BECOMING NOTHING TO BECOME SOMETHING: METHODS OF PERFORMER TRAINING IN HIJIKATA TATSUMI'S BUTŌ DANCE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates performer training in ankoku butō dance, focusing specifically on the methods of Japanese avant-garde artist Hijikata Tatsumi, who is considered the co-founder and intellectual force behind this form. The goal of this study is to articulate the butō dancer's preparation and practice under his direction.

Clarifying Hijikata's embodied philosophy offers valuable scholarship to the ongoing butō studies dialogue, and further, will be useful in applying butō methods to other modes of performer training. Ultimately, my plan is to use the findings of this study in combination with research in other body-based performance training techniques to articulate the pathway by which a performer becomes "empty," or "nothing," and what that state makes possible in performance.

In an effort to investigate the historically-situated and culturally-specific perspective of the body that informed the development of ankoku butō dance, I am employing frameworks provided by Japanese scholars who figure prominently in the zeitgeist of 1950s and 1960s Japan. Among them are Nishida Kitarō, founder of the Kyoto School, noted for introducing and developing phenomenology in Japan, and Yuasa Yasuo, noted particularly for his study of *ki* energy. Both thinkers address the body from an experiential perspective, and explore the development of consciousness through bodily sensation. My research draws from personal interviews I conducted with Hijikata's dancers, as well as essays, performance videos and films, and Hijikata's choreographic notebooks. I also track my own embodied understanding of butō, through practicing with these various teachers and using butō methods to teach and create performance work.

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This quest to understand butō training began the first day of rehearsal with Shinichi Koga in 2000 for inkBoat's *Cockroach*, and I am forever grateful for the introduction. Thank you to the many butō teachers with whom I have studied during the past decade, and especially to those who were willing to be interview subjects for this research, including Kasai Akira, Matsuoka Dai, Mikami Kayo, Murobushi Ko, Nakajima Natsu, Ōno Yoshito, Tamano Koichi and Tamano Hiroko, Temko Ima, and Waguri Yukio. The Tatsumi Hijikata Archive at Keio University, Morishita Takeshi, Homma Yu, Ishimoto Kae, Temple Japan Dean Bruce Stronach, and Mitsu Salmon, thank you all for your support of my research in Japan.

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CHAPTER 1

PRESENTATION OF STUDY

Introduction and Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to investigate performer training in ankoku butō dance, focusing specifically on the methods of Hijikata Tatsumi,[1] who is considered the co-founder and intellectual force behind this form.[2] Ankoku butō is the term Hijikata initially used to refer to his dance; later as the form developed and changed in the hands of Hijikata's students and other practitioners, it became simply referred to as butō. Please note that although the name is usually written as butoh in Western popular literature, following scholars Susan Blakely Klein and Bruce Baird, I use the butō form of translation.

As a researcher and dancer who has studied with various butō masters for more than a decade, I have found surprisingly little scholarly discussion about butō training and the lived experience of butō dancers. At the same time, I see a tendency to refer to the global "butoh" diaspora as a monolithic form, which in my experience it is not, in the

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[1] All Japanese names will follow the Japanese convention of surname first and given name second, except in the case of Japanese Americans such as Shinichi Koga and Japanese people who have assumed a non-Japanese name, such as Carlotta Ikeda and Bishop Yamada.

[2] Ōno Kazuo is considered the other co-founder of butō dance, and has developed his own approach to the potent ideas that Hijikata put forth in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Ōno was already an established modern dancer at the time, and was a senior collaborator in Hijikata's works. However, it was Hijikata who most strongly shaped butō's initial ideas about the body and instigated this new direction in dance.

sense of performance aesthetics, choreographic methods, or performer training. In an effort to understand key philosophical foundations that I believe have been overlooked or downplayed in the process of butō's migration and application, I am focusing my research on butō as close to the source as possible, in its original Japanese context. I do not mean to negate any particular branches of butō that have since developed (contemporary Japanese or otherwise). Rather, I wish to re-examine the notions of body and being which Hijikata proposed through his art, for the purposes of enriching understanding about the contributions of this one particular artist, and to investigate how his methods might be (or already are) integrated into contemporary performer training.

There is some debate about whether or not butō is a uniquely Japanese form (which I think is a moot point since it is defacto a global form at this point), and I want to be clear that I am not arguing for its "Japanese-ness" by couching my discussion in "Eastern" concepts. I am, however, investigating pedagogical concepts and methods that are deeply rooted in Japanese culture. Specifically, in this research I am interested in butō's non-dualistic, holistic approach to the body and to performer training, which is invariably informed by a Japanese artist with a Japanese cultural orientation. I do not mean to negate the myriad European influences on Hijikata's work; his fascination with Artaud, Genet, and the Surrealists is well documented and clearly evident (see Blakely Klein 1988, Kurihara 1996, Munroe 2004, Baird 2005). However, as a researcher I am trying to look beyond my American upbringing, well informed though it may be, to see from a different point of view. Though I am schooled by the post-modern school of global fusion that is mixed with the East Asian idea of learning through the body, I am constantly reminded that my cultural orientation is mind *over* matter, and not mind *in*

matter. In other words, Western culture typically values thought over experience, as opposed to an Eastern approach of embodied philosophy, hence my desire to expand my intellectual framework to something more in keeping with my experiential approach to dance. I will address this further in the researcher profile section.

Philosopher and Japanese Buddhist scholar Nagatomo Shigenori argues that Japanese performing arts are distinguished by several significant characteristics, namely 1) study of the art form implies a "way," or a designated course which one follows (2003,3); 2) that "the way has a sense of character building, or more broadly personality formation" (4); and finally 3) training necessitates transformation of "one's own body" through a process of attunement to experience" (6–7). Says Nagatomo, "because the way is concrete, 'walking' the way involves the whole of a person. In other words, there is no walking dualist in the way" (4). Contrary to a Western legacy of Cartesian dualism, Nagatomo argues that Japanese cultural and philosophical traditions assume "correlativity" between body and mind, not in the sense of two distinct entities that must be brought into dialog, but rather as an interrelated, interdependent, and inextricable whole. "The way," then, entails the perfection of this unification of the body-mind.

This is not to say that only Japanese art forms take a holistic standpoint to training—one can point to many examples in contemporary Western dance and theater training that purport to train the "whole actor." For example, I would argue that one could just as easily apply these criteria to ballet as well as to butō: both dance forms necessitate a complete body, mind, and spirit commitment on the part of the dancer, both shape the dancer's sense of ethics and aesthetic expression, and furthermore, training is a thoroughly consuming experience through which the advanced dancer gains articulate

command of his or her complete, complex psychophysical being in minute detail. Yet, I do not often find these conditions articulated as such in relation to ballet. Perhaps it is this philosophical component that is unique. Indeed, noted Japanese dance critic Gunji Masakatsu writes, "the importance of dance is not only in the technique but in a philosophy of dance which supports the technique" (quoted in Ohtani 1991, 26). My point is not that Asia has a monopoly on holistic thinking in this globalized world, but rather that several theatrical forms from Asia (i.e., Bharata Natyam's Natyashastra and Zeami's treatise on Nō Theater) have also generated written philosophy about the performer's cultivation of the body-mind as one cohesive entity, and that this is worthy of study if one is to understand these methods and their applications in any context.

Further, and more important to the topic of this dissertation, I think a clear discussion of what "body-mind as one cohesive entity" means for an individual performer wishing to train in this way is essential in the discussion of butō dance. In butō literature, there is much talk of transcendence of everyday reality but little talk of what this necessitates in any sense of a clear progression. How is this theory put into practice? What does it mean to live this experientially? Butō masters seem to have an inherent sense of body-mind oneness in their dancing and also in their training methods, and this is precisely what I mean to tease out of their words and practices, and articulate as a methodology in this study. For example, Temko Ima, former Byakko Sha dancer, says that she can tell that a dancer is improving when "her body and her heart, or spirit, [is] connecting little by little" (2010). Body and mind (or spirit) become aligned and function together. She stresses that this cohesion is "far from egoism," and that to find this perfect balance, "[a] sense of center is important…when I can feel center, I'm free from [the]

ego" (2010). I hear this term quite often in butō workshops—find your "center." But where does one *start* when trying to find "center?" And what is "center?" How will I know when I find it? Rather than just leaving a notion such as "center" dangling out there as a loosely associated concept in butō, my goal is to link these ideas to concrete exercises and methods of cultivation. I also hope to explore these concepts in some depth; for example, "center" refers to the physical place of the "hara" or "tandien" (energy source), located three fingers below the navel and in a few inches from the surface, also considered to be the second chakra. "Center" *also* refers to the state of internal and external (impulses, experiences, etc.) being in harmony, which is accomplished through breathing and imagery training exercises, and meditation. When one locates or connects with one's sense of center, one often feels lighter. To use a more well-known example, in yoga this means that by the end of the practice one's postures become easier to balance, and one often feels relaxed and hyper-alert at the same time. In butō, "finding center" is connected to a lighter, more pliable "hanging" or "danced" body, as Temko says, "free from the ego." Nagatomo notes that the term "danced" in the passive form is "crucial to suggest that it is not brought about by a working of ego-consciousness, but is brought about by something higher than it" (personal communication, 2012). The body-mind moves as an integrated whole, such that it can simply follow any image without hesitation. Still, the question remains, how does one go about finding this state?

A critical phase toward finding "center" or balance of inner and outer in Hijikata's dance philosophy is the *process* of "becoming nothing," or the dissolution of ego-consciousness. Of course, there are many "centering" moments in this process, instances of clarity and focus that bring awareness in alignment with the totality of

experience. Becoming nothing is a cyclical practice—we cannot stay there or else we would be dead. Butō performers are continuously on the way to "nothing" from "becoming something," or embodying an image, character, or mood. It is therefore critical to understand what "nothing" is for Hijikata, as it is a foundation to Hijikata's dance and a synthesis of his embodied philosophy. My goal is to describe methods that Hijikata used to train his dancers to "become nothing," as well as to portray their embodied experience of the training process. The discussion of "becoming nothing" is couched within a larger conversation on "nothingness" in Japanese philosophy and spirituality. Looking at Hijikata's dance through this lens has opened many doors in my own understanding of butō. In my experience, learning to dissolve one's ego-consciousness is more of a challenge if one has a cultural orientation that is in opposition to this idea. In addition, the ideas of Japanese philosophers Nishida Kitarō, Yuasa Yasuo and Buddhist scholars such as D.T. Suzuki have served as a guide to a different paradigm of consciousness for me, and I use their ideas to help frame my research questions. These concepts are then applied to actual experiences I have had with butō masters or experiences that they have shared.

This study highlights the lived experience of dancers within the context of culture, which is a gap I have identified within the current literature on butō dance. Closely examining Hijikata's embodied philosophy will offer valuable scholarship to the ongoing butō studies dialogue, and further, will be useful in applying butō methods to other modes of performer training. I wish to use the findings of this study in combination with research in other body-based performance training techniques to articulate the pathway by which a performer becomes "empty," or "nothing," and what these states make

possible in performance. Although a thorough investigation of applications to other performer training methods is beyond the scope of this dissertation, in Chapter Six I briefly examine the work of Jerzy Grotowski, Eugenio Barba, and Phillip Zarrilli—three pioneers in blending intercultural performance methods who have all addressed issues of performer presence—and draw preliminary connections between their work and butō methods.

Please be advised that I am casting a rather wide net around the term "training." In Western dance, performer training typically implies technical practice, with the result that the dancer improves his or her skills in executing a particular choreography in any given style of dance. Contexts may range from concert dance to dances performed in pageants and rituals. Dance educator Myron Howard Nadel argues that "a dancer with great technique and no expression is not a dance artist" (2003, 187), therefore he advises that dancers must train their body, mind, and spirit. A Juilliard graduate and Dean of the Arts at University of Texas, El Paso, Nadel's framework for acceptable dance training is "daily classes where the dancer religiously practices routines that maintain and improve skills," and further, that "the attention and involvement of the mind and spirit are crucial in these exercise rituals in order to make the body a well-honed instrument for expression" (ibid). The emphasis here is on repetition of established movements. Nadel and Strauss's is a more Western traditional and narrow definition of dance training than I apply to this study.

Approaches have changed dramatically in the past 50 years, according to dance scholar Melanie Bales, a Joffrey graduate and Laban Movement Analyst, who asserts that "contemporary dance training since the Judson era of American modern dance is distinct

from earlier approaches" (Bales 2008, 1). She cites many factors, including: 1) a disjunction between technique and performance, with choreography drawing from a multitude of sources beyond dance vocabularies, with technique viewed more as a means to facilitating efficient movement rather than pure exhibitions of technical skill in performance; 2) an eclectic approach to training, often incorporating somatic studies or other movement practices in support of or even *as* dance vocabulary; and 3) an increasingly important role of the dancer in developing innovative choreography, thus valuing dancers with a wide range of movement skills, including those outside of dance (1–2). Bales' book, *The Body Eclectic: Evolving Practices in Dance Training* (2008), is co-authored with Rebecca Nettl-Fiol, Associate Professor of Dance at University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, who is also an Alexander Technique practitioner, a somatic practice that is widely used in the United States in dance and theater training programs. Their text features a wide variety of "training stories" from artists as diverse as Chris Aiken, Tere O'Conner, and Bebe Miller, as well as an interview on the impact of somatics on dance training with Martha Myers (American Dance Festival Dean) and an article entitled "Relocating Technique" by Wendell Beavers (Naropa University Contemporary Performance chair, previously New York University's Experimental Theater Wing faculty). The authors cite Elizabeth Dempster's (1995) article, "Women Writing the Body: Let's Watch a Little How She Dances," as pivotal in theorizing the change in dance training. Dempster discusses the deconstructive approach to creating dances as something that filtered into training as well, or rather, became a "detraining of the dancers' habitual structures and patterns of movement" (32). From a similar impulse

as post-modern avant-garde theater makers such as Grotowski and Barba, post-modern dance makers have pursued a "stripping away" of technique.

Hijikata is a post-modern choreographer and, whether consciously or not, he worked in exactly these same deconstructive ways. "Hijikata didn't teach anything [in terms of dance skills]," says early student Nakajima Natsu, "just classical ballet" as a foundation in the beginning, and mostly he held long lecture sessions in which they drank sake and talked about art long into the morning hours (2010). Many students who came to him had no prior dance training, though some came from other physical disciplines such as karate. All were required to dance in his cabaret performances, less for the importance of learning the choreography and more for the experience of being publicly humiliated and performing in such difficult circumstances.[3] Ōno Yoshito explains that training was "not actually practice, it's rehearsal for the next show. Everything is for the performance with Hijikata" (2010). Murobushi Ko, who began working with Hijikata in 1968, describes his rehearsal experiences as "dangerous" with real stakes, not dancers coming into the studio and participating in a group warm-up session (2010). Waguri Yukio was intrigued to come to Hijikata's studio when he heard that dancers were jumping from the second story balcony and landing on folded legs, like Russian dancers who spin and land on their shins. Waguri also recalls Hijikata's ability to make his dancers rethink their relationship to their body and everyday perception of reality (2010). Every one of my interviewees said that Hijikata taught them to look at daily life as their teacher.

[3] Waguri commented that the cabaret shows played for noisy, drunk audiences who demanded a real spectacle in order to pay attention. In one show, he recounts, Koma threw Eikō into a wall, possibly by accident he speculates, but the audience loved it. "This is [a] show!" he said (2010).

Given this approach to dance, I am defining training to include the ways in which Hijikata taught his dancers to perceive as much as how he taught them how to move. Methods encompass practices in the rehearsal studio as well as interactions and relationships between Hijikata and his dancers. Hijikata's philosophical approach to the body and dance are critical to this study as these inform the ways in which he trained, or sculpted, his dancers to perform the work he envisioned.

Research Methods

This research is both ethnographic and phenomenological, investigating an artist's ideas as they are represented within and experienced by a small community of people: first generation butō dancers who worked directly with Hijikata and their direct students. This study also encompasses philosophical inquiry, delving into Japanese thinkers' ideas on nothingness, cultivation, and the body-mind entity. However, this philosophical understanding must be digested and embodied in practical, experiential ways, as this will be the most useful for its applications to performer training. As such, the philosophical inquiry herein serves to frame the discussion and re-align my thinking of the ego-conscious, so that I may better understand the cultural assumptions that likely influenced Hijikata's dance. As Mikami Kayo, a disciple of Hijikata, reports her teacher saying, "you can understand nothing before you start dancing" (1997, 14). As such, I privilege the lived experience accounts of dancers, not simply as evidence of philosophical concepts, but as sources of knowledge in their own right.

Historical archival materials also play an important role in this research, providing insight into Hijikata's artistic process. As Hijikata is no longer alive, my research

necessarily draws from what sources he has left behind—much of which is now archived at Keio University in Tokyo, Japan—which include videos and photographs of his work, his choreographic notebooks, performance artifacts, published interviews, and his two books of collected essays (of which only small sections have been translated into English). I spent several weeks reviewing these materials in January and October 2010, which further informed my understanding of butō practice. In particular, the videos, photographs, and performance artifacts enabled me to ask questions about specific moments in his dances and working process. However, although studying Japanese language has helped me at least identify the topics of particular texts, analyzing Hijikata's writing requires greater skills than I possess. Hijikata's dancers were therefore critical to my research; not only have they offered a first-hand interaction with his methods, but they also represented an embodied archive of the phenomenon of study.

Researcher Profile

Butō appeared in my life in 1999 at a time when I was actively seeking out new modes of performance and training. I fell into studying it quite by accident, and had only a passing knowledge of and interest in Japanese culture before my complete immersion in this Japanese *counter*-culture dance form. Parsing the nuanced meaning of butō and understanding the cultural context within which it arose has been a challenge, as has been finding my comfort zone in incorporating butō dance in my teaching and artwork. The performances I encountered resonated strongly with my dance aesthetic and exploratory approach to movement, and so I continued researching.

Butō uses nature imagery as inspiration for dance. For example, rather than directing a dancer to raise the arm and open the hand, butō choreography might give the image "a vine grows toward the sun and a flower blossoms." Having grown up in rural northern New Jersey climbing trees and catching frogs to race with my sister, nature-based image language readily appealed to me. Many butō masters I studied with stressed the importance of one's hometown landscape, where one formed the first impressions of the world. Often the images given in workshops invoked vivid, visceral memories from my childhood, ranging from the wonder I felt from high atop my tree perch to the panic I felt when I walked out of the swamp to find a leech attached to my foot. Butō was an invitation to re-enter the wildness I remembered as a child, in a more conscious way.

At first, I was not completely convinced that I should relinquish all of my other training and become a butō devotee, however. Having started with ballet lessons from age three to fourteen, I traversed a typical route for a girl who moves from New Jersey to San Francisco, via Washington, D.C.: jazz, musical theater dance, modern and post-modern dance, contact improvisation, acrobatics, aerial work, and somatic studies. I was a well-oiled machine with a clear sense of how to move aerodynamically, and butō completely disintegrated that. All my smooth lines were broken, my sense of flight hijacked by the stumbling walk of a rotting corpse, and with the Japanese master model of teaching, I found myself squarely back in the hierarchy of my ballet days. I was not comfortable being awkward and ugly, unless I fell into parodical exaggeration of these qualities. Further, I had become accustomed to the eclectic training I was receiving from a wide variety of dance, theater, and movement teachers, and was not ready to commit to any one form, much less a "master."

My first training sessions with Koga Shinichi, director of inkBoat, were somewhat disastrous. He told me to become a tree, but when I reached my arms up like branches he told me I was doing it all wrong. I glanced around at the other dancers and they all had their eyes half-closed and their arms were slowly and delicately creeping up their bodies and incrementally growing out to the sides asymmetrically. I noticed they were swaying as they "grew." So I closed my eyes and tried again, more slowly and less stable, though Koga still was not satisfied. Later, he gave me a sheet of paper showing an evolutionary development of creatures, beginning with a worm and ending in a baby. Somewhere in the middle of the chain was a young girl. I had no idea how this progression made any sort of sense, even in an associative logic. He told me that was the point. I was deeply confused.

I had several key experiences that piqued my interest and caused me to look more deeply in butō. The first such incident occurred when I joined inkBoat and started rehearsing for *Cockroach*. When one of the musicians sprayed us with a large insecticide canister, Shinichi directed us to drop our heads and let our jaw fall open as if we had been sliced clean across, right under the occipital ridge. I did it a few times and my neck started to twinge. One of the other dancers, Leigh Evans, a seasoned yoga teacher and long-time member of Tamano's company Harupin Ha, agreed that the movement could possibly injure the neck. Together we explored reaching up and back as in yoga's camel pose (see Figure 1.1), to find a way to do the movement safely and without pain. After many years of suffering from sciatica, and then a year of movement therapy training with Martha Eddy, I was oriented toward injury prevention and movement efficiency. One of my butō teachers, Seki Minako, entertained these ideas; I studied with her in Berlin for

one month each year for five years in succession, often asking her questions about movement initiation. One year she brought an Alexander teacher in to work with us. I began to connect my previous knowledge of alignment and somatic studies to support butō exercises. I also began to realize how poetic imagery could surpass anatomical imagery and bring me to new levels of experience and awareness. For example, some exercises that I tried and failed to execute by sequentially activating the proper musculoskeletal structure, I found I was able to execute with clear, strong images. I was intrigued with this discovery.

Figure 1.1
Sri Louise in *Ustrasana* (Camel Pose)

A few other key experiences secured my undivided attention. First was an experience with inkBoat in Schloss Broellin, Germany. Koga had staged me and another dancer as sentries on either side of the stage, and we had to be still for at least twenty minutes of the performance. The studio was an open-air barn located next to a swamp, and as we stood guard, mosquitoes attacked us. I wanted to scratch but was so committed to remaining absolutely still that I just stood there, getting stung. After a while, my entire body felt itchy and I was absolutely awake. I do not remember if it was a good

performance or not once we finally entered the stage, but the first twenty minutes are seared in my memory. The experience recalled a Brazilian guide in the rain forest dismissing my college group, saying, "*pscologue* [psychological]" when the mosquitoes came out and we started swatting; now I finally understood what he meant. Second, in a weeklong workshop with Carlotta Ikeda at ImpulsTanz in Vienna, I had another insect experience in which we were to imagine being eaten alive by bugs, collapse into a riddled mess until we were completely dead, and then rise up as ghosts. By the time we got to the sweet, melodic music at the end, I had thoroughly exhausted myself, and so what did rise up for my spirit dance was just a fraction of my strength. I felt like I was dancing almost weightlessly, truly like a floating ghost. Afterward, Ikeda looked at me and said something to the effect of "you had an experience, yes?" I nodded from somewhere very far away that seemed removed from the room yet also aware of the present moment at the same time. That experience reminded me of the déjà vu experience I had often as a child, in which I felt like I was being pulled backward and forward at the same time. As strange as that may sound, I am quite sure that is the physical sensation I experienced; I have a distinct, visceral sensation of the magnetic pulls. Ikeda brought those moments back and even gave me a pathway to find them again.

A third, more subtle realization occurred in a workshop I took with Murobushi Ko in fall 2009 in New York. I have studied with Murobushi for many years, in workshops of varying lengths from two days to one month, performed the same exercises over and over, and probably heard him say the same words countless times. This particular workshop was the first I had trained with him after a year of studying Japanese Buddhism and an Eastern body-mind perspective with Dr. Nagatomo at Temple University, during

which I had become acquainted with Nishida and "the philosophers of nothingness." Murobushi had us practicing *suriashi*, a walking exercise from Nō Theater that I had done hundreds of times. As he walked, he said, "concentrate…into your…silence." As I walked, the room became as quiet and as vast as outer space. I sensed my whole body, including my back-space, softening and expanding, and yet I felt very tiny. I could feel other students who were watching on the sides not looking at me, but looking through me. I felt invisible and present at the same time. I think I was starting to experience "nothingness" as a heightened state of presence, and a dissolving of material being.

Later, during a break, another long-time butō student commented that she found it confusing that each butō teacher seemed to have so many different exercises and approaches to the dance. I mentioned that Nakajima proposed that "becoming nothing" was at the core of the form, and perhaps there might be various pathways to approaching this, so it was a matter of finding the methods with which we connected. In this instance, Murobushi's approach is to "concentrate into his silence" through the practice of *suriashi*, in which physical "silence" means to eliminate excess movement and tension, and mental "silence" means to concentrate on nothing other than the task at hand, of walking painfully slowly without shifting your weight side to side as you step, while maintaining equal intensity backward even as you move forward. Eventually, the "silence" takes over, and you forget that you are walking altogether, and possibly even forget your sense of having or being a body as well.

I teach butō in New York, where the community is still young and I have something to offer. When I teach, I struggle to find words to bring students to such depth of experience. I catch myself being as elusive as my own teachers, offering guidance that

only makes sense over time. Words of wisdom from "guru" Hijikata have been peppered throughout my own training in butō. The two most often repeated snippets teach students that butō is "the body on the edge of crisis" and that it is "a corpse in a desperate bid to stand." Murobushi offered this as an exercise in this same workshop, to which most of us responded quite literally—undoubtedly fueled by a scene from Hijikata's *Hosotan* [Story of Smallpox] in which he rises and falls and struggles to stand on weakened limbs, which many of these students have seen through New York Butoh Festival screenings. I have watched novice dancers, myself included, replicate this same scene exactly in countless performances over the years. And yet when I watched Murobushi work with this image, his dance was much different than Hijikata's ailing leper. Hijikata stayed on his back for long periods of time, with limbs weakly flailing; Murobushi rose forcefully like a geyser shooting up, teetered precariously on the knife edge of his foot, and then slammed down to the floor with Judo precision, and then rose halfway again. I was surprised at the range of expression one image could bring, which began to open my movement vocabulary even further. I have come to realize over the years that Hijikata's words and image instructions have wider latitude than I originally thought. Only recently did I realize that the butō-fu, Hijikata's choreographic instructions, are a system of dance notation and not exact directions. As Nakajima stresses, "they are the *result*" (2010), which Hijikata named the movements after creating them, so each one is actually shorthand for an entire frame or state. Further, the images act as a gateway to an experience, which can then be interpreted and shaped by each individual dancer. Of course, in Hijikata's choreography, he had a definite idea as to how he wanted the images performed. However, Nakajima

commented that she refers to his butō-fu often for inspiration, and explores her own unique expression of his image language.

The teaching approach I have experienced in many butō workshops of diving right in to material without much explanation was something I found jarring at first. I sensed a methodology but was not clear what it was. I kept searching for progressions, trying to move in stages to the edges of my comfort zone and ability, so that I might retrace my steps and arrive there again. Seki once chided me for having a Western mindset that wanted to know the structure and pillars of knowledge before allowing myself to experience something. The context was an assignment of embodying an animal for two weeks. A Japanese man in the class embraced the task, drawing cat whiskers on his face and only meowing in response to questions for the duration of the two weeks. I, on the other hand, broke my study of a snake down into movement patterns, explorations of snakeskin, relationships, feeding, and other such categories. The task was simply to become another creature, which I eventually did, although not before developing a framework for my study and investigating discreet aspects. One might say I am taking a similar approach in this current research, analyzing aspects of butō training in a manner unique to my approach to processing knowledge. My hope is that it resonates with other dancers and teachers across cultural contexts, however it is ultimately only my grasp on the material and not a definitive account of butō training.

In that this study is ethnographically based, it is important to note that it is also inherently biased. Helen Thomas, referencing Geertz Clifford, notes, “ethnography is not about making truth claims” (2003, 68). Thomas argues that ethnographies “are always based on ‘second or third order’ constructs and, as such, are interpretations of

interpretations" (ibid.). Thomas emphasizes feminist scholarship's challenge to anthropology (out of which ethnography grew), and the call to situate the ethnographic account "in relation to the researcher's biography, social environment, and history" (69–70). As such, I must acknowledge the lens through which I approach this material, and emphasize that this is only one account of the phenomenon in question.

Ethnography is further complicated by cross-cultural mis/understandings. Thomas reminds us that knowledge is never directly transferred from (or even within) one culture to another because practices are invariably filtered through the lens of the observer (88). A researcher engaged in a cross-cultural study is in perpetual danger of making totalizing statements that reflect a shallow understanding of the "Other," which is itself a mis-identification. On the one hand, culture is fluid, continuously evolving, and the boundaries are often amorphous even to "members" of any given group. People migrate—both physically and in a disembodied manner—through photographs, music, films, and videos, and our cultural expressions both precede our arrival and leave their trace from our passage. We now have unprecedented access to cultures around the globe, such that we can become initiated (to some extent) to private cultural traditions without building relationships on an individual level. At the same time, despite our more porous identity, the concept of "Other" still has significance. While we trade images and practices with relative ease, as researchers we cannot mistake these with understanding; rather they are often merely the beginning of understanding, or the proverbial tip of the

iceberg.[4] Cultures, though fluid, still have a relatively coherent meaning-making structure, or a system of values, within which the easily circulated material carries meaning, and these contexts may not translate. An example of this would be butō dancers wearing kimonos backward, which might not even register to an American viewer, yet it might be read as an affront to tradition in Japanese culture and a significant political statement. Cultural markers, such as a kimono, cannot remain the unmarked norm. They need to be interrogated for the meaning they carry to the one presenting them. Thus, my task as a cross-cultural researcher is to embrace the "Other" category as a point of departure, explore and explode the stereotypes, and trace the roots of cultural expression to their origin in cultural values.

In this case, "Other" is not monolithic Japanese culture, but rather Hijikata's experience/expression of Japanese culture in the very specific context of his time. His dance has been a cross-cultural art form since its inception, borrowing cultural expression from European artists and writers freely, and at the same time, deeply engaging with Japanese culture, often through critique. Hijikata's butō is essentially a post-modern, counter-cultural form, which would be difficult (for a relative outsider such as myself) to comprehend without first delving into the cultural identity against which it rebelled. Frederick Jameson notes that the "post" label signifies both breakage and continuity with the past—an either/or relationship like an adolescent child that carves out an identity by being diametrically opposed to the parent. In *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Jameson writes that post-modern theorists (and presumably artists) are:

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[4] Cultural anthropologist Edward T. Hall's famous metaphor for culture is that of an iceberg, in which only superficial cultural attributes are seen "above the surface," through behaviors (see Rodgers, William, and Yoshitaka 2002).

> all replicating within themselves a mimesis of their own title in the way in which they are parasitory on another system…whose residual traces and unconsciously reproduced values and attitudes then become a precious index to the failure of a whole new culture to come to birth (1991, xii).

My challenge in this study has been to look for the "residual traces" and "unconsciously reproduced attitudes" as an index for understanding Hijikata's project. For example, esteemed butō master and early Hijikata collaborator Kasai Akira told me that Hijikata's *mu* [idea of nothingness] is exactly the opposite of Buddhist *mu*, by way of explaining that Hijikata's butō is not informed by Buddhist philosophy. At first I felt like the ignorant outsider who had read butō incorrectly, and then I realized the irony of his statement was that butō *had* to be informed by Buddhist philosophy in order to express its opposite. Of course it is not such a clear-cut connection as the relationship between modern and post-modern art (which is itself complex). Yet Buddhist philosophy has undeniably shaped Japanese culture, and post-war Japanese witnessed this identity splintering into many odd hybrid expressions.[5]

My position as an ethnographer is similarly complicated, both culturally and methodologically. I am not coming to this work as a pure outsider, recording my own unfolding understanding of contacting the "unknown." As a researcher, I am both an outsider and an insider in the larger butō community. I have participated as a dancer, producer, and researcher in the global butō diaspora for the past 12 years of its 50-year history, and I have been a member of one of the most renowned American butō companies, with which I have toured and taught. At the same time, I am neither Japanese

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[5] In *The Body in Postwar Japanese Fiction*, Douglas Slaymaker recounts the story of a couple reportedly having sadomasochistic sex in temple halls, "highlighting a level of disgust with the tradition of state Shinto, the Imperial system, and the repressive nation-state it represented" (2004, 1). I explore Slaymaker's research in more depth in Chapter Two.

nor Buddhist, I do not speak Japanese well, and though I have studied with numerous Japanese artists, I have only spent a very brief time fully immersed in Japanese culture. Though the debate continues as to whether one needs to be Japanese to understand butō, I am all too aware of the language and cultural barriers of not being Japanese in understanding my particular subjects. I have at times asked what I thought were innocuous questions only to have embarrassed or angered one of my teachers, and other times when I pressed for an explanation of a particular concept, I reached an impasse and the response "it's too difficult to translate."

Ankoku is one such concept that seems to escape easy translation into English. Most scholars translate it to mean "darkness" or "utter darkness," however it might also mean "shaded" or "ignorant" (Online Japanese Dictionary 2008), all of which have slightly different connotations. Nakajima describes the meaning of *Ankoku* as an idea as complex as "a black-hole in the universe;" she suggests that *Ankoku* might be understood as a form of spirituality that she has come to understand best "by learning in the field of the body" (1997, 3); in other words, beyond language. This is a sentiment I have heard from Western dance teachers as well, that experience is often difficult to express in words. Koga writes, "Insistence upon meaning loses the point. Only this undecipherable, formless beauty grows when it's watered, when it's fed" (2004, par. 3). Though Nakajima has made a considerable effort to write about butō, she concurs with Koga that writing about the depth of her experience in butō is like trying "to give form to that which is formless, trying to put into words that which cannot be put into words" (9). In other words, it is a Zen experience which one must simply experience on one's own.

Although I agree that any dance is best understood when experienced, I am also wary of appealing to a mythical "wisdom of the Orient" trope that is beyond language. I have been in workshops where my teacher will say something like "time is dance" and we all hum profoundly as if we have just received the proverbial key to the universe. In actuality, he was saying that if you are dancing an image such as a flower unfolding, your dance needs to take the time of each petal unfolding, and this time makes your dance (or conversely, that the dance has its own unique time that is not musical time, but rather the time that the image takes to develop). To some extent, this is profound, especially if you are accustomed to unfolding your flower on an eight-count, a rhythm which most Western classically trained dancers internalize and find difficult to alter. Yet it is also simply a different logic than many American butō students are used to, and should be treated at such. Still, I am concerned with exotification of the East in the West (and vice-versa), and do not wish to perpetuate this kind of discourse. Edward Said cautions that any notion of the Orient is constructed such that our desire is trained on a projection that only partially reflects reality (1979, 6). Asian art historian Thomas W. Kim connects American desire for Asian culture to a "longing for purity." In a recent article, under a section entitled "Consuming the Orient," he writes:

> Taste professionals and connoisseurs often attributed the preeminence of Oriental aesthetics to its "naturalness," its affinity to nature itself, as though Asian art objects instinctually tap into the timelessness and repetition of the earth's seasons…Japan in particular represented a repository of (supposedly) untouched, timeless beauty and ancient custom. (2006, 381)

Indeed, I have caught myself revering Japan as a culture that espouses the timelessness of nature and incorporates a consciousness of ancestors into daily life, things that I often miss in my own cultural orientation. And yet, I came to this conclusion with

the most cursory knowledge of Shintoism and Zen Buddhism. At least in this case, Said is right about projected realities. Although I had formed this opinion with the best of intentions, it is problematic in its stereotyping of all things Japanese. In terms of intercultural communication theory, this mirrors an intermediary stage of cross-cultural understanding that involves negative evaluation of the home culture and thus a reversing of the "us" and "them" paradigm to see the Other as superior (Hammer, Bennett, and Wiseman 2002, 2). Now, after these 12 years of intensive investigation, I recognize that butō is not a mythical practice that will give near-religious meaning and purpose to Western performance techniques. Instead, I think that Hijikata offered a well-developed artistic practice with an analyzable methodology, and that it can and should be taken seriously in the conversation about performer training and the development of the body-mind as a vehicle of transformation.

Mikami offers her analysis of butō training in her 1997 dissertation, couched in different layers of caveats. In response to her own fear that writing about butō in an academic context will "negate butō as the eternal avant-garde school of dance," she writes, "having finished this doctoral thesis I realized that it would be necessary for butō researchers to be equipped with [the] verbal sensibility of poets as well as [the] scientific knowledge of astronauts in order to transcript physical movements to verbal expositions" (146). While that skill set is perplexing, I do believe it is possible to write about the experience of dancing butō. Further, I am driven to do so if only because *not* doing so leaves it in the realm of mystery and mysticism; in my opinion, this is one of the primary reasons why certain aspects of Hijikata's work have been overlooked in the transition to global popularity.

Philosophical Framework

In an effort to investigate the historically situated and culturally specific perspective of the body that informed the development of ankoku butō dance, I am using frameworks provided by Japanese scholars who figure prominently in the zeitgeist of 1950s and 1960s Japan. Among them are Nishida Kitarō, who is widely considered one of the most significant Japanese philosophers of the 20th century and founder of the Kyoto School, noted for bringing Anglo-European philosophy into dialogue with Japanese thought (Maraldo 2005, par. 1), and Yuasa Yasuo, noted particularly for his study of the human body and *ki* energy (Watanabe 2006, 61). Both thinkers address the body from an experiential perspective: Nishida theorizes the unification of the body and mind in *junsui keiken* [pure experience] as a spatial-temporal relationship, while Yuasa develops a psychophysical model for the process of *shugyo* [self-cultivation]. Combined, these notions point toward a view of the body as consciousness through sensation, and a gradual developing of awareness through extended practice, ideas which are foundational in my experience of butō training. As I investigate Hijikata and the sources of butō, I draw parallels between Yuasa and Nishida's systems of thought with butō training methods in an effort to elucidate the body-mind experience of the butō dancer.

A further and profound illustration of the cultivation of nothingness appears in the "Ten Bull-Herding Pictures," a metaphorical depiction of the journey of self-cultivation that has been adopted from the twelfth century Chinese master Kuòān Shīyuǎn's (廓庵師遠) into Japanese Zen philosophy. The Bull Herding series (see Figure 4.1 in Chapter 4) describes a transcendence of the body *via* "learning through the body," through which one arrives at *shinjin ichinyo* [body-mind oneness], or "an animated state

with maximum freedom in which there is not the least gap between the will's demand and its fulfillment" (Nishida quoted in Yuasa 1987, 65). Frame Eight of the Bull Herding pictures, which is blank, is meant to depict the experience of absolute transcendence of the self. I propose that this blank frame is closely linked with Hijikata's "becoming nothing" in ankoku butō and could be used as an illustration for what butō dancers realize through their performance. These two ideas—"becoming nothing" and fulfillment of the authentic self depicted as emptiness in Frame Eight—appear to be philosophically similar. My research explores the dancer's description of "becoming nothing" in comparison with the imagery used to describe one's state in Frame Eight.

If "becoming nothing" is the foundation of butō dance (as Nakajima Natsu asserts), then inquiry into the philosophical basis for and psychophysical process of "becoming nothing" will illuminate butō practice in new ways and be valuable to contemporary students of this art form as well as critics and scholars interested in the growing butō dialogue.

Research Structure

My primary research involved interviews and archive research conducted over the course of 12 months. I traveled to Japan in January 2010, during which time I studied with Nakajima Natsu in Tokyo and with Ōno Yoshito (Ōno Kazuo's son) in Yokohama, researched at the Hijikata Tatsumi Memorial Archive at Keio University in Tokyo, and made connections with other dancers who welcomed future interviews. In the archive, I focused on videos of Hijikata's performances not available elsewhere and on his choreographic notebooks. As my trip coincided with the New Year's celebrations, which

last for several weeks in Japan, I visited many shrines and temples in Tokyo, Kamakura, and Kyoto amid throngs of Japanese people offering their New Year prayers, and witnessed several performances and cultural presentations. I was also fortunate to meet Ōno Kazuo during this trip, and was incredibly moved by his vibrant presence even as he lay confined to his bed. He died in July of 2010, at the age of 104 years old.

In February 2010 in New York, I interviewed Mikami Kayo (of Kyoto), a dancer in Hijikata's performances from 1978–81 and a scholar who has written her dissertation and published a book on butō. I accompanied Mikami to several performances in New York, and had the opportunity to discuss her opinions on each performance, which helped me get to know her further. In May 2010, I interviewed Murobushi Ko (of Tokyo), a co-founder of Dairakurakan with Maro Akaji and highly visible touring artist, and Shinichi Koga (of San Francisco/Berlin), a disciple of the Tamanos and one of the more famous butō dancers in the United States. I was also able to observe their collaborative process and participate in training with the company for four days during their residency at the Maggie Allesse Center for Choreography in Tallahassee.

In June 2010, I participated in a three-day workshop with Tamano Koichi and Hiroko (of San Francisco/Tokyo, respectively), and interviewed the husband and wife team together with the help of Oe Azumi, another dancer, who translated some of Koichi's responses. In September 2010, I participated in a ten-day intensive workshop with Waguri Yukio (of Tokyo), interviewed him informally over the course of several post-workshop meals, and interviewed him formally in front of an audience at Caveartspace, which simultaneously webcast the event. In early October 2010, I saw

Sankai Juku perform *Tobari* in New York, and was able to interview one of the younger dancers, Matsuoka Dai.

In October–November 2010, I returned to Japan for an intensive three-week research trip, during which time I interviewed Nakajima (of Tokyo) and Mikami (of Kyoto) for a second time, took classes with Nakajima, and saw Mikami's company perform. I also interviewed Temko Ima (of Kyoto), from Byakko Sha, one of the early butō companies that grew out of Dairakurakan, and was able to attend one of her company's rehearsals. Ōno Yoshito (of Yokohama) and Kasai Akira (of Tokyo) both granted me an interview with the assistance of a translator, Kae Ishimoto, a dancer who previously performed with Kasai and Pappa Tarahumara (an internationally-known Tokyo-based contemporary dance company). Kae has been an assistant at the Hijikata Archive at Keio University, and currently performs with Waguri. I was fortunate to observe Kae and company in a rehearsal of Waguri's newest work, and talk with Kae extensively about her experiences with butō. Additionally, I met Dutch-Australian multi-media artist Mariana Verdaasdonk, who created video for the memorial performance of *Kinjiki* and studied closely with Hijikata's widow, Motofuji Akiko. I also attended several other performances during this trip, including Yoshito with a Korean traditional dancer, a professional geisha performance, French-Austrian Gisèle Vienne's collaboration with video artist Shiro Takatani from Dumb Type and fog artist Fujiko Nakaya, acclaimed-choreographer Ikuya Kuroda and her contemporary dance company BATIK, and a collaboration between Japanese-American performance artist Mitsu Salmon and avant-garde Japanese accordionist Ruytaro. The Hijikata Archive was busy

preparing for a Russian Butō Festival, but I was able to get two more days of research there as well.

I concluded this year of research with 220 pages of interview transcripts, numerous performance videos, and several new documents and primary sources for my study. There are certainly many other important artists I could interview for this work—Maro Akaji of Dairakurakan is one I would have liked to have met if he had not been on tour when I was in Japan, though I did hear him speak via Livestream at a May 2011 UCLA conference. Nonetheless, my research accesses a significant pool of key artists who worked directly with Hijikata and are currently still teaching, performing, and choreographing work.

A portion of my research was also experiential, for which I kept journals during the workshops I attended. Additionally, throughout the fall and spring semesters, I taught a weekly butō class in Manhattan and choreographed a student piece exploring some of the new information I had gleaned through these recent encounters. In April–May 2011, I re-mounted an older butō-informed piece on new dancers in my company, one of whom was Endo Mariko, a former Dairakurakan dancer and student of Kasai Akira. Endo has become a valuable resource in my continued investigation and also translated pages of Hijikata's notebooks for me. Finally, I performed, taught, and participated in several workshops and panels at the Seattle Butoh Festival in June 2011. This hands-on exploration of new information has greatly informed my understanding and analysis.

All of these formal interviews were conducted with the approval of the Institutional Review Board, and throughout this process I have ensured that I complied with all guidelines regarding interviewing human subjects. (See Appendix I.)

Research Questions

The title of this study is *Becoming Nothing/Becoming Something: Methods of Performer Training in Hijikata Tatsumi's Ankoku butō Dance.* The overarching research question is "What does it mean to "become nothing," how does one accomplish this, and further, what are the implications of such a state of being for the performer's body? Attendant sub-questions include:

- What did Hijikata mean by "becoming nothing," and how did he train his dancers toward this goal?
- How do Hijikata's disciples describe their experience with him? How do they understand the journey toward "becoming nothing" and how do they train their dancers?
- What is the Japanese Buddhist concept of *mu*, or nothingness, and what manifestations of the cultivation of *mu* are seen in Hijikata's work?
- How is nothingness expressed by Nishida Kitarō, founder of the Kyoto School and philosophical forefather of post-WWII Japanese thought, and how do Hijikata's writings and performance work align with these ideas?
- What is my own unfolding, experiential understanding of "nothingness?"
- What are the possibilities in applying an experiential understanding of "nothingness" to Western performer training? What examples of this already exist? What has been the result? What possibilities are there for further applications?

Overview of the Field and Contributions of the Study

This work is situated within a broader conversation about performer development and the translation of practices across cultures, defined in Western practices by the work of such theater practitioners as Jerzy Grotowski, Eugenio Barba, and Phillip Zarrilli, among others. Grotowski investigated the connections between ritual and performance across cultures in his "Theater of Sources" period, and he credits Peking Opera, Indian Kathakali, and Japanese Nō theater among the influences for his ground-breaking performance research through which he developed techniques for "ripening the actor" (Grotowski 1968, 16). Barba has investigated Asian performance extensively; his numerous scholarly contributions to intercultural training include detailed descriptions of body usage in Kathakali and Nō theater designed to break the performer's everyday responses and instead promote what Barba has called an "extra-daily body" or a heightened sense of presence necessary for performance (Watson 1995, 133). Zarrilli has contributed to this field using Indian *kalarippayattu* as his basis, and focusing on the various stages of psychophysical transformation of the performer as they train. All three of these artist/researcher's work will figure into my analysis of butō training.

The discussion on performer training has continued to expand, so much so that Routledge, one of the major publishers of performing arts media, released a new journal entitled *Theatre, Dance, and Performer Training* in 2010. I intend to contribute a specifically dance-based perspective to this growing field of interest, which, judging from

the dominant literature on body-based performer training in publication at the moment,[6] seems to be mainly focused on actors and theater.

Within the growing field of butō scholarship, I hope to contribute research that focuses on embodiment and is meaningful to dancers as well as to academics. To date, analysis of the form has centered around founder Hijikata's artistic influences and aesthetic inventions, the confluence of history underpinning the avant-garde movement in Japan, decoding Hijikata's enigmatic writings, and the socio-political rationale for butō's transgressive body practices (see Blakely Klein 1988; Kurihara 1996; Baird 2005; Lee Chee Keng 1998). While these studies are essential and certainly provide an important framework for understanding butō, they construct an incomplete bridge from theory to practice. Certainly, these scholars address critical aspects of the embodied experience of butō: Blakely Klein (1988), Kurihara (1996, 2000), and Baird (2005) discuss metamorphosis or "becoming" as a butō tactic, in which the performer replaces their identity with that of a character or another being. Other scholars contribute to this discussion as well: Paul Roquet (2003) writes about the liminal state of mind, *ma*, or "between-ness" that occurs when performing or witnessing butō. In their recent book on Hijikata and Ōno, Sondra Fraleigh and Nakamura Tamaha (2006) include a chapter on "butō exercises" that have been amassed from a variety of butō practitioners, some more experienced than others. More controversially, there have been links between "the

[6] I am referring to the overwhelming amount of literature on performance training for actors in comparison to that available for dancers, with texts such as Thomas Richards' *At Work with Grotowski on Physical Actions*, Paul Allain's *The Art of Stillness* (on Suzuki), Eugenio Barba and Nicola Savarese's *The Secret Art of the Performer*, Stanislavski's *An Actor Prepares*, *Building a Character*, and *Creating a Role*, Michael Chekov's *To the Actor*, Uta Hagen's *Respecting the Actor*, Ann Bogarts' *Viewpoints*, and Joseph Chaiken's *The Presence of the Actor*, among others. In contrast, dance training texts tend to focus on specific genres (primarily classical ballet) or on somatic investigations, rather than issues of performance, presence, or artistic development through body-based training.

Japanese body" and butō: Joan Laage (1993) discusses the stereotyped particularities of the Japanese body—bow legs and elongated torso [sic]–that engender butō's earthy experience, and Blakely Klein claims that Hijikata promoted a bow-legged stance (*ganimata*) as the butō "first position," which, she surmises, connects these dancers to the earth in a way unlike Western dance forms (53). And many have noted the use of physical pain and grotesquery as a strategy for calling the body (both the performer's and the audience's) to unwavering attention, and becoming completely absorbed in the present. Nakajima's (1997) text, brief though it is at a mere eight pages, is the most comprehensive and concise in my opinion, because she unites theory with practice and breaks Hijikata's butō method into two distinct stages: becoming nothing, and becoming something. My research aims to expand significantly on the first idea, offering more context for the idea of "becoming nothing."

In general, there has been little discussion of the influence of Buddhist philosophy on butō dance. Though there are often references to Zen aesthetics, most analysis does not go beyond this. Fraleigh (1999) produced the most extensive published work on this topic to date—*Dancing into Darkness: Butoh, Zen, and Japan*—which is largely a journal of her reflections and poetry on butō performances and Buddhist ideas as expressed in Japanese calligraphy practices, tea ceremony, and haiku. She includes one short interview with Kasai Akira that specifically asks about his ideas of the body and Buddhist ideas of impermanence. Michael Sakamoto, a Ph.D. student at UCLA and adjunct professor at Goddard College, is also researching intersections of butō and Buddhism (personal communication, 2011). I participated with Sakamoto in a collaborative working group on butō for the 2010 Congress on Research in Dance

(CORD) conference along with Baird, Rosemary Candelario, and Megan Nicely. Sakamoto and I also participated together in the 2011 Seattle Butoh Festival, in which we performed, taught, and participated in panels specifically addressing our doctoral work. Our research is related though distinct; Sakamoto is interested in developing a new performer training system based on his experiences with butō and Buddhism, and I am researching whether such influences already exist within Hijikata's butō practice. My research is based on ethnographic research and interpretation of literature (Hijikata's writings and choreographic notebooks), and Sakamoto's is essentially an autoethnography based on his own extensive performance and spiritual practices.

This dissertation aims to shed new light on Hijikata's Ankoku butō dance. By privileging dancers' lived experience, I hope to describe Hijikata's methods for "becoming nothing" as well as discuss the effect this has on the performer. This study contributes to both practice and scholarly discourse on butō dance in a number of ways. Further, it expands potential for interaction between butō dance and other performer training methods opening up possibilities for cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary dialogue. Finally, it brings a Japanese-inflected body-mind philosophy to the forefront of the discussion on butō dance, addressing a unique paradigm that is integral to this form of dance.

Delimitations and Limitations

This study is focused on Hijikata Tatsumi as the founder of butō, and on deciphering a specific philosophical foundation of his dance. As such, I am not attempting to define the wide butō diaspora that has grown in many directions and with

many goals. Nor am I writing an historical account of Hijikata as a dancer or charting the development of his butō, as this has been covered elsewhere.

I do not intend to present a full account of Japanese contemporary philosophy nor of Buddhist practices and theories of self-cultivation. Instead, I am selecting a manageable number of critical concepts that resonate with my own experience of butō dance, and am investigating their influence (consciously articulated or alluded to in writings, imagery, or performances) on Hijikata and his primary disciples. Further, I am exploring the practical applications of these theories in performer training, and trying to elicit clear training methods used by these dancers as informed by larger philosophical ideas.

As I have only minimal Japanese language knowledge at this point, I am limited in the materials that I can access at the archive. There are very few of Hijikata's texts that have been translated into English, so I worked with a translator to help me research my topic within select Japanese language texts as well. I also required an interpreter for interviews with Ōno Yoshito and Kasai Akira, and as such their comments may have been altered through this filter. Generally, my interpreter translated directly and I quote her words as those of the artist. In places where the interpreter made additional explanation or commentary that I have quoted, I have cited her as a source.

Please be advised that many interview quotations may appear awkward. There are no articles in Japanese language structure, and many Japanese people carry this grammatical structure over when speaking in English. Many quotes from my interview sources include brackets where I have inserted grammar that helps the flow of reading and maintains the integrity of the comment. In most cases, I have opted to include direct

quotes rather than my own paraphrase as a means of increasing the archive of information available from butō masters in English. Though it may appear cumbersome in places, I ask the reader's patience with this form as the direct words of these interview subjects offer important insight about butō methods and are critical evidence in my analysis. These language issues are among the many challenges of doing a transcultural study.

CHAPTER 2

SOURCE MATERIALS AND CONTEXT

Introduction

While this chapter focuses on butō studies, it also includes contextual material from dance and cultural studies. The selection of materials shows the lens through which I have viewed Hijikata and butō studies in general. The first two sections cover scholarly literature about butō and a review of Hijikata's own writings, as these are primary sources and the most pertinent for my analysis of butō methodology. The next section looks at Hijikata as a post-modern artist, examining his work in the context of Japanese Post-War literature. I also consider the influence of German Ausdrucktanz and traditional Japanese Nō on his work, as well as resonances with American post-modern dance. The final section introduces the butō masters discussed through the remainder of the study, providing insight into their history before and within butō dance. Apart from a thorough study of butō materials available in English, I do not claim to have done a comprehensive survey in all of these areas. What I have included here are key texts or figures that frame my understanding of my main subject—butō methodology—and are connected to one another in their emphasis on embodiment. These are among the many kaleidoscopic vectors that intersect Hijikata's butō body. There are, of course, many others—Antonin Artaud, Surrealism and Dadaism, Jean Genet, Marquis de Sade, Film Noir, and many other European artists and art movements; however, these have been

covered elsewhere (see Blakely Klein 1985; Aslan and Picon-Vallin, 2002; Kurihara 1996; Munroe 2004; Baird 2005 and 2012 Barber 2006; Wurmli 2008; Curtin 2010). Having written about these topics in my master's thesis in 2005, my goal with my doctoral research has been to uncover information from dance studies—technique, dance genres, and perspectives on the body—that complete the puzzle of butō, and help formulate a picture of butō training.

Butō Scholarship

The literature on butō dance spans history, scholarly commentary, and performance critique. There is very little scholarly literature about butō training methods in English, apart from a few personal accounts of students' experience working with a given butō master. Further, butō training opportunities are organized around specific butō masters, have no stated curricular goals that are cohesive across butō masters, and very rarely offer context or history of the form.

Few books exist that address butō methodology, and those that do are more a reflection of a particular teacher's interpretation and style rather than a study of Hijikata's butō method. Dancers SU-EN (Swedish dancer, former member of Ashikawa's Hakutobo) and Waguri Yukio (disciple of Hijikata from 1972–78) have both published books (SU-EN and Kennedy 2003; Waguri 1998-2004) that address the training methodology from conceptual and poetic standpoints. SU-EN and Kennedy's book deals primarily with "state work," that is, they discuss the characteristics of various material states such as rubber, slime, bone, and instructs students on how to inhabit these forms as states of being rather than as codified movements. Waguri's "Butoh Kaden" CD-Rom and accompanying book is an extensive cataloguing of Hijikata's "butō-fu," or

choreography poems that Hijikata developed from roughly 1972 to 1980 using Ashikawa as a research subject.7 In his workshops, Waguri also creates exercises from the paintings of Francis Bacon and drawings from Japanese folklore, as did Hijikata in his teaching. While these resources are crucial, they do not especially analyze Hijikata's methods, and there is no manual that addresses the butō dancer's actual training in the studio.

Because butō is such a visually rich form, there have been numerous photo books and documentary films that deal with the field and specific companies. Documentary filmmaker Michael Blackwood's 1990 film Butoh: Body on the Edge of Crisis and documentarian Richard Moore's 1991 film Piercing the Mask are among the most widely distributed. Both films feature performance clips of most of the original butō companies in the 1960s, 70s and 80s, including rare clips of Hijikata dancing. The more popular photographic essays are Ethan Hoffman's 1987 *Butoh, Dance of the Dark Soul*, and Eikō Hosoe's *Kamaitachi*, originally printed in limited edition in 1969 and then re-released in 2005. These videos and photo books are critical to the study of butō.

Japanese dance critics Goda Nario and Kuniyoshi Kazuko have followed the butō movement since its inception and their writings are invaluable resources. Goda has written several detailed reviews of Hijikata's performances, which in some cases are the only records of the event. Among Kuniyoshi's contributions are two important historical overview articles: "Butoh Chronology: 1959–1984," situating Hijikata's work amidst theater, dance, music and film events of the time; and "Butoh in the Late 1980's," written in 1985, the year before Hijikata died.

Several documents take a dance history and performances studies approach. American scholars Susan Blakely Klein, Bonnie Sue Stein, and Sondra Fraleigh Horton

[7] Ashikawa Yoko was a writer and swimmer, and had no previous dance training when she and Hijikata met in 1970. Hijikata worked with her to develop an extensive library of imagery that she would translate to movement. Hijikata ordered and re-ordered the imagery to create his choreographies in later years. These poems were written on papers and tacked to the walls at Hijikata's Aesbestos Kan Studio in Tokyo. Waguri and other students copied the poems laboriously and used them in their own research and choreography.

have all provided pioneering documentation of butō's history, which have framed the butō movement in terms of philosophy, aesthetics and performance techniques. A few unpublished documents have investigated the personal circumstances in Hijikata's life that led him to develop his infamous theories about dance, art, and life. Among these, Kurihara Nanako (1996) and Alexandra Munroe (1999) both completed dissertations at New York University addressing Post-War Japanese art. Munroe includes butō in an art history survey of post-war movements, situating this new dance within the context of its collaborators from various disciplines. Kurihara conducted primary research with Ashikawa Yoko and her company Hakutobo. In her Ph.D. dissertation entitled The Most Remote Thing in the Universe: Hijikata Tatsumi's Butoh, Kurihara provides informed commentary on the philosophical tenets as applied to the practice of butō dance.

Two of Hijikata's dancers have presented scholarly documents within academia. Nakajima, one of Hijikata's earliest students, is one of the few dancers who is writing and lecturing about her work and butō as a practice, making her version of Hijikata's butō method more accessible than that of most butō artists. In a brief talk she gave at Fu Jen University in Taipei in 1997, she encapsulates the butō method that she inherited from Hijikata as twofold: 1.) Becoming Nothing, and 2.) Becoming Something. Says Nakajima, "the first step [in becoming nothing] is to shed the things that are daily and social, 'to return to the original body'" (8). She contrasts this with techniques in Western dance in which dancers try to achieve specific shapes.[8] Butō, she claims, focuses on "the *extra* daily body," and "strip[ping] off the individual or social identity, and return[ing] to the body as natural entity" (8). Butō scholar Bruce Baird argues that it is not possible to completely strip off the distortion of socialization and language (2005, 269–70), but I

[8] Butō dancers frequently mention the distinction between "Western" dance and their anti-external expression methods. The frame of reference for this critique is German Expressionist or American classical modern dance, as these were the two Western forms being practiced in Japan from the 1930s forward. I doubt the contrasts would be as stark if the comparison were between butō and American post-modern dance, which experiments wildly with movement principles and ideas of the body.

would propose that this is the goal, and butō practices toward this achievement in a variety of ways within a given culture. Hijikata's favorite expression for this process was "becoming a corpse standing straight up in desperate bid for life" (quoted in Nakajima 1997, 4), which is a poetic way of saying that the body is reduced to flesh (*nikutai*, or, a stinking bag of flesh, as referred to in East Asian Buddhism) and yet some force (*ki*, or basic life energy) compels it to stand. There is thankfully a growing interest in butō scholarship, at least in the United States, and an increasing number of resources—dissertations, articles, photos, and videos—are being circulated more widely. In the early 1990s, Dan Safer founded the butoh.net website as a clearinghouse of butō performance and training information, and various articles. The site was last updated in 2004, and recently CAVEArtspace's ButohNexus.net has surfaced to expand on its initial concept. Recently, ButohNexus.net live streamed a butō conference at UCLA. Through the internet, several artists and researchers such as Itto Morishita and Mikami Kayo also share copies of their unpublished papers, and continue to increase the informal dialogue across international lines.

Primary Source Material—Hijikata's Written Records

Hijikata was a prolific and versatile artist, acting in and directing films, choreographing cabaret acts that he booked regularly, and writing. His performance programs were an art unto themselves, with surrealist prose of his own, contributions from Mishima and Shibusawa, photographs, and on at least one occasion, edible artwork.[9] Baird argues that Hijikata's writing especially was a "parallel artistic activity"

[9] *Barairu no dansu: A LA MAISON DE M. CICESAWA's* program consisted of a wooden box with numerology symbols on the outside, containing a sugar candy hand, penis, and lips, along with a feather. According to Morishita Takashi at the Keio University Archive, Hijikata wanted his audiences to have experience of "eating the performance" (2010).

(2005, 362) on par with his stage productions. His writing bears a striking resemblance to Artaud's style in its cryptic rant-like cadence and existential angst, which is not surprising as Hijikata was greatly inspired by Artaud's "total theater," and an audio recording of Artaud's *To Have Done with the Judgment of God* (1947) was one of Hijikata's prized possessions which he would sometimes play for guests.[10] Rather than being simply derivative, however, Baird argues that Hijikata's writings were "savvy contributions to the literary world of Japan during the sixties and seventies" (2005, 362) through which the artist managed to invoke Western literature (Artaud as well as Genet, Bataille, Sade, Sartre, and Nietzsche) in service of his own critique of Japanese Post-War culture.

In particular, Baird argues that "there may have been some things that Hijikata could say only or more clearly with language" (2005, 362), such as the ways in which he invokes the romanticism of "old Japan" with his use of language while at the same time questioning such "wisdom." For example, he employs the nuances of Japanese grammar, which in addition to signaling "old style" language and concepts, also distinguishes between one's internal experiences and the outer experiences of another. This allows Hijikata to create complicated characters in his writing, which are impossible to identify as himself or another. Of *Yamaeru mai hime*, Mikami asserts it is indicative of Hijikata's choreographic style and also may be read as a manual of his methods. She writes that in both the book as with his methodology, "The distinction of subject and object are not clear…[t]he outline of objects is always confused with other objects. The reader cannot

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[10] See Holborn 1987, 14. And Ichikawa, M., 1989: pp.18, noted in Boyce-Wilkinson, *Ankoku as Cruel Theatre*, unpaginated.

see which direction the writer's mind is focused in. His sight is incessantly changing" (1997, 35). Baird elaborates, Hijikata "sends various signals that he intends to focus his work on his own experiences and then undermines those signals with the use of *–garu* and the third-person-I indicating that this is not about him or his experiences at all" (2005, 374). This theme of "about me and not about me" at the same time is echoed throughout Hijikata's writing, and reiterated to me by Murobushi as a defining aspect of his butō dance. (I will return to this theme in Chapters Three and Four).

Hijikata's Choreographic Notebooks

Hijikata's choreographic notes exist in 16 collected "*Scrapbooks*" at the Keio University archive. Kurt Wurmli has done an in-depth analysis of them from an art historical perspective, entitled "The Power of Image: Hijikata Tatsumi's Scrapbooks and the Art of Buto," through the University of Hawaii in 2008. There are numerous color painting prints cut out and taped into notebooks that all have "Scrapbook" embossed on the front. The vast majority of images within the pages are by European artists, including Breugal, Picasso, Goya, Bacon, Dali, Michaux, and DeKoonig. Researchers seem to be welcomed to view these notebooks, and I sincerely hope they are at least published one day, if not also translated into English. There is one page reprinted and translated in Kurihara's 2000 *TDR* article, featuring an "unidentified Jean Fautrier painting" (which is actually a Francis Bacon painting entitled *Study for a Portrait of Van Gogh iii,* 1957). Kurihara translates Hijikata's notes on this page, which make reference to Flemish interiors, French printmaker Rodolphe Bresdin, French painter Gustave Moreau, and English painter Francis Bacon. Hijikata writes of a "sooty" body, and "melting person." Down the right side of the page is one of Hijikata's butō-fu that I have practiced as part of two separate choreographies with Waguri. It reads:

a person composed of particles and tactile sensations
his skull is packed with branches
small branches in his head snap
a bird flies from his temple
an extending neck
a slug crawling along his backbone
a flying grasshopper
a stick
a sunflower
a forehead
a puddle on the sole of the foot
insects in space
people melted in furnaces in Auschwitz
grass turning pale (Hijikata quoted in Kurihara 2000, 61)

In another note he writes, "Frequent memos urge making it short/they are probably urgings not/about time but about density of material" (61). Mikami confirmed in our interview that Hijikata would indeed have incredibly dense material such as the above, and expect his dancers to walk forward to his drumbeat, embodying these images one after the other in rather rapid succession. It is also interesting that I have practiced portions of these instructions as two separate choreographies, indicating that Hijikata worked repeatedly with certain images, combining them in a variety of ways to capture the essence of the stage picture he wished to invoke. I find this fascinating when considering Hijikata's movement vocabulary, because it indicates that there was some effort at standardization and even some sense of a movement alphabet [as in what I might term the "Nijinsky-esque fawn" that I have seen Waguri perform often in his choreographies, which is made up of something like "branches" (bringing a delicate listening quality of a deer in the forest), " bird flying from forehead" (bringing awareness to where antlers might be, and a sense of forward motion), "slug crawling up back" (causing a sway back), and "grasshopper" (causing a little fawn-like leap)]. It is also interesting to note that this style of image-based choreographic language is similar to other Asian dance forms, such as Japanese traditional Bon Odori, Indian Odissi, and Korean Jeongjae.

My experience of following image-based choreographic instructions with Waguri was flustering. He showed us several pictures for inspiration and gave us the poetic description. Then he gave us about ten minutes to work on our own, after which we were to perform it for each other while he drummed a steady rhythm (or sometimes played recorded music ranging from Debussy to Japanese Kodo drummers). I managed to keep the first three images in my head but by the time I reached the fourth I forgot the rest of the series. I remembered a few things toward the end and out of order, so I inserted those. It was a humbling and confounding experience to transform that quickly and completely. I was also caught between being lost on the images and thinking ahead to the next ones. I definitely recognized the skill necessary to be able to follow Hijikata's choreography, and the completely overwhelming effect it might have had on his dancers.

Hijikata's Published Writings

In addition to his choreographic notebooks which were filled with poetic notations for movement, Hijikata wrote a series of longer essays such as *Inu no jomyaku ni shitto suru koto kara* [*From Being Jealous of a Dog's Vein*] and a few talks such as the frequently quoted *Kaze daruma* [*Wind daruma*].[11] He published two books, *Bibô no aozora* [*Handsome Blue Sky*],[12] which was a collection of these essays, and *Yameru mai-hime* [*Ailing Dancer*], which was more of a cohesive memoir published near the end of his life. Several essays from *Handsome Blue Sky*, including *Inner/Outer Material*, *To Prison*, and *From Being Jealous of a Dog's Vein,* were first translated into English by

[11] Kurihara notes in her translation of this lecture: "A daruma is a limbless figure weighted so that it always bounces upright when knocked over. In Japan it is widely believed to be a symbol of persistence leading to eventual success. Daruma is an abbreviation for Bodhidharma, a mythical Middle Eastern priest said to have carried Zen practice and teachings to China about 500 CE" (2000, 79).

[12] Both Kasai Akira and Murobushi Ko created a performance entitled *Handsome Blue Sky* – both of which used mirrors or metal plates reminiscent of those in *Nikutain no hanran* – in 2004 and 2005 respectively.

Kurihara Nanako and published in excerpt in the Spring 2000 issue of *TDR*. Since then, Baird has presented some excerpts in his 2005 dissertation which he translated differently than Kurihara, and Elena Polzer translated and published the full text of *From Being Jealous of a Dog's Vein* in English in its entirety with commentary on Kurihara's translation, through Humbolt University, Berlin, in 2006. Baird translates a few excerpted segments of *Ailing Dancer* in his dissertation and a full translation may be forthcoming. Mikami analyzes *Ailing Dancer* as a blueprint for Hijikata's working methodology, and includes several rich images such as "a senile woman who is crowded with a host of lice that have eaten up a variety of time" and "an infant who is troubled by a hernia and looks like a tiny bag of dung" (1997, 37) in her descriptions. She includes character descriptions of key figures in the text, including the dancing sick girl (which she says is closely associated with the weakened or emaciated body), "Ogano the deaf," and an old woman. Unfortunately, no complete English translations of *Ailing Dancer* exist at the moment.

Nakajima says that Hijikata's first book was interesting, but that *Ailing Dancer* is a treasure trove of choreographic images that she returns to again and again when developing new work. "It's so nice, his image language," she says (2010). For example, Baird includes this section of the text: "During the rainy season I was cut by catfish; during early spring drunken greedily by a river; and I guess my vision was naturally oriented toward these sorts of things" (2005, 362–3). Hijikata is describing the way in which he would see the landscape around him in vivid, larger than life images, such that the sharp fins of a catfish might cut his legs as he stood in the water, or the water that rushes through overflowing streams after the spring thaw might carry him away in its strong current. These images offer a powerful impetus for movement, and I can certainly see how Nakajima might find a useful nugget for a scene in such words. Also, Nakajima grew up in Northern Japan as did Hijikata, and the nature of these shared landscapes was

a strong connection between them, so these references might have a special resonance for her.

In *Inner/Outer Material* (2000a), Hijikata makes clear his intention to focus on the rawness of the body itself as the material for his dances. He begins with "You have to pull your stomach up high in order to turn your solar plexus into a terrorist" (36), which is presented as a quote from a fictitious letter he claims to have written to a collaborator.[13] He tells the reader that he studied German dance "because it would be hard" (ibid.) and shows his preference for intense bodily imagery such as youth "bleeding at the nose" (37), and by responding to the "jockstraps and Chopin" of his early dance training with "the diarrhea of misery" (38). He declares, "sacrifice is the source of all work and every dancer is an illegitimate child set free to experience that very quality…Dance for display must be totally abolished" (39–40), revealing his preference for experience over expression and reverence for pain over pleasure. All of my interview subjects confirmed these biases in Hijikata's work; Waguri said that Hijikata cautioned him not to just dance for "good feeling" but rather to focus intensely on the tiniest of details, like a cut on his finger, and that pain can bring heightened awareness to the delicate details of one's own experience (Waguri 2010). In *Inner/Outer Material,* Hijikata refers to Mr. O (Ōno Kazuo) as "a pioneer of experiential dance" (2000a, 39). He criticizes Tokyo youth of the time, saying "There is a lethargic generation arrogant with fat and I vomit on its lotioned and powdered pale effeminate skin" (40). Instead, Hijikata casts his lot with "bodies that have maintained the crisis of primal experience" (41), such as Hosoe Eikô, whom he admires because he "is an avid reader of the Marquis de Sade [and] it is virtually impossible to stand up to his passion in the darkroom" (42). Hijikata cultivated this kind of intensity in his own performance; dance critic Goda Nario

[13] Baird speculates that the letter in question may have been written to or at least intended for Mishima (2005, 367).

confirmed: "I do not know a dancer who is as arrogant as Hijikata is on the stage—yet at the same time [I] feel…absolutely compelled to watch his every move" (quoted in Blakely Klein 1988, 85). Hijikata concludes *Inner/Outer Material* with the comment, "Finally, I owe everything to the constant support of Mishima Yukio, our generations' shot with the magic bullet, who always sets an anxious unchanging fuse to his own work" (2000a, 42). Hijikata seems to be influenced by Mishima's extreme aesthetic and also by his working method as indicated in this last comment; Hijikata himself destroyed and reinvented his own choreographic methods at least three times over his career, and is known to have ruthlessly torn apart the work of his young disciples in the course of their creative process.[14]

With *To Prison* (2000b), Hijikata casts his work within a more overtly political arena. He continues his focus on "bleeding nature" and his critique of Tokyo youth as "inhabitants of the transparent, mechanical 'world'" (43). He claims to have "spent his youth like a cur" (ibid.), referring to himself in several places as a wounded dog, foreshadowing the imagery in *From Being Jealous of a Dog's Vein*. This dog spent its time "sniffing out criminals" (ibid.), such as those whose behavior "explicitly flaunts [their] aimlessness in the face of a production-oriented society" (44–5). He explains "in this sense my dance, based on human self-activation, including male homosexuality, crime, and a naïve battle with nature, can naturally be a protest against the "alienation of labor" in capitalist society" (45). He resolves, "I will no longer be cheated by a bad check called democracy" (43). He claims to be a "body shop" in the business of "human rehabilitation," which "is accomplished only in connection with young people who unceasingly experience the natural movements that kick the matrix of today's good

[14] Nakajima complains that Hijikata would frequently come to help her with her own dances late in the process, and "break everything!" but concedes that the end result would be much better than when she started (2010).

sense" (45). He invokes George Bataille ("nakedness" as a strategy for moving beyond the confines of self), Jean Genet ("giving song to what was dumb"), Frederic Nietzsche ("strip the costume of…contemporary civilization" and reinscribe it with "simple sensual passion"), and Herbert Marcuse ("provocation" as a resistance strategy), as he formulates a new image for young people, as naked "lethal weapons that dream" (45–7). Hijikata criticizes youth who join the Self-Defense Force as simply "craving to be bound," to which he responds, "my work is to remove toy weapons from the limbs of today's youth, who developed in barren circumstances, and to finish them as naked soldiers in a naked culture" (47). He denies "victim consciousness" (ibid.), dismisses "the poverty of politics" (48), and instead, through his dances, promotes "primal experiences" (ibid.). In many ways, *To Prison* can be seen as a manifesto[15] proposing Hijikata's artistic philosophy that carries throughout his life's work, through all its turns in method and material.

From Being Jealous of a Dog's Vein was originally written in 1969, and then published in 1976 by Yukawa Shobô in a collection of 16 different short to medium essays under the same as the fourth publication in the series S*ôsho tokeru sakana* [Melting Fish Series] (Polzer 2004, 28). In the title essay, Hijikata begins to articulate his conception of the "emaciated body," which he continued working on until his death. He wrote this in the year following his final solo performance, *Nikutai no hanran* [*Revolt of the Flesh*], for which he prepared by fasting for a month.[16] This performance marked the end of an era in Hijikata's work, and the beginning of a new expression (so distinct that

[15] See Mikami 1997, 53.

[16] Ashikawa reports: "A month before, Hijikata prepared his body with a strict diet. He drank just milk and a little weak *miso*, but no tea. He went running every day, even on the hottest days. He also exposed his skin to artificial lights in order to get a deep tan. He wore no makeup during the performance. The long-term preparation involved physical training, fasting and being alone and avoiding any association with other people. Only at the end of his preparation did he concern himself with the staging of the performance" (Holborn 1987, 16).

some even criticize that butō had run its course[17]). In the text, Hijikata extols rib cages, the bodies of old people, wet animals, and withered trees (Polzer 2006, 15) and describes his:

> steadily growing fervent desire, this idea of somehow escaping food by just gnawing at air and simply holding a splinter of wood between my teeth. I think I will eventually stop letting food drop into my stomach, since I have come to believe that the things which go astray after having eaten them, at length settle down in the body. (19)

Ashikawa asserts that after *Nikutai no hanran*, Hijikata "decided not to think too much, but to be more like a child, with less concern for self-identification" (quoted in Holborn, 16). Her observation gives double meaning to Hijikata's rejection of "food" as the various influences on his early work, and the beginning of his turning toward his own origins and developing what he termed Tohoku Kabuki. In both a figurative and literal sense, Hijikata was purging himself of extraneous external influence.[18]

At this stage in his thinking, the emaciated body has "no use for bothersome fat or an excess of curves. Skin and bones, and just a bare amount of necessary muscle is the ideal" (Hijikata 2006, 15). Hijikata deems a woman's body "unnecessary" and says "woman cannot even perform the role of an eraser" (ibid.), which is curious since this original essay was published in May 1969, and he had begun choreographing for Ashikawa in August 1968.[19] Ashikawa is widely recognized as Hijikata's best dancer,

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[17] See responses to *Nikutai no hanran* by Kasai Akira, Okada Takahiko, and Tone Yasunao in *Hijikata Tatsumi's Rebellion of the Body: Imagery and Documents of Butō 1968*, 56–7. For example, Kasai criticized that this production, commemorating the 11th year of the formation of Ankoku butō-ha, "productions such as 'xyz anniversary' and the like are often opportunities for declining pop singers to attempt to reclaim a wide audience and assure the world that their career is not over yet. Thus, usually these productions are fairly vacuous." He then proceeds to enumerate the ways in which he found Hijikata's performance lacking, "because Hijikata's desire to be swept away was not visible" (56).

[18] (Mikami 1997, 68) Goda claims he was ridding himself of Western influence in a section where he danced intentionally out of step to polka, tango, and waltz for what felt like an endlessly long time, to poke fun at the decadence of his "return" to stage. He proposes that Hijikata's intention was to sacrifice himself and reincarnate as something new.

[19] See Hijikata Tatsumi Chronology in Kurihara 2000, 30.

and the one with whom he worked the most closely in the latter part of his life in order to formulate his butō-fu. Ashikawa was not exceedingly skinny, and in most of her performances she is clothed in many layers of costume. Perhaps because they worked together, Hijikata clarified his notion of the "emaciated body" as something beyond the actual flesh body (*nikutai*), and instead interpreted emaciation as a different kind of "hunger."

He closes the essay with "I want to become and be a body with eyes just opened wide, tensed to a snapping point by the strained relationship with the dignified landscape around it" (Hijikata 2006, 23), reiterating his early desire for pure raw experience and his deep connection with "bleeding nature" (Hijikata 2000b, 43). He laments, "I don't [necessarily] think that it is better not to look at my own body in those moments, but my regret at having looked has also gone numb and therefore the bud of my miserable flesh is unable to sprout" (2006, 23–5). Here, to "look" is to objectify and "go numb" is to distance. He criticizes butō that is a means of expression as "hot butō based on the whole gamut of jealousy and obedience" (25), or dance that simply shows off virtuosity and imitation. Instead, he recommits himself to his passion for experience. He refers to his butō as *hi ga sasu*, which Polzer translates as "shining sun," in which *sasu* can also mean "piercing" or "shooting through" (ibid.). Hijikata describes making his butō indoors, "on the veneered tatami mats facing the garden. When the sun shone, I would rush outside in a hurry" (ibid.), perhaps referring to the intensity with which he was known to create. The last sentence of this essay reads "It seems almost a clear thing to me, what kind of help my butō must borrow so as not to become hit or miss" (ibid.), which to me implies a re-doubling of this focus on intensity if his art is to stay true to its original purpose.

The first sentence of *From Being Jealous of a Dog's Vein* is also important to note, as it defines Hijikata's movement impulse as much as it has ever been defined. He writes, "When despite having a healthy body, you want to be disabled, or even think you might as well have been better off born a cripple, then you have taken your first step in

butō" (13). Many of my interviewees noted that Hijikata was the first to "discover" the beauty of the handicapped and turn it into dance. Hijikata credited his being kept in a basket on the edge of the rice field with this discovery, saying that *tatamareta kansetsu* [folded joints/legs] became temporarily crippled after being left in that position all day.[20] He said his parents would take him out of the basket to walk home but he was not able to make his legs obey. Polzer translates *tatamareta kansetsu* as "A body that has alienated itself from the will to stand upright, a body that no longer makes decisions by will alone" (7). Kasai describes this as similar to a "handicap person's" movements: "maybe he wants to reach forward but he has to go left first" (2010). Disrupting the will and normal bodily function was Hijikata's way of keeping oneself "on the edge of crisis," such that one's capable habit body would be subverted and an entirely different logic of movement could take root.

Hijikata gave a lecture at the Butoh Festival in 1985 entitled "*Suijakutai no saishu*" "Collection of the Emaciated Body," published as "Wind Daruma.". He started off talking about a "gathering of emaciated bodies" and then diverted the lecture with a tangent about his idea of a wind daruma, which became the majority of his talk. In short, a wind daruma is his poetic description for his Tohoku neighbors who came to his parents' soba restaurant[21] through the rice fields where the wind whipped so fiercely that if one talked the sound would be completely lost in the howling whistle of frigid air. As a child he claims to have seen these "creatures" come into the shop completely frozen

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[20] This story is most likely a fabrication, as Hijikata's father was a local government official and not a rice field worker (see note 17).

[21] Hijikata's predominant personal narratives are often brought into question by scholars and artists who knew him (see Baird 2005 pg and Mikami 1997 31). Mikami notes that despite being the 11th child of his parents, he was not the poor child of a soba restauranteer, but rather a relatively privileged son of a village political figure, and that he was educated in a technical school and in martial arts (Ibid.) Seen in this light, Hijikata's personal mythology may be seen as exactly that, a metaphorical history and archetypal cosmology for the purposes of artistic invention.

and unable to talk, stamp their feet in the entryway (a sound that echoes to the core, he writes in *From Being Jealous of a Dog's Vein*) to shake the snow from their *geta*, and sit in front of the fire without speaking until their faces thawed out. Throughout this lecture, he points to various aspects of his Tohoku childhood—real or romanticized, it is difficult to discern—as sources for his butō dance. His discussion is not laid out in the form of an explanation. He says, "talking about the substance of dance techniques isn't very interesting" (Hijikata 2000c, 75). What he does instead is offer a series of anecdotes and images that characterize his approach to dance. One key experience he describes in a variety of ways is a saturated or subsumed body—one that merges into the landscape—such as falling in mud and not being able to get traction to stand so he starts to play with things he finds there and just accepts his mud reality (73), or the landscape being so inundated with rain that he is no longer certain where is starts and ends. He says, "The surrounding space gets so mixed up in this time of rain with no start and no end, and there is no longer any distinction between time and space" (76). Similarly, the wind daruma was engulfed in wind, "burning up its body as it came" (73). This subsumed body is one that is "reborn at that place"…"as if," Hijikata says, "my body, from its very core, returned to its starting point" (73). He describes one incident where he jumped into the whirlpool of rushing spring waters and grabbed onto tree roots to keep himself under until he was pulled free by "the adults." He says, "There I am born again…I am reborn again and again. It's no longer enough to simply be born from the womb" (75). He describes pushing himself to the edge of experience and perception even at this young age.

These experiences of being subsumed in violent nature reorient his view of the body. Hijikata instead sees a disassociated body, "with my head and the soles of my feet turned upside down" (73), and babies "who treated their hands as if they were not their own...who make their hands eat something" (74). Similarly, he comments on a cabinetmaker's hands, which are at once weathervanes gauging the humidity and also

become the plane that shapes the wood: “they are at once part of his body and not” (75). This seems to be the kind of expression Hijikata is after with his dance, movement that does not intend to express at all and yet expresses volumes because of its absorption in its function. It also seems that by being disassociated from “normal” function that these movements are able to discover unique meaning. Hijikata claims that his dead sister who lives inside his body tells him this: “You are totally immersed in dance and expression by what you are able to express emerges somehow by not expressing it, don’t you think?” (77). He agrees, “This can’t be accomplished by training” but rather by “feverishly look[ing]” (76). Through careful and almost obsessive observation, he internalizes the world he lives in “like a thief” (ibid.), and then he “struggles with [the] invisible matter” (77). Actual daily life, thus observed and internalized, then becomes his dance teacher. He says, “When that’s the case there’s absolutely no need for dance practice” (ibid.), and indeed, this was his method of training dancers in later years. He simply filled them with his imagery and asked them to move until he was satisfied with their manifestation. He no longer did even the rudimentary training in classical ballet as he did in early years (though the cabaret continued through his career, but this was also a source of revenue for the company). In fact, he says, “my body trains itself as a matter of course…when you come in touch with such things [these extreme nature images and experiences] something is naturally forced out of your body” (76). Hijikata’s term for investigating such internalized images and experiences is “plucking the darkness and eating it” (78), which he says that these babies who eat their hands achieve because they have no concept of internal or external world, but rather, they are simply wrapped up in the experience. Chapter Four picks up these themes again.

Cultural Context: Japan in the 20th Century

Much has been written about Japan in the 20th century, and particularly Post WWII, as it was such a significant turning point in Japanese culture. A salient topic in this literature for the discussion of Hijikata's artistic endeavors is the shifting position of nationalism within the Japanese social landscape. Japan had undergone rapid cultural and cultural change for more than a century, following a lengthy period of strictly enforced seclusion and rigid social structures during the Tokagawa period, which made the nation's "opening" to the West all the more dramatic. A vociferous faction of Japanese leaders was not at all in favor of increased involvement of foreign interests in Japan. Hane Mikiso provides context and analysis of the nativist insularity sentiment in his book *Modern Japan: A Historical Survey*. Hane links cultural discord and a desire for "pure" Japan to so-called National Learning scholars during the Tokugawa period. The National Learning scholars promoted "native" Japanese values as laid out in the *Man'yôshû* (*Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves*) and *Kojiki* (*Records of Ancient Matters*), over the Chinese Confucianist values being promoted by the Tokugawa leadership. They favored Shintoism as the historically Japanese religion and emphasized simplicity, honesty and sincerity above the stringent social codes governing Japanese society at the time. What is interesting is that the nativist position was employed in sometimes conflicting causes, ranging from reinforcing the power of the Shogunate as the fruition of Sun Goddess Amaterasu's (Japan's creation myth) bidding during the mid-1700s, to later being used to justify the Emperor's restoration as divine figurehead of the nation leading up to the Meiji Restoration of 1868 (Hane 2001, 25–33). The nativist rallying cry has a long and complicated history in Japanese politics.

Japanese historian William Beasley chronicles Japanese response to the many forays by Western powers into Japanese territory in his book *The Rise of Modern Japan*, beginning with Dutch missionaries attempting conversion to Catholicism in the early

1600s and winding through the many gunboat diplomacy attempts to open Japanese ports to trade. By the turn of the 20th century both Britain and Russia had significant engagement with Japan, the latter more forcefully through seizing several northern Japanese territories. By the time Admiral Commodore Perry made his second appearance in Japan in 1854, arriving in Edo Bay with eight gunships in tow, the *Bakufu* leadership (Shogunate administration) began to recognize the need to create alliances with foreign powers rather than risking attack (Beasley 2000, 28–30). The historic "opening" as is it lauded in Western literature, however, created deeper conflict among feudal lords, some of whom felt that the best response was "a clarion call to war" (32). Eventually, a prominent feudal lord Naosuke Ii persuaded the *Bakufu* leadership to take the long view and make trade concessions, with the goal of Japan gaining Western military knowledge and eventually amassing a powerful naval fleet of its own (ibid.). Beasley outlines the complicated waltz between American envoys and Japanese officials, who finally ceded ground when Britain seized Canton, underscoring the earlier wisdom of creating allies. Though Naosuke was eventually assassinated by nationalist activists for "dishonoring" Japan and caving to foreign interests (37), the gates had been opened and Japan was now participating in the global political and economic sphere.

Once this course had been set in motion, nationalism fueled Japan's rapid militarization and aggressive imperialistic expansion. It fought the first Sino-Japanese War in 1894–5 and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–5, and annexed Taiwan and Korea respectively. Through these conflicts, Japan established itself as a major military power on an international scale. The small island nation also succeeded in expanding its natural resources considerably, and positioned itself to become a player in European, American, and Russian efforts that were jockeying for interests in China (Gordon 2003, sec. 2 para. 1–3). Japan pushed outward as strongly as it had looked inward for so many years, joining with the Allied forces during World War I and gaining German-controlled Pacific territories in exchange. Japan continued to expand into China, officially seizing control of

Manchuria in 1931. Some historians, such as Andrew Gordon in his 1992 book *Labor and Imperial Democracy in Prewar Japan*, go as far as to label Japan's strategic outlook and actions, particularly in WWII, as fascist and akin to Germany and Italy (237), displaying a radically nationalistic political ideology and asserting Japanese uniqueness and privileged status within a global sphere.[22]

Viewed against the backdrop of this history, butō emerged at the crest of a crisis in national identity. Following Japan's defeat in WWII and the subsequent flood of Western culture imposed on the Japanese people, artists such as Hijikata played with a seemingly schizophrenic mixture of Japanese nationalist and Western aesthetics, alternately adopting it or escaping into one or the other, and also conversely violently rejecting one or the other. Hijikata's first butō performance was in 1959, right in the midst of the U.S.–Japanese Security Treaty Revision (ANPO) negotiations, which began in 1958 and ended in 1960. ANPO caused major civil unrest in Japan; 9 million citizens (nearly one-tenth of the population)[23] attended a single rally to protest Japanese cooperation with the U.S. demands. E. Patricia Tsurumi's book *The Other Japan: Postwar Realities* chronicles the labor struggles and student revolutions that began in the early 1900s in reaction to industrialization and were later redirected toward American occupation and intervention in Japanese political and social structures. By the 1950s, the social climate in Japan was one of revolution and outspoken criticism of the government and its compliance with foreign intervention. It is in this soil that butō grew. Hijikata's first performance dealt with standards of beauty and decency, as well as the overt rejection of Western-style dancing which had become the standard in contemporary dance. At the same time, he took inspiration from Western counterculture rebels such as

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[22] See also *The Culture of Japanese Fascism* 2009 ed. Alan Tansman. Durham: Duke University Press for further discussion of fascist politics and aesthetics in Post WWII Japanese culture.

[23] According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications Statistic Bureau (http://www.stat.gov.jp/english), the population of Japan in 1960 was nearly 100 million people.)

Artaud and Genet, focusing his attention on the outcasts of society as he crafted his version of a uniquely Japanese dance. Most of butō's basic philosophical tenets are echoes of the Japanese counter-cultural sentiments of the time: insular nationalism (in contrast to the imperialistic nationalism), resistance to what was seen as the maddening pace of technology and modernity, and a targeted rejection of Western culture as the vehicle of capitalism's and technology's invasion. Hijikata crafted his own radical statement entitled "Hijikata Tatsumi and the Japanese: Revolt of the Flesh," which he characterized as anti-technique, anti-capitalistic (i.e., performance not made for the enjoyment of the audience),[24] and philosophically based in an anti-modernistic view. He was in search of a "pre-civilization" body. What is interesting is that this sentiment was being voiced throughout the world, in response to the senseless destruction that war, modernism, and global capitalism had wrought.

Japanese writers and thinkers had their own unique voice particular to the Japanese experience with the Industrial Age, modernity, and economic capitalism. Tanizaki Jun'ichiro wrote an influential and ironic essay in 1933 entitled "In Praise of Shadows" in which he proposed technology as the intrusive Other and questioned whether or not culture was a strong enough counter to its invasiveness (Tetsuo 1989, 12). Tanizaki called for a "strategic cultural retreat into the interior spheres of "dimness," "shadows," and the "stillness" of dark places, where technology should be held in abeyance and where the mystery of creativity might still be found" (Ibid.). Hijikata's Ankoku Butō, or "Dance of Darkness," clearly echoed these ideas, both in aesthetic form as well as creative process.

In 1942, a group of intellectuals, academics and social critics gathered at Kyoto University at the behest of the Literary Society (Bungakkai) to discuss the topic of "overcoming modernity," a phrase that subsequently became the moniker for an entire

[24] This notion is similar to Bertol Brecht's concept of "non-culinary" performance, with "culinary" performance being defined as performance made for audience consumption.

cultural movement. At the root of the debate was the opinion that Japan was in need of a new social order. The push was for a Japanese national identity, one that would reconcile the pre-Western industrialization social order with modern Japan's new taste for ideals of independence, democracy, and consumer liberty (Harootunian 1989, 68). Japanese Post-WWII scholar H.D. Harootunian notes, "the real meaning of "overcoming" required reintegration of the Japanese with the spirit of the *kami* (gods) and the elimination of the effects of reason, with its ceaseless propensity to divide and separate" (68). The struggle became pitted between "the blood of the Japanese" (Shintoism and traditional values) and "Western knowledge" (science and capitalism) (72). Says Tetsuo, Western conceptions of "Cosmopolitanism…would not help [Japan move forward], because the cultures in the global scheme of things would remain 'Western' in orientation." That there should be a "retreat" into internal "form" and "shadow," therefore, makes sense (12).

Japanese artists like Hijikata and the highly influential and controversial novelist Mishima Yukio took these words to heart. The call for a "retreat into shadows" is the basis for Hijikata's dance, and is also clearly evidenced in Mishima's writings that were an inspiration for Hijikata. Both Mishima and Hijikata consciously strove to break social taboos and unearth violent human tendencies. Mishima writes in his notes for the 1948 novel *Confessions*, "I am desperate to kill a man; I want to see red blood. An author writes love stories because he isn't popular with women. I began writing novels so I wouldn't end up with a death sentence…" (quoted in Nathan 1974, 103). Mishima's biographer John Nathan infers that this rebellion was partially in response to Mishima's own abnormal upbringing that was dominated by a manipulative and controlling grandmother (xv). Whatever the cause, Mishima inspired a generation of revolutionaries and avant-garde artists.

Mishima situated the post-modern, post-war argument as being against "high-growth economism—and the mindless consumerism and homogenization of society spawned by it" (Tetsuo 1989, 15–16). Thomas Haven's book, *Artist and Patron in*

Postwar Japan, addresses the complexity of redefining culture in a capitalistic system—precisely what Hijikata and many others were reacting against in creating art that was not intended to entertain but rather shock and offend audiences, or disregard the audience completely.

By the middle of the 20th century, most of industrialized civilization—Japan included—was undergoing a massive cultural upheaval that changed politics, art, and society irrevocably. Across the world, counter-cultural movements were largely anti-militaristic, grappling with issues of powerlessness in the face of numerous colonial wars, and struggling to re-define notions of individuality, authority, beauty, and personal worth. People were often reacting to the stresses of a society increasingly driven toward modernity, productivity, and over-use of the earth's resources. The increasingly global artistic and philosophical community helped pollinate such ideals.

Even before this time, many revolutionary artists made their mark on foreign soil, among them American dancer Isadora Duncan who created a sensation in Europe in the 1920s, as did the German dancer Mary Wigman in America in the early 1930s. German dancer Harald Kreutzberg performed in Japan in 1934, and Ōno Kazuo credits seeing Kreutzberg as one of the primary reasons that Ōno himself began to dance (Klein 7). Japanese dancer Eguchi Takay studied at Wigman's school in Germany for several years before he formed his own school in Tokyo and became teacher to Ōno Kazuo and later, Hijikata. European writers and philosophers Jean Genet, Jean Paul Sartre, Antonin Artaud, and Roger Caillois were translated into Japanese in the early 1950s, all of which had a profound impact on Hijikata (Blakely Klein 1988, 6–10). Hijikata identified so intensely with Genet that he performed for a short while under the stage name Hijikata Genet (Blakely Klein 1988, 8; Kurihara 1995, 19). Genet's ability to transform his sense of "otherness" and alienation from society (as the illegitimate son of a prostitute, a thief, a beggar, and a homosexual) into a life of status and grandeur greatly inspired Hijikata, and confirmed his own views of ugliness and deformity as sublime beauty (Kurihara

2000, 19). Seen in this light, butō's gaping mouths are not a portrayal of horror in response to war. Instead, they reference Artaud's silent scream, and the tragedy of modern humanity.

Intersections with Japanese Post-War Literature

There are numerous connections between butō dance and literature. In addition to the French authors mentioned above, Japanese author Mishima Yukio played a critical role in Hijikata's artistic development. He borrowed the title of Mishima's novel *Kinjiki* as his first butō performance, which piqued the writer's interest and the two became colleagues, with Mishima contributing program notes to Hijikata's works and even some sponsorship. Hijikata had other prominent writer colleagues, including Shibusawa Tetsuo, who translated Artaud, Genet, and other French literature, and Terayama Shuji, an avant-garde writer, and theater and cabaret director, who was incredibly influential in post-war performance.

Japanese studies scholar Douglas Slaymaker's study of postwar literature traces a major shift in the predominant thinking about body and being in 1950s and '60s Japan, as evidenced in artistic expression.[25] In a series of articles, edited volumes, and his 2004 book entitled *The Body in Japanese Post-War Fiction*, Slaymaker explores changing conceptions of the body vis-à-vis cultural representations of *nikutai* [flesh, carnal/sensual], *shintai* [spirit], and *karada* [material]. He references historian Tsurumi

[25] Slaymaker's focus is most specifically on authors Tamura Taijiro (1911–83), Noma Hiroshi (1915–91), and Sakaguchi Ango (1906–55), though he mentions other writers in this circle, including Nagai Kafu (1879–1959), Tanizaki Jun'ichiro (1886–1965), Dazai Osamu (1909–48), and Kawabata Yasunari (1899–1972) as "writers known for their treatment of sensuality and sexuality" (2004, 2).

Shunsuke, who explains the primary reason for the dramatic transition as a loss of faith in the national polity:

> After the defeat, and after the Emperor's proclamation that he was only a human being, the idea of the national structure also fell off like another layer of dandruff. Then all that finally remained was the body [*nikutai*]. (Tsurumi 1986, 31–32 in Slaymaker 2010, 83)

Slaymaker describes a performance art event staged by a Japanese couple following the end of the war in which the pair performed sadomasochistic sex acts "in the main hall of Shinto shrines," using their "carnal body (*nikutai*) [to] suggest a punning contrast to the national polity (*kokutai*/national body), the focus of their desecration" (2004, 2). He notes that the *kokutai* indicated government through a "system of imagery" that equated the individual body with the national entity. Post-war writers and artists sought to rescue the individual body from "abstract propaganda and calls for self-sacrifice" (Slaymaker 2004, 13).

In Slaymaker's assessment, "the disillusion, despair and anger at the outcome of the war to which so much had been sacrificed, and which had long been a lost cause, left much of the populace with a keen sense of absurdity, anxiety and angst" (2002, 84). Hijikata commented that the war changed reality, in that the things one thought were real disappeared, like his brothers who went to war with "red faces" (from the sake toast to their success) and came back as "ashes" (quoted in Hoffmann and Holborn 1987, 127). Tamura proposes that only sensation is real, which is in direct contrast to Buddhist teachings. He writes in "*Nikutai ga ningen de aru*" (The fleshly is the human):

> The distrust of "thought" is complete. We now believe in nothing but our own bodies…The body's weariness, the body's desires, the body's anger, the body's intoxications, the body's confusion, the body's fatigue—only these are real. It is because of all these things that we realize, for the first time, that we are alive. (1947, 12)

He rejected the spiritual mythology that served as the foundation of the *kokutai*, and instead proposed that in order to "become fully human" the Japanese must, "at least

once, make their way to the gate that leads to their own bodies," or *nikutai to iu mon* [gate of flesh] (quoted in Slaymaker 2002, 93). Sartre's *Intimite* (and his novels in general) were inspirational to the Japanese writers of *nikutai bungaku* [flesh literature]. Sakaguchi praised *Intimite* for its acknowledgement of "the body which thinks," and the "*nikutai* which tells the story" (Sakaguchi 1975, 7: 239 in Slaymaker 2010, 79). Similarly, Hijikata proposed that the body itself is the subject of his dance, and his pivotal solo *Nikutai No Hanran* [Revolt of the Flesh], places him in dialog with the *nikutai bungaku* authors.

A potent but short-lived journal entitled *Nikutai* [flesh/carnal body] appeared in 1947. The editors asserted:

> We begin from the body [nikutai]; we do not start from ideals nor from matter. In the midst of all that is suspect in the current moment, the only existence that is not suspect is the here-and-now of the nikutai. We take this as the starting point for thinking. (quoted in Slaymaker 2004, 18)

Slaymaker encourages a reading of these post-war writers as beyond the pornographic (although he admits that they had this appeal as well); however, his emphasis is on the political critique their work offered. Specifically, he says that the images of body as *nikutai* [flesh] were "counterhegemonic because [they] defie[d] the primacy of the national body…refusal to subordinate individual desires to national projects serve[d] as revolutionary act and protest" (2004, 11). Slaymaker references Igarashi's *Bodies of Memory*, in which he asserts that what was "unproductive and unreproductive was branded as threatening to national interests" (quoted in Slaymaker 2004, 10). Similarly, Hijikata's idea of dancers as "lethal weapons that dream" offered a view of bodies that were aware of personal agency and chose to step outside of productivity and usefulness.

Despite these radically shifting expressions of identity, nothing much seemed to change for women post-WWII. Slaymaker comments on the characters in his principle authors' novels: "women remained subservient in power structures whose sole change goes no further than the hue of the men's faces and the color of the soldiers' uniforms" (2004, 5). Slaymaker criticizes that the prominent male authors reinscribed the gender binary; in their wish to "highlight the physical, [they] do so with tales of sex involving mistresses, lovers and prostitutes," using the body as a metaphor and synonym for "the sexual and base, the sensual and emotional, the non-rational and non-thinking, in a web of images that has been traditionally associated with women" (2010, 86). Indeed, Blakely Klein commented on this scenario in butō at the 2011 UCLA conference, raising the question of whether Ashikawa might be considered a battered woman (Sakamoto and Brown, personal communication, 2010). Further research into this issue is beyond the scope of the current study; however it would be an important contribution to butō studies to examine the role of women, particularly given claims that butō blurs gender boundaries and "queers" the dancing body (see Viala and Masson-Sekine; Blakely Klein; and Fraleigh, among others).

Influences from Mary Wigman and Ausdrucktanz

Mary Wigman's philosophies of dance and movement techniques warrant closer investigation for their influence on butō. Many historical analyses of butō mention Wigman in passing, in connection with German Expressionism and a deeply emotive style of dance. Hijikata concedes that he wanted to study German dance "because it was hard" (quoted in Kurihara 2000, 36). What is not often mentioned in butō studies, however, is Wigman's deep connection to nature as a source of inspiration, the prevalent

themes of death and sacrifice in her work, and her complete commitment to developing "Absolute Dance." This latter goal was inspired by her involvement in Café Voltaire and the Dadaist artists, who were searching for "absolute art" as the pure expression of the times (Santos Newhall 2009, 24). These goals—nature as source, sacrifice as strategy and theme, and the creation of a "total art" (to use Artaud's term)—are all reflected in Hijikata's butō, which is not surprising since both Hijikata and Ōno studied and performed under Wigman disciple Eguchi Takay in Tokyo, and Ōno also studied with Wigman disciple Baku Ishii. Given the mystification surrounding Hijikata's work, it is perhaps valuable to explore these influences as significant in the development of butō's methods; Wigman wrote clearly and prolifically about her ideas within dance and may provide clues as to some of Hijikata and Ōno's more poetic and often confusing directions.

The Routledge Performance Practitioners series *Mary Wigman* offers an excellent brief introduction and overview of Wigman's life, thought, and work. Wigman scholar Mary Anne Santos Newhall traces the beginnings of Wigman's technique through Rudolph Laban and German *korperkultur* at the natural paradise of Hellerau, the aforementioned Dada associations, and explores Wigman's popularity in America and her complex relationship with her homeland and Nazi Germany. She analyzes Wigman's philosophy as presented in the artist's own writing, primarily through *The Language of Dance* (1966) and *The Mary Wigman Book: Her Writings* (1973), both edited and translated by dance scholar Walter Sorell. Among many important observations that she makes, Santos Newhall notes Wigman's admiration for Friedrich Nietzsche and his desire to rescue the body from "Despisers of the Body, who saw the physical body as something

to be overcome for the salvation of the soul" (67). Santos Newhall argues that for Wigman, the "sensuous dancing body" that Nietzsche referred to in *Zarathustra* "became the vehicle to an authentic life" (ibid.). This aspiration is not unlike Hijikata's desire for "bleeding nature" in contrast to Tokyo-style modernity as a "transparent, mechanical 'world'" (quoted in Kurihara 2000, 43). In both cases, these artists sought to use dance to rescue the body from its subjugated social standing.

Two other concepts bear significance in Hijikata's work: the notion that the audience should experience the performance on a kinesthetic level, and the idea that space has texture and weight. Santos Newhall comments that Wigman built on Laban's effort concept in her development of "kinetic empathy," by which "the dancer places herself so deeply into the dance expression that the tensions and motor responses of the dancing body are made visible" (2009, 79). The emphasis here is on the dancer "placing herself so deeply in the dance," which is similar to Hijikata's emphasis on the dancer's absorption with the image over any clearly discernible meaning that is ultimately expressed to the audience. The "message" is not literally received through abstract concepts, but rather kinesthetically received from body to body (performer to audience). Wigman also drew on Laban's ideas of space, though she clearly developed this as an intimate aspect of her dancing. Space was always her "invisible partner," one with "tangible…and metaphysical pressures" that invoked the larger cosmos of her existence (Santos Newhall 2009, 83–4). Susan Manning notes in *Ecstasy and the Demon* that in contrast to Isadora Duncan's presentation of "the self in space," Wigman invented *Gestalt in Raum*, or the configuration of energy in space. Critics said she appeared to be simultaneously and paradoxically present and absent from stage. They commented on her

ability to transform herself into another being and inhabit that essence for the audience. In Hijikata's work, we see the interaction with space as atmosphere, which also has texture and weight. Further, the butō dancer aspires to literally become this atmosphere, such that there is no distinction between the dancers' body and the space within which it exists.

Santos Newhall further addresses such connections to space in the final section of her book, which includes typical exercises in Wigman's technique. This chapter also reveals Wigman's emphasis on simple walking, in which the dancer should develop incredible sensitivity to the floor and space through the feet—also echoed in Hijikata's work—and Wigman's use of spinning to find the "stillpoint of the spinning world"[26] (Santos Newhall 2009, 146). Hijikata approached this stillpoint through language, by overloading the dancer with images to the point of crisis, where one simply cannot use the intellect any more to inhabit each image. We can see the beginnings of his ideas in those of Wigman where hers deal with physical and metaphysical reality, Hijikata's aims were to move beyond what the mind can comprehend entirely. I will return to this theme in much greater detail in Chapters Three and Four.

Santos Newhall herself notes that Wigman's lineage can be seen in butō, not only through the direct links from Wigman to Takaya and Ishii to Hijikata and Ōno, but also through Eikō and Koma. These two Japanese artists worked with Ōno and Hijikata, and also with Wigman's assistant Manja Chmiel before developing their own branch of the butō diaspora in New York (ibid., 96). Santos Newhall also delves into Pina Bausch's tanz-theater as the German inheritor of Wigman's Ausdrucktanz, though she comments

[26] Santos Newhall uses this quote from T.S. Eliot to describe Wigman's centering techniques.

that Bausch's work bears the mark of the increasingly globalized and mediated world (95). Interestingly, Bausch and Ōno met in the 1980s and developed a deep appreciation for one another's work, further revealing a kinship between these two strands of post-war dance. And perhaps most importantly, Wigman's basic ideas of total dance are clearly present in Hijikata and Ōno's work.

Resonance with American Post-Modern Dance

Butō was identified as a post-modern dance form in English language butō scholarship by Sondra Fraleigh (1999) and Susan Blakely Klein (1988). In *Dancing Darkness: Butoh, Zen, and Japan*, Fraleigh notes the affinity that both butō artists and American post-modern had for "devolution of technical polish" (1999, 23). Yvonne Rainer's *Trio A*, with its flattening of timing and momentum comes to mind, as does Hijikata's manic and purposefully out of time tango in *Nikutai No Hanran* [Revolt of the Flesh]. Blakely Klein comments on butō's pastiche style in her book, *Ankoku Butō, The Premodern and Postmodern Influences on the Dance of Utter Darkness*. She connects butō to the "postmodern condition" via Fredric Jameson's characterization of "random cannibalization of all styles past and present" (1988, 21). She comments that butō artists freely appropriated *kata* [movement forms, as in martial arts] from Nō and Kabuki and reassembled them out of context, insisting that "the gestures do not tell a story but evoke associations" (Nakajima quoted in Blakely Klein, 21).[27] Further, Blakely Klein draws a

[27] Waguri instructs students in a series of these: Cupid face (smile and puff your cheeks out), baby ring (bring your right hand up to your cheek with the pinky finger pointing up and the palm facing out), brooch (bring that same hand to your chest, turning the wrist over), vine grows out (follow a serpentine pattern in front of you with your hands, and then open and close hands three times for leaves growing), etc. (see

parallel between Hijikata's reversal of "high" and "low" culture, which she says is indicative of postmodernism's affinity for the "vulgarity of kitsch" (22). She argues that butō employed this bricolage strategy as a means of promoting a "fragmented, schizophrenic" self, one that resisted easy definition or identification (23, 28). Hijikata and Ōno Kazuo in particular emphasized their gender-crossing as yet another state of being that is constantly in flux.

The difficulty in identifying butō as post-modern dance is that typically what one means by that term is Judson Church or Judson-inspired artists, which Hijikata was not. They were, however, sourcing off of similar material, namely post-modernism in general and also some specific shared sources in particular: visual artist Marcel Duchamp, whom Kasai, Waguri, Murobushi, and Nakajima all mentioned as inspirational to Hijikata's reconceptualization of dance, and John Cage, radical conceptual musician (who was also inspired by Duchamp and had traveled to Japan and often quoted Zen philosophy), who, in New York, influenced an entire generation of dancers through collaborations with Merce Cunningham and others.

In *Reinventing Dance in the 1960s*, dance scholar Sally Banes identifies Russian Formalist Victor Shklovsky's concept of *ostranie* [defamiliarization] as a foundational concept of postmodern artists in general. Faced with the effects of the numbing habitualization of automated and standardized modern life, Shklovsky sought to "smash the 'algebrization:' to infuse life with consciousness" and to "recover the sensation of life" (quoted in Banes 2003, 5). He used theatrical devices such as slowing things down (like Hijikata, taken to the extreme by Sankai Juku) or pausing action (like Grotowski),

figure X). Ashikawa Yoko is famously performed numerous of these *kata* in rapid succession while walking in an impossibly low crouched position.

recontextualizing anything and everything, changing the scale (particularly giganticization), episodic structure, and working with formal restrictions (ibid.). Banes' discussion of giganticization in Claes Oldenburg's *Giant Hamburger*—"…seemed to make not only themselves but also the human body they so uncannily resembled grotesquely alien…in microscopic detail" (7)—recalls Hijikata's use of images of giant phallic plants (*konnyaku*/Devil's Tongue), or vaginas painted on the back of a writhing Tamano Koichi. Further, Hijikata's main project could be said to be defamiliarizing his dancers with the numbing effects of daily life in post-war Japan. His entire method is geared toward getting his dancers to awaken their senses in new ways.

Banes identifies a wide range of characteristics of post-modern dance in *Terpsichore in Sneakers*: "pastiche, irony, playfulness, historical reference, the use of vernacular materials, the continuity of cultures, an interest in process over product, and new relationships between artist and audience"(1987, xv). With its blending of cultural references and often inane antics, butō fits this definition as well. Banes theorizes three stages (and counting, as of 1987 when she wrote *Terpsichore*) of postmodern dance, each one building upon the prior. Hijikata's butō most closely resembles what Banes has delineated as "metaphoric" postmodern dance, "inclusive of theatrical elements of all kinds, such as costume, lighting, music, props, character, and mood"(xxiii), yet emphasizing their radical juxtaposition rather than adopting modern dance's linear narrative structure, meaning, or concept of character development. Of particular relevance to the analysis of Hijikata's work is Banes' investigation of narrative structure in 1980s post-modern dance. Banes says of metamorphic post-modern dance, "The dances are different from modern dance, however, because in important ways they

present the nondance information (i.e., plot, character, situation), rather than *represent* it" (1987, xxxi), such that 1980s post-modern dance resembles jump-cut film editing. If dancers appear as characters they are symbols; their journey is not followed through the piece as in an early modern dance Graham ballet. Banes says of late post-modern dance performances, "They are not seamless theatrical illustrations, productions of fictional worlds (*á la* Martha Graham or Doris Humphrey). The movement vocabulary is only partially expressive; it also remains partly abstract and it resists definitive interpretation" (ibid.). While this is certainly true of Hijikata's work, what distinguishes him from late post-modern jump-cut narrative style are his surreal transformations of narrative and embodied meaning, which are more similar to German Expressionist dance. Says Japanese dance critic Kazuko Kuniyoshi, "[f]or Hijikata, the body was not a narrative, semantic, dramatic, or compositional vehicle, but a catalyst for a new awareness" (2006, 158).

Cautions butō scholar Megan Nicely, "butō is better considered an alternate postmodernism than the 1980s iteration of 60s Judson developments as Banes would have it" (2010 Cord paper). Referencing Ananya Chatterjea's critique about the inclination to compare everything to Judson as the base-tone post-modern dance, Nicely writes, "postmodern dance is not one generalized playing field but the local eruptions that tell us what postmodern means from a given perspective—Judson being one, butō another" (personal communication). I agree with this nuanced analysis, and also find it helpful to look at these two dance expressions alongside one another if only because I can more clearly understand the resonances between the two when I identify the point of comparison in American dance. At the same time, I want to reiterate Chatterjea and

Nicely's point that butō must be understood on its own terms, within its own context and not as an exact corollary to American post-modern dance. The particular convergence of influences, though similar, is distinct and results in different (sometimes radically so) aesthetic expressions. However, I do feel the need to call attention to the experimentation of American post-modern dance with butō studies. All too often I have heard butō dancers compare butō with "Western" dance as a point of distinction, but the comparisons most often reference classical ideas of body, shape, space, and musicality, which Judson dancers deconstructed ruthlessly. Were there to be an in-depth study of the similarities between butō dance and the Judson legacy, I think one would uncover significant cross-pollination of ideas.

Influences from Traditional Japanese Dance and Theater

Although butō eschewed classical Japanese and Western performance forms with equal fervor, the concepts underlying traditional Japanese performance, and even some specific movement techniques, are clearly visible in butō to at least this non-Japanese researcher. In contrast to my ballet or musical theater training, in which I am instructed to push 110% of my energy out to the audience, in butō I am told to keep some energy inside and rather to pull the audience in to my experience, echoing Nō theater's 70/30 audience/performer energy distribution. Building on this principle, butō teachers inform me that my eyes should not see but reflect, as if they were mirror balls hanging inside my head, so that I may cultivate simultaneous inner and outer awareness; this again is reiterated in Japanese traditional performance techniques. Additionally, many butō teachers use Nō theater's suriashi—a sliding walk step that emphasizes fluid, nearly weightless motion—as a focusing technique.

There are a significant number of resources in English about Nō and Kabuki Theater, laying the foundation for an understanding of Japanese-originated theatrical forms. The Asian Theater Studies program at the University of Hawaii is highly respected, and home to renowned Nō and Kabuki Theater scholar James Brandon. Samuel Leiter, another leading authority on Kabuki Theater and a professor at Columbia University, published the definitive *Kabuki Encyclopedia*. While these and numerous other resources deal with Nō and Kabuki as performance forms, there is not very much information about the training methodologies.

On the Art of Nō Drama: The Major Treatises of Zeami is frequently quoted on the conceptual basis used in training the Nō actor, addressing stages of a performer's training as related to one's ability to grasp the mystery of the form. Kabuki does not have such a parallel text, although we can trace the form through paintings showing its highly codified make-up, costume, setting, characters, dances, and play texts. Both Nō and Kabuki are passed down through family lines and the teachings are often guarded as secret, however, and there are no explicit texts for teaching the dances and vocal techniques used for acting.

Zeami enumerates several key elements in the "Way of Nō," which Blakely Klein, Ariyoshi and Brandon, Leiter and others note as common denominators throughout Japanese performance. My summation of these common aspects includes:

- ***Jo-ha-kyu*** (or principles of beginning-middle-end) and circularity of time
- ***Ma*** (or the space between)**—liminal** concept of time
- Heightened sense of **presence**
- **Stillness** as condensation of energy, in other words, the internal energy continues to move and collect against the edges of the form in a pause of movement through space
- **Dual state**: Concept of simultaneous inner and outer awareness

- **Shamanism**, folklore, stock characters and images (see Leiter 1979, Ariyoshi and Brandon 1994, and Blakely Klein 1988)

Blakely Klein adds the notion that "the Outcast" role is a recurrent theme in the history of Japanese theater (1988, 32). Both Nō and Kabuki began as forms of popular entertainment—raunchy, lively, variety-style shows performed in streets, riverbeds, anywhere people could gather. Both forms later became more refined under the influences of their respective patrons—the Emperor and Court governing the practice of Nō, and the merchant class sponsoring and shaping Kabuki theater. Klein asserts that butō proudly appropriated the earlier outcast status as its defining identity.

Although I agree that the methods of directing energy are distinct from other forms of theater training, I would also argue that several of these other elements are common to numerous performance forms. A heightened sense of presence and the liminality of the stage space are key ingredients of theatricality. Folklore pervades performance across cultures, although the manifestations might be different based on cultural mythology. In particular, ghosts, shamans/witches, and animal archetypes appear in classical ballet. Think of the haunting Wilis in *Giselle* or the evil Mouse King in *The Nutcracker*. As dance anthropologist Joann Kealiinohomoku argued in her 1970s article, "An Anthropologist Looks at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance," *all* dance is culturally derived, and *all* dance produces and perpetuates cultural values. Viewing the "Japaneseness" of butō in this light might be useful in translating it in the global diaspora. What are the demon, god, and trickster myths that resonate within a particular cultural context? What animals are emblematic of these roles? Kealiinohomoku's argument highlights the fact that each expression of culture must be examined on its own terms, within the context of its own values. This has indeed been my guiding principle in researching Hijikata's notions of body, being, and dance. It is also important to note that each of Hijikata's students have their own unique framework for understanding his creative work, based on their experience and specific moment in history.

Butō Master Profiles

The following section provides brief introductions to my interview subjects for ease of reference throughout the rest of the text. I have listed them here in order of years of history with butō, beginning with the greatest number of years. All of the information presented here is sourced directly from personal interviews in 2010 or personal communications in workshops, unless otherwise noted.

Ōno Yoshito

Ōno Yoshito is the only son of Ōno Kazuo, the co-founder of butō. I refer to him throughout by his first name to distinguish him from the elder Ōno. Yoshito discovered dance through his father, who had studied modern dance and austrucktanz with Eguchi Takaya. He preferred to play football—which he did, as center forward for a championship winning local team—but he went to his father's dance classes at his mother's urging and to his initial chagrin.

At the age of 19, Yoshito performed with Hijikata in the first butō piece, *Kinjiki*, in 1959. He continued to work closely with Hijikata for many years, took a hiatus from the stage in 1968, and then returned to perform in his father's 1985 production of *The Dead Sea*. After Hijikata's death in 1986, he took over the role of director of his father's performances. Yoshito developed his own solo career beginning in the mid-1990s, and continues to teach and perform today (Ohno and Ohno 2004, 326). He still lives in the Ōno's house in Yokohama and teaches in the same home studio where they first began in the 1950s. Together with Ōno archivist Mizohata Toshio, Yoshito maintains the Kazuo Ōno Dance Studio Archive, with all of Ōno Kazuo's costumes, photos and videos of his work, numerous books, and other materials. Because of his long history of collaboration

with Hijikata and Ōno, Yoshito is able to offer many anecdotes about butō's development over time.

Yoshito notes that Kazuo Ōno changed profoundly from working with Hijikata. Before working on the role of Divine, Kazuo "thought that the flower is beautiful, so let's dance the beauty of flower. But after that he taught that to be a flower itself." Ōno's Christianity met with complexity and paradox through his relationship with Hijikata. He felt that dancing a male prostitute was sacrilegious, and he told Yoshito "I am Juda[s]" because he felt he had betrayed God.

Yoshito recalls being shocked by Hijikata's style, because in contrast to Kazuo's direction that dancing was always a "more soft way," Hijikata asked for a "more stiff and hard way." Also, Kazuo had taught him dance counting in standard 4/4 rhythm but Hijikata's counting was more like "1…hold, hold, hold, and then 'ta ta ta'" in rapid succession. Early work together was always just work on the next show—not training in the traditional sense. Yoshito trained in classical ballet and pantomime on his own time in order to be "good material" for Hijikata.

Nakajima Natsu

Nakajima was involved in avant-garde arts at a young age. She went to high school with the theater director Sato Makoto, one of the founders of the infamous Black Tent theater company, during which time she collaborated with him in what she calls "copies" of works by Terayama Shuji and by Hijikata. Sato had seen *Kinjiki* in 1959, and told her about the work. Nakajima had begun her dance career with Masa Tsuchiya Classical Dance Academy, and then later joined the company of Masami Kumi, a student of Mary Wigman's. Through hearing about Hijikata, Nakajima and another high school

friend, Kasai Akira, became intrigued and went to see his next performance, *Anma*. She was immediately attracted to his celebration of what she calls "low art" and also his incorporation of humor, which she had not experienced in dance previously. She and Kasai went to his studio to ask to study with him, but at the time Hijikata was only accepting male students, so Nakajima went to study with Ōno Kazuo for a year. Hijikata did need female dancers for his cabaret, however, and this was Nakajima's route into working with him that first year. Eventually Hijikata did accept female students and Nakajima had the chance to work with him on regular stage choreographies. She described many late night sessions discussing art and literature, seminar style. Hijikata gave them reading assignments, so she memorized works by writers such as Jean Genet and Hanyu Yuko. On weekends, Ōno would come and lead the group in improvisation exercises based on the readings and his own lectures.

In 1969 she established her own company, Muteki-sha [Foghorn]. Hijikata had changed the system at Asbestos-kan such that dancers must turn over most of the proceeds from the cabaret and also live at the studio, and she did not wish to work under this structure. She continued to work with Hijikata, helping as a rehearsal assistant when he was first developing his butō-fu techniques with Ashikawa. Her job was to record all of the image instructions that he gave ("very fast and only once!"), and then work with Ashikawa to realize the choreography.

Nakajima tours internationally, teaching and performing solo work, and setting work on other companies, including a recent collaboration with a Mexican theater company on a production of *The Tempest*. Based in Tokyo, she also teaches movement for disabled people.

Kasai Akira

Kasai has become known as one of the most inventive artists working in butō. His style contrasts the slow, low to the earth movements of many butō artists with "fierce horizontal and vertical movements, using the expanse of the stage, but with some humorous or clown like elements" (NY Butoh Festival 2011). He studied modern dance, pantomime and classical ballet, before performing in Ōno's *Gigi* in 1963. He had first seen Hijikata perform in 1962, and then performed in Hijikata's *Barairo dansu* in 1965 (ibid.).

Kasai was impressed with Hijikata's movement invention, for example movement vocabulary such as hands chasing hands, or copying the movement patterns of disabled people. He worked with Hijikata in the early days, during the extreme physical experiments like breaking through walls, which he says for him was not a painful experience at all but rather an exciting one.

Kasai established his own company, Tenshi-kan (House of Angels), and dance school in 1971. He left Japan to study Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy and eurhythmy in Stuttgart, Germany, from 1979 until 1985. After a 15-year hiatus, he resumed public butō performances in 1994. He continues to teach and tour internationally, and has been dubbed both the Nijinsky as well as the Mick Jagger of butō.

Tamano Koichi and Hiroko

The Tamanos worked with Hijikata in two very different periods—Koichi during the early experimentation, and Hiroko in the later period where everything was precisely choreographed. Together they have a rich perspective on his work. After ten years of working with their teacher in Japan Hijikata choreographed a solo for Koichi, *Fin Back*

Whale, and sent the couple to the United States. They first found a home in the Los Angeles punk scene, and then eventually established their company, Harupin-ha, and a community in San Francisco that has served as the foundation for butō in the United States..

Their work and teaching style has remained very close to Hijikata's work in the early 1970s, with choreography recorded and performed as a series of image transformations, and unison movement sections divided by gender. Koga Shinichi, a former student of the Tamanos and company member of Harupin-ha, describes more unorthodox training sessions with Hiroko in which the students chopped wood or gargled salt water and sang. They also took field trips to museums and worked with the paintings as inspiration for improvisations. The Tamanos' home in Berkeley, California, houses their studio and guest rooms for visiting artists, and has been a hub for Japanese butō dancers coming to the United States. For many years, the Tamanos also owned and operated Country Station Sushi in the Mission District of San Francisco, which not only featured Hiroko's often outlandish performances as host, but also butō-image-covered walls and several hundred books on butō and the artists that inspired Hijikata. In September 2011, the Tamanos moved back to Japan after 40 years of fomenting an American butō community.

Murobushi Ko

Murobushi was a university student in 1968, during what he calls the "confrontation age, and all over the world, students against the system." He participated in experimental theater and performance art groups with now famous "Japanese underground" artists such as Terayama Shuji, Kara Juro, Suzuki Tadashi, and Sato

Makoto. He notes that this work was already influenced by European theater, including Samuel Beckett and Eugene Ionesco, before Hijikata's incorporation of European performance aesthetics.

Murobushi was drawn to butō because of its outsider position. When he saw Hijikata perform *Nikutai No Hanran,* he felt a sense of having met him before, like meeting a future lover for the first time and the connection is inexplicable. The very next day he went to Asbestos-kan to ask if he could study with Hijikata, however Hijikata was on his way to Kyoto to make the film, *Horrors of Malformed Men*, with Teruo Ishii,. He invited Murobushi to join—he needed "young bodies" for an orgy scene—and offered him a train ticket. Murobushi performed in the film, and then later back in Tokyo joined Hijikata's cabaret. Working with Hijikata was "very dangerous," he said, not like warming up with Koga's group as they did every morning of rehearsal when I observed their collaboration. Cabaret dancing especially taught Murobushi a lesson about dance; he discovered that good technique is not enough to catch the audience—the dancer has to shock, has to push past the edge of dance, has to provoke. Ko sought similar extreme experiences with yamabushi mountain monks and ascetic training, which he studied for two years in the Japanese mountains.

Murobushi is one of the most prolific of the early butō artists. He cofounded Dairakudakan together with Maro Akaji in 1972, created the butō-magazine "Hageshii Kisetsu (La Saison Violente) [Violent Season]" moved to Europe in 1974 and co-founded the all-female butō- company "Ariadone" with Carlotta Ikeda in Paris, and then two years later founded an all-male company, Sebi. More recently he founded the all-male Ko & Edge Company in 2001. His choreography and teaching took him throughout Europe, the

Unites States, Latin America, and South East Asia, and eventually back to Japan where he is now based. His teaching focuses on the connection of breath and body, imagery work, and extreme physicality. He has made many pieces in homage to Hijikata, including *Bibou no Aozura* [*Handsome Blue Sky*], inspired by the title of one of Hijikata's books.

Mikami Kayo

Mikami trained with Tatsumi Hijikata from 1978–81, and danced in the Asbestos-kan cabaret. She then trained with Noguchi Michizo, originator of Noguchi Taiso, the physical training system used by Dairakurakan and many third and fourth generation butō companies today. In 1991 she co-founded Torifune butō Sha with her husband, X, who had previously worked with Terayama Shuji and his theater company Tenjo-Sajiki. Mikami returned to study with Hijikata at the end of his life and attended his final workshop in 1985. She is the only dancer of her generation to have pursued academic studies, writing her master's thesis and doctoral dissertation on Hijikata's butō methodology. She currently teaches cultural studies at Kyoto Seiki University and directs training and performs with her company here and in their base in Oiso, south of Tokyo.

Waguri Yukio

Waguri previously studied karate, and was attracted to the mystery and danger of Hijikata. A friend told him that Hijikata's studio was the place for "the most dangerous training in all of Japan," where students jumped down from the second floor balcony and landed on their shins. He was the main male dancer at Asbestos-kan from 1972 to 1978. Since his stage debut in Hijikata's 1973 piece *27 Nights for Four Seasons*, Waguri kept

notes on Hijikata's teaching and butō-fu, and has organized them into a book and CD-Rom. His teaching and choreographic methods have remained very close to Hijikata's final work, although Waguri's aesthetic is much gentler than his teacher's. He founded his own company, Kohzensha, and also mentored the all-female company Shininome. He has performed and taught throughout Europe, the United States, and South East Asia, working closely with shamans in Korea and Indonesia.

Temko Ima

Temko dropped out of university to join Byakko-sha, a Kyoto-based butō company that grew out of Dairakurakan and became known for its flashy style and often appeared on television and in films. She performed with the company from the mid-1980s until it was disbanded in 1994, and she now maintains her own company, Kiraza, in a portion of the live-work studio where Byakko-sha was once based. With Byakko-sha, she toured throughout Asia, Europe, and Latin America. With her own company she has toured in Europe and Japan.

Temko had a background in traditional Japanese dance, bon odori, and Nō theater. She combines principles of this, as well as yoga, with butō in her work and teaching. Her parents were Christian, so she had a dual-religious upbringing, attending Sunday school through her Confirmation and also praying and studying calligraphy at Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples.

Shinichi Koga[28]

Koga came to butō through theater and film studies at San Francisco State University, where Yukihiro Goto taught him Tadashi Suzuki's method and brought Ashikawa Akeno as a guest artist. His father was a Judo master who emigrated to train the U.S. Judo team, and he also trained his three sons. Koga's butō exploration centers in investigating the boundaries of himself—be they physical, mental, or other. He says that pushing against an edge is what keeps him engaged, because for him, "if nothing's at stake, it's not so interesting." He joined the Tamano's Harupin Ha and studied intensively under Hiroko from 1992–95. He also performed in Berlin-based Yoshioka Yumiko's Ten Pen Chii for many years, and founded a San Francisco-based company, Uro Teatro Koku, with one of the Harupin ha dancers, Alenka Mullin. Together they collaborated with Berlin-based Russian physical theater company Do-Teatr. He also continued his theater work with Larry Reid's Shadowlight Theatre, and did improvisational theater with Ruth Zaporah and Cassie Tunick. In 1999, he founded inkBoat, which has become one of the most well-known butō companies in the United States. He regularly collaborates with artists from Europe, Japan, and the United States, as well as performs on tours with long-time collaborators, the death metal/goth/punk/rock musicians from the now defunct Sleepytime Gorilla Museum and Idiot Flesh. In 2007, Koga and his Tanaka Min (Body Weather)-trained wife, Dana Iova, founded a land-based training and performance space in the Lost Coast area of Northern California.

[28] In this case I have used the American convention because Shinichi Koga is Japanese-American.

Matsuoka Dai

Matsuoka came to butō through Semimaru and Amagatsu Ushio of Sankai Juku, the most prominent international company that grew out of Dairakurakan. He completed his university studies in philosophy and design. He was first interested in phenomenology, and was also casually studying modern dance and Noguchi Taiso. He got interested in the idea of autopoesis, which has to do with self-generation and architecture, and for him, relates to disabled people re-routing their brains in therapy. He thinks of philosophy as a starting point in his artistic explorations, and one that gave him the "right direction" but he also thinks that one has to forget about philosophy to make art. Though based in Tokyo, he has performed and toured extensively with the Paris-based Sankai Juku since 2005. In 2008, he began presenting his own performance work, which is often site specific and involves sets elements of his own design.

In Conclusion

In addition to more than a decade of my own phenomenological inquiry into butō, these sources have deeply informed my current study. A close read of Hijikata's writings that I have been able to access in English has provided incredible insight into his dance philosophy, particularly how it connects with his particular zeitgeist. Interviews with his dancers, however, offered the keys to unlock some of his more mysterious utterances and also gave me critical access to Hijikata's training and dance-making process. Through analyzing their visceral experiences, I was able to glean the ways in which Hijikata taught his dancers to perceive, which is perhaps the most important element of his training methodology. Their stories resonated with my own experiences as a butō student

and dancer, as well as documented practices in German Ausdrucktanz, American post-modern dance, and Japanese traditional No Theater and Post WWII avant-garde art. Viewing his dance in connection with these other forms has allowed me to extrapolate a sense of butō pedagogy, and to imagine applications of Hijikata's methods in contemporary performer training.

A review of the scholarly literature on butō revealed a gap in the dialogue concerning butō training. In particular, the first- and second-generation dancers are an important living archive of Hijikata's methods, and recording their knowledge provides a more complete picture of butō dance. Their practical information also sheds light on the possibilities of extracting Hijikata's training practices for use in other contexts, such as actor training. It will be useful to the reader to remember that I am taking a rather wide scope on training, addressing questions including: what is the view of the body proposed by this practice? What is the view of being? What is the view of movement and dance? What does training or cultivation entail and what does it generate? Within this purview, I am taking into account both philosophy and embodied experience, and privileging the integrated mind-body phenomenon of butō dance.

CHAPTER 3

BECOMING NOTHING

Becoming Nothing: Theoretical Foundations (Zen, Nishida and Hijikata)

This chapter explores connections between Buddhist and butō philosophies, specifically investigating similarities in ideas of self-identity and experience. My analysis focuses on one particularly salient topic of Zen Buddhist philosophy—overcoming dualism—that corresponds to ideas that my interviewees identified as fundamental aspects of butō, which I will discuss throughout this chapter. Overcoming dualism necessitates a discussion about self-identity, experience, and no-thingness, as these issues are key to understanding duality and the perspectival shift necessary to move beyond duality. For this, Nishida Kitarō's philosophy is particularly useful, and I emphasize his logic to structure this discussion.

Nishida, who is widely considered one of the most significant Japanese philosophers of the 20th century and founder of the Kyoto School, is credited with bringing Anglo-European philosophy into dialogue with Japanese thought (Maraldo 2005). In his early career, Nishida was a practicing Zen Buddhist, and he remained a life-long close colleague of Buddhist scholar D.T. Suzuki (Kasulis in Carter 1989, iv). Though Nishida's primary quest is to elucidate an ontology of experience in Western philosophical terms, his work is strongly influenced by Zen Buddhist thought, which "aims at perfection of personhood" (Nagatomo 2010, 1). Says Thomas Kasulis of

Nishida's work: "his passion [was] for rendering Buddhist paradoxical utterance, or the Zen experience of immediacy, understandable in the several 'languages' of Western philosophy" (quoted in Carter 1989, xxiii). For me, Nishida's reasoning has been invaluable in beginning to understand something as complex as a truly non-dualistic experience of reality in Zen Buddhist thought and relating it to butō practice.

However, let me be clear that I am not arguing that butō is a Buddhist practice, nor is it a manifestation of Buddhist philosophy, as many have commented of Japanese Nō Theater. I am, however, arguing that butō is in deep dialog with the culture from which it originated; and further, that Buddhism and Zen Buddhism profoundly influence this culture in particular, as D. T. Suzuki so eloquently elucidated in his 1959 book *Zen and Japanese Culture*. Even though Japanese culture is increasingly globalized and decreasingly homogenized, Zen Buddhism colors Japanese values and behavior. Several of my interviewees concur: Mikami says, "Hijikata is not Buddhist but almost [all] Japanese people have [an] atmosphere of Buddhism" (2010), and Matsuoka suggests that Buddhist philosophy is "immersed in everyday life in Japan, in tradition, [so much so that] you can't get away from that" (2010).[29] Zen scholar D.T. Suzuki confirms this observation when he states that in contrast to other schools of Buddhism which have remained confined to spiritual aspects of Japanese life, "Zen has gone beyond it. Zen has entered internally into every phase of the cultural life of the people" (1959, 22). Zen philosophy in particular permeates social relationships, aesthetic values, and, perhaps most importantly to this discussion, a view of the self as a "being in nature," to use

[29] It is significant that these two artist are separated by generations (Mikami is in her 60s and Matsuoka is barely 30), and yet they both note the prevalence of Buddhism in their everyday lives.

Yuasa's phrase. My aim in investigating Buddhist philosophy in relation to butō is not to further mythologize or exoticize the "Japanese-ness" of butō, but rather to dissect the correlations in such a way as to make them less mystical and more practical.

None of the butō masters I interviewed claimed to be devout practicing Buddhists. Nakajima claims to be only "vaguely" religious, however she feels that she "know[s] Buddhism by [her] body" (2010), meaning that Buddhism is infused into her personal experience of life. Only two of the younger dancers mentioned utilizing Buddhist meditation practice as part of their own training methods. Yet all had something to say about Buddhist philosophy and its instances in butō practices. A few even claim that Hijikata's butō philosophy is diametrically opposed to Buddhist thought. As I stated previously, Kasai in particular felt that "Hijikata's *mu* is [the] complete opposite of Buddhist *mu*" (2010). Mikami related a story of Hijikata observing "the Buddha statue in [a] temple for one year,[30] but he looked at… [it] from the inside." Instead of the serene face, he saw "many fire worlds and many people die" (2010). If this is indeed the case, then a thorough investigation of butō would seem to necessitate inquiry into Buddhist philosophy, if only to better understand butō's reaction or opposition to it.

In this chapter I also briefly discuss Zen-seeing, and Zen understanding of time and space, as they resonate strongly with butō's use of imagery. Nagatomo identifies these topics as key concepts in Zen philosophy (2010), and though there are certainly other topics that one could discuss when trying to grasp the totality of Zen Buddhism, I

[30] Morashita, Head Archivist at the Tatsumi Hijikata Memorial Archive at Keio University in Tokyo, pointed out on a map the temple where Hijikata lived in the attic of when he first moved to Tokyo. He said that Hijikata lived there just as a "flop-house" and not as a student of Buddhism. Still, this experience seems to have been informative to Hijikata's art.

will limit my comments to these three in the interest of focus. Again, this is not an exhaustive comparison of butō and Buddhism, but rather a beginning exploration and a case for further personal experiential investigation into Buddhism if one wants to understand the context and perspective of butō dance.

Overcoming dualism

Zen holds that a typical, ego-logical perspective of daily life is fundamentally flawed, perpetuating "a dualistic paradigm of thinking with its attendant psychological states such as stress and anxiety" (Nagatomo 2010, 1). Dualism is a claim that reality consists of two substances that have nothing in common, and is exemplified in Descartes' mind-body dualism where the mind is said to be utterly different from and distinct from the body. Zen espouses that these binaries are contextual and interdependent, instead of being disjunctive and oppositional. To illustrate an interdependency, Nakajima says, "without left we don't know right, without external we don't know internal, so it's [the] same" (2010). By "same," she is referring to the ground from which both identities arise, taking a both/and approach rather than and either/or approach. Zen proposes a holistic perspective whereby we can see "original human nature" and life as it really is, inseparable from the totality of being. The perfection of this is called *samadhi*, or "the embodiment of non-discriminatory wisdom" (Nagatomo 2010, 2).

Says Nagatomo, "it is through a practical transformation of the psychophysiological constitution of one's being that one prepares for embodying nondiscriminatory wisdom" (2010, 3). He emphasizes that this transformation entails "training of the whole person" and that *shugyo* (self-cultivation) by means of the body is

essential, because practice takes precedence over theory (ibid.). Ultimately, one must learn to embody a "positionless position," which Nishida terms *junsui keiken* [pure experience]. The positionless position is beyond any practical explanation in words, as language objectifies and thereby creates distance from experience. Despite the imprecision of words to describe pure experience, Zen scholars Senzaki Nyogen and Paul Reps note: "But physical man walks in the element of time even as he walks in mud, dragging his feet and his true nature. So even Zen must compromise and recognize progressive steps of awareness leading closer to the ever instant of enlightenment" (1998, 165). Similarly, this text can only point us in the right direction for an experience of dancing that is ultimately beyond words. That is not to say that words are not useful in teaching, describing, and analyzing dance. Rather, it is to say that words are not the experience itself.

With that said, several concepts merit discussion here. First, an ego-logical perspective is one that sees the self apart from its context and environment. Says Nagatomo, once a person "accepts this outer-inner dichotomy even provisionally, he or she is lead to accept as true a host of other "two" things that are affirmed to be real, as is seen in pairs of opposites such as mind vs. body…and I vs. nature" (2010, 7). Zen proposes that this division is merely provisional and fundamentally false. Further, the hierarchies implied in these binaries in Western philosophy are different than their perception in Japanese philosophy. Says Temko, rather than privileging an ego-centric or homocentric perspective, "Japanese philosophy is [that the] human being [is] not top of the creature, [rather it is the] same as other animal[s], [the] same as [a] chair" (2010). Similarly, mind is not favored over body; in fact they are not see as distinct at all. In

Japanese Buddhist philosophy, neither are inner and outer truly distinct. Says Nakajima, the "beginner think[s] truth belong[s] to internal, [but] I don't think so. It took much time, it's a big question for me, since young days. And nowadays I think external *is* internal, internal *is* external. Its just [a] name" (2010). Further, going beyond the unification of internal and external, Zen's view of reality is beyond simply that of physical matter. Though we can feel the distinctions of physical matter and thus deduce that "I" am not this book, this desk, nor this cat, Zen advises moving beyond this provisional dualism.

Secondly, the notion of original human nature in Zen Buddhism is not the same as a romanticized notion of a primitive or essential self. The latter was popular with French Surrealists, and it is well documented that such artists, especially Antonin Artaud, inspired Hijikata.[31] The Zen concept of original human nature, however, is to "show your original face before your parents are born." This points to a nondualistic experience before a subject and object split occurs. Returning to this state is also finding Buddha-nature in one's own mind. Zen compares original human nature to a mirror, as something that passively reflects without discrimination. Nagatomo notes "Zen observes that the nature of the mirror is such that it does not change due to the kind of object it mirrors" (2010, 17). He refers to it as Zen-seeing or "seeing without being a seer," in other words not seeing from a particular perspective. In our interview, Matsuoka recounted that Amagatsu Ushio, director of Sankai Juku, pushes his dancers to find this "original self," as he calls it, which Matsuoka understood as searching for "who you are originally…[with] no social mask, like no other thing but your own desire or motivation to live" (2010).

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[31] See Klein 1988, Kurihara 1997, Monroe 2004, Baird 2005

Hijikata's ideas on original human nature seem to be a blend of Zen and Surrealists' ideas, the latter in that he is taking issue specifically with modern society, and the former that he is aiming for developing the ability to "see without being a seer." Hijikata often referred to everyday consciousness as "domestication," saying that from this perspective we are almost unaware of our bodies or being. He asked, "What is the most remote thing in the universe?…It is the body" (quoted in Kurihara 1996, 111) because it is the furthest thing from our consciousness. Hijikata said that the "domesticated body," i.e., one that is habituated to "normal" society, is one that is blocked from experiencing reality as it truly is. His work mined the unconscious for suppressed experiences and "invisible history," (Nakajima 1997, 5) unearthing many taboo and grotesque images. Hijikata pushed beyond the realm of the conscious and deep into the unconscious. He questioned everything, including the solidity of the ground under his feet; he would say to his students, "Although you are standing, this is not a floor, is it?" (quoted in Kurihara 1996, 100). He emphasized that the body never exists in a stable state, and that it is transformed with each unfolding moment. Though he may have been strongly influenced by Surrealist thought, Zen perspective of "original human nature" is evident in his perspective on reality. I will delve into this more practically in Chapter 4: Training Methods.

Next, the idea of positionless position is important, and is a reoccurring theme in both philosophy and practice of butō. Takuan (1986) explains the positionless position in relation to swordsmanship in *The Unfettered Mind: Writings from a Zen Master to a Master Swordsman*. His description elevates the idea to a matter of life or death, which helps to clarify wrong thinking about where to place the mind, or awareness. He writes

"if one puts his mind in the action of his opponent's body, his mind will be taken by the action of his opponent's body," (43) where "taken" means attached or calcified to a specific point. He repeats his caution about placing the mind in the opponent's sword, his opponent's intention to strike, the samurai's intention of not being struck, and so forth. Instead, Takuan suggests, "if you don't put it anywhere, it will go to all parts of your body and extend throughout its entirety" (45). The ideal experience is that "put nowhere, it will be everywhere" (47), although this is a practice arrived at only through disciplined training. Murobushi relates this to butō practice; regarding his point of focus, he responds, "It's not only one" (2010). Echoing Takuan, he cautions, "if you concentrate into one or nothingness, nothing happen[s]…Always you should concentrate into several different things, and between that you are very split" (2010), or in Takuan's terminology, everywhere and nowhere at the same time. Murobushi suggests, "you should find your position with this multiple positions," and that your concentration should be in the "continuity or changing" (2010), meaning that your awareness should extend throughout your being and beyond, like the hairs of an alert cat, sensing the most subtle change. Space changes, the body changes, also the concentration changes, and all of this must be included in our awareness.

Hijikata apparently had some skill in displacing his position, such that he could be in multiple places at once. Tamano Hiroko recounted a rehearsal at Hijikata's studio in which the female dancers were working on their section of the dance while Hijikata was seemingly absorbed in his writing. At one point, without looking up, he waved an arm in their direction and bellowed, "This is not correct!" Hiroko remembers feeling spooked by his comment, because he never even lifted his head to see what they were doing. It is

possible that Hijikata was just being contrary to throw them off, but Hiroko truly felt that he had seen them without actually seeing them, and that he had an ability to pay attention to many different things at once. His dance technique displays that as well, with dancers being asked to work with as many as 17 different images simultaneously. Mikami says, "In Hijikata's choreography, [there are] many many condition[s]! And then [sound of explosion]," indicating with her hand gestures that she disappears in the process of concentration on the images. This is the experience of seeing without being a seer. She says, "nerve is very busy, blood is very busy, must [gestures with hands to indicate containing and calming] like Zen!" Recalling Wigman's "stillpoint of the spinning world" mentioned in Chapter Two, the butō dancer is like the calm at the eye of the storm, amidst a torrent of images. Mikami feels that the butō-fu make it impossible to ever perform rote, habituated movements because the dancer is simply too overwhelmed with countless words and images layered one of top of the other. Her direction is: "only accept, butō accept, and then *mu*;" in other words, by simply allowing the images to enter one's consciousness without thought, the dancer becomes an empty vessel through which the images come and go.

Mikami describes a walking exercise she did with Ashikawa in which she had to split her focus so that she experienced many shades of her body, with her focus/eyes very far beyond her anatomical eyes. "[To] keep distance, divide by good string[s]" she instructs. She describes seeing herself as a puppet, and "inside [her] body [there is] only image." She says, "develop each world" for yourself and the audience will understand (2010). She is clear that this is not accomplished by focusing on outward expression—in fact, expression is undesired and superficial for her. Her goal is to experience the

different images and worlds, and through witnessing her deep experience she hopes that the audience will catch something.

Nagatomo emphasizes, "Zen does not mean it to be a mindless state, much less losing the mind. Nor does it mean a disappearance of the mind. Rather, it designates a dimension of experience in which the ego-logically discriminatory activity of the mind disappears" (2010, 18). This mode of "forgetfulness" generates an ease or flow, which in the case of butō facilitates the dance. Similarly, Mikami and Waguri both noted that Hijikata instructed them to immerse themselves in the dance but not be "drunk"—referring to being in an altered state and lost in the choreography. Instead, they were hyper-aware of finely tuned details within the choreography. He also told his students, "butō dancers have got to position their bodies so that no one is able to guess their next movement" (quoted in Kurihara 2000, 52). Murobushi instructs us to walk in *suriashi* keeping our weight in the center, without rocking right and left as we progress. On an energetic level, this is one way to practice a positionless position.

Going back to the overarching concept here—overcoming dualism—I want to highlight Nagatomo's emphasis on training the whole person as a *process*, and one that occurs in stages. First, one must recognize one's ego-logical perspective. One cannot move beyond it by ignoring it, but rather, by claiming it and working from that place, one can eventually find the place of "kicking out the bottom of the bucket," that is to say, the "ground" of a person is understood as groundless (2010, 13). He refers to this process as "transdescending"—transcending by going through, or "down," into oneself. Similarly, Hijikata compared the process of self-investigation to "drop[ing] a ladder deep into their own bodies and climb[ing] down it. Let them pluck the darkness from within their own

bodies and eat it*"* (quoted in Shibusawa 2000, 51–2). He criticized "people [who] have superficial perceptions of their own particular landscapes," using the following metaphor: *"*They create a desert around themselves, then complain there is no water. Why don't they try drinking from the wells within their own bodies?" (ibid.). Hijikata encouraged his dancers use their own experience to guide them, and echoed the notion that it is *through* the body that one transcends the body.

Becoming Nothing

Hijikata's choreographic language is rich with metaphor, and often densely camouflaged even for those dancers who worked with him for many years. For example: How does one become "a frozen bone that transcends gender" or "a corpse in a desperate bid to stand up?" These and other curious directives continue to attract and confound dancers, scholars, and critics alike. The words Hijikata used to describe his dance are notoriously perplexing, and possibly best understood if one hears them both literally *and* metaphorically. For example, I could dance the above image by imagining myself as pure marrow and bone, simply lying on a snow surface until some invisible boot kicked me out of the path or wild animal began gnawing on me. At the same time, I might ask myself, what is it to fully embody such a stance and "perform" it without comment or anthropomorphic reaction? What shift in perception do I have to make in myself in order to fully become something else? To practice becoming another substance (if only in my own mind) is not the same as practicing a triple pirouette, or even practicing relaxing tension in my joints (as in release technique post-modern dance) so that I can execute a phrase with a constant falling motion, as if I were carried by wind or water. In both of

these instances, there is still an "I" present. To practice becoming something else is to practice not being an "I." This loss of ego-consciousness is critical to the process of overcoming dualism and the experience of nothingness, the foundation in both Zen and Nishida's philosophy.

As Nakajima contends, the pathway to "becoming something" necessarily leads one through "becoming nothing." Matsuoka has a slightly different perspective; he says, "I think it's not the goal but it's a phenomenon…you become something else and [nothingness] appear[s]" (2010). In either case, it is a process of erasing the self and one's single-pointed consciousness, moving toward a state of nothingness. However, "nothing," in the context of Japanese philosophy, is not the opposite of "something." It is not nihilism. Rather, "nothing" envelops both "something" and "not-something," and is the ground for both being and non-being. Opposites (something and not-something, I and not-I) are both the wave and the shore, where nothingness is the entire interrelationship, or the foundation out of which *both* identities arise.

The idea of "nothing," or "no-thing," is a concept that pervades Buddhist thought. It generally appears as *mu* (or *wu*), as in *mu-shin* (no mind) and *musō* (no thought).[32] Similar to Nishida's idea of *junsui keiken*, *mu* has the characteristic of being prior to thought, judgment, or meaning. Says Nagatomo, *mu* can be understood as "non-conceptual awareness, non-projection, non-superimposition, mind as witnessing consciousness, or no-mind" (2009).

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[32] D.T. Suzuki notes that Chinese scholars borrowed this concept from Lao-tzuan to describe the Indian Buddhist idea of *śūnyatā* (emptiness), which is why the *mu* is often equated with both nothingness and emptiness (1959, 49).

Butō dancers have adopted the idea as "becoming nothing," pointing to the process of this transformation as the "way" in butō dance. This nothingness is essentially the creative source, in the existential and generative sense of the term. The majority [7 of 10] of my interviewees discussed "becoming nothing" as a process of "abandoning" or "throwing away" the ego-self. They described giving themselves over to their director and committing to the pure experience at hand without desire or thought. For example, during the seven years that Yoshito worked with Hijikata intensively, "if Hijikata told him about tightness, he will be tight…he will throw himself away" (2010). Yoshito says that Hijikata told him that "the flower has everything, so don't put yourself." Instead, his job as a dancer was just to experience the flower, and be the flower, without adding his commentary on beauty, death or any other experience of the flower. Ashikawa was reportedly incredibly adept with such transformation; Hijikata famously told those who visited his studio, "look, I am raising a chicken," referring to Ashikawa, who was walking around the studio in a squat and clucking, deeply involved in her exploration of his chicken choreography. Kasai says, "Ashikawa's case is a good example of the pure experience because Ashikawa throw[s] away everything, then becomes [the] image itself" (2010). In Ashikawa's case, Kasai says, this is an expression or experience of *mu*. Waguri explains, "If I want to be cat, I must kill human, [or that which is] humanlike" (2010). He suggests that one must kill the self in order to transform. Tamano Hiroko reveals that for her, one way to do this is through butō's characteristic white makeup, saying, "it's erasing myself. It's not painting" (2010). She uses the word *keishyo*, which comes from *keshisaru*, meaning to get rid of or erase. Our translator, Oe Azumi, elaborates that it means to "transform with powder," or "erase and then transform

something." In my experience, when I use white makeup I often start by painting my face first, as this is the most expressive part of my body. Once my face is entirely white, I feel as if my personality is muted and I can *begin* to quietly leave my everyday self behind.

The process of self-negation also carries over into the working relationship in general. Of his experience of being trained by Tamano Hiroko, Koga recounts, "I didn't know what anything meant at the time, I was just carried along" (2010). Similarly, Waguri says that somehow eight years "just passed" as he worked under Hijikata's direction. He qualifies that self-negation is not an absence of will. He said he almost left many times "because he had no self-confidence" in his own ability to rise to the task of self-negation, but ultimately he says it was his *konjyo* [literally root nature] or fighting spirit that helped him stay committed to the process. "Actually we cannot be empty," he says, "it's [an] ideal. How to *cross* to empty, it's a kind of training in butō, not only butō…but [it's] impossible, and it's a kind of a struggle inside. [It's] not easy" (2010). The challenge is for the dancer to "only accept," says Mikami, meaning that the dancer does not block the given imagery with thought (possibly rejecting it, coveting it, analyzing it, etc.) but just allows it to come in and pass through. Nakajima likens the mental state to that of a baby who "eats everything." She tells of a student she once had who had never danced before he came to her, so he had no preconceived notions of what his movement should be like. Every instruction she gave, he "ate" and because of this, he improved rapidly in his ability to transform himself. The difficulty comes when a dancer cannot stop the mental processes of questioning, judging, or attaching a desire to how a particular image *should* be. Instead, Waguri offers the notion that good performances are those in which he can go "so deep, and…vacuum my desires" (2010). It is not that he no

longer has desires, but rather than he is not identified with them, and therefore free to play with everything, including his desire.

Japanese studies scholar Steve Odin explores detachment in traditional Japanese arts, quoting philosopher Hisamatsu Shin'ichi's definition as "freedom from habit, convention, custom, formula, rule, etc., that is, not being bound to things" (quoted in Odin 2001, 139). Odin refers to this state as "non-abiding," or *mujû*, using Chinese Chan [Zen] Buddhist philosopher Hui-neng's terminology, reiterating the notion that it is not nihilistic. Rather, it is the recognition of one's own self-nature as *mushin* [no-mind] and further, "immovable *prajna*-wisdom" that is able to participate in "the aesthetic world of forms" while simultaneously remaining detached and "in a state of equanimity without craving or aversion" (147).

This cleared mind is the beginning state with which Waguri approaches Hijikata's image choreography. Once he is able to quiet his thoughts, he is able to feel what he and Yoshito both call "delicacy," or the sense of being absorbed in very fine details, such as a tiny cut on one's finger. This, for Waguri, is emptiness. Following Hijikata's direction, he turns his attention toward his own subtle experiences. He feels that he is an "empty vessel" and "images come and attack me," changing him and causing him to dance (2010).

The idea of empty vessel is essentially that the entire psychophysical body is some sort of malleable shell that can be filled with any sort of material. Waguri likens the experience of being an empty vessel to a shamanic ritual journey. He says, "Some spirit fall[s] down, and talk[s] something, and dance[s] something, and transform[s] something, and [when] this spirit's gone, my dance is finished" (2010). I understand empty vessel as

a desired state but not a fixed achievement that can be maintained without change. Similar to a yoga practice, in which some days one can float into the postures with ease and other days the flexibility is not there for whatever reason—too much sitting, the weather, fatigue—"achieving" emptiness (in quotes because wanting to achieve it is antithetic to achieving it, though one must start from desire) is a daily question. Temko notes that every day is different: "sometimes [the body is] very full, and sometimes [it is] emptiness…[in] Nō Theater, the teacher says the same thing, *utsuwa* [container, vessel]" (2010). Of course, as in yoga, one does not begin from the beginning each time. For example, once one knows the pathway for coming up into a headstand, one can retrace the steps. However, the journey is different every day, and there are always more complicated variations to explore. Furthermore, arriving at "emptiness" is not the result of being able to do the most complicated posture (or perform the most complex of Hijikata's butō-fu), but rather, emptiness comes from calming the mind down enough to experience the most simple postures profoundly. Koga notes, "This emptiness thing is one of those goals but it's not something that I have been able to see!…it's move toward it, move toward it…one of the intermediate goals being [that] I just want to be able to *focus*" (2010).

In the next chapter I will explore a variety of steps or stages on the pathway to empty vessel. Here I only want to note its paradoxical existence. Yoshito relates the experience of emptiness to the idea *shiki soku zekku* from the Buddhist Heart Sutra, which he explains as the idea "that existence and emptiness [are the] same. There is something, so there is nothing" (2010). Once one can recognize this, one can become more flexible and playful with one's identity, which is of course a valuable skill for

performers to possess. Through the practice of becoming something other than ourselves, we can leave behind the vestiges of our egocentric perspective and begin to cultivate a multivalent view. As with Takuan's advice, the desired state is to be everywhere and nowhere at once.

Self-Identity and Nothingness

The borders of self-identity are defined by what a given entity is not, and vice versa, as Nishida, referencing Aristotle, explains (1970, 16). Both identities mutually form each other, as do a wave and the shoreline. The individual does not simply determine itself, rather "individuals must exist relative to other individuals" (17). Joseph Flay characterizes self-identity as a "privileged center of indexicality" (1985). From our individual standpoint, our perceptions of reality are limited because 1) we make partial selections of the whole and 2) we create static images of things that are always in flux (Carter 1989, 6). Despite this, we generally experience a continuity of self-identity, though it would be contradictory to say that we stay the same. We are, in Nishida's terms, a "continuity of discontinuities" or a "unity of contradictories" (1970, 16).

Flay encapsulates Nishida's "continuity of discontinuities" in his 1985 article, "Experience, Nature, and Place," in which he writes:

> While all things change in a changing, flowing time, one also experiences that the self is permanent in the sense of preserving identity over time and space and that the self is ephemeral in the sense of changing identity over time and space—it is rooted in the double sense of place which constitutes experience. It is in reality not a puzzle, but simply fact, an important characteristic, an identifying ambiguity or contradiction which must be accepted as the truth of the self (1985).

In the interval of experience (the double sense of place), this is where and when the opportunity exists to become something else. Further, experience always exists in the here and now; both elements of space and time that are essential to consciousness (Carter 1989, 2). Each instant in the here and now is an opportunity to reassert or negate individual identity. Nishida writes that in the process of mutual determination of identity, "each point must touch the absolute, i.e. must be a resurrection from absolute death" (1970, 47).

Nishida's concept of mutual determination of identity is similar to Althusser's concept of "interpellation." Althusser (1970) introduces this in *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, referring to the situation of the subject as what he calls "always-already" defined by the other. The classic example he uses is that of being hailed by a police officer and turning in recognition of being identified. Judith Butler (1997) writes in *The Psychic Life of Power* that the interpolation is allegorical, and that it is not necessarily an event, but "a certain way of staging the call" and the individual has "a readiness to turn," an "anticipatory move toward identity," and also an internalization of guilt that predisposes him or her to accept the interpolation (106–7). Butler suggests that the subject is not a stable entity, but rather it is re-enforced through performative iterations. Butler says that the subject is dependent on coherence in repetition in order to continue to accept the subject position, and that this "iterability thus becomes the non-place of subversion, the possibility of re-embodying the subjectivating norm that can redirect its normativity" (99). Thus, changes in the iteration affect change in the interpolation. In this manner, subjects have the possibility to exercise agency and re-formulate themselves.

I mention Althusser and Butler here to introduce the idea of self-identity as a performance, often a re-enactment of a particular self-identity, whereby we reassert ourselves through actions. What is pertinent here to the discussion of nothingness is the interval *between* "interpellations," or identities. Butler calls it a "non-place," which is an apt term considering Nishida's assertion that "each point [of identity] is a resurrection from absolute death" (1970, 47). In this sense, we experience nothingness as the free-fall between identities. Nishida writes: "True reality absolutely negates the self. Yet it gives us life; it is the ground of the existence of the I and the Thou" (1970, 46). His definition of absolute nothingness is that which envelopes all, and out of which everything arises, a non-place that gives rise to innumerable standpoints. Nishida claims that to experience the perspective of absolute nothingness is to experience reality as it truly is.

Murobushi describes experiencing this double sense of self-identity while performing. At first, it sounds contradictory to me, as if one is focusing on what one feels, but not exactly on oneself. One senses with detachment. Murobushi explains that, for him, this has to do with "the others," or the sense that his body is not his own. "It's not ego, and my identification, or my existence is not only belongs to mama and papa [as in, he comes from more than just the biological process of being born as a flesh body], maybe it's more…" (2010). He describes it as "unknown space" and "unknown time;" this, he says, is darkness. We are "always dancing together with the others, or [the] unknown thing." For him, the practice of expanding his awareness of self is one of tuning into this unknown, even as he operates through the known—his physical body, daily experience of time and space, and sense of self-identity. Both this known and the unknown are present in the same instant.

Basho—The Structure Of Reality

Nishida uses the term *basho* to describe the context of reality, identifying three concentric levels of awareness in any given action/interaction. *Basho* is translated as space or *topos* (in Greek philosophy), and Nishida refers to it as a system, or field of being. He writes, "Mutually determining individuals require some spatial relationship in which they exist, i.e. something like an absolute space. This is a field in which they determine one another" (1970, 47). Influenced by Neo-Kantian thought, Nishida became interested in "the structure of judgmental form" or logic (*ronri*) as a way of unpacking various understandings of reality. Nishida concluded that all judgment arises from context, or *basho* (Kasulis quoted in Carter 1989, xiv). He proposed that there are three main contexts in which we experience reality:

- *Basho* of being = empirical world
- *Basho* of relative nothingness = ideal world
- *Basho* of absolute nothingness = "acting intuition" (*kōiteki chokkan*)

The first layer is our everyday awareness of the physical world, in which things exist as objects that occupy space; this is *basho* of being, which is grasped by the conscious subject. In everyday reality, the subject makes judgments about the empirical nature of experience; the example that Kasulis gives is "the table is brown." This is meant to be an objective statement, however Nishida holds this as false, or untrue reality. He dispels the notion of pure objectivity, i.e., "table is brown," because it neutralizes and ignores the observer. Nishida aims to reveal the existence of the observer and his or her judgments as a means of revealing that which we think we are as not the complete truth of being. Our perspective is inherently limited to our standpoint, which is rooted in our particular context within everyday reality.

The second layer of Nishida's schematic is one in which the subject is decentered, having an expanded consciousness from multiple perspectives. Nishida gives the example of simultaneously being aware of a tree and being aware of the self being aware of the tree, in which case we grasp the object, as well as our own thoughts, emotions, and desires present in our experience of the object. However, we understand the self as a transcendental ego, consisting of a substance that persists through time (much like Plato's discussion of the soul as substance). In this contextual understanding, Nishida says that we are still deluded that the self—and by extension all else—has an ideal form (Kasulis quoted in Carter 1989, xv). The delusion, according to Nishida, stems from intellectual abstraction, which is distanced from an immediate experience. An example of this is my first butō experience, noted in Chapter 1, in which I was asked to dance a tree. I lifted my arms as if they were branches because I had some formal idea of what it is to be a tree and how branches exist in space. I was told I was doing it all wrong, and was instructed to experience the tree from the inside, and go through the process of growing. Though most trees have branches, no two trees will ever look exactly alike. Some grow over rocks, around poles, and through fences, and in each case their branches form to their unique situation or context. In Nishida's perspective, it would be a mistake to think that having branches is what makes a tree a tree; rather, it is the *process* of developing branches (and bark, leaves, flowers, etc.) that makes it a tree. Nishida considers self-identity to be determined by *actions* rather than form and substance.

In the deepest layer of Nishida's schematic of being—*basho* of absolute nothingness—we recognize the self as the constant process of becoming. However, it is not altogether correct to say "we" or "recognize" because there is no "I" to take note of

such a revelation. In Nishida's terms, we are not an "agent," but an "action" (Kasulis quoted in Carter 1989, xv). Within the *basho* of absolute nothingness, Nishida refers to the self as "acting intuition" (*kōiteki chokkan*), which he describes as a circular flow of influence between exteriority and interiority. Energy and information travel through the "self" (subject/object body) as such:

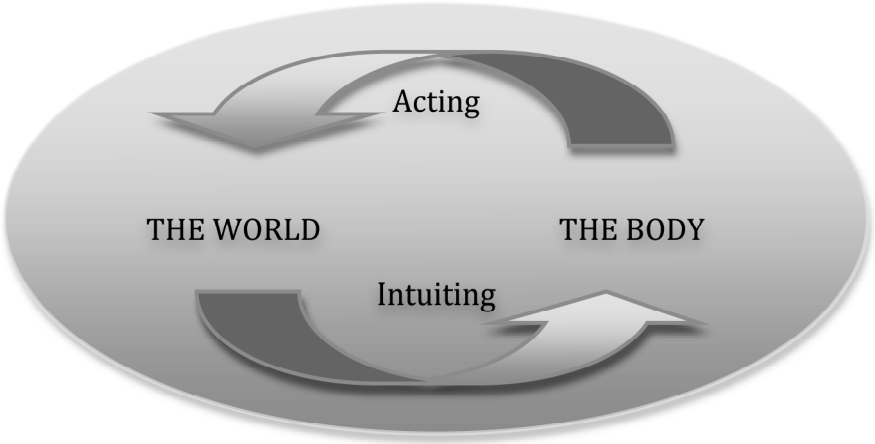

Figure 3.1: Ordinary Acting Intuition
Yuasa 1987, 52.

Through our bodies, we passively comprehend the world through "the intuitions of bodily sense" (Yuasa 1987, 52). We actively participate in the world through our bodily actions within the world. In his analysis of Nishida's acting intuition, Yuasa writes:

> The internal thrust of creative intuition moves the self while the self is filled with a great power beyond the everyday self. And the action in the self qua *basho* refers to the state in which the self, receiving such intuition, acts toward the world (in the ecstatic state) as "self without being a self," that is, with the ordinary dimension of self-consciousness extinguished. (1987, 69)

The state of being a self without a self is one in which the mind and body are in harmony, and receptivity is maximized. Nishida calls it an "animated state with maximum freedom

in which there is not the least gap between the will's demand and its fulfillment" (quoted in Yuasa 1987, 65).

In our everyday reality, we usually refer to something that is "far" from our understanding, awareness, or perception as being "in shadows," or "buried." We bridge the spatially perceived gap by fine-tuning our awareness. Nishida emphasizes that the transition from *basho* vis-à-vis being to *basho* vis-à-vis nothingness occurs in stages, through a process of transcending bright ego-consciousness. More specifically, Nishida suggests cultivation is the process of "becoming a thing and exhausting it" (quoted in Yuasa 1987, 70). I relate this conceptual leap to the process of one's eyes adjusting in literal darkness, such that one merges into an environment that was previously perceived as "other."

In the *basho* of absolute nothingness, we can fully realize Nishida's absolutely contradictory self-identity. Carter refers to this state as a "double aperture," whereby neither the individual nor the field (*basho*) is foreground or background, rather they are the same (1989, 32). The term "aperture" suggests an opening, similar to Nishida's use of "receptivity." When awareness is fully "opened," the fullness of reality flows. This is the positionless position mentioned earlier, which Zen Master Takuan Sōhō describes as "no-mind," whereby the mind does not settle in any one place. Consciousness is dispersed throughout the field, never "congealing" (to use Takuan's term) in thought (Takuan 1986, 47). He compares the congealed mind to ice, and dispersed mind—no-mind—to water that can flow freely. It is the notion of the self as a perpetually becoming identity.

Experience of Absolute Nothingness

In addition to the position that our perspective of everyday reality is limited by our own standpoint (and is thereby false), Nishida also protests any attempt to define an objective reality because it can only be grasped through oppositional thinking, hence is dualistic.

Further, objective reality is inherently expressed in language, which is itself an abstraction of experience and has no meaning outside of what one endows it with. In *Inquiry into Good,* Nishida begins with the claim that "to experience means to know events precisely as they are" and proceeds to formulate his idea of *junsui keiken* [pure experience] (quoted in Carter 1989, 10). The only way to directly apprehend true reality—without the distortion of language, judgment, or individual standpoint—is if one purely experiences and "passively mirrors reality" (Carter 1989, 10). Buddhist philosophy refers to the highest state of consciousness as "great-perfect-mirror-wisdom" symbolized by an empty circle (Suzuki 1959, 121), or "Zen-seeing" as described above. Language can only approximate this kind of consciousness; it is known solely through experience.

For Nishida, pure experience is prior to meaning; experience is the continual formation of meaning. Experience is "becoming." Experience "precedes the differentiation into subject experiencing and object experienced" (Maraldo 2005, sec. 2.1). Nishida terms this "the absolute predicate." In grammatical structure, a predicate describes the subject; in the sentence "Hijikata is dancing," the "is dancing" is the predicate. This is the state—rather than the subject—of Hijikata's body, identity, and self. Merleau Ponty called this the "lived body." It is a body that is continually in the process of reforming itself through experiencing the world (as in Nishida's acting intuition). Nishida honed in on a specific aspect of lived experience, that of "the moment of seeing a color or hearing a sound that is prior not only to the thought that the color or sound is the activity of an external object or that one is sensing it, but also to the judgment of what the color or sound might be" (quoted in Maraldo 2005, sec. 2.1, emphasis added). Phenomena are undifferentiated here, and fundamentally non-dualistic. We are able to experience this when we dissolve ego-consciousness, and instead experience from the perspective of the basho of absolute nothingness (ibid.). Perhaps this is what Hijikata called the "realm of shouts and cries" (quoted in Shibusawa 2000, 50), an expression of

pure raw emotion before it can really take form, or the utterances of a baby before it learns the intricacies of socially accepted responses.

"Few words carry more weight in the study of Japan than 'experience,'" notes Baird (2005). In his dissertation entitled "Butō and the Burden of History: Hijikata Tatsumi and the Nihonjin" he cites Nishida's theorization of *junsui keiken* in *Zen no kenkyu* [An Inquiry Into the Good] as a pivotal text which has permeated intellectual and artistic discourse since its appearance in 1911 (2005, 265). The premise of this book, Nishida writes, is that "it is not because there is an individual there is experience, but rather it is because there is experience, there is an individual" (1990, xxx). Baird argues that Hijikata was clearly influenced by this perspective, evident in the naming of his early group as the "650 EXPERIENCE Society" and then later the "Hijikata Tatsumi DANCE EXPERIENCE Gathering," as well as listing his performers in the programs as "chief or prior experiencers," "galloping experiencers," or just simply "experiencers" (273). Baird (and many others) also notes the importance of pure, engrossing experience evident in Hijikata's performances, facilitated by actions such as strangling chickens, branding flesh with a hot iron, brushing teeth until they bleed, and a host of other actions intended to provoke an immediate, visceral response among performers and audience (274–7). Says dance critic Gōda Nario, Hijikata "presented a scene that caused one to shudder with a deep sense of being" (quoted in Baird 2005, 274; Baird's translation).

According to Nishida, the meaning of "to be" is "to be *within*"; the ultimate "within" is the *basho* of absolute nothingness (Maraldo 2005, sec. 2). *Junsui keiken* is a "field of consciousness" which envelopes everything. It exists between, within, and surrounding both the self and the world. Pure experience is broken when thoughts and categories arise, and one determines meaning and judgment in relationship with an "other" (Carter 1989, 5). Murobushi explains, "if you start to feel [or think] about my own body and you feel *yourself*, your conscience is already separated with your object" (2010). In contrast, he says, "if you get only pain, you disappear, your conscious[ness]

disappear[s]…this is *junsui keiken*…" (ibid.). For him, "nothingness is *out of consciousness*," meaning that it is absolutely pure experience. He instructs, "please forget about your feeling or emotion, and [it] is just pain, and [if you] concentrate in[to] pain, in this case pain disappear[s too]" (ibid.).

Hijikata told his students to dispense with what they had learned about the body and instead to get "in touch with the origin of movement that never reaches zero" (quoted in Kurihara 1996, 124). With these directions he is asking dancers to forget about categories, meanings, judgments, and implications of performing whatever shapes and gestures they have learned, and instead to engage only in the experience of the unfolding present moment. Kurihara writes that "zero" in Hijikata's terms refers to "the condition of oneness found in the mother's womb…the original, wholesome, primary state" (1996, 100–1), a state in which we are continuously "becoming." He felt that by turning inward in search of this state, rather than through imposing any specific bodily forms, the dancer can access what Nakajima calls "the emptiness that is filled from within," which is the ultimate source of creative potential.

Questioning the Buddhist and Japanese Framework of this Study

As I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the connections I see between butō and Buddhist or Japanese philosophy might be more glaring to me as a cultural outsider. Indeed, my interview subjects were not all keen on every link I drew between these ideas. Murobushi surmises, "All body work, or martial arts has a training about [*junsui keiken*]" (2010), and Kasai suggests that pure experience is not only the basis of butō, but the basis of all art (2010). In addition, Kasai and Yoshito both enumerate several artists outside of what one would normally consider to be the butō idiom—Merce Cunningham, Anna Pavlova, Vasilov Nijinsky, Pina Bausch—asserting that they are also butō. While these ideas may be confusing, they do not altogether contradict my analysis.

My proposal was not that butō was a Buddhist or even distinctly Japanese practice, but rather that ideas from Buddhist and Japanese philosophy serve to unravel butō's methodology. Still, I want to explore some of these seemingly contradictory perspectives here in more detail.

Hijikata told Kasai that his work was first and foremost, "artistic crime," on the order of Duchamp's infamous urinal as art piece, *Fountain*.

> [In the same way that] Duchamp's piece has a big impact for the history of picture, for example, [previously people thought that] the picture should be on the canvas, now we can accept this style as [a] kind of installation. Hijikata's dance has [the] same kind of impact for the dance history (2010).

As mentioned above, Kasai cites several American and European artists who he feels transformed dance in a similar manner. Kasai asks, "to present the new sensitivity which human beings never get, is it a crime?" (2010). Audiences do seem to react as if it were a crime, walking out in disgust or being riveted until the standing ovation at the end. Yoshito claimed that the "core mentality" of butō is about revolution. Temko says her goal is to make something interesting, which she defines as something new that no one has made before. "This is Hijikata's spirit for me," she says (2010).

Looking more deeply at Duchamp's work, particularly *Fountain*, we see a perspectival shift, not unlike the one called for in Zen philosophy. Duchamp's ready-mades, as the everyday objects-cum-installation pieces such as *Fountain* were later called, made a "radical redefinition of what can constitute a work of art, how we can perceive it, and how we deal with it" (Elger and Grosenick 2004, 26). The New York Society of Independent Artists rejected Duchamp's urinal, just as Hijikata's *Kinjiki* was met with disapproval and rejection in the Japanese Dance Association. Both artists pushed their forms and their communities beyond acceptable boundaries, and in so doing, successfully redefined former perceptions about art in general. Both brought the ugly and the everyday into view, not only elevating their status, but refocusing our view of

aesthetic life. To me, this resonates with Zen's efforts to reveal life as it really is, inseparable from the wholeness of being. Such a revelation can be revolutionary, often arrived at after struggle and suffering. Indeed, there are numerous stories of Zen masters literally hitting monks over the head, throwing them off bridges, and otherwise meeting ignorance with a violent shake to make them see things in a radically new way. I do not mean to say that Hijikata and Duchamp were Zen masters, only that their unrelenting questioning of everything, in particular the nature of reality, is not inconsistent with Zen philosophy. Instead, it appears to me to be an artistic manifestation of it.

Kasai challenges my use of Buddhist *mu* to understand butō as well, because, as he says, the Buddhist notion of *mu* is the "banishment of every desire." He contends that Hijikata's *mu* is the opposite of Buddhist *mu*, calling Hijikata's *mu* a "push *into* desire, or much more emphasize of desire." He likens Hijikata's sensibility to Roman emperor Nero's alleged fiddling while Rome burned, and calls this antagonistic attitude "big desire" (2010). I find this to be an interesting tangle of the *mu* idea—is Hijikata's idea of *mu* really opposite from the Buddhist notion? Isn't nothingness just nothingness, however one arrives at it? If Kasai agrees that Ashikawa achieves *mu*, then perhaps Ashikawa's desire to be the chicken so intensely is the "pushing into desire" and in the end when she "throws herself away" she becomes *mu* in the Buddhist sense of the word. Is it possible that two different approaches can lead to the same "place of nothingness," as Nishida calls it, or "non-place" as Butler refers to it? Further, Nishida describes the pathway to *mu* [nothingness] through *muga*, which Odin says can be translated as "ecstasy," "no-self," "non-ego," and "selflessness" (131). I am struck by the connection of ecstasy (not to be confused with pleasure) with selflessness. I have heard many of my teachers instruct us to reach "ecstasy;" for example, Waguri in reference to being filled with the blinding light of angels and Murobushi in connection with being consumed by fire in our own cremation. Waguri clarified that this is not about the ego; he said "people want to show to others, it's me, please recognize me, please understand my work, my

desires…[but I think] it's [the] opposite. [The] performer must accept [the] poisons of audiences, not spread [the] performers' poison *to* audiences." Here I take "poison" to mean the desires of the audiences, who read their own meanings and narratives into the performer's dance. Waguri instructs us that when we to try to communicate a specific meaning or image, our ego is still too involved in the experience. We want to show the audience how well we can represent a given image, but this desire keeps us from actually experiencing the image and transmitting that experience. For him, desire plays a role in butō, however it is the desire to feel alive, and not a desire for personal recognition. So on the one hand, Kasai's assessment makes sense to me, in that butō is a pushing into desire, in a relentless pursuit of extreme experiences (such as burning up, tearing open, and fearlessly assuming other identities). At the same time, if this is done with the desire to be free from the ego, I am not altogether convinced that it is truly opposite of Buddhist practice.

Koga and Murobushi provided another example by which to understand the paradoxes of desire and nothingness. When I observed their collaboration at Florida State University in May 2010, they were working on a piece inspired by the irreverent and controversial Zen monk Ikkyū Sôjun. Even as an enlightened and practicing Zen master, Ikkyū was known to frequent brothels and bars, and was an outspoken critic of what he called "false piety" within the Zen establishment (Sanford 1980, 276–7; Keene 1966/67, 61–2). Ikkyū scholar Sanford suggests that his unorthodox behavior was his method of modeling a true "unity of opposites" and living the non-duality which Zen espoused, revealing the "artifaces and distortions" of his colleagues who also visited brothels but preached celibacy (277). Ikkyū demanded that there be no distinction between sacred and secular (Horton 2002, 44), insisting, "the passions exist dependent on mind: have no-mind and how can they bind you?" (quoted in Horton 2002, 44). Ikkyū is of course an unusual case; by all accounts he was an extremely disciplined monk with a precocious

intellect. His example, however, offers a highly practical view of the wholeness of existence, which is present in our everyday lives.

Ikkyū's story points back to the spiritual dimensions of my experiences in butō, and the profound nature of a non-dualistic perspective. Granted, Hijikata was not agitating for Zen enlightenment, but his work most certainly proposed a perspectival shift that would allow the ugly to be beautiful and the profane to be sacred. Essentially, Hijikata, Ikkyū, and Duchamp share this view of wholeness, and also share unorthodox, ironic methods of bringing others to see this. This is not to say that this is an exclusively Buddhist idea; Hiroko says that for her a sense of *mu* is not Japanese but "Almighty," and Kasai and Murobushi see *junsui keiken* expressed across many cultures through art. My analysis in no way negates these ideas; rather it speaks to one inroad of understanding non-duality and the essential body-mind perspective of Hijikata's butō.

Summary

In conclusion, I have discussed the philosophical framework of overcoming dualism through a process of moving from an ego-logical perspective to a multivalent one, and argued that this is the essential perspective of self-identity and experience in Hijikata's butō. Through the recognition that inner and outer space is one and the same, and that the original self is one that mirrors reality, butō dancers cultivate a positionless position. At the heart of this position is a sense of *mu*, or nothingness, as the dissolution of identity. Through the practice of becoming an empty vessel, butō dancers can then be extremely playful with perspective and material, embodying virtually anything. The malleability that is cultivated through embodying imagery calls into question fixed notions of identity. As Yoshito expresses his experience, he identifies with Buddhist idea of *shiki soku zekku*, or the notion that there is something so there is nothing. Matsuoka approaches "becoming nothing" obliquely—by becoming something else so completely

that his sense of "I" disappears, and nothingness "appears" or reveals itself as the groundlessness that is at the source of all existence. Through cultivation of the body-mind (through the body-mind), one deepens awareness of the layers of reality as it really is (beyond the body-mind). The next chapter addresses cultivation in greater depth, exploring how and why one must work through an ego-centric perspective to move beyond ego.

Finally, while non-duality may not be a uniquely Zen Buddhist or even uniquely Japanese philosophical idea, both areas of study have provided a critical lens through which to grasp the words of my teachers and my own butō practice. It is my hope that my observations may be useful to others who come to butō with little or no knowledge of Japanese philosophy, and that I may open doors for further investigation and greater dialog on butō practice.

CHAPTER 4
TRAINING THE BUTŌ BODY-MIND

Introduction

This chapter analyzes methods of Hijikata's butō training as described by my interviewees. I began this research by investigating the question: what do butō training exercises entail? I wanted to articulate the various stages of the butō performer's level of mastery, or how does learning in butō unfold? Hijikata's earliest students, such as Yoshito, Kasai, and Nakajima mentioned ballet barre work for strength and line, but this training seemed incidental to them. All three of these students placed more importance on Hijikata's thought provoking art talks and his movement invention or exploration in the process of choreographing. Later students confirmed this emphasis; Waguri describes having to stay in one position for three hours as Hijikata layered minutely detailed images to the choreography. What began to emerge from these accounts was the idea that butō progressively trains the performer's awareness and thereby intensifies stage presence. I then began to search for systems within these methods: What happens to the performer's thought process and sensation as they gain experience in the training methods over time? Of what is the performer aware, and by what means do they know this? How can we measure or at least verify changes in these thought processes and sensations when they are a factor of the performer's mode of consciousness, and thus, internal? Responses to these questions helped form the basis of the sequential steps in performer training that I

lay out here. These stages are a blend of theory and method, with an emphasis on practice so that they can be related and applied to other performance training methods. It is important to note the changing consciousness in each mode of training the butō body-mind, as this is the key to deepening modes of engagement with the material.

By consciousness I mean the awareness of one's own body and one's surroundings or environment, including objects and other sentient beings, which is a natural endowment of all humans. Consciousness is a snapshot of our present awareness. It encompasses everything in which we can actively engage in any given instant. Unconscious experiences can passively engage us and nonetheless have an effect on our subtle body, or energetic body, which can in turn cause a reaction in our gross physical body. For example, a stressful interaction might make us clench our muscles without realizing it, causing us to feel "tense." We are often unable to identify the specific causes of such "stress" because it registers below our level of everyday awareness. Training in movement can be a process of tuning into or becoming aware of those unconscious influences, and mining their nuances for creative expression. Of course tuning can be for healing as well, as in yoga or meditation.

To varying degrees, all performance and performance training involves accessing unconscious processes. Training is a process of learning conscious activities until the point of forgetting them. Nagatomo describes the performer's mode of consciousness as "controlled spontaneity," where control refers to the embodiment of form and spontaneity comes from mastering the form. When the performer knows the form well enough to forget it, a flow is generated between conscious and unconscious activity because the form is acquired as second nature (2011). Creative expression harnesses the unknown of

the unconscious and makes it visible, if only for an instant. Stanislavski described accomplished acting similarly as "reaching the subconscious[33] by conscious means" (quoted in Blair, 167). By engaging the "given circumstances" or the details of location, context, and character, the actor works through his or her own sense memory of similar circumstances, and combines these in a concoction unique to that particular performance. The actor works through what he or she is consciously aware of (from past engagement) in order to manifest an unknown: the unconscious experience of the character's reality. The goal of the actor's ability to physicalize imagery is the "artistic embodiment of the inner emotional experience" of the character (ibid.).

Baird connects Stanislavski's methods to Hijikata's in that both artists emphasized body-based practices for tapping into the power of the unconscious, and essentially tricking it into action (345-6). The distinction between the two is that Stanislavski worked through realistic means to enable the performer to generate believable images and create truth on stage, while Hijikata often used physical and psychological extremes to bring the dancers' bodies to a "crisis" point, hoping for the "total theater experience" to emerge. Nonetheless, in both cases the performer was required to "yield" (to use Baird's term) to a wide variety of influences. Through repeated training, the performer learns to become "supple" or plastic (to use Grotowski's term) in order to be ready to transform at a moment's notice into whatever he or she is called upon to embody, be it a specific character, the momentum of a falling mass, or

[33] The term "subconscious" was brought to popularity by psychologist Sigmund Freud, and refers to the unconscious content that can be brought to conscious awareness with relative ease. For the purposes of this study, however, I am dealing with philosophy and not delving too far into psychology, and will keep my terms to conscious and unconscious accordingly.

insect-riddled leaf. To the degree that one has any resistance or restrictions – a static notion of that character, fear of falling, resistance to grotesque images, etc. – our everyday awareness (or lack thereof) can inhibit the process of fully embodying the image in performance. Stanislavski and Hijikata both worked through physical means to evoke imagery that would alter the performer's awareness and thus enhance the fullness of their expression.

Movement-based training functions much like other forms of education in that learning teaches us to become more sensitive and gives us an ability to navigate complexity. Our conscious mind can engage with many details at once because we have been trained to "listen" on many levels – to our own sensate experience, to that of our dance partners or fellow students, often to music in its many varieties, and to our audience, which may be the teacher or the public. Movement educator Thecla Shiphorst notes that performance-training exercises often aim to "transform *experience* through directed attention" (2009, 26). She writes: "Somatics considers attention to be generative, which enables it to be augmented and increased through a process of somatic learning" (226). It is through the body that we can begin to notice changes – we become aware of new and different sensations – therefore somatic processes are essential in the development of consciousness.

The Ten Bull-Herding Pictures: A Illustration of Changing Awareness through Training

This transformation of consciousness is illustrated in the "Ten Bull-Herding Pictures" drawn by twelfth century Chinese master Kuòān's (廓庵) (see Figure 4.1), a allegorical depiction of the journey of self-cultivation. The bull symbolizes the

"original" or "true self," of which the youth in his everyday standpoint, as in the first frame, is not aware.

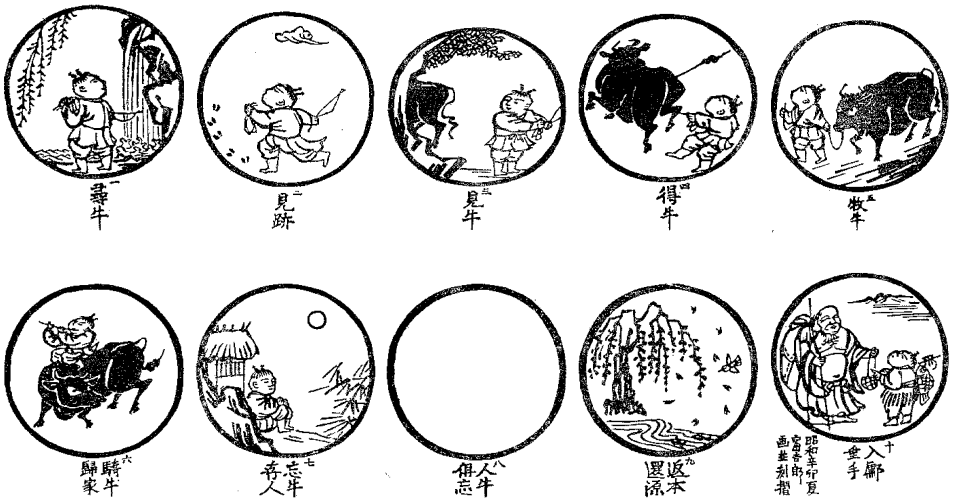

Figure 4.1: The Ten Bull Herding Pictures
Originally from twelfth century Chinese master Kuòān (廓庵)
Nyogen, Senzaki and Paul Reps. 1998. *Zen Flesh Zen Bones*. Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle and Company, Inc.

The youth's misconception of everyday reality (or "superficial perception of his own landscape" to use Hijikata's words) prevents him from seeing his true self; he "walks in mud," which is a metaphor for the world of suffering in Buddhism. Only after entering into some sort of practice or disciplined search does he then discover the bull's footprints in the mud (Frame Two) and eventually catch a glimpse of the bull (Frame Three). With a terrific effort, he is able to catch the bull, which pulls and drags the boy through difficult terrain (Frame Four); the bull is yoked but the rope is taut, indicating the tremendous struggle between youth and bull. Up until this point, the bull (or original self) is still objectified as distinct from the everyday self. The fifth frame describes "Taming the Bull:" "The whip and rope are necessary, else he might stray off down some dusty road. Being well trained, he becomes naturally gentle. Then unfettered, he obeys his master" (Senzaki and Reps 176). Because the bull's face appears in this frame, it

suggests that the youth has entered a non-dualistic state. In Zen, this is framed as "to show your original face before your parents were born," which is a state prior to a bifurcation between the mind and the body, or between subject and object, occurs. In this stage of self-cultivation, discipline renders the self supple, leading to "Riding the Bull Home" (Frame Six), in which the transformation from the previous frame suggests that two things have been unified, i.e., the empirical self and the authentic self are now one. The authentic self has appeared as a result of accepting the dualistic framework that posits the empirical self seeking an authentic self and the authentic self that is sought after. And once "home," (Frame Seven), distinctions between self and other disappear. Frame Eight is blank. It is absolute nothingness. It is simply entitled "Both Bull and Self Forgotten" and reads "whip, rope, person, and bull – all merge in No-Thing" (182). Senzaki and Reps comment, "Mediocrity is gone. Mind is clear of limitation. I seek no state of enlightenment. Neither do I remain where no enlightenment exists. Since I linger in neither condition, no eyes can see me" (182). Frame Nine depicts "Reaching the Source" as a river flowing by a flowering tree, and Frame Ten reveals the boy again, re-encountering the human world. Senzaki and Reps write "the beauty of my garden is invisible" (186), referring to the boy's true wisdom and knowledge of the world of no-form (which was previously unconscious), even as he inhabits the conscious world of form. Through this process of searching, he has affected a perspectival shift by which he is now able to hold awareness of the original self within everyday consciousness.[34]

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[34] Note that some iterations of the Ten Bull Herding pictures stop at Frame Eight. These do not account for the recognition of the original self in daily life. I chose to include this version with 10 frames because these final two frames refer to the synthesized state of de/reconstruction in my schematic of butō methodology.

The metaphor of the Ten Bulls is fascinating for a number of reasons, not least of which is its ability to capture the paradox of "self-cultivation" toward the *dissolution* of self, or "no self." I mention it here primarily because it depicts the process of learning *through* the body that which is beyond the locus of self, expanding one's awareness through sensate experience. As Nakajima writes "I borrowed the field of the body to go on a spiritual journey." The boy seeks the bull, only to realize that he and the bull are already one. When one begins to walk the path of non-duality, the boundaries of self (subject) and other (object/ external concept) begin to blur. Eventually, form is no longer an obstacle to understanding one's true nature. It is with this knowledge that the boy is able to return to the world of form (or the world as it was before his transformation/realization), now seeing the totality of life as it is.

Though the Ten Bulls are typically seen as the process of self-transformation in meditation – typically a still, silent practice[35] – I also see in them a depiction of the intense psychophysical investigation in Hijikata's dance. Inherent in his experimentation, both in his early action-based work and his later image-language choreography, is Hijikata's effort to derail the habituated sense of reality, and stun the body-mind awake. Nakajima comments that Hijikata was not teaching them to dance, exactly: "[The] techniques [are] connected with consciousness," meaning that learning itself shifts one's consciousness. For Nakajima, learning in dance (through the body) necessitates exercises in consciousness, such as performing consciously trained movements to memorize skill,

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[35] There is also a Tien Tai Buddhist practice of moving meditation, referred to as "stillness in motion," achieved by a repetitive practice such as walking or jogging for extended periods of time, however this is different than dancing in that in the latter one is constantly confronting new sensation, timing, and movement impulse, rather than a constant rhythmic action which is conducive for meditation.

questioning movement, questioning through movement, etc. She says: "so without thinking [and] just learning new techniques is nothing…Without changing their consciousness, [the dancers] can't be developed" (2010). Through his various methods, Hijikata was teaching his dancers to perceive in a different way.

A Possible Roadmap of Hijikata's Methods for Training Awareness

I have tried here to map a course through Hijikata's method, and open a discussion about the interrelationship between imagery and the dancers' changing awareness in butō dance. Though it is impossible to recreate his creative process, I use the common elements among the accounts of his dancers to provide a sense of the experience, and also draw from Hijikata's videos of performances and writings about his dance. Again, he did not articulate any training method as straightforward as what I am suggesting in this chapter. The structure I offer comes from my own perspective, formed with the benefit of hindsight looking over his whole career. It is informed by structures suggested by Nakajima in her lecture, and by Mikami Kayo and Kurihara Nanako in their dissertations, but distinct in that it is more basic and sequential, and filtered through my own understanding of movement derived from more than thirty years of training in dance and somatic education.

In an effort to create structure for the myriad exercises and experiences in butō dance, I have broken down the process of training into three main areas: the disoriented body-mind, the saturated body-mind, and the de/re-constructed body-mind. At the primary stage of the disoriented body-mind, one's sense of self is destabilized, which is a necessary occurrence to affect a perspectival shift. Through the process of "becoming" or working with images in butō, the body-mind becomes absorbed, saturated, and

subsumed into something larger than its daily form and function. As we re-orient to a different sense of reality beyond our daily habituated one, we deconstruct sedimented pathways of movement or thought and reconstruct our sense of self in a new landscape. To some extent, the second and third stages may be interchangeable; de-construction or thorough analysis of an image can also lead one to complete immersion with that image. However, several of my interviewees indicated that it is preferable not to analyze too much, but rather to become consumed with the experience of the image and allow a new structure to emerge as a result of immersion. Most importantly, though, I think there is always some instance of the disoriented body-mind that must precede the latter two. It is necessary to shift or de-center one's everyday perspective in order to break through habituated expression and create something new. The remainder of this chapter is dedicated to each of these three stages – Disoriented, Subsumed, and Re/Deconstructed Body-Mind – in detail. The summary poses uses for these methods within other performer training systems.

The Disoriented Body-Mind

We disorient the body-mind by quite literally turning it upside down, off-balance, and otherwise re-orienting our conscious experience of everyday reality. Our habituated body is only remotely aware of is actions, operating as second nature, and with good reason; we would not be able to function if we stopped to question or marvel at every step. However, with Hijikata's project of "rehabilitating the body," breathing new awareness into rote re/actions provides extensive new material for dances. If we take memorized behaviors to be "repeat performances" or cyclical intervals, then in between

these actions are a host of possible "interpellations" (to use Althusser's term): new images, characters, states of being, which we skip over in our daily enactments.

The first step toward exploring these in-between places, say Nakajima, is to "shed" the social body and "to return to the original body'" (1997, 8). One must interrupt habit and reinvigorate perception. The process of "shedding" is not so much a subtraction from our everyday perspective as it is a perspectival shift, and ultimately an expansion of our perceived reality. We must both widen the aperture of our senses and de-center our normal modes of perception, i.e. Ashikawa's directions to cover the body with eyes, or observe oneself from above.

Even if this new perspective is grasped in a flash, as in enlightenment or a sudden realization, one often searches through dedicated consistent effort in order to prepare the possibility of any such self-expansion. Often times, a perspectival shift comes about through stumbling onto something which startles us awake from habitual actions, as with the boy in the Bull-Herding pictures who catches a glimpse of the bull's tracks. Once we are aware of this unknown's existence, our everyday reality is disrupted and we are often captivated enough to continue the search.

Startled Awake: On the Edge of Crisis

Expanding the concept of human being through the metamorphosis of the flesh is one of the basic skills in butō. One works through the body to get beyond the body. Hijikata searched for how to liberate the body from the hindrance of itself, says Mikami (1997, 87). "[The] [b]utoh dancer must be kidnapped, killed, reincarnated, and after that endowed with the power to talk with wind and grasses," declared Hijikata; he emphasized that this metamorphosis only takes place through the action of self renunciation, or

throwing away the ego self (88), after which point the dancers would be "invited *all of a sudden* into a perilous place called butō" (89, emphasis added). Mikami characterized the experience as "the spiritual self in a desperate state" (2010). Driven to this edge of crisis, one confronts the very ground of one's existence and is literally forced to see the self from a new perspective. "Butoh techniques are acquired only when you are methodologically distracted," declared Hijikata, i.e. when one is involved in the realization of a task or of an overwhelming amount of image information (quoted in Mikami 2007, 138). In both Hijikata's early action experiments and later more choreographed works, the dancers are engaged with actual problems: in the early work, usually physical danger, and in the later work, embodying an onslaught of image information. In both cases, the dancers' experiences and expressions are truly unfolding in the moment. Their senses are engaged to maximum capacity, and there is very little room for habitual behavior. As their use of the body changes, so too does their concept of body altogether.

A consistent strategy of disorientation persisted throughout Hijikata's work, although later the movements were much more tightly choreographed with specific image language, still there was an emphasis on body as vehicle for transformation, sacrificing the self in/for performance, and cultivating a state of emptiness so that one could be fully present to the pure experience of the image. Hijikata overwhelmed his dancers with instructions so that they would be struggling with concentration and awareness simultaneously; he described this as "being drunk and awaken[ed] at the same time," which leads him to a state of "absolute desperation" (quoted in Mikami 1997, 138). He persistently disrupted the normal, everyday sense of self. Often, he would disorient his

dancers with a bombardment of images. Ishide Takuya told one of my translators, Endo Mariko, it felt like being "threatened with words." Hijikata explained that he wanted to "challenge the steps that were tamed by the stage-made readiness" (quoted in Mikami 1997, 54). He kept his dancers constantly guessing in order to facilitate the freshness of new experience on stage.

In his early experiments, Hijikata found a number of ways to bring his dancers to this raw point of experience, frequently through humiliation. Motofuji, Hijikata's wife and a ballet dancer, recounted to Mikami that at one particular performance he stripped her bare just before the audience came in and painted plaster on her body. He then reportedly inserted a marble in her anus, and pushed her onstage to perform the ballet choreography she had rehearsed without dropping the marble. Incredibly ashamed, she twisted and turned and kept her limps in close to her body to cover her genitals, while trying to manage the leg extensions and leaps without losing the marble (see Mikami 1997, 62). Hijikata was rumored to have a talent for unnerving his dancers and creating a risky situation that would bring about an "honest" expression that was unique to the moment. He would also meticulously plan out a performance and then throw a wrench it the plans just before the curtain, leaving the performers to deal with the consequences (64). Nakajima struggled through a similar but different type of confusion, in that they never rehearsed with music until the final rehearsal before the show. She said, "then we had to learn precisely counting and figure [very quickly]" (2010). She indicated that it was often a stressful situation and that Hijikata was not a patient director.

Hijikata dubbed his early performance group the "650 EXPERIENCE Society," making reference to the 650 seats in Nippon Seinenkan theater, indicating that there were

that many different experiences of his work. He rejected the term "happenings" because he felt that the "happenings" organized by European and American artists "lack precision" (quoted in Kurihara 2000, 50). Nonetheless, I would characterize his early work as "performance actions" similar to those in so-called happenings – i.e. being carried over the audience in a palanquin or on ropes (as in his work *Nikutai no hanran*), sharpening razor blades on leather straps attached to the edge of the stage (in *Susamedama*), shaving heads and riding bicycles onstage (in *Anma*), covering bodies in plaster that cracked as it dried, inserting tubes in the mouth and anus while carrying on a conversation, and throwing a chair through a wall (in *Barairu no dansu*). Tamano said that often the dancers were told how to enter and how to exit, and key points in between, with their own actions dependent on how the series of events unfolded (2010). They needed to remain alert to the entire experience as the performance arose around them, and through them. In *Anma*, for example, Hijikata hired older female shakohachi players to perform telling them nothing of the circumstances. As the chaotic scene unfolded, the women kept trying to inch away off the tatami mats but were repeatedly corralled back onto the stage by the Hijikata, who grabbed them by their kimono sleeves and refused to pay them unless they finished the performance (Kurihara 1996, 171-2). In this way, Hijikata's early piece required the dancers to be fully engaged in their activities. Baird and many others note the importance of pure, engrossing experience evident in Hijikata's performances, which can bring one to an ecstatic state. Certainly this is the impetus behind some of the more extreme actions, such as strangling chickens (or simulating this), branding flesh with a hot iron, brushing teeth until they bled, and a host of other actions intended to provoke an immediate, visceral response among performers and

audience. (274-277). Says dance critic Gōda Nario, Hijikata "presented a scene that caused one to shudder with a deep sense of being." (quoted in Baird 2005:274, Baird's translation).

Waguri characterizes Hijikata as "tricky" and a "genius" at confusing people. He gives an example of one exercise in which Hijikata had instructed him to be a ghost. Waguri says that Hijikata "said many words" (images) and told him to relax. Hijikata played a steady drumbeat and Waguri walked as delicately as he could. After a minute, Hijikata called his name, and he stopped and said "yes sir?" Hijikata yelled at him "don't stop, you are ghost!" The drumming and the walking resumed, and again, Hijikata called his name, and again Waguri stopped and was reprimanded. Again the exercise continued, again the interruption, only this time Waguri kept walking. Hijikata crept up behind him and hissed "you are ghost!" and it startled Waguri out of the exercise yet again. Waguri told this story to illustrate how deeply one must concentrate and believe in one's imagination in order to re-condition responses to external stimuli. In other words, one must de-center one's everyday sense of self and adopt the new perspective of the image.

Hijikata's off-kilter stance aimed to disorient basic physical perceptions as well. In an effort to wake his dancers up to the present moment, Hijikata questioned everything, including the solidity of the ground under his feet; he would say to his students "Although you are standing, this is not a floor, is it?" (quoted in Kurihara 1996, 100). Murobushi describes Hijikata's strategy as "always unbalance," he remembers his teacher saying as Murobushi himself teeters precariously on an elbow and the knife-edge of a foot (see Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2
Murobushi Ko in *Quicksilver* by Ito Miro

Seki Minako echoes this, instructing students, "stand like a pencil, not like a notebook," meaning that we should feel the sensation of always being about to fall over, as a pencil would if we were to stand it up on one end. As students in her workshop, we practice balancing brooms and mops in our hands to get the sensation of a constant falling motion and the need to continuously shift our center of gravity in order to balance the broom. Once in a while, we find a "sweet spot," where we can be still for a second or two without the broom clattering to the floor or sending us racing across the room. Off-center positions such as these magnify changes in balance and push students to become aware of its constant negotiation. According to Mikami, Hijikata's dance philosophy resembles Zen logic in its paradoxical utterances. He says, "I can't jump, therefore I'd jump. I can't spin, therefore I'd spin" (52). He asked them to fully commit to the impossible.

Koga describes disorienting situations while training with Hiroko in which the only way he could follow her instructions was to be think completely illogically. For example, when they were preparing to go onstage for a festival performance, she handed

him a pair of *tabi* socks that were too small for his feet. When he asked for another pair, she instructed him "you have to make your foot smaller!" He learned from these experiences that in order to practice butō, "you have to get your mind out of what's logical or possible." It's more important to question: "What's your imagination? You know, what do you imagine to do?" Then, he says, if you begin to question, you begin to realize that anything is possible (2010).

Defamiliarization: Seeing the Body-Mind Anew

In Chapter 2, I discussed *ostranie* (defamiliarization) in post-modern dance, and the use of radical recontextualization in order to "recover the sensation of life" amid the wartime devastation (Banes 2003, 5). The idea was to shock the senses awake from the numbing effects of modern life, as is evident in the above mentioned tactics. Hijikata applied a defamiliarization strategy to the human body itself, as part of his "human rehabilitation" project. He pursued "deep research" of the human body in order to find the place where "my arm is not my arm." Waguri describes Hijikata's dance as distinct from most movement forms, because "most dance asks 'what can my arm do,'" whereas Hijikata asked, "'what is my arm?'" (2011). From this place of deeply questioning all known assumptions about his own existence, Hijikata thought he could begin to make something new.

Hijikata's early experiments with defamiliarization techniques included exaggerating, binding, or covering specific body parts. For example, in chapter 2, I mentioned the enlarged vagina painted on Tamano's back, or images of giant phallic plants (*konnyaku*/Devil's Tongue). In several performances Hijikata wears a large golden phallus with excessively long pubic hair; in *Nikutai no hanran* [Revolt of the Flesh], he

quivers violently, slapping the phallus against his bare stomach and strutting like a marching chicken. He frequently adorned both male and female dancers with similar phalluses in his cabaret performances. Hijikata also exaggerated his sinewy body; Yoshito recounts how in *Kinjiki* and other performances, Hijikata combined black paint with olive oil and traced the lines of his muscles to create a shiny, reflective body, which would be enhanced by theater lighting. Part of the reason behind this, Yoshito says, was because people did not have enough to eat, so this was a way to make their skinny bodies appear more muscular. Also, it emphasized shadows and highlighted contours, magnifying "the body itself, creating" (2010). Hijikata was fascinated with protruding ribs, and wrote about it at length in *Being Jealous of a Dog's Vein*. He fasted for weeks before *Nikutai no hanran* to make his ribcage more pronounced. In other performances, Hijikata painted himself and his performers with white gesso, which began to dry and crack, and also made the dancer cold so that he started shivering involuntarily. Other binding elements included black head coverings, inspired by the bon odori dances from Akita.

In a photo series by Hosoe Eikō of Hijikata, Ōno, and Yoshito on a cobble stone street, Hijikata and Yoshito have their heads covered while Ōno awkwardly walks astride a bicycle. Yoshito describes the movement vocabulary "like a baby," he says, "because dancers are moving sometimes do-do-do, and stop, and then [perform a] dance move, then sometimes [they are] falling down" (2010). The dancers lost their balance from the visual deprivation, which Yoshito associated with the uncoordinated movement of a baby. Judging from videos of other performances such as *Hosotan* and *A Girl*, this

became part of Hijikata's standard movement lexicon, even when heads were not covered.

Hijikata was fascinated by disability, and often spent time observing the movements of the elderly and disabled. Kasai notes, "[i]n dance choreography or vocabulary of the dance, maybe Hijikata is the first person to [use] the beauty of the handicapped" (2010). For these people, Kasai says, restriction is just a condition of the body, causing it to move in unpredictable ways. "The hands chasing arms, it's quite new vocabulary," says Kasai, "[I] was impressed." Hijikata commented to Kasai that, while watching a person with polio, he noticed that if the man wanted to reach something to the left he first had to move in the opposite direction. Such unusual movement pathways inspired similar movements in his dance. Inspired by Hijikata, Nakajima has taught butō to and created performances with handicapped students for many years. She says, "handicap[ped] people is already dance itself" (2010). Her work just gives them permission to move in their own unique ways, she comments, rather than in a prescribed image of beauty.

Another way to create a sense of *ostranie* in butō is to re-route movement mid-action (other dance improvisation techniques use this method as well). Waguri suggests, "if [an] artist, or dancer want[s] [to] make [the] audience surprised, you have to let yourself [be] surprised first." He suggests to "cut the movement just before" in order to keep the audience guessing; referring to *isagi yoi* (an expected outcome, as with a wave moving in a consistent pattern), he says the butō dancer must interrupt expectations by re-routing the action before it is complete. A simple pause before completing an action can build the tension of the moment, and subvert both audience and performer expectations.

Katsura Kan and Takuya Muramatsu, two butō masters I have studied with, structured exercises in which we had to perform daily activities, such as brushing our teeth or getting dressed, and then suddenly forget what we were doing. That moment of pause, and of forgetting, is like a small panic; our habitual flow is interrupted and we do not know what to *do* next when we are not doing what we normally do. And that is precisely the moment in which, if we can let go of the anxiety of knowing and not *do* anything but rather just stay present for that moment, then something surprising to both performer and audience will arise.

In Hijikata's later work, these experiments were played out through a series of contradictory actions and images, and the absolute overload of directions so much so that the logical mind could not follow, and so did not know what to expect next. Consider the following series of images in one of Hijikata's butō-fu choreographies, which Waguri said was a short six to eight minute section of *Gibasan*, one of the performances in the *27 Nights for Four Seasons* series:

> Tower of heads
> War of hair
> Quarrel between teeth
> Droppings
> Insects
> Anus
> Skill of eyes
> The lamp made out of scab
> Sunflower(s)
> Butterfly
> Crystal louse
> The face of the audience – [is like a] Ghost
> An opening in the forest
> Build a prosperous country in a narrow sight on the floor, on the wall… everywhere
> Split in an earthworm
> Reflect on the surface of the water
> The things recollected in the position of still wind

The land of mice
Shut your hands, legs, ears…
Nest
Moving forest, Fossil forest
An opening in the forest
Child
(*Hijikata Scrapbooks* 16-17, Trans. Endo Mariko 2011)

The images do not follow any sort of logical progression, causing each to stand out in stark relief to the next. They draw the dancer's body and attention in a variety of directions and scale, requiring constant recalibration – from beyond the head in a tower of heads with wind-whipped hair, pulling the spine upward, to tiny animal droppings on the ground, and details like the minute segments of a worm's body. All senses are called into play, including smell, expanding stimulus beyond the visual. Then, in directions such as "build a prosperous country" or "moving forest, fossil forest," Hijikata has his dancers disperse their attention into an expansive landscape with a distinctly non-human form.

According to Waguri, this choreography was for female dancers, specifically Ashikawa and Kobayashi Saga (2011). He described the women lying on their sides, propped up on their elbows with their legs outstretched, in a position that became known to the dancers as "Flamen" after the Flemish painter and engraver Albert Flamen who inspired this choreography. Hijikata blended the life history of another engraver, Breedon[36] with the quality of etching itself as danceable material, and developed a choreography for a reclining figure around whom had grown an entire forest and

[36] This is most likely *John Symonds Breedon* (1754-1826), an amateur engraver. According to Waguri, Breedon was nearly blind and made his art in his sick bed where he was confined for nearly 25 years. Hijikata referred to his convalesence in his choreography, creating a man who was literally rooted to his bed with trees and too weak to even lift his head (Waguri, 2010).

miniature ecosystems. The body is crippled by its immobility, which begins its transformation. As if hallucinating from illness, the dancer imagines many soldiers fighting and dying on their head (war of hair), and the teeth also fighting one another (quarrel in teeth). A stem grows up through the body and the face becomes a sunflower, and the dancer raises a weary arm to trace the outline of three petals (sunflower). Countless butterflies flutter around the weakened body, brushing and tickling the skin (butterfly). The eyes squint to look at a tiny crystal inside of which a small insect is trapped (crystal louse). The directions continue in this fashion, layering multiple states to create a complex condition. Hijikata imaged a body that has become unfamiliar terrain, colonized by small environments that are magnifications and elaborations on reality, not unlike Claes Oldenburg's *Giant Hamburger* which Banes refers to as "Gulliver's Hamburger" (2003, 3). Hijikata similarly makes the body a Lilliputian experience, as a way of seeing it anew.

As space changes, so does time. Hijikata explored extremely charged stillness, where it seemed as if he might explode from the sheer amount of energy he generated with these images, yet he did not travel in space. Waguri describes one of the first solos he saw Hijikata perform, in which Hijikata stood still for 15 minutes. Waguri said, "so many time particle[s] attack him, he [is] against such time…[he is on the] offense [against daily time]" (2010). He describes Hijikata's body as tense and rigid, being pushed from all sides by the images of his dance, so much so that he cannot move. This is not unlike American and European post-modern dancers who experimented with stretching and compressing time and space. Perhaps a difference might be that rather than exploring stillness as a quality in and of itself, Hijikata endeavored to embody

images and often times his stillness was the result of the competing images and microscopic environments all working together, pulling him in different directions to the point of immobility. Waguri indicates that this is stillness that emerges out of time of the dance itself, rather than a conceptual exploration of stillness.

Daily Life as Teacher: Imagination Grounded in Experience

Pedestrian movement became a popular source of inspiration in post-modern dance throughout the world. Instead of glorifying the "everyman" as artists in America and Europe were doing, Hijikata specifically highlighted the outcasts of society, including criminals, the elderly, the disabled, and the poor. Waguri describes him as a keen observer of life, who was constantly analyzing phenomenon such as the way bones grow in a fetus (2011). The people, places, and things he encountered in life served as the substance for his dances, which he twisted, re-shaped, and re-contextualized into his own surreal narratives.

As a starting place for this work, Yoshito suggests observing the emotions of others and then experimenting with that oneself. "Realistic sensitivity," he says, "is also important, it's not like philosophy." Instead, he advises experiencing life more deeply than normal. For example, Waguri recounts a story about being on the train across from a row of elderly women, and he was so taken with their various expressions that he began to explore them with his own face. He got so lost in this play that he forgot he was in public, until he realized that they were all looking down embarrassedly, most likely assuming there was something wrong with him. He jokingly says that this sense of play can also be "very dangerous for my daily life too" (2010).

Having a "realistic sensitivity" is also tied into one's own unique experience of the world. For example, a colleague at the Ōno studio once criticized Yoshito for dressing too smartly in modern fashion, saying that as a butō dancer he should think about his clothes more and not dress with such modern taste. Hijikata defended Yoshito's choices, saying, "no, this is his style, he is a city boy, so you are not correct." This is the notion of "hometown landscape" that I discussed in Chapter Two, the notion that one's environment informs one's perceptions of the world. Hijikata said that we must begin with our own context; "When one wants to forge the great expansion, he must make use of his own geological climate as [a] springboard" (in Mikami 1997, 32). The idea is to magnify one's own unique experience, while remaining tethered to personal experience and one's own sense of truth.

Hijikata encouraged his students to seek instruction in their everyday interactions. Yoshito explains, "it means 24 hour lessons." They began to look at their surroundings differently, and their relationship to basic habits changed. Yoshito describes one simple exercise of noticing one's balance and "finding a good balance, or using the balance" as opposed to just normal walking to the train station. He says this might result in walking faster or slower than normal, and noticing the subtle changes in the body as one does this. It is interesting to note that this is a particularly extreme exercise for him given the location of the Ōno Studio high atop a steep hill in Yokohama, which Ōno Kazuo reportedly ran up and down on many trips to the station, just to feel the distinct pulls of gravity on his body. Yoshito describes walking slowly to the station (up or down the hill) as also an interesting exercise, with different sensations and psychophysical results. He says, "this practical experience we bring to the studio, then we can practice as a dancer

as well. So this kind of mentality [approaching everyday actions as lessons] is very important." Daily life provides the raw materials, but then the dancer's research is to break it, stretch it, and otherwise make it into new material. One way to do this is to change the perspective, for example by slow down or speed up time, in order to sense more daily actions fully. Butō is of course not the only performance training to use these methods of observing daily life. However, it is worth noting that this type of play is integral to butō training. By disorienting the typical interactions, one can gain a larger palate of experience of life and also develop interesting material for performance.

To summarize, disorientation is a strategy for shifting one's perception. One can attempt this on one's own by changing the temporal and spatial experience of everyday actions and interactions. Many post-modern dancers explored boundaries of extreme motion and extreme stillness, or experimented with gravity in an effort to shift their typical perspective. Hijikata often applied a more forceful disorientation through a barrage of confusing directions and movement instructions, which exasperated the dancers to the point of giving up conscious control. This was the state in which he needed the dancers to be in order to get the performance expression he sought.

Saturated Body-Mind

Hijikata required complete commitment to his work. Whether it was full engagement in some extreme task as in his early work or the bombardment of rapid-fire images in his later choreography, he commanded an unwavering presence and full immersion in the experience. He demanded of one student, "you're not [just] learning how to make facial expressions are you?" (quoted in Mikami 1997, 121). Simply

"making faces" indicates a separation of thought and action, and an intellectualized expression of something, rather than full embodiment. Instead, Hijikata's aim was toward the body-mind that is totally absorbed and subsumed into a space and time greater than the everyday form and function. The body-mind is engaged to the point of saturation. Moreover, the process by which one arrives at this consumed state should eventually become instantaneous. He told his students, "We do not get burned gradually but 'become burned' *in an instant*" (Mikami 1997, 121), in other words, with "no-thought." Conscious thought is too slow for such a transformation to occur. Instead, the dancer must work through the subtle body, the deepest, invisible layer of one's own body-mind, bypassing the conscious level.

In this section on the Saturated Body-Mind, I explore the psychophysical structure of the balanced body-mind, and the relevance of that state to Hijikata's butō method, particularly with regard to his later *butō-fu*, or image choreography. The first issue to address is an anatomy of mind-body absorption, using Yuasa's four circuits of the body. From the dancer's perspective, how does one become fully absorbed? What aspects of the body-mind must be engaged, particularly if one is to "become burned in an instant" as Hijikata instructed? Following that, I look at how butō dancers describe working with imagery, incorporating Nagatomo's discussion of "attunement." Through what psychophysical mechanisms do we "become" an image? The third section analyzes Nagatomo's concept of attunement in butō practice in relationship to Buddhist meditation practice, and the degree of psychophysical integration inherent in each.

Anatomy of Mind-Body Absorption

Yuasa proposes that with training and commitment to practice, one can achieve oneness of body and mind, or *shinjin ichinyo.* He borrows Nishida's term of "becoming a thing and exhausting it" to describe the rigorous process of cultivation (1987,70). Through dedication to daily effort, one can "become a thing," a process through which "the mind extinguishes the self-consciousness as a subject opposing the body and its objectivity; the mind becomes completely one with the body as thing" (1987,70). To illustrate this concept, Yuasa uses the example of an unskilled athlete whose movement lacks coordination because he or she is still operating on the level of the self, or ego-consciousness. One could easily extend this analogy to unskilled dancers, who practice their techniques for years until they become unconscious "muscle memories." Yuasa writes, "as the self overcomes such a bright ego-consciousness and illumines the layer of dark consciousness buried in the body, the body loses its heaviness and becomes unopposed to the mind's functioning" (1987, 72). As in the Bull Herding sequence, in which discipline renders the bull supple, in the athlete's or dancer's case the body becomes supple through focused and consistent practice. In an athlete or dancer, the mind and body merge; actions become "second nature." Nishida calls this an "animated state with maximum freedom in which there is not the least gap between the will's demand and its fulfillment" (quoted in Yuasa 1987, 65). However, the ego-consciousness is still present. There are degrees of cultivation with distinct aims. With athletics and with some styles of dance, a sense of an "I" remains within the action, even though there may be moments within extreme action in which the athlete transcends a sense of self. In meditation and butō dance, cultivation aims beyond this, to the point where ego-

consciousness is eroded and/or obliterated. This distinction is useful in analyzing the effects and aims of butō practice vis-à-vis other forms of cultivation.

Metaphorically speaking, Yuasa refers to consciousness on a scale from bright (everyday) to dark (sub- and un-conscious), spatially organized from an egocentric point of view. As one becomes more aware of the full dimensions of consciousness, spatial (and temporal) orientation dissolves and awareness expands infinitely. Cultivation of this state can take a lifetime, and for most of us, will never be reached. It requires a consistent practice and clear progression as indicated in the Bull Herding series. Though it may seem paradoxical at first, it is *through* our body-mind structure that we eventually learn to transcend our bodies and our minds.

Yuasa describes four interrelated circuits in the body through which one "experiences" various dimensions of being (1993, 7-65 and 99-148). These circuits, considered as such because they are a network of body systems, are organized concentrically with respect to bright and dark consciousness, with the outermost being the "brightest," or most easily accessible in daily life. The first circuit is the external sensory-motor circuit, comprised of the sensory organs (skin, eyes, nose, ears, mouth) through which the body connects to the external world. The second circuit consists of internal sensations of two kinds: kinesthesis, or the neuro-muscular circuit which enables us to sense and act, and somaesthesis, which governs the visceral organs (heart, lungs, stomach) and regulates the body's natural processes (circulation, respiration, digestion). Together, kinesthesis and somesthesis form what Yuasa calls "coenesthesis," or "awareness of one's own body," (1993, 47) which is both directly and indirectly apprehended. Every human being has some awareness of one's own body. Most

dancers, athletes, or other physically trained performers have a highly developed kinesthetic circuit, cultivated through daily attention to physical form. One activates somesthesis through the use of breathing techniques to regulate physical and mental state.

The third circuit, the emotion-instinct circuit, governs the autonomic nerves (which affect the respiratory, circulatory and digestive organs) and operates below our level of awareness, simply because these nerves do not reach the cerebral cortex. Instead, the visceral organs experience an emotional response (such as pleasure or pain), and affect the body holistically. This is perhaps why the organs are known as the "seat of instinct" in common parlance. Most people respond instinctively to an instance of stress, either moving toward or away, depending on whether it is pleasurable or painful.

Our breath is integrally linked to the functioning of this third circuit, and is the bridge between conscious action and unconscious processes, such as the emotional-instinct circuit. For example, when we are angry or nervous, our breath is short and shallow and our muscles are tense or knotted. Excitement engenders a similarly heightened energetic quality, though more effusive and less condensed. Energy follows emotion, and emotion can be altered by consciously changing our breathing patterns to shift our energetic state. The act of "taking a deep breath" can calm us down from an agitated state. The process of cultivation works with breath to quiet the body-mind; this is not the same as sleeping or even what one commonly means by "relaxing." Instead, quieting is actually enlivening, or "glistening" (to use Zarrilli's term). By quieting our everyday stimulations and distractions we actually become more sensitive and aware of our surroundings. One can sense this through Yuasa's fourth circuit, the "unconscious quasi-body."

Also referred to as the subtle body, this fourth circuit governs the circulation of *ki,* or energy, which flows throughout the body in the meridian system as identified by acupuncture. *Ki* can be sensed and channeled, as evidenced in marital art forms such as aikido and karate. In butō and other experimental movement techniques such as that of American somatic educators Irene Dowd or Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, one way that *ki* is directed and manipulated is through the use of images. Images promote a holistic experience for body-mind, and interact with the dancer on the level of the subtle body. *Ki* circulates through one's own body and beyond; when we talk of a person "radiating" a certain quality we are talking about the tonal ambiance of their *ki*, which Nagatomo says is the "qualitative presence of a particular personal body" (1992, 205). *Ki* travels much like sound waves, and gives off a vibration or a "rhythmic fluidity" (1992, 206) that can be sensed by "tuning" one's subtle body.[37] We can both project our own *ki* and sense *ki* from our ambiance, hence Nagatomo refers to relating to one's ambiance as a "bilateral coming-together" (1992, 198), or attunement. The process of engaging another substance – be it another creature or verbal imagery – involves the interaction of "touching and being touched" (to use Ichikawa's explanation of Cartesian cogito, see Nagatomo 1992, 21) through which these two elements establish degrees of "inter-corporeality" (1992, 197). Through the personal body-mind, we somatically sense an "affective resonance" of engagement, which in turn shapes our "epistemological as well as actional apparatus" (1992, 213). In this circular feedback loop, which somatic practitioner Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen has termed "sensing-feeling-acting" (Bainbridge Cohen 2008, 5), we

[37] Matsuoka says "each dancer makes his own image for it [the movement directions] and you kind of tune to it" (2010).

receive energy and information from our ambiance, and emit energy and information into our environment. Through the subtle body, the dancer both senses and interacts with the field of *ki* that surrounds the performer, as well as the field that is created through the performer's engagement with the image. Performer and image come together, or become attuned.

Yuasa's proposes that image-thinking is a holistic functionality of our consciousness that considers human existence *within* nature, instead of in opposition to nature. "It points to a mode of human life organized in harmony with *living* nature, while interresonating with its activity," writes Nagatomo in the translator's introduction to Yuasa's *Overcoming Modernity: Synchronicity and Image-Thinking* (in Yuasa 2008, 9). This mode of being sees the individual as a part of the landscape, as in Nishida's *basho*. The full significance of an image-thinking perspective is manifold and beyond the current discussion; here I solely want to highlight the idea of interresonance, as this best describes the dancer's interaction with images. Hijikata's words are poetic in nature, as Nakajima notes, and meant to collide with the dancer on the level of metaphor. At the same time, there are very real kinesthetic mechanisms at play in the interaction between dancer and image. These elements – existing within nature, interresonating with nature's activity, attuning to one's environment through the flow of ki energy – are all components of working with images in butō dance. For the sake of simplicity I will refer to these elements as aspects of attunement, which I am using as the overarching concept in image work.

Attunement as a Method of Working with Images in Butō

Ōno Kazuo asked, "How does a painter begin to touch in order to represent?" (June 19 rehearsal notes). Ōno's question could be extended to include Nagatomo's idea of relating to one's ambiance – how does the painter/dancer touch *and be touched* in order to represent? As mentioned in Chapter Two, butō's notion of representing in performance is not about showing gestures and symbols that indicate meaning to the audience, rather it emphasizes re-*presenting*, or the performer "becoming" the image and causing the image to *be present* through one's own body. The process of attuning can be described as touching and being touched by the energetic quality, or *ki*, of the image or substance one is working with as dance materials.

Attunement is a particularly apt characterization of the process of "becoming" in butō, especially in Hijikata's later works in which he choreographed primarily through the use of imagery. Dancers practiced transforming their bodies through engagement with verbal and visual images. Hijikata would show the dancers paintings, read them a list of poetic images, or some combination of the two. (See Figure 4.4)

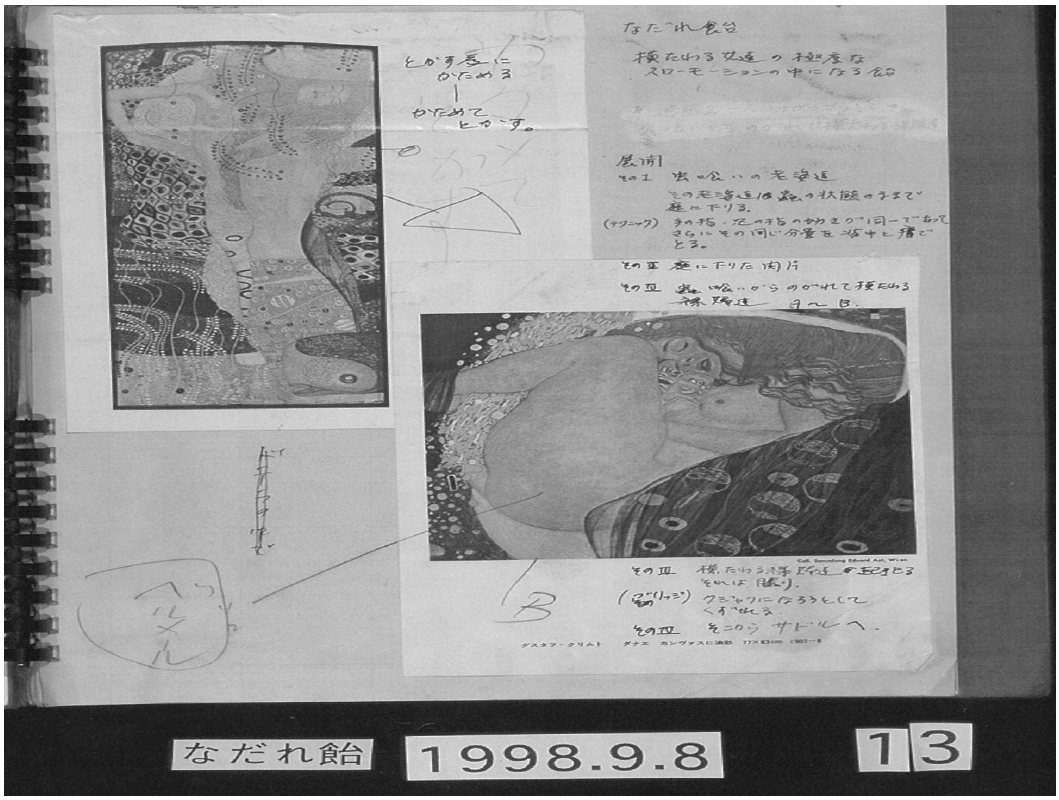

Figure 4.3

Scrapbook Volume 1: *Nadare ame*
Hijikata Tatsumi Memorial Archives,
Shiki no tame no nijûnanaban, 1998, 13.

Text:
Nadare-Ame (Candy avalanche, literally pouring candy rain.)
Ame - lying nudes under the extreme slow motion
Scene 1: The worm-eaten grandmother. These grandmothers come down to the porch.
Technique; maggot -move fingers and toes at the same time. Also, do the same action on your back and on your skin.
Scene 2: The pieces of flesh descend on the porch.
Scene 3: The lying nudes escape from the maggots.
They will sit up. They aim to be the peacocks but collapse.

Her expression, the shape of her fingers. Thighs, buttocks, and joints. Harden it in order to melt it.
Image: Gustav Klimt, *Danae* 1907

(*translated by Mariko Endo Reynolds, 2011)*

These words were shorthand for choreography that Ashikawa demonstrated and the dancers had to learn very quickly. The words were meant to inspire their own experience in the movement rather than simply copying her form. Waguri describes his

strategy for working with images as allowing himself to be caught, or captivated. He characterizes it as a somatic relationship, not an intellectual one. He explains, "images attack me, to my body…[I don't] think about [it with the] brain, head, so images catch my whole body, and he change my body, so how to escape from my images?" (2010). The capturing is complete; his body is subsumed into the image. He describes his experience in butō-fu choreography as one of falling in, and accepting each new image-state as it comes. He says, "I escape [from one image] and [the] next image catch[es] me, and so [on], [and the] next images [come and capture me]" (2010). He senses himself as an empty vessel, and the images flow through him continuously, each one filling him up to the point of saturation. In his book *Handsome Blue Sky*, Hijikata describes the butō body as an empty vessel that is abruptly invaded by something which "fills it to the brim" and overflows (quoted in Mikami 1997, 140). He continues, "the movement of becoming empty is the way of the vessel…[Through this process] his body is metamorphosed to a new one which is the present 'I'" (ibid.). Mikami explains that as an empty vessel, the dancer simply welcomes everything that is given to him in these choreographies, accepting any condition, "always being ready to take anything, anytime" (140). Most importantly, the psychophysical process is instantaneous; Waguri says he needs to "watch, [and] already [he is] changed, think [and] already [he is] changed…[to] think and [then] move is too slow…[instead] at the same time as you watch it, you just become this thing" (2010).

Waguri says the image or thing "captures" you. Mikami uses the term "reflects;" she describes attunement to images as "seeing" the image with a glass eye in the forehead, or what she calls a "Vanishing Eye," with which the "speed of reflecting is

swifter than seeing [with the anatomical eye]" (1997, 101). Both dancers describe the "in an instant" quality of transformation that Hijikata sought. Their connection with the images is immediate, without thought, and sensed on a somatic level through the subtle, energetic body. Mikami explains Hijikata's notion of reflecting the image with a metaphor that is very close to "Great Mirror Wisdom" in Zen. As described in Chapter Three, this is the notion that the highest state of consciousness and truth of one's original nature is a pure reflection of all that it comes into contact with. This is the meaning of Frame Eight in the Bull-Herding pictures and the empty circle symbol in Zen iconography. Mikami says that in butō, the human body is like a dewdrop which takes on the color of the leaf or petal upon which it sits, "always reflecting its surroundings on its surface" (1997, 142). This dewdrop is the vessel that is endlessly transformed, be it scattered by wind, pulled by gravity, filled with insects, etc. She posits: the dancers' neural network "captures hundreds of thousands of situations in an instant" and simply reflects them (1997, 143). Similar to the empty vessel that fills with pure images, the reflecting Eye/I erases the self and shines forth the energy of its ambiance.

Murobushi worked with Hijikata prior to the period of butō-fu image choreography, but he nonetheless has a similar assessment of what he calls "this butō experience," of becoming. He refers to his dance as "an exchange." He says, "I relate with this air, or this metallic plate, or animals, or human body," and emphasizes the point that we can only have this communication because we have a body: "and this communication or sensation we have inside the body" (2010). Though we both touch and are touched, we can only sense the connection through the personal body. This is similar to what Nagatomo, using Dogen's term, describes as a "felt inner-resonance" of

our experience. Nagatomo describes the sensation as a residue, which we appropriate or assume the qualities of, and thus experience an expansion of the boundaries of the personal body image (1995, 240-1). This might be applied to butō dance through the following example: if a dancer is to imagine him or herself as 100 times normal size, s/he must not "act huge" but rather first sense that increase in size in her/his perception of the personal body space. The landscape has to change in scale and that will in turn change the resonance between the personal body and the atmosphere. S/he also must slow the perception of time, the fourth dimension of our spatial awareness.

The material substances of the images have their own distinct atmosphere, time-space, and bodily consciousness. We "cannot divide time and space," says Waguri, "So my nerves reach out to 100 meter, this nerve come back, way back also 100 meter, take a time, so this time make space." Thus, in order to increase one's size and presence, one must slow one's movement down enough in order to feel the ripple effects of the movement; s/he must imagine that simply shifting weight could cause an earthquake. In this way, the image drives the dance. Hijikata described the performer's experience in butō as "being danced" rather than dancing, the distinction being that in the latter, one is in conscious control of one's actions, while when one is "danced," one moves because one is compelled to do so by the resonance with the image and its particular time-space.

On a basic level when working with an image, Yoshito suggests noticing and developing our sensitivity on what he calls the edges or points – the top of the head, the ends of the fingers, the soles of the feet. Referring to a flower walking exercise that is often taught at the Ōno studio, he instructs as we walk holding the flower in our outstretched hand, that we should feel the dimensions of the flower with these sensitive

body points. The head, fingers, and feet should sense the flower reaching to the sky and the roots reaching deeply down into the earth, "making one line from above to the down." The end result, he says, is "then maybe seven years after the person doesn't need [the] flower anymore because he or she can get these lines in the body" on their own. The image as *kata* will have become internalized, and thus fluidly embodied without conscious thought or effort.

Though one does become fully engrossed in the experience, "being danced" by images is not the same as being in a trance. The dancer must maintain a sliver of consciousness in order to be able to sense new information on a very minute level, and also sculpt the unfolding experience and movements that arise into something performance-worthy. They must observe without attachment, and without interfering too much. Waguri described the desired position as "coolness," and Mikami called it "not drunk," meaning not in an altered state (2010). Hijikata cautioned his students against being seduced by one's own movement. He told Waguri, "[if] butō looks like [you have taken] a drug, and ahh, [I have a] good feeling, or possession… Such kind of dancer cannot get it." Instead, a "drunk" dancer is lost in the personal body's sensation, and is no longer tuning to, or resonating with, one's ambiance (in the form of an image or whatever the substance of study). The dancer needs to maintain a minimal level of awareness in order to track "small things…[they are] very delicate and sensitive happenings" (Waguri 2010).

Waguri suggest that to remain "cool" even while consumed, "my eyes watch myself" (2010). He likens this paradoxical experience to sleep, saying "my every consciousness and sense reach out and, like an insect," he can sense tiny vibrations, and

his "nerves are changed to like [the] hair of cat, and 360 degrees my sense[s] catch everything. But [I must be] very cool, not too excited. If I want to do more, such sense is gone" (2010). If the conscious mind inserts a thought – such as "cat's lick" and by extension, "I should lick" – the engagement with the cat image dissipates. In order to maintain the experience of becoming, one has to watch from afar without judgment. Mikami advises: "Keep distance, divide by good string" (2010), meaning that one should maintain a detachment with the experience. She describes seeing herself as a puppet, and "inside my body [there is] only image."

Murobushi teaches an exercise that specifically addresses this delicate focus and, interestingly, it is also a puppet image:

> you have two different identity, you are Pinocchio, your body is something like marionette or machine, it's something, but you should drive it. And if your body becomes Pinocchio and you should play by yourself, you should control Pinocchio's body, in this case you should separate with body and with your control…because if you completely become one it's not possible. And it's also not possible to stay there because you are changing and moving (2010).

Separating "your body" with "your control" is not the same as separating body and mind. "Your control" also directs the mind, allowing it to be supple and just receive the puppet image. You convince yourself that you are made of light balsa wood, and that strings raise and lower your limbs, and you dance as a light, wooden puppet, not as a human being made of flesh and bones. If one tries to fix an idea of a wooden puppet and think through how it would move, one loses track of the image. Murobushi notes that one is always changing and moving, so the image has to be similarly alive, and changing and moving in every moment. "Your control" is tracking these changes and making decisions about how to manipulate the puppet body-mind.

As Ashikawa told her students, “view your own absorption from a distance” (quoted in Kurihara 1996, 101). To illustrate this delicately divided focus, Mikami explains about working with Ashikawa in a walking exercise and splitting her focus so that she experiences many shades of her body. Her focus or “eyes” see from up on the ceiling, far beyond her anatomical eyes. Mikami notes that Ashikawa also developed a technique of adding many eyes to the image – both on the butō dancer’s body and within the atmosphere – so that they would “endlessly multiply the dissolution and make his consciousness thinner endlessly” (132), similar to Takuan’s notion of being everywhere and nowhere at the same time. Mikami deems this “eternal time space” (132). She adds that this is Ashikawa’s own interpretation of Hijikata’s direction to expand consciousness beyond the distinctions of subject and object, to “look” from an infinite number of points in space, rather than simply from one’s own self-conscious egocentric daily point of view.

Butō dancers literally have to split their center of attention. A simple technique is in the facial expressions; says Matsuoka, “we tend to use the half focus, or eyes without focus very much, it’s like seeing the entire atmosphere at the same time.” It startled Matsuoka the first time he saw Amagatsu do this, as Amagatsu is quite effective with the technique and appeared as if he had become a ghost. Matsuoka comments, “maybe it’s very paradoxical, but it’s concentrating far beyond here.” Most dancers are familiar with softening their focus in order to see the other dancers in their peripheral vision. If one unfocuses one’s eyes even further, one can feel even greater sensitivity in the back of the head and “see” the whole space at once.

Hijikata disrupted "normal" vision altogether by instructing his dancers to sense with remote parts of their body, such as the back of the ears, armpits, and anuses (Mikami 1997, 125). Displacing "vision" he taught his dancers to "see" in a new way. Emphasizing or concentrating on the sensitivity of such typically invisible parts of our awareness is a method for developing a delicate sensitivity to our surrounding atmosphere. Ōno remarked:

> I think one's presence (or lively movements) depends on vitality, the understanding of living life, and the relationship to the world…By recapturing space around me, my back and the sides of my body started to be alive, to move more lively" (Ōno June 19).

Ōno and Hijikata both studied life and the body intimately, cultivating a refined sensitivity to their real and imagined landscapes alike.

Evoking atmosphere is a critical skill in butō. Japanese dance critic Goda Nario asserted that in Western dance, only mature dancers really know how to move the air around them in service of their artistic expression, whereas for butō dancers, this ability to invoke mist, smoke, scent, and atmosphere in general is the fundamental training (Mikami 1997, 124-5). Hijikata was particularly gifted with an ability to connect with vivid imagery and affect his present environment from this deeply engaged state. Dance critic Miura Masahai discusses this phenomenon in his article "Hijikata Tatsumi no kyōfu" [Fear of Hijikata Tatsumi][38], in which he writes in reference to Hijikata's 1967 performance of *Neko: Hanayome no dansu* [Cat: Bride's Dance]:

> I could see the air on the stage increasing its density, turning to water, and then oil. Once in a while, his subtle hand and foot movements changed the air into sand. The air turned into sand from the edge of his hands and

[38] All translations are Kurihara Nanako's unless otherwise noted.

feet. The sand spread like dominoes, covering the stage.[39]

Miura claims that witnessing Hijikata's dance made his palms sweat and his body tremble. Kurihara Nanako recounts Miura's story in her dissertation, by way of contexting her own similarly transformative experience of Hakutobo dancer Ashikawa Uzumi's 1990 performance in St. Mark's Church in New York.[40] She writes:

> I felt a tremendous presence, beyond any daily life consciousness, emanating from her. When her arms extended and moved forward slightly, I suddenly felt a wind blowing from her across the space toward me in the audience, some twenty feet away…Everything but Ashikawa receded into the background. The distance between her and me disappeared; I felt that she was simultaneously far away and directly in front of me. At that moment time stood still. Some invisible force was affecting me in a very powerful way, slipping me, for a moment, into another dimension.[41]

Both writers note the occurrences of viscerally experienced images and the density of the air changing. Miura's identification of fear speaks to the disorienting nature of perceptual shifts, particularly when they are instigated by someone else's actions. Kurihara further notes space changing such that distance and proximity became simultaneous and possibly inverted, and experiencing a sense of being "out of time."

Ōno's rehearsal notes provide information as to how this time shifting experience might be accomplished. He writes that from the performer's perspective, there is a recognition of the quality of the image space; it interresonates with something one knows from one's past, possibly where one has been before or perhaps it is more archetypal or

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[39] Kurihara 1997, 43.

[40] Hakutobo was directed by Ashikawa Yoko, Hijikata's most important dancer. All of the performers in Hakutobo assumed the name Ashikawa in order to erase their own identity. Hijikata met Ashikawa Yoko in the late 1960s and began to work with her exclusively as he developed the later phase of his work, now recorded in 16 notebooks of his Butoh-fu notations. These drawings and choreo-poems are the basis for much Butoh dance training today. Waguri Yukio has compiled 88 of the Butoh-fu in his DVD, Butoh Kaden.

[41] Kurihara 1997, 44-5.

"ancient," as Ōno says. While engaged in a group exercise, he has a memory (or imagination) of a funeral: "The crowd, coming and going to the grave, bustle… they cry, suppress a laugh, and try to put the rhythm together." He comments that the movement of the dancers across the studio:

> shares some of the same foundation as other spaces I've been. It must be crossing somewhere. It's crossing in my mind. I take this crossing space consciously or unconsciously while I am swaying and changing places." (Ōno June 19).

The term "crossing" is revealing of the method. His own participation in this group movement invoked another time and space, and he brought the consciousness of it into the present moment. These two time-spaces mingle and create a sense of being "out of time." It is not that he is solely representing past events with the current movement, but rather that an action or sensibility that the group created intersected with a past experience. He is braiding time (and space, which is inextricably linked) in his own imagination and projecting that crossing to his audience, in this case to Hijikata who was leading the rehearsal.

By the same mechanism, we can sense when someone who is physically present is "absent" or psychically lost in another time and space, i.e. not braiding the two time-spaces together. Yoshito explores these presence/absence qualities in an exercise he calls "full moon." He has people hold hands in a large group circle and he tells students "everybody [is] needed to make this full moon. If somebody [is] not here, it's not full moon, so we lost something, …so then, let's move with the other to use somebody's energy, so it means try to exist myself, in total balance" (2010). He is asking students to become attuned to one another and sense the fullness of everyone's presence through their own subtle body sensitivity. Having practiced this sort of exercise on other occasions (though in a contact improvisation context), my understanding of what Yoshito calls "try[ing] to exist myself in total balance" within the circle, means that I need to first tune into my own central axis and alignment, my own breathing, my own sense of space

and density, and then sense any tiny fluctuations and impulses coming from the weight, temperature, and *ki* energy coming from other bodies transmitted throughout the circle through the hands of my partners. At that level of deeply listening, Yoshito claims to experience emptiness. For me, that kind of listening also has the weighted, loose-jointed body of contact improvisation and release technique, and the sparkling awareness and suggestive imagination of Zaporah's Action Theater (more on this in Chapter 6). His comment "if somebody [is] not here, it's not [a] full moon" resonates for me as well; I have had the experience of being in circles where a participant (sometimes me) is either not really present, or is forcing their energy into the group and trying to lead it in a specific direction without listening to the whole group. Conversely, I have had group experiences where all are able to be patient and let the group energy emerge. The difference is quite noticeable. In the latter situation I can sense something actually happens that I did not purely create on my own but had a hand in creating – so it feels familiar and bigger than me at the same time. This is a slightly different take on Ōno's "crossing" idea because it is not blending different time-spaces but rather it is blending different space-time "perspectives" and senses of presence. Additionally, it is a useful tuning exercise to heighten one's own sensitivity and also to build ensemble communication.

The landscape is constantly changing so the performer should be sensing this if he or she is to remain truly present. Murobushi feels that this level of sensitivity is essential to a performer's honesty; he says, "you should feel your balance moving always and changing, and relate with your public or space, …and also my body is changing, my concentration [is] also changing with space, this space, the "changiness," it's…honesty, no?" (2010). Again, it is in the personal body that one senses change. Murobushi describes the experience as somewhat paradoxical, saying, "I concentrate into myself, but always I feel the theater space, and I should hit the space." It is as if he hits the space and his concentration rebounds back into himself, like a bat using echolocation. Waguri

echoes Murobushi's notion of "hitting the space" and noticing the reverberations in his own body. Hijikata told him: "don't look for [answers] outside. Outside stuff is round, so you look for more new one, more answers, but finally, your eyes, turn back to here (gestures toward himself) – your eyes turn to inside. Every answer [is] waiting [for you] to find" (2010). Returning to the idea of "felt inner resonance," the experience can only be verified on the level of the personal body.

The objects of attunement – images, space, other beings – engender unique experiences. Murobushi observes, "it's not necessary always some human eyes, and if it's space [that is the object of attunement, it] is different of course," implying that all space has resonance that can be sensed and that empty space has a different quality of engagement than a space full of people (who are also *of* space and *in* space). To sense the subtleties, he recommends continuing to follow the breath into different parts of one's body until one feels breath in the fingers and toes. Through breath, "your energy [is] going outside and connect[s] inside, and this is [a] very basic idea." Indeed, many performance training forms use breathing exercises to harmonize mind and body, and connect with other bodies and space. As breath and energy circulate, they pick up information about the ambiance, and in an ongoing dialog, the space affects the dancer and the dancer affects the space. Additionally, breathing affects the spinal column and the central axis, notes Murobushi, and thus one's body position is subtly shifted through this inner/outer breathing dialog as well. The balance is "always moving" he says, and "with this, already I can dance" (2010).

At the same time, for attunement to be effective, it is important to have a clear object of engagement. Koga notes that while images are useful in tuning into the present moment, they can also become stale or calcified conceptually so that his movement projects just an idea of the image. Or, he may be completely engaged with an image in his imagination but his body may not be able to respond. Consequently, he feels he "could spend a lot more time just understanding (he slaps his thigh) the physicality or the

sensations that my body has, here, now, what does the blood feel like, or the bone, and how can I feel it without defining it" (2010). In his practice, Koga emphasizes kinesthetic response, saying "sensation's a very big part of it because there's something I can understand." The focus here "is about how is this energy moving here, when is it moving there, when does it change, and how do I change in relationship to that energy." He describes being able to sense this most clearly in Tango or Aikido, when he has a clear partner relationship to provide immediate kinesthetic feedback. "You have to be really sensitive to communicating," he says, and adds, "It's good to have clear friction, so maybe my dance partner is my clothing, and then that's my clear friction, or maybe it's the air, but I have to really understand that and stay with that." He searches for a clear point of engagement: "With another person…it's the conflict, it's a little bit more easy, it's more solid in a certain way. Or if I'm bound or I'm contained there's all that…and the value of that, or that value has been for me a clear point of tension." Koga has performed several pieces bound in one manner or another, hung upside down by his ankles, trapped inside large sculptural pieces, stuffed inside a suitcase, etc. For him, these experiments are psychophysical explorations of his own boundaries. Citing the circulation of respiration through our seemingly contained skin border and mixing with atmosphere, he questions, "what's the dividing line between what seems apparently contained, and what is outside of this room?" The answer for him is not exactly a physical boundary, but rather one of energy. The ideal point, he says, is "when the point of tension is not clear, then that's really good material," but he cautions "it's also dangerous because I can just drift" unless he knows the investigation to which he is anchored. Similar to Hijikata's caution to not be "drunk," Koga warns against sloppy, unfocused investigation without a clear entry point to the engagement or exploration.

It is important to note that attunement, or "becoming something," is a practice, and not something we learn how to do once and than can forever manifest. It is a receptivity meditation to which one returns again and again, attempting some action

while attending to our breath, or noticing the state of our minds and the quality of our physical matter. Questioning is part of the practice. Even an advanced dancer like Ōno Kazuo expresses doubt in his research. The passage quoted below is from his notes after a rehearsal with Hijikata. Though it is a rather extensive quote, I think it is worth exploring how his thoughts wander during an exercise. Note that these comments are from the same rehearsal as was mentioned before, addressing the crossing of past and present through finding personal past memories that connect to the present group experience:

> At the rehearsal of June 19th we started with swinging. We started it obscurely. The rhythm of my drumming was also indistinct. There was nothing in this, which was reasonable because we didn't give any reason or understanding for swinging. I was confused, although all I had to do was just swing back and forth. Maybe I expected some meaning for expression in my intimate feelings. I said to myself, 'swing without thinking.' But still I was still thinking, expecting something to happen. My thoughts went something like this:
>
> > *Even so, you should be able to move better*
> > *So, can you do it?*
> > *Well, not sure*
> > *Then this is not working out*
> > *Again, I find the challenge of 'merely moving.'*
> > *I don't understand Mu (nothingness).*
> > *I decide to sway more.*
> > *Everything is swaying.*
> > *I am also swaying.*
> > *What are they responding to?*
> > *Each one, each place.*
> > *It's reviving.*
> > (Ōno June 19, trans. Mariko Endo Reynolds 2011)

Ōno says he is caught between doing and thinking; his body and mind are not in sync. He is criticizing himself for not finding a good rhythm, and at the same time he knows that "expecting something to happen" is only pulling him toward the future, making it difficult to find a good rhythm in the present. He struggles with "the challenge of merely moving," knowing he is looking for something beyond conscious movement.

Similarly, he wrestles with not wanting to give in to his desire to make meaning, while at the same time recognizing the value of tapping into a rather profound image of the group at a funeral, grieving and "trying to put the rhythm together." He and Hijikata grappled with essential aesthetic questions as they developed their work. What is the role of the performer? How much should they control and sculpt the theatrical experience, and would it not be better to just "swing without thinking?" How could they get to a place where they could move and not think, not in a trance but in a way that integrates the unconscious into his sense of presence. Looking back over his long career, Ōno certainly seems to have found that state. As Richard Schechner wrote, "Kazuo Ōno doesn't commute" (TDR citation). In other words, Ōno does not have to travel anywhere to go to work – he is always dancing, and always embodying his investigation. Though he may not have ever "understood Mu" by his own assessment, his pursuit of mental quietness and of oneness of body-mind certainly lead him to a deeply resonant ability to evoke the sensibilities of his imagination.

Degrees of Attunement

Attunement occurs on a continuum that ranges from our pursuit of mastery of athletic skill to the understanding of the nature of our being, or enlightenment, in meditation. Nagatomo characterizes the range as being defined by "the difference in the degree of, and hence also the nature of, the psychophysical integration" (1992, 220). If one is learning to supplant one's ego, the athlete *is* the bow as much as the Zen monk in meditation *is śūnyatā* (emptiness). However, the difference is that the athlete continues to desire to shoot the bow well, to excel at a skill. The monk desires to continue to exist in the non-place of *śūnyatā*, which is not a skill but a state of being. The greatest degree

of psychophysical integration "shatter[s] the supposedly valid ground of the life of an ego of the person," and is therefore a "radical transformation" (Nagatomo 1992, 220-21). Though in the case of the athlete, there is a greater than everyday degree of psychophysical integration – what Nishida calls this "animated state with maximum freedom in which there is not the least gap between the will's demand and its fulfillment" (quoted in Yuasa 1987:65), by which the athlete can perfect his or her actions – the object body is still intact here, as is the sense of self. An athlete might use imagery to extend ability, for example, imagining the arm as a powerful arc of water shooting from a hose, in order to throw a ball further. However, the fundamental structure of one's being remains the same. Once the action is complete, one's imagination of the water hose arm returns to a normal arm. In meditation, Nagatomo contends "there is a significant change in the concept of the body image," such that "the body image which the self synthesizes is no longer bound by this physical delineation" (1992, 240-41). He notes that this state is brought about in part by closing off the external sensory apparatus as is done in meditation, or the practice of "just sitting," and tuning in to the "felt inner resonance."

Hijikata's butō practice sits somewhere in between these two ends of the spectrum, with regard to attunement. On the one hand, butō uses imagery to extend the body's ability, however the emphasis is not on the accomplishment of a physical skill but rather on the extension of one's own body. There is no arc that one is traveling "in order to," but rather the arc (or process of transformation) is the goal. Further, the butō dancer aims to maintain this extension or transformation for an extended period of time. Through engagement with imagery as a tool of transformation, the butō dancer not only extends one's boundaries but also shatters one's ego-self. At the same time, Hijikata's

butō practice did not aim for enlightenment, or even an understanding of the nature of our true being, per se. The philosophical and political reasons for this aside (I discussed Hijikata's intentions with regard to this in Chapter Two), it is possible to analyze the practical aspects of Hijikata's butō method to see how it differs from the goals and experiences of meditation.

Meditation is the process of quieting the body-mind, which is a common experience to the athlete, the butō dancer, and to the spiritual seeker. Concentration is the foundation of meditation practice, by which one learns to train one's thoughts and actions through the breath or a specific *kata* (a set of movements, as in sports, martial arts, or dance). Pandit Rajmani Tigunait, the spiritual leader of the Himalayan Institute in the yogic tradition, suggests, "if your mind remains concentrated for at least twelve breaths, you have achieved a state of meditation" (Tigunait 2011, 40). And when "your mind becomes completely absorbed" in your object of meditation, (be it the breath, an image, an athletic feat, etc.), this state is considered to be *samahdi*, or spiritual absorption (ibid.). It may last for ten seconds, two minutes, or much longer as one continues to practice the steps of concentration, meditation, and *samadhi*. This is a cyclical, cumulative practice, says Tigunait, and even though distraction is inevitable, "if you have been practicing for a long time it does not take long to get back to a heightened state" (2011, 41).

Samadhi is not enlightenment, however it is one of the necessary stages toward enlightenment. Buddhist scholar Donald Swearer writes, "Buddhist meditation progresses from *samadhi* to *jhâna*, or from concentration and one-pointedness to the gradual expansion of the consciousness to hithertofore unexperienced dimensions" (1973, 443). According to Swearer, the first stage of *jhâna* is through non-attachment (*viveka* in

sanskrit, akin to *muju* in Japanese, or non-abiding)[42] and "dwelling in a state of emptiness" (*śūnyatā* in Sanskrit, akin to *mu* in Japanese, or nothingness) (444). Considering again the case of concentration for the purpose of mastering athletic skill, it is safe to say that most athletes are not working with these elements of non-attachment and emptiness. They are indeed attached to an outcome, and have a clear goal in mind. Butō dancers, on the other hand, most certainly are employing non-attachment as a strategy for letting the image arise of its own accord and "dance the dancer" rather than consciously manipulating the image in service of a predetermined expression. Moreover, butō dancers dwell in a state of emptiness so that they might become an empty vessel through which images arise and flow. The possibility body discussed in the beginning of this chapter is intimately familiar with the *jhâna* state of consciousness. Says Swearer, "one who passes through the *jhânas* transcends an ordinary involvement in the phenomenal world" (447), which is indeed the case with the butō dancer who cultivates an extra-ordinary engagement with the phenomenal world.

Through further practices of dispelling ignorance, one moves beyond *jhânas* and beyond "mere sensory reality" to "final liberation" (Swearer 1973, 445), *vimutti* in Sanskrit, akin to *sartori* in Japanese, or recognition of one's true nature. It is at this point in the path where Hijikata's butō dance diverges from the goals of meditation. As long as the body is moving, or even "moved" as in the case of butō, one is still engaged in sensory reality. It is true that this engagement is ideally a detached, non-abiding

[42] Buddhism was initiated in India, traveled through China and developed into Daoism, and then came to Japan where there are a wide variety of sects, including Madhyamika (the original form in Japan) and Zen (source). The key concepts were translated and also somewhat changed. For this reason, I note that the terms are "akin" but not exact translations.

engagement, but it is an engagement with sensory information nonetheless. And though the butō dancers' consciousness is dispersed, "seeing" from the positionless position, the goal is toward the performing body-mind, not the liberated body-mind. I would argue that there is an element of liberation in freeing oneself from the confines of daily reality, however the liberation to which a spiritual practice of meditation aims is a complete liberation from the "world of suffering" and transcendence of all form. Hijikata's butō specifically engaged the world of suffering as an artistic investigation and political statement, and sought to highlight the many facets, both beautiful and ugly, that this world contains. Hijikata said, "In order to obliterate the roots of evil, we must resurrect evil from the inner impulses of humans. Therefore, I intend to state intently at the evil and sex that are the essences of humans" (quoted in Nishi 1960, 62-63). His desire as an artist was to reveal the beauty of the complexity of humanity, which he felt had been lost. He felt, "sex is the root of human formation. It is the pigment of energy. This has been greatly distorted by society" (quoted in Nishi 1960, 65). His goals were liberatory, though distinct from liberation in meditation.

Nonetheless, contrasting butō method with self-cultivation practices in Buddhist meditation is useful in analyzing Hijikata's methods and discussing the process of tuning the body-mind. Further, this comparison gives butō practice a context with other East Asian methods of self-cultivation, and provides a language for discussing the transformation of psychophysical processes.

The De/Reconstructed Body-Mind

The end result of cultivation in butō is a de-centered perspective, with a new relationship to the everyday. Frame Ten of the Bull Herding pictures reveals the boy returning from enlightenment to the world of form, able to grasp the original self and the totality of being when an intentional glance is cast to do so, within the everyday experience of self. This series of images can also be read as a representation of the cyclical transformations of consciousness, whereby one becomes aware of previously "dark" layers of consciousness (to use Yuasa's term). Relating this to Hijikata's butō methodology, Frame Ten represents the expanded notion of self, "seen" from new perspectives and inhabiting the time-space signatures of images, distinct from everyday time and space. If not an embodiment of a holistic perspective within the everyday, at the very least, one who cultivates increasingly expanded consciousness will experience "multiplicity" within everyday reality. That is to say, the way of transforming the body-mind with images in butō dance brings one to experience oneself beyond the boundaries of physical form. The caption from Frame Ten reads, "the beauty of my garden is invisible" (Senzaki and Reps, 186). The butō dancer's task is to make this "garden" become "visible," not just with everyday sight, but with a heightened ability to discern an invigorating activity of *ki* energy that animates an object to be seen. This heightened ability is generated by the performer's engagement with the image, and transmitted from performer to audience energetically.

Consider the following images in Figure 4.4, drawn by butō dancer Haruko Nishimura[43] of Seattle-based Degenerate Art Ensemble during a workshop we took together, in which she depicts her body-mind changing through engagement with her imagined atmosphere or constitution:

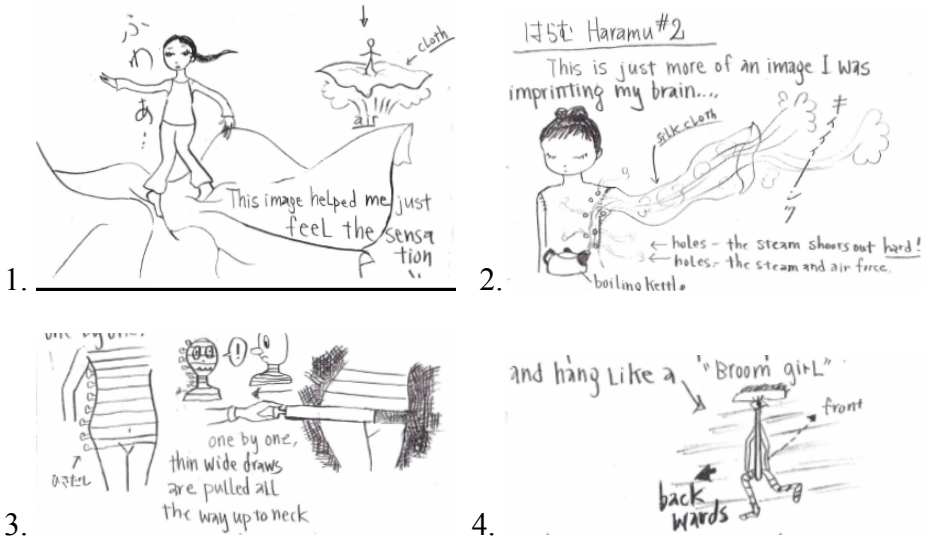

Figure 4.4
Workshop Images of the De/Reconstructed Body-Mind
Images drawn by Haruko Nishimura during Seki Minako workshop, Berlin 2003.

In the first, she senses wind blowing underneath her feet, buoying the cloth the stands on and altering her relationship to stability. In the second, she imagines a boiling tea kettle in the center of her body, blowing steam out of holes in her trunk and causing her arm – which has turned to silk cloth – to billow and float. In the third, her body is made of drawers and one by one they are pulled out, disrupting her vertical axis. In the fourth drawing, her body has transformed completely into a "broom girl," and she glides through the space. In each case, her experience of the image drives her movement.

[43] In this case, I am listing Haruko Nishimura's name using American conventions because she is an American citizen based in Seattle, even though she is of Japanese origin.

Again, butō dancers practice "no-thought" with the images; they learn to embody and explore the lived experience of the images from the inside, without thought, judgment, or meaning making. Instead, they allow the image to permeate their being, and particularly the subtle body. The process of reflecting on the experience, through journaling or drawing in this case, is intended to provide more image information with which to deepen the experience. A beginning dancer might need to focus on more practical aspects of an image; for example, if the image is boiling water, one might focus first on what it feels like to be watery and absolutely fluid, and one might zoom in to the level of molecules and explore roundness in minute detail. Then one could increase the intensity of the movement, imagine the water heating up and the molecules moving faster, and also sense the transformation from boiling water to steam. Even though the dancer may be starting from the point of Yuasa's first three circuits – which are more accessible in daily life, he or she is still paying attention to the effect of these movements on the subtle body, as this is where the image will affect the unconscious self. Noticing subtle shifts in energy and atmosphere are key to cultivating presence and going deeper into the experience. Adapting and evolving with each passing moment creates the performance. Thus, one begins to "see" from the perspective of the image, and of the atmosphere.

These are all simple one-image explorations intended to deepen a sensibility, so that it can be readily accessed later in choreography. Ōno Kazuo recounts a similar such exercise with Hijikata, used for making the expression "thicker." Extended improvisation with a particular image lays tracks in the sense memory, so one can more quickly and fully inhabit it the moment each time one returns to it. Writes Ōno, "This

rehearsal was meant for exploring and polishing our dance movement. We investigated the movement with adding conditions into a simple repeating movement in order to make [a] solid expression, to make it thicker" (Ōno June 19).

His comments speak to a debate within the butō community about improvisation or choreography as the primary modality of butō. Particularly in the American butō community, many dancers and students identify with improvisation as their movement development process. This was certainly my experience with the butō training in the first few years, and I remember being confused initially by Murobushi's workshops, which were more of a follow-the-leader exercise through many birds, tin men, wooden puppets, and other characters. Having been taught by my first teachers that the dancer's internal experience mattered more than anything the audience read from the dance, I initially resisted learning these characters from Murobushi and butō-fu from Waguri. However, after working with Waguri in an intense ten-day workshop, I was able to recognize the possibility that choreography still includes the potential for improvisation, depending upon one's approach. However, this is a deep-seated debate among contemporary butō practitioners, and an issue that cannot be taken up here, but I argue demands a closer look.

In his 1999 book *Body of Revolt*, butō scholar Stephen Barber frames the choreography/improvisation debate as dichotomous, with Ōno advocating improvisation and Hijikata staunchly supporting choreographed gesture and movement. Nakajima Natsu, a student of both Ōno and Hijikata, clarifies their differences as related to their distinct approaches to *teaching* methods, and not their overall dance method: "We can't teach everything…Ōno taught only improvisation, forget[ing] about how to show it, and

Hijikata taught us only how to show it. They taught us only one-way ticket, not [round-trip] ticket. It's important, if the teacher taught everything, the student will collapse" (2010). Nevertheless, she notes that Hijikata demanded the immediacy of experience: "from external we had to learn internal." Waguri Yukio, the main male dancer at Hijikata's studio from 1972 to 1978, concurs with Nakajima, arguing that "improvisation is experience. So what kind of experience [is the dancer having] in the choreography? It's not separate" (2010). Although he may have performed Hijikata's butō-fu countless times, Waguri holds that each time is a new experience for him. I asked him about a well-known butō-fu image of one ant crawling up the back of one's leg, wondering how, if he has performed this exact image countless times, he can find anything new to play with in it. He holds that each time is a discrete experience, and that he has to be fully in it to really be doing the choreography. For Waguri, choreography in the form of butō-fu notation is simply a short hand for the experience. Some experiences have no words, "so no words is maybe just surprised [haaaaahh! He breathes and holds breath] – maybe no words…So it's my ideal, when I, during dance, every time I want to be surprised, I don't want to be show[n] or explain to audience too much. It's just my experience." For him, improvisation within choreography is the constant search for pure experience.

Hijikata attempted to reconstruct reality to reveal to his audiences the vivid imagery he experienced. His choreographies and characters de-constructed and discombobulated the familiar in order to highlight some quality he wanted to emphasize, most often something he felt had been ignored or suppressed by the constrictions of society and everyday reality. I relate it to Frame Ten in the Bull Herding pictures, because he chose to use this very body as the site of his transformations. In other words,

his work was not meant to induce trance whereby the dancers or the audience would remain in a transcendent dimension. Instead, he made his artistic statement "using the splendid material of the body" (quoted in Nishi 1960, 62), casting the body (and body-mind) in new light within everyday reality.

In the introduction to this chapter, I described self-cultivation as a process by which one brings the body and mind into balance. As depicted in the Bull Herding pictures, one searches for this harmonious state through some sort of dedicated, consistent practice (in this case meditation). The key here is having a practice, because only through repeated engagement can we notice change. Some dancers, such as ballet or Nō theater performers, practice the same physical actions (referred to in Japanese practices as *kata*) for many years before they reach a "perfect freedom," when the movement flows naturally and is simply an expression of one's deepest being. Improvisation and new movement invention can also be a practice, though in this case the *kata* are not specific movements but rather the skills of listening, hearing the beats of an improvisation and capitalizing on timing, sensing one's performance partners and anticipating their actions, and being able to sense the architecture of the space from the audience's perspective even though one is within the stage picture. Images can be considered a *kata* as well, according to Nagatomo. If one repeatedly engages with the same image, one's experience and embodiment of the subtleties of that image deepens. Tamano Hiroko described the difference between a novice butō student and an experienced, long-time member of her company such as Hayashi Kinji as "how much [he] has developed the space" (2010), meaning the atmosphere or landscape of the image. An experienced performer who has cultivated an image as a *kata*, through repeated

practice, has developed what Tamano calls "depth of the body," or the ability to fully inhabit the image with every aspect of his or her actions. A mature artist working in this manner would also have a greater capacity for imagination and a fluid ability to embody a wide variety of states. Moreover, the mature dancer can navigate a greater deal of complexity, paying attention to a multitude of images as well as attuning to the entire space, including the audience. The distinction between mature performers and novices, then, is one of degrees of sensitivity and subtlety, which develops at different paces for every performer.

While this ability to manage complexity is common to many performers who have reached mastery of their skills, the intentional overload of a multitude of conflicting images is unique to butō. Even Stanislavski's work, which requires actors to engage a wide variety of images at once, is aiming for cohesion of the character's experience. Some elements of discord may generate intrigue in an otherwise identifiable human experience. Hijikata, however, purposefully transformed "human" beyond recognition with a plethora of images and directions that disrupted habitual human behavior and created.

Conclusion

Hijikata said the butō dancer must be "kidnapped, killed, and reincarnated" (quoted in Mikami 1997, 88). I have reframed that as disoriented, saturated, and re/de-constructed, to emphasize the changing perspectives and modes of awareness inherent in each stage. If one goes straight to the saturated state without first disorienting the normal, daily perspective, this will not be successful because the ego is still present. Or,

if we use Hijikata's term, killed, the dancer will "act out" the killing as if it were personal, as if it were happening to him or her. The idea in butō is not to telegraph one's personal reaction to something, but rather to be the purest expression possible of the image, experienced from the inside of the image rather than the objectifying intellectualization of it. We must first shake loose the comfortable, habitual egocentric perspective in order to expand awareness beyond the limits of the self. The seeming contradiction is that we must rely on the sensate experience of the body to reach a deeper awareness. However, Hijikata's direction to "experience oneself from afar" and interact with images with "coolness" serves to keep the ego in check and encourages a multivalent view.

At the same time, the very nature of performance prevents the performer from fully disappearing into the experience. Though engaged in the process of erasing the ego and becoming the image, he or she must keep one eye on performance craft. Furthermore, "it's impossible to become animal [or any other image]," says Waguri, "but we have to try…this is the most interesting for creating" (2011). Through this striving for the impossible, the performer learns to deepen his or her embodiment of the imagination. This is the fundamental lesson that I suggest taking forward from butō and applying to other performance training methods. One example would be using butō methods to help actors working in Stanislavski's method to develop the realistic sensitivities needed for the embodiment of character. Butō methods could also be used to enhance the effort qualities of more abstract dance. Several experimental dance forms already work with imagery in this way, and yet I wonder how they might change if they employed butō strategies for erasing the ego-self in the embodiment of such images.

This is a important tangential question that is not appropriate for the current discussion, however in the next chapter I will delve into some of the ways in which I have worked with the butō methods discussed here. My hope is that this is an open-ended dialog, and others will pick up the threads and make connections to their own areas of expertise.

CHAPTER FIVE

EMBODIED EXPERIENCES

Introduction

Reflecting back over the past decade of investigating butō as a dancer, performer, choreographer, and teacher, I can now see the cumulative effects it has had on me physically and perceptually. Through interrogating my most significant memories over the years, certain themes surrounding the ideas, concepts, and issues I have grappled with emerge as important steps in my own learning. I present key themes here as a personal pathway that I hope might offer further insight into the possible practices and potential applications of Hijikata's butō philosophy and methodology for other contemporary students and artists.

These themes are crisscrossed by my comingled roles as student, dancer, and teacher, as each of these different skill sets and perspectives developed concurrently for me with butō. When I started performing and studying simultaneously in 2000, and already in 2001 I was working with another contemporary dancer in the company to integrate butō methods into our contemporary dance classes. I had been teaching yoga, contemporary dance, and Contact Improvisation already for four years when I first began butō, so I had a teacher's mindset as a student; I looked for stages of learning, took responsibility for my own development, and knew how to ask for specific feedback that would help me progress. I was also already a seasoned performer and experienced

choreographer, and as such I had a developed sense of movement generation and sequencing, and knew how to manipulate stage space and atmosphere. Nonetheless, I have continued to be a student throughout my engagement with butō, regularly taking intensive workshops with butō masters, sometimes alongside my own students. As a teacher, I consider myself to be only the most experienced student in the room, and we are all learning together. So these are very fluid roles for me, particularly as relates to butō dance. With that said, the three roles of teacher, student, and performer are indeed different. As the teacher I make it my responsibility to present material in a way that facilitates sequential development. I track my students' progress and offer feedback, which I do not typically do with fellow performers. And when I am choreographing, another role still, I expect performers to absorb information and materials more quickly and I am more specific in directing the outcomes of their experiments. However, as with designing exercises for class I never fully set choreography, so that I leave performers the freedom to experience the moment and respond.

Comparing my training, teaching, and creating techniques from ten years ago with those I use today, I can very clearly see that my dancing body and movement preferences have changed. For example, I find I have more access to and inclination toward contorted postures, and a much more solid sense of balance in extreme positions. However, when I first began studying with Koga and he instructed us to shrink into a tiny ball, standing flat on our feet and hugging our knees, I laughed. I had him stand next to me while we both bent our knees, to show him that his Achilles tendons were much longer than mine, allowing him more mobility. Over time, though, through simply trying to stay in this posture without falling over, I was eventually able to maintain it. I eventually even made

a ten-minute piece almost entirely in this posture, hopping around as a baby bird trying to fly. I finally felt successful with this tiny-balled creature when a colleague commented that while watching me trying to fly and falling time and again, he actually felt the determination of a baby bird rather than the frustration he would expected to see from the human performance of that action. My own psychophysical limitations had been extended through interaction with this character over time.

Embedded in that experience are questions of how and what to warm up in butō, the hurdle and definition of technique, an ability to change the perspective of one's own body, and becoming truly saturated with an image investigation. How does one approach dance if not through some codified technique? What is the technique of non-technique? And further, on what does one remain focused as one trains in butō, if the goal is to eventually forget the training? Only through the benefit of this reflective research do I have some answers to these questions.

A First Hurdle - Idiosyncratic Teaching Methods

As an educator teaching butō workshops and master classes for professional and non-professional adults and teens, I present material within its context as much as possible. I make an express point of citing which artist taught me what material, so that students can begin to understand the variety of approaches. Further, I encourage them to experiment with the tools I offer them, so that they explore new applications of the material for their own means and performance methods. As a fourth generation student of butō, I honor the history and lineage but am not invested in any particular lineage. My interest is in taking butō methods forward into new forms of expression. This goal is both

helped and hindered by the reality that there is no one butō technique or set of exercises; instead, there are countless pathways into a single experience.

The fact that most butō training is centered in festivals or workshop presentations instead of schools keeps the methodologies idiosyncratic, resisting codification. Like so many American butō students who receive piecemeal education with itinerate butō masters, I often found myself confused by the wide variety of approaches to butō dance with each new course of study. Further complicating this is the fact that very few students in my generation are willing or able to simply commit to a master and follow them unconditionally, so instead we are students with several masters, some of whom have competing methodologies. For example, I have heard many butō teachers dismiss each others' interpretation of butō methods, such as those who frown upon Waguri's adherence to teaching Hijikata's butō-fu as a means of imparting butō techniques, and yet in my own experience his classes forced me to be a more precise butō performer than most others. Other teachers have simply re-named their methods, as in the case of Su-En Butō Method, or Sub-body Butō (Rhizome Lee), drawing a circle around their techniques and defining a brand. While I certainly recognize the need of individual butō masters to espouse the uniqueness or authenticity of their approach for the purposes of maintaining a student base and an artistic career, my present interest is in understanding the tools butō offers, and in investigating how I can apply them in different contexts.

I maintain that there is a common denominator philosophical approach among the various methods. Even in Tanaka Min's use of farming as dance training practice, I see a form of disorientation that forces the dancer to use the body in ways that he or she would not ordinarily do in daily life. With the benefit of hindsight about my own learning

process over the past decade, I can now trace connections to Hijikata's training methods as articulated in the previous chapters. Similar to the descriptions given by Hijikata's direct students, I, too, have experienced the progression of disorientation, saturation, and re/deconstruction of my body-mind as I have studied and performed butō-based work. Whenever possible, I have tried to decode and shortcut these lessons when I teach and choreograph. I offer some of these experiences here in the hopes that other dancers might find resonance with their own process, resulting in a wider dialog about dance, presence, and movement-based studies in general. Additionally, I aim to further articulate my lived experience of butō in plain terms, and to offer concrete descriptions of dance training itself into butō scholarship.

Preparation

The question of how and what to warm up is important to butō training, as it is for most performing methods. Each style or genre has its own pathway dependent upon the desired expression. Preparing the body to move is certainly important, but it is equally important to prepare one's mind to concentrate on any given material. In music and in many dance forms, the performer learns to count complex rhythms and inhabit polyrhythms with one's own body. In butō, one is generally training to inhabit imaginary worlds with a distinct sense of time and space. There are rhythms, polyrhythms, and often arrhythmic time inherent in each image, as well as a shifting sense of scale. For example, in a recent class, Endo Mariko asked the students to send their consciousness to the core of the earth. As I imagined reaching such a depth from my simple standing position in the dance studio, I could feel heat throughout my body, I could sense a deep

gaping space below me, and I saw myself from far away as if I were standing on the round edge of a globe and had a hollow black tunnel emanating though the brown earth underneath me all the way to the center of the orb. At first I just felt the warmth under my feet, and then a slight depression in the floor below me where my tunnel began. As I zoomed out to the bird's eye view, the tunnel grew with increasing speed, and then abruptly stopped in a cavernous core. With one relatively simple consciousness exercise I had slowed my breathing, I had transformed space in my own perception (and I surmise in the teacher's perception as well because she confirmed that we were doing well), and I felt warm and ready to move. However, I doubt I could have achieved this degree of engagement or energy had it been my first butō class. I think training needs to progress incrementally with good reason: to prevent injury and more importantly, to create re-traceable pathways toward time/space altering experiences. It is certainly valuable if I can guide a student to have a transformative experience through an image exercise, however as the student progresses in their ability he or she needs to be able to invoke the transformative experience on his or her own. It is as Murobushi says, one has one's body-mind and one's control. Through one's conscious control, one must trick the body-mind into sub- and unconscious processes (2010), or as Nagatomo describes the ideal state as "controlled spontaneity" (2010). Over time, one is able to navigate the unknown with a sense of freedom.

This is more easily said than done. How does one work through conscious processes in order to reach the unconscious? Often when a student is first learning there is very little understanding of what one is doing. For example, Waguri describes practicing nothing but Maya – a slow walking exercise in which the knees are bent as in

suriashi and the legs cycle slowly in a reverse bicycling motion, and the arms are bent but extended as if they pierce the chest forward and backward, while keeping the torso facing forward – for three solid months under Hijikata's direction. I have practiced this for only twenty minutes at a time, and been incredibly sore from maintaining this posture (and also from Waguri yanking my back arm into position and pressing my hand more open). I can completely understand why Waguri wanted to quit training when he was a young student of Hijikata. However, once, I had a fleeting sensation of being a radiant Indonesian goddess walking on a lotus flower, and I understood the intention of the exercise. The posture, or the conscious form, was a means to access an unconscious state. Even though it quickly shifted back into being painful, I had a glimpse of how beautiful and transcendent it could become and was encouraged to continue with my efforts.

Due to these sorts of realizations, over the years, my warm up has changed. When I first began and was rehearsing for *Cockroach*, I would exhaust myself with acrobatic contemporary dance, flipping and rolling around, and constantly changing my orientation in space. My warm ups now are much more concentrated and simple: I often just jump up and down in a straight line, trying to sense the hanging body described in Noguchi gymnastics. An image for this that I have internalized from Seki is that the dancer is a teabag being dipped in hot water; an imaginary hand above is in control, helping to create the sensation of the body that is *danced*. And rather than traveling through space vigorously to sense the edges of my kinesphere as I did with contemporary dance technique, I frequently work with an image, such as wind or water, on a small scale and gradually increase the intensity, beginning with small movements and then letting

them grow more wild and unpredictable. I can build up a great deal of heat in my body with a simple walk with this kind of awareness, and my mind becomes quiet from the sheer effort of keeping track of the image as it transforms. Some images are more difficult for me to embody than others, but as Waguri said in a workshop, "good" dance is not when "I could do well," but rather, "I was alive here" (2010).

As a means of waking up awareness, it is quite effective to concentrate on multiple images at once, as in the *suriashi* walk; the images include a bowl of water on the head, buckets in the hands, raw eggs under the armpits, piece of paper between the knees, eyes hanging as mirror balls, rope around the waist pulling you forward and back at the same time, using sliding steps to move a kimono or robe out of the way. My goal in these image exploration warm ups is to focus my attention, and simultaneously expand my awareness of space and the intensity of my presence.

After years of studying and teaching a wide variety of exercises I have learned from several butō masters, I will echo Koga's comment that while "becoming nothing" is certainly the goal, concentration is the quintessential first step. Without concentration, no amount of imagery will engender transformation. With it, the possibilities are limitless. When I see students cease fidgeting with their hair and clothes, and no longer looking around the room to gauge what others are doing, I can tell that they are focusing their minds on the task at hand. As students become more advanced, however, they require greater levels of complexity in order to focus. Koga and I have joked that we can look like we are concentrating on wind while thinking about a lighting plot, or something more mundane. The answer to such a situation might be to add more images, as in *suriashi*, or to go deeper into the sensational aspects of wind, such as, what is the

temperature of the wind? Are there particles of matter swirling in the wind? What is the wind hitting, a billowing fabric or a weathered rock? The more details to the experience, the less the mind can wander and the richer the overall experience and expression. Beyond concentration, students need to be encouraged to inhabit something completely unfamiliar without inhibition. The more pre-conceived ideas a student has about an image, the more likely they will produce a facsimile rather than a genuine experience. For this reason, it makes sense that Nakajima talked about her novice student "eating everything like a baby" and the transformation in his expression being noticeable. At the same time, she comments that she cannot produce a show with only this dancer; people paying money for a performance expect to see a certain degree of craft. Striking this delicate balance between rawness and skill can prove to be a delicate operation, and a question to which experienced performers must return repeatedly in their preparations for performance.

Beginning at the Beginning: the Different Challenges Of Working With Both Trained And Non-Trained Performers

Butō workshops and classes attract students with incredibly diverse backgrounds. In my last nine-week class series, I had two professional and one amateur dancer, one professional musician, two visual art students, and a computer programmer who takes various performance classes including mine and trapeze. With such a wide range of experience, I find that I have to be very flexible in my class planning to address all of the issues that arise. I also have to give highly personalized feedback to each student to push him or her forward given each student's individual growth.

Teaching trained performers has its unique challenges. In my own experience, when I first came to butō my body had its habit patterns from 25 years of dance training that I felt comfortable doing, and it was difficult to break out of those well grooved pathways. Further, my dance training had been oriented toward copying shape and dynamics, so I found myself following a similar pathway with my teachers rather than focusing exclusively on my own internal experience of a given image. Now I see sedimented dance training quickly in students – often ways they move their limbs in space on repeated patterns – and try to trick them out of it with counter-intuitive Noguchi gymnastic exercises, or encourage them to subvert themselves as soon as they sense a familiar configuration. These students often need to be reminded repeatedly not to be concerned with external form until they experience the image from inside. It is difficult for skilled dancers to reconcile that there is not a correct way to execute an image.

Teaching untrained students brings another set of challenges. In the case Nakajima mentioned of her novice student, she described him as pliable, and picking up new material very quickly. Not all beginners are so supple, though. I have taught many beginning students who have no feeling for their feet and legs, and no ability to let go of their personalities or habitual gestures. At the very least, a beginning student needs to understand the concept of center so their movement has a clear sense of grounding and initiation. They also need to develop an articulate body all over, not just the front body and particularly the hands and face that they use in everyday expression. If a student has poor coordination, they must first train that if they are to be able to express anything. Therefore I think it is important for novice students to adopt some movement-based practice in order to develop awareness and articulation of their performing self. While

they may have a rawness to their expression that is closer to butō's objective, it may take years of training until they are able to control that expression.

Noguchi gymnastics have proven to be effective for improving articulation in novice students and also for breaking down the patterns of skilled dancers. Noguchi is a practice much like yoga that one can return to as a daily barometer and a continual source of learning. The exercises can range from very simple to nearly impossible. The basic movement patterns teach practitioners to isolate a single point, connect those points in an infinite number of imaginary lines within the body (some anatomical, some more arbitrary), touch the many points in a curved line, and trace figure eight patterns almost anywhere in the body. The underlying principle is that the body is a "water bag," and therefore extremely malleable. Through relaxation of tension, we can access greater flexibility and agility. With extended practice, I have seen several of my novice students develop new awareness and sensitivity, and consistently all of my students display a greater sense of ease in their movement.

I, too, have benefitted from consistent Noguchi training. The exercises taught me how to employ imagery to surpass perceived physical limitations. Such exercises expanded my confidence when following imagery, giving me the confidence to truly follow the imagery and trust that my body had developed the intelligence to safely maneuver around the edges of my ability. For example, in one exercise with Seki, we were to push our torso up from a deep, seated backbend (full *virasana*, reclining warrior pose in yoga) as if a powerful wave or gust of wind had lifted us up to a seated posture. Having had years of sacro-iliac joint issues, I often need a great deal of preparation to be able to do backbending, which I did not have in this instance. I was determined to do the

exercise but kept pinching my lower back every time I muscled my way up to sit. Finally, exasperated, I decided to add the image of a giant hand grapping me by the shirt and pulling me up. It worked. I felt no twinge. Excited, I tried a similar tactic with another nearly impossible feat. I inserted an imaginary fishhook into the side of my cheek, and was able to sequence up sideways from a one-legged squat, with one leg extended to the side position (tipping away from the folded leg as it became the standing leg). I tried this with several other impossible exercises with less success; I still cannot stand on my hands for any length of time, despite thinking of my hands as flippers and my feet attached to strings, although once in a while I am able to stay for a few seconds longer than usual. Much like Waguri's Maya exercise, a small glimpse of transcendent ease is enough to spur future practice.

As I eventually learned, being a good butō dancer is not about being in control, nor is it about complete abandon, but rather staying present within an experience. I had to learn this lesson many times in my own process. For example, I am naturally a risk-taker, so I was surprised in an early butō experience to be so disquieted in a blindfolded walk exercise that Su-En directed. I had done similar guided blindfolded exercises in Contact Improvisation classes, where the seeing partner walks, trots, and eventually runs while guiding the blindfolded partner to increase their speed. I had thoroughly enjoyed this exercise in the past, even though I had run into the occasional other dancer, or stumbled as I ran. But I generally found it a freeing experience. In this case, however, Su-En instructed us to lead our partners outside onto a multi-level decaying playground in our bare feet. (She reportedly does a similar exercise at her farm in Sweden, with the blindfolded partner being led to run in the forest.) I remember trying to keep a sense of

bearings and be comfortable, and the impossibility of this task. The ground kept changing constantly and the crumbling concrete steps were particularly disconcerting. I had a very hard time relaxing into the experience, and became frustrated with my partner and angry with the teacher. Were I to repeat this exercise today, I would probably have the same difficulty trying to relax into the experience, however I would most likely find that to be a productive discomfort and use the situation to investigate the limits of my own habitual perception and interaction with the world.

Changing The Perspective Of One's Own Body

Changing the perspective of one's own body is key to butō technique. As Hijikata told Waguri, when one's arm no longer appears to be one's arm, then we have begun to study butō (2010). Both Tamano Hiroko and Seki taught me to begin splintering my sense of self by observing myself in triplicate, as a tiny "me" far away on the horizon in front of me, and an enormous "me" as a shadow in the distance behind me. Other images I use frequently are melting into the big sky and dusty desert road in Utah or Nevada, or the vacuous space and bright stars of the cosmos, or me as a Godzilla monster stomping on a tiny city. Any image could work, as long as it somehow changes the perspective from normal daily life.

Prosthetics and binding can provide a body-mind altering experience. In *Cockroach*, Koga had us hold eight-foot bamboo switches in our mouths, which we whipped around as sensors. We also held bamboo poles in our hands that we used as walking sticks for our front legs. I had a very clear sense of my cockroach body with these additional appendages. My center of gravity changed, and was more easily able to

let go of my human sensibilities. In *Cockroach* we also performed with blindfolds that we could slightly see through, sniffing our way after a piece of cake that Nishimura paraded through the space. These kinds of experiments with body manipulations are valuable both for their theatrical and experiential effect. The dancer is immediately taken outside of his or her normal experience of the body-mind by these limitations or enhancements and forced to inhabit a new sense of self. Such devices are often useful shortcuts for learning how to become something outside of one's normal sense of reality.

Hijikata often affected a change in everyday perspective through extreme performance experiments, like the aforementioned three-month Maya training, or Ashikawa's extended chicken explorations. The tradition of extreme physicality and durational experiments seems to have survived the generations – Sankai Juku perform their infamous hanging upside down from skyscrapers, or Eikō and Koma in their ten-hour "sleeping" installations are two examples. I have participated in some intensive investigations, two of which involved hanging on a wall in Caveartspace in Brooklyn. While extremely difficult, these experiences created a strong sense of altered time and space for me, and were also incredibly valuable lessons in learning how to affect a perspectival shift. In both cases, I was pushed to a limit of physical and psychological discomfort, and beyond that edge I found a new experience that I did not know was available to me previously. The first was in the choreography of Juan Merchan, *Ilo Temporale*, in which five dancers were attached to the wall in full body harnesses. Our skin and hair were caked in clay, and we wore tattered gowns. We hung on a hook in the center of an abstract painting by Naoki. Our instructions were to be completely still for the thirty minutes while the audience filtered in; we were given the image of mummies in

a tomb to inform our stillness. Then, as the music began, we slowly woke up and went through an elongated twenty-minute process of pulling our internal organs out of our mouths, twisting and contorting our bodies as we pulled in slow motion, and then returned to mummification on the wall. After only ten minutes of hanging in stillness, the harness started to cut into my legs, causing them to go numb. Without moving my external form, I tried to move my nerves on a minute level to keep sensation and energy flowing. I had to resist the temptation to move dramatically when the music began, and instead go through the transformation from sleep to waking gradually. I remember seeing white swirls slowly pouring out in front of me, delicately hovering in the air above the audience. At the end of the performance when we all pulled our innards back into our bodies, I felt my interior in much greater detail. The intensity of the experience forced me to engage with tiny details of the imagination, as a way of moving beyond the sheer discomfort of the positioning.

Similarly, in my own choreography for *Hatchlings*, I hung three dancers (myself included) in stretchy silk sacs on the same wall. We had asked for the audience to be held until just a few minutes before curtain, but as it turned out the performance was delayed and we ended up hanging inside the sacs for twenty minutes while the audience was seated. The arc of the piece was a ten-minute emergence from a cocoon, which ended in the dancers exposed and hanging upside down from the silks. Choreographing from the outside, I could see that the most gradual, disjointed emergence – first a finger, then a foot, a little more of the arm, and so on, with the head emerging just in the last minute before fully hanging upside down – was the most effective for creating a creature-like, unsettling image. Dancing it from inside the cocoon, however, my impulse was to

get my head free and get out as quickly as possible. The piece itself, plus the unanticipated twenty-minute wait for the audience, forced me to settle into the different mind-state of a gestating caterpillar. Just as Waguri has said to me so many times, the dance has its own time. In both cases, with *Ilo Temporale* and *Hatchlings*, I had to confront my discomfort while remaining still in extreme positions (hanging limp while a harness cut into my legs, or crushed in a fetal position inside a sac). Pain, frustration, anger, and claustrophobia arose and threatened my stillness. Somehow these extreme sensations pushed me deeper into the experience. I clung to my breath cycle to calm me down, and eventually settled into the time-space of the mummy, and the chrysalis. As I had learned from Murobushi, the simple act of watching the breath also changes it, and further, changes one's awareness. In this case, it made it possible to remain still and also to sink into the experience of the creature I was embodying.

What Gets Left Out of the Experience: the Difficulty of Becoming Truly Saturated

The experience of becoming completely saturated with an image or state can be both exhilarating and terrifying. Falling in love might be an apt analogy to becoming saturated or becoming "other." On the one hand, we are set aloft by a force that is seemingly greater than our own thought and will, and at the same time, the fear of being lost, psychologically-damaged, or otherwise injured, surfaces. This type of "becoming" is literally an experiment with sub- and unconscious states, which is a delicate territory in which to tread. That said, the ability to transform oneself is the currency of performers, and butō training offers many opportunities to exercise this skill.

When we do allow ourselves to become fully saturated, it is quite a dramatic shift from our everyday experience. For example, *suriashi*, or even just slow motion walking as Kan Katsura teaches, is often the first experience of saturation that many butō students encounter. The simple act of slowing down a walk invites one to become fully absorbed in details one might never notice in a daily walk from point A to point B. Several of my students have commented that they felt "all alone" and "very quiet and vast like in the cosmos" after practicing *suriashi* for only twenty minutes. One student in a recent workshop was a mother, and she noted after *suriashi* that while her attention in daily life is divided into hundreds of details about her family, school, work, and future, for these twenty minutes she forgot completely about everything else and just concentrated into her own existence. This absorption is a powerful experience, one that we rarely get to experience in our everyday lives.

Observing performers or students from the outside, I see that they are fully saturated with the image or experience when I no longer see residue of a personal "stamp" on the expression. As Hijikata told Yoshito, "the flower is already enough," there is no need to put oneself in the expression of the flower as well (2010). In acting terms, one's personal "stamp" would be equivalent to "commenting" on the action, which is a sign that the performer is distancing him or herself from the experience. As I mentioned above, I felt successful with my baby bird dance when my colleague gave me the feedback that he did not read a human emotion of frustration in my bird's repetitive wobbling and toppling over, but rather solely saw the instinctual determination of a real baby bird in its attempts to fly.

In a more challenging and nuanced instance of this kind of absorption, Koga once asked our cockroach trio to scream with our whole bodies without adding our own human emotional response to screaming. I remember being incredibly perplexed at this task. I asked him to demonstrate for us, which he reluctantly did, but all my untrained eye at that point could observe was his mouth wide open and his head thrown back as he crouched in a tiny ball. I copied this action and did not understand why he was unsatisfied. One of the dancers spent the afternoon in the barn studio at Schloss Broellin belting out blood-curdling howls to find the essence of "scream." While this psychological experiment would have unnerved me, it was certainly one inroad into the experience. Years later, I could relate this to similar exercises such as "the whole body smiling," which was of course capped with a smile on the face much like Koga's screaming body, but manifested the tension, energy, and openness of a smile with every fiber and aspect of one's being. Seki broke the smiling body down into smaller pieces, making it possible to build it incrementally. I remember having gaping grins in the palms of my hands, in the center of my chest, on my knees and scapula, and on the soles of my feet. Gradually the smiling faces multiplied and connected, and the sensation spread throughout my body. By building the experience in stages, I was able to remain focused on the sensation rather than a mental construct of what the smiling body would be. The energetic quality and muscular tension of smiling permeated my body in a way it could not have done otherwise.

There are many challenges to accomplishing and maintaining a state of complete saturation. A common problem is leaving the legs out of the experience, with the lower half of the body instead remaining a stable human foundation. Related to this is the

situation of seemingly embodying an image but then once instructed to travel in space, walking with normal, human steps. Instead, if one is smoke, one must walk as smoke. If one is eaten by maggots, one must step as if the bottom of the feet are also undergoing the same transformation. Any time I see my students put a hand flat on the ground to support themselves, I remind them that there are no stable places and everything must be consumed with the image. For this reason, many of my teachers have reiterated to me that the space under the feet is often the most important part of a dance, as this can create the entire state one is trying to evoke. To emphasize this, I often compartmentalize an image, telling students to forget about their upper body and only experience it in their feet or legs. This usually serves to intensify their overall experience, as their very foundation is now affected. Students often need to be reminded that the eyes and flesh of the face are part of the dance as well, and must be free to transform as the image dictates.

Further condensing an image, Waguri teaches students a rigorous method of transformation by percentages. In a 2011 workshop, he instructed us to transform our human bodies in five percent increment until we are completely dissolved into pollen in twenty steps. He refers to the final state as "ecstasy," saying that we are pollen and the air all around us is pollen. The discipline of increasing the intensity of the image by small five percent increments is incredibly difficult. The first time I tried this I found myself delicately on relevé by step five, and then as I struggled to maintain relevé the muscles of my legs tightened and became the opposite of dissolved. Similarly with my arms, they floated overhead but then became heavy and again impeded the light sense of pollen. Waguri advised me to keep my arms lower and instead rotate them gradually outward until the palms faced forward. In this position my hands could feel the moist

mist of pollen and my shoulders and chest felt light and open. This movement also caused me to raise my face and tip my head back. As with my arms, I found that there was a point at which the head becomes heavy, so it was important to calibrate the transformation accordingly. In a way, this kind of deliberate, almost mathematical transformation might seem a bit cold or overly intellectual. At the same time, though, it calls upon one to access true sensation and personal experience in order to find the desired state, and then precisely control the expression of that state. Such a skill is valuable for choreographing and can easily be applied to acting techniques, as in Jacques LeCoq's work, which also works with percentages. A performer playing Willie Loman, for example, could incorporate ten percent of a crumbling building image into his or her psychophysical state, or Ophelia could be played with increasing gradients of perfumed smoke.

Working with percentages is also useful for creating distance from an image and learning to manipulate something without attachment. As many of the images explored in butō can be grotesque and unsettling, attachment can cause confusion. On more than one occasion I have become overly attached with the image or state I was investigating, so much so that it lingered for several hours afterward. This can be amusing, as when Endo Mariko and I went to a café after practicing a worm-eaten lady choreography from Hijikata's *Nadare Ame butō-fu*, and were nearly unable to pick up our beverages. It can also be disturbing, as one can imagine. After an extended exercise with Seki in which we transformed between happy, sad, and angry with increasing speed, I felt quite stuck in anger. Seki's response was that this was my inexperience, and that as I became more adept at transforming I would not have this problem. In another instance, I was in Seki's

class practicing a "hanging" meditation in which we imagined ourselves rising and falling with the breath from the surface of the earth. This exercise regularly evokes cosmic imagery of stars and planets for me. I usually marvel at the beauty of the cosmic landscape, yet on this particular day, it struck me differently. I wrote in my class notes that I felt "the insignificance of it all, the violence of the transience," and as I carried my own little star and saw others, I noticed the stars that were going out, which made me incredibly sad. For the forty minutes or so that we practiced our "hanging walks," I cried as I danced. By the end of the exercise I felt released from the emotional state but it was certainly an intense experience while going through it, and more than once I felt lost. In later discussion Seki commented that sometimes these image meditations can unearth strong emotions, some of which might not even be our own, and that by being aware of that we can create the proper distance from which to observe the unfolding imagination.

I found this advice useful years later when choreographing a section of a dance in which I asked the dancers to access an excruciatingly beautiful image. Many sourced their images from deeply personal experiences, and then struggled with the emotions that arose. Through much discussion and experimentation, we were able to extract elements from each image that resonated with personal experience but were removed enough from their full personal narratives to enable them to play with the material. The result was rewarding; each dancer created precisely the state I was looking for from their own experience, which would have been difficult to do if I had simply given them an image that evoked the quality for me.

The ability to become saturated through personal resonance with an image becomes increasingly important within set work, because the more often we perform

something the more we become inured to its effects. This does not always mean that we should access personal history in connection with an image, although this might be useful. However, as Ōno mentioned, we can use improvisation to "thicken" material that will later be set, so that there is a bed of experiences to draw from in order to keep the image fresh. In working on my current series of bird pieces, I lead the dancers through image journeys in which they break out of a shell, open their wings for the first time, learn to walk, struggle to fly, and catch food with a beak. These exercises inform the movements which I eventually choreograph, but they are not the dance itself. We return to these improvisations often, sometimes even as a warm up for the actual show, to reconnect with the raw image that guides the choreography. As a result, the dancers can take the exhilarating ride that the images provide, and the movements that I have set in space and time on the stage are secondary to that experience.

A Continuing Exploration

These examples are just some of the ways in which I have understood, shared, and applied my encounters with butō. As I continue to study and experiment in teaching and through my own work, the relevance of butō methods continues to expand. Beyond the dissertation, my research plan is to more closely examine the application of these methods to actor training, and explore the dialog that emerges about body-based performance training techniques in general. As an increasing number of actor training programs incorporate Asian theater techniques and physical practices – such as Tai Chi, Yoga, Nō Theater, Suzuki Method, Kalarippayattu, and others – I am interested in the discussion about how such *kata* (movement sequences or forms) effect the performer's

psychophysical being, and what role these forms play in deepening the performer's presence on stage. Further, how have these combinations of Western and Eastern forms influenced the forms themselves, and perhaps dissolved some of the perceived boundaries? Additionally, the ways in which images are used as *kata* in butō would be a productive discussion and point of comparison. Further, I believe that butō techniques of attunement, interresonance, and embodiment will be particularly applicable to the exploration of acting technique, and I am eager to investigate these ideas in an interdisciplinary performance training setting working with actors and dancers alike. The reflections and embodied experiences I have discussed here already begin the dialog, particularly as related to preparation for performance, and the performers' skills of altering everyday perspective and becoming fully engaged or saturated with an image. I am fortunate to have my own practice and performance work as a laboratory for continuing investigation.

CHAPTER 6
RESONANCES AND REFLECTIONS

Introduction

Theater and dance practitioners of various genres and disciplines no doubt recognize resonances of the butō methodologies discussed in their own training practices: extreme physical actions to push the performer beyond the everyday perception; repetition of actions as a means of developing presence (rather than as a means of developing skills); the emphasis on holistic training that integrates mind, body, and spirit; and the use of imagery to stimulate visceral response. In my opinion, this points to the fact that butō could certainly be a complementary practice to many of these training systems, offering the performer other inroads into similar material, and possibly unlocking some deeper levels of awareness.

In the following sections I will highlight theories and methods of select key Western theater practitioners that have similarities with Hijikata's butō philosophy and training methods. In particular, I investigate the work of Konstantin Stanislavski, Jerzy Grotowski, Eugenio Barba, and Phillip Zarrilli, all of whom incorporate Eastern and Western idioms in their work much in the way that Hijikata combined forms in a global post-modern pastiche. I see strong parallel goals in these systems, and a productive dialogue that could occur. Having explored butō training with traditionally trained actors

in classes and productions, I envision a variety of ways in which butō methods can be employed to enhance the actor's abilities and enrich their performance.

This is not to say that there are not potential applications of butō methods to contemporary dance training; indeed there are. For example, it would be a fruitful analysis to compare somatic techniques used in contemporary dance training such as Ideokinesis and Body-Mind Centering to Hijikata's work with imagery, or contrast the graceful violence of Elizabeth Streb's Extreme Action Lab to Hijikata's demand for stamina and fearlessness, to name just a few dance applications to be considered. However, in my experience, the cross-fertilization of butō and contemporary dance techniques is already happening in a very productive way. Dancers are cross training in multiple techniques, moving from butō to post-modern to circus all within the course of their technical and creative development. My own training trajectory is not at all uncommon among contemporary dancers. And as Bales and Nettl-Fiol point out in *The Body Eclectic: Evolving Practices in Dance Training,* choreographers are increasingly incorporating dancers with diverse training into their work, emphasizing the productive differences in styles and approaches to enrich the overall dance vocabulary. Examples include collaborations such as those between Kota Yamazaki and Senegalese Janti-Bi in the 2003 *Fagaala*, or with Charles Anderson's DanceTheater X for the 2008 piece *In-Ou*, both mixing butō and African dance; or Pilobolus and Dairakurakan's Muramatsu Takuya's 2011 collaboration, *Korokoro*; and Shinichi Koga's collaboration with mixed-ability dance company Axis in the 2007 *ODD*. Additionally, butō practitioners have branched into therapeutic work, such as Nakajima's butō classes and performances with physically and mentally disabled people, Kasai Toshi/Morita Itto's integration of butō

and dance therapy, or Vangeline's butō as therapy for incarcerated women. A number of meaningful experiments are well underway bridging butō dance to other movement techniques and trainings, and it will be interesting to track their progress and discoveries.

Psychophysical Actor Training

Turning again to the potential connections with contemporary theater training, I will highlight some of the similarities in approach. Each of the theater directors I mentioned above– Stanislavski, Grotowski, Barba, and Zarrilli–has embraced a physical practice as a means of building the actor's sensitivity and ability to respond to stimulus. They also talk of the complete commitment of the actor to the task, as a kind of sacrifice of self in service of a "total theater." All of them encourage improvisation within the structure of character/role, script, and staging. They also share a use of imagery to stimulate presence and relationship with space. And finally they all encourage the actor to become his or her own teacher, developing self-awareness regarding one's craft.

Stanislavski borrowed freely from yoga, encouraging yoga asana and yogic breathing exercises to create the desired state of relaxation that could allow the actor to concentrate and imagine his environment (Carnicke 2010, 7-8). He also used a variety of physical exercises designed to manipulate what he called "rays of energy" (Carnicke 2010, 12), which can be equated to working with *ki* energy. Carnicke describes Stanislavski exercises she observed at Moscow's Russian Academy of Theatrical Arts in which actors directed their own energy within the room to try and elicit a response from their partners, causing them to move or execute an action like opening a door. The

energy control acquired in yoga influenced Stanislavski's methods of working with physical space.

Grotowski employed an even more elaborate system of physical exercises, distilled from his teacher Stanislavski's work on physical actions, Meyerhold's biomechanics, yoga, Charles Dullin (one of Artaud's teachers)'s rhythm exercises, Peking Opera, Kathakali, and Japanese Nō, among other influences (Grotowski 2002, 16). The exercises included extremely challenging sequences, such as repeatedly leaping forward with a fully outstretched body from a crouched position and returning to a crouch, or executing a diving summersault over a partner who bends at the waist to create a hurdle. Rather than perfecting the physical form, Grotowski preferred that "the actor must justify every detail of this training with a precise image…the exercise is correctly executed only if the body does not oppose any resistance during the realization of the image in question," and further, that continued training would make the actor "malleable as plasticine to the impulses" (ibid., 135). Similar to the Noguchi gymnastics used by many butō teachers today, Grotowski's physical training aimed to "test the limits of the body's equilibrium," in both a physical and psychic way (Wolford 2010, 209).

Barba, a student of Grotowski, formed Odin Teatret with a group of intercultural actors who trained communally. Lacking funds to bring in master teachers, each member contributed their various technical skills to the collective and created a "creole of sorts both in the rehearsal room and its productions" (Watson 2010, 238-239). Like his teacher, Barba emphasized the relationship to physical work, rather than the mastery of given skills in and of themselves. In Barba's work, however, this philosophy led him to

emphasize improvisation with the large pool of physical material the group had generated, rather than codifying and repeating a set series.

Zarrilli trained extensively in the Indian martial art kalarippayattu, which he blended with his foundation in Stanislavski, Grotowski, and Barba's work. Like Barba he developed an eclectic physical training system, though his palette is more condensed to these few influences, with the addition of breath and energy exercises from yoga, taiqiquan, and aikido. He writes, "[t]o awaken the subtle inner bodymind, one must first attend directly to a particular embodied activity…Once awakened, this bodymind or mode of awareness becomes ecstatic, it begins to vibrate/resonate and therefore move" (Zarrilli 2009, 55-56). Using himself as the primary subject for his research, Zarrilli has closely examined the effects of prolonged training on his psychophysical being and his acting abilities, and notes that it is through long-term, body-based engagement that one is able to cultivate awareness of the subtle body. Like Grotowski, he has adopted a series of set exercises from his various influences that he uses for consistent, long-term training with students and actors in his work. He emphasizes "training toward readiness," which produces the "body that is all eyes" (borrowing a term from kalarippayttu) (Zarrilli 2009, 25).

The term "body that is all eyes" emphasizes the totality of engagement and the heightened state of awareness that is the goal of physical practice in each of these actor-training systems. For example, Zarrilli takes his students through a literal exercise with this image, asking them to relocate their eyes to their lower abdomen and other physical placements, and "look" through these vantage points, thus sensitizing them to new perspectives (26). Stanislavski distilled scenes down to raw energy, highlighting only

physical actions; he had his actors play scenes without text, with simply the physical actions to highlight the body's full engagement with the moment to moment unfolding of the narrative (Carnicke 2010, 12). He directed his students that if they simply focused on the actions, the result (the story) would take care of itself (Stanislavskii 1989, 212-14). In other words, living the moment is more important than the intellectual motivations and trajectories of each character and narrative.

Grotowski crystallized the heightened state of physical action as the "holy actor" who sacrifices himself to the work; the goal of physical training is to free the body "from all resistance. The body must virtually cease to exist" (Grotowski 2000, 36). His technique aimed at "a complete stripping down, by laying bare one's own intimity – all this without the least trace of egotism or self-enjoyment. The actor makes a total gift of himself" (ibid., 16). The training was to make an actor's reflexes so quick that thought had not time to intervene (ibid., 35).

This self-negation and absorption into the performance material without resistance sounds remarkably like Hijikata's practice, and also Nishida's description of acting-intuition (see Chapter 3, section 5), which he describes as an "animated state with maximum freedom in which there is not the least gap between the will's demand and its fulfillment" (Nishida quoted in Yuasa 1987, 65). Recall that Mikami and Waguri in particular mentioned being inundated with images and instructions, and their only choice was to accept and allow the images to pass through them. By responding to images on a visceral level, without thinking, Waguri describes becoming an empty vessel as a vehicle for the dance. Similarly, Grotowski emphasizes the importance of transforming from an "organism-mass" (indicated muscles and bones in athletic activity) into an "organism-

channel through which energies circulate, the energies transform, and the subtle is touched" (quoted in Schechner and Wolford 1997, 376). Further, Grotowski ties this vessel to the role or character, which he calls a "trampoline" for the actor's moment-to-moment experience (Grotowski 2000, 37). Barba describes training techniques as a form of "colonization," which the performer must perfect so that ultimately he or she can choose how to use the technique, depending upon what the inner experience inspires (Barba 1991, 245). Grotowski makes the distinction that he was not developing the performer's "bag of tricks" but rather the skills were a way to stretch the performer into new territory and expand the energetic capabilities (2000, 121). As with Hijikata's methods, each of these theater practitioners emphasizes that it is through one's own body, as a synthesis of the subject and object body, that the performer reaches a transcendent state. Through disciplined and precise practice, the performer is eventually able to forget about him or herself altogether, leaving the ego consciousness behind and fully embodying the image or role.

For each of these theater practitioners, improvisation is key to the moment-to-moment unfolding of acting. Stanislavski describes it as the actor being "seized by the role" (Stanislavski 1993, 363), much in the same way that Waguri describes being "caught" by one image after another in a series. Stanislavski emphasized the importance of experiencing each state of transformation fully, by imagining extensive visceral details about each instance of action. Grotowski described being caught or seized as "acting that glows," which he says is informed equally by spontaneity and discipline, and that without discipline, spontaneity is just energy (Grotowski 2000, 121). Discipline is necessary to shape the experience, and spontaneity is critical to keep the actor alive in the moment.

When executing specific physical training exercises, he suggests imagining oneself in constant contact with someone else, "in order to give the exercise a definite direction" (Grotowski 2000, 189). Imagining the space in detail keeps the moment alive through visceral sensation.

In all of these traditions, the director makes the actors in some way responsible for their own education. Barba shifted the onus of daily discipline onto his actors, such that they became their own teachers with responsibility for the daily training material (Watson 2010, 246). In his 2010 book *Psychophysical Acting: An Intercultural Approach After Stanislavski,* Zarrilli, also a proponent of rigor and disciplined practice, suggests many ways in which the performer can develop self-awareness, and discipline him or herself. Stanislavski encouraged his actors to "sharpen the senses through observation" (Stanislavskii 1990, 400), encouraging them to "develop your experience of the world and your ability to emphasize with others through a broad liberal arts education" (Stanislavski 1989, 316). Stanislavski's instructions here most clearly mirror Hijikata's direction to see daily life as a teacher. However, for Hijikata, the sentiment of student as self-teacher is echoed throughout training, and the student or performer takes on the responsibility for his or her own cultivation. Training is a process of developing self-awareness, such that the performer learns to see and direct oneself from the outside.

As a means of seeing oneself from the outside, Zarrilli describes psychophysical actor training as a system that works in four dimensions: the surface body, the recessive body, the aesthetic inner body-mind, and the aesthetic outer body (Zarrilli 2009, 51). His system is based on Drew Leder's discussion of the lived body as "a complex harmony of different regions" (Leder 1990, 2), roughly organized into a "surface" and a "recessive"

body. Zarrilli's addition of the latter two regions takes into account the "extra-daily" cultivation of the performer's body for the purpose of communicating to an audience. It is interesting to note that inner aesthetic body-mind cultivation precedes the outer aesthetic body realization. In other words, one must first develop the inner felt sense of an experience before shape one's expression. In Zarrilli's discussion, the process of shaping one's expression is an aesthetic one, which is sensed and crafted both internally and externally.

This brings me full circle to Nagatomo's idea of non-duality in performing arts training that opened this dissertation: training necessitates transformation of one's own body through a process of attunement and experience (2003, 6-7). Experience is the key here, and it must be felt wholly and completely, on an individual level. We can approximate experience with language, but there is no thought or word or signifier that suffices to share experience. Speaking of an artist's study as "the way", he writes: "the way involves the whole of the person…there is no walking dualist in the way" (2003, 4). Pure experience, which is without the distortion of language, judgment, or individual standpoint is realized when one "passively mirrors reality" (Carter 1989, 10). Experience is a felt inner-resonance (to use Dogen's term), or to describe it in Murobushi's explanation, "this communication or sensation we have inside the body" (2010).

Following Hijikata's logic, this experience within ourselves is the only experience worth having. He famously compares the process of internal investigation to diving down inside of a deep well, and those who miss this essential investigation as dying of thirst in a desert of their own creation. He writes:

> A dancer must be able to relate to, for example, a frozen bone that transcends gender. Getting to that point, however, demands exhaustive

> examination, and without it the work will lapse into a trendy pseudo-darkness. In part such a failure is doubtless a result of the times in which we live, but it's also because *people have superficial perceptions of their own particular landscapes*. Underground art turns into mere trendiness not because of external factors but because of the people who practice it. They create a desert around themselves, then complain there is no water. Why don't they try drinking from the wells within their own bodies? They should instead drop a ladder deep into their own bodies and climb down it. *Let them pluck the darkness from within their own bodies and eat it.* But they always seek resolution from outside themselves (Hijikata quoted in Shibusawa 1968, 51-52, emphasis added).

Hijikata's admonition that dancers should be "like a frozen bone that transcends gender" indicates that the goal of his work as not one of harvesting personal feelings and experiences. His suggestion to "pluck the darkness from within their own bodies and eat it" is not a directive to mine personal *angst* or suffering for performance, but rather to explore the sub- and unconscious realm. As with the theater directors discussed above, Hijikata's interest was in developing the performer's ability to step outside his or her ego-logically motivated experience and imagine experience from the perspective of "other," in Hijikata's case, from a seemingly foreign substance such as a frozen bone.

What Butō Methods Have to Offer to Psychophysical Actor Training

This last distinction—Hijikata's interest in becoming something other than human—offers a clue into the potential applications of butō methods in these types of psychophysical actor training. Beyond the exercises designed to build an actor's experience of a role—of another person essentially—butō can take an actor beyond all sense of human form to relate, for example, to a frozen bone. I perceive a variety of ways in which this would be useful. First, if the goal of such intense actor training were to bring one beyond the ego-conscious self, it would seem valuable to be able to imagine oneself as the materiality of something that one does not typically identify with as having an ego. Rather than anthropomorphize an inanimate object, one can fully explore the

substance of that being, without superimposing personality or egocentric perspective. Hijikata's butō-fu, for example, bring the performer directly to the materiality of experience. Even something with human content, such as "Tower of heads/War of hair/Quarrel between teeth" (*Hijikata Scrapbooks* 16-17, Trans. Endo Mariko 2011), divorces the ego from the action. Consider the power of playing Agave with such an image; bewitched by the vengeful Dionysus and holding her son's severed head that she believes to be a hunting trophy, she is clearly mad. Madness, however, can easily become generic and unconvincing without specific content. Purely psychological rationale for actions can be equally stereotypical. Giving an actor a rich palette of abstract imagery allows them to enhance their engagement with a moment or a role, perhaps in a new way.

Consider the following complementary relationship between story and subtext: Ruth Zaporah, a brilliant physical theater performer who developed a system called Action Theater, teaches an exercise called the Language Superhighway.[44] One person takes the role of the superhighway: he or she is responsible for the narrative content and telling a story in linear fashion. Two partners take the role of side-roads. They interrupt the superhighway narrator with free association sound and language inspired by any particular word, though they must never say exactly which word it is. The result is often a rich dreamscape and complex sound bed that elicits a fully realized atmosphere.

I mention the Language Superhighway here to demonstrate how Hijikata's butō-fu might be used with a scripted play. If the play is the language superhighway, any text the director or actor chooses could become the springboard for a surreal series of images

[44] I practiced this exercise in a three-month training with Zaporah in 1999 in Berkeley, California.

that can bring depth and texture to the narrative. It can interrupt the text or be played with the text, by the same actor or different performers to support the moment. Through such experiments, endless possibilities exist to bring a rich, visceral, image landscape to a performance.

When I have worked with actors, I ask them to just explore the images for their own fullness before thinking about what to do with them. I try to broaden their expressive palette by asking them to fully express something as non-human as a glacier sliding toward the ocean and then breaking off into icebergs as it hits the sea. After exploring it without thinking, then I ask them to investigate the movement life of characters for which this progression might make sense. It need not be a tragic, Blanche Dubois-type character; it could be something as buoyant as the moment Antony and Cleopatra fall in love (though that has elements of tragedy too). Still, the performer must take experiential information from the iceberg sliding toward the path of least resistance, following gravity, and the tiny fissures and cracks that occur as it melts and strains across uneven surface. The breaking moment is then less of a psychologically driven action and more of a holistic, psychophysical experience with deep resonance in the performers mind-body.

Returning to the structure I proposed to describe Hijikata's butō methodology, I identified three key phases for training. These are: disorientation, or the act of destabilizing one's sense of self and engendering a perspectival shift; saturation, or the process by which one fully experiences becoming an image with one's whole being; and de/reconstruction, through which one can re-orient to a different sense of reality beyond the everyday experience. Comparing Hijikata's methodology to that of Stanislavski,

Grotowski, Barba, and Zarrilli, they all share an emphasis on saturation and de/reconstructing reality. However, Hijikata's methods place significant emphasis on the initial phase of disorientation, which I would argue is a rather effective means of moving a performer beyond the ego-self. One could counter that Grotowski's exercises in particular did much to disorient the performer, and I would agree to an extent, but only in as far as the performer confronted fear and belief in personal limits. Hijikata's work pushed performers well beyond any sense of "I" altogether, which could be useful in actor training as a means of "dilating presence" (Barba 1991, 54) and finding "the real source of acting that glows" (Grotowski 2000, 121). Indeed, Hijikata's butō shared these goals and developed extensive methods for performer cultivation toward the dissolution of self and the embodiment of absolutely anything one can imagine.

Possibilities for Future Research

Looking forward, I envision a variety of future research with butō training. The first strand involves practical research, working in the studio with Hijikata's ideas and methods. In one scenario, it would be interesting to simply teach butō techniques and approaches for an extended period to actors or dancers who have no prior experience with butō and analyze the impact on their form of origin. How would it change their engagement with space and ensemble? How would their presence be enlivened differently? Would the execution of their original form change, and if so, how? Another avenue might be to take a set piece of work, either a play or a highly choreographed dance, as the Language Superhighway as I have described above, and engage the many possible side roads with butō methods. With a play, one could ask: what does the text

inspire in terms of imagery and how can that imagery serve a rich atmosphere? How can the embodiment of imagery heighten key moments in the narrative? What would happen if the actors embodied non-human objects instead of leading from psychological interaction; how can relationships between objects—water dripping for a long time until it breaks through a ceiling, wind blustering so hard that it uproots trees, sunshine warming a bare winter branch until a bud bursts forth—how can these sorts of interactions feed another level of relationship and interaction between actors?

With a choreographed dance, once could break down movement pathways and explore sensation in greater detail. What happens when momentum is disrupted? What about shape, line, and stability? How can imagery change the choreography's dynamics, sense of scale, or mood? Again, some of this work has already been investigated with somatic studies such as Ideokinesis, but there is a great deal more that could be done. Specifically, how might highly codified dance forms such as ballet or Odissi intersect with butō methods? Kasai and Ōno Yoshito assert that Anna Pavlova's dying swan has already achieved this intersection, so once could say the precedent is there. Still, what would happen if conservatory students took an equal amount of courses in ballet and butō, for example? Would it foster a new generation of Anna Pavlovas, with incredible beauty and line while having an ability to transcend human experience and embody other creatures? It would certainly be an interesting experiment.

A third area of studio experimentation that fascinates me personally is that of connecting butō with sound. What does butō sound like? How can text or singing be inflected with butō techniques of embodying imagery or transcending self? Is it possible to reach a perspectival shift through sound, and how does that in turn affect movement as

explored in butō? There are many examples of ecstatic singing—Indian raga, Blues, opera, and tango singers come to mind—but what would it be like to have a singer trained in butō techniques of self-erasure? How can the whole body engage in the song? Would it sound different than singing we have heard before? With text, how can atmosphere and state affect language? Philadelphia-based Pig Iron approximated what this intersection might be quite profoundly with its 2007 *Isabella*, a highly experimental adaptation of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* set in a morgue. The actors were literally corpses, and mumbled their lines as if their mouths were frozen with rigor mortis. The mortician propped them against one another to emphasize interactions, and at times the warmth of the other bodies seemed to enliven their speech to a sputter. Perhaps the choice of a well-known narrative was a good one for this experiment, because the audience could easily follow the story even though the text was nearly impossible to understand. What would it be like to take such a technique further with an unknown text? Could a text be acted fully with movement and sound, and still convey a relatively coherent narrative? This again would be a very interesting practical experiment with the intersections of butō and theater.

In terms of historical research, there are several intersections to trace further, such as the connections between German Ausdrucktanz and butō, beginning with Eguchi Takaya's work with Mary Wigman in Germany in 1922 and Harald Kreutzberg's 1932 performances in Japan (see Stein 2001, 378) and continuing through the relationship between Pina Bausch and Ōno Kazuo, as well as the vibrant butō community in Berlin today. Another thread to extrapolate would be the connections between butō and American post-modern dance, as well as the influence of John Cage on both of these

forms. A third rich area of research might be to look closely at the work of Grotowski and Hijikata alongside one another, and analyze the influence of Artaud on both of their work. One might also draw a comparison between Grotowski's star actor Ryszard Cieslak and Hijikata's principal dancer Ashikawa Yoko, examining their pure denial of self in service of their director's wishes as well as their legendary transcendent performances.

One might also investigate a cultural studies lens on the butō diaspora. For example, in a recent conversation with Jawole Willa Zolar, artistic director of Urban Bush Women, she voiced the opinion that many contemporary dance companies in Africa have a deep affinity for butō. "They just get it," she said, commenting on the dancers' readiness to express deep experiences of the body. The collaboration I mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, *Fagaala* by Germaine Acongy and Yamazaki Yota, deals with the Rwandan genocide. What are the similarities between a generation of African dancers trying to come to terms extreme violence such as this and early butō artists responding to the devastating aftermath of WWII? Additionally, what is SU-EN's Nordic Butō in relation to Hijikata's Tohoku? Do these cold climates correspond, and how does climate affect the body? Or are her developments of Nordic Butoh and the work of companies such as Jant-Bi an extension of what Hijikata meant when he said that Tohoku could be anywhere? He said, "Although it is Tohoku Kabuki, there is a Tohoku in England. The utter darkness exists throughout the world, doesn't it?" (quoted in Kurihara 2000, 21). As butō the butō diaspora now extends to Russia, Eastern and Western Europe, Africa, South, Central, and North America, and through Asia and Australia, there is certainly enough material to investigate his claims. Additionally, one

might also compare the butō diaspora to other diasporas, such as African dance or ballet, which have migrated and changed in the process.

In short, Hijikata—and Ōno—sparked a resonant chord with butō that continues to reverberate today. Though some say that butō is dead and others contest that butō is not yet achieved, I propose asking the question, what is the seepage between butō's initial inspiration and other performance forms, particularly with regards to training methods? And further, where is there potential for further cross-fertilization?

Conclusion

At the beginning of this research journey, I initially proposed an explication of Hijikata's non-dualistic, holistic approach to body and performer training, for the purpose of exploring future applications of butō methods. Using Nagatomo's notion that training necessitates transformation through a process of attunement to experience (2003, 6-7), I sought out the experiences of ten butō masters in their interactions with Hijikata or his first generation of students, in order to create a clearer picture of the lived experience of transformation in Hijikata's butō training. Having repeatedly heard the term "becoming nothing" from many of these teachers in my own training, I was compelled to research Hijikata's understanding of nothingness, as informed by the intellectual environment of his time. As I investigated, I found a long dialog with nothingness in Japanese philosophy and religion, which prompted me to query the similarities and differences with this thought base and Hijikata's actual practices of self-negation in performance and training, as well as his own stated goals as seen through his writings.

What I discovered was an affinity (though not a recognized adoption of these ideas) with Zen Buddhist practices of overcoming dualism, as a gradual process achieved through cultivating the mind-body connection through an essentially physical practice. What emerged as critical in both Zen practice and butō training was the emphasis on experience as the key to transcending the ego-self. Falling into the experience, without question, or judgment, or thought, ultimately allows one to have the fullest experience possible, which is to experience the totality of the existence. From an egocentric point of view, to become nothing (in Hijikata's terms) is to dissolve the ego-self. However, as one continues beyond this point, the perspective of ego loses any meaning; the nothingness that is beyond this point is in fact the everythingness of all life, before we give it language or meaning, and develop affinities and aversions. This nothingness/everythingness creative source is the stated goal of Zen Buddhist cultivation, and the implied goal of butō practice. As butō is a performative practice and not a purely contemplative one as Buddhist meditation is, the butō dancer trains to become an empty vessel through which this creative source can find expression.

Nishida explains the levels of transformation in this process, and describes the state of consciousness at each point as a *basho*, or *topos*. The implication of space is critical in understanding the unfolding changes, as one must affect a perspectival shift in relation to space in order to transform. In other words, in the first level of everyday consciousness, one's sense of space has a single perspective, with a clearly delineated sense of self and everything else in space. With practice, one can learn to see from outside oneself, and eventually develop a multivalent perspective in space, where one's awareness is heightened and dispersed. The ultimate *basho* of absolute nothingness, or

space of no-thing, is a positionless position (to use Takuan's term) in which only pure experience exists.

As an end goal, Hijikata aimed for his dancers to approach pure experience. In his early work he approached this through extreme physicality and chaotic, surreal performances intended to shock and otherwise wake dancers and audiences alike from their everyday perspective. In his later work, Hijikata barraged his dancers with an enormous amount of images, guiding them to gradually lose their thinking minds and open their perception to minute details of existence, such as the tiny feet of an ant crawling up one's leg. He magnified these images to bring his dancers to a point of pure sensation and raw expression.

Essential to the practice of embodying these images is Nagatomo's concept of attunement, or a "felt inner resonance" (to use Dogen's term). The connection is energetic, sensed through *ki* energy. When working with an image, the butō dancer learns to notice the shifts of *ki* in the subtle body, as this is where the image will affect the unconscious self. Eventually, the dancer learns to "see" from the perspective of the image, and then from the atmosphere (or *basho*) itself. Relating back to Nishida's concept of *basho*, this stage is just the beginning of the process. Through extended cultivation in image work, one can perhaps touch moments of absolute nothingness. However, as this is a performative form, the butō dancer must maintain connection with the space of the performance, however expansive that may be.

In this chapter, I explored several other performance training methods that aim to bring the performer beyond him or herself, into a realm of heightened experience. As I have explained, Hijikata's butō had clear and effective methods for moving performers

beyond simply heightened experience to a transcendence of self altogether. I believe that contemporary performer training systems could benefit greatly from exploring butō methods in greater detail. Specifically, the butō techniques of attunement, interresonance, and embodiment can easily be applied to a number of different performance methods, as a means of enhancing performer presence and deepening the performer's internal experience. As Hijikata said, "true art lies in expressing without disassembling the essence lurking in the body using the splendid material of the body" (quoted in Tetsuo 1960, 62). There is much of value to learn from Hijikata's methods for expressing without disassembling; his was a process that found a way to reach the essence for which all performance aims.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPLICATIONS AND FORMS

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY
Office of the Vice President for Research
Institutional Review Board
Committee B
(215) 707-8757 Fax: (215) 707-8387
www.research.temple.edu/irb

COMMITTEE USE ONLY
PROTOCOL NUMBER

REQUEST FOR PROTOCOL REVIEW (BEHAVIORAL & SOCIAL SCIENCES)

I. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR – IF STUDENT RESEARCH, ADVISOR IS PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

NAME, DEGREE	AFFILIATION WITH TEMPLE	PHONE	FAX
Kahlich, Luke, Ph.D.	Professor	215-204-6260	215-204-4347

SCHOOL/COLLEGE, CENTER/DEPARTMENT, AND SECTION	TEMPLE EMAIL (REQUIRED)
Boyer College/Dance Department	lkahlich@temple.edu

PREFERRED MAILING ADDRESS
Temple U., Vivacqua Hall, 1700 North Broad Street Ste 309, Philadelphia, PA 19122

ACCESSNET ID (REQUIRED)	9 DIGIT TUID (REQUIRED)
lkahlich	904322017

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR - IF STUDENT RESEARCH, ADVISOR IS PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
Signature: _____ **DATE**

Printed Name: Dr. Luke Kahlich

II. STUDENT INVESTIGATOR – TEMPLE STUDENT

NAME, DEGREE	AFFILIATION WITH TEMPLE	PHONE	FAX
Tanya Calamoneri, MA	Ph.D. Student	718-207-3307	

SCHOOL/COLLEGE, CENTER/DEPARTMENT, AND SECTION	TEMPLE EMAIL (REQUIRED)
Boyer College/Dance Department	tcalamoneri@temple.edu

PREFERRED MAILING ADDRESS

ACCESSNET ID (REQUIRED)	9 DIGIT TUID (REQUIRED)
tua96354	911256660

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT RESEARCHER
Signature: _____ **DATE**

Printed Name: Tanya Calamoneri

III. PROJECT CATEGORY

☐	Faculty Research	☒	Dissertation Research
☐	Master's Research	☐	Other Graduate Research
☐	Undergraduate Research	☐	Undergraduate Independent Study
☐	Undergraduate Course Requirement	☐	Administrative Research
☐	Other (please specify):		

IV. PROJECT DATA

TITLE OF PROJECT

Butō Master Artist Interviews for Ph.D. dissertation – investigating training practices and the philosophical bases for an artistic expression.

Dissertation Working Title: *Becoming Nothing to Become Something: New Methods of Performer Training in Hijikata Tatsumi's Ankoku Butō Dance*

FUNDING AGENCY	PROPOSED STARTING DATE	ESTIMATED DURATION
	5/1/10	1.5 year

STUDY LOCATION

Tokyo and Kyoto, Japan; Tallahassee, Florida; San Francisco, California

IS DATA FOR THIS STUDY BEING OBTAINED FROM ANOTHER SOURCE?

☒ **No** ☐ **Yes**

IF YES, IDENTIFY THE SOURCE AND PROVIDE DOCUMENTED PERMISSION TO USE THE DATA.

PLEASE NOTE

IF YOUR PROTOCOL IS DETERMINED TO REQUIRE FULL COMMITTEE REVIEW, YOU WILL BE REQUESTED TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL COPIES (20 TOTAL)
FORWARD THREE (3) COPIES OF THIS FORM WITH PROTOCOL AND CONSENT FORM(S) TO:
RICHARD THROM, DIRECTOR, OFFICE FOR HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION
PROGRAM MANAGER & COORDINATOR, IRB
3rd FLOOR HUDSON BUILDING (555-00)
3425 NORTH CARLISLE STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19140

Application to the IRB from Tanya Calamoneri, Ph.D. Student
Study Topic: Butō Master Artist Interviews for Ph.D. dissertation – investigating training practices and the philosophical bases for an artistic expression.

I. CHARACTERISTICS OF POTENTIAL SUBJECTS

A. About how many subjects will you need? Please include the number of females and males you wish to recruit.

I will interview a total of 15-20 subjects for my dissertation research. At present, I have identified 6 women and 6 men that I wish to interview. I will add other interviewees based on their suggestions, and I would expect that the distribution of males and females will be about equal.

B. Describe the potential subjects in terms of gender, age range, ethnic group, and any other significant descriptors.

The subjects range in age from 35-70 and are equally divided between men and women. All are connected to my topic – Japanese Butō dance – and the majority are ethnically Japanese or Japanese-American. One is Columbian and one is American. Most of the subjects are artists, two are arts curators, and two are professors of Japanese studies.

C. Indicate any special subject characteristics, such as persons with mental handicaps, physical handicaps, prisoners, pregnant women, etc.

There are no special subject characteristics in this population.

D. Are you aware of any special health problems with the subject pool?

I am not aware of any special health problems associated with the subject pool.

E. Describe how you will gain access to these potential subjects.
I am a dancer and involved in the Butō community in New York, San Francisco, and Berlin, where I have met several of the subjects. I will gain access to those that I do not know through introductions from other artists and the two curators. I have studied with one of the professors I intend to interview, and have a connection to the other professor through a colleague in my field.

F. How will subjects be selected or excluded from the study?
I have selected subjects for this study based upon their past work with Tatsumi Hijikata, the founder of the Butō dance form who is now deceased. I am researching Hijikata's ideas about the body and dance, and interviewing his primary students and collaborators for information about this topic. Additionally, I am giving preference to subjects who have developed their own training methods based on Hijikata's work and ideas, as I am mainly interested in Butō dance training methodology and want to talk to subjects who have invested significant attention in this topic.

G. If subjects are from an institution other than Temple University, please indicate the name of the officer responsible for granting access to the subjects.
These subjects are from the dance community at large and are not represented by an institution.

One of the arts curators, Brechin Flournoy, is independent, and the second, Ximena Garnica, is the director of the New York International Butoh Festival, and has the authority to grant an interview as the head of that organization. Of the two professors, one is affiliated with Temple University and the second is an Associate Professor of Modern Japanese Literature at the University of Pennsylvania, and able grant permission for her participation in this study as a scholar in the field.

H. If the subjects are children, anyone suffering from a known psychiatric condition, or legally restricted, please explain why it is necessary to use these persons as subjects.

N/A

II. EXPERIMENTAL OR RESEARCH PROCEDURE

A. Describe the objectives and/or goals of your research.

This study will investigate performer training in Butō dance, focusing specifically on self-cultivation through practice. My objective is to articulate the embodied philosophy proposed by founder Hijikata Tatsumi's *Ankoku Butō* and perpetuated by his primary disciples. Specific questions include: What goal/s are Butō dancers training toward, how do they progress, and what is the psychophysical effect of their various methods? What experiences does the performer undergo in the process of training in Butō? What aspects of themselves are dancers cultivating? I am particularly interested to know if Zen Buddhist ideas of physical impermanence play a role in their dance practice, and if so, how this philosophy manifests in their training approach.

B. Please describe the intended experimental or research procedure. This should include a description of what the subject will experience or be required to do. Please attach a copy of all questionnaires or instruments to be used.

I will conduct hour-long interviews with each subject, either in person or via Skype. Interviews will either be audio and/or video recorded, depending upon the preference and approval of the subject. I have attached a list of questions that I intend to ask.

C. Will the subjects be deceived in any way? If yes, please describe below.

The subjects will not be deceived in any way.

D. To what extent will the routine activities of the subject be interrupted during the course of the study?

Routine activities will not be interrupted.

E. Indicate any compensation for the subjects.

The subjects will not be compensated financially. I do intend to publish articles related to this research, and the subjects – many of whom are artists – will benefit from exposure and discussion of their work. As I detail below, I will allow them to review anything I intend to publish that references them before I do so, and provide copies as requested.

III. DATA CONFIDENTIALITY

A. What procedure(s) will you use to insure confidentiality of the data? How will you preserve subject anonymity?

The subjects will not be anonymous.

IV. CONSENT PROCEDURES

A. Attach copy of consent form to be used (Please note that if consent form is more than one (1) page, the title of the study must be on the signature page.

OR

If non-written consent is to be used, attach a statement describing exactly what the subjects will be told.

Please see attached.

B. Describe how you will handle consent procedure for minors, mentally challenged persons, and persons with significant emotional disturbances.

N/A

V. BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

A. How will any one subject benefit from participation in this study?

I intend to publish articles related to my dissertation research. The majority of the subjects are artists and will benefit from exposure to the general public. Additionally, many Butō tend to work in isolation from one another, and it may be beneficial for them to hear their ideas and perspectives alongside those of other artists and colleagues in the field. My hope is to foster further dialogue within the community.

B. How will society, in general, benefit from the conduct of this study?

My larger goal is to demystify Butō training practices for American dance students, providing inroads to understand an art form that is rooted in the contemporary Japanese cultural experience. American artists have been incorporating Butō techniques and aesthetics into contemporary performance since the late 1970s; my hope is that with greater knowledge of the philosophical basis of the form, American artists may deepen their understanding of the form and find other applications of the performer development techniques, such as in actor or musician training.

VI. RISKS/DISCOMFORTS TO SUBJECTS

A. Describe any aspects of the research project that might cause discomfort, inconvenience, or physical danger to the subjects.

N/A

B. Describe any long range risks to the subjects.

N/A

C. What is the rationale for exposing subjects to these risks?

N/A

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DATE:

Title: Butō Master Artist Interviews for Ph.D. dissertation – investigating training practices and the philosophical bases for an artistic expression. Dissertation working title: *Becoming Nothing to Become Something: New Methods of Performer Training in Hijikata Tatsumi's Ankoku Butō Dance*.

Investigators:
Luke Kahlich, PhD – Temple University Dance Department, 215-204-6260
Tanya Calamoneri – Temple University Dance Department, 718-207-3307

Purpose of Research: This study will investigate performer training in Butō dance, focusing specifically on self-cultivation through practice. The researcher's objective is to articulate the embodied philosophy proposed by founder Hijikata Tatsumi's *Ankoku Butō* and perpetuated by his primary disciples. Questions include: What goal/s are Butō dancers training toward, how do they progress, and what is the psychophysical effect of their various methods? What kind of experiences does the performer undergo in the process of training in Butō? What aspects of themselves are dancers training or cultivating? The researcher is interested to know if Zen Buddhist ideas of physical impermanence play a role in their dance practice, and if so, how this philosophy manifests in their training approach.

General Research Design:

I understand that I am being asked to participate in a research study for a doctoral dissertation being supervised by the Temple University Dance Department. The research will take the form of oral histories given through interviews. Approximately twenty (20) subjects will participate in this study.

Procedures to be Followed:

I understand that the results of this study may be published but my identity will not be disclosed without written consent by me on a separate form. I understand that I will be able to review and amend any documents the researcher intends to publish at least one month before publication. I understand that I may remain anonymous with a pseudonym if I desire to do so, and that I may decide this up until two weeks before publication.

I agree to permit Temple University to keep, publish, or dispose of the materials produced in this interview.

Initials:_____Date:_____

Project Title: *Becoming Nothing to Become Something: New Methods of Performer Training in Hijikata Tatsumi's Ankoku Butō Dance*

I understand that I may refuse consent or withdraw from the research project at any time.

I understand that I will not receive financial compensation.

I understand that I will receive a copy of the final document and of any published materials related to information I have provided for this research.

Questions about my rights as a research subject may be directed to Mr. Richard Throm, Office of the Vice President for Research, Institutional Review Board, Temple University, 3425 N. Carlisle Street, Philadelphia, PA, 19140, phone (215) 707-8757.

I have read and understood this consent form and I voluntary agree to participate in this research project. I understand that I will be given a copy of the signed consent form.

_____

Signature of the Subject Date

_____

Signature of Witness Date

_____

Signature of Investigator Date

Initials:_____Date:_____

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Permission to Audiotape

Principal Investigator's Name: Kahlich, Luke, Ph.D., Professor
Contact Information: lkahlich@temple.edu 215-204-6260
Student Investigator's Name: Tanya Calamoneri
Department: Temple University Department of Dance

Project Title: Butō Master Artist Interviews for Ph.D. dissertation – investigating training practices and the philosophical bases for an artistic expression. Dissertation working title: *Becoming Nothing to Become Something: New Methods of Performer Training in Hijikata Tatsumi's Ankoku Butō Dance*.

Date: _____ Log #:

I give Tanya Calamoneri permission to audiotape me. This audiotape will be used only for the following purpose (s): (Choose one)

___ CLINICAL

This audiotape will be used as part of my treatment. It will not be shown to anyone but my treatment team, my family, and myself.

___ EDUCATION

This audiotape may be shown to education professionals outside of _____ for educational purposes. At no time will my name be used.

___ RESEARCH

This audiotape will be used as a part of a research project at _____. I have already given written consent for my participation in this research project. At no time will my name be used.

___ MARKETING/PUBLIC INFORMATION

This audiotape will be used to promote _____ to educational or health professionals, referral sources, and/or the general public. At no time will my name be used.

x OTHER

Description: This audiotape will be used as part of a research project at Temple University. I have already given written consent for my participation in this research project. I understand that I will be able to review any material the researcher intends to make available to the public at least one month before doing so.

Initials:_____Date:_____

WHEN WILL I BE AUDIOTAPED?

I agree to be audiotaped during the time period: May 2010 to May 2011.

HOW LONG WILL THE TAPES BE USED?

I give my permission for these tapes to be used from: May 2010 to January 2014.

I understand that data will be stored for three (3) years after completion of the study.

WHAT IF I CHANGE MY MIND?

I understand that I can withdraw my permission at any time. Upon my request, the audiotape(s) will no longer be used. This will not affect my care or relationship with Tanya Calamoneri in any way.

OTHER

I understand that I will not be paid for being audiotaped or for the use of the audiotapes.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

If I want more information about the audiotape(s), or if I have questions or concerns at any time, I can contact:

Investigator's Name: Tanya Calamoneri

Department: Department of Dance

Institution: Temple University

Street Address: 1700 North Broad Street Suite 309

City: Philadelphia State: PA
Zip Code: 19122

Phone: (Office) 215-204-6260 (Home) 718-207-3307

This form will be placed in my records and a copy will be kept by the person(s) named above. A copy will be given to me.

Initials:_____ Date:_____

Project Title: *Becoming Nothing to Become Something: New Methods of Performer Training in Hijikata Tatsumi's Ankoku Butō Dance*

Please print

Subject's Name:

Date:

Address:

Phone:

Subject's Signature:
(Or signature of parent or legally responsible person if subject is a minor or is incompetent to sign.)

Relationship to Subject:

Subject cannot sign because:

but consents orally to be audiotaped under the **conditions described above**.

_____

Witness Signature Date

_____

Witness Signature Date

Initials:_____Date:_____

Interview Questions – Tanya Calamoneri

Please state your name.

Do you give your permission for this interview to be audio- or video-taped?

1. Please tell me what initially attracted you to Ankoku Butō dance. Can you describe your response to the first performance you saw?
2. Please describe your training experiences working with Hijikata. Can you describe any specific body memories you have of your early training in Butō?
3. Can you describe in as concrete terms as possible how you train to "become nothing?" Can you describe any specific "ah-ha" moments in the development of your ability to do this – what did you feel/sense/think?
4. What does Ankoku mean to you?
5. Do you have a relationship with Buddhism, and if so, please describe what role Buddhism plays in your life and worldview.
6. Are you familiar with the Buddhist idea of *sunyata* [emptiness]? From your perspective, does this have anything to do with Ankoku Butō?
7. Are you familiar with the Buddhist idea of *mu* [nothingness]? From your perspective, does this have anything to do with Ankoku Butō?
8. Are you familiar with the Ten Bull Herding pictures, the Zen Buddhist metaphor for self-cultivation? From your perspective, does this relate to performer cultivation in Ankoku Butō?
9. Can you speak about the perspective of artists from your generation regarding Buddhism in the 1950s, 60s, or 70s, and particularly about Hijikata's relationship to Buddhist philosophy?

10. Are you familiar with the philosopher Nishida Kitaro? If so, do any of his ideas have any bearing on your understanding or experience of Butō dance?
11. Are you familiar with the philosopher and researcher Yuasa Yasuo? If so, do any of his ideas or *ki* studies have any bearing on your understanding or experience of Butō dance?
12. When you train your dancers or other students in Butō dance, what are the most important elements that you want them to understand and experience? Are there stages of development, like in Zeami's description of hana in Nō Theater?
13. Is there anything else you would like to say about your experiences as a Butō dancer?

APPENDIX B

PERMISSION LETTERS FOR INCLUSION OF COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL

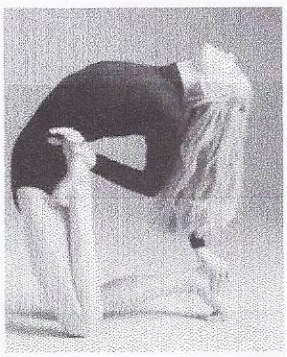
Tanya Calamoneri
PhD Candidate, Temple University
325 East 16th Street
Brooklyn, NY 11226

April 5, 2012

Sri Louise
Underground Parlour for Social Justice and Self Knowledge
3209 Peralta Street
Oakland, CA 94608

Dear Sri:

I am completing a doctoral dissertation at Temple University entitled "Becoming Nothing to Become Something: Methods of Performer Training in Hijikata Tatsumi's Butō Dance." I would like your permission to reprint in my dissertation the following image:



The caption to be included is: Figure 1.1: Sri Louise in *Ustrasana* (Camel Pose)

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If these arrangements meet with your approval, please sign this letter where indicated below and return it to me in the enclosed return envelope. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Tanya Calamoneri

PERMISSION GRANTED FOR THE USE REQUESTED ABOVE:

SR _____ (please sign) Date: 4/10/12

Sri Louise

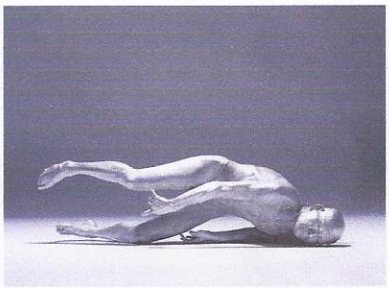
Tanya Calamoneri
PhD Candidate, Temple University
325 East 16th Street
Brooklyn, NY 11226

April 5, 2012

Murobushi Ko
1-11-5-402 Shimoochiai
Shinjuku, Tokyo 161-0033

Dear Murobushi san:

I am completing a doctoral dissertation at Temple University entitled "Becoming Nothing to Become Something: Methods of Performer Training in Hijikata Tatsumi's Butō Dance." I would like your permission to reprint in my dissertation the following image:



The caption to be included is: Figure 4.2 Murobushi Ko in *Quicksilver* by Ito Miro

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If these arrangements meet with your approval, please sign this letter where indicated below and return it to me in the enclosed return envelope. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Tanya Calamoneri

PERMISSION GRANTED FOR THE USE REQUESTED ABOVE:

_____ (please sign) Date: 4/18/12

Murobushi Ko

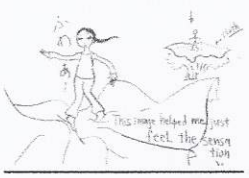
Tanya Calamoneri
PhD Candidate, Temple University
325 East 16th Street
Brooklyn, NY 11226

April 5, 2012

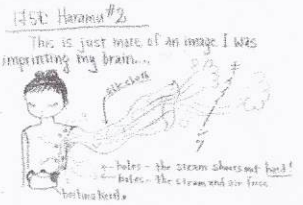
Haruko Nishimura
c/o Circuit Network
499 Alabama Street, Suite 20
San Francisco, CA 94110

Dear Haruko:

I am completing a doctoral dissertation at Temple University entitled "Becoming Nothing to Become Something: Methods of Performer Training in Hijikata Tatsumi's Butō Dance." I would like your permission to reprint in my dissertation the following images:



2.



3.

4.

The caption to be included is:
Figure 4.4 Workshop Images of the "De/Reconstructed Body-Mind"
Images drawn by Haruko Nishimura during Seki Minako workshop, Berlin 2003.

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If these arrangements meet with your approval, please sign this letter where indicated below and return it to me in the enclosed return envelope. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Tanya Calamoneri

PERMISSION GRANTED FOR THE USE REQUESTED ABOVE:

_____ (please sign) Date: April 8 '12

Haruko Nishimura