

BECOMING UNDISCIPLINED: INTERDISCIPLINARY
ISSUES AND METHODS IN DANCE STUDIES
DISSERTATIONS FROM 2007-09

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to begin to articulate the theoretical identity of the field of dance studies as an academic discipline and to produce a feminist intervention into the phenomena of disembodied scholarship, while asking questions about disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity within dance studies.

My primary research questions are: What are dance studies research methods? And, which research methods, if any, are inherent to dance as an academic discipline? In order to answer these seemingly direct and simple questions, I also question the assumption that we know what dance studies research methods are.

In Chapter 1 I first introduce and qualify myself as a dance artist and scholar, connecting my own experiences to my research; I narrate my research questions in detail and describe the significance, limitations, and scope of this project. In Chapters 2 and 3 I provide a history of the disciplinary and interdisciplinary origins of dance studies in higher education and situate that history within contemporary conversations in dance studies on disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity. In Chapter 4 I offer an analysis of the National Dance Education Organization's (NDEO) *Research Priorities for Dance Education: A Report to the Nation* and The Dance Education Literature and Research descriptive index (DELRdi), an online searchable database that aims to document all literature and research in dance education (not dance studies) from 1926 to the present, as it relates to issues and methods in my own research. In Chapter 5 I identify and describe current research methods found in all dance studies dissertations granted from the 4 doctoral programs in Dance in the United States over a three-year period. This chapter

begins to articulate the current theoretical identity of the field. I examine and report on current trends in dance studies research methods and draw comparisons across dance studies doctoral programs, setting the foundation for future discussion of dance studies research methods. In Chapter 6 I summarize the project and make suggestions for the future.

A feminist lens is used throughout as a way of providing a feminist intervention into the phenomena of disembodied scholarship by asking questions about research methods (particularly the use of critical theory as a method for research and writing about dance) and if or how particular research methods lead to the production of embodied or disembodied scholarship.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Women must write through their bodies.
–Trinh T. Minh-ha

As a feminist dance scholar, I envision that my own academic and artistic experiences, which have often felt worlds apart, not only informs my research and writing, but allows me to provide positive insights and contributions to the field of dance studies research. My overarching concerns in this study are: 1) to articulate the theoretical identity of the field of dance studies as an academic discipline; and, 2) to produce a feminist intervention into the phenomena of disembodied scholarship, while asking questions about disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity within dance studies.¹

My primary research questions are: What dance studies research methods are currently used in dance studies departments? And, what research methods, if any, are inherent to dance studies as an academic discipline?² In order to answer these seemingly direct and simple questions, I also question the assumption that we know what dance studies research methods are.

¹ Usually when I refer to *dance studies* I am describing an entire field of dance scholarship and study of dance in the broadest sense possible, both inside and outside of higher education, not limited to dance departments. At times I will use “dance studies” to refer only to dance scholars and dance scholarship from dance departments within higher education settings (rather than performance studies or dance education scholars and departments). It will be clear throughout when I refer to dance studies in a more general or specific way.

² What I mean by *inherent* is based upon a standard dictionary definition: “*Inherent*: existing in something as a permanent, essential, or characteristic attribute.” Oxford Dictionary Online website <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/inherent>, accessed January 20, 2012. In the context of my research question, inherent also refers to research methods that are not only characteristic of dance studies, but may also have *arisen out of* dance studies as a discipline in higher education rather than originating in outside disciplines such as English or performance studies, for example.

In this Introduction (Chapter 1), I first introduce and qualify myself as a dance artist and scholar, connecting my own experiences to my research; I narrate my research questions in detail and describe the significance, limitations, and scope of this project. In Chapters 2 and 3 I provide a history of the disciplinary and interdisciplinary origins of dance studies in higher education and situate that history within contemporary conversations in dance studies on disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity. In Chapter 4 I offer an analysis of the National Dance Education Organization's (NDEO) *Research Priorities for Dance Education: A Report to the Nation*³ and The Dance Education Literature and Research descriptive index (DELRdi),⁴ an online searchable database that aims to document all literature and research in dance education (not dance studies) from 1926 to the present, as it relates to issues and methods in my own research. In Chapter 5 I identify and describe current research methods found in all dance studies dissertations granted from the 4 doctoral programs in Dance in the United States over a three-year period. This chapter begins to articulate the current theoretical identity of the field. I examine and report on current trends in dance studies research methods and draw comparisons across dance studies doctoral programs, setting the foundation for future discussion of dance studies research methods. In Chapter 6 I summarize the project and make suggestions for the future. The purpose of this study overall is to begin to articulate the theoretical identity of the field of dance studies as an academic discipline. In other words, to answer the question: what are dance studies research methods?

³ Jane M. Bonbright, Rima Faber, Eds., "Research Priorities for Dance Education: A Report to the Nation," (*The Report*), NDEO (2004): accessed October 5, 2011. http://www.ndeo.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=893257&module_id=56865.

⁴ NDEO, "Dance Education Literature and Research database (DELRdi)," accessed October 5, 2011, http://www.ndeo.org/content.aspx?page_id=1106&club_id=893257.

A feminist lens is used throughout this writing as a way of providing a feminist intervention into the phenomena of disembodied scholarship by asking questions about research methods (particularly the use of “critical theory” as a method for research and writing about dance) and if or how particular research methods lead to the production of embodied or disembodied scholarship.

Feminist dance scholar and one of my dance studies professors at Temple University, Dr. Karen Bond, warns against disembodied scholarship. She outlines the “pitfalls of disembodied scholarship” and defines it via a “descriptive hermeneutic content analysis” of Paul Stoller’s *The Sensuous Scholar* and David Abram’s *The Spell of The Sensuous*. Bond writes:

It can make us sick.
The researcher becomes “over-implicated.”
Eliminates aesthetic intuition/imagination
‘Dis/temporal’ (my term)—lack of anticipation and sensitivity to ‘what’s next’—process of natural causation & effects.
Lacks heart
Stiffness
Reason becomes confused with knowledge
Detachment from nature
(reinforces powerlessness of women)
Treats body as text, therefore as disembodied, nonsensual
Bloodless language
“Does not illuminate history as a force that consumes the body of those who speak it”
“Conceit of control”/separateness of body from world
Inhospitable
We lose our humanity—humans are wired for relationship—“the nourishment of otherness”
Neglects other life forms
We lose possibility—of “body as the mind’s sensuous aspect”
We lose gaze and reverberation and therefore subtle difference
It is deluded about the bodily nature of language
Boundaries become barriers.⁵

⁵ Karen Bond, excerpts from “Pitfalls of Disembodied Scholarship” (handout from “Meaning in Dance,” a graduate seminar, Temple University, Philadelphia, Spring, 2009).

Issues around disembodied scholarship will be explored in and through my examination of research methods. I discuss how some research methods bring the subject to light and how other research methods obscure or even write over the subject.

In this study I also draw parallels between dance studies and women's studies as academic subjects in higher education. I explore significant differences between feminist studies and dance studies, such as how, throughout history, dance as an art, dance in higher education, and dance as education have sometimes been part of the problem and at other times part of the solution to feminist identity issues such as racism, sexism, homophobia, and heteronormativity.

This study is also concerned with asking questions about interdisciplinarity, such as: Is dance studies as an academic area interdisciplinary? Postdisciplinary? Can a field be interdisciplinary or postdisciplinary before its own methods are established, if not agreed upon?⁶ I take my meaning and understanding of the concept of interdisciplinary from a standard dictionary definition of the term interdisciplinary: "Of, relating to, or involving two or more academic disciplines that are usually considered distinct."⁷ What I see as the issue in dance studies in relationship to interdisciplinarity is that the discipline of dance as an academic subject has not yet developed its own distinct theoretical center.

⁶ While I recognize that it may not be desirable to create an "either/or" situation—dance studies research methods are not only disciplinary or interdisciplinary—research methods in any discipline are more complex than that. That said, I am creating and drawing attention to this "binary" to encourage more awareness and reflection on research methods that are produced in and through dance practice, in and through dance departments, and/or in and through other "outside" fields. I am drawing attention to disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity because there is an assumption in the field that we know what "dance studies methods" are. Throughout this research I question not only this assumption but I aim to uncover and articulate what makes a dance studies research method a "dance studies" method.

⁷ The Free Dictionary accessed January 1, 2011, <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/interdisciplinary>.

What are the political and academic ramifications for dance within higher education if it takes an “interdisciplinary turn” before its own methods are established? What are the ramifications of interdisciplinarity on the practice and creation of dance as an art? As education? While these are not my primary research questions, they are issues that form continuous, interwoven threads throughout this research.

This study primarily aims to identify what are dance studies research methods, and are these methods disciplinary or interdisciplinary? Put another way, are there any dance studies methods innate to dance as a discipline, or are these methods borrowed from other fields? This question is important because it is not uncommon for advanced scholars in the field of dance studies to mention dance studies methods without ever explicitly stating what these methods are.⁸ There is an assumption in the field that dance studies scholars, readers, educators, and students already know what “dance studies methods” are. This study goes underneath that assumption and asks, for example, are dance studies methods based in philosophy, theory, science, and/or in dance practice? When scholars refer to “dance studies methods,” are they referring to the theory of the practice, to methods of dance teaching, or to methods in dance studies scholarship? Is conducting an interview a dance studies research method? Is teaching a dance technique

⁸ In a recent issue of *Dance Research Journal*, contributors Jens Richard Giersdorf and Gay Morris, for example, both mention, “dance studies methods” as if dance studies methods are fully understood, established, and agreed upon, when this is not the case. See Gay Morris, “Dance Studies/Cultural Studies;” Jens Richard Giersdorf, “Dance Studies in the International Academy: Genealogy of a Disciplinary Formation;” and Ramsay Burt, “The Specter of Interdisciplinarity” all in *Dance Research Journal*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (Chicago: University of Illinois Press) Summer 2009. In 2005, the National Dance Education Organization and Temple University Research Center hosted a symposium to bring together scholars with an aim toward agreeing on terms and definitions in dance education research. Thank you to Dr. Luke Kahlich for sharing this information and for referring me to the NDEO database.

class a dance studies method? Do dance studies methods fall within or arise out of the humanities, the social sciences, the arts, or, perhaps, even some other areas, like science or physical education? This research is designed to answer these questions.

Chapters 2 and 3 narrate the disciplinary and interdisciplinary origins of dance studies as an academic subject in higher education so that current research methods can be understood within an historical context; Chapter 4 examines issues and concepts in relationship to research methods in dance education and dance studies; and, Chapter 5 explicitly describes which research methods are used in dance studies dissertations over a three-year period (2007-09) from all dance doctoral programs in the United States.

In this study, the term “methods” refers to the way in which scholars approach their subject or their research questions or both. In other words, this is not an examination of choreographic methods or methods of teaching or performing, unless these methods are used as the basis for producing dance studies scholarship. By “methods” I mean how dance research is conducted, including how the dance subject or research questions are contextualized, framed, approached, and/or answered, how terms are defined, and what texts or discourses are used. “Methods” may indicate theoretical frameworks or systems (such as the Laban Movement Analysis or phenomenological hermeneutics); specific theories or discourses (such as transnational feminisms or poststructuralism); individual theorists (doing a “Butleresque” or a “de Certeauian reading” of a dance or a text); or, “methods” may refer to broad academic areas and discourses such as cultural studies methods, historical methods, ethnographic methods, performance studies methods, or feminist methods, as some examples. Although dance “subjects” (the *what* of dance

research) will also be examined in relationship to methods, dance subjects are not the focus of this study.

In this study “dance practice” includes all physical, creative, spiritual, ritual/transformational, social, political, educational, and artistic endeavors, practices, performances, and techniques. “Dance practice” also refers to the utilization of the body, arising from physical training or expression via the body, and all other modes, techniques, and embodied forms that are also defined or understood as “dance,” and are presented, performed, or practiced in any kind of venue, with or without an audience. “Dance practice” encompasses all forms and kinds of dance as these forms are rehearsed, performed, experienced, or otherwise physically embodied or expressed, including dance teaching. Furthermore, the term includes and refers to issues surrounding the practitioner, artist, instructor, and audience or observers, and includes relationships to subjects or elements such as time, space, and effort, costumes, sets, lighting design, theatrical property (props), and music for dance.

A major force driving this research is the desire to support the dance artists, practitioners, dance teachers, and educators who make and perform the work about which dance scholars, including myself, and other researchers are writing. Without the dances, events, performances, techniques, workshops, classes, experiments, masterpieces, and other modes of dance practice, including teaching, activism, and arts advocacy by individuals and communities of artists and practitioners, dance studies scholars and “outside” scholars (such as writers from performance studies and philosophy departments) would not have materials with which to work. We owe a great deal to dance

artists and practitioners who create, perform, practice, and teach dance under difficult, if not sometimes impossible, circumstances.

The seeds for this research were planted in my course work with Drs. Kariamuwelsh, Luke Kahlich, Karen Bond, and Joellen Meglin in the Department of Dance at Temple University. Although I did not realize it at the time, my desire to articulate the theoretical identity of the field of dance studies scholarship had begun even earlier, but in a more general way, during my study for a master's degree at New York University in the Performance Studies Department.

Although I was unaware of the seed being planted at the time, this research subject most specifically arose out of my doctoral work in a graduate seminar with Dr. Kariamuwelsh. In Foundations of Cultural Studies, a required course for doctoral students in the Dance Department, Dr. Welsh asked her students to simply list terms, territories, jargon, domains of objects, subject, methods—the contents of the field—contents that were fundamental to the field of dance studies. Subsequently, our Foundations of Cultural Studies class struggled to identify language or terms that arise out of dance studies. As it turned out, many of the terms that were brainstormed were on loan from other fields: “historiography” is from history; “the 4th wall” is from theater, “kinesiology” is from physical education. Perhaps “corporeality” is a dance studies term? The point was not to conduct an etymology; rather, the intention was to heighten awareness of issues of disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity; is dance as an academic subject inherently interdisciplinary?

In Dr. Welsh's class we also examined broad similarities and differences between cultural studies and dance studies. For example, a meaningful similarity is that neither

field can claim a specific methodology as their own. A significant difference between dance and cultural studies (as well as a difference between dance and many other fields) is that dance studies focuses on a subject (for example “ballet”) rather than a scholar (for example, the work of Roland Barthes).⁹ It may be very productive to question the use of critical postmodern theory when discussing or analyzing dance; dance does not have a “grand narrative” to deconstruct, nor do we have “authorial dominance” in need of being dismantled, unless we consider ballet a dominant discourse. However, I find attempts to “turn dance into a text to be read” to be awkward, methodologically speaking, and problematic in terms of feminist issues of the body.¹⁰

In “Exploring Feminist Women’s Body Consciousness,” a recent study of women’s body consciousness in relationship to their feminist consciousness, the authors Lisa Rubin, Carol Nemeroff, and Nancy Felipe Russo reveal that when bodies are read “like texts,” it is an indication of women’s subordination.¹¹ The same could be said about a dance: turning a dance into a text has an eerily disembodied and objectifying effect

⁹ Kariamuwelsh, “The Foundations of Cultural Studies” (graduate seminar, Temple University, Philadelphia, Fall 2007).

¹⁰ By “turning dance into a text to be read” I mean the act of translating dance, movement, and/or the body into language so that it can be “read” and analyzed like literature. This is not to deny the expressive nature of dance, movement, and the body. “Dance as text” can be contrasted with the meaning (and practice) of developing a “dance vocabulary,” which is a common artistic practice in choreographing and teaching—a practice with which I do not have concerns. It is common for choreographers to develop “movement vocabularies” for use in the studio toward the production of choreography and for teaching purposes. I do not disagree with the artistic, creative, or pedagogical use of “dance vocabulary” in the studio. I do disagree with the attempt to turn dance into language (outside of the studio) in preparation for conducting a theoretical analysis or a “close reading” of dance as one would do with literature, mainly because I do not think critical and literary theory are suitable theoretical discourses for discussing dance practice. For philosophical writing on dance as language and/or turning dance into a language see Francis Sparshott’s “Dance and Language” in *A Measured Pace: Toward a Philosophical Understanding of the Art of Dance* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

¹¹ Lisa R. Rubin, Carol J. Nemeroff, Nancy Felipe Russo. “Exploring Feminist Women’s Body Consciousness,” *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, Issue 28, Blackwell Publishing, American Psychological Association (2004): 27.

that positions writing *over* movement. While social, political, and historical criticisms of ballet have not dismantled the hegemony of this form of dance, I am not convinced that deconstruction is the most appropriate tool for this, either.¹²

My questions about dance studies research methods and disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity in dance studies most clearly arose during the research process itself. While working on a different dissertation topic, I was haunted by the questions: *what* exactly am I researching and *how* am I researching it? My concerns about the production of disembodied scholarship (that is, the disconnections between dance theory and dance practice) are particularly meaningful to me, having been a dancer for many, many years. I attended dance classes throughout elementary school, mainly studying ballet at the Martha Mahr School of Ballet in Coral Gables, Florida and Graham-based Jazz in Miami, Florida, with Fred Bratcher, a former dancer with both Alvin Ailey and Martha Graham. I was a dance major at the New World School of the Arts, a performing arts high school in Miami, where I studied ballet, jazz, Afro-Caribbean, and classical modern techniques, such as Limón and Graham. Later, I was accepted into the dance department at The Juilliard School, an arts conservatory in New York City, where I studied classical ballet and classical modern dance, Flamenco, Indian, dance composition, the art of performing, dance history, music theory, among other electives and a few required humanities

¹² If a goal is to loosen the grip of nationalism, racism, and heterosexism, among other things, on bodies in dance (in ballet), more must be done outside the context of the small amount of people writing deconstructive papers about ballet. While it is beyond the scope of this research to make suggestions for a feminist dance curriculum for the 21st century, there is a need for such a study. Feminist theory/feminist inquiry is a “Top 3” most utilized method in dance studies dissertations according to my research. The feminist study mentioned above and its relationship to dance is explored in greater detail later in this chapter; the most commonly utilized dance studies research methods are discussed in Chapter 5.

courses. Shortly after graduating from Juilliard, I performed locally and internationally beginning with rehearsals in basements on New York City's Lower East Side.

From 1989 through 2004 I performed with independent choreographers and companies such as the Stanley Love Performance Group, Gerald Casel Dance Company, Sarah Michelson, Paul Selwyn Norton, Fiona Marcotty-Dolenga, and the Randy Warshaw Dance Company. We performed in typical "downtown" New York venues such as Performance Space 122, The Kitchen, Dance Theater Workshop, and Movement Research at Judson Church; "uptown" venues such as The Juilliard Theater, Tribeca Performing Arts Center, and Aaron Davis Hall; alternative spaces such as Paula Cooper Gallery, Location One, Andrew Kreps Gallery; as well as dance festivals including the TWEED Festival, the Downtown Arts Festival in New York, and ImpulsTanz, the Vienna International Dance Festival. A duet I performed with Ederson Rodrigues Xavier, under the direction of Paul Selwyn Norton, was sold to Ballet Frankfurt. We performed this piece, *Sub Rosa*, at the Holland Dance Festival and the Festival International de Nouvelle Danse in Montreal and on tour in the Netherlands and Poland.

Most of the choreographers and company members I worked with in the United States were peers from Juilliard. Our choreography reflected our classical modern and ballet training as well as the eclecticism of the 90's; we danced to Nirvana, Tina Turner, Johan Sebastian Bach—and everything in between. We were not performing for the money (there was none) and not making a living from full-time rehearsing and performing eventually became an issue and unfortunately remains all too common a problem for most artists in the United States.

This is all to say that my dance training and performing do not naturally inform my current research interests in dance as a vehicle of feminist resistance, for instance. While not the primary focus of this study, a feminist intervention into disembodied scholarship is an ongoing concern in this research. In terms of my own practice and theory, there are more disconnections than connections between my dance training and my feminist commitments. As an example, the pursuit of an unobtainable physical ideal and the unhealthy results of such a pursuit is a well-known issue for dancers who study many dance techniques, not only ballet. Many systems of dance training (dance techniques) and the dances themselves are not created to empower dancers' bodies and images of themselves. In dance training, unlike in feminist theory, the concept and tactic of resisting the norm—is not the norm. In most dance training, there is rarely an acceptance of bodies “as they are;” rather, there is a built in and persistent ideology that a dancer's body is perpetually not perfect enough. Much of my own dance training was not supportive of body types that are not ultra thin, for example. My training was not entirely supportive of non-normative gender and sexual identities, either. Overall and generally speaking, the professional dance world is actually quite conservative.

In “Exploring Feminist Women's Body Consciousness” the authors revealed that dance, athletics, and yoga were used as forms of emancipatory resistance by women who self-identified as feminists. Lisa Rubin, Carol Nemeroff, and Nancy Felipe Russo's research indicates that dancing, athletics, and yoga promote agency and liberate the body from the effects of the objectifying gaze and negative body consciousness. This research, however, did not work directly with dancers; a dancer's relationship to dancing is going to be very different than a “pedestrian's” (even a feminist pedestrian's) relationship to

dancing. For many dancers the field of dance itself, including the dance community, dance performances, dance training, dance casting, as well as images and messages about dancers in our culture, has been *the cause* of negative body consciousness—not the solution.¹³

At Juilliard I experienced a four-year-long dread of being placed on “weight probation” because of gaining five or ten “extra” pounds. Men and women developed eating disorders there, including some severe cases of bulimia and anorexia due to the weight probation criteria. One naturally dark haired woman was told on a Monday to lose five pounds by Friday and to dye her hair blonde. If we did not maintain a certain weight, we were not allowed on the Juilliard stage. Others were prohibited from performing in concerts because of non-normative gender expression and to a much lesser degree, a non-normative sexuality on stage. The dance world is well known for having gay men appear as straight men in modern and classical dance performances; however, few roles, if any, were created for openly gay men and women in the early 1990s in this conservatory setting. This training produces a distorted and unhealthy view of the body’s fundamental beauty and unwittingly makes suspect one’s sexual orientation. I speak for myself when I say that my Juilliard training did some damage to my personal, physical, creative, and professional self-esteem and I can also understand the damage it did to others.

Dance writing and research about feminist issues of the body are now rather prevalent and it is not uncommon to explore race, class, sex, gender, sexuality, age, and disability “issues” in dance; yet, when we speak in dance studies about dance theory and

¹³ Lisa R. Rubin, Carol Nemeroff, and Nancy Felipe Russo, Eds., “Exploring Feminist Women’s Body Consciousness,” *Psychology of Women Quarterly* Issue 28, Blackwell Publishing, American Psychological Association (2004): 27-37; 27.

dance practice connecting, what exactly do we mean? Finding out what these connections and disconnections are is one aim of this research. In my experience, not all connections between theory and practice have been direct or organic. However, the disconnections between my experience as a dancer and the methods and discourses I utilize as a feminist dance scholar become productive in my own research. For example, the disconnections have allowed me, along with many other dance scholars, to shape constructive criticisms of the field of dance and dance training from a feminist or cultural studies perspective, as many dance scholars do and have been doing in their research.

Having experienced and embodied any particular performance does not make me more of an authority on dance or feminist performance; however, asking and answering questions through one's experience is a feminist approach and an example of attempting to forge connections between theory and practice. Bringing one's experience into one's research does not guarantee embodied scholarship but it is an appropriate entry point. And as I have discovered, utilizing one's experience is a common approach in current dance studies dissertations.

Although my dance training was challenging to say the least, my performing was driven by a hope that dance could transform the world, by confronting racist, sexist, homophobic, and classist oppression. The dance artists and companies with whom I worked provided a needed comfort and safety for me since most of us were members of, or allied with, the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, and transgendered communities. It felt as if we were making work in and through a supportive, inclusive, and liberating environment as far as identity issues were concerned. We were out and free and making queer dances during a time like the present that, despite some progress and even some significant

victories, continues to be mostly antagonistic to issues of race, class, sex, gender, and sexual orientation. Some (but not all) of the pieces I performed in or collaborated with were aimed at raising awareness of or expressing concern over issues of social injustice, but what carried us through for so many years with little money and virtually no recognition was our love of performing.

In hindsight, I can clearly see the differences between my dance training, my dance practice, and what I am writing about now. Today my dance practice, including my teaching philosophy, has been completely transformed by yoga practice, philosophy, and teaching. This has all been to say that the connections between my own theory and dance practice are neither smooth nor seamless.

After returning home to New York after performing in Europe, I started a performance journal that consisted mainly of interviews and essays by and for dance artists, choreographers, activists, and arts administrators in New York City, in the 90s.¹⁴ In *High Ass* I enthusiastically ask questions about dance and performance in an uninhibited but unseasoned way. I began this do-it-yourself performance journal writing after I read an interview with a choreographer whom I knew personally. After I finished reading the article I thought, *this does not sound like him!* The interview was so heavily edited that the entire sense or essence of the choreographer was missing. The artist's voice was no longer recognizable. It was my first encounter with (one type of) disembodied scholarship. At the time, in the 20-plus interviews that I wrote for *High Ass*,

¹⁴ Christine Bergman, *High Ass: dance. art. performance.* (New York, printed by author, 1999). Contributors included Tere O'Connor, Jennifer Monson, Greg Zuccolo, Sarah Michelson, Alan Eto, Dirty Martini, Miguel Gutierrez, among others. I started interviewing artists and just talking about dance and performance mainly because it became impossible to ignore the ongoing paucity of dance funding. Just when we thought it was impossible for things to get worse, they did.

I made it a point to keep intact all of the “mm-hms,” “umms,” and “uuhs” in an effort to preserve some essence of the voice of the artist and the flow of the conversation.

Although I would conduct interviews differently today, *High Ass* was my first passionate (if unsophisticated) research project as a dance scholar. It arose out of my direct experience and practice as an artist. I mention *High Ass* here because it almost exclusively features interviews, which are a commonly utilized dance studies research method according to my study.¹⁵ Depending on how it is used, conducting and transcribing an interview is a method that can completely conceal or reveal the voice of the interviewee. While not exclusive to dance studies (or to phenomenology, history, or ethnography), conducting interviews may be a method inherent to dance studies as a discipline; in my experience, this method of research organically arose out of issues and concerns connected to practice.

High Ass was conceived as a vehicle of self-expression that raised questions about dance and performance funding, social and political issues affecting dance artists and the arts, providing a platform for more marginalized or non-normative voices. It endeavored to remain sensual and embodied and to keep the voice or personality of the artist present. As mentioned earlier, it was harder not to talk about the issues we were facing as dance artists, particularly issues of identity and funding.

My generation was hardly the first to rail against social and political issues, including the under-funding of the arts. However, the ongoing absence of support had a profound affect on the careers and life choices of many artists in New York and elsewhere, at that time. What was different about being a dancer/waiter in the 90s in New

¹⁵ See Chapter 5 for a complete discussion of dance studies research methods.

York City was the real estate boom. In dance history, there are periods where dancers are the stars and at other times, the choreographers are the stars. As we saw in the 90s, real estate, corporations, and the Internet became “the stars” and it was impossible for artists to compete with that. The 90s also added insult to injury for dance artists: when the economy was booming, due to the real estate and internet bubble, there was *less* funding for dance. In the interviews I conducted for *High Ass*, in addition to asking questions about race, class, sex, and gender and the arts, I addressed concerns about New York in the 90s becoming inhospitable to artists. I was trying to make sense of my personal experiences—experiences shared by many others. Speaking from or utilizing personal experience is also a research method utilized in many of the dissertations I have examined.

By the late 90s I realized I needed more tools to describe what was going on New York. After over a decade of professional performing experience in New York and internationally, I returned to school to obtain my Masters degree in Performance Studies at New York University (NYU), in the fall of 2001. In the NYU Performance Studies department, I encountered authors and systems of thinking which satisfied my curiosity for the connections between language and society and for understanding all forms of oppression: gender, sex, sexuality, race, and nationality. I encountered scholars doing the work I wanted to do: speech act theory, deconstruction, feminist theory, the history of performance art, and electronic civil disobedience. Through my coursework at NYU, I

came to better understand postmodern philosophy (such as deconstruction and some feminist theory) as a radical response to the world in which we live.¹⁶

I also came to realize that the entire system and process of reading, writing, and language, indeed, the whole process, is gendered and racialized; “theory” can be considered an arena of both action and power. I was primarily drawn to speech act theory, particularly feminist and poststructural philosopher Judith Butler’s work on performativity. I was also encouraged by the meaningful ideas in the rhetoric and tactics of direct action and non-violent protest, but my particular combination of interests were rarely addressed. Disciplinarily speaking, I was not *only* a dancer, I was not *only* a feminist, I was not *only* a queer, I was not *only* a performance writer, I was not *only* an activist, and I was not *only* a philosopher. I still find these disciplinary boundaries to be both frustrating and limiting.

While at NYU I encountered conversations and arguments such as art criticism v. art history, feminist art criticism and theories on globalization. My Masters thesis, “Toward an Introduction to My Dance Criticism,” raises questions about dance criticism distinct from dance history.¹⁷ I was questioning terms such as “modern dance” as being used ahistorically (one cannot create a modern dance “now”) and wrote: “Dance writing should ask, *what are the issues and concerns intrinsic to dance as a medium*, as a step toward developing a medium based theory and method for describing them.” Back then,

¹⁶ Now, how I see this is that not even the strongest theories have had much of an effect on the world in which we live (with few exceptions, such as laissez-faire capitalism) and I should add: neither have the largest protests in recent world history, nor the most beautiful or subversive dances. This is not to suggest that we should give up on making theory, dances, or protests. My view is that as unimaginably bad as things are now, it is possible that our creative, theoretical, cultural, and activist work may have prevented things from becoming unimaginably worse.

¹⁷ Title based on Michael Fried’s essay, “An Introduction to My Art Criticism.” Michael Fried, *Art and Objecthood* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1998).

my theoretical framework was art criticism and art history, whereas now I am trying to make dance studies methods (or “dance theory”) both the subject and method of my work, by grounding my dance research in dance studies research.¹⁸ In addition to the 32 dance studies dissertations that I examine in Chapter 5, the rest of this study employs dance studies and dance education scholarship almost exclusively.

During the time I was earning my Masters degree at NYU, my dancing and performing mostly stopped. So, after completing my Masters in 2003, as a matter of course, I reconnected with a yoga practice, started teaching, and rediscovered the joy and serenity that results from having a physical and spiritual practice. Unlike any other type of physical training that I studied at Juilliard or in any other professional dance class in New York City or elsewhere, Hatha yoga is a movement system that accepts you as you are. In yoga, the body is not something that must be overcome and personal experience, including sexuality and sexual orientation, is not something that needs to be put aside. The very definition of yoga is *to unite* mind and body; neither is ranked above the other and there is no confusion or argument about that.¹⁹ The body, particularly in an academic setting, is considered a vehicle or a vessel for the expression of something greater, such as the mind or the spirit. In yoga, the body is, in and of itself, that something greater. Further, the body (particularly in Tantric yoga philosophy) is something to be enjoyed rather than overcome. It is possible to have an experience of *yoga*, or a connection between body and mind, when we remember and connect with the body’s intrinsic

¹⁸ Part of this research study is to find out what exactly scholars mean when they say, “dance theory” and “dance methods.” Christine Bergman, “An Introduction to My Dance Criticism,” Masters Thesis, New York University, 2003.

¹⁹ One of the foremost living yoga teachers in the world, BKS Iyengar, defines yoga as, “Yoking, uniting, joining, contacting, union, association, connection, deep meditation, concentration, contemplation on the supreme union of body, mind, and soul, union with God.” B.K.S. Iyengar. *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Pantanjali* (Hammersmith, London, Harper Collins, 2002).

beauty, knowledge, and worth. In yoga and in dance practice there is no question about the meaningful presence of the body.

In contrast, as mentioned above, the ranking and positioning of mind over body is readily apparent in university settings. Within the university, dance does not enjoy equal footing even with the other arts, nor with other physical practices such as sports, let alone with other academic disciplines. Edrie Ferdun writes:

As well as being young, dance is marginal in its lack of traditional support and affiliation with higher status departments in the university. Outside higher education and sometimes within, dance still carries controversy and suspicion in its association with the body, sexuality, and non-dominant cultural groups. Its primary clientele is female.²⁰

Ferdun made this observation nearly twenty years ago and the situation today both for dance and dancers within and outside of higher education is mostly unchanged. While the body, sexuality, and non-dominant cultural groups, including women, may have risen in status, during the past two decades dance has not benefited from this upsurge, despite its “affiliations.”

Funding for the arts has become worse, not better, over the past twenty years, the period of time when I was directly impacted as an artist living and working in New York City (1989-2004). Of course as many of us know and have experienced: arts funding is a case of things continuously getting worse. When the economy was “booming” in the late-90s through the turn of the century, there was, in fact, *less* money for the arts. When I began the dance studies doctoral program at Temple University in 2007, it was a decision made, in large part, out of my necessity to earn a living. The reality remains that many

²⁰ Edrie Ferdun, “Dance in Higher Education: Out of the Picture or Into the Fray?” in *Dance in Higher Education: Focus on Dance XII*, Ed. Wendy Oliver (Reston, VA: AAHPERD, National Dance Association, 1992), 7.

talented people try to create dance and performance and write about dance and performance in the face of extremely difficult, if not sometimes impossible, circumstances.

Now, as a dance scholar, I need to remember my experiences as a performing artist. The closer I pay attention to my dance experiences, such as the love of the physical practice and the challenges I faced and overcame (with a lot of help) in order to even pursue a dance career, the more inevitable it will be for me to explore and articulate subjects that are not only more meaningful to me, but my research and writing will have a better chance of being embodied and connected to the practice, which will, in turn, only benefit the theory and the practice of dance as an art, as education, and as an academic subject. Questions regarding the connections or disconnections between theory and practice continue to be issues for the 21st century dance artist, educator, and scholar.

My doctoral coursework in Temple University's Dance Department has included aesthetics, phenomenology, cultural studies, ethnography, improvisation, as well as outside classes in social and political philosophy, feminist theory, and transnational feminisms. Simultaneous with my doctoral requirements, I pursued a Certificate in Women's Studies. Immersing myself in feminist theory and other outside courses resulted in my desire to refine my questions within dance studies; mainly, what are dance studies research methods? While I observed a number of potential connections between women's studies (feminist theory and feminist practice) and dance studies theory and practice, I noticed more disconnections, particularly along the lines of social and political activism. While women's studies is radically and progressively working toward ending oppression of all kinds, taking on social justice issues is not necessarily the aim of all

dancers, choreographers, or dance scholars. Certainly, there are many dance artists whose work blurs the boundaries between performance and resistance, and many whose work actively and aggressively seeks to undo dominant and dominating ideologies, including dominant creative structures. This kind of work, however, is not the norm. While it is widely known and understood that the beginnings of modern dance were founded upon overthrowing the artistic and ideological structures inherited from ballet (social and political ideologies are brought forward in dances), this rebellion was challenged to flourish in modern dance beyond the 60s and 70s with the advent of the “corporate university” system in the 80s, 90s, and into the present period. As will also become evident in Chapters 2 and 3, government funding for dance did not go to those individuals whose work, while perhaps artistically innovative, actively challenged the social and political norms.

Feminist author and social activist bell hooks identifies and articulates *feminist movement* as a political force to be reckoned with. In “Feminism: A Movement to End Sexist Oppression,” hooks does not accidentally leave out the word “the” when she refers to the feminist movement.²¹ hooks’ writing positions feminist movement as social and political action, firmly based on critical radical politics that seek nothing less than a complete revolution. Although it is unlikely that this was her intention, the grammar and phrasing of *feminist movement* (rather than *the* feminist movement) invokes dance and performance as potential platforms for political action and as vehicles for feminist self-expression and resistance.

²¹ bell hooks, “Feminism: A Movement to End Sexist Oppression,” *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (Boston: South End Press, 1984), 17-31.

As mentioned above, not all dance artists are intentionally creating work with a social and political message equivalent to a complete ideological revolution; however, dance, movement, and the body are poised for social and political change and feminist resistance. As articulated in and through her rephrasing of the feminist movement as *feminist movement*, hook's radical politics turn toward action or movement via grammar; meanwhile, dance, movement, and the body are already in movement or in action. Dance *is* the body, while it contains, produces, and expresses, as a cultural production, the materiality of the body (with all its political ramifications), which some philosophers, critics, and even feminists sidestep, at best. Judith Butler cannot even talk about the body without becoming undisciplined. Butler writes:

I tried to discipline myself to stay on the subject, but found that I could not fix bodies as simple objects of thought. ... I kept losing track of the subject. I proved resistant to discipline. ... I reflected that this wavering might be the vocational difficulty of those trained in philosophy, always at some distance from corporeal matters, who try in that disembodied way to demarcate bodily terrains: they invariably miss the body, or, worse, write against it.²²

This passage articulates the difficulty that some “outside” scholars and dance studies scholars have with writing on, in, and through the body. The fact that some dance theory is disconnected from dance practice motivates me to critique writing about dance that is disembodied and to discuss the now notorious claims about the “difficulty,” and according to some, the “impossibility” of writing about dance, movement, and the body. While some scholars struggle with this, experienced dancers, artists, and practitioners work directly with this material—with the body, dance, movement, and self/experience, mostly unencumbered by the many and varied theories about their work or attempts at

²² Judith Butler has made major contributions to feminist and queer theory on the subject of the body, gender, sex, race, and sexuality. Her modest remarks defy these contributions. Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On The Discursive Limits of “Sex,”* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), ix.

describing it. There is no guarantee that when one experiences a practice in one's body that "missing" the body or writing against it will occur less, but in my experience, it becomes more difficult to write against the body or against oneself, when one has experience with the practice, art, or pedagogical mode about which they are writing.

Experience is a powerful form of *feminist movement*; the body is a way of knowing and expressing social and political struggle in the world—i.e., feminist struggle. As dancers, we do not need to make a grammatical move toward action. We are already there. By taking the "the" out of "the feminist movement," hooks puts feminist theory into practice. Dance is already practice. Dance is already in movement and, according to many, the challenge for dance is how we now put it back into language. The issues of the body and language, including ideas about dance as a language, are dealt with in more detail later in this study.

In the study mentioned earlier about feminist body consciousness, Rubin, Nemeroff, and Russo examine how feminist consciousness relates to body consciousness. Their work defines in a general way what feminism does in relationship to the body: "Feminism has long seen its own project as intimately connected to the body." The article continues, "Feminists have described how the regulation of the female body—through religious, educational, scientific, and medical institutions as well as through everyday discourse and media images [and dance/art images] restricts girls' and women's experience, delimits their identity, and shapes their subjectivity."²³

Rubin, Nemeroff, and Russo's research pursues the question: how does having a feminist consciousness affect women's experience of their bodies? The authors make a

²³ My change to include dance/art images. Rubin, "Exploring Feminist Women's Body Consciousness," 27.

distinction between women who are *identified as feminists* from those who ‘merely’ *identify with feminism*, as supporters of the agenda, but not *as feminists*. The authors conclude that those who are only generally supportive of feminist ideas are ‘less protected’ from bodily dissatisfaction than those who identify themselves *as feminists*.

The authors describe their work as researching resistance as well, reporting that resisting body and beauty ideals is still a radical act. Resistance in this study is defined as “rejecting ideologies of women’s bodies that support women’s subordination.”²⁴ They offer a list of common ideologies that perpetuate women’s subordination. In other words, one can be certain that subordination of women is occurring when:

- (a) Women’s bodies are never fine as they are;
- (b) Women should be constantly aware of, and attending to their bodies;
- (c) Women should suppress their bodily appetites (i.e. for food, sex, emotions);
- (d) Women’s bodies—their size, shape, style, and comportment—are ‘texts’ through which their morals and values will be read;
- (e) Women’s bodies are objects and commodities;
- (f) Women’s bodies exist to serve others; and
- (g) Beautiful women are thin and Anglo-featured.²⁵

This is not to say that all readings of the body as text supports women’s subordination. However, it is to illustrate that turning a dance and bodies into “texts” to be read is a feminist concern. Although very few, there are some dissertation authors in this study who described their method of research as “turning a dance into a text to be read.”

Earlier I described some fundamental differences and incompatibilities between dance and women’s studies. Nonetheless, dance and women’s studies also share some interests in common. Intrinsically, dance, like women’s studies, is multidisciplinary. Before arriving at my current topic of dance studies research methods, I was interested in

²⁴ Rubin, “Exploring Feminist Women’s Body Consciousness,” 28.

²⁵ Rubin, “Exploring Feminist Women’s Body Consciousness,” 28.

connecting and articulating the power of dance and the arts in an interdisciplinary way. This is to say, I have an ongoing desire to bridge dance as an art and area of academic inquiry with other disciplines and practices, particularly women's studies, especially considering dance, movement, and the body as potential modes and sites of feminist resistance. This interdisciplinary tendency, the desire to connect dance with neighboring fields, arose out of my experience as a dance artist, scholar, and feminist. At Juilliard, we created pieces in collaboration with composers, we performed in art galleries as well as in more traditional performance spaces in New York, and we reached out to our network of friends who were artists or lighting, set, costume, or make-up designers. My performing experience fell squarely within the category of dance, but depending on the venue and the piece, it shared medium-based concerns and interests with visual art, site-specific installation, performance/protest, and theater.

The question of artistic disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity in dance may be easy to ascertain but the question of dance's academic disciplinarity is a murkier area. For many scholars (even Judith Butler), staying on the topic of dance, movement, and/or the body proves difficult. Dance studies research and writing leans on outside fields such as cultural studies, feminist theory, anthropology, performance and many other "outside" or non-dance studies discourses, but these relationships are often asymmetrical. For example, performance studies authors write about dance using theories and methods that are not taught in dance studies departments, in effect "disqualifying" dance studies authors from writing about their own subject. And while many dance scholars reach out to utilize cultural studies methods or frameworks (at Temple University's doctoral program in dance, one can even take a cultural studies focus), yet cultural studies has

mostly ignored the subject of dance as an art. These asymmetrical relationships between academic disciplines are discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

As dance struggles to be funded sufficiently as an independent art form and as an area of academic inquiry, dance studies suffers under a certain amount of obscurity both within and outside of academia. While my own research interests and methods tend toward being interdisciplinary and arise out of my experiences as both a dance artist and scholar, I was concerned about conducting dance research that might add to dance's opacity and obscurity by using theories from other fields such as philosophy or literary theory—methods which might not readily lend themselves to dance, and, in fact, might dominate, erase, or “write over” dance, as Butler described. There may be many interesting and complex philosophical or theoretical questions to pursue in relationship to dance, movement, and the body, and interesting and challenging theoretical questions may be very useful for the interdisciplinary scholar or theorist, but they may not be the most generative or supportive questions for dance as an artistic and academic discipline.

Dance scholar Judith Alter writes about the lack of a theoretical center in dance studies and is critical of discourses used by dance scholars simply because these methods are fashionable. In *Dance-Based Dance Theory*, Alter writes:

When aestheticians defended the arts as rational, dance theorists justified dance as rational. When the aestheticians valued the arts because they stimulated the imagination, dance theorists justified dance in the same way. When aestheticians thought the arts were important for their expressive and communicative powers (the early twentieth century vogue), dance writers explained the value of dance as expressive of universal feelings communicated to an audience. Western dance writers echo whatever is fashionable in aesthetics.²⁶

²⁶ Judith B. Alter, *Dance-Based Dance Theory: From Borrowed Models to Dance-Based Experience*, (New York: P. Lang, 1991),

In the end, this research aims to shine a light on our methods in dance studies departments by making dance researchers within dance studies departments the determiners of what dance studies methods are, rather than situating non-dance studies scholars, such as the philosophers, critical theorists, aestheticians, performance studies writers, or anthropologists upfront and center, as a way of illuminating dance studies authors' issues and methods.

Perhaps due to dance studies' perceived lack of theoretical center, there are many non-dance studies scholars who have told, and continue to "tell dance studies what to do," methodologically speaking. On the one hand, some outside dance studies scholars such as Andre Lepecki say that dance studies *must* reconfigure itself around the Derridian metaphysics of 'the trace,' even though critical theory is not a commonly utilized method or theoretical framework within dance studies research, according to my research.²⁷ The writing of Jacques Derrida and other critical theorists did not appear on any syllabus for any required or elective coursework for my doctoral degree in Dance from Temple University. How can a field reconfigure itself around an idea by an author that not many in the field have studied, especially an author (in the case of Derrida) whose work minimally requires familiarity with all philosophical writing since Plato?²⁸

²⁷ According to my research, critical theory is among the least utilized methods in dance studies research. See Chapter 5 for a discussion of the most common research methods. See Andre Lepecki in particular (a performance studies scholar) for writing on dance that utilizes critical theory and strongly argues that dance studies is even greatly indebted to it. Andre Lepecki, "Inscribing Dance," *Of The Presence of the Body* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2004).

²⁸ For my master's degree in Performance Studies at NYU I had the opportunity to take a graduate seminar with Jacques Derrida and Avital Ronell titled, "Forgiveness and Violence" (2002). One day a student asked for the syllabus and Ronell pointed in the general direction of ground zero in Manhattan and said, "Do you see those collapsed buildings out there? *That's the syllabus.*" After offering us a dramatic metaphor for violence, forgiveness, and global politics (the "subject" of the class) she then proceeded to list authors and texts we should be familiar with

On the other hand, Judith Alter promotes the importance of methods for dance studies that are “dance-based.” While I agree with Alter on this, according to my research, a particularly well-known dance-based method such as Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) is one of the least utilized dance studies research methods. Still others suggest dance studies ought to act more like cultural studies. To that end, Gay Morris writes: “Dance Studies must recuperate some of Cultural Studies’ early engagement with pressing social and political issues, which was an essential part of its interdisciplinarity.”²⁹ These are well-intended suggestions, but before anyone can say what dance studies must do, a more preliminary step is to identify and analyze what dance studies methods actually are. This study provides the groundwork and suggests a framework for these current and future discussions of research methods in dance studies. By asking: what are dance studies research methods, I am also asking, how are dance studies scholars conducting their research? Before dance studies takes any of these suggestions mentioned above (to reconfigure ourselves around the “Derridian metaphysics of the trace;” to use Labanotation as a means of producing dance scholarship; or, to become more like cultural studies), dance studies scholars concerned about dance studies methods ought to examine what methods are already being utilized in dance studies. By the same token, it would be beneficial if outside scholars also know what dance studies is actually doing, so when offering prescriptive advice, their suggestions may be grounded in what will serve the field of dance studies, rather than

from Plato to Kafka, Deleuze, Benjamin Franklin’s letters to his son, Shakespeare, J.L. Austin, Nietzsche, Lyotard, Lacan, Heidegger, The Bible, Baudelaire, Faust, Goethe, Kant, Freud, Tutu, Mandela, Levinas, Arendt, Shelley... We basically had to read *everything*.

²⁹ Gay Morris, “Dance Studies/Cultural Studies,” *Dance Research Journal*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, Summer 2009), 83.

what will serve their own research agenda (unless serving dance studies is not their intention).

Is it important to distinguish between outside scholars and dance studies scholars and to distinguish dance studies methods from “outside” methods or disciplines? Such a question may generate discussions about who is “qualified” to speak about certain topics, particularly when there is a practice component in the research subject. On one hand, it is not uncommon for some dance scholars to articulate their general or particular experience with the dance practice that they are researching as a qualification for researching and writing about it. On the other, it is also not uncommon for some scholars from academic disciplines more established than dance to write about dance without any mention or discussion of their (lack of) experience with the subject about which they are researching and writing (that is, *who they are* as researchers in the research); instead, there is “no questioning” their qualifications as philosophers, for example, to write about the subject of dance. What would it mean to require a certain amount of practical, artistic, or disciplinary experience in the field of dance before one could write about it and/or teach about it at a university level?

While I am in favor of “qualifying” or identifying oneself as a researcher in the research, having years of experience with dance practice, training, teaching, performing, and/or creating may not mean that one will bring those experiences to bear on one’s research and writing. Nonetheless, should there be a prerequisite that one has actually done some dancing before one can write about it with any meaningful authority? Are suggestions from outside academic areas in the best interest of dance studies? These questions are not intended to invite disciplinary restrictions or to promote a narrow view.

However, if anyone can write about anything regardless of their disciplinary training, experience, or background, why are there specific academic and artistic disciplines at all?³⁰

By focusing my study on dance studies research coming out of dance studies departments, I will be able to explore this question of what are dance studies methods. Without yet knowing what dance studies research methods are (dance methods are not clearly agreed upon, nor are they even directly stated by some of the most advanced dance scholars in the field),³¹ it remains a good idea to ask *what exactly are dance studies methods*, before taking recommendations from outside scholars who may lack artistic or academic (or both) disciplinary experience or knowledge of dance.

There are four doctoral programs in dance studies in the United States: Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, the University of California at Riverside in Riverside, California, and Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas. Ohio State has the newest program and did not grant any dissertations in 2007, 2008, or 2009, the period under consideration in this study. As a result, I could not review any dissertations from Ohio State University.

As part of asking the question, what are dance studies research methods; it is interesting to consider the different practice-based requirements for entering a dance studies program across the three doctoral programs in dance studies in this country. The doctoral program in dance at Texas Woman's University requires that the PhD candidate have a minimum of five years' professional (i.e., artistic) experience in dance in either

³⁰ These questions are not a direct part of my research questions but are addressed in this study.

³¹ As mentioned earlier, see *Dance Research Journal*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (Chicago: University of Illinois Press) Summer 2009.

higher education or actual professional dance settings.³² In contrast, the doctoral program in Critical Dance Studies at the University of California at Riverside does not require much dance training, background, or experience. According to the Riverside website, the pre-requisites for entry into that program include:

A working knowledge of movement; an acquaintance with some system of movement observation and analysis; and preparation in general historical and cultural studies.³³

Only two of the three prerequisites are dance-related or dance-based requirements. By way of comparison, the doctoral program in dance at Temple University requires that an applicant submit a dance résumé and attend an actual dance audition; submitting a digital portfolio of choreography and performance is optional.³⁴

This is not to suggest that steep disciplinary prerequisites should be created, but it is to ask questions about prerequisites, disciplinary boundaries, authority, and expertise. By grounding my research in dance studies research (rather than by starting from the interdisciplinary or critical theory turn), I am also attempting to support dance scholars and *dance as a discipline* and as an area of academic inquiry in the most productive way possible, toward articulating its theoretical identity.

The future of the field of dance practice and research is partially shaped and informed by methods that are utilized and taught within dance studies programs. This study aims to draw attention to some of the issues around disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity, disciplinary privileging, asymmetrical relationships between the

³² Texas Woman's University Dance Department (TWU) "TWU Dance Department," accessed July 7, 2010 <https://www.twu.edu/dance/doctoral-program.asp>.

³³ University of California at Riverside, Critical Dance Studies, accessed April 24, 2010, <http://dance.ucr.edu/degrees/PhD.html>.

³⁴ Temple University Dance Department. "Boyer College of Dance, Temple University," accessed April 24, 2010 <http://www.temple.edu/boyer/admissions/dance/graduate/howtoapply.htm>. The information about requirements for these three programs is limited to a search of posted websites.

disciplines, appropriation of methods and subjects, and disembodied scholarship. These concerns are played out in and through research on dance, movement, and the body, as well as in and through the physical practice of dance as an artistic discipline. In the search for a theoretical identity, dance studies has utilized methods from outside fields such as women's studies and performance studies. While performance studies and women's studies may consider themselves to be somewhat marginalized areas as well (compared to other academic areas),³⁵ dance studies does not enjoy the same amount of recognition or method and subject cohesion when compared to these disciplines (even if the subject in both women's studies and performance studies is constantly questioned).³⁶ Women's studies is ever-expanding to include more identities within its theory and practice agenda, but it has relatively more established methods than in dance studies. Performance studies constantly questions its "subject" as well; pushing the envelope in terms of what constitutes a performance is a foundational practice of performance studies inquiry. Yet, in dance studies, our subject is not questioned as much or in similar ways as in these other academic areas. For example, from my experience in a dance doctoral program (compared with my experience in a performance studies program), in a dance

³⁵ It is debatable whether performance studies is a marginalized field or not. See "Is Performance Studies Imperialist? Part 2" by Janelle G. Reinelt, "Is Performance Studies Imperialist? Part 2," *TDR: The Drama Review*. Vol., 51, No. 3 (T 195), Fall 2007: 7-16.

³⁶ This observation is based upon my experience as a graduate student in performance studies, dance studies, and women's studies departments. Although women's studies as a discipline also struggles for its continued existence in higher education settings, feminist theory is robust and enjoys widespread use by advanced interdisciplinary scholars from areas as far ranging as science, political philosophy, and art criticism. This is to say that there are feminist scientists, feminist political philosophers, and feminist art critics. On the other hand, "dance theory" does not enjoy this widespread interdisciplinary use. This comparison is made to clarify what I mean by "asymmetrical relationships." It is my hope that interdisciplinary sharing continues in productive ways between the arts and sciences; hopefully with greater awareness of what may be at stake for lesser known and established artistic and academic disciplines such as dance and dance studies.

department, I have not encountered highly metaphysical approaches to understanding dance, movement, and the body. Dance, movement, and the body are taken as givens in dance departments; their actual existence is not really questioned. Questioning or expanding the range of what constitutes a dance is more of an empirical rather than abstract exercise in a dance department.³⁷

Why I mention and make comparisons to “outside” fields is because there are many “outside” scholars interested in and writing about dance, movement, and the body. This is also recognized in other research studies on research methods, for instance, the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO) employs the category of “outside” disciplines when examining dance education scholarship from 1929 to 2003, illustrating that outside fields are interested in and conduct research in dance education.³⁸ Outside fields writing about dance would not be such a concern if dance enjoyed greater autonomy and disciplinary authority in the university.

The issue of autonomy in dance is historical and ongoing. Outside fields may be inadvertently shaping what is coming to be known as “dance studies,” when outside scholars use dance as their research subject. While dance studies may be utilizing outside methods, it is not quite yet a level playing field in terms of disciplinary cohesion, authority, and funding. It is also not yet quite clear what dance as an academic discipline is gaining by borrowing methods from outside areas. Thus, it would not be accurate to say that dance studies is “appropriating” methods from other fields. In the absence of gain from a position of power, appropriation is not an accurate term or idea to convey the

³⁷ Again, this is only based on my own observations having completed a masters degree in performance studies and having spent ten years in (two) dance departments.

³⁸ NDEO, *The Report*.

way in which dance studies utilizes methods from other fields. On the other hand, the more well known and established disciplines have much to gain by using dance, movement, and the body as their subject matter, as many “outside” academic areas such as philosophy, anthropology, and performance studies are more firmly established or rooted in academia, often with significantly larger budgets, disciplinary coherence, authority, and affiliations with more established artistic and academic disciplines in higher education.

To be clear, I am not suggesting that outside fields “keep their hands off” our subject. Rather, to paraphrase Fred Moten, one of my professors from the Department of Performance Studies at NYU (which I attended from 2001-03), it is not *that* someone is appropriating something; it is *how* they are appropriating it. I will argue, as Moten might suggest, that it is not *that* one uses dance as an artistic discipline or as a social and political practice to further one’s theory or to advance one’s own disciplinary specific concerns; it is *how*. The issues of methodological and disciplinary appropriation—and even colonization—and inter or multidisciplinary are explored more fully throughout this study.³⁹

³⁹ Gay Morris uses the term “colonization” with a similar meaning: the colonization of dance as a subject by other academic disciplines. Morris, *Dance Studies/Cultural Studies*, 82-98. “Outside areas” using dance as their subject usually without reference to the scholarly writing of dance studies authors, who are writing on the same subject, includes the fields of aesthetics, anthropology and philosophy of art, as some examples. There is a colonizing affect when outside scholars write about dance, movement, and the body without contextualizing or engaging their arguments in and through what has already been said on the subject by authors from the discipline of dance. In addition to not consulting dance authors on the subject of dance, movement, or the body, there is a disembodied affect when philosophers do not attempt to confirm their ideas via any kind of physical experience. A related error is when dance studies scholars attempt to “stretch” a theory or philosophy about art to fit dance. Although it is beyond the scope of this research to do a complete analysis of colonizing and disembodied writing, some examples would include Douglas Long’s “The Philosophical Concept of a Human Body” in *The Philosophy of the Body* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970); Frank Sibley’s “Aesthetic Concepts” in *Philosophy*

This study identifies and describes the most commonly utilized research methods in dance studies dissertations over a three-year period (2007-09), in order to reveal which research methods arise out of, or are inherent to, dance studies as an academic discipline. My foremost goal is to begin to articulate the theoretical identity of the field of dance studies as an academic discipline.

Chapter 5 reveals the results of my examination of all dissertations published during the three-year period, from the three dance studies doctoral programs in the United States. Studying dissertations uncovers how doctoral programs in dance studies are influencing and shaping the field of dance as an academic discipline and, perhaps, as an artistic discipline as well. My aim is to be able to create a foundation for future discussions on dance studies research methods by providing a framework and descriptive analysis of current dance studies research methods.

By focusing on current research methods in dance studies dissertations, in concert with an understanding of the field historically as an interdiscipline, this research raises questions about disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity while clarifying our work in dance studies departments currently. Throughout this research, I examine and discuss some areas of dis/connection between dance studies research methods and dance practice toward a feminist intervention into disembodied scholarship. As a subject, the body may not carry as much suspicion as one hundred—or even twenty—years ago, yet the methods with which we write about the body are still politicized. Therefore, dance

Looks at The Arts (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978); and Roderyk Lange's "Dance Becomes Art," in *The Nature of Dance: An Anthropological Perspective* (New York: International Publications Service, 1975). Although these are older works, the disembodied effect of much current philosophical writing "about" dance, movement, and the body is similar. I put the word "about" in quotes because the subject of much philosophical writing about dance is actually about philosophy.

studies research methods are political because we (dance studies scholars) are writing about the body.

In this introduction, I have briefly mentioned some of the connections and disconnections between my own theoretical interests and my dance practice, as well as how my experience both as a woman and as a queer informs my research. I hope the examples given begin to narrate how my experience can meaningfully contribute to my research in and through ways that are not necessarily harmonious or straightforward. Connecting one's theory with one's practice does not require that the connection be seamless or organic. Instead, writing in and through one's experience is difficult work and will raise all kinds of issues, including questions about objectivity and how to explore personal experience in academic writing.

In the end, my prescription for dance studies is that we ought to take it upon ourselves to produce embodied scholarship and bring forward our experiences in and through our knowledgeable bodies, no matter how unfashionable it may seem compared with other disciplines. Writing about dance that is "objective" or theoretically overworked risks being so detached from the body and actual dance practice and experience that it leads to the production of disembodied scholarship that is not compelling. When an author resists incorporating their experience (or lack thereof), or when no effort is made to connect or ground their theory with actual practice or practitioners, the results may also be disembodied. It is indeed ironic that in aiming to be so objective by removing oneself, one's voice, and one's body from the research, the researcher actually becomes "over-implicated" as Bond describes earlier.

As a dance researcher, however, that I have dance experience has not necessarily made my writing about dance easier or more embodied due to that experience. Although I raise some questions about practice “requirements,” I am not saying that experience with dance will lead to writing that is more embodied. Just because one has experience with a discipline does not necessarily incline one to writing about it with increased sensitivity or expertise. On one hand, my own personal, professional, and disciplinary experience does not ensure embodied scholarship, nor does it ensure that useful connections between practice and theory will be made. On the other hand, it does not prevent or categorically exclude me as a researcher from writing objectively or theoretically on the subject, even when the subject I am writing about is, in part, myself.

In addition to articulating the theoretical identity of the field of dance studies, the aim of this research is to encourage increased reflection on the connection between theory and practice and what our experiences and disciplinary knowledge bring to bear on our writing in and through our disciplines. This research questions how disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge and experiences might inform methodological choices. As dance researchers, working from within or “outside” of dance studies, we ought to keep in mind the politics of such decisions and choices. It is not *that* we are using or borrowing a particular method or subject of writing, is it *how* we are using or borrowing it. Most importantly, when writing about dance, our relationship to the practice is what ought to be held and maintained as most important. This study endeavors to promote and highlight questions and issues about disciplinary and interdisciplinary research methods and their dis/connection to practice that are both challenging and positive.

Research Questions

In this study I explore the disciplinary and interdisciplinary origins of dance studies as an academic discipline; by so doing, I historically contextualize the field, in order to articulate the current theoretical identity of dance studies as an academic discipline. Chapter 2 tells the story of dance as a discipline from 1890s to 1940s and Chapter 3 examines the 1950s through the present. In these chapters, I situate the disciplinary origins of dance studies in higher education within current conversations of disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity in dance studies. The research questions for Chapters 2 and 3 are: What are the disciplinary and interdisciplinary origins of dance studies as an academic discipline in higher education?

In Chapter 4 of this study I discuss the NDEO's report: *Research Priorities for Dance Education: A Report to the Nation*, which addresses more or less advanced scholars of dance education research as well as outside scholars. The NDEO's massive project of examining and categorizing all dance education literature (as well as outside literature that takes dance education as its subject) from 1929 to 2003 took three years of fieldwork, a staff of over 40 researchers, and funding from the U.S. Department of Education. The NDEO website also has a searchable database of the study's results, with the ability to search research documents both by "research methods" and by "research techniques."⁴⁰ One difference in scope between my study and that of the NDEO is that I am focusing on research in *dance studies* while the NDEO study focused on research in *dance education*. The differences between dance studies and dance education are discussed in Chapter 4.

⁴⁰ NDEO, *DELRedi*.

In order to provide history and context for the examination of current research methods in *dance studies*, which is the focus of this study (Chapter 5), I examine articles by leading dance education scholars, throughout Chapters 2 and 3, in addition to the NDEO database and the NDEO's *Report to the Nation* (Chapter 4). In Chapter 5, I identify and describe the most commonly utilized research methods in dance studies dissertations from 2007-09, in order to reveal which research methods arise out of dance studies as an academic discipline. This chapter aims to articulate the theoretical identity of the field and answers the overarching focus of this study: what are dance studies research methods and what research methods are inherent to dance studies? Another question that is explored throughout is: can a field be interdisciplinary before its own methods are established? Chapter 6 serves as a summary and conclusion of my research with recommendations for the field and recommendations for future studies.

This time period was selected because it represents “current dance research.” Between 2007 and 2009, 32 dissertations were completed, which is a large sample to examine; I examine all dissertations that were written over this three-year period from all dance studies doctoral programs in the United States. It is beyond the scope of this research to examine the work of more or less advanced dance studies scholars, such as published authors of dance studies anthologies or MFA thesis writers.⁴¹ It is in and through research and coursework at the doctoral level that the dance studies (dance

⁴¹ While exploring which methods are utilized in dance studies doctoral programs, it becomes clear how much “outside” or non-dance studies research methods such as performance, cultural, and women’s studies discourses are utilized in dance studies dissertations. Some academic areas such as women’s studies and performance studies define themselves as multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary fields. My aim is not to assign and affix discourses and methods to certain disciplines. However, these outside fields, unlike dance studies, agree on certain methods as native to their discipline.

theory and dance history) “canon” is established and reiterated; therefore, this study will only examine the methods utilized in doctoral research.

My goal is to articulate the theoretical identity of the field of dance studies as an academic discipline. This study is limited to programs that identify themselves as dance, dance studies, or critical dance studies programs, rather than dance, theater and music programs, performance studies, or other combinations of academic or artistic disciplines. Even among some of the more advanced scholars in the field, what dance studies research methods actually are remains slightly unclear. Part of the discussion of research methods is to address conversations about the interdisciplinary turn dance studies is supposedly taking. My concern is, how can dance studies as an academic discipline take an interdisciplinary turn before its own methods as an academic discipline have been clearly defined, established, or minimally agreed upon? Again, this is not my primary research question; rather, it is a thread that is explored throughout this study.

Limitations And Delimitations

This is a study of dance studies dissertations written during 2007-09, from currently existing dance studies doctoral programs in the United States: The Ohio State University, in Columbus, Ohio, Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, University of California at Riverside, in Riverside, California, and Texas Woman’s University, in Denton, Texas. Of the four programs only three have been in existence

long enough to produce any dissertations: The Ohio State University doctoral program, begun in 2007, had no completed dissertations at the time I conducted my research.⁴²

The 32 dissertations from the dance studies programs in the United States were selected to assess the current field of research that is produced in and through dance studies as an academic discipline. These dissertations represent a complete sample of all dissertations written from all dance studies doctoral programs in the US in 2007-09.

There are other programs around the world that conduct dance research, but they do not call themselves dance studies or critical dance studies programs or even dance departments. For example, I have excluded from this study programs that offer doctoral degrees in: theater and dance; dance, film, and music; and other performing arts programs, which is why, for example, the University of Surrey in the United Kingdom is not included in my data. I am examining interdisciplinarity in dance studies, not interdisciplinarity generally speaking. To qualify for this study, the department must offer a doctorate degree in dance, dance studies, or critical dance studies, which also excludes the many Masters of Fine Arts programs in dance. This limitation is necessary in order to be able to answer my main research question: What are dance studies research methods?

I have also excluded dissertations granted from performance studies, philosophy, and women's studies departments. These and other programs are what I am calling "outside" or non-dance studies departments, even though many scholars in these programs may conduct research on dance, movement, or the body. This limitation is made in order to ask and answer questions about disciplinarity in relationship to *dance* as

⁴² The doctoral program in dance at York University in Toronto, Canada, begun in 2008, should be mentioned here because it is a significant addition to the field.

both an academic and artistic discipline, distinct from theater, music, film, philosophy, or other outside disciplines.

I have chosen to limit the study to programs currently in existence. While there are dance studies programs formerly in existence, these programs, the founders, directors, and earlier dance studies authors deserve recognition and their contributions are appreciated, these limitations ensure I am focused on current dance research.

I am situating current dance studies dissertation writers upfront and center quite intentionally. While the NDEO database will be used to gain a sense of a broader field, it is beyond the scope of this study to look in close detail at *all* research studies from *all* program levels within and outside of dance studies departments.

Significance Of Study

This research clarifies our current work in dance studies departments. It brings attention to and raises questions about disciplinarity and multidisciplinarity, including what it means to share knowledge across disciplines and what issues or questions are raised by the concept of interdisciplinarity in relationship to dance studies, such as concerns over appropriation of methods and subjects and the politics of writing in and through the body. The questions I pose about methods reveal what it means to be disciplinary or interdisciplinary, drawing attention to the politics of research methods, including the ramifications of disciplinary privileging, authority, and boundaries on the basis of race, class, sex, and gender in both academic and artistic realms.

By focusing on dance studies dissertations, I generate a descriptive rather than prescriptive review of current dance studies research methods, whether or not the method

originates from dance studies. This focus on research methods in dissertations from dance studies departments will constitute dance studies scholars from dance studies departments as the determiners or “experts” on dance studies research methods by using their language to determine the categories of research rather than approaching my examination of the dissertations with a previously established list of research method categories. (This is described in detail in Chapters 4 and 5). In this way, it will be possible for new or unique categories of dance studies research to arise out of the discipline of dance studies, defined by dance studies scholars themselves. This research provides the foundation for conversations about dance studies methods, interdisciplinarity, and the connection between theory and practice while placing center stage the research and perspectives of scholars within dance studies departments.

The results of this research create a framework for future discussions on dance studies research methods and address the gap in the literature on dance studies research methods by specifically identifying and describing what are current dance studies research methods in the historical context of dance studies as a discipline. While dance education research is not inclusive of dance studies research, this study focuses on dance studies research including dance education research (this distinction is explored fully in Chapter 4).

While contributing to current discussions on disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity, it creates support for a generative relationship between dance studies and other fields, particularly performance studies, women’s studies, cultural studies, and dance education. This research begins to clarify the relationship between theory and practice in current

dance studies research, warning against the utilization of research methods that lead to the production of disembodied dance scholarship.

While the question of what are dance studies methods and subjects may not be new—my method of answering the question is. By grounding my questions about dance studies methods in actual current dance studies research (dance studies dissertations), I will be strengthening what is known about dance studies as a discipline in higher education. This study aims to provide a foundational tool for future conversations about methods of dance research and will bridge a gap between past and present research methods.

The goal is to be able to say *this is what current dance research looks like*, this is how dance scholars are actually conducting their research and these are the methods and theories they are using. The results of this study will counter any outside claims on our work; claims which do not take into consideration what dance studies is actually doing. This study provides a feminist intervention into the production of disembodied scholarship, generating discussions about the connection between theory and practice as well as the influence other fields have had on dance studies research and which methods, if any, are based in dance studies as an academic or artistic discipline.

Lastly, this study is significant because it produces a list of all dance studies methods used in dance studies dissertations between 2007 and 2009. This list is important because when we speak about using “dance studies methods,” this study produces a list of what those methods actually are. The list is generated from the author’s own words, rather than generated from pre-fabricated categories of research methods, thereby

assuring that if there are any dance studies methods that are foundational to the discipline of dance, they will not get subsumed into or renamed by other disciplinary fields.

CHAPTER 2

THE INTERDISCIPLINARY ORIGINS OF DANCE STUDIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION: 1890s–1950s

History changes as different people write it.

- Ruth Bell Alexander

Overview And Methods

This chapter provides a summary of the history of dance in higher education from the 1890s through the 1950s as background and context for the central focus of this study, which is current dance studies research methods from 2007-09. The issue of dance as an independent academic subject in higher education is examined through an historical and feminist lens and through an exploration of current discussions of disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity.

The term “academic” has meant different things in relationship to dance. It has been used to refer to dance practice in universities (“academic dance”) versus professional dance/training in the professional dance world (dance as art). The study of dance as an academic subject (scholarly or written research on dance) does not appear as a critical mass until the late 20th century; although there has long been writing on dance, departments in universities dedicated to the subject did not emerge until later in the 20th century. This chapter and the next trace these and other historical periods, moving from “academic dance” (dance practice in the university) into the formation and establishment of dance as an academic subject (doctoral programs in dance). In 2011, the doctoral programs in dance in the United States are academic rather than practice-based programs where the purpose is research and writing about dance culminating in a dissertation rather

than a dance performance. It will be clear throughout when I am referring to dance practice in a university setting (“academic dance”) or the study of dance as an academic subject.

Historically and today, dance has struggled for disciplinary independence (separate from physical education in the early years of its formation and now separate from theater, performance studies, music, and, in some cases, film); therefore, issues of disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity play large parts in the history of dance in higher education.

Initially and throughout much of the 20th century, dance departments were housed in physical education departments in the university. Dance departments and programs have their curricular (and some theoretical or philosophical) roots in physical education departments, both of which share alliances and concerns with women’s studies, feminism, and with the professional dance world. It should be noted that the physical education departments from 100 years ago are not the physical education programs we know today. Some of the changes within physical education programs are examined in this chapter; however, the focus herein is on a satellite of issues that surround the development of dance as a subject in higher education and not the history of dance education.

The formation of dance as an academic subject within the university setting arose out of and in many ways is indebted to physical education programs, in concert with dance as art movements (the professional dance world). Dance in higher education is also indebted to the advocacy work of the early dance educators. A distinction between dance as education and dance as art was the subject of continuous debate in the field of dance

and physical education; traces of this debate may still be felt today in dance departments across the country and in contemporary dance studies scholarship.

How dance established its identity as a discipline independent of physical education is an important part of the history of dance in higher education and is essential to understanding interdisciplinarity today. Therefore, questions about what is dance as an academic subject or as a discipline, and how did dance achieve its independent status as an academic subject in higher education, require exploring what it means to be an independent subject (in other words, to have full departmental status) and why disciplinary autonomy is important and desirable. Dance in higher education, as with other academic areas (for example, the social sciences) has a history of leaning on other fields and disciplines for legitimacy and to prove its worth or “seriousness.”

The politics of dance as an autonomous discipline are explored in this chapter. Some dance today is still considered sinful and is censored or banned in the United States; thus, dance is a fruitful area for the discussion of social and political concerns of the body from a feminist perspective, including gender and race issues.⁴³ This chapter explores the changing goals of the university system, from progressive universities to corporate structures, and how these institutional goals and forces have influenced and shaped dance as a discipline.

⁴³ There are many examples of ongoing censorship of the arts and dance in particular. A recent example is the arrest of five of the “flash mob” dancers at the Thomas Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C. who were peacefully and silently protesting what they believed was the unconstitutional ban on dancing in this public space. Please see article by John Ryan in PFSK, “Flash Mob Arrested For Dancing at Jefferson Memorial,” June 10, 2011, <http://www.psfk.com/2011/05/flash-mob-arrested-for-dancing-at-jefferson-memorial-video.html>. And in *The Washington Post* online, Del Wilber, “No dancing at Jefferson Memorial, Judge Rules,” accessed June 10, 2011, <http://voices.washingtonpost.com/crime-scene/del-quentin-wilber/no-dancing-at-jefferson-memori.html>.

The purpose of exploring the historical origins of dance in higher education is to gain a sense of the issues undergirding the development of dance as an academic subject and to contextualize contemporary dance studies research methods. In the “Introduction” to *Dance in Higher Education: Focus on Dance XII*, Wendy Oliver, Professor of Dance and Women’s Studies at Providence College, writes: “Each era of university dance education since 1887 had a dominant issue, or issues, around which educators rallied.”⁴⁴ Some of the dominant issues from the 1880s through the 1940s are explored in this chapter; the 1950s through the present will be covered in Chapter 3.

The issues in dance in higher education are often also the *subjects* of much dance research. As a way of identifying and connecting some of the issues and subjects in the history of dance in higher education, this chapter briefly explores some of the early writing in dance and touches upon the history of physical education programs and educational philosophy. Although physical education and educational philosophy are major influences on dance’s early development, and as such they are referenced, they are not the focus of this section.

The early influences and affiliations between dance and other disciplines, such as women’s studies and physical education, are examined. Affiliations and the influence of outside fields on dance are issues that have been fundamental to dance as a discipline in higher education from its inception. Academic affiliations and interdisciplinarity are also contemporary concerns in that many research methods utilized today in dance studies research have been borrowed from outside fields.

⁴⁴ Wendy Oliver, “Introduction,” *Dance in Higher Education: Focus on Dance XII*, (Reston, VA: American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, 1992), 1.

I take my meaning and understanding of the concept of interdisciplinary from a standard dictionary definition of the term interdisciplinary: “Of, relating to, or involving two or more academic disciplines that are usually considered distinct.”⁴⁵ What I see as the issue in dance studies in relationship to interdisciplinarity is that the discipline of dance as an academic subject has not yet developed its own distinct theoretical center. What constitutes a distinct theoretical center is a theoretical, pedagogical, and ideological base that is well developed, articulated (if not agreed upon), and recognizable enough to outside areas in higher education that the outside, adjacent fields could also easily recognize and articulate the most basic purpose or premise of dance studies as an academic subject in higher education—especially if and when the outside field desires to make interdisciplinary alliances with dance studies as a discipline. For example, many if not most in higher education would be able to understand the basic premise or driving purpose of an interdisciplinary subject such as women’s studies. In order to better understand the “interdisciplinary turn” that many say dance studies is now taking, it is necessary to first look back at dance’s disciplinary origins and its struggle for autonomy as a field of study.

This chapter’s design follows an historical chronology using Thomas Hagood’s *A History of Dance in American Higher Education: Dance and the American University* as a guide.⁴⁶ I move back and forth in time in order to bring forward issues and concerns from the history of dance in higher education that resonate today and then to reflect back upon issues inherent to the field. The focus is not to authoritatively assert facts or dates

⁴⁵ The Free Dictionary accessed January 1, 2011, <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/interdisciplinary>.

⁴⁶ Thomas K. Hagood, *A History of Dance in American Higher Education: Dance and The American University*, (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2000).

along a precise timeline; rather my goal is to allow historical events to illuminate issues in the present.

Additional significant historical and theoretical voices, which comprise this chapter, include Edrie Ferdun, Wendy Oliver, Lynne Fauley Emery, Karen Bond, Luke Kahlich, Malcolm Barnard, Sarah Hilsendager, and Jens Richard Giersdorf.

Introduction

A history of the white masculine heterosexual bourgeois body in Euro-America can therefore be told in terms of a series of denials of its corporeality.

- Gillian Rose, *Women and Everyday Spaces*

Dance as an academic subject is not alone in being under-supported or in being a suspect subject in higher education. However, what makes this hard to digest for many in the arts and humanities, not just dance departments, is that the resources for sports are immense compared with the insubstantial, sometimes substandard resources and budgets of many dance doctoral programs. For example, The Ohio State University recently boasted spending \$100 million for athletics.⁴⁷ While society may no longer consider dance to be dangerous or immoral (although there is evidence that some hold this lingering view), fine and performing arts departments in general and dance departments

⁴⁷ Sometimes the revenue for athletics comes from student fees. According to The Knight Commission, at some institutions, such as the University of Akron in Ohio, student fees contributed to 70.8% (\$13.3 million) of the \$18.7 million budget for athletics. This is actually a small budget compared to the top spending schools like Ohio State, which has boasted record-breaking budgets of over a \$100 million for athletics, according to *The Wall Street Journal*. The Knight Commission website, "Subsidizing Big-Time College Sports: An Analysis of Revenues and Expenses," accessed April 24, 2011, http://www.knightcommission.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=451. Ohio State budget from *The Wall Street Journal* from "Ohio State Buckeyes" website accessed April 24, 2011, <http://www.ohiostatebuckeyes.com/pdf5/94609.pdf>.

in particular are often among the university budget's lowest priorities; no university spends 100 million on the arts.

In the beginning of *A History of Dance in American Higher Education*, Hagood describes how dance in European history is associated with the erotic, with sinfulness, with drunkenness, and with a "low" intellect. In short, "No sober person dances."⁴⁸ Hagood writes, "For most 19th century Americans, professional dance remained a misunderstood activity for society's slackers."⁴⁹ The study and practice of dance remains suspect on university campuses, while university athletic events enjoy major funding and respect.

The significant disparities between the disciplines of dance and physical education are emphasized here because the history of dance in higher education reveals that dance as a discipline in higher education arose out of physical education; and for most of a century, dance has felt compelled to prove its seriousness.

Wendy Oliver writes about dance in higher education's early pioneers:

Most dance educators associate 1926 with Margaret H'Doubler's great accomplishment of establishing the first dance major in higher education at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. However, fewer of us are aware that in 1887 Dudley Sargent established the Harvard Summer School, a normal school, which included dance within its physical education program.⁵⁰

While dance had its start in physical education, both dance and physical education were different disciplines 100 years ago when compared to how they exist today. However, the relationship between the disciplines of dance and physical education is important to

⁴⁸ Hagood writes, "European biases tie dance to the erotic, to a "low" intellect, to drunkenness, to sin, and debauched behavior." Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 2.

⁴⁹ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 38.

⁵⁰ Oliver, *Focus on Dance*, 1.

consider. The tension between these two disciplines was a topic of ongoing debate and has been written about extensively by physical education and dance educators.

In addition to being housed in physical education, dance in higher education arose out of other influences and affiliations, including the women's movement, progressive educational philosophy, and holistic approaches to physical practices (which later will be contrasted with professional dance techniques created by choreographers such as Martha Graham). The holistic modes of training asserted themselves as distinct from theatrical ("sinful") productions, in order to be taken seriously within the university setting. At the turn of the 19th century into the 20th century the earliest "dance programs," as such, were merely one aspect of physical education departments. Hagood writes, "[I]t was physical educators William G. Anderson, Dudley Sargent, and Luther Gulick who are credited with bringing folk dance into the physical education curriculum."⁵¹

Some of the coursework in these early physical education programs was influenced by the advocacy work of the women's movement, particularly the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), a group that advocated for "hygiene," among other things, to be included in the university curriculum. Hagood writes,

By the end of the 19th century, coursework in aesthetic culture, physical training, and hygiene were included in curriculum designs at colleges specifically devoted to teacher preparation termed 'Normal Schools.'

Due to the lobbying efforts of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) in the 1880's curricular attention to hygiene was blended into programs for physical training.⁵²

⁵¹ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 52.

⁵² Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 29. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to provide a complete history of the formation of physical education programs, however, the pioneering contributions of Luther Gulick, Clark Hetherington, John Dewey, Gertrude Colby, along with Bird Larson must be mentioned. Colby's contributions will be explored later in this chapter, along with the work of Margaret H'Doubler. At the turn of the 19th century, that women such as Colby were in positions to effect change was, in large part, due to Gulick and Hetherington's

A healthy body and mind was seen as a moral issue in the late 19th century; therefore, the WCTU put pressure on state legislatures to include hygiene in the curriculum of universities and required programs to teach students about the adverse effects of alcohol and tobacco.

It should be pointed out that the agenda of the women's movement in the 1890s in the United States was not the same feminist agenda we know in 2012, just like the physical education departments in the 1890s are not the physical education programs we think of now. It would be a mistake to view the feminist agenda from over a hundred years ago as less rigorous when it was just different. For example, American feminists in the 1890s were advocating for women's educational equality with men, while the fourth wave of American feminism today has expanded their multiple agendas to include transnational human rights as well as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered (LGBT) issues. It is also not uncommon for feminists today to be men and for feminists to extend concern for sex and gender discrimination and analysis of sex and gender issues to men, to transgendered individuals, and to studies of masculinity.⁵³

In *Moving Lessons: Margaret H'Doubler and the Beginning of Dance in American Education* Janice Ross articulates the connections between dance, physical education, and hygiene and how these are feminist issues. Ross writes:

encouragement of her work and assigning her to the creation of something “new.” Thank you to Dr. Sarah Hilsendager for our conversations about the history of dance in higher education.⁵³ In a similar way, it ought to be pointed out that dance scholarship is not “new.” We may often only think about popular contemporary theorists or philosophers when we think of dance scholarship or “dance theory” today; however, there has long been discourse on dance. It just may not have manifested itself as it does now, therefore, contemporary scholars (myself included) may not easily recognize “dance theory” from 50 years ago. Thank you to Dr. Kariamuwelsh for our many conversations on dance writing and history.

[In the late 19th century] a change in women's attitudes toward their bodies preceded this larger change in the social status, behavior, and fitness of women. For a long period women agreed with society's belief that their disadvantaged status was justified and that they were 'inferior, diseased, and poisonous.'⁵⁴

Ross continues:

Women's entrance into the world of sport and physical education represented a critical breach in a long-standing barrier between women and physical activity. It was a necessary first step toward the eventual founding of dance as a discipline in higher education.⁵⁵

Edrie Ferdun writes about the solidarity between and influence of women on dance in higher education in these early years:

The alliance among women, often in women's colleges or in sex-separated departments of physical education generated the power to propel dance through its first stages.⁵⁶

The influence of the professional dance world at this time was not yet felt in higher education, and so the disciplinary origins of dance were not yet linked to what was going on in the professional dance world. Wendy Oliver confirms this in her history, describing that although Isadora Duncan was performing throughout Europe in the 1890s, her influence on dance in higher education was not yet felt at this time.⁵⁷

When discussing the origins of dance in higher education, it is useful to keep in mind the early alliances, influences, and connections not only with physical education but also with women's issues, particularly the feminist concern for the student's over all well-being. Ferdun writes:

⁵⁴ Janice Ross, *Moving Lessons: Margaret H'Doubler and the Beginning of Dance in American Education* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000) 52.

⁵⁵ Ross, *Moving Lessons*, 59

⁵⁶ Ferdun, *Into the Fray*, 8.

⁵⁷ Oliver, *Focus on Dance*, 1.

Dance in connection with physical education has a long history of concern for the well being of students in colleges and universities.⁵⁸

It is hard not to contrast this with the often unhealthy and unkind attitudes toward less than “ideal” bodies in many dance departments and in the professional dance world today. While women may have freed themselves from corsets and sexist scientific opinions about their bodies, not many dance departments could boast that the health and well-being of their students is placed above “professional standards,” which includes unrealistic physical ideals, no matter the cost to the student’s health or well-being.

At the turn of the 20th century in addition to sex segregation, race segregation was the norm in higher education. In the state of Kentucky, for example, a law was passed to enforce racial segregation in education.⁵⁹ However, in 1897:

Vassar College graduates its first black student, Anita Hemmings. Hemmings passed for white until she was outed a few weeks prior to graduation. The university expresses outrage at the deception but still grants her a degree.⁶⁰

One of the more positive benefits of the current interdisciplinary turn that dance is taking is its commitment to issues of race, ethnicity, sex, gender, nation, and sexuality.

However, for the most part, written dance history remains segregated and the real diversity of dance practices and dance practitioners remains underrepresented.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Ferdun, *Into the Fray*, 8. In my observation, the overall well-being of the student is not a central concern in many dance departments today.

⁵⁹ “1904: The Kentucky legislature passes the Day Law, prohibiting interracial education. As a result, Berea College shuts its doors to blacks for nearly half a century.” *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* (JBHE), “Timeline of Affirmative Action,” accessed July 26, 2011, <http://www.jbhe.com/timeline.html>.

⁶⁰ JBHE, *Timeline*, <http://www.jbhe.com/timeline.html>.

⁶¹ It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to address the underrepresentation of people of color in the history of dance in higher education in the United States. It is an indication that further research and writing is needed to reflect the diversity of dance both in higher education and in the professional dance world.

By the late 19th century, the term “physical culture” was renamed “physical training” when physical training, health, and hygiene were blended together. It would be decades before the first dance departments emerged from this physical training, benefitting from women’s advocacy for women’s educational equality, and also, as we will see, from progressive physical educators and beyond, into the era of professional artists and the development of the “conservatory model.” It would also be decades before the first few African-American women were granted PhDs.⁶²

Oliver observes that the first articles on dance from this period articulated the prevailing concerns of the era—beauty and hygiene:

1905 was the first year dance was the main subject of discussion at the conference of the American Physical Education Association. It was also the year when seven articles about dance appeared in the physical education literature.⁶³

In his article, “The Dancing Foot” published in the journal *American Physical Education Review* (1904), Henry Taylor writes:

[T]he new dancing must be hygienic... it must be gymnastic; it must be recreative; it must be expressive and it must illustrate the highest standards of beauty.⁶⁴

In their historical writing, Ross, Ferdun, Oliver, and Hagood illustrate dance’s early affiliation with women’s movements on social and political levels. Ferdun’s work

⁶² It was not until 1921 that three African-American women were granted doctoral degrees. “Eva B. Dykes from Radcliffe College, Sadie T. Mossell Alexander from the University of Pennsylvania, and Georgiana R. Simpson from the University of Chicago were the first African-American women to earn doctorates.” JBHE, *Timeline*, <http://www.jbhe.com/timeline.html>.

⁶³ Oliver, *Focus on Dance*, 1.

⁶⁴ Henry Taylor, “The Dancing Foot,” *American Physical Education Review*, Vol. 10, June (American Association for the Advancement of Physical Education, 1905), 137-145; 138, full text available through google books and as an ebook, accessed January 20, 2012, <http://books.google.com/books?id=tGwvAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA137&lpg=PA137&dq=Henry+Taylor,+“The+Dancing+Foot,”+American+Physical+Education+Review&source=bl&ots=T7QZaPsGKT&sig=y6ogrmzO2vWoYrsqAIX4U6wBoKI&hl=en&sa=X&ei=A88ZT--OGofcgQeFp8GcCw&ved=0CC0Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=Henry%20Taylor%2C%20“The%20Dancing%20Foot%2C”%20American%20Physical%20Education%20Review&f=false>.

also suggests how affiliations, such as with physical education, affect dance's *return* to physical education today, for instance, in and through the recent flourishing of the exercise industry (i.e., gyms and fitness centers) and through dance science. To understand dance studies research methods today, it is worthwhile to review the historical sequencing first to see how we arrived at these "turns" and *returns*. As will be discussed later in this chapter, dance is currently taking an "interdisciplinary turn," but its development has made numerous shifts during previous eras. From dance's affiliation with physical education and the women's movement to dance as an independent discipline, to the interdisciplinary, multicultural, and postmodern turn, all of these historical moments reflect the issues in the field—issues including affiliation, multiculturalism, interdisciplinarity, disciplinary disparities, curricular standards and demands from corporate culture, as well as other influences acting on the arts generally and on dance in higher education in particular.

As mentioned earlier, all early dance programs started within physical education programs and the physical education programs and curriculum then are not what we think of today. For example, the first stage of the "physical culture movement" in American schools included military activities such as marching and parades as well as calisthenics and gymnastics. The attention to health and general well-being is also attributed to German immigrant populations arriving in the United States, according to Hagood. He writes:

Wherever there was an established German immigrant population physical culture, health, home economics, and practical medicine were taught at local 'Turnvereins'.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 28, 39.

At the turn of the 20th century, while dance may have been seen by some as suspect, there was also a “re-discovery of the body, and of thought and emotion as expressed through the body[.]”⁶⁶ New methods of training and performance were developed, such as the Delsarte method (created by François Delsarte). Inspired by Greek and Roman fashion, statue posing and tableaux were typical Delsarte presentations. Delsarte’s physical training would later influence what was called art-dance in the early 20th century. The students of Delsarte were mainly actors, performers, and wealthy white women. One teacher, Genevieve Stebbins, taught yogic breathing along with the Delsarte system to relieve stress.

In the 1880s, Delsarte’s and other methods of training influenced Ruth St. Denis and Isadora Duncan, two dancers who are considered pioneers of modern dance. Hagood writes that in this period, the training of the body was rooted in both “the classical world of antiquity represent[ing] the ultimate in man’s artistic achievements *and* that one might commune with the divine through the body.”⁶⁷ Connecting the body and mind or expressing the divine in and through the body is central to yogic training and Hindu philosophy. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide a complete analysis of the different cultural influences acting on dance in higher education and in the professional dance world; however, multiculturalism and issues of cultural appropriation are both historical and contemporary issues within dance and dance in higher education.⁶⁸

While discourse on dance existed long before dance as a discipline developed in higher education settings, in this early period there is a record of educational philosophers

⁶⁶ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 39.

⁶⁷ (My emphasis.) Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 40.

⁶⁸ For writing on Ruth St. Denis and other writing on issues of cultural appropriation and dance see the anthology, *Moving History/Dancing Cultures: A Dance History Reader*, Ann Dils and Ann Cooper Albright, Eds., (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan, 2001).

and physical educators writing about the emerging movement training modes and systems. For example, writing emerged about “art dance” versus more holistic approaches and methods of physical training. The distinctions between these kinds of dance were made by way of the development of educational philosophy.⁶⁹

Hagood contextualizes the subject of dance in higher education by offering a history of general education and of physical education programs in the 1800s. These physical education programs in concert with progressive, general education philosophy are the platforms onto which dance as a discipline emerges many decades later. In short, Hagood describes the purpose of general education as: “1. To develop the individual’s ability to contribute to society; 2. To push back the boundaries of knowledge; and 3. To forward the cultural legacy.”⁷⁰

Today dance can borrow modes of research and writing from other fields in order to assist in establishing dance as an academic subject in higher education as a more “suitable” academic pursuit. This may be beneficial in some ways, but there will also be hazards in borrowing theories, philosophies, and/or methods from other fields, such as critical theory. Although “critical theory” is a broad term, whether one is using Jurgen Habermas, Karl Marx, Michel Foucault, or Jean Baudrillard, these theories may not provide worthwhile approaches to discussions of dance, not only because these discourses may not be offered in most dance departments, but because they are entirely disconnected from the practice and subject matter of dance. I question the suitability of theories that are used mainly to interrogate other texts; a lot of re-working will be needed before dance could apply these discourses in a meaningful and productive way (i.e., when

⁶⁹ See the writing of educators John Dewey and Stanley Hall.

⁷⁰ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 9.

theory is connected to dance practice rather than disconnected). Dance scholars should develop theories that are launched from the particular social, political, practical, pedagogical, and aesthetic *issues inherent to dance* and not from issues inherent to literature.

In *Dance-Based Dance Theories* (1991), Judith Alter warns against using outside theories and suggests that dance develop its own theoretical base:

The development of dance as an autonomous academic field stimulates the quest for a theoretical base and productive research methods to derive theoretical concepts about the field. Traditionally, dance writers turned to aestheticians to validate their ideas about dance. The reliance on outside experts resulted in many unexamined ideas being carried forward into contemporary dance literature. Dependence on philosophy may have done more harm than good for the theoretical development of dance.⁷¹

From the start of dance in higher education, the field of dance struggled to be considered a legitimate and a non “theatrical” (i.e., sinful), trivial, or obscure subject. Today, the need to “keep up with” other departments is not surprising, although if we must use the theories from other departments, then we should not do so without questioning their usefulness, as Alter’s passage above implies.⁷²

⁷¹ Judith B. Alter, *Dance-Based Dance Theory: From Borrowed Models to Dance-Based Experience* (New York: P. Lang: 1991), 2.

⁷² Ann Daly writes about how scientific inquiry furnished dance with credibility. See “Isadora Duncan’s Dance Theory” in *Dance Research Journal*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Autumn, 1994) p. 24-31. When I say “postmodern” or “critical theory” I am generally referring to work by Foucault, Marx, Derrida, Lacan, Butler, and others including postmodern feminist theory and poststructuralism. I question the utility of writing that requires turning dance into a text so that it can be “read” like a text. Poststructuralist authors and discourses may not be offered in dance departments; one must seek them out in outside seminars and programs such as the women’s department, English or other outside departments. This contributes further to the culture of elitism and exclusion that postmodernism has been widely accused of. It is unclear to me why these circuitous discourses are now prized and sought after methods in some dance writing. See Barbara Christian, “The Race for Theory,” who warns about the predominance of theory; and Judith Alter’s “Dance-Based Dance Theory” for specifically dance studies concerns over the use of critical theory and other outside methods to discuss dance. This discussion is continued in Chapter 5: “Current Dance Studies Research Methods.” as it pertains to the production of disembodied scholarship.

Putting aside (for now) the theory of our subject and returning to the history of our subject, the first systems of dance training used in dance in higher education, in physical education departments, were “aesthetic dance” or “aesthetic calisthenics.” According to Hagood, Dudley Sargent, who was a gymnast, developed this system. Another important early leader in the field, particularly for physical education for women, was Delphine Hanna. Hanna taught Luther Gulick, who eventually became the president of the American Physical Education Association (APEA), and who chose dance as the theme for the APEA conference in New York in 1905.⁷³

Dance in higher education also has its roots in national dances, pageants, and the American Pageant Movement. In *The Green River Pageant and the Americanization of the American Frontier*, Jamie Rommie provides a definition of a pageant:

At the turn of the twentieth century, a popular form of theater known as American Historical Pageantry utilized young people and immigrants to present patriotic, historical scenes of particular communities to teach proper American codes and values... to retell and repeat a recycled past. ... As a theatrical medium, pageantry sought to represent a community’s history through a fusion of the arts, such as drama, music, and dance.⁷⁴

In addition to pageants and national dances, other approaches developed, asserting an American influence, such as “natural gymnastics” and “natural dancing” (à la Isadora Duncan), German influences on the idea of “physical culture” brought gymnastic drill and group exercises to American higher education curriculum.

Barbara Christian, “The Race for Theory,” *The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse*, Eds. Abdul R. JanMohamed and David Lloyd (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

⁷³ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 53.

⁷⁴ Jamie Rommie, “The Green River Pageant and The Americanization of the American Frontier,” *Cercles* 19 (2009), accessed September 14, 2011, <http://www.cercles.com/n19/rommie.pdf>. It is interesting to think that almost one hundred years later, when I was a student at Juilliard in the 1990’s, “Americana” was still offered in a dance composition class as a potential compositional tool/inspiration; it was suggested alongside autobiographical modes of creating a dance, minimalism, or creating a duet or trio.

In the professional dance world between 1895 and 1925, dance artists such as Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis, and Ted Shawn became well known; these “modern dance” artists would greatly impact dance in higher education and even dance studies research methods. For example, Duncan spoke about her work and eventually wrote about her vision of dance. Artists writing about dance become more prevalent during the 1940s but occur throughout the history of dance in higher education.

Around 1903, Isadora Duncan wrote *The Dance of the Future*, which was originally a lecture. A manifesto against ballet, Duncan argues like a 21st century feminist would: against the conceptions of women as ‘nymphs,’ ‘fairies,’ or ‘coquettes.’⁷⁵ Duncan also discusses cultural origins of dance; therefore, in this one very early text in dance research, her work can be considered an example of writing about dance, coming from the field of dance that is already interdisciplinary, before dance as a discipline is even established. In essence, Duncan’s work is part feminist argument, part manifesto, part cultural history, and part dance history.

In “Isadora Duncan’s Dance Theory,” Ann Daly writes: “Second only to [Duncan’s] talent for movement was her uncanny instinct for tapping into the discourses of her day and using them as a way to lead people to her dancing.”⁷⁶ Duncan’s self-reflective philosophical writing, in turn, influenced and inspired content and curriculum in higher education.

Gertrude Colby, an early pioneer in dance education, was influenced by Duncan and confirms this in her writing. Also influential from the professional dance world were

⁷⁵ Isadora Duncan, *The Dance of the Future* (Leipzig: Eugen Diedrichs, 1903).

⁷⁶ Ann Daly, “Isadora Duncan’s Dance Theory” in *Dance Research Journal*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Autumn, 1994), 25.

Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn, who established the first professional dance studio offering coursework in culture, history, religion, costuming, accompaniment, social grace and art. The Denishawn school was like a professionalized version of the first academic dance department. Until Denishawn, Hagood writes: “dance in America had not been professionally taught in concert with supporting disciplines, and certainly not in context with history, religion, or literature.”⁷⁷

Dance in higher education had multiple disciplinary affiliations that shaped its development. The influence of physical culture, physical education, the women’s movement, nationalism, civic duty, philosophy, religion, visual art and music—the beginning of dance in America in the university setting seems to have arisen from multiple sources and locations both in the practice of dance and arts advocacy and in the writing about dance. Hagood summarizes the history of dance in higher education thus far in this way:

Working outside the academy, Duncan, St. Denis and Shawn shaped the thinking of those who were inside its ivied walls. Anderson, Sargent, and Gulick brought the national dances into the curriculum; Duncan, St. Denis, and Shawn shifted attention in the professional world of dance toward the natural and the expressive. Duncan, St. Denis, and Shawn introduced the ideas that dance could be conceptually based, that dance could be tied to the other arts, and that dance reflected the humanities and sciences, both in art and in education.⁷⁸

Hagood continues:

Other influences included: the search for a new spiritualism in response to the rapid and often unsettling advances in science and industry; progressive education; the evolution of mass media and transportation; social mobility; radical change and experimentation in the visual and performing arts; the accumulation of personal and industrial wealth; the creation of a large middle

⁷⁷ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 67.

⁷⁸ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 68.

class; the women's education, health, and suffrage movement: all these elements coming together, and playing off one another; changing, shifting, and evolving.⁷⁹

The next sections introduce the development of the first dance department, the influences contributing to its formation, and the idea that *who* is writing affects what is being written about dance and how it is written. In other words, the academic and artistic backgrounds of the early key players in the development of dance in higher education affected dance as a discipline in higher education, including how dance was written about at the time. From a contemporary perspective, one might associate the study of dance in higher education with art, anthropology, other performing arts, or even critical theory, but this next section reveals dance's early affiliation with, connection to, and development out of sports and science.

1913-1926 – The First Dance Department

The first dance as art program was launched in 1913 in New York's Speyer School, which was a part of Teachers College, at Columbia University. This program was founded by Gertrude Colby, at the behest of Luther Gulick; Colby was a student of gymnastics, ballet, "aesthetic dance," American Delsartism, Dalcroze Eurhythmics, and pageantry.⁸⁰ In 1918, Colby started a teacher-training program and published *Natural Rhythms and Dances* (1922), a book outlining her teaching methods. The Teachers College program was the first dance education program in the country.

⁷⁹ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 69.

⁸⁰ Thank you to Dr. Sarah Hilsendager for contributing to my knowledge and understanding of the history of dance in higher education. Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 69.

Dance scholar Wendy Oliver emphasizes that this period marked the beginning of expressiveness trumping physical fitness. She links this to the field of dance's connection with music via Dalcroze's Eurhythmics. She writes,

In 1915, Jacques Dalcroze's Eurhythmics, or music interpretation came to the fore in dance education. The importance of expressiveness in dance eclipsed the notion of physical fitness or grace.⁸¹

At this time, it is also significant that dance began distinguishing itself from physical education. The assertion of dance as a substantive area of study was a major contribution of both Colby and dance education pioneer Margaret H'Doubler. H'Doubler was an athlete and biologist who came to dance very reluctantly. Once committed to dance, she became recognized as one of the field's most prestigious dance educators, founding the dance department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1926 and writing key texts, which are highly valued to this day. Her background in science influenced her research and understanding of dance as a discipline in a particular way.⁸²

⁸¹ Oliver, *Focus on Dance*, 1.

⁸² Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 77, 78. Thank you Sarah Hilsendager for contributing to my knowledge of H'Doubler's pioneering body of work. Dance scholars who come from many different backgrounds will relate to dance as a discipline in different ways. This diversity of background and experience is reflected in the research methods used in dance studies dissertations today. In my own experience, I have been afforded multiple views and perspectives of the field: first as a dance major, then as a professional dance artist, then as a performance studies scholar, and now as a dance scholar with a feminist perspective in a doctoral program. It should also be noted that I am researching and writing about dance studies research methods at a time when the field is, more or less, fully formed, at least as an artistic discipline. There is little question about dance being a specific and autonomous artistic form. As a subject of academic research, however, although the field continues to expand (there are many BA and MA and several PhD programs in dance in the United States), dance is less widely understood as an academic subject than it is an artistic discipline within higher education.

Dance Education Pioneers:
Margaret H'Doubler And Blanche Trilling

Dance education pioneer Margaret H'Doubler pursued biology with a minor in philosophy at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she also played sports, especially basketball. After graduating from college, H'Doubler was asked to coach women's basketball teams in the women's physical education department. Around this time, Blanche Trilling was hired to be the director of the women's physical education division. According to Hagood, "Together the young coach Margaret H'Doubler, and the administrator, Blanche Trilling, changed the future of dance as education in America."⁸³

Trilling graduated from The Boston School of Gymnastics and was the director of the women's physical education program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for 34 years. From 1912-1946, dance transitioned from being an elective university course to being a full-fledged major and then a graduate degree. Trilling asked H'Doubler to go to New York City to research dance so that she could come back to Wisconsin to teach dance. Despite some initial resistance, H'Doubler, a basketball coach and biology major, went to New York in 1917 "to get dance" for a physical education program.

Trilling and H'Doubler corresponded with each other while H'Doubler conducted her research in New York. In one such correspondence H'Doubler writes, "The more I took of it, the more I disliked dance."⁸⁴ In frustration, she writes that she studied at about seven different studios and no one could answer her most critical question: "*What is dance?*"

⁸³ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 82.

⁸⁴ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 86.

If we compare this scene with the relatively advanced dance culture today, it is not a stretch to say that it would be unimaginable for a mid-western university dance department to send a basketball coach or biology major to New York to research dance classes so as to bring back what she or he learned to teach in a university department, no matter how much they loved or were committed to movement. This illustrates to what extent H'Doubler was a pioneer and how successfully dance as a discipline was able to establish itself in higher education.

Reflecting on H'Doubler's groundbreaking work in dance education in the 1920s also offers the opportunity to examine the interdisciplinarity origins of dance on a curricular level today. It seems H'Doubler was sent to New York to "get dance" at a time when there was little question about the suitability or unsuitability of biology and sports as prerequisite knowledge for creating a dance curriculum. In a similar way, today in terms of research methods we easily borrow from other disciplines without much consideration of the suitability or the consequences (for better or worse) for the discipline of dance. This seemingly unquestioned interdisciplinarity goes both ways. It can be observed in the quantity of writing about dance from outside fields today that other disciplines do the equivalent of "going to New York to get dance" and return to their own departments with borrowed subject matter, while using methods from their own areas.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Not to unfairly shine the spotlight only on dance—as other fields readily borrow from one another—however, dance as a performing art discipline has its own particular issues and concerns, unlike other fields whose subject matter may lend itself more readily to interdisciplinarity or sharing of theoretical discourses, such as literary or critical theory. Further research is needed to examine the disconnections between theoretical discourses and curriculum in dance studies doctoral programs. For example, is it even possible to say that dance studies is taking a "critical theory turn" (both within and outside of higher education) if critical and literary theory are not offered in dance departments?

This reveals two main concerns for dance studies and interdisciplinarity today. First, what are the consequences of biology, anthropology, philosophy, women's studies, or performance studies departments writing on the subject of dance? Today when this occurs, these outside fields often dominate the area of what is coming to be known as "dance studies" writing and research or "dance scholarship." I put this in quotes because there is a lot of dance scholarship that is not written by dance scholars who studied in, or earned their degrees from, dance departments. Second, should we in dance studies give consideration to incorporating outside research methods into our dance research, including ideology and concepts from other areas and departments (as well as subject matter from outside disciplines)? We as dance scholars should develop our own approaches and strategies to lessen our dependence on outside methods, especially if many of us do not have sufficient training in outside research methods, including being knowledgeable about the history and context in which the methods are used.

Hagood explains that H'Doubler set herself apart from most dance educators. He writes: [She] wasn't interested in teaching dance if it wasn't conducive to a theoretical approach."⁸⁶ The early dance writing dealt with the theory of the practice and teaching; therefore, it does make sense, considering H'Doubler's disciplinary background (biology), that she wanted dance to become more theoretically established before it could be taught in a cohesive or even systematic way that was educationally beneficial.

H'Doubler's disciplinary sensibilities as a student of biology and sports influenced the kind of dance she thought ought to be taught. Further, H'Doubler wanted

⁸⁶ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 86

to develop dance as “something worth a college woman’s time.”⁸⁷ From H’Doubler’s perspective and training, the mingling of biology and dance was not entirely an odd coupling; there was something organic about the way she came to develop her dance science, even though it may have taken several attempts.⁸⁸

H’Doubler was also endeavoring to distinguish dance as education from dance as an art. In the “Introduction” to *Moving Lessons*, Janice Ross writes,

Although both the fields of American modern dance and dance in American higher education were in their infancy in the 1920s, already there was some tension between the two disciplines. For reasons of territoriality as well as survival, H’Doubler had defined her educational dance as distinct from the modern dance of the stage.⁸⁹

Later in *Moving Lessons*, Ross continues to describe H’Doubler’s vision:

For H’Doubler, sustaining this separation between dance as an educational enterprise, as she practiced it, and dance as a performing art as emphasized in the professional New York studios was fundamental. H’Doubler had defined dance education *in opposition* to dance as an art form, and to intermingle the two would have diluted the very values of dance in the university she had worked so hard to espouse.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 86.

⁸⁸ It should be pointed out if it is not already clear that there is dance practice, dance teaching, and dance writing and that there are methods for dance practice, methods for dance teaching and methods for dance writing. I am above all interested in current methods for dance writing. Dance writing as an issue emerges later in the history; at this point in the chronology, the issues are not yet about dance writing or dance’s academic or theoretical identity formation in higher education (as opposed to dance as a practice and its development as a discipline in higher education). I should also point out that in my own experience, I have been afforded multiple views and angles of the field: first as a dance major, then as a professional dance artist, then as a performance studies scholar, and now as a dance scholar with a feminist perspective in a doctoral program. It should also be noted that I am researching and writing about dance studies research methods at a time when the field is, more or less, fully formed at least as an artistic discipline. There is little question about dance being a specific and autonomous artistic form. As a subject of academic research, however, although the field continues to expand (there are many BA, MA, and PhD programs in dance in the United States), dance is less widely understood as an academic subject than it is an artistic discipline in higher education.

⁸⁹ Ross, *Moving Lessons*, 3.

⁹⁰ Ross, *Moving Lessons*, 166.

Due to H'Doubler's particular influences, experiences, background, training, as well as her response to what was happening in the professional dance world and higher education, a dance science was born. It is in and through H'Doubler's significant contributions to dance in higher education that early interdisciplinarity in theory and in practice is apparent. The issue of *who* founded dance programs and their academic and artistic impact on the curriculum and methodology is revealing and is relevant to contemporary examinations of disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity.

Today, dance in higher education reflects upon its interdisciplinarity. For example, issues of disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity are brought forward and are examined by Jens Richard Giersdorf in his essay, "Dance Studies in the International Academy: Genealogy of a Disciplinary Formation" in *Dance Research Journal*. Giersdorf's main purpose for writing a disciplinary genealogy of three dance programs (the University of California at Riverside, the University of Surrey, United Kingdom, and the Tanswissenschaft program in Leipzig, Germany) is to provide suggestions for the future, by providing a history at the institutional level.⁹¹ Giersdorf's writing is examined in Chapter 3 in the section on the 1990s. Giersdorf's article is from a recent issue of *Dance Research Journal*, which examines issues of disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity in dance studies today.⁹²

⁹¹ Giersdorf, *Dance Studies in the International Academy*.

⁹² *Dance Research Journal*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (Chicago: University of Illinois Press) Summer 2009. 24-25

The 1920s: The Scientific Turn; A Science-Based Approach:
The Origins Of Dance Therapy; The First Physical Therapy Program: 1929

While science-based methods may not seem progressive from our contemporary perspective, understanding dance from a scientific perspective was progressive thinking in H'Doubler's time and it is likely that science helped in making dance a more palatable subject to American university administrations.⁹³ In effect, the scientific approach gave dance legitimacy, as it would do with the study of the social sciences in decades to follow.

Dance scholars were not and are not alone in feeling the need to justify their subject as worthy of study. In *Approaches to Understanding Visual Culture*, Malcolm Barnard writes about how even art history was compelled to use scientific approaches and to call its research methods "scientific." He writes,

Morelli's ideas were taken up in the twentieth century by his pupil, the art historian Bernard Berenson (1865-1959), and by other later formalist critics who were similarly interested in making art history more scientific, intellectually and academically a more respectable discipline.⁹⁴

The tendency to want to legitimize the subject of dance via scientific or other more established or "authoritative" approaches and methods can be seen in dance studies throughout its history, in all eras, and it continues today. However, unlike art history and criticism, one might be able to see how the actual subject of dance (rather than its method), via human anatomy and kinesiology, could actually have a scientific component. Yet, rather than leaning on science in terms of its subject matter, dance

⁹³ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 95.

⁹⁴ Malcolm Barnard, *Approaches to Understanding Visual Culture* (UK: Palgrave, MacMillan, 2001), 25.

sometimes leans on science in terms of research design or research methods, in an effort to boost its legitimacy.

In this study of dance studies research methods in dissertations from 2007-09, I encountered many authors who needed permission from the IRB to work with “human subjects,” granted from their University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB ensures that researchers utilize ethical research methods. In “Research Involving Human Subjects” in *Research Ethics: Cases and Materials*, Robin Levin Penslar defines these review boards:

IRB’s have been set up in universities, hospitals, and other places where research is conducted involving human subjects. Their main task is to ensure that research is conducted in an ethical manner so that the welfare of subjects is protected.⁹⁵

Penslar explains further:

We live in a time that has seen a sustained increase in public concern over coercion and victimization of the powerless by the powerful. Because science is associated with power, some of this concern has focused on the scientific research community. Public interest in controlling the power of science and scientists to coerce and victimize has led to a marked increase in oversight mechanisms, including the establishment of ethics committees in universities, government, and professional societies, all charged with determining the appropriateness of the conduct of scientific inquiry.⁹⁶

Dance studies is not a field known to be made up of powerful oppressors in need of ethical oversight, so the IRB does often provide an “exemption” for dance research.

While the IRB may correct injustices in the social sciences it does not ensure research ethics *well enough* for qualitative projects. What measures are in place to protect subjects

⁹⁵ Robin Levin Penslar, *Research Ethics: Cases and Materials* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995), 99.

⁹⁶ Penslar, *Research Ethics*, 125. We also live in a time when oversight has lost much of its authority.

against masculinist, domineering, or oppressive theoretical research strategies, discourses, or approaches?

In *Research Ethics Cases and Materials* the authors describe both science-based and qualitative cases for ethical issues in scholarship in higher education, illustrating that research ethics are not just for scientists.⁹⁷ In “Dance Ethnography,” in *Researching Dance: Evolving Modes of Inquiry*, Joan D. Frosch also suggests that a study of ethics in dance may be needed and provides guidelines from the American Anthropological Association “Statement on Ethics: Principle of Professional Responsibility,” that researchers in dance may use in the meantime. Frosch writes, drawing attention to the fact that an ethics of dance ethnography is not available so dance ethnographers lean on the American Anthropological Association as a guide:

What are our responsibilities to the people whose lives and cultures we study? Although an explicit study of the ethics of dance ethnography is not yet in print, the American Anthropological Association has provided a set of guidelines that can inform dance research.⁹⁸

Time has been spent here on ethics to make connections between the influences of science on the early years of dance in higher education with current influences of science on dance in higher education. When dance borrows methods from other fields, issues from the outside fields come with them—issues that may not be the best fit for the study of dance. Protecting human subjects is associated with science because science wields power and authority. A dance researcher wields a different kind of power than the scientist. How should research ethics (not only from science) apply to dance studies scholars today? What are current legitimate ethical concerns in dance studies research,

⁹⁷ Penslar, *Research Ethics Cases and Materials*.

⁹⁸ Joan D. Frosch, “Dance Ethnography,” *Researching Dance: Evolving Modes of Inquiry*, Eds., Sondra Horton Fraleigh, Penelope Hanstein (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999), 269.

specifically in dance ethnography—a common dance studies research method in dance studies dissertation today? How is the contemporary mingling of dance and science benefitting dance in the long run?⁹⁹

In the 1920s dance leaned on science, in part, out of necessity to legitimize the practice of dance—to make it “worth a college woman’s time.” As part of the science-turn, physical exams were required of all incoming physical education students.¹⁰⁰ In those days, if a student failed to meet certain postural or fitness requirements, they were sent to a “corrective class” and, according to Hagood, the “Corrective Program classes in posture, relaxation, dance, and corrective exercise led to the eventual development of a program in Physical Therapy (1929), and later in Dance Therapy (1949).”¹⁰¹ Here, Hagood articulates the connection between the science-based approach and physical therapy, but what will be the legacy of the effects of science on the academic study of dance (not the dance practice)?

The 1920s were a period where the debate between dance as education and dance as art began to materialize. In the next sections the ways in which the professional dance world prevailed upon dance as education in the university setting will be described. Thus far the history of dance in higher education has been explored through its association with physical education departments. This focus will change with the establishment of the first dance department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

⁹⁹ It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to answer these questions but they need to be asked; the connections or disconnections between dance and science today in terms of both subject matter and research methods would be a productive area for future study.

¹⁰⁰ As an incoming student at The Juilliard School in 1989, I underwent a complete physical examination. The degrees of rotation, flexion, and extension of my muscles and joints were measured and quantified and written up in a report.

¹⁰¹ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 91.

The First Dance Minor And Major – The University Of Wisconsin-Madison
The Origin Of The Dance As Art/Conservatory Model; Martha Hill
And The Bennington Years: 1920s-1930s

In 1923 the emergence of the first dance minor at a university in the United States developed out of H'Doubler's teaching and teacher training. The dance minor included course work in speech, philosophy, music, and psychology. The minor degree eventually led to the development of a dance major as well, but Trilling "didn't think a major in dancing would have much chance being passed by the university faculty."¹⁰² After several years of submitting curriculum and advocating for the dance major, a dance major degree was actually established in 1926 at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In 1927 a Masters degree in physical education was developed at the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a specialization in dancing. The first dance department curriculum at the University of Wisconsin-Madison included: kinesiology, technique, dance history, composition, rhythmic analysis, teaching methods, and dance philosophy.¹⁰³ According to the authors of the *Research Priorities for Dance Education: A Report to The Nation*:

The University of Wisconsin-Madison established the first major program for dance in 1926 and the first graduate program for dance in 1926. Wisconsin's programs acted as the template for subsequent development for many dance programs well into the 1950s: the programs were biomechanically oriented in the theoretical side, creatively focused in their arts contexts, and institutionalized as a major track within a larger program of women's physical education.¹⁰⁴

During the 1930s "modern dance" replaced "interpretive dance" in higher education and according to Hagood, "Modern dance emerged out of the studios of a small group of New York concert dancers"¹⁰⁵ and not out of the University of Wisconsin-

¹⁰² Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 98.

¹⁰³ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 99. Also, according to the NDEO *Report*, The University of Wisconsin Madison in 1926 was "the world's first dance major program." NDEO, *The Report*, ii.

¹⁰⁴ NDEO, *The Report*, 13.

¹⁰⁵ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 103.

Madison. This development was the beginning of the professional dance scene's strong influence on dance education in the university.

Although at Wisconsin there was a (fledgling) dance major, at this point most dance programs at universities were still housed within physical education departments. The pivotal dance education pioneers, Gertrude Colby, Bird Larson, and Margaret H'Doubler made it look relatively easy to create a curriculum from scratch or, basically, to create an entirely new program. Hagood acknowledges this by emphasizing the vision and passion of Colby, Larson, and H'Doubler:

Not all dance educators were able, or willing, to go to the lengths that Colby, Larson, or H'Doubler had to develop their own conceptual framework for educational dance. Most were trained as physical educators, where a game's rules and strategies were defined and easily accessible in a manual. The most intellectually taxing thing the uninspired educator had to do was to understand and adhere to matters of boundaries, kinds of "plays," the rules of offense and defense, and records keeping. Those who gravitated toward dance found modern art dance hugely attractive. Its conceptual underpinnings were qualitative; its description metaphorical. ... At the same time, by the abstract, qualitative, art conscious nature of its presentation, modern dance alienated many others in physical education.¹⁰⁶

This is a time when modern dance (dance as an art) was looked at skeptically, housed in physical education departments. At the heart of the debate between dance as education and dance as art was: movement/dance as education, as it was developed by dance educators in physical education and dance departments or movement/dance as art, as it was developed by professional dancers in the professional dance world.

When the stock market crashed in 1929, modern dance was gaining ground and by 1930 it was well known in academic circles. What helped fund the dance boom at this time was the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration's Works Progress Administration

¹⁰⁶ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 104-05.

(WPA), whose purpose was to help people get back to work during the Great Depression. The WPA also supported the Federal Theater Projects, which became the Federal Dance Project by 1936.¹⁰⁷ The WPA funded all areas of work in the United States (not only the arts). Women Arts website reports that the WPA found work for 3.3 million workers by 1938.¹⁰⁸

The Bennington School of Dance was conceived and came to fruition in 1932. The ‘Big Four’ of modern dance pioneered the school: Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman, and Hanya Holm. Robert Leigh was the first president of Bennington, a liberal arts institution in Vermont, founded as a women’s college in 1932, which offered an art-based exercise program. Hagood recounts:

Leigh approached Martha Graham for a possible recommendation for the position of director of dance and Graham referred him to Martha Hill... Hill declined Leigh’s offer to become either full-time director of dance or of physical education but did agree to devote two days a week to Bennington while maintaining her position directing the dance program in physical education at New York University. Hill commuted between positions until 1951, when she was appointed chair of the newly formed dance department within Juilliard School of Music.¹⁰⁹

Martha Hill attended the “normal school” of physical education, which later became the Kellogg School. She taught pageantry, ballet, athletics, and kinesiology and later, ballet and gymnastics. In 1926, she moved to New York to begin an undergraduate program in physical education at Teachers College. She met and eventually studied with

¹⁰⁷ Cultural diplomacy and cultural phenomenon are discussed later in this chapter. Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 110-11.

¹⁰⁸ “WPA Background Information,” *Women Arts* website accessed December 12, 2011, website: http://www.womenarts.org/wpa/wpa_background.htm. It is beyond the scope of this research to provide a history of the WPA and the FDP. See Elizabeth Cooper: “Tamiris and the Federal Dance Theatre 1936-1939: Socially Relevant Dance Amidst the Policies and Politics of the New Deal Era,” in *Dance Research Journal*, Vol. 29, No. 2, Autumn (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997) 23-48.

¹⁰⁹ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 114.

Martha Graham. Hill also studied with H'Doubler in the summer of 1927. Hagood describes the expressed differences between Hill and H'Doubler and how the aesthetic changed from Isadora Duncan to Martha Graham and Colby's and H'Doubler's educational models gave way for a more "professional" one. He writes:

Graham, Horst, Humphrey, Weidman, Holm, and Martin, Martha Hill and Mary Jo Shelly revolutionized dance in higher education in terms of teaching, performance, technique, composition, production, pedagogy, and criticism. ... [D]ance educators in America's universities began to ask important questions regarding the nature of their discipline: Was college instruction in dance about developing dance artists, which then would necessitate the inclusion of professional standards in the curriculum? Or was the promise of dance as a nonprofessional mode of self-expression and exploration? Could it possibly be both?¹¹⁰

While dance educators were looking for a curricular identity for dance, one that would distinguish their work from physical education, a single discipline began to form separate and apart from physical education and concert dance artists created the discipline of dance as a fine art within the university.¹¹¹

When "methods" are referred to during this time, it is limited to teaching methods. And at that, teaching methods arose out of the "Bennington hierarchy" — Graham, Humphrey, Weidman, and Holm, the "dance canon." The Bennington curriculum included technique, composition, history and criticism, music for dance, and production and continued to become and influence more cohesive dance programs. And the "philosophy of dance" during this era referred to the philosophy of dance by dance artists. The Bennington dance program ended in 1942 but was restarted in 1948 as

¹¹⁰ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 116.

¹¹¹ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 122.

Connecticut College Summer dance program, which evolved into the American Dance festival that we know today, housed at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina.¹¹²

Dance And Racial Segregation

In the 1930s higher education was still race segregated, as racial segregation for most of the 20th century in the United States affected all areas and aspects of American culture. There were little more than a hundred black colleges and universities and only a handful of which offered graduate degrees.¹¹³ For most of the 20th century the history of dance in higher education is a history of white European dance. The arts in general and dance in higher education in particular were not immune to our society's racism. Dance in higher education neither embraced nor initiated anti-racist ideology; therefore, the history of dance in higher education (until the 1960s) is mostly an inequitable history where people of color are underrepresented in dance practice and in dance education.

Although Helen Tamiris, Katherine Dunham, and Charles Williams for example, attempted to confront racism in their work, racism was still acceptable throughout society in the 20th century; the arts and dance were no exception. However, as Hagood acknowledges, "it was also in the arts that barriers of race first began to erode and crumble."¹¹⁴ Issues of diversity and multiculturalism enter the scene fully in the 1980s and 1990s and continue today to be ongoing central concerns in dance theory, practice, and dance education. At the turn of the 21st century, race, ethnicity and racism, as well as

¹¹² American Dance Festival (ADF) website accessed December 12, 2011, <http://www.americandancefestival.org/index.html>. Hagood, *A History of Dance in Higher Education*, 123-24.

¹¹³ According to JBHE, "[1932 there] are 117 historically black institutions of higher education, 36 public and 81 private. Seventy-four are affiliated with religious organizations. Five are devoted to graduate level education." *The Timeline*.

¹¹⁴ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 126.

sexism, homophobia, nationalism, classism, and other identity issues continue to be challenging, complex issues in dance practice and dance studies research. However, promoting racial equality in the 1940s could get one fired.¹¹⁵

Other social and political factors affecting dance in higher education can be observed in how increased government funding of the arts coincided with the “rise” of modern dance, which deeply influenced dance in higher education both historically and today. Dance and other performing and fine arts benefited from the periods of increased government funding the arts for the purposes of cultural diplomacy.

What is not yet commonly written in the footnotes of American modern dance history is the fact that when the United States government was promoting American culture on the international stage for political purposes, it provided resources and opportunities for some artists to be toured internationally. The “booms” in dance occurred at times when large amounts of government funding were poured into the field. Contemporary arts advocates have written about the difficulty of securing funding for dance and have reported that dance advocates rarely secure funding on their own by arguing on their own behalf. This is not to imply that arguments for the arts should not be developed. It is to say that there is evidence that the United States government funds the arts when it is politically advantageous to fund the arts—not only because of compelling arguments made by arts advocates regarding the intangible or utilitarian benefits of the arts in general or dance in particular.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ According to JBHE, “1941: The “Cocking Affair” in the University of Georgia system leaves two white professors, Dean Walter D. Cockling and Dr. Marvin S. Pittman, without jobs for promoting equality.” *The Timeline*.

¹¹⁶ See Naima Prevot’s work in particular regarding cultural diplomacy in the United States and the Cold War. Naima Prevot, *Dance for Export: Cultural Diplomacy and The Cold War* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2001).

As mentioned earlier, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) helped people return to work in the 1930s and this program was the support behind the Federal Theater Project, which became the Federal Dance Project by 1936. The Federal Theater Project increased public awareness of dance, which helped dance in university settings. Under the Roosevelt administration, the categories for consideration for funding were limited to modern, ballet, vaudeville, and educational projects and had selection process issues. Hagood writes, “Project administrators were quickly accused of conflicts of interest, graft, and artistic nepotism.”¹¹⁷ Despite this unfortunate reality, the dance that was selected was exposed to large audiences and enjoyed tremendous support in the form of government funding. According to Hagood, the first time the government funded the arts and artists and dance in particular was via the Federal Theater and Dance Projects.¹¹⁸ During this time, the arts were so compelling there was talk that the government was going to establish a Bureau of Fine Arts. The Fine Arts Bureau has not yet materialized in the United States but is an historic move worth mentioning.

Becoming Disciplined: Anti-Intellectualism And The Dis/Connections Between Theory And Practice

Another result of the success and influence of modern dance on higher education was that categorical terms began to be clarified; “interpretive dance” and “modern dance” were becoming associated with very different things and “modern dance” eventually replaced the more generic term “dance.”

At a time when the respective disciplines (physical education and dance) were becoming more discrete unto themselves, Mary Josephine Shelly, one of the founders of

¹¹⁷ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 124-25.

¹¹⁸ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 125.

the Bennington dance program, describes the friction between art-dance and physical education and advocated for solidarity between them.

In “Facts and Fancies about the Dance in Education” in the *Journal of Health and Physical Education* (1940) Shelly writes:

[T]eachers and artists should get together oftener, as they are doing in dance to the mutual benefit of both. Teachers who teach teachers who teach children get a long way from the heart of what they are doing. They need the chance to get at the pure stuff for themselves once in a while. And artists, especially in a democratic social order, ought to know more about education, which is trying to do the same thing they are.¹¹⁹

This was a time of growing division in dance (the division between dance as art and dance as education). Today dance in the university is undergoing another division: dance departments are subsumed by other disciplines such as theater, music, or film, rather than achieving independence from them. Additionally, dance as a subject of research continues to become more widely available as subject matter to other “outside” fields. Due to widespread sharing of subjects and methods, contemporary interdisciplinarity in dance invites numerous questions, such as: at what point is writing on the subject of dance no longer the theoretical provenance of dance scholarship? Put another way, at what point does the subject of dance become the other field’s content? Historically, there was a lot of dance writing in physical education journals because dance was housed there.

¹¹⁹ Mary J. Shelly, “Facts and Fancies about the Dance in Education,” *Journal of Health and Physical Education*, Vol. xi, No. 1 (January, 1940) 56.

Eugene C. Howe, professor in the department of Hygiene and Physical Education at Wellesley College, wrote, “What Business Has Modern Dance in Physical Education?” for *JOHPE* in 1937.¹²⁰ Hagood writes:

Howe’s perspective is clearly that of the physical educator and he may be commended on his ability to think “out of the box” when he writes that “Intuition whispers that [dance] is as ill at home as an etching in a machine shop” in questioning the place of art dance in a physical education program.¹²¹

Dance being “ill at home” in other fields may be reflected in terms of research methods used to write about the subject of dance. Dance is often considered subjective, not able to be contained in objective terms, yet there is evidence of quantitative methods being used to create dance research in the past as well as today—and without much difficulty.

As a researcher I acknowledge that I have inherited a somewhat divided subject (dance as education versus dance as art). I would rather say that the category of “dance studies research” of course includes all dance research, especially *dance education* research—but is it as simple as that? No, it is not as simple as art dance versus educational dance anymore. Today, in addition to the host of issues raised by dance being housed in other performing arts or in film and performance studies departments, doctoral research in dance has created new concerns and divides of its own. There are now new differences and distinctions in degree paths in the 21st century, which ought to be examined with consideration to the past experiences and arguments in the field.

I remember sitting in a required class in the Dance Department at Temple University where MFA and PhD students were combined. There was nearly a boycott of

¹²⁰ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 138.

¹²¹ Eugene C. Howe quoted in Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 140. I was unable to locate Howe’s article: “What Business Has Modern Dance in Physical Education?” in *JOHPE* (1937).

the theoretical works being read and discussed (by some MFAs) in favor of an attitude of, “let’s just dance.” While many PhD students could recognize the lack of utility for an MFA student to master the theoretical work of Roland Barthes, there was also a craving, by some PhD students, for some of the theoretical tools being offered. At the same time, the background and experience was not uniform across the doctoral students. Some came to the PhD from a BA → MFA track, not the BA → MA. Others came from a BFA → MA track, therefore, their interest and experience in theory and practice was different than both the BA → MA and the BA → MFA students.¹²²

I think there was a “legitimate” complaint in that class that had nothing to do with anti-intellectualism. In contemporary dance programs in higher education, what is the utility for an MFA student to read Roland Barthes if they are not going to pursue writing and research? I question the utility of literary and critical theory (beyond a general understanding) anyway for those who are pursuing writing and research in dance studies, but if it is a trend we cannot ignore, we may need to make it more a part of the required curriculum. In other words, we may need to require much more theoretical training in these research modes at the MFA and PhD levels if students are expected to conduct dance research projects utilizing these theorists, or even be minimally conversant in them. Critical theory, literary theory, and deconstruction may not be ideal research methods for dance, mainly because dance in higher education is in a period of trying to stabilize (not destabilize) our subject and establish (rather than overthrow) an authoritative voice in and through our dance writing and practice.

¹²² This brief examination of doctoral and MFA students is from my observations at Temple University during my doctoral coursework, 2007-09.

Regarding anti-intellectualism and the disconnect between theory and practice,

Hagood writes:

Dancers sometimes cast themselves in this light: inspired, yet intuitive: savants of the body in touch with what is felt, resistant to intellectualizing the responsive body through “over analysis.” Resistance to analysis is not without practical merit in the experience of dancers, athletes, and others desiring control of the body. Any teacher of physical activity will tell you; think too much *in action* and you’ll get in your own way.¹²³

This passage by Hagood suggests that thinking (intellectualizing) too much while dancing may not be safe. As any dancer knows (or can easily imagine), it is also true.

Hagood rightly describes the unfortunate conclusion that is drawn about dancers analyzing while in motion, even though the idea is a little silly that any dancer or any artist would be actively producing theory while creating or performing. In the field of dance, we do give a lot of “lip service” to the connection between dance theory and dance practice, yet, what exactly is meant by this?¹²⁴ Is there an expectation that the connection between theory and practice be made by the artist on site in an immediate way? Hagood writes:

Some are able to simultaneously think and ‘do,’ while others start to think or analyze and motor skill is impaired. An unfortunate result of a caution with analyzing while in motion may be a spill over effect of caution into other realms of a considered practice in dance-art making. Thus, a cultural reluctance among dancers (and many dance educators), to readily engage in theorizing, a certain anti-intellectualism has traditionally shaped the thinking of many in the field.¹²⁵

From a dancer’s perspective, philosophical writing especially from outside fields can be really removed from the creative process and from the actual dance making and

¹²³ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 148.

¹²⁴ Thank you to Dr. Kariamtu for the many discussions on this topic, which have contributed to the development of my ideas.

¹²⁵ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 148.

performing. In a passage that resonates with the “theoretical turn” today, Hagood offers observations of H’Doubler:

H’Doubler does not ‘tell’ anyone how to ‘do’ anything; only what must be considered. To a population used to being told what to do and how to do it, and fearing an intellectual approach to their dancing, the message of H’Doubler’s text was, for the most part, lost to a wide audience. H’Doubler’s writing has a certain tautological nature that causes its message and substance to flatten out and become circuitous, repetitive, and numbing; sometimes incomprehensible.¹²⁶

The problem, it seems, is in the tension and disconnections between “dance theory” and “dance practice.” The solution should be to care more about creating or discovering real and useful connections between theory and practice; or the alternative would be simply to abandon the call for it.

In “The Fabric of Change: Issues in Designing Dance Teacher Preparation,” in *The Journal of Dance Education*, Professor Emeritus Sarah Hilsendager writes about the disconnection between curriculum and disciplinary knowledge. She recounts how “Discipline-Based Arts Education (DBAE)” was advocated for in the 1980s to make connections between dance practice and general disciplinary knowledge in dance (i.e., history) to rectify “disproportional educational agendas.”¹²⁷

Hilsendager writes:

An example [of disproportional educational agendas] would be the Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) dance major who has studied the Limón or Graham technique for three years, but knows little or nothing about the sociocultural context of the development of that technique, and who would not be able to discuss the life, times, and aesthetics of the creators. Further, this same student would be unable to write about or discuss the philosophical principles behind the personal choices made by Limón or Graham in the process of integrating their technique into their choreographic decision-making.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 149.

¹²⁷ Sarah Hilsendager, “The Fabric of Change: Issues in Designing Dance Teacher Preparation,” *The Journal of Dance Education*, Vol.1, No. 1 (UK: Taylor and Francis, 2001), 14-19.

¹²⁸ Hilsendager, *The Fabric of Change*, 14, 15.

One purpose of DBAE is to make connections between dance practice and education about dance as a subject; the dance artist performing a classical modern piece should possess some historical and dance historical background to perform a classical modern piece, from the 50s for example. Whether or not the modern dance performance is reproduced in the same spirit as it was originally created, DBAE would suggest that it is important that the student has at least some dance historical (social, political, or aesthetic) context for their performance. Hilsendager continues to describe the goals of DBAE:

Proponents of DBAE proposed that arts (dance) education must assume the responsibility of providing the student with a variety of perceptions and a multiplicity of pathways throughout their educational experience, ones which are designed to heighten the students' abilities to negotiate the world of ideas within an integrated, comprehensive framework of arts experience.¹²⁹

I would add that the social, political, cultural and/or other historical background would deepen the student's artistic performance of historical or reconstructed choreography as well. Hagood writes:

We reject the notion of the dumb-dancer, yet perpetuate this notion through our refusal to engage in conceptually assessing the merit and worth of dance as art and in education. ... If we promote a culture of anti-intellectualism, and if we refuse to accept the imperative of a valued multiculturalism, we risk losing our connection to the future.¹³⁰

Conversely, the current trend toward a hyper-intellectualization of dance is not the solution for the future, either. Many current intellectual tools (such as "theory") are inaccessible to many in dance departments. This is not because dancers are empty-headed; rather, it is because there is a disciplinary and curricular disconnection and difference between women's studies, performance studies, theater studies, and dance studies—and, there is a disconnection within dance departments as well (between the

¹²⁹ Hilsendager, *The Fabric of Change*, 15.

¹³⁰ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 316-17.

MFA and PhD curriculum). These degree programs and departments have different goals, different visions, and different modes and purposes for researching dance, art, and performance. Performance studies authors, for example, can say certain things about dance because they are not teaching, creating, or performing it. The reverse is true for a dance artist who is, for the most part, unencumbered by the need to articulate their process or product. Performance studies is quite removed from the actual practice and day-to-day experience in a dance department. When one is teaching dance in the United States at an undergraduate or graduate level, depending upon the course, it is unlikely that the theoretical writing of Jacques Derrida or Karl Marx or even feminist theory will make its way into the studio. The discourses, *if any*, which will make their way into the studio, will directly relate to and support the making of art or increasing intercultural knowledge.

Jens Richard Giersdorf observes and confirms these disconnections and disparities in and through his own experience as a professor in dance at Marymount Manhattan College in New York City:

My recent transition to a small liberal arts college in New York City with a vocationally oriented dance department has heightened my awareness of the schism between vocational training and academic discourse inside dance departments. ... The division of labor into intellectual and vocational for dance is further complicated by the gender connotation of dance as feminized.¹³¹

Giersdorf continues:

The production aspect of dance education and its emphasis on training positions it closer to manual labor—and thus lower in the academic hierarchy. Theoretical considerations in dance or about dance are allowed a much higher position. Yet, most importantly, such differing positionings inside the academy as a result of gender and class hierarchies often expose the gender and class politics of neighboring disciplines, such as music, art, and theater, and in the larger field of the social science and humanities.¹³²

¹³¹ Giersdorf, *Dance Studies in the International Academy*. 24.

¹³² Giersdorf, *Dance Studies in the International Academy*. 28.

In *Graduate Dance Education in the United States: 1985-2010*, dance scholar Karen Bond articulates yet another view of the relationship between theory and practice in the dance department. Bond describes the disparity between theory and practice but in the reverse. She states that in dance departments the practice of dance is valued above the teaching and theory of dance. Bond writes:

In addition, dance as a fine art discipline in higher education has had to navigate a challenging path of self-justification that posits an analogy between artistic production and academic scholarship, thus aligning with traditional academic culture that valorizes research over teaching and service. Ironically, in dance departments this can take the form of a false schism between theorists and practitioners with an undervaluing of the former.¹³³

Is the theorist undervalued or overvalued in relationship to the practitioner? Both Giersdorf and Bond are referring to the same period, the contemporary period. I disagree only with Giersdorf's method of referring to dance training as manual labor to advance his discussion of class. However, his observations about how dance practice is gendered (and I will add, racialized) are appreciated. What is clear is Giersdorf's articulation of the disparity between theory and practice, yet his method of describing the mind over body hierarchy in Marxian terms may be cementing the problem, rather than inspiring a solution. While it is most likely not his intention, Giersdorf seems to reinstate the problem while describing it. Further, his multiple reiterations that "the body" is feminized, thus lower, is antagonistic to conservatories and dance departments around the country that are not laboring under the idea that what they are doing is not valuable, if feminine. The hierarchies of theory over practice, masculine over feminine, and mind over body, which he painstakingly describes, may be self-perpetuated and regenerated by

¹³³ Karen Bond, *Graduate Dance Education in the United States: 1985-2010*. *Journal of Dance Education*, Vol. 10 Issue 4, 2010 (UK: Taylor and Francis, 2010), 132.

those in positions to articulate such hierarchies. I am not convinced by Giersdorf's work that the division of labor is due to institutional demands imposing themselves upon the field of dance, as he would argue. More scholars are driven rather than required to utilize methods and discourses that keep these hierarchies in place.¹³⁴

There is, however, a related problem of dance being subsumed by other departments, such as film, theater, or performance studies in that these departments most frequently utilize discourses that do not serve the issues that are fundamental to dance practice. In general, I am laboring, to borrow Giersdorf's term, under the assumption that dance scholars and theorists want to make and maintain a meaningful connection with the practice of dance, both in their research and writing. If that is not the intention, then my recommendations should be ignored.

Hagood writes about the process of disciplinary individuation and how it is not only an issue in dance departments.

The pressures against programmatic individuation do not only come from within, the desire to be like the other is institutionally embedded in higher education; everybody wants to be like Harvard. Not only is it conceptually easier to imitate, it is easier to sell to administrators and parents looking for a replica of the gold standard. ... Being different is hard: to be iconoclast, in a sea of programs all seeking to look like the same kind of fish; beautiful, yet strong and fearsome to predators. Perhaps in our zeal to not "be" physical education, but to "be" dance, we have forgotten that, in many ways, dance is as great (and yet much less culturally defined), a thing to champion in education, as is the notion of a physical education.

Hagood continues:

For dance in higher education, the discipline has come to be about art. The adaptation of the conservatory model was a way out from under physical education, and a way to identify with art.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ Further study would be needed to confirm the relationship between researcher and institution: meaning, what are the institutional demands, if any, on research methods in dance and related departments?

¹³⁵ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 318.

When we ally ourselves today with other fields I suggest that we ask, at what risk, or at what cost are we leaning on, borrowing from, or perhaps aligning ourselves with other disciplines? Do these disciplines and their research methods extend and support our purposes and goals as dance educators, artists, and scholars? Are there short-term and long-term effects of these choices (to be interdisciplinary, to use research methods not intrinsic to dance, to not continue to fight for dance as a discipline on its own) that we can see now from looking back at our own history? There are longer-term consequences for the entire discipline of dance when we lean on or veer too far way from other fields.

Hagood writes,

[L]earning is part of realizing our humanity, and is preparation for our contribution to civilization. This has framed the subsequent development of all disciplines; it has been no different for dance. Our roots as dance educators lie in our conviction that dance may contribute to connecting us: to our bodies; our vessels in life, to our inherent creativity; that which opens the door of the future, and to our shared humanity; our empathy for others. In doing so, dance may help prepare those who will follow us, for their future. This is the legacy for dance; that something which passes through us, is in us, and is us; is passed on.¹³⁶

If we in dance take as a given and as one of our main concerns the deep meaningfulness of the body and dance (as Hagood, H'Doubler and many other dance educators and dance scholars beautifully describe), why then would we use language and theory that seeks to destabilize the body's meaningful, embodied, and given presence? I would like to offer as a counter-concept from yogic philosophy: the idea that the body is something in and through which the mind and heart can express itself. The body is not something that needs to be overcome, as some would have it. Similarly, the body is not a problem that needs to be fixed, nor is it a text that needs to be read. Dance in higher education is not

¹³⁶ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 319.

labor. The body is not a vehicle for something greater (like the mind); the body is already, in and of itself, that something greater. It is a great vessel for itself.

With our limitless possibilities in our bodies, in our art, in our phrases, in our practice; with our huge mind/body capacity to engage with things in, through, and beyond words, with things encounterable through the physical, with the incommensurable, sometimes through the nonsignifiable, why do we still want a place at the (language) table, or in an economy where the exchange rate is rarely in our favor? As dance artists, we have the ability to put into phrases that which cannot be phrased. And as dance scholars, we do have the language to describe that.

An Identity For Dance

My overarching concern in this research is to articulate the theoretical identity of dance as an academic discipline. I ask: what research methods, if any, are inherent to dance as an academic discipline? The methods that are foundational in a field ought to arise out of the subject matter or issues in that field. Therefore, understanding and refining the current issues in dance is essential to understanding how to write about it. Thus far, some of the recurring and prevailing issues in dance in higher education include: creating dance curriculum “worth a college woman’s time,” advocacy and manifestos around disciplinary boundaries and curriculum, theories of teaching, theories of practice, artists’ statements, dance as art versus dance as education, and some concerns around terminology. Hagood writes about dance in higher education in the 1930s:

At one point or another most every perspective and point of view had its day in print. Very little was resolved but the stage was set for the academic struggle that would consume dance educators for the next several decades as they

continued to *search for an identity for dance* in American culture and in the American university.¹³⁷

Dance's struggle to be separate from physical education is worth reflecting upon today: how does dance benefit as an independent discipline, how does dance get stronger, if it is housed in theater, music, or performance studies programs? Dance's grudging academic co-existence with physical education might feel familiar to those in dance departments today who are housed in music theater or film departments. In order for dance to develop and flourish, the field separated itself from physical education. It may be again necessary for dance to fight for its independence academically, in order for it to continue to grow on its own. Hagood continues:

How was an art identity for dance to be established when it was taught between swimming and basketball, by instructors who had never had an "art" experience in their lives? For dance being 'of art' seemed to foretell the future and negate the past. However, the fact of the matter was that the great majority of dance programs remained a part of a larger program in physical education; part, and yet, not part: loath to be too like, and not yet unlike enough for everyone to readily see the difference.¹³⁸

This might resonate with many dance departments that are housed in theater, film, and/or music departments today. Dance's lack of a theoretical identity may be contributing to its continued struggle for disciplinary autonomy; dance will exist as part, and yet not part, of the "hosting" disciplines in which it is housed in the university until it forms its own theoretical center.

This brief summary of some of the issues in dance in higher education reveals dance's difficult path toward establishing an academic or disciplinary identity. Most dance programs in this period were still aligned with physical education, and only a

¹³⁷ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 153. (My emphasis.)

¹³⁸ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 165-66.

minority of dance departments was able to develop on their own in fine arts or humanities colleges.¹³⁹

Pioneers In Black Dance: Pearl Primus And Katherine Dunham

In *Black Dance from 1619 to Today*, Lynne Fauley Emery details the many black dance artists who paved the way for Pearl Primus and Katherine Dunham, both major stars in the professional and dance education worlds. The mostly unrecognized pioneers who preceded Primus and Dunham are not included in most dance histories.

For example, there is Hemsley Winfield, who produced “The First Negro Concert in America” in 1931, by dance company New Negro Art Dancers and was reviewed by John Martin; Edna Guy, a student with Denishawn and a dancer with Winfield, pioneered a style of dance that could be categorized as “Dance Spirituals”; dance educator Charles Williams was director of physical education at the Hampton Institute and formed the Hampton Institute creative dance group; Eugene Von Grona, who pioneered the Negro American ballet, which, although it received mostly poor reviews and was not entirely successful, it should be recognized as a groundbreaking company considering the then-existing environment in which even black and African-American people believed the racist stereotypes that “blacks were supposed to be clowns and comedians but not human beings.”¹⁴⁰ There was black concert dance choreographer Wilson Williams, who fought in and through his work to eliminate the minstrel image; and, lastly, choreographer Asadata Dafora, favorably reviewed by John Martin and many others. In 1937, Dafora shared a

¹³⁹ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 168.

¹⁴⁰ Lynne Fauley Emery, *Black Dance from 1619 to Today* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Book, 1988), 242.

program with Katherine Dunham, who, along with Pearl Primus emerged in the 40s as artistic giants of the professional dance world in the United States.¹⁴¹

Katherine Dunham

Queen Mother of Black Dance, Katherine Dunham was an anthropology major at the University of Chicago and was a major force in the field of dance anthropology. In *Black Dance*, Emery writes that Dunham decided on anthropology “because of the strong connection between the dance, music, and archaic ceremonials of a people and that people’s social and economic history.”¹⁴² While studying anthropology, however, Dunham also taught dance and it was in and through this combination of dance and anthropology that Dunham launched her scholarly work.

Studying the African roots of black dance in the Caribbean and the United States, Dunham traveled to Jamaica, Trinidad, and Haiti among many other places.¹⁴³ Dunham wrote about Haiti in her Master’s thesis and again in her well-known and highly respected dance ethnographic work *Island Possessed*.¹⁴⁴ In addition to producing groundbreaking scholarship, Dunham was a renowned director, choreographer, professor, theorist, dancer, dance educator, and activist. She created her own dance technique, founded her own company and school and continues to be recognized as a major concert dance legend. Emery writes, “Dunham has provided a tremendous foundation not only for black dancers but for all dancers.”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ Emery, *Black Dance*, 241-251.

¹⁴² Emery, *Black Dance*, 252.

¹⁴³ Emery, *Black Dance*, 252.

¹⁴⁴ Katherine Dunham, *Island Possessed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969).

¹⁴⁵ Emery, *Black Dance*, 260.

To situate Dunham's influence, she received more than five honorary doctorates from universities such as Harvard and the University of Chicago, was invited to the White House multiple times, was designated Officier of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres to the Haitian and French governments, and she received countless awards and honors. Most notably, her work continues to be taught, performed, and written about today—one of the greatest honors for any artist.¹⁴⁶

Pearl Primus

Like H'Doubler, Primus was a biology and pre-medicine major while an undergraduate at Hunter College in New York City, who, like Dunham, was also trained in anthropology.¹⁴⁷ Emery writes:

Like Dunham, Pearl Primus was also trained in anthropology and utilized ethnic material as a basis for concert presentations. Emerging to prominence in the 1940s, Primus, however, studied the dances of Africa, creating a 'unique repertory of African-based movement.'¹⁴⁸

After entering graduate school and unable to find a job, Primus found her way into dance as an understudy in the National Youth Administration (NYA) dance group. After receiving a favorable review by John Martin, she was encouraged to begin a dance career. Primus was enormously successful; she traveled extensively to Africa and Libia, performed and lectured on dance, and eventually completed a doctoral degree in anthropology and sociology from Hunter College in New York.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Library of Congress Performing Arts Encyclopedia, "Special Presentation: Katherine Dunham Timeline," accessed July 26, 2011, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/html/dunham/dunham-timeline.html>.

¹⁴⁷ Emery, *Black Dance*, 262.

¹⁴⁸ Emery, *Black Dance*, 260.

¹⁴⁹ Emery, *Black Dance*, 265.

It is beyond the scope of this research to provide a history of Black Dance in the United States and to analyze racial, sexual, and other disparities and injustices in the history of dance in higher education. There is also much additional material that has been omitted from this discussion, such as the experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered (LGBT) people, and the heterosexism and homophobia in both the professional and academic dance worlds—as well as the fact that disparity and discrimination on the basis of ethnicity and skin color in the United States extends beyond the experiences of African-Americans.

In *Many Voices, Many Opportunities: Cultural Pluralism and American Arts Policy*, Clement Alexander Price writes:

The Africans, having all but given up on the prospect of a return to their native lands... chose the unenviable course of attempting to advance themselves in the face of overwhelming white resistance to both black self-determination and assimilation. The Chinese would remain largely invisible until the mid-twentieth century; the Mexicans would exist between two societies, one terribly poor, the other virtually closed to them. Two generations later, Japanese Americans, viewed as a potential threat to domestic security during World War II, were denied their civil rights and interned in relocation camps. And the white ethnics, those who benefitted from the external quality of light pigmentation in a society contemptuous of dark skin, would in varying degrees jettison part of their former selves and become, as James Baldwin was to observe much later, simply whites.¹⁵⁰

This passage covers a lot of ground in impressively few words. While it is not the purpose of my research to create an intercultural history, it must be acknowledged that my reproducing a limited history of dance in higher education, one that flatly ignores entire populations of people, is not my endorsement of such an injustice. Rather, as it will be revealed in Chapter 5, contemporary dance scholars, of which I

¹⁵⁰ Clement Alexander Price, *Many Voices, Many Opportunities: Cultural Pluralism and American Arts Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Americans for the Arts, 1994), 7.

consider myself to be one, are taking on the enormous tasks of confronting the racist, sexist, nationalistic, homophobic and other injustices of America's colonizing history and the complicit role the arts in general and dance in particular have sometimes played in that history. Dance history in this country reflects American history and while 21st century dance education, performance, and scholarship is far from the oppressive white-washed scene of the first half of the 20th century, the second half begins to take on the advocacy for and advancement of pluralistic, multi and intercultural creative and artistic views in society and in education. It was not until 1954 in *Brown v. Board of Education* that racial segregation in education became illegal, launching the Civil Rights Movement.¹⁵¹

The next period in American history (1950s to the present) reveals continued social and political struggle. In some ways it is actually just the beginning of the struggle for educational, social, and political equality in the United States and dance's complex and dual role in terms of both contributing to, and fighting against, racism and sexism in education, in the arts, and in society.

CHAPTER 3

THE DISCIPLINARY AND INTERDISCIPLINARY ORIGINS OF DANCE STUDIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION: 1950s–THE PRESENT

Overview And Methods

This chapter provides a summary of dance in higher education from the 1950s through the present as background and context for the central focus of this study, which is

¹⁵¹ The Leadership Conference, "Civil Rights Chronology" accessed July 26, 2011, <http://www.civilrights.org/resources/civilrights101/chronology.html>.

current dance studies research methods from 2007-09. In this chapter, the development of dance as an independent academic subject in higher education continues to be examined through an historical lens as well as through an exploration of current discussions of disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity. As much as possible, as in the previous chapter, this chapter is designed in a chronological way, using Thomas Hagood's *A History of Dance in American Higher Education* as a primary guide. I move back and forth in time to discuss and compare historical issues with similar concerns in our contemporary period. In addition to Hagood, this chapter utilizes dance historical and theoretical writings of Naima Prevots, Edrie Ferdun, Karen Bond, Jane Desmond, Suzanne Youngerman, Wendy Oliver, Ramsey Burt, Gay Morris, Barbara Ebenstein, and Jens Giersdorf; the feminist writings by Robyn Wigman, bell hooks, Barbara Christian, Amelia Jones; the cultural studies writing by Stuart Hall; and, the arts advocacy of Harlan Hoffa.

1950s Struggle For Disciplinary Identity

In *Research Priorities for Dance Education: A Report to the Nation*, published in 2004 by the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO), the authors write:

In this time period [1951-1964] dance began to emerge as an arts related discipline and the slow, but steady realignment of dance away from physical education and toward affiliation with other fine arts began to take place. Independent departmental status for dance in the research university context began at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) in 1955 when the department of dance was established. Throughout this period, one can trace a growing trend in the field toward academic individuation for dance.¹⁵²

Since the NDEO *Report* arises out of the NDEO's extensive examination of all dance education scholarship from 1929 through the present, it is likely that the term "academic"

¹⁵² NDEO, *The Report*, 14.

is used here to refer to dance scholarship and not to dance practice (“academic dance”) in higher education.

In *A History of Dance in American Higher Education*, Hagood describes the lingering issues from the previous decades as well as the ambivalence in the *dance as art* versus *dance as education* controversy that continues into the 1950s, acknowledging that these issues still have not been resolved. In dance in higher education there was a desire to “have it both ways”: utilizing the conservatory model and at the same time valuing the academy model. This era (the 1950s) also reveals a mass of curricular issues. It was not until the 1960s that professional degree programs in dance developed (Bachelor and Master of Fine Art degrees). Hagood writes, “Dance curricula developed haphazardly, without a nationally cohesive vision for content, standards, or disciplinary focus.”¹⁵³

Writing In The 50s: “Dance Scholars” And Practical Matters

In 1948, dance artists in San Francisco launched the dance journal *Impulse*. Marian Van Tuyl, the second editor of *Impulse*, was a student of Martha Graham and taught dance at the University of Chicago. Van Tuyl also helped develop the dance program at Mills College for Women in Oakland, California, and established *Impulse* as an annual journal for dance; she remained its editor until its last publication in 1970. Hagood suggests that Van Tuyl via *Impulse* laid the foundation for a new category of dance professionals. He writes:

Through her leadership Van Tuyl contributed to the maturation of dance related writing, helping to establish the intellectual bedrock upon which would stand a

¹⁵³ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 167-68.

new generation of dance “scholars,” a term rarely used in connection with dance education.¹⁵⁴

In 1954, dance advocate and Director and Chair of Modern Dance at the University of Utah, Elizabeth Hayes, published a position statement in *The Journal of Physical Education and Recreation*. Hayes’s article, “The Dance Teacher and the Physical Administrator,” makes several recommendations to physical educators. Hayes’ analysis of the issues in the field of dance includes mostly references to practical matters of the time. These practical concerns will be resonant with professionals in dance in higher education today. For example, Hayes lists limited budget, limited space, limited experienced faculty, scheduling, and location issues among other practical matters of concern.¹⁵⁵ This suggests that the formation of dance as a discipline in higher education on the practical level may have been as challenging, if not more challenging, than establishing itself as a discipline on the theoretical level.

It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to analyze the subject matter of dance scholarship. However, I would like to briefly point out that dance scholars in dance departments today are still necessarily concerned with practical matters, including administrative concerns, curricular issues, and advocacy (as a few examples), in addition to the ones that Hayes lists. Throughout its history, the field of dance is often self-reflective. It takes inventory of itself in and through writing and conferences; therefore, in this current interdisciplinary moment, it may be important for *all* scholars writing about dance to be at least minimally aware of what issues are impacting upon dance as an art, dance as education, and dance as a subject in higher education: from losing studio space,

¹⁵⁴ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 175.

¹⁵⁵ Elizabeth Hayes, “The Dance Teacher and the Physical Administrator,” *The Journal of Physical Education and Recreation* (December) 1954.

to losing departmental status, to ceasing to exist altogether—these issues remain important to the field of dance in higher education today. Problems arise when these concerns, so important to dance, are replaced or glossed over by the issues that are important to outside disciplines or academic subjects, because dance is administratively housed but not embraced there. The reality is: for the survival of dance as a discipline in higher education it may often be more necessary to ask practical questions before theoretical ones.

Cultural Diplomacy And Modern Dance

Hagood takes a broad view when observing the social and political concerns that came to bear on the origins of the arts in higher education. He writes, “The development of higher education in a democratic and industrial society set the stage for the university’s attention to the arts.”¹⁵⁶ In this section on cultural diplomacy, I begin to demonstrate how some dance is indebted to politics and world events; historically speaking, the rise of modern dance happened at times when the United States government launched (and at other times, revived) cultural diplomacy. For example, a lot of money was poured into the arts as a non-military or diplomatic strategy during the Cold War. The story is often told that the success of modern dance was primarily due to the pioneering genius of the early modern dance artists. However, the reality is, many household names in dance, such as Martha Graham and José Limón, greatly benefited from the United States government’s financial support.

¹⁵⁶ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 10.

Dance educators, in order to promote the arts in exchange for funding and legitimacy, also utilized the nationalistic political climate during the Cold War period.

Hagood explains:

Government recognition of dance as an important cultural export helped dance educators argue the case for expanded recognition of dance as a fine arts discipline in higher education.¹⁵⁷

Dance scholar Naima Prevots' significant research explores cultural diplomacy in detail during this era. In *Dance for Export: Cultural Diplomacy and the Cold War*, Prevots unveils previously classified US government documents, such as congressional hearings and "expert" panel discussions about modern dance in the 50s and 60s, which indicate that many famous modern dance choreographers (Martha Graham, José Limón, Alvin Ailey, among others) were employed by the Eisenhower Administration, in concert with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the State Department, to battle communism. Professor of history at Columbia University Eric Foner writes in the "Introduction" to *Dance for Export*:

Although recent historians have begun to probe the use of art as a weapon in the Cold War, the intersection of dance and diplomacy has thus far eluded scholarly investigation. Few if any scholars of the Cold War mention the dance touring program, and few historians of dance have placed this episode in the broad context of cultural politics. Here is where Prevots makes a significant contribution.¹⁵⁸

Foner describes the late 40s in the United States,

[T]he Cold War produced an anticommunist crusade, an effort to purge American life of both communists and what attorney general Tom C. Clark called "foreign ideologies." ... Anticommunism became a tool wielded by... employers against labor unions, white supremacists against black civil rights, and upholders of sexual morality and traditional gender roles against

¹⁵⁷ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 178.

¹⁵⁸ Naima Prevots, Eric Foner, *Dance for Export: Cultural Diplomacy and the Cold War* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2001), 3.

homosexuality and feminism. The world of the arts could not remain immune from these pressures, as old friendships shattered, former comrades testified against one another before congressional committees, and artists enlisted knowingly or unwittingly, in the battle against the Soviets via such organizations as the Congress for Cultural Freedom.¹⁵⁹

The above passage elicits a sense of the socially and politically rigid environment in which some of the icons of modern dance were working. The politics and rhetoric of this period did not seem to leave room for “gray areas.” During this time, artists such as Martha Graham (who is still referred to as revolutionary), made the decision to accept the “emergency” government funding; and it was this funding, “The Eisenhower Emergency Fund,” that was the beginning of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

This among other discoveries and documents brought forward in Prevots’s consequential research trace the start of the NEA, revealing the connection the young NEA had with the United States Information Agency (USIA), among other government agencies and organizations. (The USIA’s mission was to “strengthen American informational and propaganda activities.”) Prevots describes how President Eisenhower appointed C. D. Jackson, former head of psychological warfare during World War II, as Special Assistant to the President. She writes, “As the President’s advisor, Jackson would have encouraged nonmilitary approaches to combating Soviet influence and power.”¹⁶⁰ This “nonmilitary approach” included exporting dance, music, and art to multiple international locations, when and where the United States saw fit for foreign policy purposes.

Prevots also narrates the development of the “dance panel:” a group of dance experts who decided who did and who did not receive the State Department funding.

¹⁵⁹ Foner, *Dance for Export*, 1-2.

¹⁶⁰ Prevots, *Dance for Export*, 12.

(The panel included Agnes De Mille and Martha Hill, among others.) Throughout *Dance for Export*, Prevots provides excerpts from the dance panel meetings, congressional meetings on the arts, and other statements made by government officials. Her chapters explore Martha Graham and José Limón, “The Avant-Garde Conundrum” (Merce Cunningham was refused funding year after year), ballet, Alvin Ailey, Carmen De Lavallade, Katherine Dunham (who was refused government funding for over 10 years, until the panel considered her in 1959, but the tour did not happen), and more than 12 years after the Emergency Fund started, American Indian forms of dance began to be considered and funded.

Prevots’ research is notable because she reveals the connections between the professional American modern dance world and larger national and international social and political events. Hagood also makes these larger connections and writes about how The Cold War also influenced educational goals and curriculum. Physical education, for example, got strong and hard. He writes:

The progressive education ideals of socialization and learning life’s skills so eloquently referenced by physical educators in decades past, fell prey to a demand that the body be as hard as the mind. ... Meanwhile, professors and administrators were pressured by legislatures and government agencies to toe the line in matters of patriotism and rejection of the political left.¹⁶¹

At first glance, government funding might seem to have been great for popularizing dance as education and as an art. However, sometimes the much-needed recognition for professional modern dance and dance in higher education, in and through government funding and media, comes at a cost. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to examine the work of the artists in the 1950s before and after they were selected for the

¹⁶¹ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 177.

State Department tours, but it would be a worthwhile exploration to see if and how The Emergency Funds changed the work of these choreographers and if and how government and private funding may change or have an influence on artistic products today, including censorship and self-censorship.

In the next section, it will be revealed how modern dance struggled to maintain autonomy and leaned on ballet for legitimacy. What is lost when ballet is over-emphasized is a spirit of independence, liberation, and artistic, social, and political freedom: the premises upon which modern dance were founded.

The 1950s And 60s: Corporate And Government Funding And The Ballet Boom

One may judge a king by the state of dancing during his reign.
- Chinese Maxim

During the 1950s and 60s the arts in general and dance in particular benefited from business, politics, and the promotion of democracy. Hagood writes:

In 1961, a young and dynamic President John F. Kennedy assumed the mantle of US president and with his wife Jacqueline, referred to America's artistic vitality as an important symbol of cultural health. Dance gained its prestige as an important performing art in its own right. The attention paid to dance by Mrs. Kennedy was significant. ... The social and political importance of American culture was reinforced in government and business circles following Kennedy's tragic assassination. ... Kennedy's death strengthened the desire of politicians and community leaders to fulfill his vision for an America that was different from, and greater than, threatening communist societies, largely because of its cultural vitality.¹⁶²

In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act. In his speech, President Johnson promises that a National Theater, a National Ballet Company, and much more, including American music, American

¹⁶² Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 184-85.

composers, American film institute, and American orchestras will be created. After President Johnson's speech that emphatically promoted the arts, the Ford Foundation gave \$7,765,000 to the New York City Ballet in December of 1963. To house all this American art, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts was built in 1967. Hagood describes the Kennedy Center as a "Government development," rather than an arts development. This distinction is meaningful in that it reinforces the idea that the government may have used the arts primarily for political purposes rather than out of interest in developing fine and performing arts in and of themselves.¹⁶³

Due in large part to imperialistic themes, hierarchal choreographic structures, and other European, heterosocial ideology, the ballet, compared with modern dance received a staggering amount of money for professional productions (The Ford Foundation gave nearly 8 million to the New York City Ballet) while, technically and creatively speaking, there were and are many modern companies doing equal or greater creative work in terms of "artistic vitality" that went without government and business support. Meanwhile, in the minds of academics, the arts in general and modern dance in particular were the "lowest of the low." Therefore, to boost the legitimacy of the field, ballet was used to argue for dance as an art in education.¹⁶⁴

The 1960s: Star Paths

In higher education in the 1960s the debate between academic and professional dance continues and vocationalism and professionalism, influences from the modern dance world, prevail. Academic dance versus professional preparation (the conservatory

¹⁶³ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 192.

¹⁶⁴ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 189, 180.

model) is an issue that is still unresolved today. Hagood writes about these debates in the 1960s:

Agnes De Mille put the professional disdain for dance in the academy into words in testimony to the Congressional Select Sub-Committee on Education (reported in the May issue of *Dance Magazine*), when she said she thought dance in higher education was ‘largely fraudulent.’ Dance programs were not training dancers as much as ‘dilettantes.’ There is an aggressive anti-intellectualism in the tone of many of the dancers quoted in *Dance Magazine* throughout the decade; ‘dance should be done, not thought about,’ ‘I hate academic dance,’ ‘dancers in college aren’t prepared to dance, they’re only prepared to talk about dance.’¹⁶⁵

The development of the conservatory model and product-oriented professionalism seems to have contributed to the kind of anti-intellectualism articulated above. Hagood offers a definition of the conservatory model:

[T]he conservatory; a term which, in its literal definition, references a specialized and rarefied enclosure for the breeding of delicate plants.¹⁶⁶

Edrie Ferdun, Temple University Professor Emeritus, warns about the “star path” that leads to limited opportunities for artists:

Dance as a performing art, professionally conceived, seems to excite great numbers of aspiring students. Concern is sometimes expressed as to the advisability of thinking and planning programs in relation to a star path dream set in view of limitations on future opportunities and remuneration.¹⁶⁷

The issue of dance’s placement and function in the university (as education or as art) is still questioned and the field continues to struggle for independence and identity as a separate discipline. In 1965, the National Section on Dancing formed the “Dance as a Discipline Conference” in the hopes of producing a vision for dance as an independent academic discipline. Hagood writes, “The desire to clarify the meaning of dance in higher education was coming from the field itself”; the Dance as a Discipline Conference in

¹⁶⁵ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 198. I was unable to obtain this and other issues of *Dance Magazine* from the 1960s.

¹⁶⁶ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 203.

¹⁶⁷ Ferdun, *Into the Fray*, 11.

1965 was “the beginning of academic independence for dance in the American university.”¹⁶⁸

The term “academic,” at this point, still refers to dance practice in higher education. The next section focuses on the anthropological turn and issues in dance in higher education in the 1970s.

1970s And The Anthropological Turn

The 1970s experienced increases in dance department enrollments at the university level in the United States. However, by 1973, still only half of dance programs achieved independence from physical education.¹⁶⁹ In terms of dance scholarship, while half of the dance programs had established departmental status, let alone its own disciplinary center, the field began to take an anthropological turn.

Suzanne Youngerman’s “Methods and Theory in Dance Research: An Anthropological Approach,” written in 1975, illustrates an example of the “social science” or “anthropology turn” that dance studies was taking at this time. Youngerman’s writing offers suggestions for the field of dance researchers, particularly encouraging the synthesis of what she describes as the four aspects of dance that researchers in the subject ought to cover:

1. The formal aspects of the dance; 2. The behavior and/or “style”; 3. The social and cultural factors, or the “who, what, when, where and why” of the dance; and 4. The role of the dance in the culture, or the dance’s “meaning.”¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 195.

¹⁶⁹ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 207.

¹⁷⁰ Suzanne Youngerman, “Method and Theory in Dance Research: An Anthropological Approach,” *1975 Yearbook of the International Folk Music Festival*, Vol. 7 (International Council for Traditional Music, 1975), 117.

Youngerman strongly argues for linking dance to behavior and social science analysis, including quantitative methods, for the purpose of “cross-cultural” understanding. Her writing also rearticulates the often-cited issue in relationship to the difficulty of writing about dance generally; this classic complaint is along the lines of: “the notation is too difficult to use.” Youngerman writes: “Social scientists have objected to the use of notation systems because of the difficulty of learning the techniques[.]”¹⁷¹

In the present period, scholars from outside disciplines also find dance difficult to work with, citing similar problems. For example, some performance studies and other authors complain that there is no libretto to analyze or no other sufficient form of documentation from which to launch descriptive or theoretical analysis. As a result, many beautiful and complicated essays are written about dance using psychoanalytic theorists such as Freud and Lacan, or feminist philosopher Judith Butler and speech-act theorist J.L. Austin, leaving the actual dance and choreography behind, in favor of theoretical poetics about memory, death, women, and embodiment.

In “Trisha Brown’s *Orfeo*: Two Takes on Double Endings” in *Of The Presence of The Body*, Peggy Phelan writes,

But as I try to remember Brussels in May 1998 and the [Trisha Brown] première of *Orfeo* at the beautiful opera house, Theatre de la Monnaie, I do not feel relaxed. The problem with remembering dance is that such memories seep into other recollections of embodiment. ... I could not discern which of my memories came from the performance I’d seen and which memories were derived from photos, videos, descriptions and newspaper.¹⁷²

According to Phelan, dance poses some problem in terms of its liveness, mainly that dance requires the theorist or historian to remember it correctly; as a result, most of

¹⁷¹ Youngerman, *Method and Theory*, 119.

¹⁷² Peggy Phelan, “Trisha Brown’s *Orfeo*: Two Takes on Double Endings,” *Of the Presence of the Body*, Ed. Andre Lepecki (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 14.

Phelan's chapter speaks to *everything but* Trisha Brown's *Orfeo*—at least not in a substantive or material way. Like many performance studies writers, Phelan uses dance to launch thoughtful and brilliant discussions of theory. This is to say that when considering interdisciplinarity in dance and in performance studies (although some would assert that performance studies is postdisciplinary) it may be important to be minimally aware of the differences between a performance studies and dance studies approach to writing about dance. A performance studies scholar's relationship to "the subject" of dance is going to be different than a dance studies scholar's relationship to the subject of dance. While writing on the subject of dance, the actual "subject" of performance studies writing is not dance at all—it is theory.

Youngerman argues the anthropological approach to researching dance is the most complete and holistic and cites specific research techniques, from dance notation to fieldwork, that will provide the basis for statistical testing, classification of dances, and for comparison of data across cultures. For example, Youngerman suggests using Rudolf Laban's effort-shape system of movement analysis to observe and analyze a person's walk, so that everyday movements can be studied and examined against movements in a dance to reveal "patterns" for cross-cultural classification purposes. Youngerman's essay is a definitive example of the social science influences on dance studies research methods in the 60s and 70s. Although Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) and Labanotation are not common research methods in current dance studies dissertations, fieldwork is a common research approach.

From this review of the history of dance in higher education so far, it is clear that dance scholars and educators use the tools, events, and affiliations that will best support

dance as a discipline, including advocacy, theories of the practice, and any other theories that keep us in business. However, I suggest that dance studies scholars from inside and outside of dance departments conduct an honest assessment of the benefits and the drawbacks of utilizing theory and methods from outside fields, including anthropology and performance studies discourses such as psychoanalytic and speech-act theory to write about dance.

Other notable concerns in dance in higher education during the 1970s (and into the 80s) include ongoing advocacy and organization, issues of standards, curriculum, and disciplinary identity. For example, dance administrators founded the Council of Dance Administrators (CODA) in 1967 and by the 1980s, discipline-based standards in dance education emerged and national accreditation guidelines were necessary to enforce them.¹⁷³ At this point, the issues between “academics versus professionals” in dance in higher education seem to be reaching their height. Although during this time more dance majors appeared, the generally accepted idea is that if one takes a professional path in dance, the best place to study is at a studio, not in college. Oliver writes,

Most dance programs up through the early 1970s believed that the main focus of dance in higher education was to train teachers, not performers, although there were some exceptions to this rule.¹⁷⁴

In the next section, dance’s struggle to survive within the corporate university is discussed along with issues of disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity in the 1980s and 1990s.

1980-1990: The Conservative Turn, The Consumer Student: Dance’s Struggle For Survival In The Corporate University

¹⁷³ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 234.

¹⁷⁴ Oliver, *Focus on Dance*, 3.

In the 1980s and 1990s, as dance was becoming a more stable subject, the world around it was becoming less stable and more conservative. Vocationality increased outside the university while university enrollment decreased until 1998. In “Dance Studies in the International Academy: Genealogy of a Disciplinary Formation” in *Dance Research Journal*, Giersdorf writes:

It is in relation to this transition from the University as a national institution ... to global corporation concerned with accountability that I am situating my discussion of three graduate programs in dance studies.¹⁷⁵

Giersdorf narrates the disciplinary genealogies of three dance programs: the Tanzwissenschaft program in Leipzig, Germany, the University of Surrey in England, and the dance history and theory department at the University of Riverside in California; Giersdorf’s purpose is to reveal, among other things, issues of nation in relationship to a genealogy of these programs and to examine some of the issues that dance in higher education faced in the corporate, market-driven climate of the 80s and 90s. Giersdorf writes:

[W]hen dance training is situated in universities or colleges, it often communicates only to a certain extent in technical or scientific terminologies and establishes itself more often in descriptive categories, such as excellence or competitiveness. That is especially noteworthy given that the increasing corporatization of universities also favors the values “excellence” and “competitiveness” as part of its discourse because these concepts allow ranking and this speaks to the student-as consumer.¹⁷⁶

Hagood confirms the increasingly corporate climate in America. He writes:

By 1978 the nation’s economy was pointed toward dramatic change. ... The Corporate University became the model for action. Faculty did not take the turn toward a business-oriented academy lying down; they did their best to retain programs, faculty lines, and faculty-governance privileges. ... Accountability and

¹⁷⁵ Giersdorf, *Dance Studies in the International Academy*, 24, 25.

¹⁷⁶ Giersdorf, *Dance Studies in the International Academy*, 27-28

the consumer-student were new issues for higher education. Both were cause for alarm among academics comfortable with the tradition of the university existing outside the common concerns of corporate consumer culture.¹⁷⁷

In addition to facing challenges within an increasingly corporate university, dance faced challenges outside the academic setting. Dance companies started closing in New York in the late 1980s; modern dance appeared to be shutting down. Within the university, dance departments were facing enrollment issues. In the late 1980s dance educators and advocates faced steep challenges advocating for the importance of dance in the corporate university setting. As we know financial challenges and the corporate climate continued to escalate well into the 21st century.

The next section begins to examine dance's interdisciplinary affiliations with women's studies and how interdisciplinarity in dance has often been motivated by economic factors and by a need to broaden its horizon and be a part of larger intellectual debates for its own survival. Gay Morris writes about how dance could "profit" from using methodological tools gathered from feminist theory, Marxist analysis, and other theoretical modes and discourses. Although it is not likely that Morris's use of the word "profit" was meant to be taken literally, it is revealing in Morris's and others' writing that there is a continued view that dance has much to gain by leaning on outside disciplines.¹⁷⁸ Unfortunately in both the contemporary period and throughout history, less is said about what dance may lose by interdisciplinary sharing. Morris's analysis of the intersections between dance studies and cultural studies will be explored in closer detail in the next sections.

¹⁷⁷ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 242-43, 246-47.

¹⁷⁸ Morris, *Dance Studies/Cultural Studies*, 82.

Outside Disciplines And Dance Studies In The 1990s

Does the study of and preparation in related or outside fields such as women's studies, urban studies, or anthropology and the need to be knowledgeable in these areas to better teach dance, carry a different intention than interdisciplinarity? Hagood writes:

Many of us in the earlier period had courses in education, psychology, curriculum development, group process, creativity, etc. Dance majors today do not get these courses—and probably won't because of time restraints and interest. The questions are: 1) How do we help prospective teachers acquire these related knowledges? 2) How do we help current faculty expand understandings in related fields? 3) What should be the framework for graduate courses?¹⁷⁹

This passage expresses that there is a need for outside areas of study and it seems to arise out of a desire to deepen and improve disciplinary knowledge and teaching.

Hagood asks important questions that encourage connecting curriculum with interdisciplinary knowledge with teaching dance.

Ferdun writes about interdisciplinarity in the 1990s with reference to an earlier period of exercise and science in dance in higher education. Ferdun compares and describes the recent science and therapeutic “return” in dance, with the physical education and dance science of H'Doubler's era. Ferdun writes:

Affiliation with the sciences, professionally in the form of dance science, begins again to take dance in the direction of its original relationships in the colleges that is, with the health and medically oriented field of physical education. This time, however, it is with changed social values and experiences. The foothold in physical education used to have in the public schools seems to have loosened in some ways, making it more open to successful dance, while also subjecting it again to exclusive preoccupation with exercise.¹⁸⁰

Muriel Topaz, the former director of the Dance Notation Bureau and the Dance Division of The Juilliard School, looks at the issues of the broad-based curriculum,

¹⁷⁹ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 254.

¹⁸⁰ Ferdun, *Into the Fray*, 10.

rejecting anti-intellectualism, while illustrating some concerns surrounding the continued debate between the dance professional and the dance academic. Topaz offers:

The field itself can only benefit from dancers with broader backgrounds and greater understanding of their art. As we become more articulate, we are slowly winning the increased respect of our fellow artists in allied fields. It has not been an easy path to respectability, nor should it have been considering our own insistence on negation of the dancer's intellectual powers.¹⁸¹

Today there is an ever-widening gap between dance practice and dance scholarship. With the expansion of dance in higher education to include dance scholarship on the doctoral level, and with many outside fields and scholars researching and writing about dance (while being mostly disconnected from the practice of dance), my observation is that the theorist produces certain discussions about dance and the practitioners are for the most part disconnected from the production of scholarship and “theory” about their work, whether or not there is a desire to become more articulate about their work. As my own experience has shown, there is a disconnect between dance training, dance practice, and dance scholarship. More research needs to be conducted to locate and generate pathways between practice and theory, particularly in and through degree programs and curricula in dance in higher education so that dance as a discipline is better equipped to navigate the current interdisciplinary turn and other future turns taken by the field.

Dance Studies, Women's Studies, And Cultural Studies

Dance Studies is Feminism's Other
–Susan Foster

¹⁸¹ This passage by Murial Topaz is from an untitled paper that was presented at an annual meeting of the National Association of Schools of Dance, September 1984, in Reston, Virginia. It is quoted by Hagood in *A History of Dance*, 259. The document is in the hands of the author.

We can see the need for dance studies to find a center today when many “outside” methods are increasingly popular, and in many cases unavoidable, because dance is housed in other departments due to budget restraints. Therefore, it is important for dance studies to question its research methods and subjects and ask: what methods and subjects are inherent to dance? And, how can a field be interdisciplinary before it develops and understands its own theoretical identity or theoretical center? Hagood writes:

Dance will remain a part of its parent discipline [physical education] until it establishes its own educational center.¹⁸²

Dance in higher education has foundational alliances with both physical education and the women’s movement. Dance struggled for most of the 20th century to establish itself for better or for worse as an art form, distinct from physical education. Today, dance studies may benefit from asking, what are the next “moves” for dance studies on its own? At the turn of the 21st century dance is utilized as a vehicle for multicultural and intercultural expression and affiliations with women’s studies return as central concerns. In this section, I examine discussions by authors who prescribe that dance become more like cultural studies, taking up social and political issues of power as focal points, as well as being actively anti-disciplinary. It is useful to examine cultural studies and women’s studies alongside dance studies; like the field of dance, women’s studies as an interdiscipline is based upon a practice (feminist practice and/or the women’s movement) and shares activist concerns with cultural studies.

Ferdun looks at the populations served by dance and draws connections and parallels between dance and women’s studies departments. However, the connections are

¹⁸² Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 144.

less than comfortable, due to an asymmetrical relationship that exists between these different departments. Ferdun notes,

There has been remarkable silence from women's studies in the realm of dance. Conferences and workshops, even in the arts, are repeatedly held with little or no coverage of dance."¹⁸³

Importantly, Ferdun makes this comment as she describes the origins of dance programs in the United States and explains the field of dance's early affiliation with the women's movement. Ferdun writes about dance's struggle for disciplinarity and compares it with a similar struggle in women's studies:

Like dance, which has to work very hard to define itself as a discipline and professional field distinct from the populations most involved in it, so women's studies seems to need to define itself in terms of the most recognized, potent, and explicitly useful departments and functions in higher education.¹⁸⁴

Ferdun continues, writing about interdisciplinarity and dance's contemporary affiliation with women's studies:

Unless dance academics strive hard to construe dance into frameworks understandable and appreciated by the articulate and energetic leaders affiliated with women's studies, there is little to expect in the way of automatic support for dance from organizational bodies of women on campus.¹⁸⁵

Feminist author Robyn Wigman articulates how women's studies has disciplinary, academic, and institutional problems of their own and speaks directly to the cultural studies element of its activist roots:

Has academic feminism betrayed its radical political roots, substituting abstraction for action, legitimacy for risk? Have the emergent generations of professionally trained feminists abandoned their foremothers' tradition by making of feminism an academic career? Has our success, in short, engendered

¹⁸³ Ferdun, *Into the Fray*, 8.

¹⁸⁴ Ferdun, *Into the Fray*, 8. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to provide a history of the women's movement or of the development of women's studies in higher education.

¹⁸⁵ Ferdun, *Into the Fray*, 8.

failure, transforming grassroots social movements and anti-institutional ethics into prototypically liberal and hence reformist, not revolutionary ideals?¹⁸⁶

In a similarly prescriptive passage, Ferdun poses a challenge for the field of dance, describing how dance has lost sight of its own early commitments to social change:

Dance offers a background of information and a new frontier in scientific, cultural, and clinical studies. What dance seems to have forgotten is the dynamism of commitment to social change and personal integrity that was so vital to its early years. The present period would seem to call for movement into the central currents of social concern. By this I mean to confront poverty, racism, sexism, homophobia, ageism, fascism, and the general abuse of life and legacy.¹⁸⁷

Along these lines, dance scholar Gay Morris suggests that dance studies become more like cultural studies. In “Dance Studies/Cultural Studies,” in *Dance Research Journal*, Morris provides an etymology of both dance studies and cultural studies, methodologically speaking. However, as it is the case with most writers when talking about “dance studies research methods” or “dance studies methods,” Morris does not specifically or substantively identify what are dance studies methods. She does specify *who* is writing dance studies scholarship that “absorbed the ideas and methods of cultural studies.” Morris names Susan Manning, Susan Foster, Mark Franko, Randy Martin, Ann Daly, and Barbara Browning and notes that the most influential dance studies research is that which incorporates cultural studies elements, a perception that indicates and speaks to the politics of dance studies research methods.¹⁸⁸ If the utilization of cultural studies modes in dance studies research leads to the production of more “influential research,” does this not create a complication considering the whole driving force of the cultural studies movement is to dismantle disciplinary and other hierarchies?

¹⁸⁶ Robyn Wigman, *Women’s Studies on Its Own*, Ed. Robyn Wigman (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 3.

¹⁸⁷ Ferdun, *Into the Fray*, 11.

¹⁸⁸ Morris, *Dance Studies/Cultural Studies*, 93.

Morris speaks to the “theoretical turn” that dance studies has taken and makes claims about the close link between theory and practice. Morris raises thoughtful arguments but problems remain unresolved in her research. It is not clear which dance studies methods were utilized before the “theoretical turn” so it is hard to appreciate its necessity.¹⁸⁹ Morris’s essay raises many important points, mainly that dance studies will benefit from becoming more like cultural studies in terms of it being actively anti-disciplinary, like cultural studies was in its beginning, even if she inadvertently created an asymmetrical relationship between the two disciplines with dance being positioned as less consequential.

Modern dance had an activist beginning. We can also recall that dance in higher education has some curricular roots in the women’s movement and shared social and political interests with the advocacy work of the women’s movement as early feminists rallied for women’s health and inclusion in education via physical education programs, securing these significant victories. Additionally, dance educators and advocates have struggled and continue to struggle for the continued existence of dance departments. I suggest that dance does not need to be more like cultural studies; perhaps it needs to be more like itself.

However, if we take Morris’s recommendation: what would it look like if dance were more like cultural studies beyond or in addition to its activist foundation? Cultural studies also questioned established disciplines, including certain theories, as there was a call for those theories to be addressing real problems. The way this might be translated

¹⁸⁹ Like my necessarily limited examination of research methods suggests, there is a need for more research on the subject of dance studies research methods. Research methods are inseparable from discussions of disciplinary identity, including *what* a particular field is concerned with and *how* it approaches its own particular issues and concerns.

for dance is by bridging theory with practice—in addition to addressing real problems on greater social and political levels. Yet, how do we write about dance in a way that is resonant with “real problems” in dance, both on the ground and in the studio, when we are still struggling for continued existence within the university?

Cultural studies has actually ignored the subject of dance, even though it has been known as a “vehicle” for the excluded, for those who are outside established traditions and disciplines. Cultural studies has boasted not only interdisciplinarity, but also that it was “actively and aggressively anti-disciplinary.” However, are the theoretical legacies of cultural studies, Marxism, feminism, psychoanalysis, poststructuralism, and postmodernism well suited to talk about the many different kinds of dance and issues in dance?¹⁹⁰

For dance as a field, as a discipline, to be more like cultural studies, as Morris suggests, perhaps it needs to recognize itself more seriously as a *movement*. Historically, some dance artists have sought to dismantle, overthrow, or bring attention to dominant or dominating social and political relationships. The history of dance as an art and as a practice is a history of social and political events; dance is also a history of political change in that we can see social and political progress (or lack thereof) in the United States in and through dances.

In the Introduction to *Meaning in Motion: New Cultural Studies of Dance*, Jane Desmond’s clearly articulates what cultural studies as a field *does*. “[It is] committed to examining cultural practices from the point of view of their interaction with, and within

¹⁹⁰ In “Cultural Studies and Its Theoretical Legacies,” Stuart Hall describes these methods as the theoretical legacies of cultural studies. Stuart Hall, *Cultural Studies*, Eds. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, Paula Treichler (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), 277-294.

relations of power.”¹⁹¹ This invites the question, what does dance studies as a discipline *do*?

What may be useful to “borrow” from cultural studies in addition to its relationship to power is its constantly changing nature and its anti-disciplinary stance. While dance may share some issues with other live performing arts, it must wrestle with its own particular issues and focus on the many unique concerns of dance, using whatever theoretical or philosophical means necessary to articulate each particular problem, rather than trying to fit into already made discourses and agendas. What is the dance studies agenda?: to “fit in” in higher education or to continue to pioneer an art form and academic subject in higher education? We do not need to *seek out* social and political topics—we are already socially and politically constructed; just starting with the fact that dance is a field made up almost exclusively of women and that dance’s obvious main concerns are issues of dance, movement, and the body.

Feminist theorist Gail Chester writes, “Our theory is that practicing our practice is our theory.”¹⁹² This is a radical idea to advance in higher education. Rather than adopting Michel Foucault or the socio-political theories of Karl Marx to legitimize our concerns or to radicalize our agenda, grounding our theory in our practice—going so far as to say that *practicing our practice is our theory*—is courageous. In the end, however, it must be acknowledged that a spirit of activism does not represent the whole field of dance, which is actually quite conservative. Therefore, borrowing modes of feminist inquiry and practice or modes of paradigm-smashing discourses carry along with them issues of

¹⁹¹ Jane C. Desmond, “Introduction,” *Meaning in Motion: New Cultural Studies of Dance*, Ed. Jane C. Desmond (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 5.

¹⁹² Liz Stanley and Sue Wise, *Breaking Out Again: Feminist Ontology and Epistemology* (New York: Routledge, 1993) 56.

methods and subjects that are not quite an easy fit for dance in higher education until dance embraces its artistic, disciplinary, and educational authority.

Phd Programs

In the *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, Barbara Ebenstein offers a summary of the six schools that offered doctoral degrees in dance in 1986 (International College, NYU, Temple University, Texas Woman's University, University of London Goldsmith's College, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison). She writes,

However, it is only in the last 30 years that universities have developed doctoral programs in dance and that dance has come into its own as a research subject independent of other disciplines. The Congress on Research in Dance (CORD) has been stimulating and nurturing dance research for 17 years. Yet, there is a tremendous need for further research to explore the many facets of dance and to give dance the academic credibility it deserves.¹⁹³

Ebenstein recounts why some of the doctoral programs in dance developed, citing reasons, including practicality, for tenure and for teaching promotion. Ebenstein also describes a default interdisciplinarity, pointing to the fact that:

[B]ecause there are so few doctoral programs in dance, dance faculty most often get doctorates in related subjects, such as physical education, anthropology, or educational administration.¹⁹⁴

Ebenstein's article reports on NYU's Performance Studies department, which was founded in 1980. She writes that this program has a "concentration" in dance and adds, "This is the place for specialized academic courses in dance."¹⁹⁵ Ebenstein continues about the NYU program:

¹⁹³ Barbara Ebenstein, "A Ph.D. in WHAT? A Survey of Doctoral Programs in Dance," *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, Vol. 57, No. 8, 18-21, Oct 1986 (Reston, VA: AAHPERD, 1986), 18.

¹⁹⁴ Ebenstein, *A PhD in WHAT?*, 19.

¹⁹⁵ Ebenstein, *A PhD in WHAT?*, 20.

As no studio courses are offered, this program attracts older students, injured dancers, already accomplished dancers, and other non-traditional students.¹⁹⁶

Dance studies writers from within performance studies departments may have a different view of themselves today. The issue of “who” is writing and from what perspective and with what disciplinary knowledge or experience is not the focus of this study but would be an interesting area for future research. In my own experience, when I was working on my master’s degree in the Performance Studies department at NYU, I felt removed from the field of dance in general and especially removed from dance practice, mainly because practice-based classes were not offered. It was not until several years later, when working in a doctoral program in dance, that it felt important to stay connected with my practice and write from my own personal experience and knowledge of dance as an artist.

Although I greatly enjoyed the issues and methods of performance studies, my first connection to dance was through the body and movement—not through conceptions of performativity or identity politics. This is not to suggest that I am anti-theory; rather, when I look at my own dance writing, I can see there is a disconnect between practicing dance and conducting dance research, which is why this topic of what we write about and *how we write about it* comes from my own desire to make sense of my art, my education, and my research. This next section continues to explore how dance degree paths reinforce the disconnection between practice and theory, while at the same time practice and theory lose their separation from each other. Connecting theory and practice does not mean blurring the distinction between theory and practice. Ideally, the relationship between

¹⁹⁶ Ebenstein, *A PhD in WHAT?*, 20.

theory and practice strengthens both, forming a symmetrical relationship—neither theory nor practice dominating the other.

Separation Of Scholarly Research In Dance From Dance Practice

There's the theory of our practice and there's the practice of our practice.
- Moses Brown

Alma Hawkins, pioneering dance educator, recorded The Council's concerns about academic degrees in dance in 1987. Hawkins articulates two "paths" a dance student could take in dance in higher education. These paths separated "the studio" from the "scholarly research." Path one was the BA → MA → PhD route. Path two was the BFA → MFA route.¹⁹⁷

The curricular details of Path 1 and Path 2 are broken down as follows: Path 1: The BA in dance (four years) provides a broad knowledge of dance including: theory, history, kinesiology, philosophy, as well as some practice based components. It is flexible, reflecting the student's other varied interests. From there, the MA in dance (two years to complete), building on the BA, continues for more in-depth study of history, notation, and kinesiology. The program culminates with an academic thesis and "some sort of creative work," either choreographic or research.

The PhD degree, according to Hawkins, takes "2 plus additional years" to complete. The PhD program provides and requires even greater knowledge of the discipline of dance, but is primarily focused on scholarly work and creating new

¹⁹⁷ Council of Dance Administrators (CODA) "Summary Notes – Developmental Conference on Dance." These notes are in the hands of the author (Hagood). Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 267.

knowledge. The goal of the PhD degree is to prepare students to be in “leadership roles as scholars, teachers, or administrators[.]”¹⁹⁸

Path 2’s BFA (four years to complete) also provides broad knowledge, “but more emphasis is placed on the studio component in terms of curriculum.” By contrast with Path 1, Path 2 leads into an MFA (two to three years to finish), which is considered a terminal degree.¹⁹⁹ The emphasis of the MFA is on dance production, creativity, aesthetics, and “professionally oriented work including performance, choreography, [and] production.”²⁰⁰

Today (2012), the primary purpose of the PhD in dance in the United States is to make an original scholarly contribution to the field; these programs do not offer a performance component. Perhaps it is the need to be like other fields that separates dance practice from theory, or the academic study of dance from dance practice. Meaning, by removing dance practice requirements at the doctoral level, dance programs do resemble other academic disciplines; but by removing the dance theory from the dance practice, the theory will reflect this disconnection. If we boast a connection between our theory and practice should we not be able to experience, articulate, and teach that connection? How can we have it “both ways” How can we simply be like other departments and disciplines when we are not like other departments and disciplines?

¹⁹⁸ Hagood, *A History of Dance in Higher Education*, 267. My own experience was that I completed two years of coursework in addition to an MA (two years) and BFA (four years); one year of exams and dissertation proposal preparation, and two more years for writing and defending the dissertation, totaling roughly eleven-plus years of education, compared with seven years of education outlined in Path two above.

¹⁹⁹ Although an MFA is still considered a terminal degree, today a current trend is for more MFA students to continue their studies to obtain the PhD. Dr. Luke Kahlich mentioned this during a graduate seminar, “Directed Study in Dance Research,” Spring 2008, Philadelphia, Temple University.

²⁰⁰ Hagood, *A History of Dance in Higher Education*, 268.

The issue of degrees and discrepancies (in 1987) between programs confused the public and probably some students and faculty as well. Hagood writes:

CODA members noticed a trend for [dance department] position announcements to confuse necessary credentials and to ask for a great range of applicant skill. PhDs and MFAs found themselves competing for jobs that asked for a host of applicant skills. Again members commented on the problem of MFA graduates lacking conceptual bases and understandings.²⁰¹

Today, many university dance department job announcements found in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, for example, continue to desire or require applicants to possess an “MFA or PhD” as if these degrees were one and the same, when the goals and curriculum for these two degrees are entirely different. The length, intensity, type, and scope of study are different, as well. Today, generally speaking, the MFA is a three-year program while a PhD can take four to ten years to complete, although most will complete in five to six years, depending on circumstances. The duration of the program is not the main difference, however. Although some faculty and students may wish there were performance requirements for the PhD in dance, there are no such requirements for dissertation research; it is a traditional academic degree. While the MFA path culminates in a dance concert, the PhD path culminates in a dissertation defense, which follows after qualifying examinations, dissertation proposal development, and the dissertation research and writing process. The MFA, on the other hand, is a fine arts degree (not academic) where dance practice (creation, performance, and teaching) is more than required—dance practice is the focus of the degree. Generally speaking, doctoral students are not focused on dance technique (studio) classes, yet many job announcements today request or even require that the potential incoming faculty member is prepared to teach all levels of

²⁰¹ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 266.

technique (studio) classes as well as courses in traditional dance history or variations of dance history, “dance theory,” and often university-wide sociocultural dance-centered courses.

This brief comparison of these programs is from my own observation and is only intended to draw attention to how the goals of the MFA and PhD programs in dance today continue to have quite different agendas in their curricular contents and overall structure. The skills of an applicant holding an MFA are different than an applicant holding a PhD, yet many job announcements list the MFA and PhD degrees in dance as if they were interchangeable.

The conflicting messages regarding degree paths and job expectations may indicate a lack of clarity in the dance field itself regarding the connections and disconnections between practice and theory. It may also indicate an informal flexibility in hiring practices. My point here is only to say that few recent graduates of MFA or PhD dance programs have the skills of both programs combined. Few MFA or PhD graduates are the “dancer-artist-scholar-educator-administrator-professional-theorist:” candidates who have been productive in and through dance creation, performance, research, education, philosophy, curriculum development, advocacy, administration, marketing, grant writing, and teaching all levels of different kinds of dance techniques and somatic practices, improvisation and composition, as well as theory, history, or other classroom based coursework, and have a research agenda, are published and attend conferences.²⁰²

Scholarly Activity

²⁰² It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to examine the connection between MFA and PhD hiring in dance departments and curriculum but this would be a fruitful area for future research.

In the chapter “Dance Scholarship in Transition: A Post-Modern Aesthetic,” Hagood writes about how the ongoing development of scholarship had beneficial effects on the field’s sense of identity. It helped the discipline “reinforce its internal sense of academic integrity and substance.” “Yet,” he writes, “scholarly activity in dance has also been a development fraught with the fears of the influence of the non-dancer, because as one may recall, serious dancers don’t read.”²⁰³ Hagood continues:

The intellectual discourse on dance during its separation from physical education primarily addressed history, educational philosophy, and practical issues of identity.²⁰⁴

Historically and currently dance educators submit their research to journals published by affiliated arts or to *Research Quarterly* and the *Journal of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance* (JOPERD) published by the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (AAHPERD).²⁰⁵ Throughout the 20th century, several dance periodicals made contributions to writing in the field of dance; these included *American Dancer*, *Dance and Dancers*, *Dance and the Arts*, *Ballet News*, *Dance Magazine*, *Dance Teacher*, *Dance Spirit*, *Impulse*, and *Dance Observer*, which was the “official journal” for modern dance. The contents of many of these publications were primarily focused on calendars of events, feature articles on performers, teachers, and histories, or art-opinion articles.

Dance scholars chose to publish in physical education journals (especially in JOPERD) because the platform for scholarly writing about dance was not in place in the

²⁰³ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 273.

²⁰⁴ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 273.

²⁰⁵ The original *Journal of Health and Physical Education* developed into *The Journal of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance* as each field developed increasing autonomy in K-12 and higher education during the second half of the 20th century. Thank you Dr. Sarah Hilsendager for contributing to my knowledge and thinking.

professional field and because they were housed in physical education departments.²⁰⁶

Hagood describes the development of some dance writing in the physical education journals:

Scholarly inquiry in these journals focused on the practical matters of dance education or on dance as it was related to motor development, kinesiology, and exercise physiology. Theoretical consideration of what dance means, in culture, to people, or as artifact, developed slowly and did not substantively appear in the literature until the 1950s. ... In the 1950s, *Impulse* helped shepherd the field's development of an identity, as dancers and dance theorists began to consider their subject in broad new contexts.²⁰⁷

Another publication, *Dance Perspectives*, first published in 1959 was edited by well-known dance historians Selma Jeanne Cohen and A.J. Pischl. Hagood writes:

Like *Impulse*, each issue of *Dance Perspectives* was devoted to a special topic, e.g. 'Dances of Anatolian Turkey,' which according to the introduction for this issue was the first comprehensive study in English of dance in Turkey.

Outside of *Impulse* and *Dance Perspectives*, between 1926 and 1965, the majority of theoretical research in dance was conducted under the rubric of dance as part of physical education.²⁰⁸

It was not until the 1960s that a critical mass of dance writing "suitable for discursive exposition" appeared. The research in *Dance Perspectives* was mainly historical in its approach; history is still the most commonly utilized research method in dance studies dissertations today.

In 1978 The Society of Dance History Scholars' (SDHS) official publication emerged: *Studies in Dance History*, at a time when the *Dance Research Journal* was known as the field's "premiere academic journal." At the time, the first sentence in both the CORD and the SDHS mission statements mention or refer to interdisciplinarity.

²⁰⁶ Thank you to Luke Kahlich for our conversations that contributed to my writing about this subject.

²⁰⁷ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 274.

²⁰⁸ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 275.

CORD's mission statement stated: "The Congress on Research in Dance is an interdisciplinary organization."²⁰⁹ Today, the mission statement reads:

The Congress on Research in Dance is an international organization of dance scholars, educators, and artists that aims to strengthen the visibility and increase the reach of dance as embodied practice, creative endeavor and intellectual discipline.²¹⁰

The CORD website also offers a very brief history of the organization. In 2011, the history page of the CORD website identifies CORD as an interdisciplinary organization:

The Congress on Research in Dance (CORD) is an independent, non-profit 501-C3 organization. An interdisciplinary organization with an open international membership, CORD's purposes are:

- to encourage research in all aspects of dance and related fields;
- to foster the exchange of ideas, resources, and methodologies through publications, international and regional conferences and workshops;
- to promote the accessibility of research materials.²¹¹

In 1978, the SDHS's mission statement reads:

The Society of Dance History Scholars is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting study, research, discussion, performance, and publication in dance history and related fields...²¹²

And in 2011, the SDHS "[A]dvances the field of dance studies through research, publication, performance, and outreach to audiences across the arts, humanities, and social sciences."²¹³ These comparisons are made to show how interdisciplinarity, then and now, seems to have been a buzzword. In this next section on the postmodern period, the issues of dance as an academic subject in higher education, the ongoing

²⁰⁹ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 183.

²¹⁰ CORD website accessed December 16, 2011, <http://www.cordance.org/aboutus>.

²¹¹ From the CORD website: "CORD was originally convened in October 1964 at the behest of Esther Jackson and Kathryn Bloom, Director of the Arts & Humanities Branch of the U.S. Office of Education when concern for dance research was beginning to burgeon." CORD website accessed December 16, 2011), <http://www.cordance.org/history>.

²¹² Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 183.

²¹³ SDHS website last accessed, December 16, 2011, <http://sdhs.org/about/mission-statement>.

relationships between dance practice and dance scholarship, as well as the influences of the professional dance world on dance in higher education continue to be explored.

Scholarship And Teaching In Transition: The Postmodern Period

The relationship between my embodied reality and my sociological practice is at the very core of how I do sociology. I have to be equally aware of the reality that my body imposes on my practice and of the reality that social theory imposes on that body. I cannot be silent about it. - Felly Nkweto Simmonds

As we continue to navigate forward in the history of dance in higher education, there is ongoing evidence of interdisciplinary affiliations in dance studies as a discipline. History reveals the influences of physical education and science (via H'Doubler), anthropology, aesthetics, and philosophy on dance, and in the mid to late 50s Suzanne Langer introduced phenomenological approaches to dance scholars. These are some examples of some of the interdisciplinary influences that have and continue to shape and influence dance's identity as a subject in higher education today.

The current "interdisciplinary turn" that dance studies is taking is cited by many in dance and in outside disciplines and seems to have been launched by postmodernism and more recently by the many discussions on disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity in dance studies. For example in the "Introduction" to *Of the Presence of the Body*, Andre Lepecki describes dance as *taking a turn toward* performance studies and critical theory:

The phenomenological intertwining of presence and body that dance brings about as it moves (even in its most microscopic gestures) forces the recasting of our understanding of performativity, and brings about the current turn in dance studies toward the fields of performance studies and of critical theory.²¹⁴

²¹⁴ Lepecki, *Of the Presence*, 2. A recent issue of *Dance Research Journal* dedicated itself of issues of disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity in dance studies. The authors all discussed the

On the other hand, in terms of postmodern dance practice, while scholars were using dance to launch discussions of theory, dance artists were smashing paradigms on the stage but dance curriculum was firmly and conservatively grounded in movement techniques from the past.

For example, at Juilliard in the early 90s, the Martha Graham and José Limón techniques were still considered the foundation of dance training; the Merce Cunningham technique was not even offered. Although the Cunningham technique requires virtuosic technical skills usually obtained from years of ballet training, Cunningham revolutionized the artistic form he inherited from Martha Graham. One student in my class left Juilliard in order to study with Cunningham and eventually joined the company; her career path may not have been available if she were to have continued her conservatory training.

Outside the university, dance artists were revolutionizing the forms they inherited from previous generations, while these postmodern dances were, in many ways, unteachable within the university. There were pressures from outside social movements such as feminism and the Black Arts movement and although initially there was great resistance to postmodern dance, it eventually ruled the day.²¹⁵

In the 80s and 90s, dance scholarship, multiculturalism and diversity in higher education continued to emerge alongside the changing and increasingly eclectic compositional rules of dance creation. However, a real multiculturalism and diversity has yet to be put into practice in dance departments and in the dance world today in 2012. As one example, dance students at the University of Minnesota Dance department recently

interdisciplinary turn from different angles. *Dance Research Journal*. Vol. 41, No 1 (Summer 2009).

²¹⁵ Thank you to Kariamuwelsh for our many conversations.

protested (2009) what they felt was racist casting choices for *Missa Brevis*, a classical modern dance piece choreographed by José Limón.²¹⁶

In the 1980s, despite the challenges posed by the corporate university, including less money for dance, dance scholarship was increasing. This next section explores how the corporate environment continues to affect dance in higher education as well as other issues dance as a discipline faced in the 1990s.

The 1990s - Still Corporate

The advent of the “corporate university” materialized most evidently in the 80s and 90s and into the turn of the 21st century. Giersdorf, Ferdun, and Hagood explore the corporatization of the university and multiculturalism and their affects on dance and other disciplines. Giersdorf writes:

[The development of universities into global corporations] has been confirmed by current analysis of the growing reliance on adjunct and student labor, labor disputes for the acknowledgement of graduate students as university employees in the University of California System in 1998, or national strikes in England regarding adjustment of faculty salaries to national inflation in 2006. The analysis and the activism prove the erosion of the position of the tenured professor as a towering personification of university culture and a move toward administrative power – a shift that impacted many disciplines through reduced funding, a product-oriented concentration on excellence and outcomes assessment, and a focus on education as career development and not on the experience and process of learning.²¹⁷

At the same time, dance had fully entered mainstream education and was now a part of the core courses in many institutions. Ferdun writes,

²¹⁶ Isaiah Potts, *The Minnesota Daily* online, “Students Protest Racial Issues in Dance Program,” accessed October 22, 2011 <http://www.mndaily.com/2009/03/23/students-protest-racial-issues-dance-program>.

²¹⁷ Giersdorf, *Dance Research Journal*, 24-25.

Core requirements in the arts and humanities that include dance have tended to move dance a little closer to the mainstream of educational consideration.²¹⁸

By the late 1990s the dance department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison was still a part of the physical education department. Although it was a strong dance program, it still found itself faced with the need to change or close. In 1997-98 Wisconsin stopped accepting dance majors and became a program for arts and technology and design.²¹⁹ Hagood describes similar changes taking place at the University of California:

Another example of change is illustrated by events that transpired at the University of California – Los Angeles, where the first independent, arts-affiliated dance department and a research university was formed by Alma Hawkins in 1962. In this case change came about in the direction of multiculturalism. In 1995, UCLA's department of dance was absorbed into a new Department of World Arts and Cultures, within the School of the Arts and Architecture. ... Losing an independent dance program of the stature of UCLA's was a blow to the field's struggle to maintain the integrity of other dance programs threatened by a decade of retrenchment and educational downsizing.²²⁰

While Hagood's point is very well understood that dance is losing its ability to remain on its own, losing independence in some cases also meant losing multiculturalism in dance, which was a good thing for dance from any perspective. However, it is an interesting conflict to consider how dance seemed to have lost its central billing to interdisciplinarity and multiculturalism at time when dance as a discipline was gaining ground as an independent field. In historically strong dance departments, it seems that culture trumped the arts at this time; and dance lost central billing not only to "culture," but to "technology," "design," and "interdisciplinarity" due to sociocultural influences and financial considerations.

²¹⁸ Ferdun, *Into the Fray*, 7.

²¹⁹ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 300.

²²⁰ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 301.

Interdisciplinarity and multiculturalism influenced dance in higher education from the outside in, rather than as an impulse or necessity arising out of dance studies. In other words, the interdisciplinary turn seems to indicate that dance as an academic subject was turning more toward theories and organizing principles developed in outside disciplines, disciplines that place multiculturalism and cross-culturalism, rather than monoculturalism, at their center. Ferdun writes,

It is in the context of African-American studies where the surge toward dance seems now to have deep social reasons. Beyond multicultural concerns, there is a dance, art, and communication imperative in African-American culture that speaks for itself and needs to be heard and appreciated. Dance in higher education is just beginning to address those who see and experience dance in its cultural roles and who seek to make visible the powerful legacies and visions of their communities.²²¹

It is interesting to note that while Ferdun mentions African-American studies, her analysis, perhaps unintentionally, glosses over the then-emerging conflict between multiculturalism and Afrocentrism.

In *Many Voices Many Opportunities* Clement Price writes, “It seemed to me that many of the dilemmas facing arts professionals could be better addressed through an enhanced understanding of America’s racial and ethnic minorities.”²²² In *Many Voices*, Price brings forward a criticism of Afrocentrism as the antithesis of multiculturalism through his own observations and analysis and via historian Diane Ravitch:

[M]ulticulturalism is both a field of study that examines the interaction of diverse people and a condition in society that results when different cultures mix and mingle. ... Afrocentrism ... is the antithesis of multiculturalism.²²³

²²¹ Ferdun, *Into the Fray*, 8.

²²² Price, *Many Voices, Many Opportunities*, xix.

²²³ Ravitch quoted in Price, *Many Voices, Many Opportunities*, 44.

These turns and changes at this time do not seem to arise out of dance education philosophy or what was being created and performed in the professional dance world. This invites questions about how these turns come about: there continues to be evidence that much of dance's development in the university setting arises out of necessity to make changes due to outside forces acting on dance rather than making changes due to emerging paradigms, philosophies, theories, ideologies, or agendas that are conceived and developed from within the field. Hagood writes:

While the idea of experiencing and viewing dance in multicultural contexts has evoked the dance educator's inherent interest in the expressive potential in human movements, in many cases interest and subsequent engagement have collided with the field's essentially conservative sensibility.²²⁴

Is this "conservative sensibility" a euphemism for Eurocentrism and heteronormativity in the field of dance in higher education? What are contemporary goals in terms of diversity and disciplinarity or interdisciplinarity in dance? Will dance lead the way or be led? In Chapter 5 of this study reveals that current dance studies scholars take strong positions on these issues.

Contemporary Divides

In *Graduate Dance Education in the United States: 1985-2010*, dance scholar and educator Karen Bond reports that some of the "enduring issues" facing graduate dance education in the United States in 2010 include:

...teacher preparation for multiple levels and context; preparation for responsibilities outside of artistic production and teaching; shrinking budgets in the face of unrelenting corporatization; balancing practice and theory; and higher education mandates for attention to student diversity, multicultural perspectives, interdisciplinary studies, and technology in curriculum design and practice.²²⁵

²²⁴ Hagood, *A History of Dance*, 303.

²²⁵ Bond, *Graduate Dance Education*, 122.

Bond's phenomenological approach to her analysis allows for general keywords to surface (examples above), which is very useful for developing an understanding of the field as a whole; otherwise, mixing MAs with MFAs and the PhDs in dance would make for a difficult analysis. Bond's research indicates that in 2009 there was a wide range of dance graduate programs.²²⁶ The diversity of programs may have contributed to the diversity of research methods in dance studies, as I found in my research. Although many dance scholars describe the current period as the interdisciplinary turn, I would instead describe it as a multi-varied disciplinary turn—the emphasis being on a very broad range of agendas.

Bond's work is a phenomenological examination of graduate dance programs self-descriptions from graduate dance program websites, for the purpose of “[extending] the currently limited discourse on graduate dance education in the United States.”²²⁷ The only part of Bond's research that I have to question is why she denies that there is a split between dance as education and dance as art. She refers to this split as a “grand myth” when even the title of her own research suggests a distinction between *graduate dance education* and other dance programs at a graduate level.

A degree in graduate dance education is different than a degree in dance at the graduate level. (These differences are explored in more detail in Chapter 4.) For example, Bond's suggestions are for more teacher preparation and attention to K-12 populations, which are generally understood as a *dance education* issues. Bond approaches the subject of MFA programs from the point of view of a dance educator. I can only speak for my

²²⁶ Bond, *Graduate Dance Education*, 123.

²²⁷ Bond, *Graduate Dance Education*, 123.

own experience as an artist who was trained in a conservatory, but there was no teacher preparation and no attention to dance education issues in my BFA dance program. If MFAs follow the conservatory model it is not surprising that there is an absence of dance education concerns and curriculum.

It is important to look at and acknowledge how different aspects of the field of dance are framing or referring to themselves. It comes across in and through Bond's writing that her perspective within the field of dance is through dance as education, rather than dance as art. This is only to say that there are still distinctions between dance as education and dance as art in higher education.²²⁸

Bond argues in the end that these are false divides. While I agree that we do not want to create division, especially not false division, we cannot deny that there are distinctions between these programs that are worth noting, especially considering issues of where the funding for dance programs goes (although it is not "entirely" a funding issue). Bond acknowledges:

[E]conomic rationalism did not seem to be entirely responsible for the demise of established programs; it seemed that ideological forces were also at play, separating dance artists from other dance professionals.²²⁹

Bond's focus is on issues in graduate dance education as these issues relate to teaching, competency, administrative preparation, and teacher preparation. Her suggestions parallel Temple University Professor of Dance Luke Kahlich's research

²²⁸ In this study of dance studies dissertations from 2007-2009, a few dance studies authors took up dance education as the subject of their research but most did not write about dance education subjects or state that they are utilizing dance education research methods.

²²⁹ Bond, *Graduate Dance Education*, 123.

(from 1990), which concludes that the MFA does not prepare artist-teachers sufficiently in their teaching and other responsibilities required for jobs in higher education.²³⁰

Bond refers to professor Douglas Risner of Wayne State University who has concerns about the corporate climate in which dance programs continue to try to survive.

Bond writes:

Where graduate dance education is concerned, Risner describes conditions of ‘scarcity, deficiency, and decline,’ reflected in continuing budget cuts, reduced faculty lines, declining or stagnant enrollments and resource allocations favoring performance-oriented undergraduate and graduate dance programs (BFA, MFA), concurrent with the elimination of masters and doctoral programs and concentrations in dance education (MA, EdM, EdD).²³¹

The myth of the divide does not seem so mythological here. These are concrete issues facing dance education—not dance programs (which have their own problems)—a distinction that Bond also makes in her own language throughout her research when referring to different programs. There are *graduate dance education* programs, such as the MA, EdM, EdD (Track 1) and there are *graduate dance programs*, such as the MFA (Track 2). Generally speaking, academic work in MFA dance programs is a minimal requirement when compared with a PhD curriculum.²³²

My suggestion is that we acknowledge that there remains a divide between dance as education and dance as art programs and curriculum and that there is now an additional “spoke” on the wheel as graduate dance programs develop into dance research only programs, where dance practice is a minimal requirement if it is even a requirement

²³⁰ Bond, *Graduate Dance Education*, 125. See also Luke Kahlich’s dissertation, “An Analysis of the Master of Fine Arts Degree as Preparation for Dance Faculty Roles in United States’ Institutions of Higher Education,” PhD dissertation, Temple University, Philadelphia, 1990.

²³¹ Risner quoted in Bond, *Graduate Dance Education*, 126.

²³² These statements come from my own general observation. Further examination of dance degree curricular paths and their connection to “real” issues happening in the field, as well as how curriculum connects dance practice with dance theory across degrees in dance, is an area in need of further study.

at all. Other spokes on the wheel include multiple “Dance Studies.” There is the Dance Studies that is shaped by “outside” scholars in performance studies and other outside departments and there is the Dance Studies shaped by research from scholars from within dance studies departments.

In terms of producing dance scholarship, Bond speaks of the interdisciplinary trend in terms of dance as art (the practice of dance) and less about interdisciplinary research methods, which is the focus of this study. Bond’s research, however, reveals that 50% of graduate degrees refer to interdisciplinary inquiry in their program information.²³³

Real Divides

In *Arts Education and Politics: The Odd Coupling* (1988), Harlan Hoffa, Art Education Professor at Pennsylvania State University, suggests that arts advocates create and become a political movement with a cohesive political agenda for the arts that joins these three interrelated aspects of the arts:

1. the art community with
2. art education with
3. general education²³⁴

Historically, Hoffa argues, these three areas have not agreed with each other and in-fighting has not been good for arts advocacy. He explains that there has been some political fallout as a result of this discussion. In other words, arts educators have no clout in Washington, D.C. Hoffa writes:

²³³ Bond, *Graduate Dance Education*, 129.

²³⁴ Although this was written in 1988, dance as art and as education continue to be undervalued in higher education and in American culture, perhaps due to the lack of unity between dance as art, dance as education, and dance studies. Harlan Hoffa, “Arts Education and Politics: The Odd Coupling,” *Design for Arts in Education*, Vol. 89, No 5, May-Jun (UK: Taylor and Francis, 1988), 3.

In short, the arts education community, by itself, has virtually no history of political success in its own behalf.²³⁵

In dance in higher education today we can see overlapping and sometimes conflicting affiliations and associations at work in the postmodern landscape. Issues of dance as art versus dance as education are further complicated by dance as an interdisciplinary academic subject, which brings forth all the contemporary concerns of race, class, sex, gender, sexual orientation, ageism, art-ism, and hyper-intellectualism, to name a few. These multiple and sometimes conflicting agendas will continue to provide challenges for interdisciplinary dance professionals in the 21st century.

There is no doubt that in the history of dance making, choices have been made based on the need for dance to be legitimized and for dance's continued existence and survival. But how do we reconcile the multiple functions of dance in our society and in higher education? How do we reconcile the professional dance world's need to survive with the dance scholar's need to write about (and interrogate) dance as a subject on par with other departments, that minimally acknowledge that conflicts exist, for example, between a call to activism and using dance to sell products for corporations? Edrie Ferdun writes about the affiliation of dance with science via the exercise industry and also as an example of dance in corporate culture. In the 1920s dance leaned on science for legitimacy. Science and technology were used for the same purpose in the 1990s and that continues through the present, this time with demands from corporate culture. Ferdun writes in 1992:

Although I am not aware of dance programs shifting markedly toward preparation for exercise, aerobics, and fitness centers or toward media, advertising, and other businesses using dance as a matter of course, it is apparent

²³⁵ Hoffa, *Arts Education and Politics*, 3.

that dance majors have a variety of new part-time jobs and interests. The exercise science industry, the focus on performance enhancement and the role of technology in creating shows and devices of economic consequence has changed the context of dance in society.²³⁶

While it may not have been occurring within higher education, professional dancers in the 1990s did not hesitate to become a part of the corporatization and consumerization of the arts and Madison Avenue is shrewdly aware that beautifully trained bodies sell products; many dance companies (as well as individual dance artists) displayed their dancing talents via television commercials for Hanes, the Gap, and Old Navy (some notable examples from the 1990s). With these issues mostly unresolved now, the history of dance in higher education continues to move along toward the present.

The Self-Reflective Artist

According to Wendy Oliver, doctoral degrees in the 80s were needed more for purposes of tenure and legitimization of the field of dance than for intellectual inquiry into dance as an academic subject.²³⁷ Today in dance scholarship (at the doctoral level and beyond) there is a need for doctoral program based more on intellectual inquiry into dance as an academic subject—and not only to legitimize the field. There is a currency in connecting theory and practice and in promoting dance studies based methods, yet what are these methods and what are these connections?

²³⁶ Ferdun, *Into the Fray*, 10.

²³⁷ Oliver, *Focus on Dance*, 3.

Temple University offers on its website the “self-reflective artist” as one category of doctoral student for which the program is geared.²³⁸ This category of scholar implies that there will be a connection made between the artist’s practice and their research. The self-reflection will likely be reflection on their art, thus there is an indicated link between theory and practice, not a disconnection. Regarding the connection to the physical practice of dance as education, Ferdun writes,

[D]ance does have special significance in higher education at this time [the 1990s]. Part of that significance is based on the historic refusal of dance to abandon *immersion in dance experience as a vital form of education*.²³⁹

These concepts (reflecting on one’s practice and immersion in a dance experience) convey a different epistemological approach than that of performance studies or even women’s studies. Although at different points in the history of feminism, *experience*, as a way of knowing, was valued over not having experience with being an oppressed subject, for example. However, it is also now widely accepted that one does not have to be a biological woman to produce anti-sexist arguments, nor does one have to be African American to produce anti-racist scholarship.²⁴⁰ Using a similar argument, one might then say that one does not need dance experience to write about dance. However, the practice of dance—the dance experience—is essential to the field disciplinarily speaking. Put another way, an issue essential to dance, perhaps one that may even define dance as a discipline, is dance practice and dance experience (studying dance, teaching

²³⁸ Temple University. “Boyer College of Music and Dance, Dance Programs,” accessed October 22, 2011, <http://www.temple.edu/boyer/dance/programs.htm#PHD>.

²³⁹ Ferdun, *Into the Fray*, 11.

²⁴⁰ Hopefully from this brief comparison, the reader does not conclude that I think experience does not matter, or that I equate anti-racist writing with writing from one’s experience with racism or sexism (we can also add sexuality here). I am acknowledging that antiracist writing does not imply or necessitate experience with racism, for example and although someone has not experienced racism, sexism, or homophobia should not stop one from advocating against discriminations in these areas.

dance, performing dance, and dancing). On a scholarly level, it may be in and through one's experience with or practice of dance that resides the possibility of the production of embodied dance scholarship as well as a deep articulation of dance as a practice and as an experience in, through, and of the body. Immersion in dance experience is not exclusive to dance as education or dance as art. Immersion in a physical practice or experience is one (of many things) that dance as a discipline does in higher education. Why would a scholar not want to be able to say they have experience with the subject about which they are writing? In my experience, my experience changes things. Mainly, having embodied the liberatory and revolutionary potential of art making, I would not trade that experience for anything.

Toward Dance As An Academic Discipline

Dance scholar Jens Richard Giersdorf's essay, "Dance Studies in the International Academy: Genealogy of a Disciplinary Formation" in *Dance Research Journal* demonstrates how social and national issues contribute to disciplinary concerns. Like many other advanced scholars in dance, Giersdorf does refer to "dance studies methods" and "dance studies research" but without stating what these methods actually are. Although Giersdorf does not explicitly state specific research methods in dance studies (his study is not an examination of methods), he does produce a deeper understanding of the conceptual bases that undergird each of the programs he is examining. Giersdorf writes:

[The PhD in Critical Dance Studies at the University of California at Riverside] initially strove to create analytic systems for dance studies yet shifted its focus toward choreography as a strategy for the theorization of dancing.²⁴¹

My research study makes distinctions between “dance studies departments” and “dance studies” as an academic discipline that is more generally contributed to as an area of knowledge by scholars from within and outside of dance studies departments. By looking closely at disciplinarity in dance studies departments (dance studies on an institutional and curricular level) there can be a more grounded discussion of what is actually happening on a disciplinary level. For example, there is a difference between the work of a dance scholar coming out of a dance studies doctoral program with or without a practical dance background, and a scholar conducting dance studies research from an English or philosophy department with or without dance background. One may arrive at a theory or conclusion about dance that is immersed in discourses that are not a part of dance studies curriculum and without ever having seen, studied, or experienced in any other way the dance that is under discussion. The other may arrive at a different theory or conclusion (but it is more likely that an entirely different set of questions would be asked) after having been immersed in the practice.

Additionally a dance studies scholar may utilize theories and discourses from the philosophy of other outside areas without having read the original source or without knowing the social, political, or theoretical context from which the theory developed. Due to the dominance and authority of certain theoretical discourses (such as critical theory or deconstruction) the dance studies scholar may be overshadowed when utilizing dance-based research methods, instead of the more widely known theories and methods.

²⁴¹ Giersdorf, *Dance Studies in the International Academy*, 38. The University of California at Riverside website <http://dance.ucr.edu/degrees/PhD.html> accessed February 21, 2012.

At other times dance studies scholars may even be “disqualified” from writing in and through her or his own field because certain “dance studies” discussions are formed utilizing theories and discourses from outside the dance studies curriculum; therefore, the dance studies scholar from a dance studies department is not well-versed enough in certain highly specialized outside areas to enter into the discussion. It is unlikely that a scholar from any discipline can become an expert in multiple theories and discourses outside their own. In any case, the results often are that the dominant, more authoritative, or more popular methods and discourses often have the effect of overshadowing less dominant or popular modes.

Giersdorf also acknowledges that dance needs its own tools. He writes:

Dance permits and requires a different set of theoretical and practical tools for its study than, for instance, a painting, a sculpture, or a performance art piece.²⁴²

However, he does not specify what those tools might be, nor does he discuss the issues that inspire or necessitate that dance utilize a different set of theoretical and practical tools.

As mentioned earlier, Gay Morris writes about how social and political issues are at stake in dance and narrates some of the calls for dance studies to be more like what cultural studies was in the beginning. While Giersdorf’s research offers an institutional etymology, Morris’s research is a methodological etymology of both dance studies and cultural studies. Morris raises important points about interdisciplinarity in relationship to both “disciplines” (cultural studies and dance studies) and outlines several differences between these two areas of inquiry. She writes:

²⁴² Giersdorf, *Dance Studies in the International Academy*, 23.

[D]ance and cultural studies developed along different paths; consequently, interdisciplinarity within dance studies is not always conceptualized in the way it is in cultural studies. Cultural studies was initially meant as a political and social intervention that purposefully avoided creating theories of its own, while dance research, long tied to the disciplines of history and anthropology, not only adopted many of the theories and methods of these fields but also developed theories and methods of its own as an aid in analyzing the human body in motion.²⁴³

Although Morris references history and anthropology, it is not clear which “methods of its own” she believes dance studies is currently utilizing, except to imply that these current methods are employed toward an analysis of dancing (rather than an analysis of power). Morris’s research brings forward the connections between cultural studies and interdisciplinarity and between dance studies and interdisciplinarity through the recent connections made between cultural studies and dance studies (although there are many disconnects as well).

One such parallel made between dance studies and cultural studies is the addition of the word “studies” to the category of dance scholarship, creating “dance studies” scholarship. By identifying dance scholarship and the field that produces dance scholarship as “Dance Studies,” the discipline allies itself with cultural studies (at least semantically, as a start) as an interdisciplinary discipline. Morris writes:

In the mid-1990s several articles appeared in the dance literature calling for greater alliance between dance scholarship and cultural studies. More recently, dance scholarship has come to be labeled “dance studies,” suggesting such a link has occurred. Since interdisciplinarity is a key element of cultural studies, it is appropriate to investigate interdisciplinarity in dance studies by examining dance’s relationship to cultural studies.²⁴⁴

Ramsay Burt’s essay “The Specter of Interdisciplinarity,” from the 2009 issue of *Dance Research Journal*, begins with a brief discussion of artistic interdisciplinarity in

²⁴³ Morris, *Dance Studies/Cultural Studies*, 1.

²⁴⁴ Morris, *Dance Studies/Cultural Studies*, 1.

“theater dance.” The core of Burt’s article is a discussion of several of the issues involved in dance research methods, including interdisciplinarity, which is described by Burt as the “theoretical turn” in dance studies.²⁴⁵ Burt’s argument unfolds as part of a conversation among dance scholars regarding the use of literary theory in describing the body (Susan Foster warns against it, for example).²⁴⁶

Burt does explore some specific methods utilized in dance scholarship including medium-based, aesthetics, historical method, and the formalist modernist approach, re-opening the conversation about theatricality and art criticism via art critic and historian Michael Fried. Burt’s article raises questions about the possible invisibilizing or exclusion of women and people of color in medium-based dance scholarship (art-based theories) and argues that interdisciplinary methods, in concert with medium-based methods, will allow for taking up social, political, and cultural aspects of a performance, which are manifest in and through dance as an art. While Burt raises complex questions about the strengths and weaknesses of some dance research methods in relationship to identity concerns, overall, there remains a need for a more basic and explicit discussion of dance studies research methods. This is common among the three articles in *Dance Research Journal* on disciplinarity and multidisciplinarity in dance studies (Burt, Morris, and Giersdorf) referenced herein. Although “dance studies methods” are mentioned, no

²⁴⁵ When referencing “interdisciplinarity” or the “theoretical turn” in dance studies, Burt seems to take his meaning from cultural theorist Mieke Bal. Burt writes, “As art historian and cultural theorist Mieke Bal has recently noted, one challenge facing the academy today is to find ‘a theoretical link between linguistic, visual and aural domains that blend so consistently in contemporary culture but remain so insistently separated as fields of study in the academy.’” Burt, Ramsay. “The Specter of Interdisciplinarity” in *Dance Research Journal*. Vol. 41, No 1 (Summer 2009), 3.

²⁴⁶ Burt writes, “Janet Wolff has warned against a tendency within literary studies to use ‘the body’ as an abstract concept rather than a lived reality, while Susan Foster has raised doubts about the appropriateness for dance analysis of the concept of performativity as it has been developed by queer theorists.” *The Specter of Interdisciplinarity*, 4.

explicit examples are provided about what these methods actually are; thus, we are left on our own to deduce what these methods might be.

Moving on from these field-based questions, the next chapter in this study examines dance education research and the NDEO database of dance education research methods.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODS IN DANCE EDUCATION: NDEO RESEARCH IN DANCE EDUCATION PROJECT

The National Dance Education Organization (NDEO) recently conducted an enormous dance education research project funded by the United States Department of Education-Office of Education Research and Improvement (OERI).²⁴⁷ Dr. Jane Bonbright, Founding Executive Director of NDEO, wrote the grant three times before

²⁴⁷ NDEO, accessed October 22, 2011, <http://www.ndeo.org>.

securing funding for the Research in Dance Education Project (RDE Project), which took place over a three-year period (2001-2004).²⁴⁸ In 2001, at the end of the Clinton era, NDEO was granted funds to document and categorize *all dance education* research from 1929 to the present. NDEO published a report of their results, *Research Priorities for Dance Education: A Report to the Nation* (edited by Bonbright and Rima Faber), and created a searchable online database of its findings.

While other disciplines may find such a record/archive commonplace, the field of dance education does not have a “central clearing house” for dance education research and not only because the dance literature is spread out in other disciplines. According to Bonbright, there is also a lot of unpublished hard copy dance scholarship and important historical records that are not organized in any way, let alone digitized and indexed. This makes it difficult to articulate and refer to dance education research. It also gives the impression to some granting organizations and institutions that are unfamiliar with dance and dance education issues that the field is undervalued.

The RDE Project is the first project of its kind. It is a major contribution to the field of both dance education and dance scholarship in general, though the project did not set out to document and index *all* dance scholarship (i.e.: research in dance studies and graduate dance scholarship in general, in addition to research in dance education). The distinctions between dance as education, dance as art, and dance studies are explored further in this chapter in and through an exploration of the research delimitations NDEO created when designing the scope of the RDE Project. The authors and designers developed defining criteria for what kind of literature and research would be accepted

²⁴⁸ Thank you to Jane Bonbright for taking the time to speak with me about research issues in dance and about NDEO’s significant contributions to the field.

into the study because there was so much data to review. To support and maintain the delimitations, a research grid was created and an overarching guideline for inclusion in the NDEO project was formed. The research grid is documented in NDEO's *Report to the Nation*; in short, in order to be included in the database the research/article/literature had to *impact learning or teaching in or through dance*.²⁴⁹

How this vast project came about, its purpose and its features (its overarching goals and delimitations) are also documented in the *Report to the Nation*, which is part of the focus of this chapter. Since it was published in 2004, elements of the project have further evolved. In 2009, for example, the name of the online database was changed from "Research in Dance Education Database (RDEdb)" to the "Dance Education Literature and Research Descriptive Index (DELRdi)."²⁵⁰

In lieu of a traditional methodology chapter, the second purpose of this chapter is to discuss my own goals and methods for examining dance studies dissertations.

Although I read the *Report to the Nation* and examined the RDE Project's database after completing most of my own research, the *Report to the Nation* and database revealed a broader framework for me in terms of my understanding of research in dance in higher education. The fact that there is indeed a split between dance education, dance as art, and dance as an academic subject ("dance studies") and that the division is deep became particularly evident. These distinct areas in dance in higher education function independently of each other in many ways; these areas do not yet form a single and united discipline of *Dance* (dance education *with* dance as an art *with* dance studies).

²⁴⁹ Thank you to Jane Bonbright for speaking with me about the NDEO Research and Database.

²⁵⁰ "The Dance Education Literature and Research Descriptive Index: Research in Dance Education Project," NDEO website, accessed January 1, 2012, http://www.ndeo.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=893257&module_id=53172

Someday soon (hopefully) “we” (artists, educators, and scholars) may see these disconnections as impediments to the coherence of dance as a discipline in higher education; in the future we will want to emphasize our similarities rather than our differences. For now, some of the particular and specific features, concerns, and functions of dance education research are examined herein in contrast to dance studies research methods.

This chapter also examines NDEO’s research as it is offered via the online database in order to explore some of the differences between dance education research method categories and dance studies research method categories, particularly how these method categories are designed and perceived and what implications these categories have for the field (dance education, dance practice, and dance studies research). For the most part, my analysis in this chapter is limited to published materials by NDEO. This chapter also continues to explore discussions about disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity within dance in higher education as well as considering the disconnections between dance as education, dance as art, and dance studies both within and beyond higher education.

The Purpose Of NDEO’s RDE Project

The purpose of the RDE Project research is:

[T]o identify patterns, trends, and gaps in research, determine research priorities for dance education and initiate new research, build national/state networks to effect change in policy and practice, and establish Research Centers for Dance Education.²⁵¹

There are many experts in the field of dance education and dance studies who co-authored and contributed to *The Report*. In the foreword to *The Report*, the editors write:

²⁵¹ “The Dance Education Literature and Research descriptive index: Research in Dance Education Project,” NDEO website, accessed January 1, 2012, http://www.ndeo.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=893257&module_id=53172

The Research in Dance Education (RDE) project grew out of a long-term national need in dance education—a need to know what researchers in dance and allied fields have studied over 80 years, what they learned, and if, and how, existing research impacted teaching and learning in and through dance.²⁵²

The intention behind my own examination of research methods in dance studies is somewhat parallel to the rationale for the RDE Project, though much smaller in scope. My study identifies research methods from current dance studies literature that was generated in and through dance studies programs in the United States, over a three-year period. The difference in quantity is 32 dissertations compared with the 13,000 written documents that the RDE Project database works with.²⁵³ While the RDE Project responds to national needs in dance education in order to connect dance education scholarship (over an 80 year period) with dance teaching, I aim to discover if and how recent dance studies research methods are inherent to dance studies or are they borrowed from other fields or both. I am also concerned with how interdisciplinarity has shaped the field of dance and how certain research methods tend to produce disembodied scholarship that is disconnected from the practice of dance particularly in ways that write over, erase, or even dominate dance by an overworked theoretical relationship to the subject.

²⁵² NDEO, *Report to the Nation*, ii. Although the above quote refers to “researchers in dance,” my understanding of what is meant here is “researchers in dance education.” Key Personnel: Jane M. Bonbright, Ed.D., Project Director, Research in Dance Education and Executive Director, National Dance Education Organization; Rima Faber, Ph.D., Research Director, Research in Dance Education and Program Director, National Dance Education Organization; Thomas K. Hagood, Ph.D., Chair, Unpublished Literature; Carol M. Press, Ed.D., Coordinator, Unpublished Literature; Karen K. Bradley, M.A., C.M.A., Chair, Published Literature in Dance Education; Loren Bucek, Ph.D., Coordinator, Published Literature in Dance Education; Susan Koff, Ed.D., Chair, Published Literature in Other Disciplines; Sara Lee Gibb, M.S., Coordinator, Published Literature in Other Disciplines; Richard Colwell, Ph.D., Research Consultant; and Mary Edsall, Ph.D., M.L.S., Dance, Library Science Consultant.

²⁵³ NDEO, *Report to the Nation*, iii. “Thirty-seven field researchers and ten key personnel reviewed over 13,000 primary source materials in unpublished literature and research, and published literature and research in dance and other disciplines.” (iii.) Here, the authors say “research in dance” when my understanding is that the project examines only “research in dance education.”

Before I knew about the NDEO's research, my own purposes and intentions in conducting this study were to allow the dance studies authors to be the ones who determine the research method categories (rather than using predefined or predetermined categories) by bringing forward the terms and language that the dissertation authors use in their work to describe their own research, thereby creating the research categories that might come to be known as dance studies research methods. For instance, a good example of a research method category created by a dissertation writer is Donna Dragon's "Embodied Research Methodology."²⁵⁴

My intention was, and still is, to resist fitting Dragon's or others' work into already determined categories or terms (such as "deconstruction" or "anthropology" or "phenomenology"). I developed and maintained this intention to identify dance studies methods and utilize the terms of dance studies authors because, although I read many dance studies and outside scholars referring to "dance studies methods," I have yet to find any source that is dedicated to articulating what dance studies methods are, particularly, what methods are specifically dance studies, albeit there are some which provide discussion on the topic.²⁵⁵

My particular goal is first to isolate and then explore dance studies research methods that are *inherent to the field of dance* as a discipline. My approach of making sure the authors determine the categories for their own modes of research allows methods and modes of research to arise out of the field of dance studies itself, rather than trying to

²⁵⁴ Donna A. Dragon, "Toward Embodied Education, 1850s-2007: Historical, Cultural, Theoretical and Methodological Perspectives Impacting Somatic Education in United States Higher Education Dance." PhD diss., Temple University, 2009.

²⁵⁵ See Penelope Hanstein and Sondra Horton Fraleigh, *Researching Dance: Evolving Modes of Inquiry*, Eds. Sondra Horton Fraleigh, Penelope Hanstein (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999).

fit dance studies writing and categories of research methods into already established categories. Having said that, it has become apparent that, in most cases, dance studies dissertation authors fashion their research designs or frameworks after other disciplines.

Jane Bonbright, who earned her doctorate in the Dance Department at Temple University, mentioned that as a doctoral student conducting dissertation research, part of her own research process necessitated resisting the preferred method at the time; instead of producing an hypothesis, she committed to allowing *the research itself to inform her how to do the research*. In other words, Bonbright wanted to, as much as possible, enter the work without a preconceived agenda, problem statement, or organizing structure.²⁵⁶ Of course the scale of any dissertation research—small compared with NDEO’s documentation of thousands of pieces of scholarship—allows for getting deeply immersed in a small area. This is all to say that unlike dissertation research, preconceived categories and criteria for research had to be made in order to handle the massive amounts of data that the RDE Project sorted through.

My own overarching purpose is to articulate the theoretical identity of the field of dance studies as an academic discipline and I believe in order to do this, using predetermined categories of methods cloaks the issues and methods intrinsic to the field of dance and dance studies. Today, when many dance scholars within and outside of dance studies departments assert that dance studies is interdisciplinary, it is not yet clear how dance studies can be interdisciplinary before its own theoretical identity has been established.

²⁵⁶ From a phone conversation with Jane Bonbright, Founding Executive Director of NDEO. (It should be noted that her advising committee supported and enabled this process to occur, an approach that was not prevalent at that time.)

As mentioned earlier, I take my meaning and understanding of the concept of interdisciplinary from a standard dictionary definition of the term: “Of, relating to, or involving two or more academic disciplines that are usually considered distinct.”²⁵⁷ What I see as the issue in dance studies in relationship to interdisciplinarity is that the discipline of dance as an academic subject has not yet developed its own distinct theoretical center. What constitutes a distinct theoretical center is a theoretical, pedagogical, and ideological base that is developed, articulated (if not agreed upon), and recognizable enough to outside areas in higher education that these outside, adjacent fields could also easily recognize and articulate the basic premise of dance studies (its theoretical center) as an academic subject in higher education—especially if and when the outside scholar makes interdisciplinary alliances with dance or dance studies the subject of their research.

Many, if not most, in higher education would be able to understand and articulate the basic premise (the theoretical center) of the interdiscipline of women’s studies. Performance studies may be less well known, but it does have a unique and specific theoretical center that could be clearly stated. Dance education scholarship compared with dance studies scholarship may also have an easier time in terms of its disciplinary purpose being recognizable because *education* as a discipline has a more secure place in higher education than does dance as a discipline; therefore, dance education as a term has some cohesion.

Based upon the dictionary definition of the word interdisciplinary, a subject is usually considered distinct first before it can be interdisciplinary. Therefore, I challenge the idea that dance as an academic subject is interdisciplinary. My view after examining

²⁵⁷ The Free Dictionary accessed January 1, 2011, <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/interdisciplinary>.

aspects of its development in higher education and after examining current research methods is that dance as a subject in higher education is not yet distinct or widely acknowledged or accepted on its own as a discipline and that its interdisciplinarity developed out of default actions taken for its own survival. This is the reality for many dance departments historically and today as they have been and still are housed in or subsumed by outside areas such as physical education, theater, film, performance studies, and music. The solution may be to become more disciplinary before being shaped by these outside fields and their discourses. The history of dance in higher education shows that dance had interdisciplinary origins in the United States. NDEO's *Report* confirms this:

Dance was introduced into 19th century education primarily for its healthful and social benefits. [Dancing] was considered an acceptable physical activity for young women. ... Dance found its first home in higher education in physical education programs for women.²⁵⁸

When I first viewed the RDE Project database and the publication of the results, via *The Report*, I was struck by the enormity of the project; the scope and breadth of the RDE Project is impressive, especially given that it traces dance education scholarship back to the very beginning of dance in higher education when it was housed in physical education.

The NDEO study received funding from the United States Department of Education; it utilized a research team of nearly 40 field researchers (plus 10 “key personnel”) and had a time frame of over a year devoted solely for the data collection.²⁵⁹ While my modest and focused questions in this dissertation deal with a limited period of

²⁵⁸ NDEO, *Report to the Nation*, 1.

²⁵⁹ NDEO, *Report to the Nation*, ii

three years of dance research, the RDE Project covers 76 years of dance education research. In addition to being quite different projects in terms of scope, I also ask different questions, limiting my “data” to dance studies dissertations, while the RDE Project’s questions are more broadly conceived. The *Report to the Nation* provides some of the RDE Project’s motivating questions:

What research exists in dance education? When was it done? Where is it?
What patterns, trends, and gaps may be identified by analysis of these data?
What are the implications for understanding the scope of this information for dance, arts education and U.S. education?
What recommendations for the future of dance arts education may grow out of this project?²⁶⁰

The RDE Project (like this study) acknowledges the relationship between dance (in this case, dance education) and outside fields and also describes them as “outside.”

The *Report to the Nation*, which summarizes the RDE Project, refers to outside disciplines as “Literature in Other Disciplines” and includes areas such as:

“anthropology, cognition, ethnography, educational psychology, kinesiology, medicine and science, physical education, psychology, sociology, somatics, body therapies, and so forth.”²⁶¹

Based on my research most current dance studies research (distinct from dance education research) does not use discourses or theoretical frameworks from these outside disciplines mentioned above, except for ethnography, which is a “Top 3” method in dance studies overall. Literature from cognition, medicine and science, physical education, psychology, body therapies, and some of the others were not stated as primary

²⁶⁰ NDEO, *Report to the Nation*, ii.

²⁶¹ NDEO, *Report to the Nation*, iii.

methods or frameworks used by the dissertation authors, although some dissertation authors took some aspects of these outside areas as the subject of their research.

It may appear awkward to make comparisons between the RDE Project and my own small study; however, in doing so, important issues emerge in terms of research design and definition of terms. For example, I allow the authors of the dance studies dissertations to dictate the terms, instead of using predesignated categories, which is how the RDE Project was designed, mainly due to its size; therefore, my research produced different categories of “outside” and allied fields. The “outside literature” that appeared in my research (literature from disciplines outside of dance studies) included women’s studies, philosophy, history, film, cultural studies, critical theory, tourism studies, and performance studies, among others.

I was somewhat surprised there was no mention of women’s studies in most of the *Report to the Nation* primarily because dance in education has served women almost exclusively. This may be due to the possibility that the interdisciplinary turn (as some are describing it) happened after 2002 or because the RDE Project’s searches were limited to dance education. Even so, it is hard to believe that dance education as a field was not concerned with feminist or women’s studies themes, subjects, methods, or research techniques before 2002. It is possible they just were not stated as women’s studies or feminist, even though many of the stated goals of RDE project (below) seem to be allied with women’s studies and women’s issues. From NDEO’s website:

With this grant award, NDEO conducted an extensive research initiative to identify existing research in the field of dance education in its myriad contexts and to learn how research addresses educational issues in the United States such as student achievement, kinesthetic learning/brain research, creative process, integrated arts/interdisciplinary education, multi-cultural infusion, children-at-

risk, equity issues, policy, certification and teaching standards, national and state standards, assessments, etc.²⁶²

Kinesthetic learning, especially when the majority of dance students and teachers are women, could lend itself well to feminist examinations of the body and gender, as would issues of equity, children-at risk, and multi-cultural concerns. Generally speaking, these are areas that have been and continue to be of concern to feminists and women's studies scholars—a potential point of connection among dance as education, dance as art, and dance studies.

Another difference between the RDE Project's and my own in terms of approach is my study is not dictated by subject matter; rather, the search criteria and scope for my study were determined by disciplinary definition and degree. I chose to delimit the field to dance studies research coming out of dance studies departments. Further, this study is delimited to dissertations, regardless of the dissertation's subject matter; I chose not to include MFA theses or other research projects. I assumed that most dissertations coming out of dance departments would be on the subject of dance and this was true for all except two of the 32 dissertations.²⁶³

The RDE Project's categories and search criteria are different because they examine dance education—educational issues; the search is for dance education research and not *all dance research*. Therefore, the RDE Project did not categorize critical theory, postmodern theory, feminism, or phenomenology (as some examples) as “Literature in

²⁶² “The Dance Education Literature and Research descriptive index: Research in Dance Education Project,” NDEO website, accessed January 1, 2012, http://www.ndeo.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=893257&module_id=53172

²⁶³ The two dissertations that did not take dance as their subject explored historical topics that in some aspect related to movement and the body but not to dance per se. One of the two dissertations created an historical reconstruction (but not a reconstruction of a dance). In the other dissertation, the author used the research and writing of dance scholars to discuss a non-dance historical figure.

Other Disciplines.” Feminist theory (or feminist inquiry) and critical theory were not mentioned at all in the *Report to the Nation* as a research method, technique, discourse, or subject. These differences are brought forward in order to further understand how research methods and research design affect results, which affect how a field or sub-field describes itself. This also illustrates some of the differences between dance education and dance studies and begins to unveil potential points of connection between what have been disconnected areas in dance in higher education: dance as education and dance as art—and now a third area: dance studies scholarship.

Issues Of Dance As Education Versus Dance As Art Continue

In the NDEO *Report* the authors acknowledge the argument between dance educators and “art specialists.” They describe how these modes (dance as education versus dance as art) are complimentary rather than exclusive of one another, yet, the RDE Project delimits its work specifically to “dance education” research or literature.

In *Debating Disciplinarity* Yale law professor Robert Post describes the artist as possessing a different kind of authority than a humanities scholar, for instance. Post narrates the current debate surrounding disciplinarity in higher education and provides an analysis of various disciplinary functions, including ideology and the more functional aspects undergirding different modes of research across the disciplines in higher education. Post contrasts the arts with the humanities and describes how artists possess charismatic authority rather than disciplinary authority. He describes the humanities (in contrast to art) as beholden to disciplinary means and ends, thus, the humanities cannot be “inherently subversive” or “intrinsically revolutionary.” Post writes,

Artistic authority can be inherently subversive and intrinsically revolutionary because artistic success does not appear to depend upon either reproducible methodological competence or the approval of established organizations like universities. ...At the heart of this ongoing debate about the status of the humanities is the question of whether the authority of humanities scholarship is to be regarded as disciplinary instead as charismatic, like artistic authority.²⁶⁴

What is not explored here is the place of art as an academic subject within the university. However, with this understanding of artistic authority in contrast to the authority of disciplines in the humanities (even while dismantling such authority is being attempted), we have additional context from which to understand the struggle within the discipline of dance between dance as education, dance as an art, and dance studies. Dance in higher education has struggled with these issues articulated by Post (even if not described in the same way as by Post). While the humanities may endeavor to prove their revolutionary potential, dance as art (and to some extent dance as education), strives to prove its seriousness and even utilitarian function within the university, sometimes at the expense of its artistic authority. Meaning, some dance artists and educators have sought to prove that the power of dance is in its “usefulness” to humanity, to higher education, and to the world, rather than emphasizing it “charismatic,” “subversive,” and “revolutionary” qualities in these relationships and arenas.

Additional divisions and issues in the field are also acknowledged in the *Report to the Nation*. Methodological divisions and issues between qualitative and quantitative research approaches are described as a national dilemma. The Introduction to the *Report to the Nation* states:

²⁶⁴ Robert C. Post, *Debating Disciplinary*, Faculty Scholarship Series, Paper 164, 2009, 760-61, Accessed January 15, 2012, http://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/fss_papers/.

To reduce everything to statistics does not give one much sense of complexity; yet, to not strive for data makes it difficult to articulate, and probably truly understand, outcomes in student achievement and program effectiveness.²⁶⁵

While the RDE Project looks at a broad spectrum of research in and through dance education, I am looking at a much smaller universe of research methods in dance studies dissertations, which includes, but is not limited to, dance education literature and subject matter. In my research I found numerous dissertations that utilized educational philosophy modes and discourses and took teaching or other issues in dance education as their subject, but “dance education” was not a delimitation in my study.

Dance studies scholarship, as many advanced and influential scholars in the field are conceiving it, does not take on dance education issues. “Dance studies” scholarship, as described by Gay Morris for example, seems to be primarily concerned with critiques of social and political power, utilizing critical theory, cultural studies, and other postmodern constructions and deconstructions of dance, movement, the body, and identity. As mentioned in the previous chapter, I believe there are now multiple “dance studies.” There is the dance studies that is produced in and through dance departments and there is the dance studies that is produced by scholars “outside” of dance departments.

In addition to publishing *The Report*, the RDE Project generated an impressive online database of their results, where one may search for dance education documents by research method. However, the majority of the categories that came up in my own research (categories determined by the authors themselves) are not listed, which indicates

²⁶⁵ NDEO, *Report to the Nation*, iv.

another difference between the two inquiries and also suggests a potential connection between dance studies and dance education scholarship.

On NDEO's website, the RDE Project's database provides a drop-down menu of "Research Methods" if one is interested in searching for dance education scholarship by method. The RDE Project's list of methods includes:

- Correlation/comparison
- Curriculum
- Descriptive
- Ethnographic/Anthropological
- Evaluation-Individual
- Evaluation-Program
- Experimental
- Historical/Biographical
- Philosophical
- Quasi-Experimental²⁶⁶

I could place any of the dissertations I examined into one or more of these method categories. However, these method categories (above) are too broad to understand current trends and nuances in the current body of dance studies research. The biggest drawbacks I found in utilizing the above categories are their predeterminancy as well as how they represent modes of dance education research, rather than dance studies research more broadly considered. "Dance studies" includes dance education, but "dance education" does not seem to include dance studies. Another limitation with this dropdown list is if a contemporary author is working with a method that is new, unique, perhaps even inherent to dance education or to dance studies, the potentially new method will be missed and the methods will be lost because it has been necessarily sorted into these already determined categories. As mentioned earlier, because of the size of the project and quantity of data, the RDE Project had to create broad research categories into which it could sort the data;

²⁶⁶ NDEO, "DELRedi."

consequently, missing from the RDE Project’s massive database are the individual voices, details, and specific disciplines from which the research methods are derived.

The RDE Project’s process of creating categories of research method and research techniques has its own history. Experts both inside and outside of the field of dance education were consulted in creating the categories. Additionally, a conference held at Temple University in the summer of 2002 focused on research methods and research techniques. There were 54 people in attendance, working in groups to define “research methods” and “research techniques;” while the discussions were lively and interesting, there was not general agreement on definitions. While many other disciplines in higher education enjoy a general consensus around the terms of their own research, in 2002 the field of dance education was not unified in perspective on this topic.²⁶⁷

Another incredibly useful (but necessarily limited) drop-down menu on the NDEO’s website beneath “Research Methods” is a searchable menu called “Research Techniques.” This distinction between research methods and research techniques is instructive. The Research Technique menu includes:

- Action Research
- Anecdotal
- Case-Study
- Computer Simulation
- Content Analysis
- Focus groups/interview
- Meta-analysis
- Observation
- Survey Questionnaire
- Thinking Aloud²⁶⁸

²⁶⁷ Thank you to Drs. Luke Kahlich, Sarah Hilsendager, and Jane Bonbright for our interactions about the conference at Temple and NDEO in general.

²⁶⁸ NDEO, “DELRdi.”

This list contains some crossovers with dance studies research methods; however, the top method used in dance studies scholarship from 2007-09 (historical methods) is not included in their searchable database, while all the dissertations that I examined are contained in their database. This is to say that the terms used in “dance education” research versus the research I am calling “dance studies” research are not the same and thus will generate different results. These results are not trivial; results of the RDE Project contribute greatly to how we perceive and therefore define the field of dance education. My own study aims to contribute to understanding and defining what it is that we *do* in dance studies departments.

In the three-year period that I examined, what is most common about the research methods is the *diversity of methods* and modes rather than uniformity. Thus, the above list does not capture the nature of current dance studies research methods. It is daunting to consider how we (dance studies, with dance education, with dance as art) could identify a framework large enough in scope to embrace all dimensions of our field; however, this should be done if the field is to gain respect and relevance in higher education.²⁶⁹

In my research, the dissertation authors themselves provide the terms I use as categories of research methods. If standardized terms fold dance research modes into already established disciplines and modes of research, then this standardization prevents the field of dance studies from articulating its own theoretical identity. NDEO’s *Report* does not state that there are dance or dance education research methods; perhaps it is implied that the methods utilized are dance education methods. I realize that the RDE

²⁶⁹ Many thanks to Jane Bonbright for helping me to understand the importance in making these connections.

Project's list of methods may be broad for necessary reasons, but it is still puzzling that even the categories of "dance methods" and "dance education methods" are not specifically or overtly listed or articulated, while anthropological and ethnographic methods are.²⁷⁰

Defining Terms: Predetermined Research Methods And Research Techniques; Author Driven Research Method Categories

The NDEO *Report* provides definitions of "research methods" and "research techniques" that guide the RDE Project:

Research Method: A methodology is a system of principles, practices and procedures that are specific to branches of knowledge. For example, in quantitative research, methodologies usually involve the measurement of definable quantities, e.g. how much a muscle can contract. Quantitative research seeks predictability and exact replication will result in the same conclusion. Qualitative research uses methods that reveal underlying trends and meanings, e.g. analysis of a particular culture or ritual within a culture, a curriculum, etc.²⁷¹

And "research techniques" are defined by NDEO as the "means by which the researcher manages and contextualizes data collection, review, and subsequent analysis."²⁷² In this study, I have the luxury of small scale where I can allow the research to show me how to research it. Put another way, I was able to allow the dissertation authors to define the terms because I was only working with 32 documents. This is useful because the field of dance scholarship in higher education is relatively new, rather than trying to fit methods into already known, popular, or pre-existing categories—mainly categories from outside

²⁷⁰ Like all research projects, NDEO's dance education research project is ongoing. It has gone through different stages and designs since 2004 when *The Report* and database were published. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to track and compare the changes in concept and design over the recent incarnations. This chapter is responding only to the first incarnation of the project that was designed with particular purposes in mind. Thank you to Luke Kahlich for our conversations about NDEO's research and database.

²⁷¹ NDEO, *Report to the Nation*, 120.

²⁷² NDEO, *Report to the Nation*, 120.

disciplines—it is interesting to observe how dance studies authors describe their work and it is helpful when trying to articulate the theoretical identity of the field. For example, Linda Quinn’s methods are connected to practice in how she designed her research mode, mirroring the choreographic structure of the dance she was examining. In *Community in Motion: The Creation of Native American Community through Performative Experience*, Quinn describes her spatial model of research based on the pow-wow:

After I developed my spatial model of the pow-wow event through my observations (seven concentric circles), I began to realize through my analysis of data from my participants that these circles also comprise a metaphoric model that expresses the points of entry and intersections found in between these seven circles in this fluid community space.²⁷³

Another example of a unique and complex research structure is found in Shakina J. Nayfack’s dissertation, *Butoh Ritual Mexicano: An Ethnography of Dance, Transformation, and Community Redevelopment*.²⁷⁴ Nayfack writes:

Recruiting models of post-Marxist geography, tourism studies, and feminist ethnography, this dissertation questions the implications of transborder ritual dance within larger exploitative processes characteristic of 21st century US/Mexico relations.²⁷⁵

Both Quinn and Shakina’s dissertations are “ethnographies;” however, their particular research techniques, modes of inquiry (particularly the feminist lenses in both cases), or points of entry that may be unique to dance studies are missed if we place them into a more general category of “ethnography.” Further, the theoretical diversity within one dissertation is notable and the different types of discourses used disappear by limiting them to one methodological category. My humble suggestion for the RDE database is

²⁷³ Linda Quinn, “Necessary Circles: A Journey into the Core of the Dallas/Fort Worth Urban Indian Pow-Wow.” PhD diss., Texas Woman’s University (2007), 171.

²⁷⁴ Shakina Nayfack, “Butoh Ritual Mexicano: An Ethnography of Dance, Transformation, and Community Redevelopment,” PhD diss., University of California at Riverside (2009).

²⁷⁵ Nayfack, *Butoh Ritual Mexicano*, vi, vii

that there should at least be a category for “dance education methods” as well as a category for “dance studies methods” since there are some dance studies dissertation writers who take dance education as their subject.

Ideally, it would be productive and illuminating for the field if we talked more about unique and dance studies specific methods that are grounded in the practice, such as designing one’s dissertation using a spatial model of research fashioned after the choreographic structure of a dance, like Quinn did in her study. Another humbly offered suggestion for the RDE Project would be to include a category of (dance as art) practice-based methods (methods that are specific to dance practice), as well as making more room for feminist approaches. Not only was feminist inquiry one of the most common methods/research frameworks utilized in recent dance studies dissertations, dance in higher education is disciplinarily affiliated with the women’s movement and women’s issues from its origins in physical education departments.

Another example of a dance studies scholarship that breaks the methodological mold is Donna Dragon’s dissertation, given that she creates her own methodology called Embodied Research Methodology.²⁷⁶ Although Dragon’s dissertation can be located in the RDE Project’s database, her unique research method is not accounted for in the menu of methods or research techniques categorized in the database. There is no searchable category for “embodied research methodology.” Allowing the authors to determine, or even dictate, the terms used for methodology was a promising approach to finding methods rooted in dance studies, rather than borrowing terms from somewhere else. Determining *what are dance studies methods* is particularly important when so many

²⁷⁶ Dragon, *Toward Embodied Education*.

scholars refer to dance studies methods. Again, I realize the RDE Project had different goals in mind; my comparisons are made to point out differences as potential future points of connection.

What I discovered in my research is that the dance studies authors bring forward their experience and embodied knowledge. The problem is that this way of knowing a dance (“experience” based on past or present experience and “artistic charisma”) is quickly folded into phenomenology or other disciplines. What would happen if we allowed a method of research to develop from our own dance experience and not call it something else from another discipline? How else could we get at a dance studies method except in and through our embodied knowledge and experience of dance practice, teaching, scholarship, and artistic production? This may be important if we are to develop methods that arise out of the field of dance as a discipline and if we are to create theory that is connected to practice.

Embodied Scholarship: Dance Theory And Dance Practice

If we neglect the body, the body will have its revenge. And are we not doing this? Are we not throwing our whole educational force upon the brain?
- Editor of the *Boston Courier*, 1858

Research techniques that work hard to create embodied scholarship may inadvertently create a disconnection prior to investigation. However, when dancers and artists are writing, they may already be coming from an experienced and embodied place as researchers; whether or not they bring forth that experience and embodied knowledge. This is not to assert that dance experience is required to conduct dance research. Anyone with a body is in a position to write embodied scholarship if they write from a whole

rather than a partial or disembodied position— as if disconnected from physicality, materiality, and/or the practice of dance. Embodied scholarship is an invitation to remember one’s body and to bring one’s self forward onto the page.

On the other end of the spectrum is the science approach. Unfortunately, as the *Report to the Nation* observes, funding for education requires “accountability” from states emphasizing scientifically based research and documentation. This requirement is evidenced in the “No Child Left Behind” legislation.²⁷⁷ However, dance studies is an expanding field and the number of dance programs in higher education tripled from 1986-2002 and 80% of those programs in the university were for dance as fine art and only about 20% as physical education.²⁷⁸ According to my research, recent dance studies scholars writing in and through doctoral programs in dance have not succumbed to the pressure to produce scientifically based research. Although some of the methods I reviewed were more quantitative than others, there was not a trend toward scientifically based methods, unless we were to call “theory” the new science (even though some would argue that theory has more subversive and revolutionary potential). In any case, this again raises the question of whether dance studies fights to maintain disciplinary identity on a methodological and disciplinary level or does it collapse its identity into other departments, which enjoy more money and prestige in the university?

Women’s studies may not enjoy a great deal more funding or prestige in the university than dance (when compared with science, for example), but as an interdiscipline, women’s studies via feminist theory attracts advanced and prestigious scholars who are writing from their fields with a feminist lens and utilizing feminist

²⁷⁷ NDEO, *Report to the Nation*, 2.

²⁷⁸ NDEO, *Report to the Nation*, 1.

theory (there are, of course, feminist scientists, social scientists, political philosophers, and educators for example). The same cannot be said about dance theory and dance as a discipline (scientists or political philosophers, for example, do not utilize “a dance theory lens” or “dance theory” in their research, teaching, or scholarship).

How dance intersects with outside disciplines in the university is different than how women’s studies intersects with outside disciplines. No matter how difficult it may have been nor how long it took to obtain, women’s studies currently has a broader reach and influence, which is what allows me to say here (and previously) that there is not a symmetrical relationship between dance and women’s studies. Although women’s studies may not enjoy sufficient funding and prestige either—and it should be stated clearly that many women’s studies programs are closing, hanging on by a thread, or suffer from extensive budget cuts—other disciplines including science and the arts, are still widely and significantly influenced by feminist authors, theories, practice, and history. Women’s studies has a theoretical identity. Dance does not enjoy the same relationship with other fields, the difference being that dance lacks a theoretical base specific to itself—not a theoretical base specific to phenomenology, performance studies, women’s studies, cultural studies, although it may share concerns with these areas. What is dance studies theoretical or methodological identity? According to my research, the methods that dance studies authors use most are historical, ethnographic, feminist, and practice-based methods in concert with a diverse range of other theoretical discourses from outside disciplines. As dance moves forward as a discipline in higher education we should develop and maintain our own center, especially as we intersect and align ourselves with outside areas.

Dance Education Issues And Subjects

While my research focuses on research methods and not on research subjects, the RDE Projects' large and rather amazing study includes dance "issues" (or subjects), which is very beneficial for any discussion of methods. The RDE Project reviews and describes what "issues" in dance education were deemed important from 1929-2002. The authors of the *Report to the Nation* write,

Looking at these data as first related to an *Issue*, and then in correlation to *Populations Served* and/or *Areas of Service*, provides an overarching sense of patterns and gaps, delineating what Issues have been of importance to researchers conducting thesis, dissertation, and other published research in dance education 1929-2002.²⁷⁹

The RDE Project also notes via the *Report to the Nation* that higher education is the most often written about subject in "the field" of higher education. They write,

Perhaps the field also comes back to itself again and again because there has been little shared communication regarding the focus of graduate and doctoral research between dance departments over time; there has been no database of shared information on the "who, what and where" of dance education research prior to the RDE Project.²⁸⁰

What is important to point out here is NDEO's concerns about how there is little shared communication regarding doctoral research. I will add, it seems there is little shared communication between dance education and dance studies scholarship. It should be pointed out again to be clear: the RDE Project is not looking at dance scholarship broadly understood; instead, it is looking at *dance education* scholarship and research.

Throughout the study the subject is framed as "dance education research," and not dance research or dance research in education. These differences are significant in terms of the

²⁷⁹ NDEO, *Report to the Nation*, 16.

²⁸⁰ NDEO, *Report to the Nation*, 17.

results then generated in a search using the database. For example, performance journals (even with a focus on dance) may not be included in the database, but dance education journals are.

I make this point because although the RDE Project's focus is on dance education, the authors sometimes refer to the broader field of "dance" and "dance researchers" more broadly understood. For instance, in the "Summary Discussion of Part I" of the *Report to the Nation* the authors write,

Research has not enjoyed a central place in the mission of most graduate programs in dance. Department cultures and their limited resources most often focused on the act of dancing, the development of new modes of performance, and the making of new, original dance works. As a broad topic in academe, education is considered by many to be a "soft" science. Outside some purely quantifiable research, it is very hard to be able to nail down exactly what is going on when "education" is happening. ... In considering the vitality of dance education research, one must take into account social notions of dance. Dance is often viewed as recreation or competition activity, as "not for males" or as a prelude to sin and debauchery. As the discipline has grown in depth and scope, scholarly as well as artistic activities have become more available and accessible. However, the more academic or theoretical interest in dance are not visible to the general public, and are thus not widely recognized. The popular notion simply does not involve the dancer as empiricist.²⁸¹

Here and in other places mentioned earlier in this chapter, observations are made more generally about dance departments alternating with dance education specific concerns. This is to say that dance education and dance as art share more with each other than our separate but not equal histories may suggest. While I realize the goals of the RDE Project are to research dance education research, sometimes the authors of the *Report to the Nation* make more general statements about the field of dance (such as what happens in dance departments). It is these moments in the *Report to the Nation* that created some confusion in terms of what their stated goals were compared with the actual scope,

²⁸¹ NDEO, *Report to the Nation*, 22.

delimitations, and results of the project. This is an issue because sometimes (directly and indirectly) the *Report to the Nation* reads as if they are using dance education (its issues and subjects and methods) as the yardstick when measuring the whole field of dance as a discipline.

Although an offer was made in the beginning of the *Report to the Nation* to bridge dance as art with dance as education, some comments betray that original, stated intention. For example, the authors write:

With most graduate faculty focused on what comes next on the college production calendar, it should come as no surprise that issues that may be contemporarily vital in the hothouse climate of national (or even state) educational policy do not appear on the ‘radar screens’ of graduate programs in dance.²⁸²

What follows is a prescription for dance programs:

It may be politically wise for dance research graduate education programs to begin focusing in *Issues* of concern to U.S. education if dance is to assume a more prominent position in American education.²⁸³

This is to say that there is a difference between artistic and education research methods, curriculum, goals, and products. I make this point because several of my main concerns, as a result of this research, focus on how dance education and dance as art interact and intersect on these levels of research methods and curriculum. The RDE Project’s *Report to the Nation* sometimes seems to conflate “dance research graduate education programs” with all dance programs. Perhaps it is my own desire for dance studies and dance as art research to be included in the database that contributes to this reading. The fact remains that the designers and authors of the RDE Project did not set out to measure or represent dance studies, nor was it their intention to measure or

²⁸² NDEO, *Report to the Nation*, 22.

²⁸³ NDEO, *Report to the Nation*, 23.

represent all dance scholarship in higher education. Although this was necessary for the RDE Project, it may also contribute to deepening the divide in the field: today, in addition to the dance as education and dance as art split, there is now another split between dance education research (which the RDE Project is focused on) and the rest of dance research. It may not make sense at first glance to criticize a study for not including graduate dance studies when that was not its design but upon closer examination my critique is a call to connect these disconnected areas: dance education and dance education research *with* dance as an art practice *with* dance as an art research *with* dance studies research both within and outside of dance departments in higher education. Perhaps a tall order, making these connections will make us stronger and more united as a discipline; thus, more cohesive, more authoritative, more relevant, and more accessible.

Research Subjects In Dance Education (Continued)

Subjects that are unique to dance education research include particular areas such as K-12, student performance, brain research, children-at-risk, certified teachers, among others. Although my focus is on research methods (not subjects), after reading the *Report to the Nation* I took note of some of the dance studies subjects that intersect with dance education subjects. According to my own (albeit limited) research of dance scholarship from dance studies programs, the range of topics in dance scholarship (not dance education scholarship) ends up being inclusive of dance education subjects. Therefore, some of the research subjects of dance studies dissertations include dance education subjects, such as the experience of young populations of dancers and students, teaching at

undergraduate and graduate levels, and holistic and feminist modes of embodied pedagogy.

To further gain a sense of the subjects of dance studies dissertations (in contrast to dance education research) it needs to be noted that some “non-dance education” topics found in dance studies scholarship include studies of local and international mono and intercultural choreography, dance performance, dance practice, feminist re/constructions of identity, dance performance as vehicles of expression of national identity, a range of feminist ethnographies and numerous historical subjects. Overall, the subjects of the dissertations are “dance subjects” with only a couple of exceptions, such as research on a particular event or person in history, such as a World Fair, for example, or the Queen of Sweden. A handful of the 32 dissertations from 2007-09 were dance education research dissertations but the majority was not. Where I had anticipated similarities with the RDE Project, my study diverges in significant ways, mainly in terms of how the scope of “the field” is conceived; realizing these differences has been quite informing.

Returning now to the issue of artistic authority versus other types of authority, in the summary of Chapter 2 in the *Report to the Nation*, the authors conclude:

It has become obvious that, like it or not, it is increasingly important that practitioners skillfully measure the results, practices, and applications of dance.²⁸⁴

What does it mean that dance practitioners ought to skillfully measure the results of their work? From a dance as art perspective, I am not sure that this is what is needed. This comment points to how we should make more connections between dance as education and dance as art; the field of dance education is fundamentally linked to dance as an art

²⁸⁴ NDEO, *Report to the Nation*, 27.

or dance practice. In a similar way, what follows also illustrates the uncomfortable dis/connections between pedagogical and artistic authority. Further, the passage below also suggests that the “debate” about dance in higher education as education or as art has not quite come to a resolution. From the *Report to the Nation*:

In the struggle that dance in education has undertaken over these many years to separate itself from education of a physical nature and in becoming “art,” have we tossed the “baby out with the bathwater”? Our field is not wholly divorced from measurement, but it is largely so. [Measurement refers to dance as a discipline’s origins in physical education programs.] We all can wrap our minds around the efficacy of knowing more about the appropriate depth of a plié, but we seem to struggle with topics that go further than that. . . . Furthermore it is critical that practitioners of dance articulate the benefits, or lack thereof, of dance as an education medium.²⁸⁵

I am not certain that dance practitioners would agree that it is critical that they articulate the benefits of their work (of lack thereof) as an educational medium. To ask dance artists in the studio to control the direction of the research—to be researchers themselves of themselves in the studio—is the beginning of an excellent line of thinking, however, asking dancers to measure the utility of their work is not the purpose of artistic authority. When in the studio, the point of the artist is to make art, not education. As a starting point, however, this suggestion will lead to other guiding questions including, what is the connection between dance research and the dance practice (whether it is teaching dance or dance making as an art) and how does studio-based work connect with research and scholarship? Indeed, does it connect? How might the practitioner and the researcher/scholar/educator interrelate? Should articulating the connection between theory and practice be the task or burden of the practitioners (practitioners may include teachers as well) to make the connections? Or is it the job of the researcher outside the studio? Who

²⁸⁵ NDEO, *Report to the Nation*, 27.

is going to make the first actual move in setting a foundation for the productive connection between theory (research and writing) and practice (dancing and teaching)? What are the possible entry-points into actual (not theoretical) connections between theory and practice? How might we turn these sometimes-necessary differences and distinctions into productive connections and collaborations?

As a feminist dance studies scholar, I find myself caught between several different worlds. One world is the realm of high theory that often seems to be completely removed from the world of dance practice and the actual people creating, performing, and teaching the work. I feel sympathetic toward and connected to yet another world which consists of strong and hard empiricism from the dance education researchers and authors of the *Report to the Nation*, which appears to completely ignore the type of dance studies research mentioned above and other research and literature that is not “dance education research.” I also feel like I am a member of the world of dance artists, practitioners, and scholars who are producing art and scholarship in and through dance departments.

While I am critical of work that is disconnected from dance practice, the *Report to the Nation* is at the other end of the spectrum when it asks the dance artist to articulate skillfully and scientifically how their work is useful. I would argue that dance artists should not be called upon to theorize or assess anything about their work; the point in time and space of creation, improvisation, or rehearsal in the studio is not the optimal time or place for a self-evaluative or academic study by the dancer or choreographer themselves. Research and skillful examination can be a post-practice reflection as many practice-based methods suggest. From both a researcher’s and a creator’s perspective, adding the layer of a demanding “can I skillfully articulate this” at the point of creation in the studio

imposes an overly burdensome directive on artists and educators—to justify their work. If their work is not “useful” at all, that is not the failing of the art or the artist. It is not necessarily the purpose of art to be useful. (And who/what deems it “useful”; how/should the utility of art be measured?) Nor does this indicate that anything is lacking about the intellectual capacity or inclinations of the artist or practitioners. Not all dancers will write or will want to write about their work. If and when they do, why should they feel compelled to be so generous with their ideas, especially given the idea in our culture that the artist cannot be trusted anyway to articulate their work, perhaps because they are too inside of it.²⁸⁶ In the Introduction to *The Creativity Question*, Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School Albert Rothenberg and Carl Hausman, Professor of Philosophy at Pennsylvania State University, write:

There is in fact some reason to believe that creators’ reports are *unreliable* accounts of actual experience since the public utterances of creative artists about themselves are often intended by the artist herself to enhance the corpus of her work or, at least, to be consistent with her artistic or literary image.²⁸⁷

To this I add that it is not difficult to see how the whole premise of requiring the articulation of scientific accountability for the benefits or the utility of one’s art might be

²⁸⁶ There are, of course, some outstanding artists who also develop teachable methods alongside their artistic production, who also conduct research, and teach their research and their artistic work both within and outside of higher education settings. For example, Dr. Kariamuwelsh is an artist-scholar-educator who has developed artistic, pedagogical, and scholarly authority in and through founding a dance company, creating a dance technique and method, teaching the history, theory, and practice of dance within and outside of higher education and publishing widely. Although “triple threats” like Welsh are not completely uncommon, they are rare. My own dance practice stopped while conducting research in higher education and while focusing on my practice, I was mostly consumed by the training, rehearsals, and performance. My post-practice reflection did not consist of wondering how could I skillfully articulate this so that it could be taught; rather, my reflections tended toward the social and political issues surrounding the identities of the practitioners with whom I was working, as well as the basic stuff of dance production: how can we do this with virtually no money or space?

²⁸⁷ Albert Rothenberg and Carl R. Hausman, *The Creativity Question*, Eds., Albert Rothenberg and Carl R. Hausman (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1976), 23.

enough to motivate many artists to want to purposefully skew or subvert the results of such a scientific study of their work. Do music theorists or music education scholars require a composer to measure and articulate the utility of their music at the point or moment of its creation? We must respectfully keep in mind the difference between artistic, scholarly, and pedagogical authority.

I imagine that at the moment of creation, to articulate something skillful and scientific about what I am creating may be possible but not desirable. Unless the purpose of the research is to articulate the moment of artistic creation, the idea that dance creators must scientifically prove the utility of their work is questionable. If this is necessary for the health of the field, and if it is necessary to secure funding, then it ought to be a more featured focus in dance department curriculum. If it is necessary so that dance education and dance as art can intersect more smoothly and so these separate areas can be on the radar screens of each other, then this is also a worthwhile reason to make the attempt.

In any case, aware of the affects of its necessary delimitations, the authors of the *Report* approach the issues of interdisciplinarity and the connection or disconnection between theory and practice when they write,

[O]ur field needs to expand research in dance education—regardless of the environment—to include (1) a sincere grounding in the importance of research to dance and our work in Other Disciplines; and (2) training in research methods and technique so we know how to frame questions and gather, analyze, and report data. Part of the grounding process should involve understanding how practice informs the research process, which in turn informs the practice to research. In other words, research informs practice and practice informs research in a never-ending cycle of inquiry, whether one is a student, professional artist, educator, administrator, or purely a lover of the dance.²⁸⁸

And:

²⁸⁸ NDEO, *Report to the Nation*, 54.

Finally it is clear from the good proportion of work accepted in journals of Other Disciplines that the requirements for inclusion in these particular disciplines requires a more formal research format. If the Research in Dance Education database (RDEdb) is studied from this perspective, it could well inform dance educators about the perspectives of Other Disciplines while it simultaneously provides information about research methodologies and techniques required to partner more successfully with Other Disciplines.

The first paragraph above is inspired and encouraging. The second part, particularly the description of dance education's relationship to outside disciplines, may be putting the cart before the horse. Dance studies at least needs to first understand itself more fully in terms of its own issues, methods and subjects, before it partners successfully with outside disciplines. It needs to be clear on what it is doing, and it needs to know what is its agenda before it can successfully navigate in and through the interdisciplinary turn.

As mentioned previously in a different way, dance education needs to get together with dance studies on the issue of interdisciplinarity and research methods and outside areas writing about dance need to pay more attention to the issues in the field of dance and dance education. Caught between the intellectual challenges of high theory on one hand and the equally challenging empirical issues of dance education research on the other, somewhere in the middle are dance studies research methods, the "stars" of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

CURRENT DANCE STUDIES RESEARCH: RESEARCH METHODS IN DANCE STUDIES DISSERTATIONS: 2007-09

Dance studies is itself interdisciplinary.

- Roxanne Fenton

This chapter reveals the primary focus of this study, which is an examination of 32 doctoral dissertations in American university dance studies departments from 2007-09. The purpose of this examination is to be able to answer two primary questions: What are dance studies research methods? Is there a method that is inherent to dance studies? In addition, secondary yet ongoing questions include: Is the field currently taking an interdisciplinary turn? And, can a field be interdisciplinary before it has established its own agreed-upon methods?

In order to answer these questions, I examined *all* dance studies dissertations that were written in 2007, 2008, and 2009, from the three dance studies programs in the United States: Temple University, The University of California at Riverside, and Texas Woman's University. It should be noted that the new doctoral program at The Ohio State

University opened its doors in 2007; therefore, Ohio State did not grant any dissertations during the period under review.

Methods For Chapter 5

Although I presented my analysis of the NDEO *Report* and database (Chapter 4) before offering my analysis here of the research methods in dance studies dissertation from 2007-09, I actually examined the dissertations first, before looking at the NDEO *Report to The Nation* and database, so that potential categories of dance studies methods would have a better opportunity to surface and so I would not be tempted to drop them into the categories that the NDEO database created to classify dance education scholarship. However, as we will see in this chapter, dance studies dissertation authors also did this; they often dropped potential dance studies methods into pre-existing, older (been around longer than dance), better-known or more authoritative discipline or research method category.

In order to identify the research methods used in the dissertations, I first gained a general understanding of each of the 32 research documents: I read the abstracts and highlighted the research method(s) used (the *how* of the research), to first determine the research methods used in all 32 dissertations individually.²⁸⁹ While I kept in mind the subject(s) of the research (the *what* of the research), my focus was to first identify the research methods used in the dissertations, as stated by the authors in their dissertation abstracts and methodology or introductory chapters. After identifying the authors' stated method(s), rather than fitting each particular research method into a general or already

²⁸⁹ I did not find it necessary to distinguish "research methods" from "research techniques" because the dissertation authors stated that their methods were methods rather than techniques.

established or pre-determined category of methodology, I maintained the authors' language and terms as much as possible, trying not to use my own terminology or already established terms or method categories to allow for new, unique, or even *dance studies-based* categories of research methods to emerge.

What I discovered was that most dance studies dissertation authors utilized method categories in a rather standardized way.²⁹⁰ This is not a criticism of the authors. However, when methods are labeled as anthropological, ethnographic, or performance studies methods, as a few examples, it makes it more difficult to determine what methods, if any, or what aspects or elements of these methods may actually arise out of dance studies as a discipline and not out of performance studies, or anthropology, or other outside fields.²⁹¹

For example, in Laura Katz Rizzo's dissertation, *How the Sleeping Beauty Awoke in Philadelphia: Classical Ballet in the Modern American Context, Historicizing the Canon of Classical Ballet*, Rizzo writes:

The emphasis I place on experience—my own as well as those of the dancers I interviewed—places this research in the phenomenological realm.²⁹²

²⁹⁰ Although there was a standard use of methodological terminology in terms of categories, there was also a great range of research methods and many unique and individual research methods that are not tethered to outside disciplines. See page 206 for a complete list of research methods used in dance studies dissertations from 2007-2009.

²⁹¹ Judith Alter also warns against borrowing methods and concepts from outside fields. Alter writes:

Borrowed concepts are derived from research methods geared to their particular field. In their writing about dance for academic purposes dance scholars have traditionally applied concepts from other disciplines to dance without being fully aware that those research methods may not be applicable to dance at the level of depth the dance writer intend. Alter, *Dance-Based Dance Theory*, 4.

²⁹² Laura Katz Rizzo, "How 'The Sleeping Beauty' Awoke in Philadelphia: Classical Ballet in the Modern American Context, Historicizing the Canon of Classical Ballet." PhD diss., Temple University (2008), 16.

I question why Rizzo and other authors situate their own experience and the experience of other dancers in the phenomenological (or other) realm(s) and not the “dance studies” realm, methodologically speaking. Why is Rizzo’s “experience” not a dance studies research method? Phenomenology is not the only outside method that dance studies authors fold their work into. Why is dance experience “given away” to phenomenology? Or, at what point does one’s own experience or observations get categorically managed or folded into another discipline so that it is more cohesive or so that it appears more credible?

In this study of dance studies dissertations, only two authors explicitly stated that they were working with “dance studies methods.” Yet even these authors, like most other dance studies and other scholars writing about dance, do not state what those dance studies methods are. This assumption that we know what dance studies methods are is what motivates me, in part, to conduct this research: to articulate dance studies research methods, if there are any methods that are *inherent to dance studies*. Unlike the NDEO’s research and database that utilizes predetermined categories of research, I allow the 32 authors in this study to be the determiners of the categories of research, under which their own work is listed, even when they utilize standard or commonly known “outside” categories, instead of attributing their methods to dance studies.

Methods Continued: Determining Methods Categories

After reading the title pages and abstracts of the 32 dissertations and highlighting the research methods used as stated by the authors in the abstracts, I then read the table of contents in each dissertation to gain a sense of each project as a whole and to locate the

methodology chapter (or its equivalent, if it was not named “methodology”). Most authors provide a methodology chapter and when they did not, their research methods were usually discussed in an introductory chapter, section, or elsewhere throughout the dissertation. By reading at least the abstract, the table of contents, and the methodology or introductory chapter for each of the 32 dissertations, I felt confident that I had a clear sense of what the authors say they are doing. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to provide a close reading of all 32 dissertations to verify that the authors are doing exactly what they say they are doing, although I did read through many of the dissertations if I felt unclear about the author’s stated methods.

Dance studies dissertations lend themselves well to this study of dance studies research methods because the nature of dissertation research is that the authors’ methods are transparent and overtly stated. However, I should state here that this is not a scientific study, nor does it pretend to be. While I do use some numbers in order to identify which research methods are the most commonly utilized; the purpose of this study is not to generate numbers, percentages, or statistics. Although this chapter contains several charts with numbers as a way of organizing my “data,” the overall purpose is to gain a sense of the field in a qualitative way in order to begin to articulate the theoretical identity of the field of dance studies as an academic discipline, although the quantitative results may also be useful. The charts that are generated and presented here are intended to provide illustrations for the reader to gain a sense of the field of dance studies research methods as these methods currently exist. The results of this research indicate areas for future study and are not to be taken as a display of “facts.” It is possible that another approach

or perspective could derive different meanings and results from the same “data” or materials.

While I read each dissertation’s methodology (or introductory) chapter, I highlighted the stated methods within each. If the authors said they used 10 methods, then I highlighted all 10. (See **Table 1** wherein I provide both sets of data alongside each other [a long and short list of methods used]). From the (sometimes) long list of methods used by each author, I then narrowed the list to create a “Top 3” and a “Top 5” list of research methods (**Tables 2 and 3**) and then created a list of *all* methods used, as stated or described by the authors. Below is the (long) list of all research methods, modes, and techniques used in dance studies dissertations from 2007-09:

Complete List Of Research Methods, Modes, And Techniques In
Dance Studies Dissertations 2007, 2008, 2009

A

action research
aesthetic philosophy
analysis of live dances
analyzing compositional processes
anthropological theories of performance
anthropology
archives
asking philosophical questions
audio tape
autobiographical

B

ballet history
bioaesthetics
biography
biography of choreographer
black cultural studies
black dance/cultural studies
bodily participation
body-centered approach

brainstorming
British cultural studies

C

captioned drawings (of the dance practice)
case study
Chinese history
choreographic analysis
close analysis of dancing and moving
close description
coding
coding data
communications
concurrent nested procedures
constructivist
constructivist learning
contemporary/African dance history
contextual analysis
creating portraits
critical pedagogy
critical race theory
critical theory
cross-cultural study
cultural dance history
cultural geography
cultural history
cultural history via dance
cultural studies
cultural studies of sport
cultural theory

D

dance description
dance ethnography
dance ethnology
dance history
dance studies
dance studies analysis of the dancing body
dance studies methodologies
dance theory
data analysis
data collection
data transformation
de Certeauian framework
deconstruction
descriptive/hermeneutic

detailed field notes
developmental theory
diasporic studies
direct participation
disability studies
discourses on nationalism, imperialism, and multi-culturalism
discuss dance pieces

E

educational philosophy
educational theory
email interviews
embodied knowledge
embodied research methodology
empirical materials
ethnic studies
ethnographic
ethnographic description
ethnographic participant/researcher
ethnographic practice of dance making and training
ethnographic: data
ethnographic: field notes
ethnographic: interviews
ethnographic: participant/observation
ethnographic: readings
ethnography (local)
ethnography (out of the US)
European history
examine primary sources
examine textual evidence
experience
experiential inquiry
experiential knowledge

F

feminist analysis
feminist and minority discourse
feminist approach
feminist cultural history via dance
feminist dance ethnography
feminist data collection
feminist ethnography
feminist inquiry
feminist lens
feminist methods
feminist perspective

feminist reading
feminist studies
feminist theories
feminist theory
film studies
free writing

G

gathering and analyzing data
gender studies
gender theory
gender theory on ballet
generating data for analysis/data collection
globalization theory
grounded theory

H

Haitian dance history/studies
halfie or hyphenated ethnography
having a conversation with discursive practices
hermeneutic phenomenology
hermeneutic
heuristic approach
historical
historical analysis
historical analysis of a culture
historical approaches
historical biography
historical contextualization
historical hermeneutic
historical methods: oral interview
historical narrative
historical reconstruction (of a dance)
historical reconstruction (of a non-dance event)
historical: archives
historical: primary sources
history of culture via dance
history: examining texts
history: interviews

I

inductive coding
interaction analysis
interactive research
intercorporeal theory
interdisciplinary approach

internet search
interpretive bio
interpretive methodology
intertextual analysis
interviews

J

journal analysis
journaling
journals

K

Korean feminism
Korean history
Laban Movement Analysis (LMA)

L

lens of intersectionality
lenses of critical theory and postmodernism
limited ethnographic study
linguistics
literary study
lived experience
lived experience (phenomenology)
look closely/examine choreography

M

media studies
memoing
mixed methods
movement analysis
movement analysis (of non-dance event)
movement description
movement description from video
multi-disciplinary qualitative approach
multi-method
multi-modal study
multiple methods

N

narrating the work
narrative analysis
narrative strategies

O

observation

observe and describe
open ended and closed questioning
oral histories
own embodied experience of dance subject
own experience
own perspective as lens

P

participant (of a protest)
participant/researcher
participation in reading
performance analysis
performance philosophy by artists
performance studies
performance studies theory
performance theory
performativity theory
personal descriptions
phenomenological
phenomenological hermeneutics
phenomenological interviews
philosophical dance and cultural studies
philosophical discourses
philosophical inquiry
philosophical text analysis
poetic transcription
postcolonial studies
postcolonial theory
postmodern theory
postpositivism
poststructuralism
postmodern literary theory
postmodern theory
practice based: studied
practice based: teaching
practice-based: bringing forward knowledge based on experience
practice-based: choreographic process and teaching
practice-based: dance creation and performing
practice-based: personal experience: having danced the dances
practice-orientation: a study of a dance practice
prioritizing race in an American social context
putting dance into language

Q

qualitative
qualitative movement analysis

quantitative
queer ethnography
questionnaire

R

re-textualizing dance: turning dance into a text
reading choreographies
reading dance as text
reflective narrative
reflective/philosophical/aesthetic mode of inquiry
research design dictated by choreography or dance structure
rich description

S

scrapbook approach
scrutiny of body movements
self-study
semi-structured interviewing
semiotic analysis of dancing bodies in filmic narratives
semiotics
sequential procedures
short case-study
situating problem within a hermeneutic circle
south Asian studies
spatial theory
speech act theory
surveys

T

Taussig inspired embodied memory
television studies
text analysis
thematically analyzing texts
theoretical models of postMarxist geography
theories of critical pedagogy
theorizing about data using philosophy
theory of aesthetic community
theory of critical spectatorship
thick description
tourism studies
transhistorical approach
transnational approach
transphenomenal approach
treat choreography as a heterogeneous discursive act

U

univariate and bivariate analysis to understand quantitative variables
using dance to support theory
using images and stories
using own logic
using own perspective as lens
utilizing dance history authors

V

video documentation
video tape transcriptions
viewing the event

W

watched dances on video “copious amounts of time”
women’s studies

In this and other lists and tables the dissertation authors’ language is used so that the authors are the determiners of the research method categories. The purpose of creating a complete list, a “Top 3,” and a “Top 5” list of research methods (as well as other lists and tables) is to begin to identify and articulate the theoretical identity of the field of dance as an academic discipline in higher education.

I arrived at the “Top 3” list of methods used in each dissertation after reflecting on all of the highlighted methods found in the methodology (or introductory) chapter of the respective dissertation and in the dissertation abstract. (Most authors state their primary methods first in the dissertation abstract and then again in the introductory or methods chapter.) The “Top 3” methods were determined by which methods the authors mentioned most often and/or with the most emphasis or detail. As a way of confirming that I accurately identified the author’s primary methods, I also took into consideration the title of the dissertation, the type or categories of literature discussed in the review of literature, the titles of the chapters, and by reading through the dissertation in order to confirm.

In addition to highlighting a method when it was mentioned in the abstract and in the methodology or introductory chapters, I also took notes in the margins throughout the dissertations as I examined them; jotting down notes when I felt a method under discussion by the author was a primary one. I noticed that only a couple of dissertation authors did not state their methods in the abstract but did so in the methods section. Only one dissertation author neither explicitly articulated her methods in the abstract nor provided a methods or introduction chapter at all. In this case, in order to ascertain the author's methods, I consulted the bibliography and read through the chapters of the dissertation to see how the texts are utilized.²⁹³

Below is an excerpt from a dissertation illustrating how authors typically provide overt and unambiguous language regarding what methods they are using. Some authors are even more specific and detailed. The clarity required of dissertation writers lends itself well to my task of identifying the methods used. Using Rizzo's engaging and thorough dissertation as an example again, she writes:

Using the qualitative approaches above [historical, anthropological, embodied knowledge, among several others], I discovered information about performances of "The Sleeping Beauty" in Philadelphia in 1937, 1965, and 2002. Then, using my own perspective as a lens, as well as the theoretical writings of feminist and postmodern thinkers, I analyzed my findings, coming to conclusions about the ballet. This approach places my research in the realm of deconstruction as I use my own logic as well as that of other thinkers to challenge the many assumptions embedded in current analyses of Beauty. ... Key to this work are the lenses of critical theory and postmodern ideas surrounding deconstruction...²⁹⁴

²⁹³ My purpose is to identify research methods used in the dissertations by bringing forward categories of research methods as articulated by the dissertation authors. As mentioned earlier, this is not a scientific study nor does it aim to be. The authors' stated methods are mostly unambiguous; however, it is possible that a different researcher would interpret and organize the data in a different way. With this in mind, I reexamined my results and the method categories and created a different "Top 3" list. This reexamination is provided toward the end of this chapter. (See discussion beginning on page 238.)

²⁹⁴ Rizzo, *Sleeping Beauty*, 16.

As Rizzo states, she is utilizing quite a lot of methods: anthropological, ethnographic, phenomenological, deconstructive, historical, practical and experiential-based methods, as well as feminist and critical theory. The quantity and diversity of methods, as we will see (particularly utilizing many different theoretical discourses), is common in the dance studies research I examined. Interestingly, earlier in the dissertation, Rizzo states her work falls within the phenomenological realm, but in this above passage, she states it also falls within the realm of deconstruction. This raises a question for all dance scholars: when we make interdisciplinary choices in our research, who are we serving: the field of dance studies or other disciplines? (Just to be clear, this is not a criticism of Rizzo's rigorous scholarship or any other scholar's research.)

When Rizzo states that her work falls within a certain realm of discourse, for instance, deconstruction and phenomenology, is this an attempt to forge an interdisciplinary alliance, to borrow credibility, or to simply show up on *any* methodological or disciplinary radar screen, since dance studies methods and the theoretical identity of the field are so new they may not even be established? This does not indicate anything is "lacking." We do not need to apologize for being a younger field compared with others in academia and we should not rush past our essential developmental stages. At the same time, it is understandable why so many authors use outside methods and discourses because even when consulting current dance scholars' research, they too are using theories and methods from the outside, and so it is an ongoing process of using outside methods before we have firmly established our own.

After examining the dissertations, another concern I have is when scholars discuss interdisciplinarity in relationship to dance studies; in other words, when authors say they

are using interdisciplinary methods or an interdisciplinary approach, dance studies methods or “dance theory” is not mentioned or overtly articulated as a part of the interdisciplinarity. Therefore, it is not clear what the dance theory part is, or what is the contribution, theoretically speaking, from the field of dance. We have taken an interdisciplinary turn before dance studies is methodologically established or known as a discipline. Or, when speaking of interdisciplinarity, dance studies and dance studies research methods and discourses are often referred to as if they were fully formed and established.

Dance studies author Carl Paris, who has served on the faculty at NYU’s Dance Education Program, writes in his compelling and significant study:

In recent years, my interests have broadened to include an interdisciplinary approach... This included interacting with disciplines, such as ethnic studies, anthropology, performance studies, feminist studies, semiotics, gender studies, critical pedagogy, critical theory, hermeneutic phenomenology, post-colonial studies, and others, which are concerned with deconstructing issues of culture, identity, and nationality.

In broad terms, this perspective attempts to encompass an inclusive, contextually sensitive, reflective, and reflexive approach to black dance scholarship.²⁹⁵

Like Rizzo’s work, this passage illustrates quite a lot of research methods and discourses being used in a single research project. Do we reach out to these fields because we lack our own research methods, or because we fold our own methods (perhaps dance experience-based methods) into other disciplines/methods? Dance studies is the implied discipline from which Paris is conducting interdisciplinary research; however, dance studies is mostly lost, if it is even mentioned in the list of other fields’ methods.

²⁹⁵ Carl F. Paris, “Aesthetics and Representation in Neo-Afro Modern Dance in the Late 20th Century: Examining Selected Works by Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, Ronald K. Brown, and Reggie Wilson.” PhD diss., Temple University (2008).

In Shakina Nayfack's absorbing and distinctive dissertation, *Butoh Ritual Mexicano: An Ethnography of Dance, Transformation, and Community Redevelopment* (which was briefly reviewed earlier), Nayfack also uses a large quantity of diverse methods and discourses including: theoretical models of post-Marxist geography, tourism studies, feminist ethnography, performance theory, body-centered approach, images and stories, Taussig inspired embodied memory, spatial theory, theory of critical spectatorship, feminist analysis, and queer ethnography.²⁹⁶ Nayfack's methods and discourses are diverse and plentiful—a trend I found in the dance studies dissertations under examination. My research suggests that current dance studies methods can be characterized by a multi-diverse interdisciplinarity. Based on my research, I would not suggest calling dance studies methods interdisciplinary without some caveat or explanation.

While dance studies research methods were not the focus of Donna Dragon's groundbreaking research, Dragon asks a similar question in her extensive dissertation. She writes: "If dancers are indeed researchers, then, what might research practices based in dance look like?"²⁹⁷ With all of our creative and intellectual capacity, dance scholars ought to at least see the importance of articulating research methods that have arisen out of the discipline of dance before we take another "turn" that may move us even further away from dance practice or away from disciplinary autonomy.

Below is **Table 1** which lists: each dissertation author, the program in which they studied, the title of their dissertation, the 3 primary methods used by each author, and a longer list of methods each author used.

²⁹⁶ Nayfack, *Butoh Ritual Mexicano*.

²⁹⁷ Dragon, *Toward Embodied Education*, 40.

Table 1: Dance Studies Research Methods 2007, 2008, 2009²⁹⁸

Author, Dance Studies Program, Date of Publication ²⁹⁹	Dissertation Title	3 Main Research Methods Utilized	Additional Research Methods Utilized (and/or additional terms used by author to describe methods used)
1) Bambara, Celia, Riverside, 2008	<i>Transfiguring Diaspora: Travel and the Politics of Haitian Dance</i>	Textual analysis ethnographic practice “dance studies methodologies” (choreographic analysis)	Haitian dance history/studies, dance and critical race theory (interculturalism), diaspora studies, embodied knowledge – interpretive methodology, performance analysis, “other configurations of race, power, and practice”
2) Berger-Di Donato, Andrea, Temple, 2009	<i>The Re-Birth of Dance through the Soul of Tragedy: On Nietzsche’s “The Birth of Tragedy” Becoming Body in the Text and Dance of Isadora Duncan</i>	Philosophical text analysis, historical (archival), personal experience/ descriptions	Historical contextualization, practice-based (personal experience: having danced the dances)
3) Bory, Alison, Riverside, 2008	<i>Dancing With My Self: Performing Autobiography in (Post)Modern Dance</i>	Critical theory, “reading choreographies,” feminist and minority discourse	Watch the dances on video “copious amounts of time,” wrote a narration of the work, cultural studies, analyze compositional processes, look closely at /examine choreography, discuss 2 pieces
4) Chang,	<i>Choreographing the</i>	Gender studies,	Experience, cultural dance history,

²⁹⁸ The alternating background colors in this table are intended for easier reading; the colors do not indicate anything about the data.

²⁹⁹ The author’s name, title of their dissertation, date of publication, and name of institution from which the dissertation was granted was collected from the ProQuest/UMI Database via Temple University Library. I conducted this research by examining hard copies of all 32 dissertations; most were available at Temple University library or via inter-library loan; the dissertations not available in hard copy format were obtained via download from the Proquest Database (UMI). “ProQuest Dissertation Publishing,” accessed October 22, 2011, <http://www.proquest.com/en-US/products/dissertations>. I cross references the data with lists of dissertation authors from the three dance departments to make sure the dissertations were from dance departments. “TWU” indicates the Texas Woman’s University Department of Dance; “Temple” indicates the Temple University Dance Department; and “Riverside” indicates the University of California at Riverside Department of Dance.

Ting-Ting, Riverside, 2008	<i>Peacock: Gender, Ethnicity, and National Identity in Chinese Ethnic Dance</i>	diasporic studies, cultural history via a dance	Chinese history, dance history
5) Chen, Ying-Chu, Temple, 2008	<i>When Ballet Meets Taiwan: The Development and Survival of the Taiwanese Ballet</i>	Ethnography (participant/observer – out of U.S.), semi-structured interviewing, grounded theory	Internet search, ethnography (field notes), historical methods: oral interview, archives, inductive coding

Table 1, continued

6) Choi, Kihyoung, TWU, 2008	<i>A Pedagogy of Spiraling: Envisioning a Pedagogy for Dance in Korean Higher Education</i>	Educational philosophy/theory, cultural history (Korean), post-colonial theory	Theories of critical pedagogy, constructivist learning, philosophy
7) Choi, Won Sun, Riverside, 2007	<i>Re-Presentations of Han, a Special Emotional Quality, in Korean Dancing Culture</i>	Ethnography (fieldwork in Korea), Laban Movement Analysis (LMA), cultural studies	Dance ethnology, Korean history, interviews, video documentation, experience, discourses on nationalism, imperialism, and multiculturalism, history of culture via a dance, oral history
8) Dragon, Donna A., Temple, 2009	<i>Toward Embodied Education, 1850s-2007: Historical, Cultural, Theoretical and Methodological Perspectives Impacting Somatic Education in United States Higher Education Dance</i>	Historical hermeneutic, feminist inquiry/reading/analysis, embodied research methodology	Multi-modal, experience, phenomenological, hermeneutics, lived experience, rich description
9) Elkins, Leslie, Temple, 2007	<i>Body-Presence: Lived Experience of Choreography and Performance</i>	Phenomenological hermeneutics (lived experience), dance description (re-textualizing dance: turning a dance into a text), practice-based (dance creation and performing)	Interactive research, fieldwork – local, interviews, close description, video, interviews
10) Fenton, Roxanne, Riverside, 2007	<i>Circuits of Representation: Figure Skating and Cultural Meaning in United States Popular Culture</i>	Cultural studies, movement analysis, textual analysis	Communications, interviews, viewing the event, “participation in reading,” short case-study, text analysis, T.V. studies, cultural media studies of sports
11) Frazier, James A., Temple, 2007	<i>Saying It Loud: The Cultural and Socio-Political Activism of Choreographer Jawole Willa Jo Zollar</i>	Dance history, biography of choreographer, American cultural history	Philosophical inquiry, history/historical methods, ethnographic description, prioritizing race in an American social context, movement description from video, practice-based method (bringing forward knowledge based on experience), interviews, texts
12) Giguere, Miriam, Temple, 2007	<i>The Mind in Motion: An Examination of Children's Cognition Within the Creative Process in Dance</i>	Data collection/analysis, practice-based (teaching), phenomenology	Grounded theory, qualitative, textual analysis, coding, utilized videos, journals, brainstorming sessions, interviews
13) Hayne, Mary E., TWU, 2007	<i>On the Move: Researching Dance in a Multiply-Cultured World</i>	Theory/text analysis (of texts/theory), turning dance into a “text” to be read, using a dance (the cakewalk) to support a theory	Theory/text analysis (of texts / theory), turning dance into a “text” to be read, using a dance (the cakewalk) to support a theory

Table 1, continued

14) Kandare, Camilla Eleonora, Riverside, 2009	<i>Figuring a Queen: Queen Christina of Sweden and the Embodiment of Sovereignty</i>	Performance studies, “dance theory” (Susan Foster, Mark Franko, but not writing about a dance), history (but not of a dance or dancer): Queen Christina archives	Case study, poststructuralist theory, reading dance as text, poststructuralism, Descartes, Austin, Derrida, Butler, Foucault, speech act theory, linguistics
15) Kornelly, Sharon, Temple, 2008	<i>Dancing Culture, Culture Dancing: Celebrating Pacifica in Aotearoa/ New Zealand</i>	Anthropological theories of performance, performance studies, ethnography (participant/observer, went somewhere)	Anthropological theories of performance, performance studies, ethnography (participant/observer, went somewhere)
16) Milling-Robbins, Stephanie, TWU, 2007	<i>Evolving Identities: An Investigation into Female Ballet Dancers' Perceptions of Self and Vocation</i>	Women’s studies, case study/grounded theory, interviews only (author made a point to say it was only interviews)	Feminist/gender theory on ballet, disability studies, gathering and analyzing data
17) Nayfack, Shakina, Riverside, 2009	<i>Butoh Ritual Mexicano: An Ethnography of Dance, Transformation, and Community Redevelopment</i>	Theoretical models of post-Marxist geography, tourism studies, feminist ethnography	Performance theory, ethnography, body-centered approach, using images and stories, Taussig inspired embodied memory, spatial theory, theory of critical spectatorship, feminist analysis, queer ethnography
18) Nijhawan, Amita, Riverside, 2007	<i>We Are Cool Now...in Hamara India: Bikinis, Bike Races and Dancing Bodies in the “Age of Globalization”</i>	Dance studies, film studies, cultural studies	Close analysis of dancing and moving, cultural history, semiotic analysis of dancing bodies in filmic narratives, analysis of live dances, South Asian studies
19) Odhiambo, Seonagh, Temple, 2008	<i>A Conversation with Dance History: Movement and Meaning in the Cultural Body</i>	Transhistorical approach (archives, documents, photos), intertextual analysis, hermeneutics	Having “a conversation with discursive practices,” multi-modal study, intercorporeal theory, archives, elder interviews, oral histories, reflective narrative, semiotic analysis, historical narrative, scrapbook approach, heuristic approach, practice-based (choreographic process and teaching), transnational, transphenomenal approach

Table 1, continued

20) Paris, Carl F., Temple, 2008	<i>Aesthetics and Representation in Neo-Afro Modern Dance in the Late 20th Century: Examining Selected Works by Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, Ronald K. Brown, and Reggie Wilson</i>	Cultural studies, ethnographic (interviews), descriptive/hermeneutic	Biography, performance philosophy by artists, case-study, philosophical discourses, interdisciplinary approach: ethnic studies, anthropology, performance, feminist, and gender studies, critical pedagogy, critical theory, hermeneutic, phenomenology, postcolonial studies, philosophical dance and cultural studies, dance theory (Langer, Sklar, Hodgens), heuristic, interviews, biographical materials, “readings” of “choreographic texts,” semiotics, cultural theory, reflective/philosophical/aesthetic mode of inquiry grounded in black dance/cultural studies
21) Quinn, Linda, TWU, 2007	<i>Necessary Circles: A Journey into the Core of the Dallas/Fort Worth Urban Indian Pow-Wow</i>	Ethnographic: participant/observation, dance ethnology LMA	Lens of intersectionality, detailed field notes, audio tape, interviews, fieldwork, video, audio, direct participation, bodily participation, qualitative movement analysis, free writing, research design dictated by dance structure
22) Randall, Tresa M., Temple, 2008	<i>Hanya Holm in America, 1931-1936: Dance, Culture and Community</i>	Practice-based methods (teaching), dance history (dance history authors), historical methodology	Historical methodology: lectures, reports, promotional material, newspaper articles, personal notebooks, correspondence, photos
23) Richard, Byron, Temple, 2009	<i>“Daddy, Root Me In”: Tethering Young Sons in the Context of Male, Inter-generational, Child-Centered, Dance Education</i>	Phenomenological methods (video tape transcriptions), movement analysis, practice-based	Video tape transcriptions, narrative analysis, captioned drawings (of the dance practice), aesthetic philosophy, bioaesthetics, LMA, developmental theory, theory of aesthetic community, thick description, qualitative research, multiple methods, empirical materials, practice orientation, action research, autobiographical elements, self-study, interviews
24) Rizzo, Laura Katz, Temple, 2008	<i>How “The Sleeping Beauty” Awoke in Philadelphia: Classical Ballet in the Modern American Context, Historicizing the Canon of Classical Ballet</i>	Historical approaches (video footage, newspapers, books, magazines), ballet history, women’s studies/feminist dimension/lens and theory	Observing and examining versions of the ballet, asking philosophical questions, interviews, embodied understanding, own knowledge and perspective, “multi-disciplinary qualitative approach”, phenomenology, anthropology, primary source documents, ethnographic approach, postmodern theory, critical theory, embodied knowledge as lens
25) Roh, Youngjae, Riverside, 2007	<i>Choreographing Local and Global Discourses: Ballet, Women, and National Identity</i>	Historical narrative feminist lens/ approach/perspective, globalization theory	Case study, feminist inquiry, feminist theories, own perspective as lens, Korean feminism

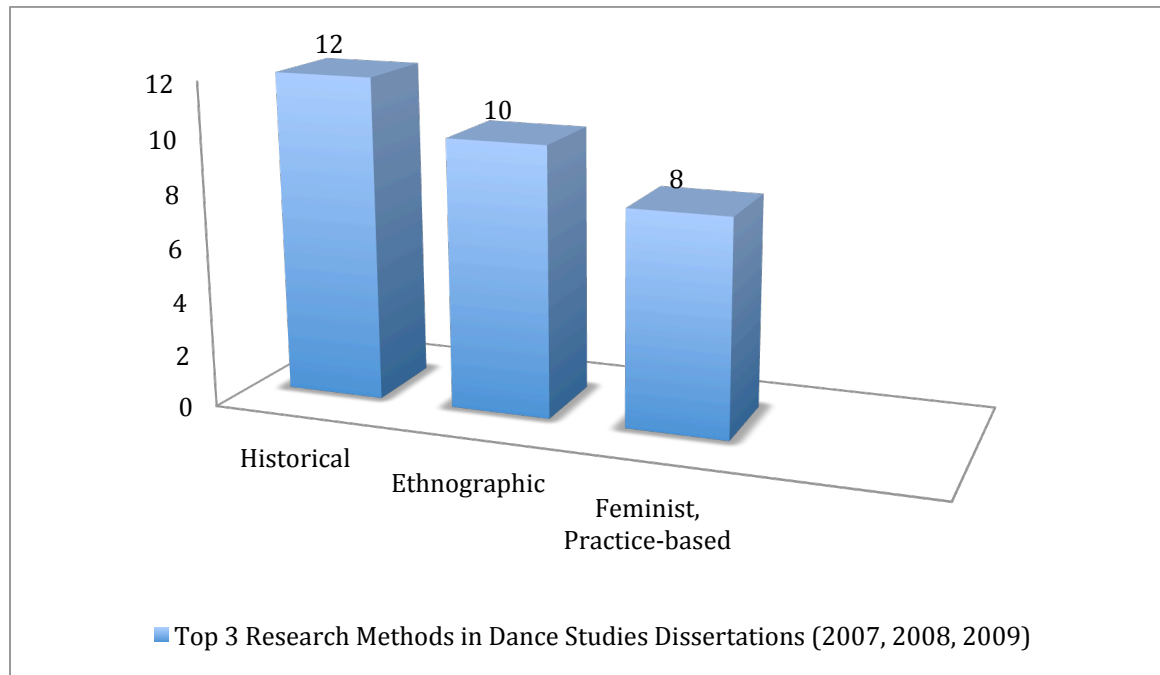
Table 1, continued

26) Satkuna-ratnam, Ahalya, Riverside, 2009	<i>Moving Bodies, Navigating Conflict: Practicing Bharata Natyam in Colombo, Sri Lanka</i>	Feminist dance ethnography, feminist studies, cultural studies	(Implied) feminist cultural history of Sri Lanka via a dance, historical analysis, “methods of dance studies” (dance studies methods?), fieldwork, cultural studies, feminist theory, cultural geography, dance studies analysis of the dancing body, dance ethnography, halfie or hyphenated ethnography
27) Seyler, Elizabeth Marie, Temple, 2008	<i>The Tango Philadelphia Story: A Mixed-Methods Study of Building Community, Enhancing Lives, and Exploring Spirituality through Argentine Tango</i>	Survey, interviews, ethnographic, (participant/ researcher)	Dance history, qualitative, quantitative, data collection, phenomenological, postpositivist quantitative, surveys, phenomenological interviews, data collection, questionnaire, open ended and closed questioning, concurrent nested procedures, sequential procedures, journal, examined primary sources, participant/ researcher, coding, interaction analysis, data transformation, univariate and bivariate analysis, poetic transcription
28) Stevens, Cheryl M., Temple, 2007	<i>One Language, Different Dialects: The Cross-Cultural Investigation of Ghanaian Students Learning the Umfundalai African Dance Technique</i>	Practice-based (teaching), movement analysis, ethnographic (participant /observer)	Gathering video and photographs, journals, contemporary African dance history, cross-cultural study, field work in another country (as opposed to local field work), experience, observe and describe, practice based: studied (as well as teaching), multi-method, movement description, analysis, lived experience (phenomenology)
29) Stroik, Adrienne, Riverside, 2007	<i>The World's Columbian Exposition of 1893: The Production of Fair Performers and Fairgoers</i>	Historical methods (not dance history: primary source materials), movement analysis (not of dance), practice-based (reconstruction of an event)	Textual analysis, historical methods (not dance history: primary source materials), movement analysis (not of dance), practice-based (reconstruction of an event)
30) Van Oort, Jessica, Temple, 2009	<i>Dancing in Body and Spirit: Dance and Sacred Performance in Thirteenth-Century Beguine Texts</i>	Textual/contextual analysis, historical analysis, de Certeauian framework (philosophy/ theory)	History, thematically analyzes four texts, examines textual evidence, textual analysis, literary study, postpositivist, postmodern literary theory, feminist theory, deconstruction, own embodied experience of dance subject
31) Vieira, Alba Pedreira, Temple, 2007	<i>The Nature of Pedagogical Quality in Higher Dance Education</i>	Phenomenological hermeneutics, experiential inquiry, teaching philosophy	Case study, interpretive biography, email interviews, experiential knowledge
32) Wilson, Margaret A., TWU, 2007	<i>Knowing in the Body: A Dancer's Emergent Epistemology</i>	Practice-based research method (teaching) (feminist) data collection, case study, grounded theory	Generating data for analysis/data collection, case study, grounded theory, ethnographic, qualitative, quantitative, phenomenological, constructivist, coding data, creating portraits

After creating the database above (**Table 1**), I then created a “Top 3” and a “Top 5” list of the most commonly utilized research methods in dance studies dissertations from 2007-09. The “Top 3” methods used in dance studies dissertations from 2007-09 are:

1. Historical
2. Ethnographic
3. Feminist and Practice-Based (tied for third place)

Table 2: Top 3 Research Methods in Dance Studies Dissertations 2007, 2008, 2009



Historical Methods

Twelve authors (not quite half) stated that they utilized historical or dance historical methods. The category of historical methods includes dance historical as well as what one author called “trans-historical” methods. In “From Idea to Proposal” in *Evolving Modes of Inquiry*, Professor of Dance and Chair of the Dance Department at Texas Woman’s University, Penelope Hanstein discusses the mode of dance historical writing:

Historiography as a mode of inquiry reflects a way of thinking about dance that draws one to understand and explain the past. The historian asks questions about the events, art works, and personalities that shaped dance in the past. Historical inquiry seeks to create a meaningful interpretation of what happened and in some cases, why it happened and how it relates to who and what we are today.³⁰⁰

³⁰⁰ Penelope Hanstein, “From Idea to Proposal,” *Researching Dance: Evolving Modes of Inquiry*, Eds. Sondra Fraleigh Horton, Penelope Hanstein (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999) 43.

In Tresa M. Randall's dissertation, "Hanya Holm in America, 1931-1936: Dance, Culture and Community" (Temple University, 2008), Randall reports utilizing historical methodology, which in her case, includes an examination of lectures, reports, promotional material, newspaper articles, personal notebooks, correspondence, and photos. In the introduction to Randall's dissertation, in addition to stating that she utilizes historical methodology, she mentions using practice-based methods (teaching), and dance history (dance history authors); these methods seem to be Randall's primary methods.³⁰¹

Randall writes,

This study uses a historical methodology and accesses traces of the past such as lecture, school reports, promotional material, newspaper articles, personal notebooks, correspondence photographs, and other material—much of it discussed here for the first time. These sources provide evidence for new descriptions and interpretations of Holm's migration from Germany to the U.S. and from German dance to American dance.³⁰²

This passage from Randall's dissertation abstract articulates that her primary use of the historical method is archival. More specifically, she is using biographical and other historical materials about an artist to create a "new" interpretation of an "old" dance story. Randall utilizes historical methods in combination with other modes to create new knowledge in dance history, acknowledging that there are historical method-specific challenges. In this case, Randall writes that historical methods are "messy" because "sources from the past are often unpredictable."³⁰³ She continues:

³⁰¹ It is common for dance studies authors during this period to combine text and/or theory-based approaches (such as history) with practice-based methods (such as teaching dance as a mode of research).

³⁰² Tresa M. Randall, "Hanya Holm in America, 1931-1936: Dance, Culture and Community" (PhD diss., Temple University, 2008) iv-v.

³⁰³ Randall, *Hanya Holm in America*, 16.

I could not always find what I sought, and I discovered unexpected treasures buried in unlikely places. The methods I used to locate my sources are almost as varied as the sources themselves.³⁰⁴

Historical methods are the most commonly used methods in dance studies dissertations from this period, indicating that dance studies authors are willing to work with a the messiness of the past.

Another example from the many dance studies dissertations that utilize historical methods is Adrienne Stroik's dissertation, "The World's Columbian Exposition of 1893: The Production of Fair Performers and Fairgoers" (University of California at Riverside, 2007). In the abstract, Stroik states that her methods include historical methods, movement analysis, and historical reconstruction (but not reconstructing a dance). In the Introduction to her dissertation it becomes clear that Stroik's historical methods do not include dance history, which one might reasonably expect, considering hers is a dance studies dissertation. Rather than utilizing dance historical materials, Stroik states that she will analyze texts, pamphlets, and other primary source materials relating to the Fair. Stroik's other main methods include movement analysis (of the people at the fair in 1893—not of dance), historical reconstruction (of a non-dance event), and textual analysis.

Stroik's dissertation is not "about dance" per se. In the abstract she writes, "This dissertation examines performers and fairgoers at the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition, the first World's Exposition in the U.S."³⁰⁵ In the Introduction, she describes:

³⁰⁴ Randall, *Hanya Holm in America*, 16.

³⁰⁵ Adrienne Stroik, "The World's Columbian Exposition of 1893: The Production of Fair Performers and Fairgoers," PhD dissertation (University of California at Riverside, 2007), v.

My analysis draws from and builds upon the writings of late twentieth-century historians who have examined and theorized how matters of race, ethnicity, international politics, and gender were signaled at the Fair.³⁰⁶

Although Stroik works with other historians' writing on the same topic and utilizes historical methods such as analyzing documents, she also utilizes historical reconstruction, a research method that allowed her to take a "fictive stroll through the fairgrounds." In writing history, researchers face issues of "fact" and "fiction." In *Beyond the Great Story: History as Text and Discourse*, Robert F. Berkhofer describes fact and fiction as a range of discourse existing on a spectrum. He writes:

History, historical fiction, fictional history, and fiction all exist along a spectrum ranging from supposedly pure factual representation of literal, historical truth to nonliteral, invented fictional representation of fantasy. No work of history conveys only literal truth through factuality, and few novels, even science fiction ones, depict only pure fantasy.³⁰⁷

Although there were no dissertation authors in this period that utilized science fiction as a method for dance research—and it may seem absurd to suggest science fiction as a research method for dance—the passage above inspires the idea that fiction (if not science fiction) may be worth considering as an approach to dance writing. Some dense and heavily worked theoretical writing already reads as somewhat removed from the materiality of the body and of "facts" (the purpose of some theoretical writing is, in fact, to destabilize the authority and given nature of "fact"); therefore, why not explore dance in and through fiction as a mode of research? Randall writes:

Imagination was a key element of my interaction with the primary sources of this study, and yet I knew that my imaginings were not arbitrary, for they were intimately tied to the subject through the closeness of my sources. I also endeavored to get a sense of personalities—Holm's and other major figures in

³⁰⁶ Stroik, *The World's Columbian Exposition of 1893*, 2.

³⁰⁷ Robert F. Berkhofer, *Beyond the Great Story: History as Text and Discourse* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 67.

my narrative—in order to imagine why they did what they did, or said what they said, or wrote what they wrote. I tried to imagine what it was like at the New York Wigman School in the early 1930s. Memories by former students about the smell of the studio, the kind of floor it had, the fact that it was very warm in the summer—all these gave me imaginative fodder, and added to other kinds of evidence such as photographs and school brochures.³⁰⁸

The best dance studies work pushes boundaries in this way and uses all (interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary) methods and resources available to the researcher including his or her imagination and experience. In Randall's attempt to capture "the truth" or the reality of her subject by using imagination, her writing becomes sensual and embodied. This next section explores the second most common method in dance studies dissertations: ethnographic methods.

Ethnographic Methods

Ten authors in this study utilized ethnography as one of their main methods. It should be pointed out that the use of an ethnographic method does not qualify the dissertation as "an ethnography." For the purposes of this examination of dissertations, if the researcher did not actually go somewhere to conduct their fieldwork, I did not categorize those dissertations as ethnographies. For example, if the author conducted interviews via email, while the interviews could be categorized as an ethnographic method, the dissertation as a whole was not considered an ethnography.

Similarly, authors who conducted interviews as one of their methods do not always identify the way in which they conduct their interviews as an ethnographic method. For instance, some authors describe their method of interviewing as feminist data collection, biographical methods, historical methods, or phenomenological methods. Therefore, the interview, like many other research methods or techniques should not be

³⁰⁸ Randall, *Hanya Holm in America*, 23.

conceived as belonging solely to one discipline or another, although some methods may be considered more “native to” a particular discipline than to others and/or some disciplines just utilize or return to certain research methods more than others. For example, feminist theory is unambiguously “native to” women’s studies, although researchers from religion, political science, performance studies and dance studies utilize feminist theory as a method or as a lens.

In the abstract of Ying-Chu Chen’s dissertation, “When Ballet Meets Taiwan: The Development and Survival of the Taiwanese Ballet” (Temple University, 2008), Chen indicates that her methods include: semi-structured interviewing, grounded theory, historical archives, fieldwork, and an internet search. In Chen’s methods section she writes that she utilizes historical methods, oral interview, archives, semi-structured interviewing, inductive coding, ethnographic methods (traveling to Taiwan), and ethnographic field notes. Chen’s main research question is:

[H]ow does an imported art form develop and survive in the present in a culture that has adopted it, even while creating a new and unique cross cultural identity for itself in the future?³⁰⁹

In order to answer this question, Chen creates eight extensive and varied sub-questions ranging in scope and content in order to explore the influences of globalization and ballet training and curriculum in Taiwan. She writes,

Each of these sub-questions explores, in one or more aspects, the central question from cultural, social, historical, educational, or artistic perspectives. In answering these questions, I hope to weave together a historical narrative of how the Taiwanese ballet was established in the past, how it is developing in the present, and where it is heading in the future.

³⁰⁹ Ying-Chu Chen, “When Ballet Meets Taiwan: The Development and Survival of the Taiwanese Ballet,” PhD dissertation (Temple University, 2008) 14.

In order to accomplish this, Chen's research methodology, in part, includes conducting field research in Taiwan. The ethnographic method here is utilized to support the revelation and articulation of these many levels, angles, and perspectives in relationship to her research question and sub-questions. Chen reports that traveling to Taiwan and staying there for an extended period would have been ideal for her research, however, she was only able to spend ten months in Taiwan. Interviews played a central part of Chen's research and she writes about how interviews supported her understanding of individual and collective perspectives on her subject:

Interviewing a group of artists who worked within the same environment would allow me to explore the survival and struggle in a particular company in depth and allow them to express their individual and collective experiences and aspirations from various perspectives.³¹⁰

By participating in the dance event and other elements of a culture including language, music, art, and food, the ethnographic method attempts to understand something—from the inside as well as from the “outside”—about another's point of view.³¹¹ Sometimes referred to as a qualitative research method and at other times as a science, at the heart of the ethnographic method there is the attempt to stay connected to the practice. Quinn writes:

Ethnographic study gives one the tools for meaningful engagement, for appreciating others, for understanding why it is important to us all as members of a global community to study how we create our lives. ... I wanted to discover, through my own body, what indeed lies in the movement as a key to describing this community in motion.³¹²

Here Quinn articulates the meaningfulness of an embodied experience as a direct connection to practice and how experience and engagement benefits all members of a

³¹⁰ Chen, *When Ballet Meets Taiwan*, 31.

³¹¹ Quinn, *Necessary Circles*, 18.

³¹² Quinn, *Necessary Circles*, 19.

global community (i.e., engagement benefits all of us). The purpose of the ethnographic participant/observer method is to experience, embody, or at minimum, participate in the dance or the culture one is studying. Dance scholars use participation as a way to appreciate, understand, and articulate movement knowledge. Quinn cites dance scholar and ethnographer, Deidre Sklar, who writes, “Movement embodies socially constructed cultural knowledge in which corporeality, emotion, and abstraction are intertwined.”³¹³ Sklar also describes this connection to physical knowledge as “dropping down into the body.” Directional hierarchies aside, embodied research methods such as ethnographic methods of participation and observation provide a direct connection to the practice. Dance ethnography is a direct attempt to produce research in and through the experience of dance, movement, and the body and often changes the researchers perspective in productive ways. Quinn writes:

My participation in this study was my attempt to learn about Native Americans through their own movement forms, as opposed to my own comfortable Eurocentric lens.³¹⁴

Quinn and Chen are only some examples of the many dissertation authors in this study that utilize ethnography as a primary method in their research. On its own or in combination with other modes and techniques, ethnography connects directly with dance practice and often succeeds in destabilizing a Eurocentric lens in and through the act of participation. In and through the experience of participation, the researcher’s ability to understand and articulate their subject is made stronger and more embodied by engaging with other individual and/or collective voices, as they mingle with one’s own.

³¹³ Quinn, *Necessary Circles*, 19.

³¹⁴ Quinn, *Necessary Circles*, 25.

In my experience as a dance scholar, there is a qualitative difference in my research and writing after meeting and speaking with others on a particular subject; compared with my research and writing that I produce “alone” or only using published texts. As a human, I am wired for relationship and connection; so after speaking and connecting with others, the material connection made can actually be felt and sensed in my writing. Connecting with others changes my tone; my writing becomes grounded, it gains in depth and clarity, it is more pleasant to read, and the reader may sense that my knowledge is more integrated; as a source, I become more trustworthy.

The next two sections explore Feminist Methods and Practice-Based methods; both of these method categories tied for third place. (The “Top 3” methods used in dance studies dissertations are History, Ethnography, Feminist, and Practice-Based methods.)

Feminist Methods

Eight authors in this study utilize feminist inquiry as one of their main methods and eight authors utilize practice-based methods. The category “Feminist Methods” includes women’s studies methods and queer theory.

In the abstract of her dissertation “Moving Bodies, Navigating Conflict: Practicing Bharata Natyam in Colombo, Sri Lanka” (University of California, Riverside, 2009), Ahalya Satkunaratanam states that she utilizes historical analysis of a culture and historical analysis of issues of nation (from the Introduction), methods of dance studies, dance ethnography, and feminist studies. What is implied in Satkunaratanam’s dissertation abstract is that her research is a feminist cultural history of Sri Lanka via a dance. In the Introduction, Satkunaratanam states that her methods include: fieldwork, cultural studies,

feminist theory, cultural geography, dance studies analysis of the dancing body, dance ethnography (“a method of dance studies”), halfie or hyphenated ethnography, and feminist dance ethnography.

Satkunaratnam’s work is connected to practice in and through her research process as a feminist ethnographer; she enters the field and makes a feminist inquiry at the intersection of women’s bodies, gender, and national identity among other identifiers.

She writes:

In this dissertation, I draw on dance ethnography to remain engaged in the nuanced processes of dance practice, from entering into new relationships with practitioners to understanding the resistance of my own body to engage in new practices.³¹⁵

In her dissertation abstract Satkunaratnam writes:

I also draw upon feminist studies to highlight the relationships between women and their strategic negotiations of power. By focusing on dance, I pay careful attention to women’s dance practices as work and the ways in which women negotiate their power within an experience of war.³¹⁶

It should be noted that the category of feminist inquiry or feminist dance research does not necessarily produce embodied dance scholarship; nor does it mean that the theory or method will even be connected to dance practice. However, like Quinn, Satkunaratnam reflects on her own identity as part of shaping understanding and meaning; as a result, embodied scholarship is created due to her self-reflection that she brings forward in her research. Reflecting on her identity as an ethnographer and as a feminist, Satkunaratnam writes:

After a little over a year I the field, I came back to the home of my parents in Chicago, in the U.S. By the time of my departure, I was exhausted with living in

³¹⁵ Ahalya Satkunaratnam, “Moving Bodies, Navigating Conflict: Practicing Bharata Natyam in Colombo, Sri Lanka,” PhD dissertation (University of California at Riverside, 2009), 21.

³¹⁶ Satkunaratnam, *Moving Bodies, Navigating Conflict*, viii.

Sri Lanka. I had entitlement to be exhausted, knowing there was an escape scheduled soon. My criticisms of daily life mirrored those of the colonial-bourgeois woman. In my apartment, I would say, “I can’t bear the heat.” At the bank, I would complain, “Everything is so slow, people are just not working hard enough.” Frustrated, sitting in the back of a rickshaw immobilized in the traffic of Colombo, I would think, “I am so tired of this, I just want to move.”³¹⁷

As a mode of research, feminist theory or feminist inquiry does not necessarily draw upon one's experience. There is a large body of highly theoretical work in feminism that does not directly address (or accept) the body as a given; it does not work with actual experience directly or explicitly and, yet, this body of highly theoretical feminist work still makes substantial and important contributions to issues of the body and experience. This is to say that different research modes are effective for different purposes. Satkunaratanam's work is an example of feminist writing that brings forward self-reflective experience of her body and identity in a direct and material way, producing embodied scholarship, as a result.

There are of course examples of disembodied feminist writing, feminist scholarship that purposefully sidesteps discussions of the actual body as a material given in favor of “more complex” theoretical threads. This research is not an analysis of feminist methods; rather, it is study of dance studies research methods. Therefore, my suggestions are for the field of dance research: embodied dance writing (more than the highly theoretical modes of writing) may better serve the dance practice, dance as a discipline, and the dance practitioners.

As mentioned above, there was a tie between practice-based and feminist methods. Eight authors in this study state that they utilize a practice-based method as one

³¹⁷ Satkunaratanam, *Moving Bodies, Navigating Conflict*, 191.

of their main methods (including teaching, creating, performing, and reconstruction). The next section briefly explores practice-based methods.

Practice-Based Methods

Cheryl M. Stevens's dissertation, "One Language, Different Dialects: the Cross-Cultural Investigation of Ghanaian Students Learning" (Temple University, 2007) is an example of research that uses practice-based methods. From the abstract, Stevens states that she utilizes practice-based teaching, movement analysis, participant/observer (ethnographic fieldwork), gathering video, photographs, and journals, and utilizing contemporary and African dance history. In the Introduction to her dissertation, Stevens writes that her methods include: cross-cultural study, observer-participant, experience, observation, and practice based methods, which includes: teaching, studying, multi-method, cross cultural, movement description, journal analysis, and lived experience (phenomenology). Stevens writes:

The central focus of this research study was to examine the specific and articulate ways that the selected group of Ghanaian dance students processed and performed a beginning level Umfundalai vocabulary. To accurately address my research question I studied the following Ghanaian dances: Adowa, Agbadza, Kpanlogo, Akom, Bawa, Bamaya, and Gahu. I studied these dances to derive seven signature movements that I used to compare to the seven Umfundalai core movements.³¹⁸

This passage illustrates Stevens's immersion in the dances themselves in order to generate signature movements with which she produces a comparison of the seven Umfundalai core movements as a way of examining them. Stevens's methods are rooted

³¹⁸ Cheryl M. Stevens, "One Language, Different Dialects: The Cross-Cultural Investigation of Ghanaian Students Learning the Umfundalai African Dance Technique." PhD diss. (Temple University, 2007), 18.

in African dance practices both from the United States and from Ghana; the result is a dance studies dissertation using practice-based methods. In a practice-based mode, the researcher utilizes the practice (teaching, rehearsing, or performing) to generate “data.” Stevens describes her cross-cultural teaching as a practice-based method that brings forward new knowledge in dance and produces culturally significant meanings. She writes,

My research will bring forth new knowledge that goes beyond descriptions of traditional dances and enters the realm of the shared lived experience of communication through two languages of African dance, Umfundalai and Ghanaian dance.³¹⁹

While ethnography, as a method, is not groundbreaking from a dance studies perspective, a *practice-based mode that connects culturally significant meaning with medium based analysis* may be closest to a “dance studies” method specific to the discipline of dance. Dance-practice based modes of research are not (they cannot be) borrowed from other fields. Further, a practice-based mode that is not separated from social and political realms is important for the study of dance. Medium based and social, political, and/or identity based writing and practice do not often share the same space. The way that Stevens works in and through African dances, utilizing the dance practice, as a way of generating cross-cultural understanding is an exciting seed of dance studies based research (rather than “giving away” dance experience to phenomenology). The practice based methods created and utilized by Stevens and others (unlike the practice based methods such as Laban Movement Analysis) make social, political, and aesthetic analysis simultaneously in and through their dance practice (in Stevens’s case, teaching) and their research and writing. When practice-based concerns are intrinsically connected

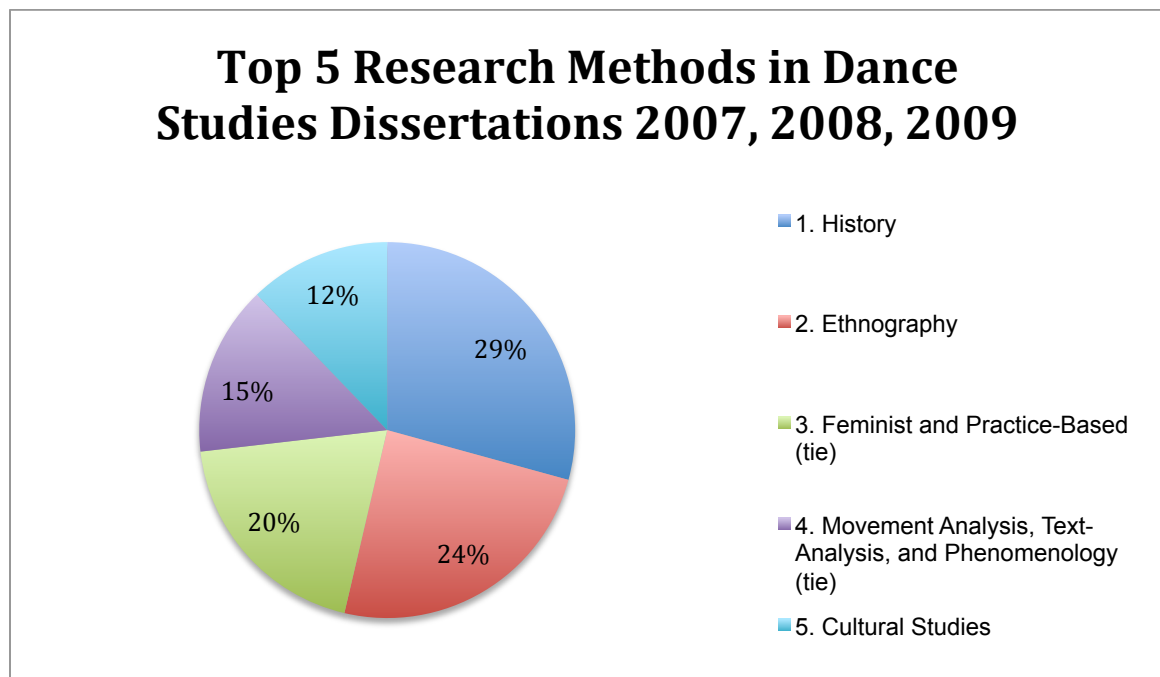
³¹⁹ Stevens, *One Language, Different Dialects*, 35.

to social and political issues of the body, then a separate overlay of cultural or identity theory is not needed. A separate and often disconnected “reading” of identity is not needed when identity is understood in and through the dance practice as an art or as a social, political, and cultural practice. Stevens’s research demonstrates how to use dance practice to study and describe issues of dance as a medium while exploring the identity issues and concerns in and through dance, movement, and the body. A closer examination of practice-based methods like Stevens would be a fruitful area for future research toward the development of dance studies based methods that are both culturally significant and grounded in dance practice.

Returning now to my own methods for this chapter, after establishing the “Top 3” methods briefly discussed above, the next list I created indicates the “Top 5” methods used, which are listed below and illustrated in **Table 3**:

1. Historical
2. Ethnographic
3. Feminist and Practice Based (tied for third place)
4. Movement Analysis, Text Analysis, and Phenomenology (three-way tie)
5. Cultural Studies

Table 3. Top 5 Research Methods in Dance Studies Dissertations 2007, 2008, 2009. Feminist and Practice-Based methods occur equally (8 times each), as do Movement Analysis, Text Analysis, and Phenomenology (6 times each).



These categories of methods arose out of what the authors stated as their research methods. As mentioned earlier, many authors stated they used *many* more than three methods and several authors stated the utilization of more than five methods. When reading through the 32 dissertations, the primary research methods usually emerged very clearly. Dissertation authors return again and again to descriptions of the particular ways in which they are conducting their research. When the primary methods did not clearly emerge, I looked at the dissertation overall (at the “big picture”) to determine the primary methods.

For example, in Elizabeth Marie Seyler’s dissertation “The Tango Philadelphia Story: A Mixed-methods Study of Building Community, Enhancing Lives, and Exploring Spirituality through Argentine Tango,” Seyler states in her abstract that she utilizes

mixed methods: dance history, community profile, qualitative, quantitative, surveys, data collection, phenomenological inquiry, individual narrative, and interviews. In her “Research Methods” chapter, Seyler mentions that she utilizes ethnographic (participant/researcher), constructivist theory/constructivist qualitative, postpositivist quantitative, surveys, questionnaires, interviews, phenomenological interviews, data collection, open ended and closed questioning, concurrent nested procedures, sequential procedures, journals, examined primary sources, coding, interaction analysis, data transformation, univariate and bivariate analysis, quantitative variables, poetic transcription, and her own experience.³²⁰

Since there were so many stated research methods and research techniques (stated in slightly different ways in the abstract and methods chapter) I had to take a step back and consider the whole project over all. I decided that participating in the community under examination (where she conducted interviews and generated surveys) was most important to her work. Surveys and interviews seemed to receive the most emphasis in the abstract and methods sections of her dissertation; therefore, I designated surveys, interviews, and ethnographic methods as Seyler’s primary research methods.

Table 4 (below) illustrates the primary methods used in dance studies dissertations from 2007-09 ranked in order of most to least common.

³²⁰ Elizabeth Marie Seyler, “The Tango Philadelphia Story: A Mixed-Methods Study of Building Community, Enhancing Lives, and Exploring Spirituality through Argentine Tango.” PhD diss., Temple University, 2008.

Table 4. Primary Research Methods in Dance Studies Dissertations 2007-09³²¹

Primary Research Method Used in Dance Studies Dissertations 2007-09	Comments
Historical	(12) Twelve authors (not quite half) stated that they utilized historical or dance historical methods. This category of historical methods also includes dance historical methods as well as what one author called “trans-historical” methods.
Ethnographic Methods	(10) Ten authors in this study stated ethnography as one of their primary methods.
Feminist Methods	(8) There was a tie between Feminist methods and Practice-Based methods. Eight authors in this study utilize feminist inquiry as one of their main methods. The category “Feminist” includes women’s studies methods as well as queer theory.
Practice-Based Method	(8) There was a tie between Practice-Based and Feminist methods. Eight authors in this study utilized a Practice-Based method as one of their main methods. This method includes teaching, creating, performing, and reconstruction as a method of data collection, observation and others.
Movement Analysis	(6) There was a tie between Movement-Analysis, Text Analysis and Phenomenology. Six authors in this study stated that they utilized Movement Analysis as one of their methods. Movement Analysis includes LMA thick description.
Text Analysis	(6) There was a tie between Text Analysis, Movement Analysis, and Phenomenology. Six authors in this study utilized Text Analysis as one of their main methods. This category also includes what some authors call intertextual and contextual analysis.
Phenomenology	(6) There was a tie between Phenomenology, Movement Analysis, and Text Analysis. Six authors in this study utilized Movement analysis as one of their main methods. This category includes Phenomenological Hermeneutics and Hermeneutics.

³²¹ Note about subjects: There were only two dissertations that did not use dance as their subject.

Table 4, continued

Cultural Studies	(5) Five authors in this study stated that they utilized Cultural Studies as one of their methods.
Grounded Theory	(4) Four authors in this study stated that they utilized Grounded Theory as one of their methods.
Turning dance into a “text” to be “read”	(3) Three authors utilized this mode of research method. Turning dance into a text to be read was tied with interviews. While some may rightly consider this deconstructive methodology, or literary theory, some authors did not read the dance as a text in this way, nor did they identify it as deconstruction; rather, it was utilized more as a transposition or poetic translation than a theoretical trend of deconstruction. The use of “theory” is closely examined in more detail later in this chapter.
Interviews	(3) Three authors utilized interviews as one of the main methods in their research. Interviews are tied with turning a dance into a text as a method. The category of interview is separate from ethnography and from history because many authors who utilized interviews as a method did not travel anywhere, therefore I did not call it ethnography. Interviews can also be categorized as phenomenology, but I did not categorize it as phenomenological unless the author identified the method as phenomenological.
Educational Philosophy	(2) Two authors in this study stated that they utilized Educational Philosophy as a method.
Cultural History	(2) Two authors in this study stated that they utilized Cultural History as a method.
Dance Studies	(2) Two authors in this study stated that they utilized Dance Studies methods.
“Theory”³²²	(2) Two authors in this study stated that they utilized “theory” as one of their methods. This category includes postmodern and critical theory.
Performance Studies	(2) Two authors in this study stated that they utilized Performance Studies methods.
Anthropological Theories of Performance	(1) * The remainder of the research methods on this list occurred in the dissertations only once. In other words, only one author overtly stated that he or she utilized one of the remaining theories in this section.

³²² This category also could be labeled postmodern, theory/critical theory. Van Oort uses a de Certeauian framework while Bory just indicated that “critical theory” is used.

Table 4, continued

Experiential Inquiry	(1) *
Embodied Research Methodology	(1) *
Postcolonial Theory	(1) *
Personal Experience	(1) *
Data Analysis	(1) *
Diasporic Studies	(1) *
Auto/biographical	(1) *
Globalization Theory	(1) *
Surveys	(1) *
Using a Dance to Explore a Theory	(1) *
Dance Ethnology	(1) *
Dance Theory	(1) *
Film Studies	(1) *
Tourism Studies	(1) *
Philosophy (Deconstruction)	(1) *

I then created a list of the research methods used in the dissertations from each of the three universities reviewed in this study. **Table 5** (below) illustrates these results:

Table 5. Primary Methods Used By Schools (based on primary methods used as stated by dissertation writers except for “American Cultural History,” which is a category I created distinguishable from Cultural History).³²³

Method	Texas	Temple	Riverside
Historical	-	9	3
Ethnographic	1	5	4
Feminist	2	-	5
Practice-Based	1	6	1
Movement Analysis	1	2	3
Text Analysis	1	3	2
Phenomenology	-	6	1
Cultural Studies	-	1	4
Grounded Theory	2	2	-

³²³ In the abstract of James A. Frazier’s dissertation “Saying It Loud: The Cultural and Socio-Political Activism of Choreographer Jawole Willa Jo Zollar” (Temple University, 2007), Frazier indicates that his dissertation is a *dance history*, a *biography of choreographer*, and a *cultural history*. From the methodology section of his dissertation, Frazier reports using methods including philosophical inquiry, history/historical methods, ethnographic description, movement description from video, practice-based methods (bringing forward knowledge based on experience), texts, interviews, and prioritizing race in an *American social context*. I felt like it was important to challenge the assumed yardstick when a cultural history is mentioned/utilized/created. Therefore, rather than assuming American history is the dominant norm (thus, not a “Cultural History”) while all other non-American histories are “Cultural Histories,” I thought that was important to create a category of American Cultural History since the author emphasized “race in an American social context” was important to his research. As you can see in **Table 1, Table 5, and Table 6** American Cultural History was only used once by this one author. When creating the table of Primary Methods Used By School this method is indicated. (**Table 5 and 6**) Otherwise, this category was folded into “History.”

Please note: The quantity of dissertations examined per school should be kept in mind when looking at these numbers. I examined all dissertations published in 2007, 2008, and 2009 from each of the schools: Texas (5), Temple (16), and Riverside (11).

A hyphen (-) indicates that no authors used that method as one of their primary methods (Top 3). It is not uncommon for dissertation writers to use five or more methods, discourses, or frameworks. Thus, if a school is listed as not utilizing a particular method, it does not mean there were no dissertations using that method; rather, it indicates that it was not one of the primary methods.

Table 5, continued

Reading Dance as “Text”	1	1	1
Interviews	1	2	-
Educational Philosophy	1	1	-
Cultural History	1	-	1
Dance Studies	-	-	2
Critical Theory	-	1	1
Performance Studies	-	1	1
Anthropological Theories of Performance	-	1	-
Experiential Inquiry	-	1	-
Embodied Research Methodology	-	1	-
Postcolonial Theory	1	-	-
Surveys	-	1	-
Dance Ethnology	1	-	-
Film Studies	-	-	1
Using a Dance to Explore a Theory	1	-	-
Tourism Studies	-	-	1
Diasporic Studies	-	-	1
Dance Theory	-	-	1
Auto/biographical	-	1	-
American Cultural History	-	1	-
Globalization Theory	-	-	1
Data Analysis	-	1	-

After seeing the list of primary methods and which dance studies program used them, I thought it would be useful to provide a list of the most common primary research methods arranged by school, so as to “see” the data in a different way or from a different perspective. These data are illustrated in **Table 6**. These are the same data as in the previous chart except displayed differently. Here I group the methods by schools and this allows us to see the primary methods used by each school in a more focused and less comparative way.

Table 6: Most Frequently Used Primary Methods By Schools

Most Common Primary Research Methods Used at TWU 2007, 2008, 2009	
Feminist	2
Grounded Theory	2
Ethnographic	1
Dance Ethnology	1
Movement Analysis (LMA)	1
Practice-Based Method	1
Text Analysis	1
Reading Dance like a “Text”	1
Using Dance to Support a Theory	1
Interviews	1
Educational Philosophy	1
Cultural History	1
Postcolonial History	1

Most Common Primary Research Methods Used at Temple 2007, 2008, 2009	
Historical	9
Phenomenological	6
Practice-Based	6
Ethnography	5
Text Analysis	3
Interviews	2
Feminist	2
Data Collection/Analysis	1
Auto/Biographical	1
American Cultural History	1
Experiential Inquiry	1
Teaching Philosophy	1
Turning Dance into a Text	1
Grounded Theory	1
Anthropology	1
Performance Studies	1
Cultural Studies	1
Embodied Research Methodology	1
Movement Analysis	1
Theory (de Certeauian Framework)	1
Survey	1

Table 6, continued
Most Common Primary Research
Methods Used at Riverside
2007, 2008, 2009

Feminist	5
Ethnography	4
Cultural Studies	4
Historical	3
Movement Analysis	2
Dance Studies	2
Textual Analysis	2
Globalization Theory	1
Cultural History	1
Diasporic Studies	1
“Theory”, Critical Theory	1
Reading Dance Like a Text	1
Tourism Studies	1
Performance Studies	1
“Dance Theory”	1
Practice-Based	1
Film Studies	1

After examining, reexamining, and reflecting on these charts and lists, I noticed something about the way “theory” was situated in and framed by these lists; it did not seem to reflect the issues involved in this research method in the field of dance studies and the discussion of interdisciplinarity. For example, the University of California at Riverside’s doctoral program in dance recently changed its name from being a doctoral program in Dance History and Theory, to Critical Dance Studies. This name change drops the focus on history and makes the already overt study of dance theory even more emphasized. Additionally, given that there were so many instances of a single theoretical method or discourse being used only once (when a particular theory is used only once by one author and is not used by any other authors, for example “globalization theory”), I combined all “single-use” theories to create another research method category: Theory. I

created this new category to see if the total quantity of each individual theory used, when combined all together, is equal to or greater than the already established “Top 3” or “Top 5” dance studies research methods.³²⁴

I then combined the categories of dance history, cultural history, auto/biographical, and American cultural history into “history.” I combined “interviews” with “ethnographic methods” (although interviews could also be considered phenomenological research, I only placed an interview in the category of phenomenology if the authors stated they were utilizing a phenomenological approach to interviewing; otherwise, the interview went into the category of ethnography).

When reconfigured in this way, “theory” became a “Top 3” method used in dance studies dissertations. The deceptive part of viewing the results in this way is that dance studies dissertations between 2007-09 are noted for their use of multiple, not singular, theories or theoretical discourses; if anything, what is most common about dance studies methods in this period is the quantity and variety of methods used within one dissertation, as opposed to a predominance of one theorist or kind of theoretical discourse. In other words, there is a trend toward heterogeneity of theoretical discourses.

So on the one hand it is true that “Theory” is a common method, but on the other hand it is not; my research indicates that strictly theoretical research studies that utilize

³²⁴ In doing this re-sorting, if a theory, method, or discourse was used more than one time, that category of method did not get folded into the new category of “Theory.” (For example “dance studies methods” were reportedly used twice, so I did not fold dance studies methods into the new category of Theory.) Just to be clear, if a method was used more than once, it remained its own distinct theoretical category, such as cultural studies and feminist theory – those two categories among others were prevalent enough to maintain their own category. I also left the category of “text analysis” on its own because many of the texts being examined are not other theoretical texts. However, I combined “turning a dance into a text” with this new category of Theory because critical theory (deconstruction) is the organizing conceptual framework behind such a method; thus, it is likely critical theory is used to “read” the dance.

the same kinds of theoretical threads and discourses are not common in dance studies dissertations during this period. Also, it is important to emphasize that the use of theory usually occurs in combination with other methods in a nonhomogeneous way. However, this readjustment of the ranking of the most commonly used methods to include theory among the “Top 3” is still useful. Therefore, I created new “Top 3,” “Top 5,” and “Top 10” lists of methods used in current dance studies dissertations.

In the case of theory, there were different kinds and different uses of theory, as mentioned above; what is characteristic of the use of theory in dance studies is how authors utilize a variety of frameworks (rather than a similar, singular, or homogenized theoretical framework). What characterizes research methods in the dissertations, overall, is the diversity not the uniformity of modes. In terms of theory, most of the theories used in dance studies dissertations were different from each other: from critical theory to postdiasporic theory, to anthropological theories of performance, to gender studies, to film studies, globalization theory, and to dance studies (as some examples); each of these different theoretical frameworks occurred only once or twice. And again, what characterizes the use of “theory” in dance studies dissertations is its use in combination with ethnographic methods, movement analysis, interviews, and the author’s own experience. Theory is combined with non-theoretical methods, such as practice-based methods or interviews. Dissertations that use theory only, such as multiple authors on the same subject using the same approach, were not common either, as opposed to dissertations that used a diversity of theoretical threads.

For example, in Amita Nijhawan’s dissertation, *We Are Cool Now...in Hamara India Bikinis, Bike Races and Dancing Bodies in the “Age of Globalization,”* Nijhawan

uses: film studies, cultural studies, South Asian studies, media studies, gender studies (hooks, Spivak), and analysis of live dancing; she states in her abstract that she is utilizing semiotic analysis of dancing bodies in filmic narratives.³²⁵ This dissertation was among those that had the most variety of discourses and lenses from cultural studies to analyzing live dances.

However, the theoretical frameworks that were most often employed were not “dance studies theories” or “dance studies methods,” stated by the authors. In fact, “dance studies” only existed twice and “dance theory” was mentioned only once. Dance studies authors are not calling the methods they use “dance studies” methods, nor are they calling the theories they use “dance theory,” with the exception of two authors. Perhaps this is the case because the theories they are using are not dance studies methods—they may not even be taught within the department.³²⁶ In my experience as a doctoral student in a dance studies department, the feminist lens in my own work was cultivated in and through outside courses in women’s studies.

In conclusion, although this section has discussed the use of theory, when looked at overall, many authors use theoretical discourses, but the primary methods used in dance studies dissertations do not include “dance theory” or “dance studies methods.” These research modes (with or without knowing exactly what they are) are not common methods in dance studies dissertations, based on how the authors describe their work.

³²⁵ Amita. Nijhawan. “We Are Cool Now...in Hamara India: Bikinis, Bike Races and Dancing Bodies in the ‘Age of Globalization.’” PhD diss., University of California at Riverside (2007).

³²⁶ Further research in this area is needed to prove this. It would be very useful to examine dance department curriculum from a research methods perspective. However, in my experience as a doctoral student in a dance department, outside methods such as film theory and other theories were not offered within the department curriculum. However, we were required to take 3 courses outside the department.

Disembodied Scholarship And The Dis/Connection Between Theory And Practice

[T]he performative should be doing something
as opposed to just saying something[.]
-J.L. Austin

Generally speaking, theory as a research method needs to take more steps toward the practice of dance. It has to do more work (meaning the authors have to do more work) to get close to, to get immersed in, or integrated within, the subject. This may make theory a more challenging method for working with dance. Not all authors get close to their subject with their language. There are some who do, while others stay away from an embodied interaction (in language or in person) with their subject. An example of what I mean by this is: students can tell when their teacher knows the subject and has practiced it, minimally experienced it, or has integrated the teachings into their lives, research, or into their body. Similarly, the reader of dance scholarship (or any other kind of scholarship) can tell when the author has fully integrated herself with/in the subject; the result being the production of embodied scholarship.³²⁷

In “Art History/Art Criticism: Performing Meaning,” feminist art critic Amelia Jones critiques enlightenment-based art history and art criticism, particularly in the work of Michael Fried, whose art historical and art critical writing is ‘derived loosely’ from German philosopher Immanuel Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*.³²⁸ Her writing takes aim at the Kantian ‘objectivity’ and ‘disinterestedness’ that Fried insists is necessary to make authoritative interpretations of art—interpretations that will maintain the critic’s authority, status, power and, as Jones points out, distance from the body, especially as

³²⁷ As mentioned in the Introduction, Karen Bond and other dance scholars and educators have written about the pitfalls of disembodied scholarship.

³²⁸ Amelia Jones, “Art History/Art Criticism: Performing Meaning,” *Performing the Body/Performing the Text*, Eds. Amelia Jones, Andrew Stephenson Nfa, and Andrew Stephenson (London: Routledge, 1999).

expressed through the theatricality of minimalist sculpture. A repression of desire or disengagement with the art object confirms the authority of the critic. It is as if when desire is present, critical judgment is not.

The main point in Jones's multi-faceted assessment is located in the idea of repression. Repression of the critic's desire becomes suppression of the artists or their work, or both, and in the case of feminist body art in the 1960s (which shares many concerns with dance), the oppression of the actual body of the artist. Jones suggests that Fried believes he needs to suppress his desire in order to view art objectively, as a rebellion against the art object's power. And when the critic is unable to achieve this state of objective disinterestedness, the critic shuts down the work instead and declares it "not art."

By building quite a case against Fried, Jones works toward offering us her own methodology, philosophy, and politics of writing art criticism, which she provides as a conclusion. According to Jones, in this somewhat notorious argument, Fried is very much the "bad guy" whose writing against minimalism (that it is not even art) is so impenetrable it is almost humorous. Jones's charges against Fried are immersed in the political, aesthetic, philosophical, theological and professional realms. Jones chides Fried for having picked the "wrong guy for the job" of "the next premiere Western contemporary artist." Fried incorrectly assigned Anthony Caro this place in history.³²⁹

What is at stake here in making disinterested aesthetic judgments is the oppression of that (and those) which the critic cannot master or understand, including:

³²⁹ Jones, *Art History/Art Criticism*, 54.

minimalist theatricality, the feminist body/art, women's crafts, and work by "non-Euro American ethnic groups."³³⁰ Jones writes,

Kant's model instantiates the Cartesian opposition between mind and body, clearly distinguishing between contemplative, disinterested aesthetic judgment and embodied, sensate, interested, contingent and therefore individualized and non-universal judgments.³³¹

Jones addresses the writings of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu to explain how issues of class are also at stake in art criticism. The project of othering, assisted by distancing, under the guise of art criticism, encourages the viewer to differentiate himself from the masses to maintain superiority, and in the case of art historian and critic Clement Greenberg, to "legitimate his own 'taste.'" Aesthetic judgment is a way of "(P)roducing boundaries to define white, upper-middle class, masculine culture as superior in relation to a debased—non-white, or 'primitive' lower class, feminine—alternative."³³²

In contrast, Jones's own art criticism begins at the moment of desire; she turns her own uneasiness in the presence of the object into an act of sharing or exchanging power, rather than shutting down power or attempting to wield power over another. Jones describes this exchange as a 'politics of cultural engagement' as opposed to a cultural distancing.³³³ Jones asks:

Why would it be a bad (indeed, Fried suggests, execrable) thing to admit that we engage actively with the flesh of the world through our own embodied perceptual apparatus?³³⁴

In "Art History/Art Criticism: Performing Meaning," Jones creates a space for feminist engagement where there was previously very little room for additional or

³³⁰ Jones, *Art History/Art Criticism*, 41.

³³¹ Jones, *Art History/Art Criticism*, 40.

³³² Jones, *Art History/Art Criticism*, 41.

³³³ Jones, *Art History/Art Criticism*, 9.

³³⁴ Jones, *Art History/Art Criticism*, 48.

alternative views. Jones succeeded in demonumentalizing Fried and Greenberg's art criticism with humor and thoroughness. However, it was not only a critique of what Jones perceived as their failings. In the end, she offered solutions. In Jones's conclusion, she writes:

Works of art... would be viewed as extensions of bodily/verbal communication in the broadest sense and the question of what is allowed to be called art and what not would be obviated.³³⁵

Working with/in the cracks or flaws of Fried's art criticism, Jones not only creates space for reinterpretation, she allows an opening for both the artist and the viewer to perform an act of cultural engagement, empowering both parties simultaneously.

My own embodied interactivity with Jones's text (what she is asking from us as readers and audience members) inspires me to consider its applicability for dance scholarship. However, dance was not part of this conversation, even though the body and performance is present or implied in the discussion. Many dance studies and outside authors write about the difficulty of writing about dance, movement, and body. I will not go into all the reasons here; some were mentioned earlier; the more common ones include: dance is temporal and fleeting; you cannot take the dance home with you (there is no product); therefore, how do we write about it? With Jones's argument in mind, is this not the same distancing (and oppressive) 'logic' that Fried uses against minimalism and theatricality?

How do these issues of aesthetic judgment or detached criticism allow the body and desire, and interactivity to exist and inform our connection with the dance work under consideration? Or are there different issues at stake in the field of dance? In other

³³⁵ Jones, *Art History/Art Criticism*, 51.

words, do these same issues apply to dance writing? What issues apply to dance in terms of creating a dance theory that does not wield power over anyone? What kind of writing do we imagine is up to this task?

When a research subject has a practical component, the more embodied research practices or practice-based modes and theories may take their connection to practice for granted; therefore, less intellectual or theoretical/conceptual steps are taken toward the subject. When a researcher's connection to the practice is "already there" or taken as a given (with a practice-based mode such as teaching, for example), there is an implied and automatic connection. Compare this with the research method of "theory." In terms of the connection between the theory and the practice, theory needs to take more steps toward the practice in order to produce a connection and in order to produce embodied scholarship, as well (whereas, embodied research methods are assumed to be "already there.") In other words, sometimes being the practitioner or participating in the dance/event brings one closer to the subject, but that experience alone does not automatically create theory that is connected to the practice. On the other hand, it is not necessarily that one is using theory that makes for disembodied scholarship. Theoretical writing can be connected, engaged, and immersed in the subject, truly serving the subject rather than self-serving the author's agenda.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Andre Lepecki, a performance studies author, makes claims about what dance studies must do. His chapter "Inscribing Dance," in *Of The Presence of the Body*, contains several useful threads regarding the connection between dance and writing and their codependence, as he describes it, on each other. Lepecki is strongly arguing for utilizing the Derridian metaphysics of the "trace" in dance studies,

even while he admits this is more of a performance studies concept. This essay and its concerns about dance, writing, and femininity clearly arises out of performance studies discourses, rather than “dance studies discourses.” And where it is more of a performance studies text, he notes that Peggy Phelan and others all diverge from the Derridian concept of the trace in relationship to performance and liveness (generally speaking). Thus, taking his suggestion that dance studies reconfigure itself around the Derridian metaphysics of the trace requires even more reworking by dance scholars for dance studies, particularly in regard to the social and political issues in and of the body, which Lepecki mostly sidesteps, except to quote others’ writing about dance’s problematic exteriority to history, according to them. Generally speaking, Lepecki’s writing is an example of scholarship that utilizes theory exclusively, and unfortunately, in this case, produces disembodied scholarship.

“Inscribing Dance” is much like a conversation between Lepecki and Derrida—not a conversation that could be easily transported to and utilized in dance studies research. The utility of the Derridian metaphysics of the trace (in short: dance’s now notorious ephemerality) is overstated; it almost performs its own self-erasure as it is inscribed by Lepecki. No matter how well intended or poetically argued, his concerns for the materiality of dance and the body end up privileging a circular narrative that creates and produces only itself, again and again, as both the problem and the solution.

Lepecki initially suggests that there is a connection between dance and writing. He then explains that dance can be “overcome” by writing and reminds us that inscription precedes dancing. The chronological approach is then abandoned while he argues how writing and dancing have a symmetry that must be undermined and introduces the

Cartesian split between mind and body and writing and dancing. He then asserts that this distance must be bridged; however, writing is not able to capture or convey dance anyway and both writing and dancing inevitably disappear into ephemerality. In short, dance is connected to writing, but it was not always. Dance and writing must be split from each other; however, this split is really a problem, so they must be bridged; yet, writing cannot capture dance and both dance and writing disappear into ephemerality, which is where Derrida naturally comes to the rescue. Lepecki writes:

With Derrida, dance finally finds a form of writing that is in harmony with dance's current ontological status. Perhaps not since the seventeenth century has the harmonization of writing and dance had so complete a model.³³⁶

Lepecki continues:

Derrida's notion of writing as difference offers dance studies a set of "signs" ... both writing and dancing participate in the same motion of the trace: that which will always be already behind at the same moment of its appearance.³³⁷

While sometimes poetic, Lepecki's work is mostly just a challenge to read and in the end, we are no further along from where we started. Lepecki even concludes in circuitous form with another round of serpentine problems and promises for solutions, including his concern that when dancing finally becomes writing, it is no longer dancing. ...*Yet*.³³⁸

The main difficulty in Lepecki's suggestion for dance studies is in and through the sole use of literary theory and philosophy because these are not the discursive foundations of dance studies as a discipline (they are not likely to be found in dance studies curricula); they are not common methods used in dance studies dissertations

³³⁶ Andre Lepecki, "Introduction" and "Inscribing Dance," *Of the Presence of the Body* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 2. 133.

³³⁷ Lepecki, *Of the Presence of the Body*, 133.

³³⁸ Lepecki, *Of the Presence of the Body*, 139.

currently, and so it is unlikely that many will even have the training, let alone the desire, to fully embrace the ideas Lepecki presents with such force.

Hopefully this is becoming clearer: methodologically speaking, literary theory is quite removed from the actual materials of dance both as an artistic and academic discipline, which would not be such a flaw if Lepecki did not *insist* he was making profound and useful material connections and contributions (i.e., between theory and practice) to dance and dance studies. But as I previously have suggested: there are now two dance studies. The dance studies produced in and through dance departments and the dance studies produced outside of them.

The most interesting moment of “Inscribing Dance” is after Lepecki asserts how much debt dance owes to deconstruction and to Derrida in particular. He then mentions that Derrida’s only actual writing on dance is in the form of an interview, which is not “writing” at all. An interview is that form of archival documentation that Lepecki claims is the antithesis of dance’s self erasure; a self erasing absence necessarily present in order for his (and others’) ideas about woman and femininity (their absence, their distance, and their dancing) to be maintained. So while Lepecki says dance studies owes much debt to Derrida, performing such advanced theoretical gymnastics might not be so useful upon closer examination. How worthwhile will a theory be when it disqualifies most dance scholars from talking about their own work?³³⁹ Lepecki argues in the “Introduction” to *Of The Presence of the Body* (2004) that dance studies is currently taking the performance

³³⁹ In “The Race for Theory” Barbara Christian argues that there has been a theory “take-over.” Although it was written in 1989, her work is very useful here to counter Andre Lepecki’s somewhat retro arguments which were made in 2004 not 1989 when the critical theory take-over was reaching its peak. Barbara Christian, “The Race for Theory,” *The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse*, Eds. Abdul R. JanMohamed and David Lloyd, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990. 51-63.

studies and critical theory “turn.” This is not true according to my research. (But of course it is possible that we do not mean the same thing when we say, “dance studies.”)³⁴⁰

I came to this research thinking theory is “bad” and that ethnography (or other methods in which the researchers are immersed in or at least minimally experienced with or a part of what they are researching or writing about) is “good.” It is now clear to me that it is more complicated than that. More embodied methods, such as practice-based methods or ethnography, may take for granted their close connection with practice and some practice-based and ethnographic work becomes more flatly descriptive, just as theory can also read as “flat.” The benefit of theory (although theory risks being more flat from the onset than ethnography) is that theory requires critical analysis and engagement with the subject in a different way: writing itself can also be a *practice of connecting* not only with dance practice but a practice of connecting the mind with the body. It may be possible, when writing is viewed as a practice, to bridge the anti-intellectual arguments with the overly intellectual ones.

Toward A Dance Theory Of Embodiment: Grounding Dance Theory In Issues Inherent To Dance Studies As A Discipline

[W]e do not have bodies, we are our bodies... We write—think and feel—(with) our entire bodies rather than only (with) our minds or hearts. It is a perversion to consider thought the product of one specialized organ, the brain, and feeling, that of the heart.
—Trinh T. Minh-ha

Dance scholars could attribute dance experience to the field of dance studies; however, embodied practice and experience is often “given away” to outside areas such as phenomenology. And when outside methods are used in dance scholarship, it becomes necessary to discuss some of the subject matter of the fields from which the methods are

³⁴⁰ Lepecki, *Of the Presence of the Body*, 2.

borrowed; thus, the focus on dance and dance practice is often lost, written over, or obscured.

Rather than collapsing social and political issues specific to dance into cultural studies discourses, we can produce our own theories of dance, movement, and the body as these subjects relate to constructions of power on social and political levels; we have more than enough material with which to work. Rather than leaning on science to lend credibility, we can seek productive connections between these two disparate areas. Instead of suturing dance as a live performing art to performativity and other discourses developed in outside areas such as performance studies, we can launch our own discipline specific issues in relationship to the issue of liveness. (My hunch is that dance's "liveness" is not as big a deal as liveness has been for performance studies scholars). We should interrogate methodologies before we use them—even methods that call themselves "embodied methodologies."

In *Embodied Methodologies: Repatterning the Scholars BodyMind*, a group of innovative, pioneering, and interdisciplinary but mostly anonymous scholars from the University of Minnesota explore what it means to write embodied scholarship. In their writing they tell stories, provide definitions, and share experiences that illustrate, define, and explore dis/embodiment. One author offers a description of the physical university environment itself as a windowless, indoor, cubicle-type space designed to sedate the body in favor of the mind and increasing productivity.³⁴¹

³⁴¹ Asheldon, "Rx: How to sedate your body to be more productive," *Embodied Methodologies: Repatterning the Scholars BodyMind* website accessed January 15, 2012, http://blog.lib.umn.edu/madamek/embodiedmethodologies/antiembodied_methodologies/.

In “What is Experience” from *Embodied Methodologies*, Maggi Adamek provides some definitions of experience as it relates to the production of embodied scholarship:

If we are to use a ‘sensual technology’ or cenesthetic sense to explore our experience of embodiment, what then do we mean by experience? Numerous philosophers and thinkers have articulated what type of experience we refer to when we dwell in the realm of embodiment.

Eugene Gendlin: experience is the “...the inward receptivity of a living body...Experiencing is a constant, ever present, underlying phenomenon of inwardly sentient living”

Richard Shusterman: “pre-cognitive, non-linguistic experience”

John Dewey: “primary experience”

Merleau-Ponty: “...the basic experience of the world...[as] that which precedes knowledge”

Wilshire: “...spontaneous and prereflective....utterly pre-reflective awareness”

Fontana: “...direct experience of conscious processes”

Husserl: “...the things themselves”

So, we are using an embodied methodology to learn how to access this level of embodied experience, one which happens prior to the formation of language, thought or construct - the very immediate sensory level.

Last week, we focused on the ‘direct experience’ of our bones and organs...learning to pay attention to the actual experience of the bones as living tissue in our body, the quality of sensations in our organs as they do their liver-y thing.³⁴²

Although the blog claims to be interdisciplinary, philosophers are almost exclusively referenced, when dance scholars could be leading the way (or at least minimally participating) in the development of theories of embodied scholarship. Thus, my suggestion for the field of dance is that we either develop more coursework on the foundations of embodied scholarship as it is conceived in philosophy departments so we

³⁴² Maggi Adamek, “What is Experience,” *Embodied Methodologies: Repatterning the Scholars BodyMind* website, accessed January 15, 2012, <http://blog.lib.umn.edu/madamek/embodiedmethodologies/definitions/>.

can contribute to those conversations and/or we develop our own theories of embodiment grounded in the issues and materials foundational to dance.

Dance is already an embodied practice. As dance scholars, particularly those who have dance experience as dance artists, practitioners, or educators, we are not just now (or even recently) discovering the body, the benefits of moving, of somatic practices, of physical health, and of being connected in and through these bodily modes as practitioners, scholars, and educators. In this way we are much further along than most disciplines in the university who are now just discovering “embodied practices” whether this means *experience*, holistic modes of training, teaching, somatic or kinesthetic learning, researching—the list can go on.

That said, without going deep into how some of the philosophers listed above articulate experience for example, one can immediately see some danger in conceptualizing experience as *prior to* thought or writing; this splits the mind from the body (as philosophers are prone to do) creating a tired hierarchal binary. I think we need to do more than that. All things considered, perhaps “embodied scholarship” is the wrong term for what I envision since it brings with it too much discourse and terminology from outside disciplines—disciplines that appear to be wholly unfamiliar with physical practices and perhaps are not sympathetic to (if they are even aware of) the issues specific to dance practice, dance scholarship, dance teaching, both in and outside of dance departments in the university.

Therefore, instead of arguing for “embodied scholarship,” which seems inseparable from phenomenology, I will use the phrase *dance theory of embodiment*, since so many scholars are already interested in “dance theory.” Minimally, a dance

theory of embodiment will be grounded in dance and dance studies issues (which includes, dance teaching, dance practice, and dance scholarship). Ideally a dance theory of embodiment will be a dance theory that arises out of or is at least meaningfully linked to dance practice. A dance theory of embodiment will be grounded in dance and dance studies methods (as well as issues). Dance studies methods, however, as my research has revealed, are steeped in outside fields' language, discourses, and even issues and subject matter—a serious drawback to developing a dance studies theory inherent to dance. Nonetheless, the field of dance will benefit if we develop ways of working, knowing, and writing in and through our experience of dance, movement, and the body in all of its manifestations and expressions on social, political, spiritual, cultural, artistic, educational, and discursive levels.

Hopefully this moment for dance practice, dance education, and dance studies will be a launching point for a movement that aims to articulate dance issues and methods fundamental to the whole field and discipline of dance. As many already are doing we can bring the discussion of theory *and* practice *and* teaching to the center of our theory and practice and teaching. It is exciting to imagine what dance theory of the future might be like—a dance theory perhaps even capable of articulating the concerns of dance as education, dance as art, and as an academic subject *together*.

Dance education, dance theory (dance studies), and dance as art can work together. These seemingly opposed areas can put aside historical and contemporary differences and unite forces so that the students of the future who are studying, practicing, teaching, researching, and writing in and through the field of dance in higher education will be better served. This next generation of scholars should bring these areas

together. Dance as a discipline in higher education will be stronger if these separate spokes on the wheel work together; however, if the separate spokes are to remain separate, we will need to recognize and articulate the different needs and concerns more clearly. We cannot recoil from making definitions (definitions can change and develop along with the field); and we should view difference and diversity of goals and definitions within the field as a benefit to the field not as a problem.

Lastly as a suggestion for developing dance theory of embodiment, I suggest that scholars begin with an issue specific to dance first rather than beginning with a theory (a list of *some* of the issues that dance continues to face are offered below). When we produce scholarship that puts theory at the center of the discussion, or scholarship that “leads” with theory, as it was illustrated with Lepecki’s writing, the result is dance scholarship that *writes over* dance, movement, and the body. As dance scholars and researchers, we can instead take an issue inherent to dance as a discipline and ask how will I best serve, articulate, and contribute to this concern? What methods will best serve this particular issue and dance as a discipline?

Some possible *dance as a discipline-specific issues* that could launch theory and scholarship uniquely connected to dance as a discipline:

1. Practical matters such as money, time, and space within and outside of the corporate university setting
2. Ongoing reliance on outside areas theories and discourses, used primarily to make dance appear “serious” due to a lack of a recognizable theoretical identity

3. Forging and articulating connections between theory and practice, as well as the disconnection between many current theories that dance scholars use and dance practice

4. Re-appropriating dance as a subject and method. The field's reliance on multiple (outside) theoretical identities leads to a "default" interdisciplinarity, rather than a true interdisciplinarity arising out of two or more independent subjects benefiting each other in an inevitable and symmetrical relationship

5. Becoming a more united field. What is needed before dance is an independent subject capable of interdisciplinarity is a more united field, or at least a more clearly defined field that consists of multiple and clearly defined subfields: (the different types of) dance studies, dance as education, and dance as an art/practice. There is still a split between these areas of dance in higher education in terms of resources, curriculum, issues/subjects, and research methods.

Here at the end of this chapter it may seem like much has been left unresolved. I would like to view this as a promising start rather than an end of the work. This is only the beginning. In the next and last chapter, I provide a summary of this research and offer more suggestions for the future of dance as a discipline.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Our theory is that practicing our practice is our theory.
Gail Chester, *Feminist Anthology Collective*

In this study I aimed to discover and articulate the theoretical identity of dance studies as an academic discipline. I wanted to discover if (and if so, how) recent dance studies research methods are inherent to dance studies or if (and how) these methods are borrowed from other academic areas. I was drawn to do this research, in part, because contemporary dance studies scholarship often refers to dance studies methods as if these methods are already fully formed and understood. This assumption led me to question if we (dance studies scholars) actually know what we are talking about when we refer to “dance studies methods.” This led me to pose other questions such as what exactly are dance studies methods? What exactly are dance studies specific research techniques? Are there discourses that are inherent to the field? If these discourses are not specific to the field, then what methods, theories, or discourses do dance studies authors utilize? Do dance studies methods—if these methods are dance studies based or not—make meaningful embodied connections with the practice of dance, including dance teaching; are they connected in and through to body itself or do they, as Judith Butler put it, *write over* the body or even write against it?

The drive to understand how we write about dance is a concern shared by many other scholars and educators in the field of dance in higher education. For instance, my research concerns are shared with some of the early dance educators whose vision for dance as an autonomous discipline drove their advocacy work and writing. Today,

studying dance at the turn of the 21st century, I entered the field of dance at a time when dance was mostly fully formed both as an artistic discipline and as an academic subject—it is much easier to ask these questions about theory and practice now than it was 100 years ago. Today, in addition to Temple University's, University of California at Riverside's, and Texas Woman's University's PhD programs in dance, there are now dance studies dissertations being published from The Ohio State University's PhD program and other schools internationally. It is an exciting time to be a dance scholar because the field of dance scholarship is expanding.

A fruitful area for future research would be to take my research questions into the field to extend further what is known about the disciplinary formation of dance as a discipline in higher education by interviewing the founders of the PhD programs in dance. It would be worthwhile to create a history of these programs in the United States and beyond. When I began my research, I found there was not yet a written history on this particular subject. I did start this research myself but it quickly became beyond the scope this dissertation. There is interest in creating this history and there is a need for it.

There is also much more work to be done in the area of dance studies' theoretical or methodological identity. The aspect of my research that asks, is dance disciplinary or interdisciplinary? was also motivated by the assertion of many dance scholars in the field who write that dance studies is taking an "interdisciplinary" and a "critical theory" turn. This perspective invited other questions such as, how can we be interdisciplinary before we have established our own theoretical center? And how can we seriously take a critical theory turn if dance studies programs do not offer critical theory discourses in their curriculum?

While my study discovered that dance studies research methods are interdisciplinary and dance scholars from dance studies doctoral programs use theoretical discourses, the dissertations are more notable for their use of a wide range of theories (rather than homogenized) within one dissertation *in combination with* ethnographic, experience or practice based, and other modes such as feminist inquiry. My research suggests that further research is needed to examine the connection between current research methods and dance studies department curriculum and course work. This is also needed in light of so many suggestions for what dance studies “must do.” While it was useful to articulate the theoretical methods used in doctoral level research, the next step will be to discover the connections or disconnections between these methods and the curriculum in dance studies departments, in addition to examining the connection or disconnection between theory and practice on both discursive and curricular levels.

What Does Dance Studies Do?

In this dissertation, I traced the disciplinary formation of dance back to the “beginnings” of dance in higher education where, through the historical research of physical educators and dance scholars, it was revealed that dance had early affiliations with physical education and with the women’s movement. Hagood and others confirms that for the better half of the 20th century, dance was “housed” in physical education. Initially, the discussion of methods by the early dance educators referred to methods of teaching. As the field developed, methods came to refer to both the theory of dance practice and teaching as well as methods for conducting dance scholarship. It is on this general point in history that my study has been most focused.

The history of dance in higher education brings to light that the actual physical settings of dance and dance departments affected its theoretical or discursive positions. Dance methods have ranged from the *activist-based* (through the advocacy work of the feminists and early dance educators), to the *science-based* (when early dance pedagogy was developing in physical education departments influenced by Margaret H'Doubler's dual background in biology and as a sports coach), to *art-based* (when Martha Hill and the Bennington College launched the conservatory *art-based* era of professionalizing the study of dance in higher education), and more recently, to the *social science-based* methods (including the methodological influences of anthropology and ethnography). Today, there are two "dance studies" because of where dance as a subject is housed in the university; there is the dance studies scholarship that is being produced from dance studies departments and the dance studies scholarship being produced from outside areas such as performance studies.

The influence of philosophy has been felt throughout the history of dance in higher education, whether scholars were discussing dance as an art form or a subject in higher education, or whether the aim was to advocate for the well-being of the student overall via dance education, or to pursue dance as a topic of doctoral research. From Isadora Duncan's earliest writings to the educational philosophy of H'Doubler to the highly conceptual and theoretical mode of Andre Lepecki and other outside scholars' writing on dance, philosophy has influenced the field. We are at a point where it is not clear if theory is the new science (as it is used in dance studies). In any case, the utility (or non utilitarian benefits) of philosophy and other discourses as a method of writing in

and through dance as a subject in higher education still should be examined before it can be used effectively in dance studies.

Early And Contemporary Interdisciplinarity: A Satellite Of Questions

In the history of dance in higher education, including the contemporary period, much of dance scholarship has been and continues to be published in what would be considered “outside” subject journals today (for example, in physical education journals). Today, if more published work on dance (or the more widely-recognized published work on dance) is coming from “outside” fields, then should we consider this dance scholarship or is it interdisciplinary scholarship that uses dance as its subject? Should we likewise consider if this work is actually benefiting the field of dance or benefitting the field from which the authors are writing? There is a lot at stake in the issue of who is writing in and through what discipline and publication. In “Debating Disciplinarity” Robert Post, Professor of Law at Yale University, writes:

Disciplinary publications are important gatekeepers of disciplinary norms. Who publishes in which journal or with which press is an important indicator of scholarly influence and merit. Virtually all universities use publications as criteria for institutional hiring and advancement.³⁴³

Do fields outside of dance, perhaps exhausted or over-saturated by their own subject matter, or perhaps experiencing their own brand of identity crises or struggles, take on dance as a subject for reasons that are extending their own discipline or dance as a discipline? What other questions need to be asked about the asymmetrical relationships between disciplines that work together in interdisciplinary ways? Our disciplinary coherence may depend upon continued examination of these issues.

³⁴³ Post, *Debating Disciplinarity*, 761.

In addition to connecting theory and practice, we should bring our visions for dance studies closer to actual curriculum when we conceptualize about it as a field or when we make prescriptions for its future health and longevity. If dance studies writers in dance studies departments are not trained in critical or literary theory and dance studies writers from outside departments and disciplines have no experience with the practice of dance or with teaching in dance departments, or they have no interest in or knowledge of the actual concerns and issues in a dance department, there will continue to be multiple (and disconnected) “dance studies.” Dance studies scholars within and outside of dance studies departments need to get together on the issues of inter/disciplinarity, research methods, and how curriculum connects (or does not connect) with these areas, or the future of dance studies and dance in higher education may endure another deep split in the field that is not beneficial for researchers, educators, nor practitioners.

In and through this research it is clear that dance studies as an academic area has and continues to grapple with its identity. As a result, I see the need to ask fundamental questions about where we stand in relationship to other fields. Such questions include, do we in dance studies need to keep proving that dance is an art or a science or a form of resistance or whatever it needs to be for greater influence or impact? Another inquiry along these lines is if there is an interdisciplinary turn today, is dance borrowing academic “weight” from other more established outside fields in lieu, and at the expense of, exploring and developing its own methods?

To highlight this tension between disciplines, the dance department at The University of Maryland has recently been subsumed by Theater and Performance Studies

Department to form the School of Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies.³⁴⁴ It is possible that by not having a disciplinary center, the dance department may be swayed by these other hosting disciplines (in this case theater and performance studies) in ways that may not be best for dance as an academic subject. Is this the direction that other dance departments are headed by default, due to current financial constraints? If so, then will more dance departments lose their methodological, disciplinary, and ideological autonomy because they cannot justify their continued existence to their schools, so they end up becoming a branch of other fields—the “main” field being theater, music, or performance studies and so dance takes on their methods? Sharing a physical space should not be confused with sharing artistic, academic, or ideological space.

Dance practice and theory are not postdisciplinary. It matters a great deal if and when dance loses its autonomy in the university, especially before its own theoretical identity has been clearly established. At the University of Maryland, in the School of Theater, Dance and Performance Studies, for example, the MFA in dance is the highest terminal degree a student can go, while there are doctoral degrees offered in the areas of theater and performance studies. In this setting, it is unlikely that the production of theory will be dance based; rather, dance may be “read” utilizing theater and performance studies methods if it is worked with at all as a subject of scholarly inquiry on the doctoral level.

Developing dance studies based research methods will allow dance studies to develop on its own as a subject in higher education. Judith Alter writes,

³⁴⁴ The University of Maryland School of Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies, accessed October 11, 2011, website: <http://tdps.umd.edu/>. My observations about the University of Maryland dance department are based upon viewing it from the “outside” from information available on the website.

If we start with a working definition of “theory” as an explanation of practice then we must examine, inductively, all parts of the field. We can also define the separate parts of dance in dance terms and show how they fit together in a truly comprehensive dance theory. Dance theory, as my title suggests, must be derived from dance and not from sources other than dance.³⁴⁵

My research has revealed that dance studies authors primarily utilize historical, ethnographic, and feminist methods; these methods and sources reflect the origins of dance as a discipline. Theory is also a top method used; however, the theory used in dance studies dissertation is not dance theory. Based on my review, almost all dissertation authors framed their studies using language from other disciplines, often “giving away” dance experience to outside areas such as phenomenology. By this I mean, when some authors wrote about dance experience, for example (which in my view contains the seed of a dance studies method), they would attribute dance experience to the field of phenomenology; and very few said they were using dance theory or dance methods. Overall, the dissertations are heavily language by outside methods; a closer reading of each of the dissertations may produce more seeds of dance studies methods, which may reside beneath the language of outside fields.

For dance to stand on its own it needs to develop its own independent language and methods. Janice Ross writes, in *Moving Lessons*:

Dance has never been fully at home in the humanities in higher education, however, because until recently it lacked the historical and theoretical scholarship that the other art forms have long possessed.³⁴⁶

As a start, toward developing our own theoretical scholarship, this may mean we resist the temptation to fold our subject into popular outside discourses, phrases, and buzzwords. Instead, let us create some of our own. I say this not to discourage

³⁴⁵ Alter, *Dance-Based Dance Theory*, 7.

³⁴⁶ Ross, *Moving Lessons*, 206.

interdisciplinary work or scholarship but rather to encourage dance scholars to take risks when engaging with outside fields in terms of keeping the focus on issues inherent to dance. Like Alter, I would encourage dance scholars both within and outside of dance studies departments to interrogate methods (or continue to interrogate methods) before using them; not all performing or other art disciplines share the same issues as dance, therefore not all methods will be suitable for dance research.

The connection between what we research and how we research ought to be brought to the center of more discussions in dance studies; the future of the field as an autonomous discipline in higher education may depend on making meaningful connections between its own theory and practice. If we say we make connections between theory and practice, we need to actually make, articulate, and teach these connections.

My experience as both a dance artist and scholar suggests that there are connections between practice and theory, but they are not easy to arrive at. The attempt to connect my own theory and practice raised all kinds of conflicts of affiliations and associations between my conservative dance training and my radical feminist commitments, for example. The attempt also raised conflicts between my intellectual thirst for the theory of the day, and the question, well, what does this actually have to do with dance practice, teaching, or other issues and practical matters that dance artists and educators are facing? It is not as easy as saying, “the practice of our practice is our theory,” but “the Derridian metaphysics of the trace” does not seem to be for us, either. Before taking the next turn, I suggest we look more closely at how dance studies scholars, educators, and artists are researching and writing— underneath the language of

outside fields' methods may be the seeds of the language, theory, and methods particular to dance. Perhaps the next era in dance studies research is the "disciplinary turn," alongside interdisciplinarity, as an ongoing trend.

In the 1999 feminist anthology, *Feminist Theory and the Body*, the last section of essays is titled, "Performing The Body." In the Introduction to these essays, the authors write:

The name of this section could be taken to herald a move into feminist engagements with the arts, but what we have in mind is rather more complex. As feminist theory has moved away from the idea of a fixed and given body, there is increasing interest not just in corporeal construction from the outside as it were, but also in how we are constrained by and/or choose to perform our own bodies.³⁴⁷

The slight snub of the arts aside, where should dance scholars begin to engage with this feminist view of the arts as simpler than feminism's complex theories of the body as no longer a given? To return to an issue raised in the Introduction (Chapter 1) of this research, we in dance departments do not question the meaningful presence of the body nor do we question its material existence; in dance, we take the body as a given. Is it useful for dance to start questioning this now? Does questioning the existence of the body (or calling the body a "text" or even "literature") benefit the field of dance except perhaps to appear as more "complex?"

In an article titled "Disciplinarity" in the Fall 2009 issue of *Social Text*, Shireen R.K. Patell writes:

The cultural and other capital is not evenly distributed among the disciplines, however; while multi-inter-trans[disciplinary] initiatives in the natural sciences, medicine, law, and economics might be lauded as signs of innovation, too much multi-inter-trans in the humanities may be perceived as a dilution of the

³⁴⁷ Janice Price and Margaret Shildrick, Eds. *Feminist Theory and the Body* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 413.

epistemological strength of the university. In fact, the success of the multi-inter-trans has not eclipsed or weakened the traditional disciplinary structure; rather, its force has reinvigorated and thus strengthened the disciplines from within, intradisciplinarily. Thus, for example, an English seminar may include psychology and neuroscience research in the syllabus or a psychology study may take cues from literature and philosophy, but the multi-inter-trans ironically becomes a sign of the contemporary relevance and epistemological robustness of the home discipline.³⁴⁸

Can we expect to survive without a disciplinary center? What about those who place *dancing* at the center? The next turn dance should take is toward *disciplinarity*, if we are to secure a theoretical home/identity, cultural and other capital, a place in higher education of the future, and the possibility of a real (rather than a default) interdisciplinarity.

To those who say, “Disciplinarity is dead,” I say, “long live disciplinarity.” While dance studies may be “new” to some, dance in higher education is not new. Dance studies has emerged at a time when other “new disciplines” have splintered off from larger fields of study, simultaneously with the interdisciplinarity of larger more established fields that are now colonizing subject matter previously outside their disciplinary realm. While many disciplines are necessarily (for them) involved in dismantling and deconstructing their subject and their methods of scholarship, dance and dance studies should resist this trend, especially before our discipline is clearly established (in theory and practice); we do not need to fear being labeled as conservative or out of date for not deconstructing everything that moves. Post writes:

Physicists do not dismiss scholarship that is accomplished within the normal and routinized standards of their discipline. This is because physicists are confident that the ordinary application of their discipline creates useful and significant

³⁴⁸ Shireen R.K. Patel, “Disciplinarity,” *Social Text*, Fall 2009 27(3 100): 104-111.

knowledge, and they are comfortable affirming the authority of that knowledge.³⁴⁹

Dance may be housed in or affiliated with areas and subjects that are challenging the utility or authority of disciplinary knowledge in general and/or their discipline in particular; our host disciplines may be taking on the task of destabilizing their subject. Let us not be worried that dance as an academic subject and as an artistic practice and educational mode does or does not produce fashionable theories or necessary and useful knowledge *prior to producing disciplinary knowledge*. Let us be concerned first with stabilizing our subject and methods and with producing cohesive disciplinary knowledge and methodological standards unencumbered by the need to look or sound like other disciplines. Let us allow dance as a subject in higher education time and space to develop methods inherent to dance as a discipline—a rather complex subject. Let us all from all the various spokes and aspects of the fields of dance in higher education be the producers of our own disciplinary knowledge; and let us become more comfortable affirming the authority of that disciplinary knowledge in all of its diversity.

³⁴⁹ Post, *Debating Disciplinarity*, 761. For other current discussions of disciplinarity see: *Disciplinarity: Functional Linguistic and Sociological Perspectives*, Eds. Frances Christie and Karl Maton (Continuum Books: London and New York) 2011.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
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