent Hodson, Kenneth Archer and Murial Topaz. This group of scholars addresses a range of practical and theoretical challenges associated with dance preservation and reconstruction.

Hodson and Archer discuss their criteria for choosing which ballets they would reconstruct and highlight issues of authorship and authenticity¹. They provide a detailed description of their experience of reconstructing a selection of ten influential ballets, including *Le Sacre du printemps* with the Joffrey Ballet in 1987, and describe the ways in which they retrieved the information about each of the

dances through primary source materials and oral histories. Hodson and Archer discuss the importance of authenticity in their reconstructions, and explain that they would not agree to reconstruct a piece if they did not have at least fifty percent of the work represented in what they refer to as “hardcore evidence” (2). Murial Topaz also expresses her desire for authenticity, and outlines her model for reconstructing dance works from source materials. She describes one of her primary objectives as being able to thoroughly understand the context of the work; by this she means both its cultural context and the personal context of the artist. In terms of the actual movement material Topaz describes the importance of being able to recreate the text (which refers to the movement profile of the work) as well as the intricate details. She then discusses the process of transmission and the various modes of communication that enable the stager to teach the work to the dancers. As a notater, Topaz is partial to the practice of score writing although she explains, “burying heads in the notation or fishing around on videotapes are simply not acceptable practices and give the reconstruction process a bad name” (102). Instead she suggests, “some combination of physical indication of the movement combined with explanatory coaching and shaping of the movement on the bodies of the performers is more productive in the long run” (ibid), alluding to the idea that both written notation and oral history are imperative to the authenticity of a reconstruction.

In response to a study commissioned by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts, the Dance Heritage Coalition (DHC) was

established in 1992 to meet the demand for an organization that would address issues related to the preservation of American dance history. The DHC has since facilitated numerous legacy projects including an archive assessment program and a “Secure Media Network” of digitized moving images. Despite the ongoing work of the DHC in the field of American dance preservation, there remains a branch of American scholarship that continues to question the philosophical implications associated with the preservation of performance art.

Performance studies scholars Peggy Phelan and André Lepecki both explore issues relating to the politics of disappearance, invisibility and the ephemerality of live performance. In *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (1993) Phelan evocatively explores the communicative capabilities of performance by drawing attention to that which is not always visible. For Phelan, performance is non-reproducible because it is constantly disappearing and is therefore not conducive to the workings of a capitalist society. When considering the ontology of live performance Phelan suggests, “to the degree that performance attempts to enter the economy of reproduction it betrays and lessens the promise of its own ontology. Performance’s being, like the ontology of subjectivity proposed here, becomes itself through disappearance” (146).

Lepecki is concerned with many of the same issues as Phelan regarding the ontology of live performance; however, he is seemingly more open to both sides of the ontological debate. In the introduction to his book *Exhausting Dance*:

Performance and the Politics of Movement (2006) Lepecki states, “meanwhile, dance’s ontological question remains open” (4). *Exhausting Dance* explores what Lepecki refers to as the “political ontology of modernity” (16) through the subjective critical analysis of a selection of contemporary choreographic works. He argues that the work of contemporary choreographers such as Jérôme Bel, David Dorfman and William Forsythe have initiated a necessary shift in the ontology of dance performance, and that perhaps the nature of dance lends itself to being in a constant state of ontological flux. Lepecki explains, “much of my argument in this book turns around the formation of choreography as a peculiar invention of early modernity, as a technology that creates a body disciplined to move according to the commands of writing” (6). He grapples with notions of ephemerality and disappearance and suggests a continuum of temporality, which allows dances to last beyond the vanishing point (131).

Themes of ephemerality and irretrievability are recurrent in dance preservation discourse and have coloured debates about the philosophical and aesthetic implications of reconstructing dance works from the past. In *The Body, Dance and Cultural Theory: Reconstructing the Dance* (2003) Helen Thomas addresses a range of issues underscored by themes of authenticity and interpretation, in direct relation to a selection of methodological approaches to the practice of dance reconstruction. Thomas discusses the notion of irretrievability and suggests that dance’s ephemeral nature may have inadvertently worked to write it out of historical discourse. Informed by theoretical frameworks used in

musicology, parallels are drawn between the performative acts of instrumentalists and dancers. Based on the work of prominent musicologists Gary Tomlinson and Richard Taruskin, Thomas suggests the possibility that authenticity exists within the embodied practice of the performer, rather than in the notated score, and that the performer's interpretation of a composer's intention becomes the true 'art object'. This paradigm can also be applied to dance, as delineations between choreographic intention and embodied execution often become obscured through the use of traditional notation systems. With regard to dance reconstruction, reference is made to the notion of oral history through either formal interviews or casual conversations with previous cast members of a particular work. Thomas identifies this practice of recollection as a type of kinesthetic memory, which has been inscribed onto the dancer's bodily archive. By illuminating the reconstructive methodologies employed by dance scholars, Thomas discusses some of the ways in which choreography from the baroque and modern eras can be re-examined through the lens of contemporary scholarship. The use of reconstruction as a methodological framework for conducting research shifts focus away from the static archive, and elicits a renewed interest in living traditions.

In a growing number of practice-based studies, dance scholars are employing reconstruction as a methodological approach towards gaining a more thorough understanding of the relationship between a dance's historical and cultural significance. Dance preservation practices have traditionally been dominated by

written notation systems, and subsequently, notated scores have been considered to be irrefutable records of a dance's existence. However, scholars are now exploring the ways in which reconstructing, reworking, and restaging dances can illuminate the liminal space between performance and record. In *Dance as Text: Ideologies of the Baroque Body* (1993), Mark Franko suggests, "the body – within its very presentation as a spectacular entity – was also identified as a textual entity" (15). Faced with the realization that the value of text has persisted throughout history, Franko offers a rationale for an approach towards reconstruction that shifts privilege away from the textual record:

The textual status performance aspires to in the west should no longer be one of repeated presence. Rather, the textual status of performance to be desired is inherently in between. Poised between the apprehension of the object and the creation of the object, it can both serve cultural critique and foster new creativity. (152)

Franko looks to reconstruction as an embodied methodology that assists him in unearthing the subtleties of a specific work, rather than achieving the goal of recreating an exact replica of a structured text. The impact of this methodology is manifold, as it can be applied to any dance form, from any historical period. By shifting focus from the choreographic structure of a dance to the bodies that actively participated in the creation and performance of it, Franko's method allows for the exploration of multiplicity in the construction of historical narratives.

It is on this same basis that Lesley Main grounds her approach towards a deeper understanding of the work of Doris Humphrey through the reconstruction of her works. In her book *Directing the Dance Legacy of Doris Humphrey: the Creative*

Impulse of Reconstruction (2012) Main states that her primary aim is “to bring the past back to the present” (3) by restaging four of Humphrey’s most influential dances. Main argues that the embodied act of reconstructing Humphrey’s work simultaneously generates both creative impulse and a greater appreciation of legacy. By drawing a comparison to theatrical history Main suggests:

Professional and student dancers alike feel similarly enriched by being inside these works because of the quality of the choreography and also because dancers must rise to meet the demands of the language, much as actors have to do with the languages of Shakespeare and Beckett. (7)

Franko and Main agree that the process of learning to embody a specific movement vernacular unearths the subtleties that exist between the work as an artifact of objectification and the dance as a means through which to explore creativity and individual experience.

Ann Cooper Albright writes about how she experienced this very phenomenon in her book *Traces of Light: Absence and Presence in the Work of Loïe Fuller* (2007). She discusses the ways in which her embodiment of choreography that closely resembled Fuller’s led her to an understanding of the physical rigour required of her work that would have otherwise been incomprehensible. In an essay summarizing her experience, Cooper Albright explains, “using my kinesthetic imagination to embody images of Fuller has fuelled much of my scholarly work and helps me to understand aspects of her dancing (its own vibrant expressivity) that are often overlooked” (2010 110). The physical research conducted by Cooper Albright allowed her access into Fuller’s world

and facilitated a corporeal experience that reached beyond the existing textual and visual analyses of her work. Cooper Albright argues that although Fuller was considered by many to lack the technical proficiency of her peers, in actuality the physical demands of her choreography deserve recognition. Cooper Albright acknowledges that through the embodiment of Fuller's dances she was able to develop a new appreciation for her endurance, artistry, and historical significance.

Another example of a practice-based approach to historical inquiry is Anna Blewchamp's 1992 reconstruction of Gweneth Lloyd's *The Wise Virgins* (1942). Basing her reconstruction on Hodson and Archer's methodology, Blewchamp combines observations, oral histories and embodied memories to piece together Lloyd's abstract ballet. Speaking of her rationale for investigating Lloyd's choreographic influence through recreating her work, Blewchamp explains that the "reconstruction of a lost ballet proved to be the only method through which Lloyd's importance as a creative artist could be accurately explored" (Blewchamp iv). Although Blewchamp had access to a selection of records documenting the original work such as audio, film and photographs, she admits that these resources often presented challenges resulting from missing information or individualized performances. Her process actively engaged dancers who had previously performed *The Wise Virgins*, and relied heavily on the recollections of their experiences. Of the original dancers' roles in the reconstruction Blewchamp notes:

The cast members' physical involvement in the reconstruction process subsequently proved to be more revealing than verbal 'memories'. The movement style could be observed in practice, even when it could not be described through language. (76)

This observation reaffirms the importance of embodied memory and its pertinence to the practice of reconstruction. Evident in all four examples (Franko, Main, Cooper Albright, Blewchamp) is the sentiment that embodying history through reconstruction allows for the development of a sensorial relationship to a particular work or choreographic style, which is capable of penetrating deeper into the experience than is possible through reading a score or watching a video. Moreover, the process of revisiting dances from the past through embodied methodologies allows for an opportunity to interrogate the ways through which they have been preserved. The practices of preservation and reconstruction are inextricably linked to issues relating to historiographical methods, and the archivization of certain types of knowledge.

Though now considered a cornerstone of scholarly research, the establishment of history as an academic discipline was laden with issues that have problematized the ways in which historical events have been perceived, recorded, and studied. Historian Georg Iggers (1997) examines the development of historiography through the lenses of modernization and globalization. He contests that the professionalization of history within academia in the nineteenth century helped to solidify antiquated concepts of historiography, which privileged logocentric, eurocentric and gendered knowledge constructs. Included among

those beliefs were the notions that history allowed for the representation of just one narrative, that the state was often situated at the centre of that narrative, and that value should only be ascribed to a specific brand of knowledge disseminating from privileged, western men.

Peter Lambert (2003) expresses similar views in his discussion of the issues surrounding the standardization and professionalization of history in the academy. Lambert pays particular attention to historical developments as they were perpetuated and supported by privileged, educated men in what he refers to as 'first' and 'second' world countries. He argues that it was not until the latter part of the twentieth century that the professionalization of history expanded to 'third' world countries, thus shifting perceptions of the nature of historical study. According to Lambert, pluralism is a necessary condition of responsible historical reporting (57), and it is upon this supposition that historical methods have continued to develop. Postmodern and poststructuralist criticism has challenged the traditional foundation of historiography, and propelled scholarship towards the acceptance of plurality and subjectivity within historical discourse. The collection, organization, and analysis of records that are not encumbered by a presupposed hierarchical status, allows for the unveiling of meta-narratives and micro-historical accounts.

The overarching themes of subjectivity and plurality as presented by Iggers and Lambert continue to inform discourse in the social sciences, arts, and humanities.

Subsequently, these same notions have underpinned the evolution of dance scholarship, and as a direct result, have affected the practice of dance notation. Despite the relatively recent addition of dance studies to the academy, historical records of dance practice in western Europe have been collected for centuries. These records, when attained through traditional modes of dance notation, share many similarities with the professionalized historical scholarship to which Iggers and Lambert refer. The tendency to privilege western theatrical dance forms, and the overt exclusion of 'other' cultural dance practices has produced historical records that represent what Iggers calls the 'grand narrative' (141). Contemporary dance scholarship recognizes this trend and acknowledges that the key to a comprehensive understanding of dance history is to offer alternative narratives to those that depict eurocentric, patriarchal, and homogeneous ideals. Subsequently, current discussions about twenty-first century historiography have urged a reconsideration of the legitimacy of kinesthetic memory and the ways in which it is written into an individual's embodied archive.

Ideas surrounding the significance of bodily writing have permeated the dance studies discourse, and as a result, the field is successfully moving away from its reliance on logocentric methodologies. With the historic emphasis that was placed on the written word, significant value was traditionally ascribed to the use of language, and by extension, written notation as a mode of recording and disseminating ideas. The collaborative effort of dance studies scholars to challenge the privilege of logocentrism is arguably one of the greatest

contributions of the field to date. Alexandra Carter's *Rethinking Dance History* (2004), brings together a collection of essays, and situates them within one overarching theme; to challenge traditionalist approaches toward historical inquiry. In an attempt to reconstruct dance's historical landscape, Carter urges a reconsideration of traditional historical sources, and as she explains, "a key source in the study of dance, is not the traditional written one, but the visual: the dance itself" (15). This belief is one that is shared by most dance scholars, and it has informed the development of research methods that interrogate the ways in which dance embodies both cultural and historical experiences.

Issues relating to embodiment have become increasingly more visible in dance studies discourse. The anthologies, *Choreographing History* (1995) and *Corporealities* (1996), both edited by Susan Leigh Foster, include a selection of essays that grapple with the ways in which dancing bodies operate as sites that form gendered, cultured and aesthetic knowledge constructs. Much of Foster's work illuminates the liminal space between dance practice and discourse with her theories on the corporeality of bodily writing. Offering a diversion from the traditional approaches of textual analysis and semiotic reading, Foster suggests that meaning is implicit in bodily action, rather than explicitly constructed onto the body. Each of the essays in *Choreographing History* and *Corporealities* contests that all bodies have something to say, thus prompting necessary conversations about the agency of the individual body. These discussions have made a substantial impact on academic discourse, reaching far beyond the borders of

dance studies. Foster's argument echoes that of Carter urging a re-evaluation of the significance of the human body as it relates to the construction of historical narratives. Carter's contention is that "traditional dance studies replete with the same logocentric values that have informed general scholarship on the body, have seldom allowed the body this agency" (15). Throughout history, lococentricity has inadvertently silenced dancing bodies of the past, and until recently, the canonical force of the 'grand narrative' dominated dance history discourse.

Dance scholar Vida Midgelow in *ReWorking the Ballet: Counter-Narratives and Alternative Bodies* (2007) also challenges the singularity of historical narratives. Her work explores the ways in which meaning, as it is constructed through individual bodies, challenges the canonical representations of classical ballet narratives. Midgelow draws on textual and semiotic analysis to 'read' the narratives of a selection of classical ballets. She then explores the ways in which some contemporary choreographers have explored these classics to convey narratives that counter the originals. The reworkings that Midgelow examines rely on bodily agency to challenge the canonical representation of issues such as gender, sexuality and cultural difference. Midgelow's research aligns with a broader discussion of historical analysis that Carter refers to as "a further debate in macro-history which inevitably impacts on dance and concerns the notion that historiography is not value-free" (2004 16). Carter maintains that a traditional historical approach "privileges certain kinds of people and activity and it is these

that constitute the canon” (ibid). To address these issues of inequality and reallocate agency to the individual participants of historical events, scholarship has begun to embrace oral history as an alternative methodological approach towards the apprehension and construction of knowledge.

According to historian Lynn Abrams, oral history emerged as a method of conducting historical research in the late 1930s in America and in the 50s and 60s in the UK and Scandinavia, and has since become a widespread methodology that has a range of academic, social and political applications. Abrams explains, oral history “was informed in part by the European tradition on ethnology and folklore collection which had always privileged the spoken voice as a repository of tradition” (4). Much of the historical interest at the time of its development existed around post-war narratives, and the individual experiences of marginalized members of society such as: labourers, women and minority ethnic groups (ibid). Though its origins are rooted in ethnographic and social studies discourses, oral history’s model of qualitative research has crossed into many other academic disciplines, and has become particularly important to dance research. Scholars such as Jacqueline Shea Murphy (2007), Stuart Hodes (1992) and Jeff Friedman (2005) have each considered various aspects of oral history, and the ways in which it relates to dance studies.

Long disputed notions of dance’s ability to be ‘pinned down’ have resulted in a series of questions about its legitimacy as a valid historical record.

Subsequently, dance scholars have continued to problematize the logocentricity that has governed academia and subsequently privileged the written dissemination of knowledge. Shea Murphy addresses some of the historical issues associated with the status accorded to oral history and kinesthetic memory in her research on the heritage of aboriginal communities. She discusses the *Delgamuukw* trial, a legal dispute that erupted over aboriginal land claims in British Columbia, and explains that the initial dismissal of song, dance and oral testimonies as evidence of the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en peoples' right to over 58,000 square kilometres of land, called into question the legitimacy of oral history and performance as modes of factual documentation. This decision contributed to ongoing debates about comparative differences between acts of performance and performative acts, and subsequently assigned greater value to the latter. However in a 1997 appeal, the Supreme Court of Canada rejected the original verdict, and agreed to consider the oral histories and acts of performance from the original trial, thus validating the merit of oral history and performance in a court of law. As a result, oral testimonials that at one time were dismissed as 'hearsay' are now admissible forms of evidence in Canadian courtrooms, and dances are more readily accepted as authentic historical documents. This case urged a reconsideration of the functionality of performance, and confirmed that oral history can act as a legitimate historical record.

Although this shift represents considerable advancements in terms of the legal system, dance practitioners and historians have consistently supported the

legitimacy of oral history as a mode of information preservation and transfer. In fact, many consider oral traditions to be integral to the preservation and transmission of dances, as Stuart Hodes explains:

Dance is ruled by an ancient paradigm, that of oral history; its works are preserved by being passed directly from one dancer to another...even today, despite the growing use of textual notation, dance persists as a correlate of poetry in an oral culture. (97)

As much as dance is indivisible from corporeality, it is also inextricably linked to orality. Dances have been passed down through verbal modes of transmission for centuries, and as Hodes explains, though written notation has aided this process, oral traditions have remained integral to the practice of sharing dances. Based on this understanding, dancer and choreographer Jeff Friedman has experimented with the principles of oral history as a methodology for creating work. Much of Friedman's work is presupposed by the claim that oral history (as a methodology) and dance (as a performative act) share many of the same innate qualities. Namely, their characteristic 'liveness' and similar attention to temporality suggest oral history and dance to be a likely pair. In his article "Muscle Memory": Performing Oral History" Friedman's approach towards historiography suggests an acceptance of historical subjectivities, a distinct digression from traditional historical methods that foster notions of the grand narrative. Friedman expands upon the notion that dance and oral history are both embodied events. The subtle raise of an eyebrow or shift in a chair revealed through an interview reveal semiotic information about socially constructed meaning in the same way as an exaggerated head nod or stylized

leap. The primary aim of his study is to consider a selection of oral histories as raw material from which to create a choreographic work. Spanning nearly six decades and covering a range of geographic locales, *Muscle Memory* (1994) is a solo work that plays with the logical conventions of temporality and spatiality. Friedman weaves together excerpts from a pair of oral history interviews, creating a dialogue that represents two distinctly individual narratives, yet they appear convincingly similar in their thematic undertones. The strategic use of specific choreographic devices such as repetition and variation supports Friedman's attempts to elicit a kind of memory recollection on behalf of the audience. Friedman concludes that the use of oral history interviews as the inspiration for a choreographic work provides a rich combination of subjectivity, authenticity and interpretative creativity. Fueled by the notion of dancing an oral history, Friedman attempts to draw connections between the intrasubjective and intertextual qualities that inherently connect embodied practice to memory and oral history to dance. This practice is in line with contemporary historiography, which strives to illuminate the plurality of subjective experience as it is communicated through multiple voices. I intend to expand this notion by also considering the ways in which history can be inscribed onto multiple bodies.

A literal definition of the verb 'inscribe' is: "write or carve (words or symbols) on something, especially as a formal or permanent record"². The term 'score' carries with it multiple meanings, one of which is: "a notch or line cut or scratched into a surface"³, alluding to an act that results in a certain kind of permanence.

Much of dance scholarship posits that the performative act of dancing is incapable of leaving behind an object of permanence. However, contrary beliefs consider the surface of inscription to be the body itself, and suppose that gesture can be kinetically archived in an individual's embodied memory. Rooted in semiotic and anthropological theory, the notions of inscription and incorporation, as presented by sociologist Paul Connerton in *How Societies Remember* (1989), are presupposed by a general understanding that corporeality is inextricably linked to our social and cultural constructions of meaning. Connerton illuminates some of the ways in which gestures are inscribed into the body and incorporated into the collective consciousness of a particular culture or community.

Sally Ann Ness explores the notion of embodied inscription in a chapter titled, "The Inscription of Gesture: Inward Migrations in Dance" (2008). According to Ness, linguistic labels become transformed into codified symbolic representations of a certain technique, and these symbolic movement patterns inherently become an object of permanence on the dancer's body. Of course, a human body will not endure anywhere near the amount of longevity as a written document or a video, but it does possess the ability to transfer one's own bodily inscriptions onto the body of another, thus resulting in a living, breathing, moving memory that privileges resonance over permanence.

Evocatively speaking to this issue, performance studies scholar Diana Taylor asks, "is performance that which disappears, or that which persists, transmitted

through a nonarchival system of transfer that I came to call the *repertoire*?” (Taylor xvii). Taylor’s book, *The Archive and The Repertoire* (2003) investigates issues relating to the performativity and transferability of embodied memory. At the root of her argument is the supposition that cultural memory is constructed by a repertoire of performed and experienced events. Taylor articulates the fundamental difference between archival records and embodied experiences and suggests that while the archive has historically been linked to notions of permanence, the repertoire is a more fluid concept. According to Taylor, “the repertoire, on the other hand, enacts embodied memory: performances, gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing – in short, all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral, nonreproducible knowledge” (20). To accept Taylor’s notion of the binary between archive and repertoire, it is imperative to understand the philosophical underpinnings of the ways in which knowledge is constructed through human experience.

In line with the claim that human experience is integral to the practice of dance preservation, the combined work of philosophers such as Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty provides a valuable theoretical foundation for this dissertation. Heidegger’s belief that being is not reducible to representation or objectification reinforces the critique of traditional forms of dance notation and his position that being is rooted in human experience supports that of kinesthetic history as an appropriate approach towards dance preservation. Similarly, Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological theory pertaining to the lived experience

must be considered here. His belief that perception cannot be universalized, and his urge to abandon objectification both support the argument that dances cannot be encapsulated within a codified system of notation. The phenomenology of human experience has served as a point of departure for numerous conversations across the field of dance studies. Seminal works such as *The Phenomenology of Dance* (1979) by Maxine Sheets-Johnstone and *Dance and the Lived Body* (1987) by Sondra Horton Fraleigh have paid homage to Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty as phenomenological theoreticians.

Sheets-Johnstone argues for a re-examination of dance aesthetics through the immediate experience of the dancing body. Based on the phenomenological philosophies of Jean-Paul Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, Sheets-Johnstone suggests, “any quest for knowledge about a phenomenon begins with the direct intuition of the phenomenon” (12). She argues that in order to interrogate any dance practice one must do so through a direct lived experience of, or relating to, that practice. Similarly, Fraleigh seeks to unravel classical notions of dualism and illuminates dance as an existential art. Weaving philosophical discourse with aesthetic theory, Fraleigh considers dance from a personal perspective and draws extensively upon her own lived experience as a dance practitioner. Pertinent to this dissertation is Fraleigh’s discussion about “Moving as a Group” (204), where she exposes the interconnectivity of spatial, temporal, and emotional relationships that arise between performers. She asserts “that dance is an art in which we may understand the (human) lived character of time and

space in their *interrelatedness*" (208), a consideration that is particularly important to the discussion of the preservation of ensemble works.

Philosopher and dancer Erin Manning echoes similar sentiments about group relations in her book *Relationscapes* (2012). For Manning a body simply cannot exist in isolation from its immediate surroundings, and by extension those events that have preceded, or that will occur after any given moment, are inextricable from one's awareness of the here and now. She refers to this notion as an ecology of practices, and likens it to a system of living organisms that rely on their interdependency in order to survive. In life, as in dance, "to think a body in movement is not to locate the body in a performed world but to conceptualize moving worlds as instances of interrelating bodies" (66). In ensemble works, the idea of ecology is vital to both the performative and ontological essence of the dance, as both Fraleigh and Manning indicate the sensory experience of movement is reliant upon the ever-changing interrelations between bodies in time and space. This sensitivity towards moving relationships is integral to the recreation of an ensemble work on a new group of bodies, and arguably something that cannot be conveyed through written notation or video due to its existential nature. As Manning explains, "sensing bodies in movement are open systems that reach-toward one another sensingly, becoming through these relational matrices" (66). In other words, as the ecology of group collaboration in ensemble works continues to shift through their interrelations, so too does the ontology of the work itself.

This ecology of practices to which Manning refers is vital to the Forsythe Company's working model, which credits the dancers as being co-authors in the creative and choreographic process. In addition to my own observations of the methods used to restage one of Forsythe's works, I spoke at great length with dancer, stager and ballet master, Christopher Roman, about the collaborative structure of the company. These discussions revealed Roman's personal accounts of his experience as an integral member of the company. Additionally, Steven Spier's *William Forsythe and the Practice of Choreography* (2011) and Senta Driver's *William Forsythe* (2000) are useful resources through which to gain a deeper understanding of Forsythe's choreographic process and his conceptions about contemporary dance. Forsythe's artistic process is insightful, complex, and seemingly infinite in terms of creative possibility; attributes that simultaneously allure and challenge discussions about his choreography. To proceed with an interrogation of the methods used to restage *One Flat Thing, reproduced*, it is necessary to understand more about the conceptual and aesthetic underpinnings of his work.

The Work of William Forsythe: Contemporizing Classicism

William Forsythe grew up on Long Island in the 1950s and 60s, where he recalls memories of frequently dancing around the house to rock and roll music of the era, and where a lecture-demonstration delivered by the New York City Ballet provided him with his first introduction to classical dance. In 1967, at the age of eighteen, Forsythe attended Jacksonville University, where he studied drama and humanities, and took his first formal classes in ballet and modern dance. He left Jacksonville after two years to pursue full-time dance training at the Joffrey Ballet School. In 1973, Forsythe was invited to join the Stuttgart Ballet and it was here where he made his initial foray into choreography with a duet entitled *Urlicht* (1976). His first choreographic initiative was well received and by 1980 he had taken a break from performing altogether in order to focus solely on choreographing new works.

After four successful years of being commissioned by some of the world's most prominent dance companies, Forsythe became the Artistic Director of the Ballett Frankfurt in 1984, a role that he held for twenty years. Throughout his tenure with the company he continued to build upon his emerging reputation as one of ballet's most exciting contemporary artists. As Steven Spier remarks:

Forsythe's choreographies for the Stuttgart Ballet and other companies over eight years lent him a reputation for pushing hard at the artistic conventions of ballet, including its movement vocabulary, its staging and its own sanctimonious atmosphere. (1)

Forsythe's work appealed to audiences who sought a theatrical experience that stretched beyond the traditional boundaries of ballet. He expertly flirted with rebellion and challenged the notion of predictability, while still working within the restrictions of a state funded ballet company. It has been suggested that the artistic exploration that brought the company so much acclaim also contributed to the eventual demise of the Ballett Frankfurt. According to some, the controversial decision to close the municipal ballet company "was made for financial and, surprisingly, artistic reasons, and provoked international protests" (Siegmond 22). After more than a year of public disapproval and despite attempted negotiations between Forsythe and the city, the Ballett Frankfurt officially came to an end in the summer of 2004. The Forsythe Company was formed soon after, and once again Forsythe was at the helm of a contemporary ballet company that continued to thrive on innovation and investigation, whilst remaining unencumbered by political impositions. Over the course of his career Forsythe has been the recipient of numerous awards and accolades, including an honorary doctorate from The Juilliard School, and he continues to be one of western theatrical dance's most prominent contemporary choreographers.

The originality demonstrated by Forsythe throughout his career has undeniably challenged traditional notions of dance technique and performance. In fact, I would argue that Forsythe's unique ability to contemporize classicism remains unrivaled, and is one of the most significant contributions to the field of dance since the modern era. His creative methods, choreographic process and

movement philosophy epitomize all that is contemporary. Of notable importance is the fact that his work does not disregard tradition, nor does it follow along the same deliberately rebellious lines as many of his modern predecessors. Rather, his approach seamlessly marries the conventions of classical ballet with many of the opposing principles of modern and postmodern dance. Forsythe's own classical training continues to underpin the foundation of his distinct movement lexicon, however the ways in which that vocabulary is treated, altered, and tampered with push at the boundaries of tradition. Modern and postmodern principles including fall and recovery, manipulation of the torso, spatial re-orientation, and elements of chance are applied to the otherwise rigid structure of codified ballet positions and composition, thus resulting in a vernacular that decentres, deconstructs and redefines classicism. In doing so however, the classical technique that Forsythe and his company of dancers possess is never eclipsed. Instead he manages to construct an articulate dialogue between familiarity and discovery, linearity and chaos, tradition and innovation.

Although Forsythe's choreographic methods have evolved over many years of experimentation, early developments in his approach towards movement and composition were significantly informed by two dominant figures of the twentieth century. While a young student at Joffrey, Forsythe was a frequent patron of the New York City Ballet, a practice that fueled what Senta Driver refers to as "his lifelong study of the craftsmanship of George Balanchine" (10), and one that has made a significant impact on the development of his own choreographic method.

Considering Forsythe's keen interest in Balanchine's work, it is not surprising to see that his process of re-imagining classicism echoes a familiar resemblance to the neoclassical ballets that he frequented during his early years as a dancer in New York. There are marked differences as well; for instance, many of Forsythe's works exude theatricality, whereas Balanchine often chose a minimalist approach to production. However, with regard to conceptual ideas about the reconfiguration of ballet's traditional axial model, Forsythe and Balanchine share many of the same innovative ideas.

Balanchine's signature re-invention of the narrative ballet greatly influenced Forsythe, and parallels have often been drawn between the compositional practices of these two choreographers. Of notable comparison is their shared ability to re-imagine the classical ballet vocabulary. Susan Leigh Foster explains:

Balanchine's emphasis on speed and on the design capabilities of the long lean body gives the ballet lexicon a certain look in his dances. The new moves he introduces – the occasional inward rotation of the leg, angular arm positions, unusual lifts and carries – inspired by the abilities of his chosen dancers and by the nuances of the music, complement his stylistic treatment of the lexicon. (1986 91)

Like Balanchine, Forsythe sees the traditional conventions of ballet as a structure from which to deviate, a point of departure that offers only *one* possibility of what ballet *might* look like. When asked to comment on Forsythe's relationship to classicism, Christopher Roman, dancer, ballet master and current associate artistic director of The Forsythe Company explains:

I think he has a contemporary theatrical mind, but he's a real classical beast. He just allows himself to see it differently. He allows himself to see

a classical position on the floor, or upside down, or under a table. He allows himself to see it without having to feel bad that he's not genuflected to some classical rule. (Roman)

What is integral to the aesthetic identity of both Balanchine's and Forsythe's work is the agreement that a strict adherence to classicism is not a requirement.

Rather, their work is characterized by a notable ability to reference the traditional lexicon, whilst simultaneously re-purposing classical technique. Senta Driver extrapolates on this description of Forsythe's contemporary approach to classicism:

We can follow the logic of a known classical step through long new permutations. A *penché* may plunge in extraordinary directions, or a *fouetté* be created by picking up the dancer and hurling her manually around 360° as she executes the legwork – and we still recognize the source. As Forsythe has often stated, he treats the premises of classical technique as a useable language capable of new meaning, rather than as a collection of phrases and traditionally linked steps that retain traditional rules, shapes, and content subject only to rearrangement. (2011 52)

Of the many qualities that identify Forsythe as an exceptional contemporary artist, this treatment of the classical vocabulary that is reminiscent of Balanchine's is one that continues to be an unmistakable Forsythian trademark.

Many of the ways in which Forsythe manipulates the classical vocabulary have been derived from Rudolf von Laban's theories of movement analysis. It has been noted, "Laban's proposals became the basis of Forsythe's own method of generating movement material" (Driver, 2000 11). However, Forsythe has continued to expand upon Laban's foundational ideas. Much of Laban's work is predicated on the notion of the kinesphere, which can be described as "the

spherical space around the body delineated by easily extended limbs” (Gilpin, 2011 119). In Laban’s own description of the kinesphere he maintains that its relationship to the body remains fixed and only moves as a direct response to that body. Using the body’s centre point as its axis, the kinesphere encapsulates the space that is reachable by any one of the subject’s limbs “without stepping away from that place which is the point of support when standing on one foot” (Laban 10). Forsythe’s development of this notion suggests the possibility of multiple axes, inhabiting any number of possible locations:

In Forsythe’s dismantling of Laban’s model, any point or line in the body or in space can become the kinespheric centre of a particular movement, and the kinesphere is permeated with an infinite number of points of origin that can appear simultaneously in multiple points on the body. An infinity of emerging rotating axial divisions may have as their centres the heel of the right foot, the left ear, the right elbow, the back of the neck, or an entire limb, for example. (Gilpin, 2011 120)

This proposition has been a cornerstone of Forsythe’s choreographic experiments, and led to the development of *Improvisation Technologies* (1995), a video animated choreographic tool, which explores the generation and manipulation of movement material. Forsythe’s process of multiplying and relocating the kinesphere acts to further challenge the traditional conventions of classical ballet, and in doing so, he exposes, and makes vulnerable, the concept of balance, as Gilpin explains:

Fundamentally, ballet as movement spectacle invites a narrative of physical grace, poise, and style: the *telos* of classical ballet implies and assumes – at the very least – physical balance. This assumption and its consequent attitude toward beauty are interrogated by Forsythe. He elevates the failure to maintain balance as the most important project in his movement research. (2011 120)

Of equal, if not greater importance is the fact that this permutation of the classical vocabulary is not superficially aesthetic, but integral to the physicality of Forsythe's work. The manipulation of recognizable positions, steps, and shapes reaches far beyond the scope of visual appearance and actually serves as the impetus for the development of movement material. There is a fluid quality to the Forsythe vernacular that thrives on the abandonment of rigidity and gains momentum in the absence of a vertical axis. As explained by veteran company member Dana Caspersen:

Bill's dancing is extremely complex and organic, and the key to understanding how to do his choreography lies in figuring out which points on his body are initiating movement and which are responding to the initiation. This inner response, which we call residual movement, is a refraction like light bouncing between surfaces. In order for it to be effective in cannot be decorative, applied after the fact, but must be the result of skeletal-muscular coordinates reacting to the original movement impulse. (Driver, 2000 27)

The result exemplifies a distinct departure from the traditional application of ballet technique, and the confines of classical composition, which is predicated on the careful placement of specific positions. Instead, Forsythe's dancers utilize their expertly trained and highly technical bodies as a means through which to move beyond determinable destinations, therefore repurposing the service of classical technique.

Many consider this movement quality one of the distinguishing features of Forsythe's choreographic style; however, those who know the work intimately

advise against labeling it as such. According to Christopher Roman in reference to the work:

There is no style, there's no technique and there's no style. I think stylization has to do with extras or bells and whistles. I think we approach things, we don't stylize things, it's just the way that we've had to organize or solve puzzles in our brains through our bodies that could be misconstrued or seen as stylistic, but what's happening is just a negotiation with our body trying to figure out the problem. (Roman)

The 'problem' to which Roman refers can otherwise be explained as the dancers' responses to choreographic directives that they have been assigned in the creation process. Forsythe and his company have developed a task-oriented working model, which they refer to as "Universal Writing", that requires the dancers to experiment with various manipulations of movement themes and ideas. According to performance theorists Patricia Baudoin and Heidi Gilpin, "operations are constructed not so that the results of a specific task have visible priority, but to generate the unavoidable and unforeseeable residual movement" (Baudoin & Gilpin 4). Much of this task-oriented problem solving is improvisational, and as Roman explains the real-time decision-making that occurs during a live performance often is perceived as being stylistic, when in fact it is vital to the execution of the work:

I think it outwardly can show how you're maybe in a state of crisis trying to figure that out and it might be misconstrued as style and it's just not. It's the body and the mind trying to figure out how to juggle those tasks. (Roman)

This practice translates into an evolutionary approach towards the movement material that is in constant flux, as opposed to one that pins down a fixed set of

predetermined steps. Forsythe and his dancers are seemingly in a constant state of negotiation with the movement material, as it continues to be regenerated through the dancers' reactions to their assigned tasks. As a result of the indeterminacy of the choreography, many of Forsythe's works are in a perpetual state of development and transformation. Baudoin and Gilpin describe this as "a system of ever-multiplying systems of working which in turn regenerate themselves in variation" (4). That is not to say that Forsythe's works are void of structure, in fact the opposite is true, as this way of working requires an extreme amount of precision and rigour, both for the dancers and for Forsythe as the facilitator of the creative process.

Forsythe has often been referred to as a deconstructivist (Baudoin & Gilpin, Mattingly) and compared to postmodern architects Frank Gehry and Daniel Libeskind⁴. The unpredictability and apparent chaos of much of Forsythe's choreography are likened to the same identifiable features of buildings such as Gehry's *Vitra Design Museum* and Libeskind's *Imperial War Museum North*. In all three examples what can be perceived as a lack of form is in actuality an acute attention to detail. Themes of disequilibrium, disappearance and distortion define the deconstructivist aesthetic, all of which are routinely evident across the Forsythian repertoire. However, in order to disturb the equilibrium and distort the predictable it is necessary to begin with an intimate understanding of those principles upon which the classical aesthetic is founded. Gabriele Brandstetter explains, "in William Forsythe's work with the body, for example, the processes of

dissolving of fixed patterns result from an exact observation of the codified steps and poses of the *danse d'école*" (2000 122). As with deconstructivist architecture, to create a design that appears skewed does not occur through happenstance, it emerges through the careful manipulation of a pre-existing vocabulary and "for this, an exact knowledge and analysis of the traditional systems of movement are required" (ibid). It is for this reason that Forsythe's choreographic process cannot be considered anything other than methodical. The way he and his dancers apply specific directives to the movement material in order to create the illusion of disorder is actually an example of the company's meticulous attention to compositional organization.

Although much of Forsythe's work is systematically ordered to the finest detail the structure of the work is designed to fluctuate. As Forsythe explains:

There is no choreography, at least not as to be understood as a particular instance representing a universal or standard for the term. Each epoch, each instance of choreography, is ideally at odds with its previous defining incarnations as it strives to testify to the plasticity and wealth of our ability to reconceive and detach ourselves from positions of certainty. (2011 90)

Forsythe challenges his dancers to continuously investigate the possibilities of which their bodies and minds are capable, and he has been known to urge such explorations during live performances. It has been noted, "at the Paris Opera premiere of *In the Middle, Somewhat Elevated*, Forsythe reset the order of the sequences and informed the dancers just before the beginning of the performance" (Baudoin & Gilpin 6). It is these characteristics of fluctuation and malleability that epitomize that which is contemporary. Forsythe has been

described as “a pivotal, adventurous figure whose work embodies the dissolution of categories, an attitude that continues to shape the contemporary dance world” (Raymond Strauss 85), and his work is said to “extend our conceptions as viewers of what is possible” (Mattingly 22). It is these Forsythian characteristics of invention and irreproducibility that challenge traditional dance preservation methods such as notation and video recording, and beg the questions of how, why, and whether contemporary dances should be preserved for the purpose of future reconstruction?

Reconstruction: Philosophical & Practical Considerations

The practice of reconstructing and restaging dances is riddled with an array of complexities that pertain to the ontology of live performance; issues of ephemerality, repeatability, and accuracy are integral to discussions about the ways in which dance is believed to exist. Traditional modes of dance notation and documentation suggest that a dance can exist, to some extent, in a form other than the dance itself, such as in a written score or a video recording. Contrasting beliefs suggest that it is impossible for live performance to be recorded in any way, and that, as it is an embodied phenomenon, the dance itself can only exist in the precise moment within which it is experienced. These opposing views continue to inform debates about the preservation of live performance, with the latter being expressed by Peggy Phelan in the following excerpt from *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*:

Performance's only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations *of* representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance. (1993 146)

This rationale that dance exists only within the frame of one singular event is agreed upon by André Lepecki, who states, "dance silently moves towards its future only to reveal it as a vast amnesiac past" (2006 124). However, Lepecki also suggests that the act of choreography has emerged "precisely to counter this ontological condition" (125). Choreographic methods of generating, constructing, and repeating movement material function as modes of inscription that enable the recovery of otherwise irretrievable acts. In other words,

“choreography activates writing in the realm of dancing to guarantee that dance’s present is given a past, and therefore, a future” (Lepecki 125). This belief that choreography is an inscriptive act, supposes that the embodied act of choreographing and performing a work must enable the dance to exist in some way other than a fleeting moment that can never be recalled. The possibility that movement can be written into a dancer’s bodily memory challenges the notion of ephemerality, and suggests that dance can exist beyond its life as a performative act. Consider the following notion as explained by Matthew Reason:

Yet at the same time as it disappears performance also endures. Performance is present and represented in various media and activity that although not the thing itself, reflect upon, remember, evoke and retain something of performance. (1)

This dichotomy between elusiveness and endurance to which Reason refers has been a recurring theme in dance studies discourse. Although traditional modes of preservation, such as written notation and video, have proven that dances can exist in visual, symbolic, and linguistic forms, these tokens are purely referential to that which they represent, as opposed to that which they actually are. It is for this reason that issues relating to ephemerality and repeatability must be given careful consideration in discussions about dance preservation and reconstruction.

The notion of ephemerality is indivisible from discussions about live performance. As Reason aptly explains, “one of the most prominent and recurring definitions of live performance – whether of theatre, performance art, dance or music – is that

it is fundamentally ephemeral” (1). It has been argued that the ephemeral nature of dance is not conducive to the act of reconstruction, and that it is impossible to recreate an exact replica of a dance, as it existed in an earlier instance. Many practitioners and scholars believe that once the moment has passed it is irretrievable and in some cases irrelevant. As Lesley Main suggests, “there is a view that dance is ephemeral, ‘of the moment’, and therefore not intended to exist beyond that ‘moment’ of performance” (7). It has also been proposed that perhaps any attempt to bring a past dance into the present is unnecessary. In conversation with Selma Jeanne Cohen about the preservation of his ballets, George Balanchine emphatically stated, “they don’t have to be preserved. Why should they be? I think ballet is NOW. It’s about people who are NOW. Not about what will be” (1992 192). When asked if he was concerned about the eventual loss of his ballets, Balanchine answered:

Absolutely not concerned. Besides, there will be different people then. The art of dancing will disappear – or maybe it will be done with acrobats. Who knows what they’re going to do? But I don’t want my ballets preserved as museum pieces for people to go and laugh at what used to be. *Absolutely not.* (ibid)

William Forsythe has expressed similar views about the preservation of his works. As Heidi Gilpin explains, “Forsythe is not interested in the survival of his work as an object; that would fetishize the work as a finished, categorizable, reproducible object” (2011 123). In contrast, there are a number of practitioners who are extremely interested in the preservation of their choreographic works. A notable example is Canadian dance artist Peggy Baker, and her legacy project entitled, “The Choreographer’s Trust”. In collaboration with a group of dancers, a

choreologist, a dance writer, a visual artist, a DVD production team and a website designer, Baker compiled a set of records to document and preserve six of her solo works⁵. A similar endeavor has been undertaken by a group of researchers at Ohio State University to document works by Deborah Hay, Bebe Millar and Jonathan Burrows and Matteo Fargion as a part of the *Motion Bank* project⁶. There seems to be a clear distinction between those who wish to encapsulate their dances as archived objects, and those who would rather embrace their transience. As Main articulates:

There are choreographers who are unconcerned about documenting their work for preservation or re-creation purposes. They create work for a moment in time and then move on. Other choreographers make a conscious choice to have their work documented through Labanotation, film, and choreographic notebooks. By doing so, the choreographer signals a desire for that work to exist beyond the ephemeral moment of its first performance. (2012 7)

Regardless of the choreographer's specific intent towards the direct preservation of their work, the physical inscription of that work on their dancers leaves behind an object of semi-permanence, in the form of an embodied record. This notion suggests that it is possible for choreography to be retrieved from the living memory of a dancer and shared with others, therefore supporting the viability of dance as a repeatable performative act.

This is certainly not a new supposition, as dancing masters and scholars have been interested in the repeatability of dances for centuries. Reconstruction continues to prevail as a methodological approach towards a deeper understanding of the aesthetics, historical locality, and cultural significance of

dance's past. There is also a general understanding that issues of identity and variation are inherent in the reconstruction process. As Graham McFee suggests, "commonsense tells us that the 'repeat' is quite likely *not* to be qualitatively indistinguishable from the previous performance" (2011 106). In a similar vein Phelan remarks, "performance occurs over a time which will not be repeated. It can be performed again, but repetition itself marks it as 'different'. The document of a performance then is only to spur a memory, an encouragement of memory to become present" (1993 146). In keeping with this understanding that each performance of a work has its own ontological identity, numerous questions arise. How can one evaluate the merits of a reconstructed work? How does one determine which features of the work are integral and which are interpretive? Do these choices affect the authenticity of the work?

To further discuss the process of reconstructing a dance work, it is necessary to define the parameters of what constitutes 'a work'. Many have attempted to define the term in reference to live dance. However, as Sarah Rubidge explains, "there is no permanent physical object to which one can refer" (1996 220), thus making an absolute definition difficult. Dance scholars Valerie Preston-Dunlop and Ana Sanchez-Colberg have identified a triad of elements: idea, medium, and treatment, which they suggest, "comprise the constituents of a work" (2002 18). In their discussion, each component is further analyzed to explain its relevance within the context of choreological studies. According to their taxonomy, the *idea* pertains to a theme, narrative, genre, cultural, or perceptual identity inherent in

the work. The term *medium* refers to the individual strands that merge to create the actual form of the work, and include the performers, movement, sound, and space. Finally, *treatments* are described as “the ways and means used to give shape to the original idea” (20). According to this description of the elements that form a work, in order for a dance to be considered a reconstructed version of an earlier iteration, it should bear an accurate resemblance in each of these three areas.

In order to comment on the degree of ‘accuracy’ to which a reconstructed work represents its original counterpart, it is necessary to frame the word within the context of this particular discussion. In this case, the word ‘accuracy’ assumes meaning as a value term, as used in Francis Sparshott’s explanation in reference to dance performance, which he suggests are “the things about it that make it good or bad” (301-302). Of course, there is an exhaustive list of value terms one can consider as criteria for what makes a work good or bad. However, none pertain as directly to reconstruction as accuracy. If the aim of a reconstruction is to achieve a version of the work that is considered to be as close as possible to the original, then accuracy should be assessed as a criterion for judging the ultimate success of the reconstruction process. This leads to some important considerations. Which elements in particular should be evaluated in order to identify a successful reconstruction of a particular work? And how can these elements be reproduced in subsequent versions in order to create the most accurate rendition? In some cases, depending on the definition of a work being

used, the accurate reproduction of structural elements would be enough for that reconstruction to be considered an acceptable version of the work. However, is this enough for it to be viewed as an authentic reconstruction? Preston-Dunlop and Sanchez-Colberg allude to the notion of expressivity in their mention of the performer as a medium through which a work is transmitted. In addition to structural form, there is a humanistic element that exists within a work that is difficult to define, a physical embodiment that when combined with the idea, treatment and medium strands brings a work to life. As explained by Matthew Goulish, “work is an event in which the human participates; the human is an organism that works. A work works when it becomes an event of work. A work works when it becomes human” (102).

The primary argument here is that the structural accuracy of movement and form are, on their own, not sufficient in the recognition of a reconstructed version of a particular dance as a work of art. In order to be considered a reproduced work worthy of artistic value, rather than just a reproduced work, reconstructed dances must be able to emulate the original sense of expression. A similar view on artful expression is voiced by Leo Tolstoy in his suggestion that, “it is on this capacity of man to receive another man’s expression of feeling, and to experience those feelings himself, that the activity of art is based” (178). According to Tolstoy, if a reconstructed work is void of the originally intended expressive qualities, it cannot be considered a work of art. This is not to say that I agree unequivocally that a dance must express a specific feeling in order to be considered artful; the

point is that if a work of dance is to be considered an accurate representation of its original form, then the work itself must convey a sense of expressivity that is akin to the original version. Monroe C. Beardsley supports this notion by claiming, “when a motion or sequence is expressive, it is dance” (33). Beardsley does not specify that expressiveness must denote a particular feeling or emotion; instead he refers to an identifiable quality that can be conveyed through a particular work. In his essay, Beardsley highlights the words of Selma Jeanne Cohen who says, “expressiveness is present in all true dance” (qtd. in Beardsley, 33), and Haig Khatchadourian who prefers to think that “expressiveness is not a necessary condition of dance but a criterion of *good* dance” (qtd. in Beardsley 33). Overall, the views presented here indicate that a work of dance art should be valued by its ability to be expressive, and likewise, a reconstructed work should be ascribed value based on its ability to accurately recreate that same sense of expression.

Of course it is reasonable to disagree with such a statement. One has only to scour the dance notation section of libraries and dance collection archives to realize that the accuracy of structural form has traditionally been valued by dance preservation practices, while attention to the accuracy of expression has been overlooked. Herein lie the disappointing limitations of traditional dance notation systems, which do not possess adequate capabilities of capturing detailed expressive qualities. Spatial trajectories, degrees of rotation, details of weight, shape and musical counts are some of the structural components that comprise a

dance, and the components most accurately recorded by notation systems. The question arises as to whether a work can be considered its most complete representation if it does not accurately reproduce both structural and expressive elements.

Let us consider a work that, when reconstructed, remains consistent in its structural architecture, but conveys a completely different meaning or sense of expression from the original. For instance, Susan Leigh Foster explains the choreographic method of Merce Cunningham by saying that, 'like the dancers, members of the audience are free to bring a variety of interpretations to the dance' (1986 41). Due to the nature of Cunningham's work, and the numerous possibilities of expression that can be constructed and read by the audience "each viewer's experience is unique, not simply because each person has a different heritage of associations to the dance but because each person has literally made a different dance" (ibid). In other words, although the choreographic structure of Cunningham's work remains relatively unaltered, the expressivity of the movement can differ drastically from one performance to another.

Conversely, Rubidge provides an example of her own work whereby each version of her choreography is executed through varying combinations of movement. Bearing resemblance to Forsythe's approach, the work is based on specific choreographic directives and intentionality, and therefore similar feelings,

meaning and emotive qualities are conveyed throughout each rendition. In Rubidge's own description, it is "a work which is designed in such a way as to exhibit radical differences in surface features and/or form from presentation to presentation" (2002 135). She explains, "it was not a narrative piece, however; rather, it provided the framework for an exploration of the variability of human relationships, and the variability of meaning embodied in movement and gesture. As such it had an expressive choreographic intent" (ibid, 136). According to Preston-Dunlop and Sanchez-Colberg's definition of a work, neither of these examples can be considered an accurate duplication of the original, because in their view, a work must comprise all of the aforementioned elements. On the other hand, Tolstoy and Beardsley might argue that provided the theme, expression and meaning remain the same, it would be an adequate rendition of the original work of art, regardless of any differentiation amongst the structural details.

Perhaps only the original live performance of a dance can be considered the work of art in its entirety, and any subsequent reconstructions, representations or reiterations of it should be referred to as such. Consider the way in which reprinted versions of the Mona Lisa are widely accepted as manufactured replicas of a masterpiece, which allude to the painting's value, but are not mistaken for the original. It could be argued that, in much the same way, reproduced dances can only ever exist as less valuable imitations of an original work of art. However, the above example refers to static objects that are void of temporality,

and as such, does not specifically apply to the reconstruction and restaging of dance works. In Walter Benjamin's seminal essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936), he explained, "even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be" (220). So, what if the reproduced work of art *is* present in time and space? Seemingly, this would negate Benjamin's view that a reproduction lacks those elements that are characteristic of the original.

Of course, a performance of a reproduced dance is present in a *different* time and space than the original. However, it cannot be assumed that difference necessarily equates to lack of value. Instead, difference implies plurality, multiplicity, and subjectivity. Benjamin also claims, "the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition. By making many reproductions it substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence" (223). It is on this basis that the practice of dance reconstruction should be considered within the broader philosophical framework. Issues related to ephemerality, repeatability, and accuracy are integral to the development of dance preservation discourse, as they urge further inquisition and encourage the acceptance of multiplicity. I disagree with Benjamin that reproductions "substitute a plurality of copies for a unique existence"; rather, I contend that reproductions offer a plurality of unique existences.

On this basis, the assumption that the process of reconstructing and restaging dance works results in a performance that is inherently different from the original leads to an obvious consideration. Why do we reconstruct dances at all? If the process of reconstructing dances is so complex, and encumbered by so many philosophical issues pertaining to repeatability, then why is it a practice that continues to prevail across the field? In actuality, there are a number of convincing reasons, which demonstrate the benefits of reconstructing and restaging dance works.

The first of these is of course related to finances. If it were feasible for dance companies to thrive on the constant development of new programs every season, we would likely see a decline in the practice of restaging existing repertory pieces. However, the financial practicality of recycling dances is of great significance, as Lepecki explains: “a whole economy of dance and its supplements energized by the melancholic plaint of the lawyer Capriol allows precisely for dance and dances to constantly be recycled, reproduced, packaged, distributed, institutionalized, sold” (2006 126). In a conversation with Christopher Roman of The Forsythe Company about restaging dances, he explained, “I would love to do original works all the time” (Roman), alluding to the financial unfeasibility of such a proposition. It is my assumption that many artists share Roman’s view that the creation of new works offer more excitement than restaging ‘old’ ones. Most dance companies do not have access to the funding that supports the ongoing production of multiple new works, and instead many

companies rely heavily on the buying and selling of previously performed dances. This practice benefits both parties involved as it saves money and time for the company purchasing the work, and generates revenue for the original choreographer. As such, previously produced works become commodities, ripe to be bought and sold between dance companies and educational institutions. This type of financial and artistic exchange is beneficial to the wider dance community, and is a practice that is unlikely to change as long as it continues to prove economically efficient for those involved.

A further consideration, and perhaps the one that is most relevant to this particular study, is the educational value inherent in the practice of reconstruction. This type of experiential learning is of particular importance in the education of the next generation of dance students. As we move further into the twenty-first century we are continuing to lose some of the twentieth century's legendary choreographers, and in some cases their direct descendants as well. The irreplaceable benefits of learning repertory works from a dancer who has had direct experience with the original choreographer, or one with a prominent position in that choreographer's lineage, are of great importance to the longevity of these works. As Main explains,

This emergence and crossover between generations is an important part of any tradition's evolution but particularly so when much of the 'documentary evidence' lies within the ephemerality of human movement as opposed to the tangible pages of a book or images on a screen. (8)

The educational value that is ascribed to the process of reconstructing and restaging seminal dance works has gained prominence in the pedagogical philosophy of many higher education dance programs, and Juilliard is no exception. In the program notes for the 2013 repertory concert, Lawrence Rhodes, the Artistic Director of the Juilliard Dance Division explains, “this program is to continue the education of our students by challenging them to take on roles in already established classics of our dance history” (Rhodes 2013). Acting as a bridge between academic classes and studio technique classes, the reconstruction of historical works, and restaging of contemporary ones, encourages an understanding of theoretical concepts through praxis. According to Main,

North American Universities play an important role in the field of dance reconstruction. Many institutions regularly stage reconstructions as a matter of course. One great value of the US higher education system is that the educating of tomorrow’s dancer can be framed within explicit cultural historic terms through the experience of performing modern dance works. The combined educational and artistic benefit is that student dancers are equipped with the specific language of a choreographer’s style and, at the same time, an appreciation of the work within its historical cultural context. (9)

In addition to these benefits identified by Main, learning a piece of repertory also provides students with an opportunity to explore and question their own documentation and preservation practices. Through their active participation in the restaging of repertory works at Juilliard, the students learn directly about the process of embodied transmission. Many of these students will go on to have professional dance careers, and this experience teaches them practical ways that their own works, as well as those in which they have performed can be

retained, recalled and transmitted to other dancers. Theoretically and practically there continues to be value in the practice of dance reconstruction. Therefore, so too is there value in investigating the methods through which this practice occurs.

It is on this premise that I interrogate both historical and current modes of dance preservation. This dissertation introduces a contemporary approach towards dance preservation, one that considers the current generation of dancers and choreographers, as well as the context within which they are working. However, in order to do so, it is necessary to first consider the historical context of dance preservation.

Chapter 2

Dance Notation, *re-traced*: An Historical Overview of the Written Score

Historically, one of the ways in which western theatrical dances have been preserved is through the act of score writing. According to dance notation expert Ann Hutchinson Guest, written notation has been utilized as a mode of preserving dances for hundreds of years and records of the earliest known western dance notation systems date back to the fifteenth century (2005 1). Throughout western theatrical dance history, there has been an ongoing search for a comprehensive dance notation system that parallels music notation in its ability to achieve universality across western theatrical forms, and in particular ballet and modern dance. In 1968, philosopher Nelson Goodman commented on the quest for such a system with the following statement: “because the dance is visual like painting, which has no notation, and yet transient and temporal like music, which has a highly developed standard notation, the answer is not altogether obvious” (211). Numerous attempts have been made to codify a universal system, however such efforts to standardize the practice of dance notation have proven difficult, and as Goodman explains, “here we have an art without a traditional notation; and an art where the ways, and even the possibility,

of developing an adequate notation are still matters of controversy” (Copeland & Cohen 403). Though these statements were made well over forty years ago, the sentiment still rings true as we move further into the twenty-first century. As recently as 2005, language and performance studies scholar Myriam Van Imschoot wrote,

Contrary to the music tradition, dance practice has never strictly reserved the word ‘score’ for a specific object, encoded in notation on a piece of paper, indicating a body of work that can then be instantiated with great rigour in performance. (Sarma 2005)

Implicit in Imschoot’s claim is the notion that dance, and in particular contemporary dance, is not bound by an overarching set of generally understood rules, thus making it exceedingly difficult to encode within a standardized system. The transient nature of dance as an embodied practice has called into question the ability to establish and maintain a codified system of dance notation.

Much like the evolution of dancing styles, the field of dance notation has experienced its own transformation throughout history. Early records of notated scores demonstrate an adherence to formalist and traditionalist ideals, whilst the modern era brought forth a wave of notation systems that displaced the prioritization of ideas related to hierarchy and structure. In *Choreo-graphics* (1989), Hutchinson Guest provides a diachronic comparison of dance notation systems that have been employed at various points in history to record western theatrical dance practices. Though she names more than twenty different systems in the book, the following discussion focuses on Beauchamp-Feuillet

Notation, Labanotation, and Benesh Movement Notation, because they have consistently remained at the forefront of western dance notation discourse. The purpose of this discussion is neither to provide a chronological overview of the development of dance notation, nor to explain in great detail any one of the systems. Rather, the intention is to locate and contextualize three of the most popularized notation systems within the broader historical narrative of western theatrical dance.

Beauchamp-Feuillet Notation:

It has been suggested that the use of dance notation systems pre-dates many of the historical records that are available to us today. According to Hutchinson Guest “some scholars believe that the ancient Egyptians made use of hieroglyphs to record their dances and that the Romans employed a method of notation for salutatory gestures” (2005 1). Despite the plausibility of this claim, dance historians Susan Au (2002) and Selma Jeanne Cohen (1992) each credit the Beauchamp-Feuillet system as being the earliest codified method of dance notation.

Developed in France in the late seventeenth century, and explained by Hutchinson Guest as “the most highly developed track drawing system” (1989 13), Beauchamp-Feuillet notation depicts floor patterns from a bird’s-eye perspective⁷. The score reads as a set of diagrams that illustrate steps and spatial pathways in direct relation to the musical accompaniment. This system

was designed initially by Pierre Beauchamp to capture the intricate floor patterns and footwork of the social dances that were performed in the French courts of King Louis XIV (see Appendix A). Later, the system was expanded upon and published by Raoul Auger Feuillet, and it continued to be in use until the latter part of the eighteenth century (Hutchinson Guest 1989).

Beauchamp-Feuillet notation seems to adequately map complex spatial patterns and movements of the feet; however, the records that exist tend to ignore many other choreographic details. Dance historian Moira Goff offers further explanation, “although Beauchamp-Feuillet notation provides detailed information about the path traced by the dancer and the steps, it contains ambiguities and it does not usually record movements of the head, arms, or upper body” (158). However, that is not to say that it would not have been possible to do so. Linda Tomko claims that, “Beauchamp-Feuillet notation was absolutely capable of indicating arm gestures for ballroom and theatre choreographies alike” (1999 3). She continues, “historians think that, for ballroom dancing at least, amateurs selected and sequenced arm gestures for themselves” (ibid). Tomko positions this statement as an example of dancers’ individual agency within the framework of court dance. However, I suggest that the decision to exclude details of the upper body is also indicative of a broader cultural narrative.

The very nature of the Beauchamp-Feuillet system represents formalist ideals, with its focus on form, rather than content. The prioritization of floor patterns and

spatial pathways, as evidenced in the written scores, suggests the importance of the overall appearance of the dances, and the spectacle they were intended to create. This theme reaches beyond the dancing and can also be seen in the visual appearance of the score itself. As notation practitioner Victoria Watts suggests, “the ornate cursiveness of the Feuillet system would seem entirely consonant with the Baroque era in which it was devised” (Watts 366). She adds, “it underscores that dance notations are historically located cultural practices that visually instantiate a complex of particular values” (ibid 367). Watts’ propositions support the idea that dance practices, and their related notations, are both inextricably linked to the overarching contexts from within which they originated.

As evidenced in the Beauchamp-Feuillet scores, it is clear that the spatial formations and placement of the dancers’ bodies were integral to the Baroque era court dances. In his discussion of reconstructing Baroque dances from Beauchamp-Feuillet scores, dance scholar Mark Franko highlights the importance of spatial patterning, and as Teresa Buckland explains, in a review of his work, “no longer peripheral, the moving body and the laws by which it proceeds to create meaning are viewed as constitutive practices of seventeenth century French aristocratic power dynamics” (102). This preoccupation with defining where bodies are in space has associations that reach far beyond the dances themselves, and alludes to the socio-economic class divisions that were prevalent in France at that time. Court dancing provided a social arena for the aristocracy, and the organization of events adhered to a strict hierarchical

structure. According to Selma Jeanne Cohen, “though the general public was now sometimes admitted to performances and occasional professionals appeared in some of the *entrées*, the ballet was primarily a vehicle for the nobility” (9). Similarly, dance historian Susan Au explains, “the court ballet was a carefully calculated mixture of art, politics and entertainment: its chief purpose was to glorify the State, which could be symbolized, as in the time of Louis XIV, by the reigning monarch” (12). Governed by ritualistic formalities, these court dances can be seen as performative acts that operated under a particular set of principles. The Beauchamp-Feuillet notation system echoes similar characteristics in its adherence to specific rules that imply the prioritization of structure and form.

Though the Beauchamp-Feuillet system has proven useful for the notation and preservation of approximately 355 court dances (Pierce 288), its specificity limits its ability to function as a universal mode of dance preservation. As Hutchinson Guest explains, “the system was very much a product of, and suited to, the dance of its period” (1989 21). In agreement, Tomko refers to Beauchamp-Feuillet notation as “the antithesis of a universal system. It attempted to represent only the French noble style of dancing, plus some aspects of character or grotesque dancing” (1999 2). Due to the specificity of the system, the notation poses challenges to anyone not privy to the context that governed its particular codification. As Tomko explains,

One had to have recourse to other period documents to grasp that initial bends in dance step-units should be taken on the upbeats for musical

measures, and not on the downbeats as the notation would seem to indicate. And if not to written sources, noble amateurs repaired to professional dancing masters for regular tutelage, to achieve technical mastery for performance at court or assemblies, and also to study newly published dances. Beauchamp-Feuillet notations thus circulated as part of a larger network of tutorial means. (ibid 3)

Beauchamp-Feuillet notation remained in use, in modified versions, for approximately one hundred years. Hutchinson Guest explains that the system “fell into disuse chiefly because the dance for which it was specifically designed went out of fashion” (1989 22). However, I suggest that it fell into disuse because the very ideologies that governed its operation went out of fashion as well. Consider the following discussion of Beauchamp-Feuillet notation offered by philosopher Francis Sparshott:

Like staff notation, it corresponded to the prevalence of a steady practice. What stopped it was the social changes clustered around the French Revolution, which destroyed the courtly consensus of method within which Feuillet had worked. (428)

The political climate in western Europe around the time of the French Revolution indicated a significant displacement of power, as democratic and nationalist ideals threatened sovereignty. This broad shift of ideological thought initiated an undulating effect, and subsequent responses began to emerge throughout society. Court dancing rituals became less popular, as they were considered to be emblematic of nobility, and the professionalization of ballet fortified its reputation as a disciplinary practice, rather than as an act of socialization.

Alongside the decline in court dancing traditions, the nineteenth century witnessed the codification of classical ballet. During this time, “various manuals on the technique of dancing were written and the classical vocabulary has been fully codified to its finest detail” (Tembeck 71). Among the most significant publications was Carlo Blasis’ *Traité élémentaire, théorique et pratique de l’art de la danse* (1820; *An Elementary Treatise upon the Theory and Practice of the Art of Dancing*). Although earlier dance manuals were published by Thoinot Arbeau (1589, 1596), Raoul Auger Feuillet (1700) and Pierre Rameau (1725, 1728), they focused respectively on French Renaissance dance, notation and social dancing in the Baroque era (Cohen, 2004 122-124). Blasis was the first to publish a manual that described, codified and analyzed classical ballet technique, as it is still in use today. Brandstetter explains “in dance historiography Blasis is considered the founder of the system of movement and aesthetic of classical ballet” (2005 67). A number of notation systems were created during the nineteenth century to record the ballets of the time, all of which referred directly to the newly standardized vocabulary, as established in the dancing manuals⁸. Many of these systems have remained relatively unknown, and the next significant advancements in the field of dance notation occurred in the mid-twentieth century.

Labanotation:

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, traditionalist thought began to wane as the emergence of modernism steadily gained momentum. That is not to

say that this shift occurred as a linear progression, of course the relationship between traditionalism and modernism remains porous. However, as society became affected by modern ideologies such as abstraction and self-consciousness, the landscape shaped by artistic values began to unveil new possibilities. Themes such as individuality and expression became increasingly more important to emerging artistic and choreographic practices, and notions of innovation and experimentation challenged traditionalist ideals. As a result, these shifts demanded a reconsideration of dance notation practices, as

Tembeck explains:

With the emergence of Modern Dance a further problem arose: movement possibilities are perceived as being unlimited. People invent steps that have not previously been codified and which are borrowed from everyday life, sports or martial arts. The recording of such information becomes considerably more difficult. (74)

In order to address the changing requirements of dance notation fueled by the rise of modernity, Rudolf von Laban created what is now considered the most commonly used abstract symbol system. Labanotation (1928) is composed of a lexicon of symbols indicating specific directives for a movement's use of individual body parts as pertaining to various levels, timings, and directions. In theory, Labanotation is capable of recording nearly every type of movement. An extensive catalogue compiled by Mary Jane and Frederick Warner (1984, 1988) exhibits the breadth of Labanotation's possibilities, and includes scores of a variety of movement practices ranging from ballet and modern dance, to industrial motion studies, to the mating dance of spiders. However, its application as a system of dance notation has remained its most prominent use.

Labanotation presupposes that verticality is representative of the human body, and various symbols are placed on a vertical lined grid, reminiscent of the musical staff. The body is divided along the sagittal plane with each half being symmetrically represented on either side of the grid. Abstract symbols are used to identify various body parts, and the actions of those individual parts are depicted along the grid through the strategic placement and colouration of the symbols (see Appendix B). Presumably, if a dancer were to look at a Labanotation score they would inherently relate their own verticality to that of the grid, and from there he or she would be able to decipher the symbols in the score by envisioning where their body parts would be situated in relation to the grid's centre line. In other words, "starting at the bottom of the page, the dancer sees the three-line staff as being himself in the upright vertical situation" (Hutchinson Guest, 1989 121). Laban's emphasis on the individual perspective of the performer challenged traditional ways of thinking and offers a stark contrast to Beauchamp-Feuillet notation, which prioritized the visual structure of the dance over individual details. Notably, "until Laban's system all floor plans were written from the audience's point of view and not as experienced by the performers. It was as though the dancers were not to be involved, but only those watching them" (Hutchinson Guest, 2005 54). This choice quite obviously brings the dancer into the picture by indicating the importance of their presence in the process of recording their movements.

Though Labanotation is capable of recording the timing, direction, level, and body parts involved in a specific movement it does so in a way that does not account for the individuality of perception. The symbols used to denote each of these particular qualities form a sort of dictionary of references, and suggest a standardized translation of what they intend to communicate. Therefore the overall success of the system relies on the assumption of a universal understanding of what the symbols mean.

In the same way that the governing principles of Beauchamp-Feuillet notation can be situated within a specific cultural context, so too can the ideology that influenced Laban's theoretical beliefs. Labanotation shares one fundamental characteristic with all of the other dance notation systems that Hutchinson Guest compares in *Choreo-graphics*. Despite a range of subtle differences, each example is predicated on the idea that once a symbol is assigned a specific meaning, the relationship between signifier (symbol) and signified (movement) assumes a sort of 'universal truth'. This notion was aligned with other theoretical trends of the time. Structuralism experienced its peak in the first half of the twentieth-century, and ideas about systemization and regulation were at the forefront of numerous discourses. Tomko describes this period as "the historical juncture in which twentieth-century abstract symbol notation systems were devised and in which they continued to develop, for concern with universals has been characteristic of twentieth-century modernism" (1999 2). One of the fundamental issues with structuralism and the theme of universality is that the

idea of 'absolute truth' came to be seen as a string of narrow biases, which represented the viewpoints of a select group of individuals. Knowledge constructed around this time has since been criticized for its exclusion of non-western points of view, and its domination of patriarchal, logocentric, and homogeneous ideologies. According to Tomko,

Another kind of concern for universals animated leftist politics and labour organizing early in the century. This politics claimed that an international brotherhood of workers and the working class existed, and the class solidarity of this group was theorized as overriding ethnic and racial differences. (ibid)

Once again referencing the political climate of the time, Labanotation (as a mode of recording movement) like Beauchamp-Feuillet, provides a contextual lens through which to interrogate broader social and cultural developments.

Though Labanotation has experienced marked success in the documentation of human movement, the system is not altogether flawless. This is evidenced by the number of systems that have been devised since the advent of Labanotation. In *Choreo-graphics* Hutchinson Guest identifies a further 55 systems that had been developed up to 1986, clearly alluding to the fact that Labanotation has not achieved the type of universality toward which it was originally intended. Further analysis of Labanotation's practical use must consider its complexity and the fundamental knowledge of the system that is necessary to use it appropriately. Many practitioners have expressed frustration with Labanotation, primarily because, as Tembeck explains, "recording by means of Labanotation is a meticulous and long drawn task because it is so comprehensive" (77). In an

interview with Sandra Aberkals from the Dance Notation Bureau she explained that on average it takes somewhere between six and nine months to notate a work that runs anywhere between fifteen and sixty minutes, and that the notation of a fifteen minute work usually produces a 150 to 200 page score (Aberkals). On the basis of this admission, it seems as though Labanotation's most celebrated success is also one of its apparent downfalls. The system is extensive in its capabilities, but labourious in its execution.

Benesh Movement Notation:

Grappling with the challenges presented by Labanotation, Rudolf and Joan Benesh developed a system of dance notation to work with the specific intricacies of the mid-twentieth century classical ballet vocabulary. Faced with the initial task of creating a system of recording movement that enabled "speed, economy, and simplicity without any loss of accuracy" (Hall, 1967 190), Benesh Movement Notation (1956) evolved as a visual system, based on virtual stick figure drawings. Sharing a similar belief to that of Laban, Rudolf Benesh postulated that the lines of a staff "form a perfect base or matrix for the human figure" (Hutchinson Guest, 1989 41). Written horizontally along the staff, as opposed to Laban's vertical method, Benesh notation divides the dancer's body into four segments along the transverse plane, and situates them within a vertical grid that is delineated by a five-lined staff (see Appendix C).

In contrast to Beauchamp-Feuillet notation, where the score presents a bird's eye perspective, the Benesh system depicts the dancer from behind. The implications of this feature are two-fold. Much like Labanotation, Benesh considers the movement from the dancer's point of view, a distinction that is indicative of the late twentieth-century trend towards acknowledging individual agency. The choice to place the dancer at the centre of the score signified a sense of autonomy by directly relating the individual dancer to the image on the staff. This implication that the image in the score is that of the self re-ascribed a sense of agency to the dancer, reallocated the distribution of ownership over the work between choreographers and dancers and reaffirmed the broader social and political shifts towards egalitarianism that were unfolding at the time. As Nancy Reynolds describes:

During the 1960s egalitarian impulses at the root of the counterculture led to the condemnation of virtuosity, self-display, and the star system. In line with this, the principle of the charismatic choreographer-leader – a time-honoured tradition in modern dance – began to give way to new performing collectives, in which responsibility for choreography and other aspects of the performance were shared. (Reynolds & McCormick 609)

Many of the other notation systems that had been in use up until the mid-twentieth century were time consuming, both in the processes of notating and deciphering the scores. Modern inventions had instigated a desire for all things immediate, and subsequently, the Benesh's aimed to devise a system that would be easier and more convenient to use than the other pre-existing systems. The self-referential visual cues that Benesh notation provides alleviates some of the ambiguity that clouds the decoding process of other abstract systems.

The indications placed on the staff represent movement directives and spatial trajectories of the dancers, which are designed to correspond directly with the musical accompaniment. An obvious flaw embedded within this system is the assumption that all choreography is set to music. Though this is often true of classical ballet, there are many modern and contemporary examples where this is not the case. For example, Merce Cunningham often choreographed without music, and his collaborations with musician, John Cage, routinely included improvised accompaniment. Likewise, Forsythe's work occasionally is performed in silence, or as in the case of *One Flat Thing, reproduced*, a live soundscape is mixed in real-time, and differs with each performance. Since its initial development, Benesh Notation has been adapted to notate other forms of movement; however, its success has been primarily in the notation of choreography that uses codified ballet vocabulary (Hutchinson Guest, 1989 36). Subsequently, attempts to record dances that are not governed by classical rules, and not paired with consistent musical accompaniment, prove challenging to Benesh notators. Neither Benesh Notation, nor Labanotation, has managed to completely escape from the formalist conventions that also governed the Beauchamp-Feuillet system. All forms of dance notation continue to prioritize the tangible, and privilege the written score as a record of objectifiable truth. This characteristic problematizes traditional dance notation and hinders its ability to comply with contemporary post-formalist and poststructuralist thought, which tends towards embracing the notion of subjective experience.

Advantages and Disadvantages:

Despite their individual idiosyncrasies, Beauchamp-Feuillet notation, Labanotation and Benesh Movement Notation are considered to be the three most popular systems of dance notation, and each has proven effective in the apprehension and preservation of the specific types of dances they were intended to record. Historical records have illuminated the success of each of these three systems, and the fact that they are all still in use today demonstrates their suitability for the preservation of certain types of dances. Each system has enabled the preservation and archivization of thousands of dances that would have otherwise been lost. The Beauchamp-Feuillet system is responsible for the preservation of 355 known dances in the form of notated scores. These scores have facilitated numerous reconstructions of Baroque era court dances, thus providing scholars a portal into the past to study the techniques, aesthetics, and cultural significance of these dances (Pierce 355). There are thousands of Labanotation scores, which have managed to encapsulate the works of many of the twentieth century's most legendary choreographers. York University houses a special collection of over 3000 scores (Warner), and the Dance Notation Bureau in New York has an extensive archive of 807 scores, representing works by 286 choreographers, including Forsythe's *Artifact II* (1984). Similarly, in 1986, The Benesh Institute of Choreology published an extensive index of approximately 875 dances that were recorded between the years 1955 and 1985, including two Forsythe Ballets: *Flore Subsimplici* (1977) and *Orpheus* (1979). In addition, some dance companies such as The National Ballet of Canada and the

Royal Ballet in England have a trained notator on staff whose job is to record new works and assist in the teaching and/or rehearsing of pre-existing pieces of repertoire. Where in-house notators are not available, many companies employ the contractual services of someone to notate and/or stage new and existing works.

The written document has traditionally been privileged in western society, as a tangible record that represents a fragment of historical truth. However, these scores represent much more than a set of archival documents. They offer an opportunity for scholars and practitioners to revisit, re-embodiment, and reconsider the past, a concept that is articulated by Watts in the following excerpt:

Dance notation scores have the capacity to do much more than document any particular choreographic work. Indeed, they can never do just that. Instead, each score contains a record of the movement under observation and also a trace of how the notator thought about and understood what she observed...and for as much as the notated score is a visual record of the synaesthetic process of seeing at a particular moment in time, it also leaves a tangible trace of an historically and culturally determined mode of embodiment. (372)

As Watts explains, the value of the written score lies in its ability to capture moments in dance history that are integral to understanding their significance in the broader historical narrative. Dance notation provides a vehicle by which to record specific moments, and preserve them for future analysis and interrogation, a process that is vital to furthering the discipline of dance studies. Dance has been unjustly undervalued by its lack of tangibility, and although notated scores have provided invaluable textual references, often the inherent un-written subtext

provides equally valuable information about the record's cultural significance. As Tomko explains, "when we conceive dance notation as part of a dynamic social relation, as part of the larger cultural practice of dancing, we gain increased insight into the cultural agency of dance and dance notation" (1999 2). This assertion summarizes one of the primary obstacles facing the field of dance studies, and substantiates a fundamental criticism of traditional historiography; that which privileges the authority of a written document over an embodied experience.

Traditionally, dance notation supposed that a system's rules, symbols, and directives assumed a universal understanding of their intended implications. That is to say that once an individual is trained in the fundamentals of any of these notation systems, ideally he or she should be able to watch a dance, notate it, hand the score to someone else with a relatively equal amount of knowledge of the system in question, and that individual could then recreate the dance with little digression from the original version. Theoretically this should be the case, however scholarly discourse on the topic of dance notation and reconstruction indicates otherwise. Sparshott identifies a fundamental issue concerning the notator's interpretation of a notated score in the following excerpt:

Actual notations are not neutral. A notation affords a finite repertoire of signs, allowing one to use this sign or that in this or that form to record what one wishes to record. However flexible, what it affords is a system of choices. The options one is to choose from are determined by the system, not by the subject matter. Unless the deviser of the system and the performer of the movement are using the same set of elements and the same syntax, the notator has to decide how the movement is to be described. (436)

The issue of interpretation is one that cannot be ignored in a critical analysis of dance notation systems, especially since the emergence of postmodern and poststructuralist theories. Traditionalist views assume that the codes used in symbol-based notation systems represent a common understanding of their meanings, and that the reading of those codes will result in an accurate representation of their intentions. In contrast, performance studies scholar Patrice Pavis proposes the following: “to ‘notate’ the performance inevitably means to interpret, to make a more or less conscious choice among the multitude of signs of the performance deemed *noteworthy*” (Pavis 111). When discussing the process of scoring a dance using Labanotation, notator and stager Sandra Aberkalns concurs: “sometimes in notation I could have multiple choices of how to write something, it’s very interpretive” (Aberkalns). On this basis, we can no longer assume that written notation systems are, in isolation, capable of recording an exact replica of the choreographer’s original intention.

The limitations of traditional dance notation systems become exacerbated when attempts are made to notate individual expression, stylistic qualities and artistic nuances. This particular criticism of dance notation is by no means a new undertaking. According to Fernau Hall, “in the late eighteenth century we find the great choreographer and theoretician Noverre rejecting notation out-of-hand, because it provided no record of many important aspects of choreography” (Copeland & Cohen 394). The aspects to which Noverre was referring include the subjective elements of artistry and style that continue to cloud discussions

about the ontology of dance performance. Notator Elizabeth Kagan agrees with Noverre in her admission that “Labanotation alone cannot adequately capture certain stylistic and expressive aspects of a piece” (75), although she suggests that Laban’s theory of effort/shape movement analysis “provides the possibility for making [Labanotation’s] description more complete” (ibid). While this claim is likely to be true, the fundamental issue with the process of reconstructing a dance from a written score lies within the interpreter’s perception of its elements. For example, throughout Kagan’s analysis she repeatedly describes certain features of the dance, as they ‘appear’ to be. A rudimentary critique of such statements would challenge issues of appearance and question how the same performance would appear to another individual. While the issue of perception is complex enough when considering the basic structure of choreographic elements, it is compounded when a notator is required to decipher motivational intent and expressionistic qualities from a predetermined set of codes. Philosopher Joseph Margolis argues, “although there are efforts to correlate movements and distinct expression notationally, such efforts appear to be noticeably awkward and unconvincing” (1981 419). When discussing this issue with Aberkals she described how she and her colleagues at the Dance Notation Bureau include words and phrases in their scores to address the challenge of recording motivational or expressive intent. She explained:

Word notes – within the body of the score – enhance the information found in the accompanying notation staff. Whether this information is a choreographic directive, or addresses movement quality, intention, motivation, or effort; the notator is capturing the choreographer or stager’s

voice – it's the next best thing to having them there in the studio with you.
(Aberkalns)

The incorporation of linguistic references to augment the symbolic codes in a Labanotation score is an undeniable asset to anyone staging or learning a pre-existing work. Certainly the inclusion of more information results in a richer record of the work. However, language has limitations as well and there are times when notators struggle to find either a symbolic code or linguistic cue to describe a particular movement.

In her book *My Body, the Buddhist* (2000), Deborah Hay explains an experience she once had with a notator who offered to score a work of hers using Labanotation: “a month later she handed me the notated dance, admitting to critical choreographic omissions because of the elements in the choreography that did not have a counterpart in the notation system” (27). This is a recurring trend with traditional forms of written notation, especially as choreographers continue to push the boundaries of choreographic experimentation. In the case of Forsythe, who is exceedingly experimental, “he is similarly adamant about the fact that his choreographies, unlike classical ballets, cannot be recorded using Labanotation” (Gilpin 123). Of notating Forsythe’s work Aberkalns concurs, “as to some of his later works, I wouldn’t want to notate them either – I completely agree with him” (Aberkalns). Much of Forsythe’s work is based on improvisational tasks and directives that are intended to alter the work with each performance. According to Gilpin, “a Labanotation expert confirmed in 1990 that

the operations performed on movement could be recorded generally, but that sequences of movements themselves were impossible to notate” (Gilpin 123).

Of using Labanotation to create a score of Forsythe’s *Artifact II* in 1999,

Aberkalns shares a similar sentiment:

In *Artifact II* there are specific unalterable choreographic directives as well as moments where the movement is simply what it is – a *développé* is a *développé*. However, there are also moments when, for example, in a *ronde de jambe à terre* the woman has options as to how to execute the movement. She can choose to turn, or not; she can finish in a *demi-plié* or drop down into a squat; if she dropped into a squat then on the movement’s reversal she can stay in that squat or rise back into a *demi-plié* and so on. When a dancer makes choices based on their understanding of the choreographer’s style in addition to the style in which they were trained, or to their physical strengths and limitations, what do you notate? How do you document the choreographic intent of the work in such a collaborative process? (Aberkalns)

Aberkalns explained how she used three different colours when writing the score.

Black pencil to denote the movements that were to remain constant, blue pencil to indicate the variety of possible choices that were available to the dancers, and red pencil to signal tasks or improvised movement. She explained:

The complex collaborative relationship that exists in this work required that I create an extensive guide in how to read the score. In that section I explained the use of color, provided teaching insights to the stager, as well as information to the dancers on how they can articulate what they know about dancing through their movement choices. (Aberkalns)

For Aberkalns “notation does not forever fix the dance into the version notated.

Rather, it provides a foundation—with unique choreographic insights—on which to discover the work anew.” (Aberkalns). Perhaps it is for this reason that

Goodman asserted, “a score need not capture all the subtlety and complexity of a performance” (1968 212). Rather, notation should be accepted as a mode of

recording the general framework of a dance and not necessarily all of the intricacies and nuances that will undoubtedly vary from performance to performance.

Another unavoidable problem with symbol-based notation systems is the fact that many dancers are not literate in any form of dance notation. Each notation system is intricately complex, and they all require extensive training to be able to decipher their coded systems. Training to become a Labanotation practitioner includes three levels of study, with each involving months of coursework and practical applications⁹. Likewise, The Benesh Institute offers three consecutive programmes, ranging from five days to 1200 hours of coursework¹⁰. According to Hutchinson Guest, “most dancers cannot read dance notation and so they turn to film and video out of necessity” (1984 9). My conversations with the students at Juilliard certainly support Hutchinson Guest’s claim. Of the seventeen dance students I interviewed, not one had direct experience working with any codified dance notation system. In fact, Juilliard’s dance program did, at one time, include courses in Labanotation. However, the last course was offered in the 1992-1993 academic year. Although some students admitted to keeping journals and writing their own personal notes about choreography, and some shared that they occasionally draw themselves pictures and symbols to refresh their memories, video is the primary tool they use to record their dances. This is a trend that has prevailed throughout dance practice for the better part of the last five decades. As Tembeck explains:

Today with our civilization geared towards the “here and now” and the “instant” aspect of productivity, there are few professionals specialized in Labanotation mostly because modern technology such as film and video provide a quicker means of recording. (77)

Subsequently, the use of traditional dance notation systems has rapidly declined in recent years, and the written score has become an underutilized mode of preservation. Many practitioners assume that the visual and temporal qualities of video are capable of capturing a complete archival record of their work. However, careful consideration unveils numerous challenges with the use of video as a mode of dance preservation as well. The following chapter considers some of these issues in direct relation to the practice of dance preservation.

Chapter 3

Technology, reviewed: Film, Video, and Other Technological Developments

With the rapid advancement of technological developments, traditional dance notation systems continue to be on the wane. As video equipment, computer applications and globalized online communities have become more readily accessible, many practitioners have eagerly embraced technology as a mode of preserving their choreographic works. This trend has caused a considerable shift in the practice of dance preservation, and as a result, the use of traditional notation systems has experienced a significant decline in recent years. Subsequently, the twenty-first century has seen dance notation lose momentum as a topic of scholarly inquiry, as it has become eclipsed by technology's reputation as a more universal mode of dance preservation.

The reasons for this shift are manifold. Film, video, photography, and other visually based technological applications directly address some of the foremost challenges presented by traditional modes of written notation. The records produced through visual media are available almost immediately for viewing, and the images they portray are more accessible to the general population, as they

do not require the same amount of decoding as most notation systems. By providing realistic images of the dances they record, these visual documentation systems reduce many of the interpretive and perceptive ambiguities that arise through the use of abstracted symbol-based and track drawing systems. The ability to portray 'life-like' representations of a dancing body has demystified the obscurity of records collected through written notations, especially to those not familiar with the symbolic language in question. In addition, visual records acquired through video are unique in their ability to encapsulate many of the spatial and temporal qualities of a dance with lucidity. While watching a video of a dance, one has immediate access to the elements of dimension, spatial patterning, temporal qualities, and synchronicity with the music. These individual components of the work are integrated in real-time and viewed simultaneously, therefore drastically reducing the time that would be required to interpret each thread discretely. Furthermore, the convenience and accessibility of records attained through video capture cannot be ignored. Evolving developments in digital imaging technology have continued to make video documentation more accessible to the masses, and the immediacy of results proves more efficient and less laborious than the processes of scoring and translating written notation.

Choreographers began to experiment with 16mm film as a mode of recording their choreographic works in the 1960s. According to Allegra Fuller Snyder, "the availability and widespread use of film coincided with the appearance of dance curricula in Universities" (8). In actuality, dance existed in academia well before

the sixties¹¹, however Fuller Snyder is correct in that the discipline began to expand significantly around that time. The simultaneous emergence of both dance studies as a discipline, and dance films as artifacts, enabled new possibilities in the development of dance scholarship, and subsequently fueled the evolution of sub-fields such as movement analysis, criticism, and reconstruction. As Fuller Snyder explains, “film brought the history of dance to life in the classroom and film documentation began to form a critical body of literature as important as the written text” (ibid 8). Referring back to the development of historiographical methodologies as illuminated in the previous chapter, the legitimization of films as objects of analysis in scholarly discourse contributed to the burgeoning criticism of logocentricity. Theories relating to embodiment and performative representation gained momentum as “the advent of film opened the door a crack to the direct, three-dimensional experience of dance in a form that could be preserved and reviewed” (Fuller Snyder 7). As a result, filmed dance performances began to be accepted as valid performative artifacts, which could be read, analyzed, and contextualized through semiotic and phenomenological theories.

The popularity of visual media continued to increase as the transition from film to video meant that recording equipment became more readily accessible and easier to use. In comparison with the process of producing film, Matthew Reason explains, “video recording is in contrast cheap, small-scale, immediate and individually accessible” (77). Though practitioners continued to experiment with

developing video technology, according to Fuller Snyder, “it was not until the late 1970s and early 1980s that video began to be used to document dance” (8). The acceptance of video-as-record has since revolutionized the field of dance preservation, and “its use became more widespread and broader in scope in the 1980s and 90s, paralleling the digital revolution in society at large” (Au 213). As the use of video as a mode of documentation became increasingly more popular, so too did its function as an invaluable resource in the practice of reconstructing and restaging dances.

Video technology provides an almost immediate record of a dance, eliminating the need for a notator, and significantly increasing the speed at which fleeting moments can be apprehended. As Fuller Snyder explains, “since video made it easier to capture movement in time and through space, the ephemeral aspect of dance was fast becoming less of an issue” (8). In other words, video brings dances to life by lifting them off the page, adding dimension (though it is still not 3-dimensional) and making available a record that not only shows the visual characteristics of a dance, but also allows the viewer to manipulate it. The ability to watch movement phrases in real-time, but also to fast forward, rewind, and pause the frames, expose video’s unique relationship to temporality and repeatability. Reason refers to this phenomenon as ‘timeshifting’ and explains,

Once open to timeshifting, and once opened to activities of pause, fast-forward and replay, a recording on video is opened to a much more dispersed and fragmented relationship between performance and viewer than is the case with other audio/visual media or indeed live performance. (87)

This ability to timeshift is particularly advantageous in the practice of reconstructing and restaging dances, as the opportunity to go back, review, slow down, and repeat facilitates a more thorough understanding of the specific intricacies and subtle nuances of a work. However as Douglas Rosenberg articulates in the following excerpt, this feature of video technology is equally useful in the creative process of generating and organizing choreographic material:

The immediate feedback loop that video provides allows the choreographer to cut and paste ideas to create a pastiche of phrases, and to use video like an interactive mirror that provides mnemonic markers for movement creation. Thus, the image inscribed on tape serves as an electronic memory of both ideas and execution. (22)

Using video to collect a database of electronic memories can be invaluable to choreographers and dancers during the rehearsal process. The Forsythe Company for example, videotapes every one of their rehearsals for archival purposes (Roman). Digitally archived records of the ways in which movement material is generated and constructed provide opportunity to continuously revisit the choreographic process. If, as Reason suggests, each video recording serves as an additional electronic memory, issues of multiplicity are bound to obscure the authenticity of a work's original version.

Multiple videos represent multiple truths, each one representing a different version of the same work. This can be advantageous, because it allows the viewer to sift through the collection of versions and piece together valuable

information about the work. It provides the viewer with insight into the choreographic structure of the work, by indicating whether or not certain sections are set or improvised, repeatedly performed in the same way or open to interpretation by the dancer. In the case of restaging dances from multiple video recordings, the viewer is afforded a selection of variations from which to choose the most suitable version for a particular situation. Of his experience of restaging *One Flat Thing, reproduced*, Christopher Roman explains:

I was trying to see different versions, different perspectives, and tried to use all of that information to be able to properly give over that information to the individual dancer in front of me, and tailor make it to the best of my ability to them so that they fulfilled the requirements for the structure of the piece. (Roman)

It is important to note that these authorial choices to which Roman refers were made based on his extensive knowledge of the dance and its choreographic structures. Roman drew from his own accumulation of kinesthetic and experiential histories with the work in order to construct a version that most suitably met Forsythe's original vision for the piece. In this way, electronic memory, as recorded through video, can provide a plurality of records and serve as a method of dance preservation that reflects poststructuralist ideals. By embracing the notion of multiplicity, video challenges the traditionalist concept that authenticity can only be represented as a singular truth.

The advantages of video, both in the contexts of creating new work and restaging previously performed repertoire, are obvious. In an era where immediacy and convenience are coveted, the accessibility of video as a tool with which to

document choreographic work is impossible to ignore. What was at one time a large, heavy, expensive piece of equipment can now fit in a small pocket.

Handheld devices in the form of smart phones and tablets have provided the general population with the necessary tools to be videographers. Reason

highlights the elements of video that make it an attractive documentation option:

Video is indeed a hugely convenient and accessible medium: being portable and discrete (particularly today, less so in the early stages of the technology), affordable and involving relatively low production costs, a real-time activity that records sound and image simultaneously, allowing immediate playback without the need for development in a laboratory, easily and readily disseminated either on television monitors, through projection or on tape, in being relatively easy to use and in having a degree of permanence. (77)

As video equipment became more affordable and increasingly easier to use, dance practitioners gravitated towards video as a mode of preserving their work.

When asked about how they document their own choreography most of the

Juilliard students I interviewed expressed that they use video to record their work.

One student answered “I usually record it with the video feature on my iPhone”

(anonymous), and another said, “these days I’ll just get a video recording of it”

(anonymous). The responses from these students are reflective of the wider

dance community in the consensus that video recording is the preferred mode of

documentation in the twenty-first century. In 1990 a national study on

documentation and preservation practices in America conducted by William

Keens, Leslie Hansen Kopp and Mindy N. Levine identified the same trend:

Virtually every dancer and choreographer with whom we spoke indicated a preference for video over other forms of documentation, presumably because it shows actual motion, is so readily available, offers the artist the opportunity to review work repeatedly and can be shared with others. (21)

For most dancers, visual images are easier to translate into movement than abstract symbols, and the fact that using video does not require any extensive training means that dancers and choreographers can spend more time training, rehearsing, and making work.

Disadvantages:

Despite the obvious advantages, critics of video documentation suggest that there are a number of issues associated with its ability to capture adequate records of dance. According to Reason:

Audio/visual recording technologies, particularly video, offer the ultimate test case where questions of ethics, ideologies and practices in representing live performance are concerned. More than any other form or activity of representation, video is constructed within discourses of documentation and disappearance as at once both the saviour and the death of live performance - as at once something that will solve the 'problem' of documentation and at the same time something that will potentially obscure and overwrite the original performance. (73)

The issue to which Reason refers here is arguably the main challenge associated with video as a mode of documentation. Embedded within each recording of a particular work are often mistakes made by the performers or technical crew, slight impromptu adaptations to the choreography, and unavoidable variances in technical execution and performative qualities. The question is: does this disrupt the authenticity of the original performance, or does it celebrate the elements of fluidity and variation that define dance as a performative art? Inevitably, responsibility lies with the viewer (whether that is the dancer, stager, choreographer, or spectator) to make informed decisions based on their

individual perception and interpretation of the work. Uncertainty as to which is the 'correct' version becomes compounded as individual choices are inscribed into subsequent iterations of the work, thus problematizing the very characteristic of multiplicity that makes video documentation appealing.

In this way, a video can only ever act as a record that represents possibility, one specific interpretation of a live performance that captures a dance as it appears to be. Sparshott's explanation of this issue suggests, "a film seems to show what a dance is like but does not in itself say what it is that it shows: it does not distinguish between choreographer's intention and dancer's execution, or between correct and incorrect practice" (422). This is a fundamental problem with using video as a mode of documenting dance, as the possibility for inconsistencies to be found across different recorded versions of a particular work is great. Hutchinson Guest shares this view on video recordings, as she asserts that videotapes "do not represent the work itself but a *performance* of that work" (1984 9). A recorded performance often assumes significant authoritative value, as the 'true' version of a work, and its identity as a fixed document automatically ascribes it a type of historical significance. Though in theory this may seem like the ultimate goal of dance preservation, in actuality, as Hutchinson Guest explains, the practice of restaging dances from video can be troublesome.

From the practical standpoint it is not as easy to learn a dance sequence from film or video tape as it would seem. Even if we overlook the fact that many dance films are recorded in unfavourable circumstances we still have to deal with distortion resulting from camera angle, movement hidden

by other dancers or by props or costumes, and, quite frequently, poor or blatantly incorrect performance on the part of the dancers. What is on the film may not be what the choreographer intended. (1984 9)

The circumstances to which Hutchinson Guest refers are common realities in the practice of reconstructing and restaging works from video recordings. Any form of dance documentation that relies on technology alone can easily become clouded by the multiplicity of possible truths. Furthermore, the inevitable issue of subjective interpretation compounds the lack of clarity that is often caused by the numerous possibilities embedded within video records.

To most accurately document, recreate, or score a dance through the use of video, it can be argued that a consistent interpretation of the choreographer's original intention must be shared between the choreographer, the performers, the videographer, and the interpreter. In a discussion of her role as the notator for Frederick Ashton's *La Fille mal gardée* (1960), Michele Braban explains her experience of working from a combination of video sources: "for almost every sequence of movement in the ballet I was confronted with a variety of choices upon which I had to make a decision. It is clearly evident that video was not able to provide clear-cut solutions" (86). The process of attempting to translate the ballet from video to a written score inadvertently required Braban to re-write sections of the choreography. She was forced to make authorial choices about the work, and as she explains, was left questioning the validity of both the notated score and the video recordings. Alexandra Carter explains "the postmodern attitude to the role of the 'author' has given rise to a questioning of

the role of the historian, who is now seen not as neutral recorder of events but as active creator of them” (2004 10). This is evident in the above example, where factors such as individual interpretation and perception become vital to the translation of notated score to performed movement, thus problematizing issues of authority, subjectivity and ownership.

These issues relate not just to the individual watching and interpreting the video but also to the individual who is behind the camera. The camera operator assumes an authorial role, as he or she is required to make choices about the angle, width and position of the shot. Jenny Holub, Juilliard’s resident dance videographer, shared with me her experience of having to make editorial decisions:

Sometimes we will do a two-camera shoot and edit it, either from the same location or perhaps from another angle. So, then you have the wide establishing shot and the other one can go in and you can get that detail and nuance without losing the other. Then of course the editing is how you honour the structure and yet work with what you have actually captured. With the single camera, even when I’m doing the close-ups on people I’m thinking ‘oh, I’m missing that, I’m missing these’ you’re just always aware of the limitations, whether you’re out or you’re in you are always aware of what you’re not getting. (Holub)

Even a fixed wide-angle shot leaves certain aspects of the dance out of the video record. For instance, movement that faces upstage or happens to the rear of the dancers often escapes the view of the camera lens, and occasionally entrances and exits are missed if they occur just beyond the frame of the shot. Ideally, the camera operator should be able to move with the dancers in order to capture as much of the work as possible. As Rosenberg describes, “one participant – the

dancer – moves freely, unencumbered, while the other – the camera operator – is tethered by the camera, a prosthetic image-gathering device that by necessity becomes an extension of the body” (Rosenberg 2). Similarly, Holub explains how the role of the videographer is as much rooted in kinesthetic experience as that of the dancers on stage:

That’s the nature of it, and obviously I enjoy it, because even within that structure there’s how you breathe with the work each night, and there’s always only so much you can do with the framing and so forth, but each night is different and how you move with it is slightly different. (Holub)

Based on this explanation, it is reasonable to assume that the video record captured on any given night will differ in response to the performative action on stage. In this way, a video recording can only ever be seen as the documentation of a specific performance of a work, rather than a complete record of the work itself.

What was at one time limited to film, and then video, has since exploded into an array of seemingly infinite technological possibilities. Subsequently, the term ‘video documentation’ no longer encompasses the variety of ways that dance is able to appear on screen. As Rosenberg explains of his book titled *Screendance* (2012):

I have chosen the term ‘screendance’ as the most accurate way to describe the passage of “dance” via its mediated image, to any and all screens without articulating materiality. That is to say, screendance speaks of the *end point* or the *point of reception* by the viewer and not of the material form of the production in the way that “videodance” refers to the actual production media or method of inscription. (3)

In accordance with the breadth of this definition, methods of dance documentation have also expanded to include other varieties of screendance. Ranging from digital imaging to sensory motion capture to graphic animation, numerous adaptations, deriving from video, have been designed to facilitate choreography, documentation and exploration. Arguing for the same sense of variety as Rosenberg, Reason explains:

With such technological contingency in mind it becomes more accurate to think of 'video' as a verb, rather than a noun. Video does not name any particular thing, rather pointing towards an extremely broad and ever changing category of audio/visual recording technology. (76)

The numerous possibilities that are made available by the mediatization of screendance have consequently compounded the issue of multiplicity as it is represented in documented records. Furthermore, the innovative and experimental nature of screendance means that the act of attaining records for the purpose of reconstructing or restaging dances is more complex. Where traditional methods of dance notation function to categorize individual movement phrases and gestures in a manner that traces their chronological progression, screendance records portray a more synthesized version of the work. The process of digitizing a choreographic record often leaves that record open to potential manipulation, both pre and post-inscription. Rosenberg explains:

In the construction of a screendance, the traditional linearity of the choreographic process is flayed open and exposed to a very particular kind of scrutiny. Composition may come in isolated bits; kinesthetic transitions may become virtual or nonexistent, slated to be inserted later in the editing process. Movements and gestures, released from the physical boundaries of weight, time, and space, are digitally archived to be

retrieved and reconstructed at a later date. The dance/dancing thus becomes malleable, fluid, and available as a kind of digital text. (2)

Through this description, Rosenberg identifies a set of features that likens, yet simultaneously differentiates, screendance from the written score. Similarities can be seen in the isolation of compositional elements, absence of kinesthetic qualities, and the process of archivization and retrieval. However, to divide movements from the boundaries of time and space is to contradict the fundamental components of many notation systems, which prioritize those very elements. Beauchamp-Feuillet Notation, Labanotation and Benesh Movement Notation are, in their own ways, designed to orient bodily movements within temporal and spatial frameworks. Though Rosenberg's description seems to omit the relationship between traditional notation systems and screendance, a number of efforts have been made to integrate the two modes of inscription.

Computerized Notation:

In conjunction with the Dance Notation Bureau, researchers and computer programmers at Ohio State University (OSU) developed LabanWriter (1987), "a software program that permits dance to be copied, edited and stored on a computer"¹². Using the traditional Labanotation symbols, LabanWriter is said to ease the process of scoring dances, by providing the notator with an electronic database of over 700 symbols that can be selected and dragged into the main computerized score. Since the initial debut of the program in 1987, constant improvements have been made to the software, resulting in numerous version

upgrades. As collaborator on the project Lucy Venable notes, “it was important to develop a program for both the student and the professional - to help students learn this language more easily by having the symbols literally at their fingertips and to relieve the professional of the tedium of copywork, revisions and layout” (79). Though in theory, the computerized process of score writing seems like it should be a preferred method, dance notation practitioners offer mixed reviews. During my visit to the Dance Notation Bureau I spoke with a number of Labanotation experts, and found that their opinions of LabanWriter differed greatly. Sandra Aberkals, who has been with the bureau since 1984, admitted that she preferred to handwrite her scores rather than use the computer program, while another (more recently trained notator) expressed great appreciation for the software. As a supplement to LabanWriter, the Dance Notation Bureau Extension at OSU created LabanReader (1999), a complementary program that has been designed to decipher LabanWriter scores and aid with movement analysis. In 2013 Hannah Kosstrin and David Ralley announced the release of KineScribe, the latest development in Labanotation technology supported by Reed College, the National Endowment for the Humanities and OSU. Channeling more recent technical advancements, KineScribe is an iPad application that allows for Labanotation scores to be written and manipulated through touch screen technology. As explained on the Reed College website, “KineScribe reimagines LabanWriter for the touch screen, allowing users to write dances in Laban movement notation and quickly edit scores and symbols”¹³.

Around the same time that the first edition of LabanWriter was being conceived similar efforts to devise a computer program that could encode the Benesh system of movement notation were being undertaken. In 1986, the Department of Computer Science at the University of Waterloo published *ChoreoScribe: a Graphics Editor to Describe Body Position and Movement Using Benesh Movement Notation*. *ChoreoScribe* is a software program that serves dual purposes, to produce computerized scores and to facilitate the process of editing scores. As explained by research collaborator Detlef O.K. Dransch, “in the first place, the system is used to create, modify and archive Benesh scores as they are notated manually today. This involves the creation and placement of signs in the score and the generation and manipulation of movement lines” (28). Dransch also describes how the program is designed to make inherent associations between symbols and their meanings, “thus, the editor, to some extent, understands the semantics of the ballet language being implemented” (ibid). *ChoreoScribe* has been adapted for use with various operating systems, (MacBenesh for Macintosh and Benesh Notation Editor for Windows), and it continues to facilitate the computerized writing and editing of Benesh Movement Notation scores. Rhonda Ryman, a collaborator in the initial research project at the University of Waterloo, explains the merits of the software:

The computer assisted editing system described in this paper is designed to facilitate the learning, teaching and use of the Benesh Movement Notation. Its particular value lies in the ability to edit any frame or set of frames as often as necessary and to obtain a fair copy of the score after each editing cycle. (33)

LabanWriter, ChoreoScribe and the other related Benesh Movement Notation software programs operate primarily to facilitate the writing and editing of choreological scores. However, computer technology has also been used to develop programs that offer a variety of choreographic applications.

The development of *LifeForms* in 1989 by a group of researchers at Simon Fraser University introduced new ways of visualizing dance and documenting modern choreography. Postmodern choreographer Merce Cunningham used the software to animate dancing bodies and visualize choreographic possibilities and “by the early 1990s Cunningham had become the first choreographer of international renown to utilize the computer as a choreographic tool” (Copeland 42). Equipped with the ability to devise movement sequences, alter spatial orientations, and change viewing perspectives through the computer, Cunningham was able to choreograph from a new vantage point. *LifeForms* enabled a revolution in choreographic thinking, which proved that the generation of movement material could in fact be divisible from the human body. Cunningham used animated figures to embody his creative ideas, and simultaneously inscribed computerized documentation of his work. Subsequent experimentations with analogous types of software have resulted in programs such as *DanceForms* and *Ballet Moves II*, which employ the use of computer animation to assist with a variety of choreographic explorations.

Shortly after the debut of *LifeForms* William Forsythe began working on a graphic animation project that was designed to “codify and teach principles of improvisation he had created” (Groves, Zuniga Shaw & deLahunta 92).

Improvisation Technologies (1995) acts as a training tool and virtual tutorial for new company members to gain a more thorough understanding of his approach towards the generation of improvised movement material. Forsythe himself appears in the over 100 video demonstrations, which show through his bodily articulations, verbal explanations and imposed graphic animations, the ways in which he approaches movement development. Further to its obvious applications for student and professional dancers, *Improvisation Technologies* provides a glimpse into Forsythe’s choreographic methods that can reach beyond the studio. Of the development of the commercial CD-ROM, research collaborators explain,

It provided audiences with a set of analytical skills to become better readers of dance performances. Furthermore, it created a legible graphical language and an accessible conceptual framework through which architects and researchers in other non-dance fields could approach dance as an interdisciplinary resource for ideas about space, structure and movement. (Groves, Zuniga Shaw & deLahunta 92)

This theme of interdisciplinary collaboration has continued to evolve as several dance practitioners have teamed with researchers from other fields to further investigate the relationships between movement, notation and preservation.

Emio Greco and Pieter C. Scholten released the second phase of *The Notation Research Project* in 2007, an initiative involving multi-disciplinary approaches to dance analysis and notation, which are based on the creative work of the Emio

Greco | PC Dance Company. The project is rooted in collaborative research and fueled by the following question, 'what notation system can capture inner intention as well as the outer shape of gestures and phrases?' (deLahunta 2007 5). The project asks further questions around some of the choices that must be made when determining which features of a work should be preserved through documentation. Obscured by the confusion that surrounds the ontological condition of a choreographic work, Franz Anton Cramer suggests, "we therefore define dance by a characteristic which by its very nature is none, namely the non-existence of dance" (11). Faced with this observation, the author raises the question as to "whether art can ever be translated into another form, another medium; whether indeed, it ever exists beyond the given structures of communication in which it takes place with its (alleged) purely experiential nature" (ibid). Cramer's query is important to this discussion, as it considers a selection of practices that document choreographic works, as well as the interrogation of a work's ontological condition once it has been translated from a physical experience, to a documented artifact, and then back to an embodied version or its 'original' form. Greco and Scholten's creative process is documented in *Double Skin/Double Mind* (2007), a DVD-ROM that provides access into the ways in which these choreographers produce movement material, and are then able to document the intention behind their choreography.

More recently, other practitioners have been experimenting with similar multi-media concepts. In April 2009, as part of a project entitled *Choreographic*

Objects: Traces and Artifacts of Physical Intelligence, Sadler's Wells hosted a panel discussion on the works of four contemporary choreographers and their research involving alternative modes of dance documentation. The project was funded by the UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council, and led by a group of scholars¹⁴. In addition to Greco and Scholten, the panel included British choreographers Wayne McGregor and Siobhan Davies, as well as Norah Zuniga Shaw, who spoke about *Synchronous Objects* (2009), an online resource that explores the choreographic structures that appear in *One Flat Thing, reproduced*. In collaboration with the Advanced Computing Center for Art and Design at Ohio State University, Forsythe's *Synchronous Objects* project has culminated in an interactive digital interface, which allows for the investigation of the dance's choreographic structure and thematic content, and manipulation of the ways in which the dance is viewed. The interdisciplinary elements that Forsythe and his collaborators have designed provide multiple angles from which to consider the choreographic themes present in the work. In addition, Forsythe attempts to deconstruct the notion of physicality by suggesting the choreography itself can be divisible from the human body, and therefore preserved in the form of a 'choreographic object' (Forsythe 2009).

Synchronous Objects is one chapter of a larger initiative spearheaded by The Forsythe Company called *Motion Bank*, an online digital archive that seeks to explore the variety of ways dances can be scored, translated and preserved. Showcasing works by Deborah Hay, Jonathan Burrows, Matteo Fargion, Bebe

Miller and Thomas Hauert, the website provides an interactive platform from which to explore the methodological approaches to scoring that have been employed by these artists. The impetus for the project comes from Forsythe's belief that "an active archive of vivid representations of the ideas and structures that make certain kinds of choreography work should be made accessible to students and professionals in a wide range of practices" (Groves, Nuniga Shaw & deLahunta 92). The choreographic information made available through *Motion Bank* provides opportunities to challenge our pre-existing concept of the traditional score, to expand our perception of the function of the score, and in turn, our core beliefs about what it means to preserve. As research collaborator Norah Zuniga Shaw explains, "for dancers it can sometimes be uncomfortable to reduce the lived and performed essence of dancing to data sets that necessarily occlude certain aspects in order to reveal others" (ibid 95), a challenge that has perhaps added to the hesitation of many dance practitioners to embrace the idea of dance notation.

Although all of these aforementioned applications are impressive in their technological proficiency, and relatively successful in their abilities to capture digitized records of choreographic works, many still argue that attempts to preserve dances are counter-productive, as they reduce the work to a lesser version of what it was intended to be. Lepecki contests, "documentation in its optical-descriptive obsession, withdraws dance from the flow of its own materiality" (2004 133). Lepecki also suggests "the moment dance is arrested,

fixated, written down, it is no longer dance” (2004 139). This sentiment is echoed by Reason who argues, “a documentation that tells the *whole* story is not documentation, but the whole story; not a recording, but the thing itself” (Reason 27). Though video and graphic animation are valuable tools for the documentation of dance, they remain referential to the specific variation of a work that has been captured, and not authentic in their representation of that work in its entirety.

This comparative analysis of selected dance notation systems and modes of digital documentation reveals some of the key issues with both types of preservation. Written notation relies heavily on the acceptance of a universal truth, thus unveiling the fundamental weakness of this traditional approach towards notation. The practice of reducing human movement to fit within a subset of pre-determined symbolic references, which may or may not be decoded in the manner of which they were intended, is problematic. On the other hand, the many possibilities of truth unveiled through video recording as an approach towards dance documentation poses questions about which version of a work is the correct version, and whether or not there were mistakes embedded in the recorded performance. Both preservation methods raise questions of authenticity, subjectivity and interpretation. Consider the following suggestion offered by Sparshott:

In principle, there should be two ways of making a record of a dance. One is to make a moving likeness of it, the inspection of which is like inspecting the original dance itself. The other is to make a symbolic description if it,

so that anyone who consults and understands the description has enough information to reconstruct the dance. (421)

Sparshott reaffirms the primary argument that I have attempted to make here, that neither traditional dance notation systems nor video documentation, on their own, possesses the ability to capture a complete record of a dance's existence.

In agreement, Hutchinson Guest explains "film gives an overall impression of a work, notation the specific details. They are not mutually exclusive" (1984 11).

Furthermore, Fernau Hall suggests the following:

Experience has shown that films do not provide a substitute for dance notation anymore than tapes and records provide a substitute for music notation; in fact, the choreographic score and the film record complement each other. The latter shows what the dance looks like as it moves in time, while the other shows an analysis of the whole dance, from beginning to end, spread out on the page for study: its dance-images, groups, floor-patterns, rhythms, phrasing, construction and so on, can be analysed at leisure and comparisons made with other dances of the same region or of quite different regions. (1967 196)

In accordance with the claims offered by Sparshott, Hutchinson Guest and Hall, one might assume that the combination of a notated score and a video would provide the most accurate record of a dance work. However, I contest that the practice of dance preservation will be conclusive if we simply marry the two approaches. Both will continue to succumb to their own idiosyncrasies, resulting in a hybridized system that does not actually address any of the aforementioned issues in its continued disregard of the body itself. As Diana Taylor suggests, "now, on the brink of a digital revolution that both utilizes and threatens to displace writing, the body again seems poised to disappear in a virtual space that eludes embodiment" (16).

So, where does the practice of dance preservation go from here? I admit that it is tempting to become enamored with the romanticism of this digital age within which we live, and that technology does offer some interesting possibilities to the field of dance preservation. However, the continuous developments in technological innovation threaten the lasting power of any one of its many products. What was unimaginable yesterday will be obsolete tomorrow, and records of dance that are captured by any of today's revolutionary systems will soon disappear into a world of obsolescence and irretrievability. It is for this reason that I suggest a digression from the two approaches that have been discussed thus far, and propose an alternative method that considers embodied memory, as well as verbal and kinesthetic communication, as legitimate modes of preserving contemporary dance works.

Chapter 4

Kinesthetic History, *recalled*: The Embodied Repertoire

Both written notation and screendance, in their various forms, have attempted to inscribe the ephemeral, to arrest movement and gesture in a manner that fixes them to a particular time and space. Whilst these types of records are undeniably useful in many scenarios, such objects of documentation remain devoid of actual physicality and continue to limit the agency of the dancing body. Contemporary scholarship illuminates ideas related to the subjectivity of personal experience and the legitimacy of embodied knowledge, however these themes have not been adequately reflected in dance preservation discourse. It is for this reason that I introduce the concept of 'kinesthetic history', and consider its use as a mode of preservation that embraces the themes of fluidity and multiplicity, which are often characteristic of contemporary dance practices.

Resulting in part from the burgeoning effects of dance studies scholarship, developments in academic discourse have begun to legitimize the role of the body across a range subject areas including history, anthropology, and philosophy. For example, Mark Franko's *Dance as Text: Ideologies of the*

Baroque Body (1993) uses dance as a lens through which to analyze the shifting political landscape in France in the 16th and 17th centuries. Likewise, Deidre Sklar's *Dancing with the Virgin* (2001) employs embodiment, sensation, and dance analysis as research methodologies in her anthropological study of the Fiesta of Tortugas. Additionally, the role of embodiment in philosophical discourse is illuminated in George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's *Philosophy in the Flesh* (1999), a text that challenges the notion of traditional western philosophy. This shift towards legitimizing the role of embodiment is widening the gap between contemporary theoretical explorations and the practical applications of traditional forms of dance notation and documentation. In the same way that the development of written notation and technological documentation methods have paralleled broader theoretical paradigms, my proposal of kinesthetic history reflects many of the same concepts that underscore contemporary scholarly discourses.

Poststructuralist notions of subjectivity and individual agency are developing themes across the field of continental philosophy, and of particular relevance to this discussion are the sub-fields of existentialism and phenomenology. Based on the work of philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, and rooted in understanding human existence through the lived body, existentialism is founded upon the belief that the construction and understanding of knowledge is grounded in lived human experience. As Jean-Paul Sartre explains:

Kierkegaard was a man who set out to pose the problem of the historical absolute, who emphasized the scandalous paradox of the appearance

and disappearance of this absolute in the course of History. If we cannot revive this martyr of interiority other than in the form of an object of knowledge, a determination of his *praxis* will forever escape us: his living effort to elude knowledge through reflective life, his claim to be, in his very singularity at the heart of his finitude, the absolute subject, defined in interiority by his absolute relationship with being. (141-142)

Sondra Horton Fraleigh claims that although the term 'existentialism' was first introduced in the nineteenth century, "common existentialist threads in the literature and art of the twentieth century have been traced" (xxi). Based primarily on the work of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, the phenomenological method similarly posits that phenomena can be analyzed as a way of knowing that comes to be constructed through human consciousness. French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty was one of the twentieth century's most prominent phenomenologists with his two most influential works *Phenomenology of Perception* (1961) and *The Primacy of Perception* (1964) dealing with issues relating to "the consciousness of being in the world" (Merleau-Ponty, 1961 57). Merleau-Ponty and Sartre were responsible for the eventual fusion of these two branches of philosophy, and thus, as Fraleigh explains "the concept of the lived body was technically developed through their joining of existential concerns with the phenomenological method" (3). Fraleigh identifies a string of commonalities between modern and postmodern dance and existential phenomenology, suggesting:

Existential phenomenology's concern for 'things in themselves' (reducing anything to its most basic, or phenomenal, manifestation) bears a similarity to 'dance as dance', the pure dance aesthetic shown in the work of Merce Cunningham, George Balanchine, Viola Farber, and others, which emphasizes the human body-of-motion as the inmost phenomenal essence of dance. (xxi)

Fraleigh suggests that through the employment of existential phenomenology awareness can be brought back to the lived experience of the dancing body, and it is on this basis that I suggest 'kinesthetic history' as a methodological approach to the apprehension, transmission and preservation of contemporary dance. Operating as a counterpart to oral history, and borrowing theoretical concepts from existential phenomenology and ethnography, the concept of kinesthetic history is largely based on the notion that lived experiences become inscribed onto an individual's embodied memory, thereby preserved in the form of a kinesthetic record. The recollection and retrieval of such memories are activated through re-embodiment of the inscribed material at which point it can be verbally, visually, and kinesthetically transmitted through a collective embodied experience between dancers.

Admittedly, this is not a revolutionary concept. In 1992 Stuart Hodes made a similar suggestion at the *Dance ReConstructed* conference, where he asserted the following: "dance is ruled by an ancient paradigm, that of oral history; its works are preserved by being passed directly from one dancer to another" (97). Hodes, like myself, approaches the discussion as a practitioner, rather than as a notator or an historian. He draws upon his own experiences of learning Ted Shawn's *O Brother Sun and Sister Moon* (1931) from a film of Shawn, a video of another dancer's performance and coaching from first generation dancer Barton Meeker. According to Hodes, film and video engages with what he refers to as

'kinetic history', a process that he describes as "one dancer learning from another, whether that other is alive or an image" (97). Integral to Hodes' argument is the notion that film and video are capable of capturing the kinetic history of a dance, thus allowing it to be preserved as a moving record. However, he also recognizes the limitations of video and argues, "that with a mechanical medium, video in particular, loss can be faster than with living memory" (97). I disagree with the suggestion that video captures and preserves the kinetic history of a dance. I do agree that video's capacity to record moving images is useful, and sometimes invaluable to the process of reconstructing and restaging dances, but I struggle to accept the notion that kinetic history can be divisible from kinetic experience, and as Hodes suggests, preserved in the form of a video recording. Instead I suggest that video is capable of recording visual cues that, when seen, activate a memory of a kinetic experience. The visual cue then acts as a trigger for that embodied memory to be recalled, but it is only the re-embodiment of that memory in the present moment that enables the memory to be re-activated as a kinetic history. Perhaps the most resounding message conveyed by Hodes is that "kinetic history passing between living dancers is a rich and complex transaction that includes negotiation" (98). More than twenty years later, this statement still rings true, and it is upon this assertion that I explore the possibilities for contemporary dance preservation offered by kinetic history.

I suggest a slight adaptation of the terminology used by Hodes from 'kinetic', which is broadly defined as "relating to or resulting from motion"¹⁵ to the word 'kinesthetic', which implies a more thorough sensory experience. Though both are appropriate in conversations about preserving dances, the term 'kinesthetic' offers a more comprehensive definition and is more suitable when describing the inscription of an embodied experience. Deriving from the word 'kinesthesia', the meaning of kinesthetic sensibility has shifted slightly over time. According to Susan Leigh Foster "kinesthesia was coined in 1880, in response to a growing body of research establishing the existence of nerve sensors in the muscles and joints that provide awareness of the body's positions and movements" (2011 7). Since then the term has been largely used in the fields of neurobiology and perceptual psychology to explain the cognitive integration and synthesis of bodily movements in relation to space and gravity. There are obvious similarities between kinesthetic theories and human corporeal experience. However for Foster, a lack of literature linking the two presents a curious dichotomy as she explains "the term has been sporadically referenced and investigated in medicine and neurobiology, and more consistently in kinesiology textbooks and dance pedagogy, but otherwise rarely appears in discourse" (2001 7). Considering the current trend towards theorizing about the role of the body it seems a significant oversight to omit discussions of kinesthesia that emerge from academic fields outside dance studies.

Even within dance studies discourse it appears as though kinesthetic enquiry remained confined for much of the twentieth century to areas such as pedagogy, somatics, and criticism. Foster explains, “dance pedagogy and criticism have consistently cultivated understanding of the existence and importance of kinesthetic awareness” (2011 7). In his seminal work *Frames of Mind* (1983) Howard Gardner identifies various forms of intelligence, one of which is bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, and discusses the ways in which individual aptitudes are reflected in one’s preferred mode of learning and synthesizing information. Gardner suggests that most dancers possess a heightened bodily-kinesthetic awareness and that pedagogical methods should reflect dancers’ inherent aptitude for kinesthetic learning. More recently however, discussions about kinesthetic ways of knowing have pervaded ethnographic and historical studies. Diedre Sklar (2001), Tomie Hahn (2007), Cynthia Novack (1990) and Sally Ann Ness (2008) have all interrogated notions of cultural inscription and representation through the embodiment of various performative, ritualistic and social practices¹⁶. Likewise, Ann Cooper Albright (2007), Leslie Main (2004), and Mark Franko (1993) have each employed kinesthetic methodologies to explore the role of the body in the resurrection and reconstruction of historical dances¹⁷. This group of scholars has proven that kinesthesia holds a valuable place in the study of dance, and that bodily-intelligence possesses a unique ability to generate a strand of knowledge that is otherwise inaccessible by non-embodied methodologies. By extension, bodily-intelligence is also capable of producing a historical record that is otherwise unattainable through non-embodied

preservation methods. Based on Gardner's suggestion that bodily-kinesthetic intelligence is prevalent amongst dancers, a mode of dance preservation that prioritizes the kinesthetic experience presents the opportunity to complement the specific intellectual capabilities of dancers, as well as the sensory nature of live performance.

Dancer, choreographer and scholar Jeff Friedman describes the challenges posed by current modes of dance preservation and supposes that dance's lack of sufficient documentation is in part a residual effect of dance's ephemeral nature combined with the practicalities of live performance. He suggests the following:

We might obtain remedies for these difficulties at the level of methodology, that is, identifying documentation strategies commensurate with dance that adequately record live performance...Consequently, dance calls for a documentary method that is also alive: embodied, contingent and temporal. (2005 35)

Friedman proposes that oral history and dance share these innate characteristics and likens the fluidity, vulnerability and reciprocity of oral history interviews to dance's similar properties. However, oral history is dominated by language, and though language is an important part of dance transmission it is not, on its own, a viable way of sharing dances. Oral history as a methodology operates far beyond the structure of question and answer interviewing techniques. The purpose of oral history is to gather an individual's story, to unveil a metanarrative that provides an additional account of the event in question – to colour the story, and to illuminate the 'facts' with an individual's actual embodied experience. In this way, kinesthetic history is no different. The purpose of kinesthetic history as

a preservation method is to gain an understanding of how an individual dancer (often as part of a larger group) reads, interprets, performs and remembers 'the facts' surrounding choreographic structure, movement directives, dramaturgical elements, gestures, and emotive qualities. The dancer takes what he or she believes to be true about the dance, based on a score or a visual image, and assimilates, integrates, and embodies those many different facets of the work. The dancer does not read the dance or watch the dance or even translate the dance, the dancer dances the dance, and it is this form of embodied inscription that has yet to be explored by existing methods of dance preservation.

Inscription:

Anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu suggests “[p]robably the only way to give account of the practical coherence of practices and works is to construct models which reproduce, in their own terms, the logic from which that coherence is generated” (Bourdieu 92). On this basis it stands to reason that to achieve a practical coherence of a contemporary dance work the method of recreating that work should closely resemble the method that was employed to create the work in the first place. More specifically, where the choreographic process involved the embodied inscription of movement material into the kinesthetic memory of a dancer, the restaging process should similarly evoke those memories in a manner that facilitates their re-inscription into a new dancer’s body. In theory, both written notation and video documentation are capable of evoking the original cast member’s kinesthetic memory in this way. However, I suggest that in

practice embodied memory serves as a more reliable, and often more authentic, record.

In Sally Ann Ness' discussion of the different processes of 'writing down' field notes for her own records and 'writing up' a polished piece for public dissemination (1996), she suggests that the process of 'writing up' often dilutes the authenticity of the participatory experience. When applied to the practice of dance preservation Ness' concept can be used to compare the act of 'writing down' a lived choreographic experience through embodied inscription with the act of 'writing up' a traditional notated score. Writing down choreographic information into a moving body supposes that the repetitive act of performing a sequence of movements solidifies that kinesthetic experience as an embodied memory. Ness demonstrates this process by describing a dancer's repetitive execution of a Graham contraction:

After years of embodying this movement term, their skeletal-musculature gradually comes to bear its "mark". A gesture - or in this case, a postural term - has been inscribed not upon but *into* them. Gesture as inscription, in other words, can now be seen to refer in a literal manner to a process of embodiment paralleling that of linguistic inscription. A danced term or a simple series of terms is embodied habitually and "inscribed" into a dancer's body once the body's connective tissues themselves bear the evidence of that practice. (2008 12)

Conversely, the process of writing up a score, or editing a video removes the element of embodiment from the scenario and suggests that the record has lost a certain amount of immediacy. In her experimental field notes gathered from ethnographic research in Southeast Asia Ness suggests, "the ethnographer's

memory and otherwise physical figure are thus dissociated in the classical score as these two aspects of the self are sequenced in the process of text-making” (1996 141). Seen in this way the post-experiential process of creating a score or video actually distances the record even farther from any lived experience of the dance itself.

There is however a logical rationale for understanding this peripheral conceptualization that has become symptomatic of most dance preservation methods. As Ness explains:

Generally, the commonsense understanding of danced gesturing is that it expresses itself outward. Dance’s gestures are typically seen to move out of the dancer’s body onto thin air. They impress themselves onto nothing at all – other than, in some cases, and by no means all, the gaze of a spectator. (2008 5)

According to this belief, attempts to capture visual or symbolic representations of a dance as it leaves the dancer’s body through external modes of preservation seem reasonable. The presence of a notator or camera lens provides an illusion of security, and seems to alleviate any fears that the dance will cunningly slip away into the depths of the orchestra pit, never to be seen again. However, contrary to the common misconception Ness outlines above, dances do not disappear into an irretrievable void, this suggests that they would have somewhere to go – somewhere to hide. Instead they remain alive in the embodied memory of the performer(s), perhaps even becoming more durable with each repeated performance. Consider the following explanation offered by Ness:

If we are going to look for the *inward* moving tendencies of danced gesturing, we might do best to look at the mark they leave not upon the space surrounding their actions of the eyes watching them but *upon the bodies that are their medium*. The dancer's body can be seen to form the "host material", a living tissue, for dance's gestural inscriptions. Its anatomy provides the "sites" or "places" where gesture can leave its mark in the rendering of a "final form" – that is, in a structure that bears an enduring and permanent signifying character. (2008 6)

When comparing embodied memory with a written or recorded document questions pertaining to the issue of permanence are inevitable. Of course a written score or video give the illusion of permanence because they are tangible objects that can be viewed repeatedly and scrutinized at length. However, that is not in consonance with the actual act of dancing and does not adhere to Bourdieu's suggestion of a logical coherence of practices. Instead, dance thrives as a movement practice that balances precariously between permanence and impermanence. It can be argued that once a dance has been performed it becomes permanently embedded in the dancer(s) kinesthetic memory, but on the other hand it will never be performed the same way twice, meaning that the record will be in a constant state of transformation. This dichotomy begs the question of how a practice that is so fragile can be preserved in the form of a permanent record, or even if indeed it should be? As Ness articulates:

The relationship of dance to the airy "host" into which it is typically expressed, a "material" so light that the idea of cutting into its "depths" produces only images of fleeting trace forms or ghostly trajectories, is critical to the discourse that asserts for dance a semiotics that is essentially transient. This is how the vanishing and ephemeral character of dance's gestures is often justified. (2008 5)

However, Ness has shown that this common justification of dance's impermanence overlooks the body as the actual site of inscription and admits

when “understood in this way, dance becomes the antithesis of inscription” (Ness, 2008 6). Teetering feverishly on the edge of ephemerality, the endurance of a dance actually relies entirely on its inscription into the dancer(s) bodily memory. Gabriele Brandstetter explores this notion in the following statement: “choreography is a form of writing along the boundary between presence and no longer being there: an inscription of the memory of that moving body whose presence cannot otherwise be maintained” (104). If we are to subscribe to Brandstetter’s way of thinking about choreography, it is impossible to perceive a record of a dance as anything other than the dancer(s) own embodied memory of performing the work. The dance is therefore indivisible from the dancer, and any sort of retrievable history of the dance in question lives in the body of the dancer who brought that work to life.

When the performance is over then, where does the work exist? Does it continue to inhabit the embodied memory of the performer(s)? Has it been translated to the living memory of the audience? Or perhaps it lingers in the liminal space somewhere in between? Then again, maybe it is nowhere, vanished from any sort of existence until the moment of its resurrection at the next performance. I suggest that it enters into a sort of hibernation, deep in the muscle fibers of its dancing host(s), resting quietly until the time of its next appearance. Most certainly the dance does not exist in the form of the score or the video record, even dance notator Sandra Aberkalns admits “dance is not dance until it is danced, it is in the movement” (Aberkalns). Despite the precarious ontology of

the movement itself, kinesthetic history supposes that a sort of historical record of a dance is automatically preserved through the lived experience of either dancing in or watching the dance.

Kinesthetic history acts as a mode of remembering and recalling the physical sensation of being present in the moment of a performance, even if that memory is referential to something that is long gone. According to Brandstetter, “choreography, as the writing *of* and *about* movement, as preserved in memory, thus always includes something of a requiem” (104). Referring to the impermanence and ephemerality of choreography Brandstetter suggests, “William Forsythe has been engaged by these questions more, perhaps, than any other contemporary choreographer (Brandstetter 104). Interestingly though, Forsythe remains a willing participant in the recyclable, reproducible repertory culture that pervades today’s professional dance scene (no doubt he has to be in order for the Forsythe Company to survive financially). However, the rigour exercised by his staggers and the faith Forsythe seems to have in their bodily memory of the company’s repertoire indicate that he is well aware of the formidable power of kinesthetic inscription and transmission.

As an artist who is notoriously opposed to the traditional concept of score writing for the purpose of preservation, Forsythe prefers to explore alternative modes of writing of and about dance that celebrate the transience of contemporary culture. He and his dancers have built up a repertoire of works that pay homage to the

conceptual understanding of dance as an evolutionary art form, and by doing so the artistic ethos of The Forsythe Company represents a creative process that is in a constant state of fluctuation. To be able to continuously construct and deconstruct various choreographic paradigms Forsythe has had to rely upon the collective kinesthetic history of his dancers. Much of the Forsythian repertoire is interwoven with newer works borrowing thematic and dramaturgical information from older ones, and in order to work in this way the company has developed a specific kinesthetic culture through the continuous bodily inscription of their choreographic practices. In doing so Forsythe and his dancers have remained at the forefront of philosophical, theoretical and methodological ways of thinking about movement.

Performance studies scholar Diana Taylor calls for a shift towards this model that has been the cornerstone of Forsythe's artistic invention for some time:

By shifting the focus from written to embodied culture, from the discursive to the performatic, we need to shift our methodologies. Instead of focusing on patterns of cultural expression in terms of texts and narratives, we might think about them as scenarios that do not reduce gestures and embodied practices to narrative description. (16)

For Taylor, there is a distinct difference between what she calls 'the archive' and 'the repertoire', the former referring to a written document and the latter representing an embodied experience, which becomes embedded in the individual or collective memories of its participants. She suggests that unlike the archive "the repertoire allows for an alternative perspective on historical processes" (20), thus enabling a body of knowledge that is open to interrogation

and interpretation. When explained in this way the term 'repertoire' indicates an apt choice made by dance companies to describe their collection of performative works. Reference made to a company's repertoire of dances is accompanied by a different meaning than their archive of works. The former suggests body of kinesthetic experiences that is very much alive and contingent on the embodied memories of previous cast members, whereas the latter conjures the image of a library, storeroom, or hard drive that houses the company's collection of static records. The repertoire refers to more than just a compilation of a choreographer or company's body of work, instead encompassing the collective repertoire of experiences embodied by those who have performed them.

In discussions about preserving and restaging repertory works, this notion of the repertoire becomes evermore important to an analysis of the ways in which works are transmitted between dancers. Once a dance has been inscribed into the embodied memory of a dancer through the repetitive process of rehearsal and performance, how then is that information shared with a new cast? Taylor suggests that "live performance can never be captured or transmitted through the archive" (20), however embodied memory "because it is alive, exceeds the archive's ability to capture it" (ibid). Of course the counter argument questions the permanency of the embodied repertoire, suggesting that the archive provides a more stable and enduring account of a dance, which is otherwise vulnerable to being lost when those with embodied experience are no longer able to pass it on. This is a valid criticism of kinesthetic history, and particularly relevant to the

discussion of dance preservation, however in conversations about restaging repertory works concerns with longevity seem to be less of an issue. In all the restaging processes with which I have been involved (and indeed all of those that occur at Juilliard) access to a previous cast member, stager, or the original choreographer has been a necessary criterion for deciding which works to include in the program. In all cases there has been someone available who knows the work intimately, and almost always someone who has an embodied experience of actually performing the work. Even dance notation expert Murial Topaz states, “there is no substitute for the authenticity this can bring to a restaging” (Jordan 104). This admission calls for an examination of the ways in which the record acquired and shared through kinesthetic history operates as a mode of transmitting choreographic information.

Recollection & Transmission:

The process of restaging a dance illuminates issues relating to the retrieval and transmission of embodied memories that have been kinesthetically inscribed into the bodies of those who have performed the work. Many practitioners, notators, and historians agree that there is no better way to teach a piece of repertory than through human interaction in the dance studio. Consider the following excerpt from a document about dance preservation published by the Dance Heritage Coalition in 2004:

“Watch me.” “Let me show you.” “Not that way...this way.” From toe to toe, from hand to hand, from eye to eye, dance, more than any other of the performing arts, has been transmitted through time by human chains of

dancers, choreographers, and others involved in its creation and performance.¹⁸

This example is indicative of the way in which most dances are passed on, with the expert practitioner sharing choreographic information through verbal cues, visual demonstrations and tactile feedback with the new cast members. For these modes of transmission to be possible there are two imperative conditions: the participants must be working together in a shared space, and the teacher will undoubtedly rely on their own embodied memory of performing the work.

Sociologist Paul Connerton calls this practice 'incorporation' describing it as: "messages that a sender or senders impart by means of their own current bodily activity, the transmission occurring only during the time that their bodies are present to sustain that particular activity" (Connerton 72). In this way, the practice of incorporated transmission is reliant upon more than just visual, verbal and tactile cues, also incorporating a kinesthetic energy that has the capacity to shift and change with the flow of the process. For example, one of the most obvious advantages of learning a dance from someone who has previously performed it is the opportunity for the learners to ask questions. This ability opens up a reciprocal dialogue between past and present performers and affords the work a greater degree of accuracy and authenticity than would otherwise be available from a non-responsive score or video. Taylor explains, "the repertoire requires presence: people participate in the production and reproduction of knowledge by 'being there', being a part of the transmission" (20). This transformation to which Taylor refers is indicative of the reciprocity of the

repertoire, as it exists both in the embodied memory of the original cast member and the newly acquired kinesthetic sensibility of the learner.

Taking a phenomenological approach to movement transmission, kinesthetic history supposes that in the act of acquiring knowledge of the dance, the material becomes inscribed into the body of the learner at the same time as the information is being shared by the teacher. Sheets-Johnstone refers to phenomenology as a “pre-reflective, pre-objective encounter” (1979 10), and in this way the embodied transmission of movement material is no different.

According to Sheets-Johnstone, “instead of reflecting upon experience as the objective relationship of man to the world, the phenomenologist seeks the heart of the experience itself: the immediate and direct consciousness of man in the face of the world” (ibid). This is a clear distinction between the way in which

kinesthetic history functions differently from scores and videos as a mode of transmitting choreographic information. Both score writing and video recording objectify the dance, as well as the dancer’s experience of embodying the dance.

Both processes fix choreography to a particular time and space, oppose the phenomenological method of seeking the heart of the lived experience, and subsequently provide objective records of the work. Whether abstracted in the form of a symbolic score or recorded as a vision-centric representation of one version of the work, both written notation and video documentation attempt to extract the dance from the very bodies through which it is able to exist. However, Fraleigh supposes that such a division is never truly possible:

No amount of abstraction can ever fully abstract the human body or the relationships among dancers in dance. Because dance is of the human body, it is also of ourselves – of the times and spaces we live and move, as we live our world through our body in relation to others. (208)

Although not intended as a direct criticism of symbol-based written notation systems the above statement could be interpreted as such. Fraleigh's suggestion that dance is not divisible from the human body calls into question traditional modes of dance preservation, and simultaneously supports the notion of kinesthetic history as an alternative method of choreographic transmission.

Although it is not referred to as such, western theatrical dance practice indicates that kinesthetic history is regularly deployed as a mode of collecting and recalling embodied memory for the purpose of restaging dances. Of a video program she initiated to preserve George Balanchine's choreography Nancy Reynolds explains the following:

These taping sessions would not consist of interviews per se, although interviews would be part of the process; I felt there were plenty of interviews and oral histories out there already. What I wanted was to capture the body language of Balanchine's dancers as they passed on their roles to dancers of today. I felt this would convey far more information than purely verbal discourse. I also suspected that dancers, who are sometimes inhibited when expressing ideas about dance in words, would lose themselves in the teaching process and in so doing, impart not only the choreography itself but the nuances of interpretation and phrasing, including the motivations behind the steps, in a way that simply could not happen in face-to-face interviews." (2000 52)

What Reynolds refers to here is the process of collecting a kinesthetic history, as embedded into the embodied memory of the original performer, retrieved from that bodily archive, and then translated to the new dancer for re-inscription.

Despite numerous examples such as Reynolds' that kinesthetic history functions as a legitimate mode of dance transmission and preservation, there is little scholarly research that supports its philosophical underpinnings and implications, an oddity that Foster identifies in the following statement:

Especially considering the widespread application of the term 'choreography', remarkably little use of the term 'kinesthesia' has been made in scholarly or public domains. Often derided or dismissed within the academy, kinesthesia and the information it might provide have typically been received with skepticism at best. (2011 7)

However, looking beyond the scope of western theatrical dance and scholarship there is evidence that many cultures rely solely upon embodied traditions and oral communication for the transmission of dance and movement practices.

In *Sensational Knowledge: Embodying Culture through Japanese Dance* (2007)

Tomie Hahn explores the ways in which choreographic transmission between teacher and student is lived through multi-sensory experiences. Not only is the act of body-to-body transmission indicative of Japan's social, cultural, and philosophical conventions, but it also informs a dancer's culturally constructed sense of self. Pertinent to the broader discussion of kinesthetic history and its role in the practice of dance preservation, Hahn addresses the process of transmission by way of visual, tactile and oral/aural cues. She discusses these various modes of information transfer within the context of teaching and learning *nihon buyo*, a traditional Japanese dance form.

Through a selection of case studies, Hahn explores the various senses and interrogates the ways in which they facilitate the process of learning new choreography. Visual cues offer a distinct set of directives for the student dancer to follow, whereas tactile, oral and aural cues are used when attending to subtle nuances and intricate details. All cues are based on the experience of the teacher, and it is through their bodily memory of performing the dances that they are able to describe, demonstrate and transmit the necessary information to their student. Commensurate with Hahn's study, Sheets-Johnstone explains, "there is an experience, and the experience must be had in order to be described; the trick is to develop a method of description which takes nothing for granted, and which does not falsify or reduce the effect of the experience itself" (1980 11). In accordance with this statement, kinesthetic history supposes that the sensory experience of sharing movement is a method of description that successfully echoes the 'liveness' of the experience itself.

In an effort to refrain from reducing the experience to something other than what it is, kinesthetic history transmits movement information through visual, verbal and tactile cues, all of which promote kinesthetic awareness and celebrate the embodied nature of dance. Echoing the sentiments of Friedman, Bourdieu and Taylor, kinesthetic history suggests a methodological shift that approaches dance preservation with the same logic that is commensurate with dance practice itself. The initial process of generating movement material often involves exploratory negotiations between visual, verbal, tactile and kinesthetic cues, so the process

of recreating that material should follow the same coherence of practices as suggested by Bourdieu. As Hahn illuminates, there are various modes of transmission that are used to evoke the kinesthetic sensibility that is essential to recreating a dance. She explains, “transmission, executed via a variety of sensory modes, imparted movement, sound, timing and beyond. Specifically, visual, tactile, and oral/aural modes of transmission conveyed dance from teacher to student” (78). The same is true of the transmission of western theatrical dance forms; visual demonstration and imitation, tactile feedback and verbal instruction all come together to facilitate the incorporation and inscription of choreographic design.

Visual Cues – Demonstration & Imitation:

Dance is as much a visual practice as it is a kinetic one. For the audience and the performers the dance experience is reliant upon the assimilation and interpretation of visual cues. It is in part the visual appearance of a work that renders it identifiable in both ontological and aesthetic terms, and as Hahn explains, contributes to the historical and cultural significance of the work:

Over time, dramatic visual representations become codified traditions, marking the identity of specific pieces, the genre, and the style of a particular school. Idealized conventions of the showcased body establish a shared cultural vocabulary of images that convey meaning between choreographer, dancer, and audience. (82)

The transmission process creates an opportunity for dancers to share their kinesthetic experience of performing a work through the vision-centric practices of demonstration and imitation, and by doing so contribute to the preservation of

the work through embodied incorporation and inscription. According to Hahn, “through lessons dancers learn and embody visual conventions and, by transmitting them to future generations, maintain the historical lineage of these visual patterns, or codes, of style” (82). The most practical visual mode of sharing dances is through demonstration and imitation, whereby the learner watches the teacher perform a sequence of movements and then attempts to repeat that sequence in their own body. Sheets-Johnstone refers to this phenomenon as “kinetic-kinesthetic matching” (2000 354) and suggests that: “in the most basic sense, skill-learning is rooted in the capacity of one bodily presence to be attentive to another and to pattern movement along the lines of the other, imitating the way in which the other performs something” (ibid 358).

Recent studies in the field of neuroscience have illuminated the discovery of mirror neurons, which are said to “respond preferentially to actions that are either observed or performed” (Cross 177). Broadly speaking, the neurons that fire when an individual performs a specific movement task are the same ones that fire when they observe someone else performing the same task. This neurological connection between action and observation indicates, “we understand new actions by mapping others’ movements onto our own motor representations” (Cross *et al* 1257). Based on this information it is impossible to discount the importance of demonstration, observation and imitation in the transmission of choreographic material. This belief is substantiated by research conducted by pedagogy theorist Donald Blumenfeld-Jones who explains, “there

appears to be a direct line between seeing another's motion and reproducing that motion" (64). Research shows that skill acquisition is most successful when the action being performed is familiar to the observer, and in the case of learning choreography this is true when the movement material is reminiscent of a series of actions that have been previously inscribed into the body of the learner. This is because "the mirror system codes complete action patterns, not just individual component movements" (Calvo-Merino *et al* 1246). For instance, if the teacher demonstrated a *rond de jambe* the learner would automatically be able to perform it as a successive movement rather than having to break it down into smaller parts. In this way, the visual practice of demonstration and imitation stimulates the learners' own kinesthetic history, and their embodied memory of performing codified steps from their existing repertoire of experience. Sheets-Johnstone describes this as "a compound of experiences sedimented with skills and concepts accruing from our history" and suggests, "our capacity to imitate is an integral part of that history" (2000 359). Visual cues are therefore integral to the process of transmitting choreographic information. However, they are most suitable in assisting with the construction of the design of the dance, in other words the overall shapes, trajectories and spatial patterning that make up the visual structure of the work. For elements such as dynamics, weight distribution and more detailed physical alignments the proprioceptive feedback offered through tactile cues provides an additional layer to the incorporation of embodied memory.

Tactile Cues – Kinesthetic Participation & Collaboration:

As Hahn describes, “tactile sensing occurs throughout the body; the receptors are cutaneous and connect to a web of nerves and muscles throughout the body” (100). In this way tactility could be considered the essence of kinesthetic experience, as it illuminates the sensorial relationship between the body and its surrounding environment. While dancing, tactile cues are evident everywhere; the feeling of your feet on the ground, the sensation of your own body parts brushing past one another, and the force of energy that is generated when you come into contact with other dancers in the space. All of these cues provide proprioceptive information to the dancer about the nature of his or her movement and the ways in which their body, and the bodies of others, negotiate their way through the space. According to Hahn, “this full-bodied feature of the sense is ideal for dance transmission, where the entire (receptive) body can feel and mediate movement qualities” (100). Acting alongside visual cues, tactile feedback provides information about the way certain movements should feel in addition to how they are expected to look.

When restaging a choreographic work the presence of the original cast member allows for him or her to be an active participant in the process of re-inscribing the work into the bodies of the new cast. The importance of their presence is vital to the transmission process in two distinct ways. Firstly, when the goal of restaging a choreographic work is to construct a version of the work that is akin to the original, the most authentic representation of that work lives in the bodies of

those who have performed it. In the cases where original cast members are not available to facilitate the transmission process, and the restaging is reliant upon a written score or a video, the work has already been distanced from its most authentic version and left open to multiple stages of interpretation and re-interpretation. As Hahn explains, “the vivid qualities of the lived learning experience so vital to lessons cannot be translated to paper” (136) and “video has numerous limitations that clearly disembodify dance from the lived experience” (142). The presence of the most authentic record of the dance, as it has been inscribed into the living memory of the original cast member supersedes any other form of documentation that might be available. By actively participating in the transmission process original cast members are able to retrieve their embodied memories through the act of re-performing the material. In other words, they recollect the inscribed kinesthetic history of the work and re-live the dance through the tactile and sensory experience of transmission. Secondly, as the original cast members share a physical space with new casts they are afforded the opportunity to role-share with the dancers, meaning that they can place themselves directly into the tactile experience by physically executing certain sections of the work in the place of one of the dancers. This is of particular use in the transmission of partnering sections, whereby the original cast members’ tactile cues can inform such conditions as correct placement and weight distribution in a lift. Hahn eloquently summarizes both of these advantages of human transmission in the following excerpt:

Tactile transmission exposes the union of dance and the corporeal body. Through embodiment, touch denies their separation – the body

simultaneously exists as the art object for performance, as the direct transmitter of the art, and as an individual self. (101)

I suggest that in addition to these functions the body also exists as the archival site of the work itself, poised to transmit the work through whichever means necessary. In addition to visual and tactile cues verbal communication serves as a conduit through which to share information that can form, clarify and enhance the physicality of the work.

Verbal Cues - Language & Imagery:

As a mode of dance preservation, kinesthetic history also considers some of the practical ways in which oral/aural communication is used to transmit corporeal experiences. Verbal cues can be used to convey information about almost any aspect of the work including movement directives, narratives and dramaturgical components, and as Hahn explains, “this direct verbal guidance assists the transmission of correct body movement in a clear and pragmatic manner” (120). However, my particular interest is in the use of imagery as a mode of evoking specific kinesthetic responses in the recreation of a work. The use of imagery has been prevalent in the field of dance studies throughout the latter part of the twentieth century and it continues to grow alongside further developments in somatic and pedagogical practices. Reference to its use in the process of choreographic transmission is curiously sparse considering the strong links between imagery and movement generation. Referring to Bourdieu’s model of the coherence of practice it seems logical to explore the use of imagery in the

re-generation of movement material, as it is commonly used in the process of generating movement material in the first instance.

The relationship of dance to language is complex, albeit necessary. Language is used to describe, analyze and contextualize dance practices within a broader conceptual structure, but it is also used to transmit corporeal experience from one dancer to another. Hodes suggests, “despite growing use of textual notation, dance persists as a correlate of poetry in an oral culture” (97), and the use of imagery works to facilitate the transmission of movement material in a manner that evokes dance’s referential and metaphorical qualities. Eric Franklin describes imagery as “a quasi perceptual experience, a perception in the absence of any causation” (1996 3). Unlike the demonstrable stimuli that are present with visual and tactile cues, images communicated through oral/aural transmission are more conceptual, and more interpretive.

The way in which an image is internalized and embodied is entirely reliant on an individual’s perception of, or personal experience with, that particular image. For example, if a dancer is encouraged to imagine that they are wearing a pair of high heeled shoes, one’s perception of what ‘high’ means will differ slightly from someone else’s depending upon their experience of wearing high heels. At other times, the direction may be completely interpretive, such as the image of rooting yourself into the ground like the roots of a tree. None of us has experience being an actual tree and we are forced to imagine what the sensation of rooting

ourselves into the ground might feel like. Of course cues that rely upon the perception and interpretation of an image are also culturally sensitive, an action or experience that might be commonly referred to in one culture or community may be unheard of in another. However, despite these obvious challenges imagery does have the capacity to both evoke and inscribe a deeply personal and authentic corporeal experience.

With imagery even though the verbal stimulus may originate from an external source, the perception, interpretation and manifestation of the image is generated from within. The embodiment of an image is therefore a representation of the self and its complex web of past experiences and pre-existing knowledge constructs. In other words, the embodiment of imagery can be seen as a performance of one's kinesthetic history as it has been inscribed through repetitious experience. According to Ness, "inscription, literally, is a form of using language" (2008 7), and when approached in this way verbal communication that uses language to evoke a specific image can be seen as a direct mode of kinesthetic inscription. This practice is of particular use to the notion of embodied preservation as Connerton suggests, "we preserve versions of the past by representing it to ourselves in words and images" (72). When considered in this way the use of language can augment, and even enrich the kinesthetically inscribed record. The transmission of kinesthetic memory through oral communication, as an alternative approach towards dance preservation, is one that embraces multiplicity and subjectivity. Therefore, records attained

through the combined use of oral and kinesthetic history can allow for new possibilities in the preservation of contemporary dance. The following chapter explores this notion in practice by considering the ways in which kinesthetic history operated as a mode of transmission in the restaging of *One Flat Thing, reproduced*.

Chapter 5

Case Study: One Flat Thing, reproduced

Re-Staging OFTr at Juilliard: The Study

Until now, this discussion has suggested that the body is an irreplaceable site of knowledge, and particular attention has been paid to its dual roles as both creative vessel and storage facility for the inscription and incorporation of movement material. Through my first hand observations of the restaging of *One Flat Thing, reproduced* at Juilliard, this case study explains the ways in which qualitative evidence substantiates those claims. An integrated analysis of the role of the ballet master/stager, written scores, video records, and visual representations of the dance as made available through *Synchronous Objects* (SO) provide practical examples of the ways in which these various modes of preservation intersect in the process of restaging this contemporary choreographic work.

Every year a palpable sense of nostalgia descends upon The Juilliard School's dance department as they prepare for their annual concert entitled, *Juilliard Dances Repertory*, a tradition that pays homage to some of the most legendary choreographers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The 2013 repertory

concert featured a program of distinctly varied works by three markedly different choreographers: *Four Brubeck Pieces* (1984) by Murray Louis, *Sunset* (1983) by Paul Taylor, and Forsythe's *One Flat Thing, reproduced* (2000). The concert showcases the sophomore, junior and senior dance students and they are cast in one of the works based on their physicality and suitability for the available roles. The school commissions the dances and a stager is appointed by their respective company or foundation to go to New York City and be in residency at Juilliard while they set the work on the students. The process culminates in five public concerts at Juilliard's Peter Jay Sharp Theater.

The Juilliard School is a post-secondary performing arts conservatory where the students are working towards a bachelor's degree in their given discipline. All the dance students partake in two daily technique classes, one ballet and one modern; depending on their year of study, they also take classes in jazz dance, pas de deux, composition, anatomy and dance history, as well as additional elective courses in the humanities. A typical school day begins at eight thirty in the morning and ends around five o'clock. Throughout the duration of the school year the students spend their evenings rehearsing for one of the upcoming performances, which include four main concerts that are produced by the dance division, as well as several other student showcases and workshops. In 2013, the rehearsal process for *Juilliard Dances Repertory* was allocated six weeks in the dance division's academic calendar, taking into consideration a two and a half week hiatus for spring break.

Methodology:

The rehearsals for *One Flat Thing, reproduced* took place every weekday evening from approximately four o'clock to seven o'clock; I attended each of these rehearsals as an observer. The role of observer is one that is essential to the practice of ethnographic research, and in this instance proved critical to my process. Experiencing the *One Flat Thing, reproduced* rehearsals through the lens of a subjective observer afforded me the opportunity to ascertain authentic qualitative information that was rooted in my own kinesthetic presence and sensory awareness. Of her ethnographic research for *Sensational Knowledge* (2007) Tomie Hahn admits "for me, theory unravels in moments of experience – in music, dance, and in fieldwork" (7). I agree with Hahn's statement, and it has been through my participation as an observer of the restaging process that I have come to understand the theoretical perspectives that have been discussed thus far. Occasionally in rehearsals, I would help move the tables, take notes for the ballet master and talk casually with the students. However, I tried to remain as inconspicuous as possible, taking my role of observer seriously, so as not to interrupt the natural flow of the rehearsals or impede them in any way by my presence. During the rehearsals, I sat at the near side of the Glorya Kaufman studio, often times on the steps that were used to gain entry to the space, and sometimes on a chair in the front corner of the studio. I chose to situate myself in the same area at every rehearsal to maintain consistency. However, at times my location in the room did affect the way in which I was able to observe the rehearsals. Although I had a complete view of the entire space, there were brief

moments when my position in the studio made it difficult to see and hear exactly what was occurring. This issue was easily diffused in the latter part of the rehearsal process when we moved into the performance space. In the theatre, I always chose a seat in the front of the house, and this enabled me to clearly hear the notes that were being given to the students before and after each run-through.

During each rehearsal I recorded written field notes, which led me to a collection of notebooks from which I have drawn qualitative information to reflect upon for the analysis of this case study. Since dance is an interpretive practice, it stands to reason that the collection of evidence, and subsequent construction of meaning by way of such evidence, should reflect similar interpretive characteristics. Ethnographic theorist Soyini Madison insists, “because the critical ethnographer is committed to the art and craft of fieldwork, empirical methodologies become the foundation for inquiry” (5). The recording of field notes gathered through my observations of the rehearsals at Juilliard allowed me to reflect upon my own sensory experience as well as those of the participants, a practice that is a clear example of the empiricism to which Madison refers. Moreover, the act of writing field notes afforded me the opportunity to consider issues related to self-reflexivity. The moments that I chose to record and the manner through which I chose to record them are reflective of my inherent biases, and as a result my personal values are inextricably embedded within my field notes. The benefit of written notes however, is that they provide a tangible

document that can be re-visited in order to identify and perhaps extrapolate on such intricacies. This ability to fix certain elements of the otherwise ephemeral experience of observing a dance rehearsal is essential to the post-experiential phase of an empirical case study. As Clifford Geertz explains,

The ethnographer “inscribes” social discourse; he writes it down. In so doing, he turns it from a passing event, which exists only in its own moment of occurrence, into an account, which exists in its inscriptions and can be reconsulted. (158)

The written notes I generated throughout the process proved to be invaluable points of reference that provided descriptive details of the occurrences in the *One Flat Thing, reproduced* rehearsals. Of course, my notes are coloured by my individual perception of the events and open to interpretation, however the fact that they can be re-visited allows for the opportunity to look for fluidity and plurality through subsequent re-interpretations of my experience.

I attempted to mirror these same characteristics of fluidity and plurality in my methodological approach towards collecting experiential information from the participants through specific interviewing techniques. I chose to conduct the student interviews in small groups in order to establish an environment that was as relaxed and comfortable for the students as possible. It was my hope that this approach would elicit an interactive dialogue between myself and the students, rather than a more formal back and forth exchange. The rationale for this approach is manifold. Firstly, by moving away from the formality of a structured question and answer interview format, I anticipated a more natural sense of flow in the sessions, which would hopefully allow for the dialogue to change direction

if necessary. Finally, seeing as the choreographic structure of *One Flat Thing, reproduced* is reliant on the ideas of reciprocal exchange and communal effort, I found it important to adhere to these same themes in the ways that we communicated about the process.

I structured my interviews with individual participants in much the same way as I did with the student groups. Although in all cases, a predetermined line of questioning loosely guided the interviews, I remained unencumbered by the use of specific language or structure and allowed each conversation to evolve and resolve organically. Informed by a conscious awareness of power dynamics, I chose to conduct the interviews in this way in an effort to foster a collegial environment and support each participant's individual sense of agency. As I have already identified, traditional modes of dance notation and documentation have a tendency to ignore the experiential perspective of the dancer, and by virtue of this, records tend to encapsulate an extremely limited version of a work, often as perceived by a third party notator or camera operator. By folding oral histories into the tapestry of dance preservation techniques, we gain the ability to hear the dancers' voices and acknowledge their creative and artistic contributions. In his discussion of critical ethnographic methodologies, Madison extrapolates on the qualitative interviewing strategy,

The interviewee is not an object, but a subject with agency, history, and his or her own idiosyncratic command of a story. Interviewer and interviewee are in partnership and dialogue as they construct memory, meaning, and experience together. (25)

My role as a researcher, observer, interviewer, and at times, participant was undeniably laden with the presence of my own subjectivity. The experiences I have had as a dancer learning repertory works, as a previous intern at Juilliard, and as a graduate student during a time when scholastic interest in the role of the body is burgeoning, have all influenced the ways in which I have perceived, interpreted and articulated the findings of this study. I iterate this point not to hierarchize my own experience, but rather to embrace the subjective discussions that are likely to emerge from this research. According to Madison, “this ‘new’ or postcritical ethnography is the move to contextualize our own positionality, thereby making it accessible, transparent, and vulnerable to judgment and evaluation” (8). This view harkens back to Ness’ suggestion that the ways in which certain ideas are ‘written down’ into the identity of the researcher are inextricably linked to the ways in which the findings are ‘written up’ for dissemination.

One Flat Thing, reproduced: The Dance

The restaging of *One Flat Thing, reproduced* (hereafter referred to as *OFTr*) proved to be a delicate process, riddled with an array of complexities. To recognize the intricacies embedded within *OFTr*, and therefore the issues associated with its recreation, it is important to understand the contextual, choreographic, and dramaturgical underpinnings of the work. *OFTr* was first performed in 2000 as a section within a longer work entitled *Die Befragung des Robert Scott* (2000), however components of it already existed as part of a larger

framework of choreographic works. *Die Befragung des Robert Scott* is a one-act ballet that was first performed by the Ballett Frankfurt in 1986. The Forsythe Company then adapted the original choreography in 1999 and created a new evening-length version that the company refers to as *Robert Scott II*. Often synonymously called *The Table Dance*, *OFTr* was also constructed in 1999 as a section of *Robert Scott II*, however it has since been extracted and performed on its own as a shorter work.

Much of the movement material in both *Robert Scott* works, and subsequently *OFTr*, was developed from an eight-minute phrase called 'tuna' that Forsythe first created in 1985. Since then 'tuna' has served as the movement impetus for seven different works that the company refers to as 'derivatives'. Though there are commonalities between the dances and much of the movement material seen in these derivatives is based on 'tuna', the treatment of the initial phrase varies greatly across the range of works. Forsythe and his company of dancers are experts at crafting choreographic variation; evidenced in the fact that one phrase of movement material has fed seven complete works. Each piece is surprisingly unique in its ability to represent various deviations, manipulations and fragmentations of the original phrase. By employing different choreographic structures and strategies, The Forsythe Company has been able to recycle 'tuna' with each creative development of the phrase.

In the case of *OFTr* the primary choreographic structure of the dance is based on the principle of counterpoint, which Forsythe describes as “a field of action in which the intermittent and irregular coincidence of attributes between organizational elements produces an ordered interplay” (Forsythe, *Synchronous Objects*). These attributes to which Forsythe refers are otherwise termed as ‘movement material’, ‘modalities’, ‘cueing’ and ‘alignments’, and it is the complex interaction of these strands that propels the momentum of the work. The movement material comprises twenty-five structured phrases, which the dancers refer to as ‘themes’. These themes are repeated and reconfigured throughout the duration of the work, and are considered to be set material, meaning that they do not change between iterations of the work. The term ‘modalities’ is used to identify movement patterns that link themes together and act as modes of locomotion that allow the dancers to travel throughout the space. The terms ‘cues’ and ‘alignments’ are used to refer to specific moments when dancers either indicate to each other when to move next, or when they find synchronicity in the trajectory line of their movements. A number of improvisational tasks are also interspersed throughout the piece, whereby the dancers make impromptu choices in response to predetermined directives. Although much of the movement material is set, the temporal aspect of the dance is constantly fluctuating in response to the improvised moments. Choreographic tasks as allocated by Forsythe (or the assigned stager) are applied to the original thematic material, resulting in variations of the theme that differ in ways such as temporal quality and directional flow.

The specific timing of when the dancers perform certain movements or enter into a theme or hook-up by way of an alignment is determined by the dance's intricate cueing system, which Forsythe refers to as "an internal clock". The sequential ordering of the choreographic structure is entirely reliant upon the dancers' adherence to the cueing system. Cues can present themselves as either visual or aural and as a result, the dancers are required to be in a constant state of heightened awareness so as not to miss a cue, as doing so can throw off the pace of the entire dance. Similarly, a keen sense of focus is required of the dancers in order for them to match up during the choreographed moments known as alignments. Embedded strategically within the work are hundreds of moments where two or more dancers link up in a manner that Forsythe describes as "short instances of synchronization between dancers in which their actions share some, but not necessarily all, attributes" (Forsythe, *Synchronous Objects*). These structural elements are imperative to the integrity of the dance, as it is only the functional relationship between each of these components that renders the work identifiable in ontological terms. Operating in isolation from one another would not be possible as the occurrence of alignments and repetition of themes are both reliant upon the dance's internal cueing system. The result is an illusion of chaos, a group of frantic bodies on stage maneuvering around a sea of tables in a manner that appears to have no sense of structure or order. In actuality, the work is intricately ordered to ensure that the alignments occur when they are supposed to and the dancers' internal cues continue to fuel the momentum of the piece. The very idea of structure is one that permeates much of Forsythe's work,

and the dancers' ability, and sometimes inability, to operate within the given parameters provide a recurring dramaturgical theme to many of his dances.

Forsythe and his company of dancers work frequently with themes relating to effort, failure and the notion of impossibility. In addition to the seven direct derivatives of 'tuna' there are a further two dances and two installations that deal with similar themes of failure and impossibility. Dance Studies scholar Gerald Siegmund refers to this collection of works as the "Robert Scott Complex" because of their shared dramaturgical underpinnings, which relate back to the British naval officer's failed expedition to the Antarctic in 1912¹⁹. Drawing a metaphorical comparison to Scott's attempted voyage to the South Pole, Siegmund suggests "this complex leads us into the heart of Forsythe's thinking about ballet and his attempts to rescue it from its *rigor mortis* in the permafrost of tradition" (21). The collection of works that make up the 'Robert Scott Complex' began with *LDC* in 1985 and concluded with *Wear* in 2004 (although *Whole in the Head* which was choreographed in 2010 is said to have revisited similar themes and used 'tuna' as the basis for the movement material). Each of the seven works in the complex is thematically based on the trials and failures of Robert Scott and his companions as they faced their demise in the frozen Antarctic waters. As Siegmund explains:

In *LDC* Forsythe sent his company on a working expedition to the South Pole, which served as a metaphor for the unknown continent of ballet. This was followed one year later by *Die Befragung des Robert Scott*, [*The Questioning of Robert Scott*], an autopsy of *LDC* in that it reflected on its working methods and means of producing movement. (21)

The second rendition of *Robert Scott* revisited these initial explorations and it is here, embedded within a complex layering of dramaturgical concepts, that *OFT* sits in the repertoire. According to dancer, stager, and choreographic assistant Christopher Roman, at one point during the rehearsal process Forsythe described the tables as sheets of ice and suggested that the dancers were attempting to scramble to the top of them in order to avoid the freezing water below. Although Roman explains that this particular metaphor of the tables representing icebergs in the Arctic Ocean was never set in stone as an absolute dramaturgical reference, he admits that it helps to create the allusion of frantic desperation that is integral to the performance of the work. Occasionally during the restaging process at Juilliard Roman referred back to the metaphorical icebergs and freezing water to elicit certain movement qualities and nuances from the dancers. For instance, there is a recurrent modality whereby the dancers use their arms to pull themselves between the tables, during this action it is important that the lower body appears to be lifeless and unable to move. In order to encourage the desired movement quality Roman suggested the idea that the dancers are navigating between the icebergs and that their legs are immobilized from the freezing cold water and therefore unable to provide any assistance. Roman recalled this image as a suggestion that was offered to the original cast of dancers as they were generating the movement material in rehearsals. He explains:

It was good information for me, this idea about how we approached the tables - to just have an inkling of an idea of the tables being flat sheets of ice, and that when we were in between the tables we were in the water so then our legs would be frozen from being under water. So, we had these

modalities where we pulled ourselves between and through the tables with limp legs because they were frozen and our upper bodies were the things getting us from ice sheet to ice sheet. (Roman)

Although such a metaphor is a useful tool in the creation and restaging process, Roman advises against getting overly caught up in a dramatic representation of it. Rather, he suggests that the imaginary sheets of ice serve as an impetus for generating the amount of effort that is required to perform this piece, and that any sort of dramatic element becomes eclipsed by the immediate need to perform the specific task at hand:

After that initial spark of a dramaturgical idea of ice and water and limp legs it just became a task or modality to get you from one place to the other and I no longer thought of my legs not working. It wasn't anything that I had to attach an emotion to and it just became task-oriented. So, in that way effort was just to get from one table to another. (Roman)

In *OFT* the idea of effort is also inherent in the choreographic structure of the piece. The constant need to be on the lookout for cues and alignments requires a collaborative effort from the entire cast that is relentless throughout the duration of the dance. The forward momentum of the piece is entirely reliant on the cues that are generated and read by the dancers on stage, and as so much of the material is improvised, constant attention must be paid to the work as it unfolds during the performance. Roman repeatedly referred to this as “looking and seeing” not just to enhance the aesthetic quality of the piece or to emphasize the dramaturgical layers of being stranded and desperate, but because the organization of the piece hinges upon the dancers’ abilities to work as an ensemble. He often explained that if one dancer misses a cue that will, in turn, shift the entire structure of the piece. He also admits that such instances are

unavoidable and that failure to achieve a perfect performance is inevitable. In this way, the dramaturgical underpinnings of the Robert Scott expedition are suitably referential to the interplay between effort and failure. As Roman explains:

Knowing dramaturgically that the expedition failed is always in the back of your head, this organization this grouping and splintering off and then re-grouping and splintering off and then re-grouping is just an effort towards something that you're eventually going to fail at. Even when we were trying to be on time with cues or hook-ups there was inevitably someone who would be either early or late and you were trying to get through your thematic to be able to get to the table in time to raise your arm to be matching up with everybody else who was raising their arm, and maybe you failed, maybe you were half a second late and you weren't there but the effort was to get through the material you needed to get through to match up with everybody else, and it didn't always work. (Roman)

Forsythe enjoys watching those moments that do not always work. His fascination with failure is evidenced in his characteristic re-orientation of verticality, flirtation with gravity and acceptance of disappearance. For Forsythe, failure is a point of departure for the generation of something new, and perhaps it is for this reason that it has continued to be a recurrent theme in much of the company's work. Former dramaturg for the Ballett Frankfurt, Heidi Gilpin discusses failure in the following excerpt:

Failed performances ultimately describe movement: movement of a physical and psychic nature, and multiple movements of the body, of memory, and of the unconscious. If these ambiguous movements actively fail to be fixed by any singular meaning, then failure, it seems, can be regarded as a positive, enabling force of movement. Failure functions within the work of contemporary European movement performance directors as a significant strategy both for the composition and interpretation of movement. (115)

When seen in this way it is no wonder that the failure of Robert Scott's expedition to the South Pole inspired Forsythe for more than two decades and fueled the generation of nine artistic works. Dramaturgically, conceptually, philosophically, the notion of failure is inextricable from not just Forsythe's work in performance, but also from the process of its recreation. Likewise, so is the notion of effort. The following section details the process of restaging *OFTr* at Juilliard and discusses the myriad ways in which the themes of effort and failure were continuously present.

Reproducing One Flat Thing: The Process

OFTr is an intricately complex work, and the task of restaging it is a daunting proposition. Since The Forsythe Company premiered the work in 2000, *OFTr* had been restaged twice before coming to Juilliard, once for the Pacific Northwest Ballet in 2008 and again a year later for the Ballet de l'Opéra de Lyon. In both instances, a group of dancers from The Forsythe Company were called upon to restage the work, which was set based on the original version for fourteen dancers. The process at Juilliard was organized in a slightly different fashion. The work was restaged based on the version of *OFTr* that is shown on *Synchronous Objects*, which included seventeen dancers as opposed to the original fourteen, and for the first time the process utilized *Synchronous Objects* as a restaging tool. In addition, in contrast to the group of four dancers that restaged the work in Seattle and the nine dancers who set the piece in Lyon, only one ballet master assumed the task of restaging *OFTr* at Juilliard.

Christopher Roman has been a member of the Ballett Frankfurt and then The Forsythe Company for more than 16 years, and was involved with the original creation of *The Table Dance* before it was extracted from *Robert Scott 2000*. He has held a variety of roles within the company including dancer, ballet master and stager, choreographic assistant and most recently the Associate Artistic Director of The Forsythe Company, and has restaged numerous ballets including *OFTr* in Lyon. To restage *OFTr* at Juilliard Roman was equipped with a variety of tools, including his own written score of the dance and the selection of visual representations of the work that are available through *Synchronous Objects*. In addition, Roman brought with him a hard drive, which housed a vast library of videos from The Forsythe Company archives and included footage of the movement material being generated, as well as rehearsals and numerous performances of *OFTr*. Of course, not to be overlooked is Roman's personal experience as a participant in the creation of the work and his own kinesthetic history of dancing in 110 performances of *OFTr*.

The Score:

Roman's written score of *OFTr* is a 33-page document that details many of the structural elements of the piece. Even though the score is not based on any one specific codified system of dance notation, it resembles many of the traditional symbol based systems in its documentation of temporal and spatial elements of the dance. The score separates *OFTr* into four sections and then further sub-divides those sections into scenes, thus acting as a visual storyboard

of the dance. Each scene is depicted on a different page of the score, and includes a diagram of the grid that is created by the tables as well as a legend identifying the individual dancers in the scene and their spatial trajectories. Colour-coded symbols that represent each of the 17 dancers are placed on the grid, along with arrows that indicate each dancer's directional pathway within the grid. Further written instructions on each page include approximate timings of when cues and alignments occur as well as an identification of which movement themes are being performed in the scene. According to Roman the rationale behind the creation of the score is two-fold. It was originally devised as a visual aid for the filmmaker who recorded the dance for *Synchronous Objects*. However, in subsequent restagings of the work, it has also served as a tangible record to which Roman can refer in order to refresh his memory on certain structural, spatial and temporal details. Of notable interest is that aside from a vague reference by Roman to the written score in the first rehearsal, it was never actually used in rehearsals throughout the duration of the restaging process, and Roman admitted "I don't usually refer to the score again after writing it, it's almost just a way to remember and find a trajectory for that person's character" (Roman). Instead, Roman and the students relied extensively on the video and visual animations located on the *Synchronous Objects* website to obtain and clarify specific information about the dance.

The Technology:

Synchronous Objects (2009) was developed by an interdisciplinary group of researchers at Ohio State University, led by a creative team that included William Forsythe, Maria Palazzi and Norah Zuniga Shaw. Forsythe company dancers Christopher Roman, Jill Johnson, and Elizabeth Waterhouse were appointed as additional research collaborators on the project²⁰. *Synchronous Objects* provides a selection of tools through which to conduct thorough analyses of the intricacies embedded within the organizational structure of *OFTr*. On the surface, *Synchronous Objects* appears to be an interactive website that allows for one to explore the choreographic structure of *OFTr*. However, as you begin to navigate around the site, it soon becomes evident that there is much more embedded within the site than initially meets the eye. In actuality, what *Synchronous Objects* offers is a glimpse into the depths of Forsythe's choreographic mind. It operates as a portal through which to transcend into a revolutionary way of thinking about movement, one that considers the multiplicity of manifestations that choreography can undertake. In an essay written by Forsythe, he articulates this very point, "to reduce choreography to a single definition is not to understand the most crucial of its mechanisms: to resist and reform previous conceptions of its definition" (2011 90). Underpinned by this statement, *Synchronous Objects* provides a point of departure from which to explore the possibility suggested by Forsythe, that choreography can be divisible from the human body and represented in alternative ways. On this basis, Forsythe poses the following question,

One could easily assume that the substance of choreographic thought resided exclusively in the body. But is it possible for choreography to generate autonomous expressions of its principles, a choreographic object, without the body? (ibid)

Serving as an impetus for the creation of *Synchronous Objects*, this enquiry is addressed through the website, and its contents provide us with a viable answer to Forsythe's question. In order to better understand this claim, let us consider the configuration of *Synchronous Objects* from an operational standpoint.

The introductory section of the website is divided into three primary sections labeled 'the dance', 'the data', and 'the objects'. By choosing one of these headings you are re-directed to a short essay explaining the details of each of the three sub-categories. The dance section outlines the organizational elements that make up the choreographic architecture of *OFTr*, and extrapolates on the highly methodical network of strategies that provide the framework of the piece. The intricate ways in which the movement material, cues and alignments operate within the dance, were decoded by the *Synchronous Objects* research team and organized into two separate data sets, which they labeled 'Spatial Data' and 'Attribute Data'. Drawn primarily from video recordings of the company performing *OFTr*, the spatial data was generated by mapping the locations of each dancer as they moved around the performance space. The attribute data is based on the dancers' experiential accounts of the ways in which the movement material, cues and alignments interacted throughout the work. Each data set provides quantifiable information about the spatial, visual and temporal aspects that form the choreographic structure of *OFTr*. This information was then

analyzed, translated and repurposed by academics in various other departments at Ohio State University resulting in the various 'Objects' that are available to view on the *Synchronous Objects* website.

In addition to the dance department, this project included participation from other departments such as animation, graphic design, geography, statistics and music, thus reflecting a genuine example of cross-disciplinary collaboration. The spatial and attribute data sets were made available to researchers from each department, and they were invited to experiment with ways in which the data could be deciphered and repurposed in a manner that made it relevant to their specific discipline. Forsythe refers to this phenomenon as 'physical thinking', a notion that is based on the premise that the scope of choreographic structure can reach beyond that which is generated by way of dancing bodies. Guided by Forsythe's question of "what else, besides the body, could physical thinking look like?" (2011 91), the interdisciplinary research teams were challenged to consider various ways in which the choreographic attributes of *OFTr* could be translated into their inherent languages. As explained by Creative Director Maria Palazzi,

As Bill explained his methodology for designing its choreography to us, we felt an instant connection to his organizational principles, his use of spatial geometry, and his creation of visual complexity because they were deeply related to organizational systems used in our disciplines. Suddenly we were released from looking for a linear story and instead could engage with *OFTr* as a contrapuntal composition of complex relationships, patterns and trends. (Palazzi, *Synchronous Objects*)

The result is a varied selection of translations of Forsythe's choreography as the project's participants manipulated the data sets and applied the information

through processes considered specific to each discipline. The exploration of each object on the website invites the public to re-consider the notion of choreography in its traditional sense, and investigate some of the ways in which choreographic strategies can be applied to topics that are seemingly unassociated with dance. Palazzi stresses the point that these explorations are not intended to eclipse the importance of the dancing body, but rather to broaden its legitimacy by realizing its transferrable contributions, “our objects are not a substitute for the live stage performance of *OFTr*, but offer alternative sites for understanding Forsythe’s work and seeing its choreographic structures unfold” (Palazzi, *Synchronous Objects*). Reiterating this point Forsythe states, “a choreographic object is not a substitute for the body, but rather an alternative site for the understanding of potential instigation and organization of action to reside” (2011 92).

Although *Synchronous Objects* is a valuable resource for the analysis of choreographic structure, it is not capable of providing a complete record of *OFTr* for the purposes of documenting, preserving and restaging the work. In fact this was never the intention of the project, as Creative Director Norah Zuniga Shaw explains:

We weren’t concerned with documenting or reconstructing the dance for the stage, nor were we concerned with purely scientific questions. Instead we worked with the Forsythe Company to unearth the choreographic building blocks of *OFTr*, quantify them, and repurpose this information visually and qualitatively. (Zuniga Shaw, *Synchronous Objects*)

Despite the fact that *Synchronous Objects* was not specifically designed to act as a record for the preservation of *OFTr*, this has inadvertently become a secondary effect of the project. The video representation of the work and the computer animated score both function as archival materials, which have preserved many of the dance's spatial, temporal and visual qualities. The process of restaging *OFTr* at Juilliard relied heavily upon the use of *Synchronous Objects* and as a result, its effectiveness as a mode of documentation has been brought into question.

Even though the original intention behind the development of *Synchronous Objects* was not to provide a record of *OFTr* for the purpose of restaging the dance, it is worth noting that certain facets of the project did prove to be useful in this instance. When considering the use of *Synchronous Objects* as a restaging tool in relation to this case study, there are two key considerations. The first of these is the fact that the role of the stager, which had previously been shared by multiple people, was limited to one individual with extensive knowledge of the work. In past instances of restaging *OFTr* staggers had the opportunity to offer plurality through the corroboration of their collective memories that allowed them to work together to demonstrate certain choreographic elements. In this case, without aid from his colleagues Roman was challenged to experiment with different ways of transmitting information about the theme of interdependency that is integral to the dance. *Synchronous Objects* afforded Roman the ability to share vital information about the work, and in particular about relationships that

are integral to the operation of the dance, which would have otherwise been extremely difficult to explain. Roman was able to identify and clearly explain the internal cueing system and hook-ups as they occur throughout the dance through the visual animations in *Synchronous Objects*.

The second consideration is the students' proficiency in navigating the technological aids that were made available to them. The studio housed two viewing stations that were readily accessible to the dancers throughout the entire rehearsal process. Each viewing station consisted of a large flat screen that displayed *Synchronous Objects* through a live Internet connection. Users were able to navigate through all of the applications that are available on the website, and were invited to make use of the viewing station at any point throughout the rehearsal. Students also had access to *Synchronous Objects* outside of the rehearsal studio on their personal devices, and could view the dance and any of the website's components at any time. To augment the two existing viewing stations students often brought their personal tablets, phones and laptop computers to rehearsals, meaning that many of the students had a mobile version of *Synchronous Objects* that they could refer to anywhere in the space. This multiplicity of viewing sites and increased access to the visual components of the dance made for a dramatic increase in productivity while the movement material was being learned, but also provided a unique set of challenges that will be discussed later.

Kinesthetic History:

Despite the multiple ways in which *Synchronous Objects* was used throughout the restaging process at Juilliard its primary function was to provide a record of the dance to which Roman could refer. The visual information made available through *Synchronous Objects* functioned as digital cues that activated Roman's own embodied memories of both making and performing the dance. Both Hahn and Hodes refer to the role of video in the activation of embodied memory and suggest that this is its most useful purpose in the practice of dance preservation. Of the use of video in the teaching practice of *nihon buyo* Hahn explains, "for the most part, media are permitted within the pedagogical system primarily as a device for extending memory, as a memory aid" (135). Similarly Hodes suggests, "video and film remember dances for us to extend the movement analog of oral history" (97). In this way, *Synchronous Objects* assisted in the retrieval of Roman's repertoire of experience with *OFTr*, and his kinesthetic history (as inscribed through the process of embodied inscription and recalled by way of visual cues) provided an additional mode through which to facilitate the transmission of choreographic information to the students at Juilliard.

The following sections detail the restaging process as it occurred throughout the six-week rehearsal period. First, I will provide a weekly summary of the rehearsals to establish an overview of the general timeline and progression of the work. Then, I will describe the modes of transmission that were used to

communicate the work to the students, focusing on Roman's use of visual, tactile-kinesthetic, and verbal cues. Finally, I will discuss the actual performances and explore ideas related to the ontology of the work.

Weekly Rehearsal Summary

Week 1:

As with the beginning of any project, the initial phase of restaging *OFTr* was geared towards establishing the groundwork for the remainder of the process. The first week of rehearsals focused primarily on Roman and the dancers becoming familiar with each other and the work, establishing some guidelines for the way in which the rehearsal time would be structured, as well as the important job of casting the dancers. In the first rehearsal Roman introduced himself and began explaining some of the most important structural and dramaturgical elements of the work. He gave an overview of *Synchronous Objects* and briefly showed the students the capabilities of the components on the interactive website. In this first rehearsal Roman emphasized the notion of group work and explained to the students that the overall functionality of the work was dependent on their ability to work as a cohesive unit. He used the phrases "autonomous for the greater good" and "everybody is responsible for everything" (Field Notes, 02/04/2013). However, despite Roman's best efforts to ensure the group that the piece looks much more complicated than it actually is, the initial response to the first viewing of the piece was one of overwhelming confusion.

At first glance *OFTr* reads as an intricately complex work, and many of the students commented on their initial fears about learning the dance. One student said, “every time we were ready to move onto a new section of the video I would watch it and think what are they doing? I’ll never figure it out” (anonymous), and another explained, “you would watch the piece on the website and it just looks like a mountain” (anonymous). The students’ reactions to the overwhelming density of the piece was matched by Juilliard faculty member and former Cunningham dancer Banu Ogan (the school’s appointed rehearsal director for *OFTr*) who shared the following comments:

I was so fascinated by how complex the *Synchronous Objects* looks, the dance looks so complex and I thought I couldn’t even begin to deconstruct it. As they were learning their individual parts it was hard for me to even find phrases or grounding points in the phrase. It is such a different movement style than I’m used to. (Ogan)

Admittedly, without being aware of the internal cues that govern the piece, it is easy to be deceived by the speed and apparent disorder that seem to render the piece un-learnable. In reality though, there is a remarkably clear structure that is expertly constructed to give the illusion of uncontrolled chaos. In order to alleviate some of the apprehension that emerged after the first viewing of the dance, Roman proceeded to explain the various components of the work that are illuminated in *Synchronous Objects*. He described the four key elements of the work: themes, cues, alignments and modalities and showed the students how they could view each of these components on the digital score through the website. Then, as if pre-empting some of the students’ fears relating to the

density of the work, Roman told the students about the Robert Scott expedition and introduced the dramaturgical (but also realistic) concept of effort and failure.

Starting from the very beginning, Roman taught the students an excerpt from 'tuna' and explained that the creation of *The Table Dance* emerged from The Forsythe Company dancers experimenting with ways that 'tuna' could be fit on and around the tables. He had the students explore the 'tuna' thematic before paring it down to a precise phrase of movement, at which point he constructed the phrase around the tables as it appears in *OFT*. It was also in this first rehearsal that Roman introduced the idea of the tables being sheets of ice and the space around the tables being the freezing cold waters below. He had the students explore the feeling of having "weightless legs" that were unable to transport them between tables and suggested that they had to rely on their upper body strength to pull them through the space. In later conversations Roman admitted to me that he conducted this particular restaging through a different methodological approach than he normally does by suggesting that the students think about the choreography first in terms of mechanics rather than movement quality. He explained, "it went backwards for me – I wasn't giving them the essence and then having them grow, it was a full-grown tree and then I had to pare it down to the seed" (Roman). The process continued like this until the choreographic structure was constructed in its entirety. It was only after the mechanics of the movement were set and inscribed into the bodies of the dancers that Roman was able to shift his attention completely towards the

movement quality and subtle nuances. Even though Roman himself explains the process as being backwards in the way he set the material first and explored conceptual themes later, my observations revealed that in actuality he started incorporating initial ideas about movement quality in these early rehearsals. For example, in the second half of the first rehearsal Roman invited the students to play around with the movement they had learned thus far. He had one student perform a section of the material and asked him to alter the timing and phrasing of that particular thematic. Meanwhile, the others were challenged to follow his timing while drawing on their senses to perceive, read, and interpret the cues given by a fellow dancer. This was the first of many times the group would be asked to experiment with the possible variations that lie just beneath the surface of the movement material in *OFTr*.

On the second day of rehearsals the group was divided into two separate casts of seventeen dancers each, and were assigned to a role based on their likeness (in some way) to one of The Forsythe Company's original cast members. Roman expressed that despite the multiple versions of the work that exist "in his head" for this particular re-staging he would be teaching *OFTr* "as it appears in the video on *Synchronous Objects*" (Field Notes 02/05/2013), and each dancer was assigned a character from the video to watch. Throughout the rest of the first week the students continued to learn the movement material at an astounding rate, and Roman fell into a routine of constructing and piecing together the choreography. The group would gather around the television set and watch a

short section of the dance, often two or three times with Roman pointing out the various cues and alignments that occurred during that particular section. It is worth noting that the annotation feature on *Synchronous Objects*, which highlights the cues and alignments, proved to be particularly useful here. Once the group had an idea of how the section was to operate mechanically they would move to the tables and practice embodying the material.

At this stage, Roman rarely worked with the group as a whole; instead he worked with small groups on the construction of the relationships that occur between the dancers and the tables. He worked with both casts at the same time, ensuring that both sets of dancers had an equal amount of time working with the tables. What struck me most during this initial phase of the process was the obvious sense of collegiality between the students as they worked together to construct the piece. There were many moments when the students would ask each other for help, with questions such as “can you see what he is doing right there on the video?” and “would you like to go over this section with me?” (Field Notes). As Roman was busy working with another group the students were able to work together to decode the information on *Synchronous Objects* in order to figure out the problem. Of course, there were instances where neither the video nor the digital score was able to provide clear answers, at which point the students would patiently wait for Roman to answer their queries. This well-organized system of watching the video, talking the dancers through the mechanics of the scene, physically demonstrating the movement themes, and then helping them to

construct the material on the tables proved to be a highly effective framework through which to conduct the rehearsals. By the end of the first week the group had learned and constructed about half the piece.

Week 2:

The second week of rehearsals continued along the same efficient course as the first. As Roman and the students became more familiar with their newly established working process they gained momentum and by the end of the tenth rehearsal they had finished piecing together the entire choreographic structure. The process continued to rely heavily on the video to get an overall idea about the mechanics and use of space, augmented by Roman's demonstrations and verbal cues to translate what they had seen into practice. Interestingly, at no point throughout this part of the process did Roman or the dancers refer to the written score, and rarely were the scoring applications on *Synchronous Objects* used as the dance was constructed.

Much of the work accomplished in the second week continued to explore the movement directives that inform the improvisational sections of the dance. Roman introduced the students to the Forsythian notion of 'reading' the thematic material and guided them through movement explorations to facilitate their growing understanding of the concept. In *OFT* there are a number of moments where the dancers are directed to perform an impromptu reading of another dancer (or dancers) in the space. Though it is considered to be improvisational because it is generated anew with each performance of the work, the act of

'reading' actually follows a rigorous set of instructions. In this work when a dancer is reading the movements of another they are actually both working from the same phrase of thematic material. For example, if dancer A is performing movement theme 4 then dancer B is reading the way that dancer A embodies movement theme 4 and interprets that theme in their own body as directed to by a specific instruction. Possible instructions may include physicalizing the theme using only one or two isolated body parts, or it might be to alter the timing, direction or sequencing of the theme. As one of the students explained, "it's not a free for all, it's as much a task as any other step because you're reading what you see and that is quite specific" (anonymous). The students experimented a lot with this as the work was constructed, although it is worth noting that the further they got into the rehearsal process the better their improvisational choices became. It was clear that their familiarity with the material continued to inform their decisions and their increasing comfort with the vocabulary allowed them to delve into more uncomfortable, and thus more exciting, improvisational choices.

The amount of repetition that this stage of the rehearsal process involved was key to the embodied learning of movement material. Roman had the students perform sections of the work, and eventually the whole piece, multiple times in rehearsals. Not only did this allow the material to be inscribed into the kinesthetic memory of the dancers, but it also provided a valuable opportunity for the cast who was not performing to learn visually through the embodied practice of their peers. Harkening back to the notion of group ecology, Roman was sure to

address the entire studio when he gave notes because as he often re-iterated, the interconnectivity of the work is impossible to ignore. At the end of the second week Roman commended the students on the speed at which they had digested the information and explained that he was both surprised and delighted that they had managed to construct the entire work in just two weeks. He admitted that his initial apprehension about setting the work on his own had been diffused, and that the students' expert ability to pick up the movement material from the video was integral to the success of the process thus far.

Week 3:

The third week of rehearsals began with an explanation by Roman of how he intended to move forward with the staging of the piece. He explained to the dancers that now that the work was mechanically and choreographically constructed, they would go back through the dance and discuss the meaning and impetus for the movement material in greater detail. He told the dancers, "the work starts here" (Field Notes, 02/18/2013). At this stage of the process my observations shifted from noting specific details about how the movement was being organized to include the imagery, comparative and metaphorical language that Roman used to share information with the dancers. His method of communicating adopted a more poetic tone and he began to utilize language in a way that elicited certain performative responses from the dancers. Phrases such as "be more utilitarian" (Field Notes, 02/18/2013) and "let your shoulders be in conversation with your hips" (Field Notes, 02/19/2013) began to draw more nuanced movement qualities from the dancers.

Another factor that became apparent as Roman worked towards a certain aesthetic with the piece was the previously inscribed movement habits of the dancers at Juilliard. For many of them, the classicism engrained in their bodies became somewhat of a hindrance when they were asked to disrupt the verticality to which they had become so accustomed. Though much of the Forsythian repertoire is based on the classical ballet vocabulary it becomes a challenge in and of itself to deconstruct that codification and rewrite the body's innate response to certain terms. In order to achieve the element of momentum that is so vital to this work Roman elicited the use of a few key phrases. His repeated use of the directives "find the connection and rebound", "you have to go down to go up and in to go out" and "find economy in your movement" (Field Notes) encouraged the dancers to explore a dynamic range of movement that typically falls outside the traditional ballet aesthetic. Particular attention was paid to the dancers' use of *épaulement*, which is a recurring theme in *OFTr*. Roman challenged the dancers to find elasticity in the position that would resonate through the whole body and provide an obvious transition into the next movement. It is this organic quality that fuels the notion of economy and implies that one movement moves seamlessly into the next. Of course the other consideration is that the piece moves so quickly that there is very little time to think about what comes next, so this economizing of the movement serves a dual purpose of being visually pleasing while also practical.

At this point in the rehearsal process it started to become clear that the dancers were feeling much more comfortable with certain sections of the work. The first half of the dance had a completely different feel to it than the second half did, illuminating the obvious observation that the more time the dancers had with the material the more it became inscribed into their bodies. Roman commented on the development of the work after a run-through one day by saying “it looked like you were dancing, and not just regurgitating the steps of my colleagues from the video” (Field Notes, 02/20/2013). In order to continue with the individualization of the roles that was starting to emerge Roman kept two of the dancers behind one day to show them some additional video footage of a particular section. There is a duet that takes place at the beginning of the piece, once the tables have been set, that is constructed as a reciprocal dialogue between two dancers. One dancer performs thematic material while the other ‘reads’ and then they switch roles. This duet is an integral part of the work as it sets up a large part of the choreographic structure and initiates the momentum of the piece. Roman’s intention behind sharing more video footage with the dancers was to offer them additional information about the improvisational decisions that they could make. Until now the dancers had only seen the version of the work on *Synchronous Objects*, and Roman wanted to reiterate the fact that the video shows only one set of choices made from a matrix of numerous possibilities.

The next day Roman re-iterated this notion to the rest of the group by facilitating a movement workshop that focused on improvisational choices and decision-

making. It began as a follow-the-leader exercise and then transitioned into a directed improvisational exploration, whereby the dancers were told to point their fingers in all directions and given the instruction to “really see” (Field Notes, 02/22/2013) where they were pointing. Roman’s intention with this exploratory exercise was to nudge the dancers towards thinking about how they were directing their energy and focus, how they were sharing energy, and what exactly they were seeing as they danced. All of this was to reiterate the point that the piece works most effectively when the dancers “read each other” and execute their tasks as though the piece is a “working organism” (Field Notes, 02/22/2013). *OFT* is a task-oriented choreographic work and is in no way rife with symbolic meaning. Rather, the fundamental essence of the work is to demonstrate an example of how, much like a piece of machinery, a group of bodies working together is capable of completing a task that otherwise might be impossible.

Week 4:

Week four consisted of only two rehearsals as Wednesday marked the beginning of Juilliard’s two and a half week spring break. Monday’s rehearsal began with the first cast performing a run-through that Roman described as being “too smooth” (Field Notes, 02/25/2013). He explained that the work had to move on to the next level now and become “not so smooth, more manic – like you are crazy people, it is going to feel like you are crazy” (Field Notes, 02/25/2013). Roman explained, “smooth doesn’t work” and suggested that the dancers needed to convey a deeper sense of panic (Field Notes, 02/25/2013). Again, he

reminded the dancers that this piece is part of a larger group of works that explore dramaturgical notions of effort and failure, and he suggested that the concept of attempting to accomplish the impossible should fuel their performative approach to the work.

The second cast then performed a full run-through for a number of guests who had arrived at the studio including: the production coordinators, director and assistant director of the dance division, stage manager, lighting designer, and costume coordinators. This was the first time the production team had seen a live performance of the work. Once the guests had left Roman gave his notes for the second cast and commented on the level of energy that they had brought to that performance. He explained that they had found the right amount of crescendo that is necessary for the piece and suggested that the piece should have a feeling of “being on the edge of your seat” (Field Notes, 02/25/2013). The sense of urgency felt by the dancers should be transmitted to the audience and leave them constantly wondering until the very last moment whether or not the group will be able to complete their task.

The next day the dancers had costume fittings, and a sense of excitement filled the air as the dancers realized that the performances were nearing. The costumes for *OFT* were originally designed to emulate street wear, with the dancers wearing various styles of pants and tops in an array of vibrant colours. The costumes that were used in the performances at Juilliard consisted mostly of

those that were used by the Pacific Northwest Ballet in their rendition of the work, augmented by a selection of items from Juilliard's own costume shop.

Interestingly, and unlike other restagings with which I have been involved, in this case the costumes were not determined by the dancer's role, nor were they chosen based on any previous performances of *OFT*. Instead, choices were made according to the way that the clothing fit each individual dancer, the range of motion that they provided and the way the various colours looked next to each other. However, Roman did want the two casts to resemble each other as much as possible, so the dancers either shared the costume if the sizing was appropriate, or the costume was emulated as closely as possible for the alternate cast members.

After a final run-through Roman left the dancers with a parting thought for them to consider over the spring break. He explained that he was now able to see the individual personalities of the dancers creeping into the work, and he encouraged them to continue thinking about the ways in which they could keep making the work their own. In other words, the dancers were invited to begin to incorporate their personal kinesthetic histories into the tapestry of the work.

Week 5:

When the rehearsals resumed after spring break there were no longer television screens with *Synchronous Objects* set up in the studio. Instead, the focus was entirely on the movement and on developing the necessary

performative and dynamic qualities that are integral to the work, a process that Roman aptly referred to as “texturizing the piece” (Field Notes, 03/18/2013). Roman nudged the students back into the feeling of *OFTr* by conducting a two-hour movement workshop, which consisted of guided explorations of the improvisational tasks the students had now become accustomed to. The focus of this workshop was once again on “looking and seeing” and on improvising material that was based on the interpretive reading of a movement phrase. Roman explained that this approach was designed to get the students back into the spirit of the piece. However I suggest that it also served as a means through which the students could re-activate their embodied memories of the work.

Interestingly, when I interviewed the students about their experience many of them admitted that they did not practice the dance over the break. Some did practice, some thought about the choreography, and some re-familiarized themselves with it by watching the video on *Synchronous Objects* the night before. However, regardless of the ways in which they chose to think about the work over the break, they all remembered it in their bodies. Even if they thought there were sections that they could not quite recall, they explained that as soon as they started embodying the work again it came right back. One student told me that after returning from the break there were “a couple of stumbles here and there for myself, but after doing it once it came right back to me” (anonymous), and another said, “the movement was all there” (anonymous). This provides evidence of the way in which kinesthetic inscription works, and supports my

proposition that kinesthetic history functions as a legitimate mode of dance preservation. I realize that the students were only away from the work for two and a half weeks, which is a relatively short amount of time when talking about preservation. However, it is a viable proposition that the amount of time a dancer has had with a particular work should be proportionate to the length of time that work will remain in their body. In other words, the more repetitions of a movement or sequence of movements one performs, the deeper it becomes inscribed into his or her bodily memory.

During the fifth week of rehearsals *OFTr's* musical accompaniment was introduced to the dancers for the first time. Until now, the dancers had only heard the music when they watched the video on *Synchronous Objects*, and had been performing their run-throughs of the work in silence. The accompaniment is most accurately described as a soundscape that is comprised of a selection of twenty-four pre-recorded sounds, which are mixed in real-time alongside the performance of the dance. As is the case with the dance, much of the soundscape is improvisational, with the exception of a handful of pre-determined cues. Caley Monahon-Ward, the musician who performed the live accompaniment at Juilliard explains, "there is no score and there are very few instructions" (Monahon-Ward). When asked about the guidance he was provided by composer Thom Willems, Monahon-Ward replied, "he didn't really give me much information as far as which of the various sounds should accompany which movements, that's really up to me" (Monahon-Ward). In a rather unconventional reversal of roles, it is the musician who takes his lead from the dancers and

follows their timing, as it is established through the internal cuing system.

Monahon-Ward explains:

The soundtrack really operates much more broadly in terms of the major contours of the piece. And so what I end up doing is basically bringing in sounds that are rhythmically really active when there's a lot of activity on the stage. So, I'm kind of tracking the number of dancers who are at the tables as opposed to standing by at the back and what their movement is like, so if they're doing some kind of legato movements, like slow sweeps across the table or something then I'm trying to find 'whooshy' sounds that kind of correspond to that – in a way it's kind of obvious. If they're moving really violently and quickly then I would bring in something that's percussive and really dense, and for the solos the musical dynamic comes way down and I bring in kind of low frequency ambient stuff – like a low kind of humming feel or something. For the finale, which is where the movement is really dense and active and there's eight themes happening at once that are all different, then it's kind of like all in so then the job is to create as much chaos as possible. (Monahon-Ward)

In performance the soundscape is meant to be amplified through the theatre at near-deafening decibels. There are two primary implications of the extreme sound levels. Firstly, it produces a certain amount of discomfort for the audience and contributes to the desired affect of pushing them to the edge of their seats. Secondly, it helps to generate increased levels of adrenaline for the dancers and heightens their sense of awareness, urgency, and energy.

Unfortunately, this newly discovered energy that the dancers found as they began rehearsing with the soundscape likely contributed to two of the dancers sustaining injuries in the week leading up to the performance. The first cast was nearing the end of a full run-through of the piece in rehearsal when one of the dancers sprained his ankle. Due to the interconnectivity of the cuing system, the loss of one dancer meant that the dance ground to a halt, as he was no longer

able to give or receive the necessary cues. It was as though a cog in the wheel literally stopped working and there was no alternative but to stop. In order to continue with the run-through the member of the second cast who shared the role with the injured dancer stepped into his place. Devastatingly, the next day that same dancer (who was now dancing in both casts) dislocated his shoulder in the final minute of the second cast's run-through. Consequently, the piece had to be adapted in a way that had other dancers moving into their roles momentarily so that their cues could be given and received. This last minute re-working of the piece proved to be a challenging exercise, though for Ogan not quite as complicated as she might have thought:

When the two students got injured and we had to teach the part again from beginning to end I saw 'oh, it's not that complicated really'. There is lots of repeated material, there are a couple of phrases that are repeated and there are many different add-ons and variations, little things that are just slightly different. But, it isn't as though every step is a whole new phrase, so that was interesting to see that. (Ogan)

Once again, Roman employed the use of video to show the structural mechanics to the dancers who were standing in for their injured classmates. Additionally, although the injured dancers were not able to perform the material fully, they were on hand to explain the intricacies of the choreography to those who were taking on their role.

Week 6:

In the sixth and final week the rehearsals moved into Juilliard's Peter Jay Sharp Theatre. The costumes had been finalized and the entire production team came together to make the restaging of *OFTr* a reality. The week consisted of a

series of technical and dress rehearsals while Roman continued to refine the piece right up until the very end. Not surprisingly, the move to the theatre exposed a few of the growing pains that typically accompany the transition from the rehearsal studio to the stage, such as adapting to the vastness of the space and altering the amount of energy that is required to project to the back of the theatre. However, the students at Juilliard are used to performing in this theatre, so in actuality the move was relatively seamless.

Although at this point in the process the work was clear, concise, and well executed, Roman's advice was to keep finding innovation in the movement. The process of bodily inscription appeared to actually be so effective that the dancers were beginning to lose some of the impromptu decision-making that renders the work so exciting. Instead, some of the dancers seemed to be slightly resting on the laurels of good decisions they had made in the past and this did not go unnoticed by Roman. He said, "boredom is the best friend of improvisation" (Field Notes, 03/29/2013), and explained that when this occurred in the company, Forsythe would begin to make changes to the choreography in order to keep the material fresh. In this case, Roman did not have the power to make those kinds of authorial decisions about the work, and instead he had to encourage the dancers to find new ways of approaching the existing material. I will discuss the implications of this practice on the ontology of the work at the end of this chapter, but first I will consider, in greater detail, the specific modes of

transmission that Roman employed throughout the duration of the rehearsal process.

Modes of transmission:

To echo the methodological framework of Hahn's *Sensational Knowledge* the next section illuminates the various modes of transmission that were employed by Roman in the restaging of *OFTr*. In agreement with Hahn I suggest that the majority of the choreographic information was transmitted by way of visual, tactile-kinesthetic, and oral/aural cues. Notably, Roman's handwritten score as well as the scoring applications on *Synchronous Objects* were rarely used throughout the process. Instead, the information transmission relied almost entirely on Roman's embodied communication of the dance. The exception to this was of course the video, which acted as a visual, spatial and temporal map of the work to which Roman and the students referred when necessary. However, to delve beneath the overall contours of the work Roman shared his own kinesthetic history through the deployment of an interrelated set of visual, tactile, and verbal cues.

Visual Cues

The visual transmission of *OFTr* occurred primarily through two modes of observation. The first of these was through the video of the work that is available to view on the *Synchronous Objects* website, and the second was through the lived experience of watching Roman's own physical demonstrations in the rehearsals. It is difficult to say which (if either) was more effective in terms of the

actual transmission of movement material because they occurred simultaneously throughout the process. It is generally agreed upon that video provides a visual record that successfully conveys vital information about the visual structure and overall appearance of a work. In this case, the video on *Synchronous Objects* has the ability to be viewed either from the front or from a bird's eye perspective, which proved to be extremely useful. The additional camera angle allowed Roman and the dancers to view much of the complex maneuvering that occurred both on top and behind the tables that is otherwise obstructed by the traditional proscenium/frontal view. Furthermore, there is a function on *Synchronous Objects* that allows the viewer to watch the video while a simultaneous score is traced below. While this feature was not used regularly throughout the process, it did provide an additional layer of information that assisted the students in their understanding of exactly where thematic material, cues and alignments appeared in the work. Despite the obvious advantages of the video recording it did present a number of practical complications that hindered the restaging process. The most frustrating, and most common complaint about digital technologies was that the video did not always work as it should. Resulting from issues such as poor internet signal and slow connection speed, there were many times when the group was gathered around the television screen to watch a segment of the video, only to have it freeze. Roman and the production team spent a substantial amount of time trying to troubleshoot the issue, but many times it was abandoned for the far more immediate option of showing the movement phrase himself. For the most part, the video was used to give a general overview of the specific

section of the piece that was being worked on and to point out the cues and alignments of which the dancers needed to be aware. Due to the fact that there is so much happening at one time in *OFT* this continuous process of 'show and tell - then move' proved to be extremely efficient. However, when the video did not work Roman was forced to spend much more time choreographing the timing structures that the video could show more effectively.

When the video did work as intended it undoubtedly contributed to the speed at which the actual choreographic construction of the work occurred. The students' mobile access to the video allowed them to learn the work on their own time and come to rehearsals already knowing much of the movement material that was to be taught that day in rehearsal. As Roman explains, this was both an advantage and a detriment:

One thing that was challenging for me was the inability for me to physically set all fourteen parts on my own, piece by piece, and give everybody direct information. Because the piece is so heavily counterpointed, it is impossible to teach all fourteen parts at once in relationship to that counterpoint. Instead, I had to allow people learn it partially from the video and that kind of tinged a bit, because I had to give up control. I just didn't have any other choice but to give it up for that moment. They are so expert at learning from video now because they are the YouTube, iPad generation and that was helpful, but I've had to go back and shave off the individual interpretations that appeared in that video and give them additional information to what appears in that 2-dimensional thing they are seeing on the screen. (Roman)

The individual interpretations referred to by Roman are the subtle nuances and personality quirks that the original cast members embodied, which may or may not be suitable for a new set of dancers. Roman explained that even though the casting process thoroughly considered individual personalities and attempted to

match Juilliard dancers with appropriate counterparts from the original cast, the intention is to overlook specific characterizations and bring a new sense of individuality to the role. He explains:

Two of the students were adopting Sang's character for example and another was looking at the way Richard physicalized the material. It was a challenge for me, while I was showing somebody else something choreographically, to monitor how they were seeing and to see them absorb the characters from the original cast rather than what they were doing into their physical being. That was difficult to rein in or keep track of. (Roman)

It is for this reason that Roman admitted that he prefers not to use video at all in a restaging process. Instead, he would rather teach the movement material and assign the improvisational tasks before the new cast has seen a recorded performance of the complete work. Part of Roman's job as the stager is to tailor an individualized version of the work for the specific dancers he has in front of him and to give them the version that works best for them and their particular physicalities. The video featured on *Synchronous Objects* represents just one possible version of the work, as it was performed at one time, but it by no means should act as the *only* version. Before arriving at Juilliard Roman re-familiarized himself with numerous versions of the work as it had been recorded on multiple occasions. Drawing on a number of performances, as well as his own repertoire of embodied experiences, he was able to craft a version of the work that was most suited to the Juilliard students. This method involves a complex editing process and hinges on Roman's ability to deconstruct the individual components of the work and then reconstruct them in a manner that is congruent with the overall ethos of the work.

Seeing as this restaging at Juilliard was the first time the work had been set with only one ballet master, Roman was forced to allow the video a more prominent role in the process than he would have liked. Due to the overwhelming density of the piece there was no way Roman would have been able to teach each of the individual roles in their entirety in the allocated time. So, the video was made available to the students from the very beginning, and in some ways, Roman relied on it to act as a sort of teaching assistant throughout the process. The students relied heavily on the video as well, and often they would arrive to rehearsals having already gone ahead and taught themselves the material as they saw it on the video. Though Roman recognized the ambition and professionalism that this showed on behalf of the students, he admitted that he would regularly have to go back and have them unlearn that material for some reason. Most commonly, the students had taught themselves phrases of the dance that they had not realized were actually improvised. Although they were meant to be responding to the same improvisational tasks as the dancer on the video, the physical manifestation of those tasks were intended to represent the embodied response of each individual dancer as opposed to an imitation of the dancer on the screen. When asked about the experience of learning the material from video the students agreed that they found it to be challenging at times. One student commented:

I think it was a hindrance because he gave us so much time to work on our own. When he was putting the piece together we all had so much time to go off and learn something by ourselves before we got to it. I think that because we just went to the video and learned everything we could,

everything kind of became set in our heads. So, he has been chipping away at that, but in the beginning it was hard to get out of that because I was like I'm going to do it like Ioannis because that's who I watched and how I got all my information. (Anonymous)

Another student agreed, "I learned step by step what he does in the video, so then to strip it down and start doing your own thing is difficult" (anonymous). The process of unlearning movement material is especially difficult once it has been inscribed into the dancer's muscle memory through embodied repetition. However, after Roman explained the choreographic structures and improvisational frameworks the students were better able to understand how to incorporate their own physical choices into the tapestry of the work.

For the students, learning *OFT* turned out to be more than just imitating the movement material and putting it all together on stage. Due to the complexity and density of the work, the process also involved learning to facilitate Forsythe's choreographic methodology and make impromptu decisions in response to the work's rigorous contrapuntal structure. Much of the improvisational material in *OFT* is designed to follow an extremely specific framework of reading the movements of other dancers in the space, and as one student explains this reading enacts a constant negotiation between the movement material and the rest of the ensemble: "I have a few moments where I am improvising and I could be reading anyone in the room at those times, so what I'm reading changes depending on who I'm even looking at, not only what those individuals are doing" (anonymous). At any point in the piece there may be multiple dancers working in

this way, receiving their improvisational cues from the improvised material of others. This reciprocal continuity results in a work that is in a constant state of evolution and transformation, and it is for this reason that the concept of 'seeing' is of vital importance to the execution of the work.

From the outset of the restaging process Roman made frequent and repeated references to the element of sight and its importance to the work. Though there are dramaturgical underpinnings related to the Robert Scott complex and ideas about being lost and frantically searching for a mode of survival, the need to see each other in the performance space is absolutely vital to the functionality of the work. As the forward momentum of the piece hinges upon the dancers' execution of, and response to, predetermined cues they must be constantly aware of what is going on around them in the space. This genuine need for a keen sense of awareness is compounded by the fact that when dancers are reading the movements of others, and generating their own improvised responses, they are often working in new and unexplored territory with every performance of the work.

When Roman referred to the element of seeing one another in rehearsals he often coupled it with an explanation of the ways in which the overall ecology of the piece functions as a result of the dancers' ability to see each other at all times. He made comments such as "it is important to look around in this piece" (Field Notes, 02/12/2013) and "the communication is equally as important as the

dynamics of the movement” (Field Notes, 02/07/2013), and it was early in the process, during the fourth rehearsal, when Roman noted “this is the first time I think you’ve realized that you can’t do this alone” (Field Notes, 02/07/2013). What Roman was referring to was the overwhelming sense of collaboration that is required to perform this piece, a reality that presented itself late in the rehearsal process when two of the dancers got injured. The fact that these injuries occurred just over a week before the scheduled performance, the entire ensemble was obviously shaken. They were clearly concerned for their peers, but there was also an overwhelming sense of tension as the entire group realized the importance of each and every individual dancer’s role in the ecological functionality of the work.

When asked about their personal views on what *OFT* is about many of the students answered with a response pertaining to the cohesion and collaborative nature of the work. One student said:

Its about trying to complete a task as a group, but doing things differently while still having to work as an organism that’s vibrating all together. We are all doing different things but we are all together, and we are trying to complete one thing by the end of it. (Anonymous)

Scholars have referred to the idea of a shared kinesthetic experience by different terms. Susan Foster calls it ‘kinesthetic empathy’ (2011), Erin Manning refers to it as an ‘ecology of practices’ (2009) and Cynthia Novack alludes to the notion of ‘kinesthetic collaboration’ (1990). Though the terminology may vary slightly, the

essence of the concept remains the same. Fraleigh describes the energetic force of ensemble work in the following excerpt:

Moving together as a group has to do with intention, not simply the number of people onstage. A group performs as a group through the cultivation of some common characteristic; in dance this may be accomplished in various ways – spatial, rhythmic, emotional – or it may be established physically through body contact. (208)

In this case, the ecology of the group that is so integral to the performance of *OFT* is established through eye contact, watching and seeing one another so as to be able to read the cues that propel the piece. Roman admits that this is one element of the work that he feels gets lost in the video, and emphasizes the importance of going back and reiterating how crucial it is to the performance of the work:

I think what was missing that we had to keep backtracking on was the idea of ensemble. Because they were following the person in the purple shirt the whole time, and I was trying to teach them as we went along how to see the dance, how it was cued and when we'd go back and I'd go through all 17 characters 'let's just watch you' and watch and tell them why they were moving and what their cues were. They were just watching themselves even though they were hearing that I was saying that person gives you the cue, but they were only doing their thing and then they would look at the moment they needed to get the cue and then they would go – instead of it all being one thing. So the essence was really learning how to work as an ensemble and seeing what you're doing as you look to see what everybody else is doing and why it affects what you're doing and why you affect what they're doing. That was the essence of what they didn't get right away from having to learn it on the video because they were just learning themselves. (Roman)

It was this essence of the work that Roman had to transmit through his own presence in the space. There were numerous verbal cues directing the students towards an understanding of the concept, but one of the most effective ways Roman communicated the energetic intention was through his demonstrative

physicality. At numerous points throughout the restaging process Roman captivated the students through his physical demonstrations, and as he explains, shared information that gets otherwise lost in the video. In addition to the performative qualities that have been so deeply embedded into his kinesthetic memory through more than one hundred performances of the work, there remains an embodied repertoire of experience that he drew upon to facilitate an accurate restaging of *OFTr*.

On numerous occasions, Roman identified mistakes that had been performed during the recorded version of *OFTr* that is shown on *Synchronous Objects*. His extensive knowledge of the work allowed him to be able to identify mistakes and inconsistencies within the video that might otherwise be overlooked. I often noted him saying things like “that’s what that was supposed to be, but it didn’t work” and “if you saw it otherwise on the video it’s wrong” (Field Notes, 02/08/2013). This tended to occur earlier in the rehearsal process, as the students were learning the movement material, leaving Roman ample time to ‘fix’ the learnt mistakes. However, that it occurred at all highlights one of the primary challenges that video recordings present. Hahn identifies the same issue shared with her by a dancer in her study: “what is problematic about learning dances from these tapes is that if performers in Japan have made mistakes during the performance, we have no way of knowing” (143). It is precisely for this reason that the presence of someone who has a lived experience of the work is integral to the restaging process. As Roman remarks:

That's the problem with all this modern technology sometimes. It's great and it gets the job done, its just that the humanity, what goes into the construction of these things sometimes gets lost for a time, and then you have to find a way of getting it back. (Roman)

Tactile-Kinesthetic Cues

The way that Roman got it back was through immersing himself deep into the restaging process, and by utilizing his physical presence in the space to transmit his embodied knowledge of the work through tactile and kinesthetic cues. Operating beyond what is transmittable through demonstration and imitation, tactile cues are capable of evoking distinct kinesthetic sensibilities that can communicate a great deal about the work. As Hahn explains: “the practice of learning through visual imitation, repetition, and close proximity to the teacher reinforces imprinting – a transference and fixing of dance information in a student’s physical memory” (83). What is important to this discussion is Hahn’s reference to the student and teacher sharing a close proximal space to one another, as it is only through an intimate spatial relationship that tactile and kinesthetic cues can be used to facilitate the transmission process.

It is important to differentiate between tactility and kinesthesia in order to understand the ways in which these two types of transmission functioned in the restaging of *OFTr*. Tactility refers directly to the sense of touch, and one’s response to tactile feedback is generated through the proprioceptive assimilation of being touched. Tactile cues possess the unique ability to provide detailed information about the way it feels to touch and be touched, and is an important

consideration due to the amount of partner work in *OFT*. Throughout the piece every dancer forms hundreds of tactile relationships with other dancers, the floor, and the tables. The amount of tactile information being fed back to the dancers at any given moment is overwhelming, and their physical responses to the tactile cues that emerge serve to add further dynamics to the work. The opening and closing scenes, which have the dancers running while dragging the tables behind them, effectively punctuates the high level of tactility that is present throughout the piece, and it invites the audience directly into the experience by eliciting an innate kinesthetic response.

Both Foster and Hahn refer to the viewer's sensory experience of watching dance as 'kinesthetic empathy' (2011, 2007), and Hahn describes it as "an empathy rooted in the body that draws on kinesthesia – the sense that comprehends the body's weight, spatial orientation, and movement of muscles, tendons, and joints" (84). The rationale behind kinesthetic empathy is related to the neurological explanation of mirror neurons and suggests that as humans we have the ability to sense what others feel, and therefore when we watch someone else dancing we can empathetically internalize that sensation and imagine what it might feel like to be performing the same movements. According to Hahn:

It plays an important role in movement transference, in which a dancer, experiencing and physically identifying closely with the movements of a teacher, sympathetically coordinates her muscles to resemble the teacher's dance. The alignment between bodies via kinesthesia imprints movement and reinforces kinesthetic empathy for future lessons. (84)

Acting in tandem with tactile feedback, kinesthetic empathy augments the visual components of demonstration and imitation by provoking a deeper sensorial relationship to the movement material that is being performed. Roman utilized both types of cues in the physical transmission of *OFTr*, and by doing so was able to facilitate sensorial experiences for the students.

Although demonstration was broadly discussed in the previous section as a mode of visual transmission, it warrants further consideration here as a vehicle for fostering kinesthetic empathy. Roman's physical demonstration of movement phrases, modalities and gestures offered much more than just a visual reference for the students to emulate. His corporeal execution of various elements of the work provided an interconnected network of cues for the students to read, interpret, and incorporate into their own embodied understanding of the material. Drawing on the neurobiological mirror neuron theory, it can be argued that Roman's frequent use of ballet vocabulary (as communicated through his bodily and verbal cues) served to enhance the students' ability to imitate his demonstrations, as they all shared a thorough knowledge of the lexicon to which he referred. For example, when Roman demonstrated an *épaulement* line or a *rond de jambe* the students could immediately access that step from their own repertoire of experience, thus enacting a sense of collective kinesthetic history across the group.

In addition to providing a point of visual and kinesthetic reference for the students, Roman's demonstrations enabled the retrieval of his own embodied memories of the work. I observed many instances where Roman would watch a section on the video and then say "I have to get it in my body first" (Field Notes, 02/14/2013), before he was able to accurately teach the movement phrase to the students. Not surprisingly, this usually occurred when Roman was attempting to teach material that he himself had not performed. Although he was obviously fluent in the movement vocabulary and the sequencing of the twenty-five thematic phrases, he had to re-familiarize himself with the specific additions and variations that his cast mates had performed in their individual roles. This process of retrieval and re-familiarization through embodiment harkens back to the notion of corporeal inscription as it relates to the activation of muscle memory. Ethnographer Jaida Kim Samudra suggests, "we can record and translate kinesthetic experiences as they become memory in our body" (678), and in turn, the re-embodiment of those memories allows for the retrieval and re-activation of one's repertoire of kinesthetic experiences. Similarly, when the students returned to Juilliard after their spring break they too experienced the retrieval of muscle memory through kinesthetic experience. Many of them admitted that even though they had not practiced the work during the break as soon as they began to physically immerse themselves back into the rehearsal process their bodies innately knew what to do.

Another way that Roman facilitated the tactile-kinesthetic transmission of movement material was through his own physical participation at certain points in the rehearsal process. On numerous occasions Roman would stand in for one of the dancers in order to explain how to perform a particular piece of the choreography. This strategy was most often used in partnering sections to demonstrate effective use of weight and correct body placement for the execution of lifts, although Roman also sometimes used his own body to work out the mechanical construction of complicated transitions onto and off the tables. This practice does more than simply demonstrate an action; it enacts a reciprocal kinesthetic experience that provides detailed sensory information about the timing, flow and intent of a certain movement. As Hahn explains:

When someone/something contacts our body we can perceive its movement quality, such as the speed and direction of its action. For example, if someone takes your hand, swings, and releases it in an upward toss, you experience this arm gesture through touch. The energy, or force, of the tactile encounter imparted a speed and direction of motion to your body. (101)

In this way, Roman's physical transmission of sensory cues provided invaluable information to the dancers about the ways in which certain movements should feel, a sense that is not available through any other mode of documentation of transmission. Of course, visual demonstrations and verbal explanations can give clues as to how the execution of a lift or partnering section *should* feel, but no other direction is as authentic as the actuality of sensing that lived experience. According to Hahn "this full-bodied feature of the sense is ideal for dance transmission, where the entire (receptive) body can feel and mediate movement

qualities” (100). Although tactile-kinesthetic transmission is an integral part of any restaging process, the complex web of interconnections and relationships in *OFTr* provides a clear example through which to interrogate its use as a mode of communicating valuable information about the dance. The speed at which the piece unfolds as well as the intricate cuing system and precarious placement of the tables all contribute to the heightened sensory awareness that is required to perform the work. Roman’s extensive experience as a dancer in *OFTr* undeniably contributed to the apparent ease with which he was able to physically guide the students through their intricate negotiations with all of the work’s elements.

Verbal Cues

My first instinct was to assume the priority of visual cues over any others when attempting to determine their efficacy as modes of transmission in the restaging process. I have since discovered that in this case Roman’s deployment of verbal communication proved to be irreplaceable. In truth this should not be surprising, considering the variety of traditions that rely primarily on oral history to share dances. However, the somewhat tenuous relationship between dance and language has exposed some doubt as to whether linguistic signifiers can be used to accurately describe movement. Dance studies scholars such as Gay Morris (1996), Jane C. Desmond (1997), and Alexandra Carter (2004) have challenged the long-standing assumption that language is capable of communicating an authentic description of movement and gesture. Morris

asks, “what is dance’s relationship to language and is it possible to deconstruct the dichotomy between mind and body that has worked to dance’s disadvantage for so long?” (1996 2). At the root of Morris’ query is the reality that dance has traditionally been trivialized by theories that equate value to linguistic description. Similarly, Ness suggests, “dance was often cast in oppositional terms as the ‘nonverbal’ medium of communication. This implicitly positioned dance as an inferior medium, a relatively primitive counterpart to language” (2008 7). Conversely, scholars such as Friedman and Hahn suggest that language, shared through oral/aural transmission, is capable of illuminating meta-narratives that can augment and enhance the communicative powers of dance. Friedman argues that through oral history “we have a chance to reveal alternatives considered, but not taken, revealing the full three-dimensional humanity of historical action” (2005 36). Likewise, Hahn explains, “I found that teachers’ articulations in lessons form a meta-language, a unique dance instructional language reflecting a varied and deeply complex matrix of information” (119). Despite such contrasting opinions, my observations echoed those of Hahn and unveiled multiple ways in which verbal cuing proved to dramatically enhance the transmission process.

While restaging *OFT* Roman utilized verbal cues in a number of different ways that I have classified as: directive, intentional, referential, and metaphorical. I have devised these terms to identify and further analyze the specific uses of verbal language that Roman deployed throughout the process. Directive cues

refer to uses of language that indicated to the students *what* should be happening at any given moment, *when* and *where* the action was to take place, and *who* was involved in the particular activity. In essence, directive language was quite literally intended to direct the construction of the choreography, and it was often used as the first point of departure in explaining how the work fit together. For instance, Roman often utilized directive language when the group was watching the section they were about to construct on the video. He would explain to the students exactly what was happening in the video as it happened with a commentary to the effect of “see, there’s Cyril and that roll on the floor is the cue for Fabrice and Yoko to enter the space”. Then, when the group moved to the tables to piece the section together Roman’s verbal cues directed the formation of the choreographic structure with instructions such as “grab back of right hand with palm of left” and “use left arm to push off” (Field Notes, 02/04/2013). The directive cues were extremely specific, and often related to precise anatomical, spatial, and temporal configurations. They were also the most universal set of instructions the students received, and due to their specificity allowed little room for interpretation. The use of directive cues allowed Roman to relay information about the structural foundation of the work with relative ease and efficiency. For the students, the directive information they received provided a clear verbal counterpart to the set of visual clues about the structure they were able to see on the video.

Differing slightly from directive instructions, intentional cues were employed by Roman to explain *why* certain elements of the work are necessary. Operating on a broader conceptual level, intentional cues conveyed information about the governing principles of the work, such as the functionality of the internal cuing system and the choreographic design of the works contrapuntal structure. The most important intentional cue Roman communicated was the explanation that the dance operates as a task-oriented challenge. It was vital for the students to understand that the movement material in *OFTr* is not intended to be movement for movement's sake, but that there is an evolving, fluctuating system of interconnected tasks that actually drives the momentum of the dance forward.

Intentional language was also used when directing the students in their improvisational tasks. When Roman described the concept of improvisational reading he explained to the dancers that the intention of the task is to see what another body in the space is doing and to interpret their actions through your embodiment of the phrase; in other words "to see the body part and make decisions in relation to it" (Field Notes, 03/18/2013). Without a detailed explanation of the precise rules governing the improvisations they were intended to follow, the students would have struggled to decode that information from the visual clues that are evident on the video. Unlike the directive cues, which tended to be more prevalent in the early stages of rehearsal, intentional cues continued to be verbalized throughout the duration of the process. Roman constantly reiterated the most integral intentional concept, which was the

necessity that the dancers continued to look at one another and really see what they were doing. At one point he described the importance of seeing each other as “a communicative dialogue between the ranks of the working group – the communication is equally as important as the dynamics of the movement” (Field Notes, 02/07/2013). Though Roman is referring to the visual and kinesthetic communication that occurs between the dancers on stage, his explanation could also be applied to the restaging process on a broader level. The verbal dialogue that Roman employed throughout the restaging of *OFTr* proved to be equally important to the transmission of movement material through other modes of sensorial communication.

Of vital importance to the restaging of *OFTr* was the ways in which Roman was able to use language to elicit the particular corporeal execution of certain elements of the work. To do so, Roman employed the use of referential and metaphorical linguistic cues to guide the students on *how* to embody specific movement material. Referential cues were used to draw comparisons between desired movement qualities through external references that did not necessarily pertain directly to the work. In other words, they provided a variety of contextual lenses through which the dancers could consider their approach towards the movement material. Roman used a range of culturally specific referential cues when describing both desirable and undesirable movement qualities and stylistic embellishments. For example, he often advised the students against adopting the nuances of other movement vocabularies with comments such as “no Martha Graham pleadings” (Field Notes, 02/04/2013) or “don’t get Baroque” (Field Notes,

03/25/2013). On one occasion he referred to the students' classical ballet training and said, "it's very Cecchetti, head to the working leg" (Field notes, 02/19/ 2013) to describe the relationship between a *tendu* and the eye focus in one particular section. These verbal cues proved to be incredibly effective because they related directly to the collective kinesthetic history of the dancers, and would not otherwise be applicable had the group not possessed a shared cultural understanding of those references.

In addition to the pre-existing culturally specific references the group had in common, they developed their own lexicon of referential cues throughout the process, which became adopted as universally understood terms within the studio. As the thematic material became inscribed and the work began to take choreographic shape, Roman and the dancers began to refer to specific moments in the dance through their own colloquial language. For instance phrases of thematic material were ascribed referential labels such as "duckie" and "Fab dance", and various sections of the work were often referred to by directive terms such as "Ingrid sit-up" and "reset". When Roman asked the dancers to begin the material at the "reset" section, they all intuitively knew what he meant and would proceed directly to their starting positions. In this way referential cuing acted as a sort of short-hand instructional language that would have seemed odd to anyone not privy to their ascribed meaning.

Adding a further layer to the concept of *how* the dancers were guided to execute the material, Roman used metaphorical language and imagery to elicit certain performative responses. By traditional definition "metaphor is a matter of words,

not thought. Metaphor occurs when a word is applied not to what it normally designates, but to something else” (Lakoff & Johnson 119). When perceived in this way metaphorical language can be employed to facilitate a unique process of embodiment for dancers that is referential to an object or experience that seems to have no relevance to the work itself. It enables opportunities to explore the kinesthetic relationship between movement, language, and one’s pre-existing repertoire of experiences. According to Fraleigh the use of metaphorical language and imagery is integral to the process of restaging an existing work:

In order to reconstruct or to dance another choreographer’s work, a dancer strives to recreate the choreographer’s aesthetic intentions – to embody them in performance. Thus the imagery that brings out the aesthetic intent of the dance – whether it is focused in qualitative properties of movement or designed to project, represent, or symbolize something else through movement – is crucial to the dancer’s understanding. (210)

The use of metaphorical language and imagery cues pervades dance practice and discourse in the areas of pedagogy and somatics, but it has rarely been mentioned in discussions of restaging choreographic works. Yet my observations at Juilliard showed that its efficacy as a communicative tool was incredibly valuable. Metaphorical language appeared to be most useful when refining the movement quality and performative subtleties. Roman used images such as a “helicopter”, “Egyptian hieroglyphics”, and “corkscrewing” to evoke particular movement qualities from the dancers. In a case such as this, where the participants share similar cultural and experiential backgrounds, this type of metaphorical cuing proved to show little discrepancy in the individual dancer’s perception of the image. However, in situations where the cultural identities of

the participants are more diverse interpretation is bound to become an underlying consideration. One of the advantages of verbal communication in this instance was that Roman's presence in the space allowed for a reciprocal dialogue between him and the students. If there happened to be any confusion it was settled immediately through a verbal exchange. Many of the students identified this reciprocity as being an integral part of the process. One student explained:

There are times when you have a whole piece in front of you on a screen and you see it and you still don't really know what's going on, and having someone who does, who can explain it is invaluable. You couldn't replace the human in the room. (Anonymous)

Another student mentioned the importance of being guided by a leader, "a leader who is knowledgeable and who you can really trust and listen to and ask questions of" (anonymous), and yet another remarked, "to have that personal experience from someone that was in the original cast is such a wonderful learning tool" (anonymous). When asked about their experience of learning *OFTr* through the combined information from *Synchronous Objects* and Roman's personal experience one student responded, "that's the scary thing that even with such a thorough form of notation without an almost immediate source you still wouldn't know the answer" (anonymous).

Of course, although these various modes of transmission have been discussed in isolation, they by no means acted independently from one another. Throughout the restaging process visual, tactile, kinesthetic, and verbal cues were constantly presented as a complex web of sensory information. Naturally, the students would pick up different pieces of information at different times depending upon

they way they received, perceived and interpreted the cues. Roman's role, as the stager, was to deliver as much information in as many ways as possible, and it then became the students' responsibility to assimilate and learn to embody those cues. As mentioned earlier, the choreographic framework of the piece was taught in just ten days and it took the remaining month of rehearsals to refine the structure, layer in the dynamics, and enhance the performative qualities in preparation for the final performances of the work. It was during the five-day run of performances that I was able to analyze the work as a complete piece, and assess the restaging process in relation to the final presentation of the work.

The Performances – Ontology of Variation:

Juilliard Dances Repertory opened to a full house in the Peter Jay Sharp Theatre on Wednesday April 3rd, 2013. The program featured *Four Brubeck Pieces* (1984) by Murray Louis, followed by Paul Taylor's *Sunset* (1983), and ended with *One Flat Thing, reproduced* (2000), with a fifteen-minute intermission between each piece to allow the stage crew to reset the space. There was an unmistakable sense of excitement as the audience took their seats, and the theatre was soon filled to capacity with family, friends, faculty members, patrons of the school, members of the public and distinguished New York City dance critics. *Four Brubeck Pieces* enlivened the audience with its upbeat energy, live on-stage accompaniment played by a group of Juilliard's own jazz musicians, and the technically impressive showmanship of the dancers. Then, the lyrical qualities of *Sunset* evoked a more somber mood across the audience as Taylor's

work conveyed a narrative of war, love, and separation. The ambiance in the theatre changed drastically again as the lights came up to unveil twenty 3 by 6 foot tables being dragged onto the stage.

Even though I had seen *OFTr* dozens of times over the course of the past six weeks I was captivated by the intensity of the sensory experience that came from seeing the work in a sold-out theatre. The dancers possessed a newly heightened sense of energy that often reveals itself on opening night and the musical soundscape filled the space at ear-piercing levels. The piece seemed to progress at a faster rate than normal as the dancers expertly worked their way through the rigorous cuing system. There was an overwhelming sense of amazement and disbelief that swept through the theatre as the tables were dragged off into the darkness, leaving the audience slightly bewildered about what they had just experienced. Even I felt as though I had just witnessed something new. Perhaps it was my presence in the theatre that had altered my perception of the work, or maybe the reactions of those sitting around me validated what I had quietly thought about *OFTr* all along. According to Roman it was clearly the best performance of the work that the students had executed in recent weeks. The first cast had set an incredibly high standard for their classmates.

The following night's performance was equally well executed. Admittedly, I found myself anxiously awaiting the end of the first two pieces so that I could re-

experience the exhilarating rush of *OFTr*. Again, the dancers delivered an energetic performance, and again I heard whispers of awe as the tables faded into the darkness. Though the sense of excitement that resonated in the theatre after the performance echoed that of the previous night, much of the work itself was markedly different, a trend that continued through until Sunday's final performance. The two casts brought distinctly individual personalities to the work that would have only been noticeable to those who had seen each version. As I had become more familiar with the work throughout the rehearsal process I had learned how to read it as a network of interacting systems. I was aware when certain dancers were improvising, when cues fell out of sync, and when alignments were mistakenly misaligned. These subtleties would have been imperceptible to most of the audience, but interestingly, they added to my overall enjoyment of the work. Harkening back to Forsythe's choreographic philosophy, failure is a reality that facilitates creativity. Failure to achieve something means that an alternate solution must be found, and it is these moments of impromptu decision-making that generate the kind of honest movement material that is characteristic of much of Forsythe's work. It is also representative of the ontological identity of *OFTr*. The work itself is designed to fluctuate, to be fueled by different improvisational choices and to shift aspects of its appearance whilst remaining true to its overarching choreographic framework. Sarah Rubidge refers to improvisation as "the paradigm of the open work in contemporary dance practice" (2002 136) and suggests a theoretical shift towards "an ontology of flux"

(ibid 135). In accordance, *OFTr* can certainly be considered an open work and its ontology determined by the variability that is inherent in the work.

I found myself becoming fascinated by how the system operated each night, as well as by the improvisational choices made by individual dancers. The notion of the work being an interconnected puzzle of task-oriented decisions became clearer with each subsequent performance. Those who saw the work more than once began to realize that there was no right answer, no pre-determined formula for exactly how the puzzle should be solved. The dancers were constantly exploring the various possibilities of how the work could come apart and fit back together in different ways, and every night they found a different solution to the problem. Although the thematic material and specific directives never changed, the work recreated itself anew with each performance by way of the dancers' improvisational choices. This process recognized the dancers as co-collaborators in the choreographic process, a practice that prevails across the creation and performance of many of The Forsythe Company's works, as Gilpin explains:

The performer becomes an agent; at once an inscriber and a transcriber, the dancer performs operations that dismantle an assumed logical structure. The forgotten elements of deceptively unified and coherent sequences are reassembled spatially. (124)

OFTr provides a unique example of the deconstruction and reconstruction of the work to which Gilpin refers because the entire ensemble is at once responsible for the outcome of their experimentation. According to Fraleigh, "a group dance moves as a single unit, a whole body, which assumes that even when individuals

emerge from it in solos, they do so in context of the whole” (205). Though the group has to work together in collaboration to execute their individual tasks and contribute to the accomplishment of the collective task, the reality of seventeen dancers making improvisational choices will inevitably result in a certain amount of unpredictability.

Veteran company member Dana Caspersen also acknowledges the element of unpredictability of the Forsythian repertoire. She says “for a piece to function, each performer must be willing to experience, to embody, its inherent energies”, and in this case that means to embrace the work’s ontology of flux. She continues, “they must be willing to change, to abandon what they understood to be right” (95). For some reason the traditional notion of ‘restaging’ western theatrical dance works has been that in order to be ‘right’ it must resemble the original as closely as possible. However, when the original was designed to fluctuate with each repeated performance, perhaps it should be considered ‘right’ to embrace failure as a choreographic strategy, rather than as an undesirable inevitability. In *OFTr*, failure to complete a task becomes the impetus behind creating another possibility, and as such it becomes embedded in the work as a choreographic directive of its own. In a comparison between organized sport and music, Sheets-Johnstone suggests, “like the rules of the game, the musical performances of others and the actual notes on the musical score sheet constrain but do not limit creativity” (2000 359). This notion can similarly be applied to *OFTr* as the score, the video recording, or the choreographic directives

and improvisational tasks, as originally set by Forsythe, form a conceptual framework within which the work can function. The choreographic, performative, improvisational, and dramaturgical 'rules' establish a structure that facilitates play between the dancers and the musician, however they also leave open a seemingly liminal space between concept and corporeal execution, a place where the dancing body itself acts as a site of knowledge generation, reception and translation, a living site upon which to inscribe, and transcribe, a kinesthetic history.

Conclusions

The liminal spaces between choreographic ideas and execution, record and performance, archive and body continue to obscure a fundamental question that pervades dance preservation discourse: where does the work itself actually exist? The proposition that movement is an inscriptive act, supposes that the embodied practice of choreographing and performing a work must enable the dance to exist in some way other than a fleeting moment that can never be recalled. The possibility that movement can be written into a dancer's bodily memory challenges the notion of ephemerality, and suggests that dance can exist beyond its life as a performative act, and therefore beyond Marcia Siegel's often quoted perpetual vanishing point. This dichotomy between elusiveness and endurance has been, and will continue to be, a recurring theme in dance preservation discourse. Although traditional modes of dance documentation, such as written notation and video, suggest that dances can exist in visual, symbolic, and linguistic forms, these tokens are purely referential to that which they represent, as opposed to that which they actually are, and therefore the question remains as to where, if anywhere, does the dance actually exist? Is it on the stage, or in the studio? Written into a score? Captured through a lens? Or viewed on a screen? Does it exist in the bodies of the performers? In the mind of

the choreographer? Or in the gaze of the audience? Perhaps it exists in some form in all of the above places– or more mysteriously – in none of these places?

The practice of restaging dances illuminates issues related to the ontology and locality of choreography. When restaging *OFTr* at Juilliard the process involved the combined use of a variety of records including a written score, video recordings, a series of graphic animations made available through Synchronous Objects, and the kinesthetic history of one of the original cast members; all of which were valuable to the restaging process in some way. This multiplicity of archival sites reiterates the question: which, if any, of these sites can be seen to host the most authentic record of the work? In this particular instance of restaging *OFTr* it is clear that Roman's physical presence in the rehearsal space was invaluable, and that his repertoire of embodied experience with the work enabled the transmission of kinesthetic history between him and the students. Likewise, the visual information made available through video recordings and digital technology undoubtedly aided in the transmission of the work. However, the authenticity of the video as an accurate document was called into question when Roman chose to override the record (as it appeared on screen) with his own repertoire of embodied memories. Interestingly, Roman's written score proved to be of little use to the restaging process as it was rarely referred to either to teach or to clarify the choreography.

My observations confirmed that kinesthetic history provides a valuable methodological approach towards both the apprehension and transmission of a

complex choreographic design. The sensorial experience of sharing *OFTr* through visual, tactile, kinesthetic and verbal cues enabled a transmission process that most closely resembled the initial act of choreographic inscription, and therefore suggests a logical coherence of practice. Furthermore, the reliance on human interaction, reciprocal dialogue, and kinesthetic collaboration allowed for the work to fluctuate in response to the next generation of subjective agents whose bodies came to bear the mark of the work. Though the choreographic architecture and intentional essence of *OFTr* remained akin to the original, the work itself was markedly different in that it was brought to life by an ensemble of unique individuals. This is always the case with live performance, resulting in an ontological certainty that reiterates the vulnerability of dance preservation. Recreated works are never exactly the same as the originals, and though many dance scholars and practitioners agree, as a field we have struggled to move away from the notion that the practice of recreating dances should produce a piece of work that most closely resembles the original version. Keith Michael, the production coordinator for Juilliard's dance division, explains the difficulty of communicating this curious scenario to his colleagues from the drama and music departments:

The idea of the reconstruction of an original production is primarily an unfamiliar concept in drama and opera because it's rarely done. When we prepare to present a program like *Four Brubeck Pieces*, *Sunset* and *OFTr* we don't just acquire the "text" of the dances and then have the production redesigned. What is expected is that we are recreating the dance production (scenery, costumes, lighting) from 1984 or 1983 or 2000 and that's what a dance audience expects to see. They don't come wanting to see a re-imagining of the pieces and that is generally a foreign concept to explain to staggers-of-plays. When you do a play, if you said 'oh I'm going to try to recreate the original production' like the recent *Death of a*

Salesman where Mike Nichols used the original scenery design and incidental music - that was news all over the place, but that's what is expected in dance, and to not do that would be news. To restage Martha Graham's *Appalachian Spring* without the Noguchi set would be unheard of, or to set it in a different place and time would be shocking and you would have huge arguments. Whereas, Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet* is done all the time in different places, different times, on the moon, and that concept of flexibility, or reimagining, is really hard to communicate. The only dance works that are frequently given new productions are the ballet classics - *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Giselle* - where the same choreography is presented within a new stage design, as well as creations of new choreography, new concepts, new production values using those same titles and story lines. (Michael)

Michael raises an interesting point; why is it that the practice of restaging dances remains encumbered by the idea of exact reproducibility? Has the tradition of documenting dances in a manner that will facilitate their most accurate reproduction hindered the way in which we think about dance preservation? As we continue to be influenced by contemporary theoretical paradigms that are fueled by themes of plurality, multiplicity, subjectivity and flux, perhaps it is time we shift our conceptual understanding of what it means to preserve, reconstruct, and restage dances.

In the spirit of the Robert Scott complex, I suggest that preserving a contemporary dance work is in and of itself an impossible task. Inevitably, there will always be mistakes, missed cues, and inconsistencies in live performance. That is what makes live performance what it is - a living, breathing, fluctuating phenomenon. Contemporary modes of preserving and transmitting live performance must account for this ontological condition, and accept the notion that an absolute record of a dance in its entirety, whether it be in the form of a

notated score, video recording, or preserved in a dancer's bodily memory, is not attainable. As Fraleigh explains:

No amount of abstraction can ever fully abstract the human body or the relationships among dancers in dance. Because dance is of the human body, it is also of ourselves – of the times and spaces we live and move, as we live our world through our body in relation to others.” (Fraleigh 208)

Perhaps the fact that a universal mode of dance preservation that is capable of capturing the entirety of a work has not been developed is indicative of a broader implication - that dance cannot be fixed to a particular time or space because it is dependent upon the malleability, fluctuation, and individuality of human relationships.

I have acknowledged that some modes of preservation are more suitable than others for recording specific elements of certain types of work. For instance, Labanotation proves particularly useful in the scoring of modern dances, where the choreography follows a straightforward structure and uses movement material from a codified technique, whereas film, video, and other digital technologies are capable of recording and assimilating visual, aural and structural clues, but do not adequately describe *how* those cues are to be put together. I have also argued that records obtained through traditional modes of notation and documentation are not as rich as those inscribed into the embodied memory of a performer. As this case study has illustrated, Roman's kinesthetic history, as inscribed through the choreographic and performative processes, and subsequently recalled through the act of restaging *OFT_r*, provided a record of the

work that was fluid in its representation and mirrored the reciprocal and plural qualities of the work itself. The acceptance of kinesthetic history as a methodological lens through which to consider dance preservation and transmission answers the request made by numerous scholars to move towards a mode of preservation that is in consonance with contemporary choreographic practices.

If we are to re-visit the terminology as it was discussed in the introductory chapter, neither the term 'reconstruction' nor 'restaging' seems appropriate to describe Roman's transmission of *OFTr* to the students at Juilliard. I suggest a consideration of the term 'regeneration' when discussing the practice of restaging contemporary repertory works. This process of sharing *OFTr* did not include dusting off a selection of old primary sources that had been buried for some time and re-making the dance with all the sources that were available. Nor was the goal to recreate the dance for the sole purpose of putting it on stage. Instead, what this process entailed was much more rigorous, as it involved sharing Roman's repertoire of kinesthetic experiences with a new generation of dance students. The aim was not simply to learn the steps and the motivational intent, but to learn to embody an entirely new way of working as an ensemble. The lesson was in learning to make informed decisions and to be responsible for the ways in which those decisions affected the rest of the group. The dancers were encouraged to infuse their own personalities, choices and impromptu decisions into the work, whilst remaining cognizant of the fact that the momentum of the entire piece hinged upon their ability to function as a cohesive unit. Taylor

suggests, “as opposed to the supposedly stable objects in the archive, the actions that are the repertoire do not remain the same. The repertoire both keeps and transforms choreographies of meaning” (Taylor 20). In this way the term ‘regeneration’ allows for the constant evolution of the work, embraces the notion that the work will shift in response to the individual dancers who perform it, and celebrates those elements of plurality and multiplicity that are central to contemporary choreographic practices.

When considering Forsythe’s own fascination with the idea of failure, and how that theme is embedded within much of his work, perhaps the term need not be associated with negative connotations. Instead we should embrace the notion of failure, as Forsythe does in his choreographic process, and for purposes here accept that failure to reproduce the work in its entirety is actually a sign of great achievement. Failure to reproduce a fixed object, failure to achieve an exact replication of a work, and failure to duplicate a past performance actually substantiates the idea that failure fosters regeneration. Failure to be something other than what it once was and failure to fetishize the work as a tangible object actually achieves Forsythe’s overall goal, which is for the continuous development of his works.

No two performances of a dance are the same, and the introduction of new cast members weaves a colourful tapestry of historical kinesthetic experiences, which

allow the work to evolve by way of the collaborative embodied experience. As Taylor explains:

Performances also replicate themselves through their own structures and codes. This means that the repertoire, like the archive is mediated. The process of selection, memorization or internalization, and transmission takes place within (and in turn helps constitute) specific systems of representation. Multiple forms of embodied acts are always present, though in a constant state of againness. They reconstitute themselves, transmitting communal memories, histories, and values from one group/generation to the next. Embodied and performed acts generate, record, and transmit knowledge. (20-21)

In this way, the regeneration of dance works allows for their continuous evolution, and provides opportunity to revisit and re-inscribe the existence of the work in a way that is dependent on the individual bodies that perform it. Each generation of the work is created anew, and is representative of the ever-changing negotiation that exists between historical records and past performances. The liminal space between score, screen and stage is not only an active space, but also an interactive space. It is a space that may be intangible, but not unintelligible. It is a space where perception, interpretation and experimentation provide opportunity to challenge our pre-existing beliefs about what it means to preserve a dance. No longer is it necessary to objectify the written score as tangible evidence of fact, or fetishize the images we see on screen as visual representations of truth. These records will never achieve entirety, because entirety would mean that the dance is complete, and that is not the goal. Instead, we should recognize the possibilities offered by these modes of preservation as lenses through which to consider the ways that moving bodies relate to the wider ecology of interdisciplinary studies. My intent is not to disregard traditional

modes of dance preservation because they do provide a range of valuable uses. Written scores offer insightful glimpses into the past for historians, and video records provide suitable records for critics and scholars to gain an overall understanding of the aesthetic quality of a work. The deployment of these modes of preservation should continue for the sake of gathering clues about the nature of choreographic works. However, it is necessary to consider alternative approaches to the practice of preservation for the specific purpose of regenerating those works.

The process of creating (and re-creating) a dance is one that is never complete; the dancers, the choreographer, and the audience are in constant negotiations with the work due to its inability to be divisible from lived experience. Dance persists as an art form that continues to live, breathe, fluctuate and reinvent both itself and its artistic value, and in doing so finds itself in a constant state of disappearance. However, as Lepecki suggests, “to disappear into memory is the first step to remain in the present” (127), and in this way embracing kinesthetic history as a methodological approach towards dance preservation will allow dance practitioners, historians, archivists, and scholars to regenerate the future rather than historicize the past.

Endnotes

¹ The term 'authenticity' has been used by many scholars in conversations about the preservation and reconstruction of dance works. Despite its prevalence across the dance and performance studies literature, I use the term cautiously and acknowledge that it is a problematic term.

² Definition from the Oxford Dictionary.

³ Definition from the Oxford Dictionary.

⁴ The term 'deconstructivist' refers specifically to the postmodern architectural style that was influenced by Jacques Derrida's theory of Deconstruction.

⁵ More information on Peggy Baker's 'Choreographer's Trust' is available at: <https://thechoreographerstrust.wordpress.com>

⁶ More information on Motion Bank is available at: <http://motionbank.org>

⁷ Of notable interest is that the two other notation systems devised around the same time by Lorin and Favier both also scored the dance from a bird's eye perspective (Pierce 291).

⁸ Some of these notation systems include: Stepanov, Zorn and Saint-Leon (Hutchinson Guest 1989).

⁹ More information on the specific requirements for certification as a Labanotation practitioner are available at: <http://dancenotation.org>

¹⁰ More information on the specific Benesh Notation training courses are available at: <http://www.rad.org.uk/study/Benesh/courses>

¹¹ Margaret H'Doubler is credited for founding the first university dance program at the University of Wisconsin in 1917 (Hagood, 2000).

¹² As explained on the Ohio State University website: <http://dance.osu.edu/research/dnb/labam-writer>

¹³ More information on KineScribe is available at: <http://www.reed.edu/kinescribe/>

¹⁴ More information about the AHRC funded project can be found at: <http://www.projects.beyondtext.ac.uk>

¹⁵ Definition from the Oxford Dictionary.

¹⁶ Sklar, Deidre (2001) *Dancing with the Virgin: Body and Faith in the Fiesta of Tortugas, New Mexico*; Hahn, Tomie (2007) *Sensational Knowledge: Embodying Culture Through Japanese Dance*; Novack (1990) *Sharing the Dance: Contact Improvisation and American Culture*; Ness, Sally Ann (2008) "The Inscription of Gesture, Inward Migrations in Dance".

¹⁷ Cooper Albright, Ann (2007) *Traces of Light: Absence and Presence in the Work of Loïe Fuller*; Main, Leslie (2012) *Directing the Dance Legacy of Doris Humphrey: The Creative Impulse of Reconstruction*; Franko, Mark (1993) *Dance as Text: Ideologies of the Baroque Body*.

¹⁸ Dance Heritage Coalition, "Beyond Memory: Preserving the Documents of Our Dance Heritage," <http://www.danceheritage.org/preservation/beyond.html#intro> accessed November 20, 2013.

¹⁹ Robert Falcon Scott was a British explorer who led a team of 5 to the Antarctic. They successfully reached the South Pole on 17th January, 1912, but lost their lives on the return journey to their base camp. Crane, David (2007) *Scott of the Antarctic: A Biography*. New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2007.

²⁰ A complete list of credits can be found at: www.synchronousobjects.osu.edu

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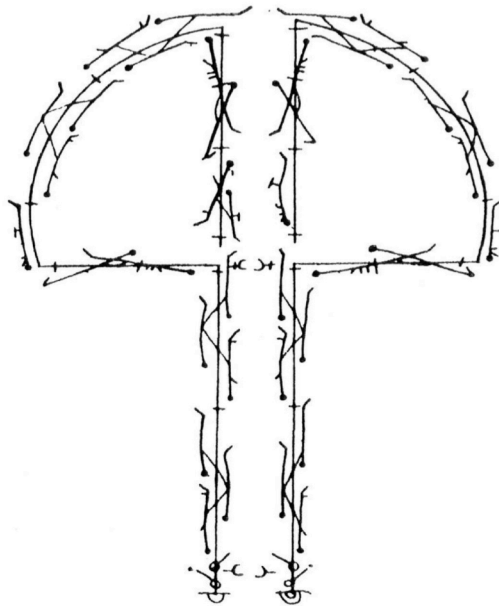
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Appendix A: Sample Beauchamp-Feuillet Notation Score



la Bourée d'Achille.



Ex. 15

An example of Feuillet notation

Appendix C: Sample Benesh Movement Notation Score

Ex. 38 Illustration of a score in Benesh notation.

Extract from *Voluntaries*

Choreography © Glen Tetley 1975