Foucault and the Training of Docile Bodies in Dance Education[1]

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Describing a typical dance studio class in a university setting is a difficult task. There are diverse dance techniques, levels and pedagogical styles that may be included under the umbrella of "higher education dance." In addition, dance education includes classes in areas such as African Dance and other world dance forms, social and folk dance, and so forth, which are quite different from modern, or ballet technique classes. However, since modern dance or ballet is a primary focus in so many college and university dance programs, and since there are some commonalities that characterize these types of dance education in the United States, I will focus on these types of classes at the college level.

When I think of a typical university ballet or modern dance technique class, I see a large studio space filled with mirrors. The dance teacher usually stands at the front of the studio while the students are often lined up in neat rows facing the mirror and the teacher. Students in dance classes spend much time gazing in [sic] the mirror in order to perfect the outward appearance of the body and strengthen dance technique. They commonly wear leotards and tights or variations of tightly clad clothing that allow the teacher to view the body from an outside perspective. Very often the dance teacher focuses on specific corrections, placement of the body, proper technique, and efficient performance of particular dance movements. (Green, 1999, p. 81)

The particular pedagogy that I wish to address in this paper is a pedagogy that is prevalent in dance studios in higher education. This is one in which teachers do not necessarily attempt to help students find meaning in their dance experiences and empower them to own their own bodies. I am referring to a more conservatory approach to dance education,

a type of pedagogy that exists in universities and colleges too, particularly in ballet and modern dance classes. It is an approach that gives power to the teacher to manipulate students' bodies. This traditional pedagogical approach is more closely associated with an unchanging way of teaching dance, an approach that has been handed down from generation to generation.

This conservatory-style system for training students' bodies is ripe ground for a Foucauldian analysis. Foucault (1979) points out that the western prison system, has moved from an institution that punishes by inflicting pain through torture and physical abuse, to one that appears more humanely aware and sensitive but is in fact more hidden and reaches its end through a system of surveillance, supervision, training and correction. Building on Johnson's contention that Foucault was a model thinker in looking at how bodies are shaped and molded by society (Johnson, 1992) I contend that dance training is another example of a practice that moves from repressive control to the implementation of a system that requires subjects to be observed and corrected through the ritual of dance technique classes. In the conservatory-style system student dancers' bodies are docile bodies created to produce efficiency, not only of movement, but also, a normalization and standardization of behavior in dance classes.

It may be significant to point out here that dance classes in particular areas such as modern dance and ballet are called "technique" classes. Foucault also used this term, identifying "technologies of the self" as part of regimes of power that society requires of people to discipline themselves. These dance techniques are similar to the social techniques described by Foucault..

While physical poking, prodding, and pushing were common teacher practices in ballet and early modern dance training, we have developed new ways of ensuring docile student behaviors. Recently, as there have been a number of lawsuits against dance teachers who physically abuse student bodies, there has been a movement to find less overt ways of producing normalized behaviors in student dancers. This shift towards surveillance, and particularly self-surveillance, has been effective in training docile dance performers, but not so

effective in producing dance artists who take ownership of their bodies and artistic processes. As Quinby (1991) suggests, perhaps impeding the creative energies that could subvert the dominant paradigm is just the point. By producing docile bodies in dance classes, there is less likelihood of ending up with political artists who question norms of ideology as well as practice.[2]

This essay and Foucauldian analysis of my dance education study (Green 1999), looks at dance education as a disciplinary power that trains students to be docile citizens in the dance world and creates standards for dance behavior and bodily being. I will argue that human beings are made subjects through this system of "dance technique," and I will explore how the social manipulation of bodies and constant correction affect the artistic and personal lives of five dance students.

The study: Somatics and the gendered body in dance education

Theoretical Framework

In addition to the ideas of Foucault, the study draws on the ideas of a number of diverse postmodern, feminist, and somatic thinkers. As a researcher, I continue to wrestle with diverse ideas as I attempt to situate myself within sometimes complex and conflicting perspectives in a postmodern world of uncertainty and change. I recognize my own subjectivity and thus attempt to be self-reflexive and look at how I am positioned in the research context.

The use of somatic practices such as body awareness and imagery, in dance classes is a growing trend in dance education (Eddy, 2002; Fortin, 2002; Green, 2001, 2002a, 2002b). Hanna (1988), a major somatic theorist, asserts that data from a first-person perception are quite different from data observed from a third-person view. He explains that somatics is a matter of looking at oneself from the "inside out" where one is aware of feelings, movements and intentions, rather than looking objectively from the outside in. Although Hanna emphasizes the point that neither the first-person mode nor third-person

mode of observation is more factual or better, he claims that there is a distinct difference between the two, as separated by *soma* and body. Where a body may be defined as an objective entity, studied as any material object from the outside, a soma is a "living body" that is observable from a first-person viewpoint. Thus, according to Hanna, somatics is the study of the *soma*, not as an objective "body" but an embodied process of internal awareness and communication. It is interesting to note that while much postpositivist and feminist research recognizes the researcher as a first-person subjective participant, somatics affirms an inner perspective of the *soma*.

Although somatic theory and practice tend to focus on inner experience, there are some somatic theorists and educators who move into a more macro socio-political sphere and address how our bodies and somatic experiences are inscribed by the culture in which we live. I call this body of literature "social somatic theory" because it addresses socio-political issues related to somatic theory and practice. Since this project moves into a socio-political realm and begins to explore critical, postmodern and feminist issues related to the body and movement, it draws heavily on this body of literature. These various discourses bump up against each other and may not be consistent with some components of Hanna's somatic theory. However, one commonality among the literatures of social somatic theory is a general shift that moves outward from micro to macro dimensions and from self to society.

This study draws particularly on the writing of theorists Johnson (1992) and Behnke (1990-91), and others who have addressed issues of bodily authority and have demonstrated how our bodies are shaped by the cultures in which we live. According to these theorists, western culture creates the myth of a body/mind split. This split does not simply separate our minds from our bodies and favor mind over body. Rather, there is an active obsession with the body as an objective, mechanical entity. This split removes us from the experiences of our bodies and often results in disconnecting us from our own inner proprioceptive signals and from our *somas* as living processes.

Furthermore, Johnson argues, dominant cultures often perpetuate this body/mind split in an effort to maintain somatic

weakness and confusion of oppressed groups in society and preserve and control in an attempt to maintain a status quo and capitalistic currency. By disconnecting people from their sensory and sensual selves, through the imposition of external models of "ideal bodies," or standards of what the body "should be" and how it should act, the dominant culture maintains control as people in oppressed groups distrust their own sensory impulses and give up their bodily authority.

Much of Johnson's work is grounded in the discourse of Foucault (1979, 1980), who looked at power and its relationship to knowledge. Although Foucault was interested in studying power and extremes of standardizing bodily behavior that have characterized institutions in a historical context, and did not directly address the body in the context of pedagogy, he rejected power as repressive, and explained it through discourse. He believed in deconstructing language through a historical reading of texts to highlight how the body is socialized and habituated.

His studies approach the body as a site of social and political control and power. Although I point to these connections between social somatic theory and Foucauldian thought, I do, however, wish to trouble the uncritical resonance between the two ideologies in relation to dance. A number of tensions exist between these schools of thought. For example, Foucault would not be fond of the idea of bodily experience and would be suspicious of the practice of working pedagogically through the body. Although he viewed the body as a site of political manipulation and control and studied it as an effect of the culture in which we live, his writing suggests a suspicion of typical somatic conceptualizations such as bodily experience and practice (Foucault, 1979, 1980). As Frank (1990) points out, "What Foucault contributes to the study of the body — beyond his studies as a site of political violence — is an enhanced self-reflectiveness about the project of the body itself" (p. 132).

In other words, Foucault does not claim that the body can provide us with a grounded truth or that education through the body can free people from oppressive social policies and authoritarian regimes. His writing offers an approach rooted

in critique of institutions through discourses created by the dominant culture. He would be cautious about somatic practices and creative work because of his claim that experience is based on how our perceptions have been socially constructed. He would be leery of any claims to "experiential" or "somatic" authority. Many critical theorists and feminists (for example, McLaren 1989; Simon & Dippo 1986) also believe that a focus on experience gets in the way of critical social work. In fact, Johnson (1992) himself points to the danger of using somatic practice as a panacea to the world's ills without framing the discourse in a larger social context. He suggests that by focusing solely on individualistic bodily experience, we may be hypnotizing ourselves to the outer world and the problems Foucault addresses through his historical analyses.

Nevertheless, it may be recognized that although Foucault rejected bodily practice and experience in his early career, towards the later part of his career he came to "refute the autonomy of discourse," (McNay 1993, p. 27) and to refer to the corporeal aspect of life. He acknowledged that "the discursive and the material are linked together in a symbiotic relationship" (*ibid*). Thus, although he was more suspicious of experiential or corporeal notions of body in his early years, he grew to be more accepting of such aspects later in his life.

Consequently, I use somatics and Foucauldian thought as tools with which to view dance education with the recognition that while they are not the same thing, Foucauldian thought may be used as a lens, while recognizing the social limitations of somatic theory and practice.

Methodology

In a study (Green. 1999) that looked at the training of student bodies I investigated how the bodies of participant student teachers in dance are socially inscribed in relation to gender. I investigated the students' perceptions of how their body images are influenced by how they feel they should look and act as women dancers. In this study, somatic practice was used as a tool to investigate students' perceptions of their bodies, more specifically, the experiences of five undergraduate

dance education majors in a university level instructional setting. The five students volunteered to participate in a somatics/creativity teaching and research project at a state university in the south. Over a period of one semester, three hours per week, movement explorations, somatic exercises and discussion were used as tools to explore the students' perceptions of their bodies, and how these perceptions have been influenced by society and the dance world. They were asked questions about their previous experiences in dance, and how they have learned to perceive their bodies in reference to a specific weight and body ideal.

The class was designed so that during the first part of each session, the students would be exposed to various somatic practices (body awareness systems) and during the second part of each session they would immerse themselves in the creative process and work towards a group production or performance. This performance took the form of an interactive movement forum, whereby students danced their ideas about student bodies, performed somatic improvisations, spoke to the audience and invited the audience to join them in discussion and movement.

A qualitative/postpositivist/naturalistic inquiry approach was used. These terms refer to different aspects of the study. For example, "qualitative" refers to the type of methods used during the data collection process. "Postpositivist" refers to the paradigmatic framework for the study (Green 1996a; Green & Stinson, 1999; Lather 1991). "Naturalistic" refers to the research approach. According to Guba and Lincoln (1989), in naturalistic inquiry, the researcher cannot know what constructions will be introduced during the investigation, and cannot predict beforehand, what claims, concerns and issues will arise. While the initial research problem and general procedures for data collection and analysis provided parameters and a general guide, I was purposefully open to emerging patterns throughout the study.

I began the investigation by announcing the new experimental course, "The Gendered Body in Dance Education," to dance education students who were preparing for student teaching. I designed and taught the course as both a pedagogical

endeavor and an opportunity to collect data for the research project. The purpose of the project was to understand this particular research issue and to generate theory regarding dance in higher education. Thus, I used a purposive sampling (Guba & Lincoln 1989; Lincoln & Guba 1985). I was hoping to enroll students who were interested in somatic work and the socio-cultural issues tied to the body in dance.

The five women who decided to join the project ranged in age from 20 -24 years, knew each other prior to the project, and were from diverse backgrounds. Some had studied in public school settings while others had studied in conservatories and dance studios. One woman, "Jasmine,"[3] was African American, and four were Caucasian. "Missy" came from New York, "Kathy" and "Tess" were from New Jersey, and Jasmine and "Nancy" were from North Carolina. Kathy and Tess identified themselves as lesbians.

Data Collection

Data collection took place throughout the duration of the two-semester study. Since I was not looking at the efficacy of particular somatic practices, I did not include a movement analysis or quantitative assessment of results in body perception changes. I was more interested in class discussions and interviews that reflected general changes in perception through somatic practice as an investigative tool. Classes met once a week for three hours and usually included discussion, somatic and creative work, and work on the final performance/production. Each session was audio taped and videotaped. Audiotapes of group discussions were transcribed and used as group interview data. The data collection methods included individual interviews, group interviews, observation and documents. Individual interviews were conducted with each of the five women in May, at the end of the project. We addressed perceptions about socially inscribed bodies at the beginning of the project and, after experiencing somatic practices, at the conclusion of the project. We also addressed the role of dance educators in relation to their perceptions of the body, and their plans for future action. I used unstructured (Denzin, 1989) and

theme-oriented questions (Kvale 1983) to achieve an open sense of give and take between us.

After each exercise, students discussed their experiences informally, as a group. These discussions provided a natural vehicle for data collection by providing information about students' lived bodily experiences. These informal group discussions were ongoing throughout the course of the project. However, once during November and once during May, after reviewing collected data, I focused specific questions around my current findings and emerging themes. These interviews also served as "member checks" (Guba & Lincoln 1989; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Observation provided additional data. Videotapes of classes provided a source for making field notes. Documents also provided a primary data source. Throughout the duration of the project, the students submitted various forms of artwork from class sessions and for the production/performance. The students also collected ads and articles about body image that they analyzed from a critical perspective, and they submitted journals that included their experiences, feelings, reactions, changes and observations during the project.

Data Analysis

Data analysis included both an informal "analysis-in-the-field" phase, and a more formal "cut-up-and-put-in-folders approach" whereby themes were generated and categories emerged from the data analysis process (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

Methodological trustworthiness was achieved through triangulation of data and sources, systematic reflexion, checking for discrepant cases, member checks, questioning my own assumptions and findings, theorizing, and colleague debriefing

Ethical Issues

Many ethical issues arise in a study of this type. I will address two: researcher reflexivity, and teacher-researcher

power. Adler (1993) suggests keeping a log of one's teaching experience to facilitate reflective inquiry and explore taken-for-granted assumptions to question one's own established beliefs. I have attempted to explore both suggestions and have included a section on discrepant cases at the end of my analysis.

Regarding the issue of coerciveness and obligation to students, I informed the students about the class and study before the class began and let them know that they were not required to take part in the study. All five students indicated that they were interested in participating in the research as well as in the class. Since the class was an elective, the students joined both class and study willingly. I informed them that they might drop out of the study at any point without penalty.

On the issue of grading, I informed the students that they would be graded on the quality of their written work and project rather than on what they said about their experiences. I took into consideration the fact that they might want to please me and tell me what I wanted to hear in order to receive a good grade. For this reason I attempted to be reflective and to encourage them to disagree with me. In fact, many of the students provided data that challenged my initial assumptions (as evident in the section below, regarding discrepant cases). These data provided some evidence that the participants were not interested in pleasing me in order to receive high grades in the class. Furthermore, during both the first and final individual interviews, I asked each student whether or not she felt pressured to provide particular responses and support my claims and findings. Each said that she felt able to voice her opinions and viewpoints.

Foucault and Dance Training

With these issues in mind, initial findings from the study suggest that these participants' previous experiences in dance reflected an emphasis on "ideal body" myths in society and particularly in the dance world. When asked to describe and talk about their bodies, the women emphasized the influence of a dualistic perception of body as separate from mind and represented through an objectified perspective. For example

Jasmine spoke about her "butt" being too large, particularly for dance, and she continually referred to her body as unacceptable according to a stereotypical model in dance. In response to my request to recall any "body stories" they might have, Jasmine offered the following narrative in her journal:

I was sitting in [the ballet studio] putting on my street clothes after a typical ballet class. So that meant I felt like a total zero with two left feet. But of course I was not alone in my thoughts. Three of my friends were thinking and saying the same thing. Then in walked the stereotypical ballerinas, long legs and arms, skinny, white [skin], hair pulled back or short, and very defined facial features. Don't forget the flexibility for days [sic]. And all we did was say, "Here come the 'real' ballerinas and of course [we] are leaving. We would not fit in with them." As I thought more about this the more I felt that I and my friends were still caught in the traditional attitude and myths [that you must look like this to be a "real" dancer]...I still fall so easily back into that stereotyped ballet body ideal. I even find myself wishing my body were like that and asking God for a body like that.

Students' journals contained a number of descriptions of their views of ideal bodies required in dance technique classes and in the dance world in general.[4] However, what particularly stood out were their ideas about how dancers were required to behave in order to achieve such ideal bodies and in order to be successful in dance. In their view, dancers were required not only to move in certain ways and habitually train their bodies to perform in certain ways but to train themselves to act in the world through very specific means. For example, they reflected on the destructive effects on their perceptions of body as a result of dancing at what they called "Dolly Dinkle" dance studios (usually private dance studios that often required them to wear frilly outfits for dance recitals). They referred to these studios as more of a social training ground for young girls and women than as a facility to teach dance.

However, it may be interesting to note that the participants often claimed that with all the destructive effects of social influences such as advertising and media, the dance world itself was a more serious culprit because students were

directly faced with the pressure to live up to these expectations on a daily basis. In dance classes they were, in Foucauldian terms, constantly under "surveillance."

Although I began the study with the assumption that the idea of dancer as social tool played largely in the lives of these students, I was surprised to see the extent to which discussions and journal entries revolved around these experiences as meaningful for these students and how detrimental these experiences were to their lives as students and dancers. Jasmine's comments above are typical of the responses from the students that indicated that they were struggling with the tension between concepts of their bodies as social tools and the agency of dance as artistic expression. The study brought to the students' awareness these deeply rooted issues which underlie their perspectives about their bodies— issues that they are not always encouraged to address in their dance lives. Thus, the study served as a vehicle for raising their consciousness.

Docile Bodies in Dance Technique

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1979) refers to the soldier of the early seventeenth century as a model for bodily honor and respect:

The signs for recognizing this profession are a lively, alert manner, an erect head, a taut stomach, broad shoulders, long arms, strong fingers, a small belly, thick thighs, slender legs and dry feet, because a man of such a figure could not fail to be agile and strong. (p. 135)

Echoing Foucault, Tess wrote about a perfect body as a necessity in the dance profession. She listed the requirements for an acceptable dance body:

[In the dance world] there is only one acceptable way to see us. Example:

Legs = Need to be long, slender, super flexible, usually the skinnier the better, and if you don't have thin legs it is because you are lazy and don't want to have to work at it. Legs

are a definite accent point of the body.

Buttocks = Small, proportional to the skinny legs, and round, it must be firm and not jiggle.

Stomach = flat, no bulge, preferably no room to pinch an inch. Should be hard.

Hips = No fat, As close to the bone as possible, No love handles.

Waist = Should have a straight line. No large hour glass shapes. Shapely to attract men, Never sag.

Arms = small a small amount of muscle & no flab under the arm & no flab between shoulder and breast.

Face = Thin, fine, clear bone structure.

Lips = full, heart shaped.

Eyes = Large.

Hair = Long.

Should be light as a feather. Never eat sweets.

Both Foucault and Tess point to a required mastery of the body in an attempt to achieve perfection and control. Foucault refers to the body as both an object and target of power. He says, "It is easy enough to find signs of the attention then paid to the body – to the body that is manipulated, shaped, trained, which obeys, responds, becomes skillful and increases its forces…a body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved" (p. 136). I believe that these student dance bodies, as Tess described are docile bodies because they require a system of codification and methods that are, like Foucault's socialized bodies, under meticulous control and surveillance (Foucault, 1979).

Docile bodies also require a system for hierarchical surveillance, normalizing judgment, and continuous supervision (Foucault, 1979, p. 192). Foucault describes such a system in his portrayal of the prison whereby inspection through spatial portioning provides a continuous hierarchical gaze, thus training or correcting citizens to be uncreative and self-

supervising. In such a physical setting, citizens become docile and are trained to behave in normalized ways.

Dance training aims to achieve normative behavior. One of the ways in which it does this is through the use of mirrors. Mirrors provide a means for self-surveillance, a way that teachers can check students and students can continuously check their bodies and movements. For example, the participants in the study referred again and again to the traditional western dance setting, with particular reference to the existence of mirrors as an ominous and powerful presence that contributed to physical self-evaluation, behavior regulation, body objectification, and competition. As Tess explained,

We as dancers spend so much time in front of the mirror. And I sit there and pick my body apart the whole time. And many of my classmates claim that they are overweight and need to lose [weight] but they have bodies that are fine and outside the dance world these women are considered small, skinny, tiny. But here they are considered chunky, flabby, not professional material. They tell me how bad their eating habits are for them, then they won't even finish their salad. When I enter class, I look around to see who is smaller than me and think about how big I am. If I concentrated in class half as hard as I do on the shape of my body I would be an incredible dancer. I want to know how to change this attitude because I don't want to pass it on to my students...Cause you can do a lot of damage when you take all that we've been programmed with and then you sit in front of a mirror over and over and over and [you are] encouraged to correct, correct, correct, pull up, pull in, suck, tuck. You're getting all that all day. So, [the mirror] it's kind of a reinforcer....Everything that we do reflects how we are perceived.

In addition to its emphasis on perception, the investigation examined the attitudes of dance teachers and the values and assumptions that they communicated about how students should look. As Kathy reflected in her journal, "...it is sometimes more important that the dancer look a certain way than it is that the dancer have something to communicate." It is worth noting that, as Bordo (1993) and (Brant 1995) point out, the ideal of a woman's body has changed within the last decade.

The new aesthetic also includes a toned and muscular ideal. However, this new model does not replace the societal expectation of achieving a small, emaciated body, with an empowering model of strength, vitality, health and power. On the contrary, bodies, particularly women's bodies are still required to be conditioned and manipulated into "shape." Women are urged to spend large amounts of time observing and training their bodies. Bodies must remain thin and smaller; but now women have the additional demand of appearing strong and muscular too. According to Thomas F. Cash (cited in Brant 1995), professor of psychology at Old Dominion University, "It's [the fitness ethos] just added another master to be served.... Women say they want to look healthier, not be healthier" (p. 88). With an exaggeration of this attitude in the dance world, the students said that they often felt added pressure to meet this cumulative ideal. They were encouraged to spend time making sure their bodies looked fit but they were not necessarily encouraged to eat in healthy ways. Because being muscular is now aesthetically pleasing, women have to develop their muscles *and* remain skinny.

The issue of the ideal body is a significant gender issue because of the higher proportion of women in most dance classes in universities. An ideal body image, therefore, is particularly imposed on these young women who strive daily to meet these aesthetic ideals.

The students provided many examples of teacher directions which required self-training and regulation in order to achieve an external standard. Comments included instructions and corrections such as, "Don't let your butt stick out," "Lock your knees," "Make sure your back is flat," "Squeeze your butt." These comments help student feel that they must always judge and "correct" their bodies in class.

With the training of docile dance bodies so prevalent in the minds of the five students, authority and power relationships became overriding sub-themes in the study. They often discussed their feelings of oppression and dominance. Some students indicated that they felt intimidated in class, particularly in the class of the guest artist, "Jeff," who often chided them in public. During class discussions Kathy referred

to "the whole authoritarian structure" of dance classes. And Tess referred to a silent code, warning that "If you break that code of what you're supposed to do, you are just upsetting the whole hierarchy." In her journal, Jasmine literally and metaphorically remembered, "I remember beginning in a jazz class...and I got scolded for being out of line."

Recurring themes included authoritarian practices and standardized behaviors that were required within the broader educational dance setting. Control was sometimes established through institutionalized codes of dress and behavior, particularly in classes at dance conservatories. Missy explained that students at a nearby conservatory were required to wear different colored leotards to indicate the different levels of the students; beginners would wear one color while advanced students were required to wear another color. This is a problem for students because it categorizes them by ability and level publicly. Students wearing colors representing more advanced levels tend to get better treatment from teachers and peers. Missy reported that eating was monitored and that students were required to participate in "weigh-ins" at another dance department.

The students referred to these practices as a violation, and an assault that resulted, for them, in a disconnection from their bodies. On the other hand, somatic awareness sessions and practices attended during the study tended to provide them with a place where they could reconnect to inner senses and somatic impulses while releasing some of the habitual physical strain of keeping constant vigilance and surveillance over their bodies.

However, it may be significant to point out that although somatic practice was used as a vehicle for body awareness and release of habitual tension patterns, it should not be used apart from social analysis and critical thought. It may be just as problematic to view somatics as a panacea for dealing with the effects of power and the training of docile bodies. In an earlier study (Green, 1993), I pointed out the danger of employing somatic practice apart from a socio-cultural context and within an individualistic and micro context alone. Unless we use a broader social lens to examine how bodies are habituated and

regulated through normalizing standards of bodily behavior, we are not likely to change the pressure to conform to a dominant ideal body model or to break down strategies for training docile bodies

Nevertheless, the myth of the ideal body is pervasive in the dance world and dance students, who are mostly young women, are particularly vulnerable to the current spread of diet regimes and other technologies aimed at bodily "correction" (Bordo, 1993, p. 104). While "control" and "mastery" are concepts used in media and advertisements to dictate desirable behavior regarding weight management and body regulation in the larger society, "prohibitions against female indulgence" are even more severe for dancers in the studio and the micro dance culture. Lack of control of the body is not tolerated.

Bruch (cited in Bordo 1993) notes that a typical symptom of an eating disorder is the feeling of "not owning the body and its sensations" (p. 147). Dance students are faced with a rigorous routine of daily training that teaches them to disconnect from their bodies, and the threat of disorders that further weaken and disembody them. In an attempt to "not take up too much space," (*ibid* p. 160) some female dancers run the risk of literally vanishing from the dance world.

Technologies of the Self

There was one discrepancy in the data regarding strength and control. As a feminist and somatic educator, I began to feel quite uncomfortable with a number of responses that described feelings of power and control experienced by some of the participants while they were practicing weight and strength training at the gym. I could not ascertain why students expressed such feelings of power associated with current techniques that require body modification and regulation. To me, the new fitness craze was not empowering for women. While women could learn to build muscle and look more like men, I believed that strength training, like traditional dance pedagogy, required women to spend more time training an ideal body, thin, yet now muscular, whose purpose was an objectified representation designed for the male or teacher gaze. Yet it

seemed to me that the participants were not ready to release an aesthetic ideal and conclude that reaching this ideal had empowered them. Missy for example, talked about her recovery from an eating disorder, which included taking a job at a gym:

When I looked at different people in the gym there are so many different body types… I realized aesthetically to me someone who was muscular…was more attractive than a skinny person with no shape, no muscle tone. Finally I was like, I always looked like I worked out even when I didn't. I was like....it is not in my genes to look like a beanpole. Apparently I said there is something in my genes that tends toward the muscular. That's what I'm going to do. I got to eat right to help me build my muscle definition. I looked at this as a health conscious choice of proper eating but I said that gave me a goal to eat something right. Because this was something that I wanted. It was still an aesthetic body because I was going toward the aesthetic. I couldn't get it without eating.

As a teacher, I became very concerned about Missy. She had come to me prior to our encounter in the course because she had not been eating for a very long period of time. She was worried because her body was not functioning properly and she was afraid that she might not be able to dance. Since I taught the body courses and I was her advisor she came to see me. I was the one who drove her to the hospital and listened to her story about her inability to keep food down. Now, during the project, she was telling me that she was eating, and taking care of her body yet she seemed to be compulsively working to mold her body into a more familiar and contemporary shape, but nevertheless an imposed body ideal.

Missy exercised a sense of control and power when she refused to eat and became focused on molding her body. This is one area where as teacher and researcher I was conscious of interacting subjectively within the research study. As a teacher, I could not help but be concerned about the harm Missy was causing to her own body by trying to mold it into an aesthetic ideal, regardless of the health implications. Yet as a researcher I was intrigued by Missy's insistence that she had control over her body. I sought to listen to her words, but I cannot say that I accepted her words at face value. This may have been because

of my belief that her feelings of power and control were illusory.

Bordo (1993) explains that this feeling of strength, control and power is deceptive. She describes it as a modification practice that leads women to collude with a dominant culture. The self-control necessary to diet or shape the body may afford dancers a sense of mastery over their bodies, a goal that is valued in a male-dominated society. However, "to reshape one's body into a male body is not to put on male power and privilege. To feel autonomous and free while harnessing body and soul to an obsessive body practice is to serve, not transform, a social order that limits female possibilities" (p. 179). Thus, self-management of bodies is a "continual and virtually impossible task in our culture" (p. 187) and particularly in the dance world. The ideal body is impossible to achieve because it requires a vast amount of energy which often saps the body of usable strength and decreases agency in women by disconnecting them from their bodies as they fight to adapt to cumulatively impossible standards that are designed to control women's bodies and desires.

Another problematic conundrum was also related to Missy. While most of the students pointed out that the guest artist, Jeff, was abusive and intimidated them and other students, Missy explained that she liked to be pushed and physically challenged. She said that although she experienced pain in Jeff's classes, she liked it. Listening to her, I could not help but feel that Missy's responses were due to her training, that she might have felt more comfortable with this approach because it was familiar. She felt as though she was working hard and achieving success in controlling her body through self-discipline and restraint. She was creating a self, and molding a body that brought her pleasure because she was working toward achieving a bodily ideal. In Bordo's words, she may have experienced some sense of "mastery" over her body, with pain as an unfortunate result. Her words often haunted me because I could not help but think that this was a case of physical denial and an effort to numb the body. Yet at the same time, the pleasure Missy experienced from doing this seemed immense. I could not deny this sense of agency that Missy seemed to receive from this mastery, however, as a feminist, teacher, and somatic

educator, I was also concerned about Missy's apparent willingness to relinquish ownership of her body to a male authority figure. On the one hand, I asked myself, "Who am I to deny Missy and other women this feeling of 'empowerment' and control?" On the other hand, I kept asking myself whether or not this feeling of control was an illusion that weakened Missy's ownership of her body and affected her health and well-being.

This idea of mastering and shaping a body resonates with Foucault's (1988) concept of "technologies of the self." According to Foucault, technologies of the self are the different ways in our culture that humans develop knowledge about themselves: economics, biology, psychiatry, medicine, and penology. Foucault's main point is not to accept this knowledge at face value but to analyze these so-called sciences as very specific "truth games" related to specific techniques that human beings use to understand themselves.

Foucault identifies four types of "technologies of the self": 1) technologies of production; 2) technologies of sign systems; 3) technologies of power, "which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject" (p. 18); and, 4) technologies of the self, "which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality" (p. 18).

This study revealed the existence of the last two types of technologies—technologies of power, and technologies of the self—operating within the field of dance. But while I expected technologies of power to play a large part in dance training, I was surprised to find how much technologies of the self played a role. What disturbed me the most was that Missy and the other four participants had on several occasions indicated that they enjoyed the harshness of dance classes and what they perceived to be the strength and reward of shaping their bodies into dancers. For them, the ideal dance body was a way to happiness and perfection. There was much resistance when I pointed out

the health risks of disconnecting from their bodies and attempting to force their bodies into an aesthetic ideal. It seemed to me that the dance world had somehow created an environment whereby teachers were no longer responsible for directly shaping student bodies but rather utilized a "science of dance training" which requires students to develop skills and attitudes through self-analysis, self -judgment and self-evaluation according to the attainment of a specific ideal. From a Foucauldian perspective this shift from the direct shaping of student bodies by the teacher to a science of dance training creates a culture of silence rather than one of creativity and action where students constantly observe, judge, and correct themselves. In such a culture, students are unable to take ownership of their bodies or to explore their creative processes. But it also creates the illusion or "truth game" of happiness and success in the attainment of the goal.

As McWilliam (1996) found, specific schooling and other practices "permit individuals to act upon themselves to promote 'care of the self.'" The focus on molding the self is how a human being turns him or herself into a *subject*" (p. 9).

Morgan (1996) explains that Foucault proposes that

Certain forms of selfhood or subjectivity will be dominant in a particular modern society. These forms are maintained most effectively and invisibly when individuals exercise self-surveillance and thus regulate their 'own' behavior according to those norms. The mechanism or 'technology' works when the normalizing 'gaze' constructs a person as more or less conforming to that norm. This gaze then becomes internalized as each individual defines and 'sees' herself or himself in those terms. Thus each becomes his or her own 'personal trainer'(p. 34).

Moreover, in her reflections on personal training, Morgan suggests that the pleasure involved in creating such a self, (i.e. this hurts; thus this feels good) is a particular form of "auto-eroticism," which is part of "a particularly austere and abstinent regime of exercise and practice" (p.35).

Thus, viewed through the lens of Foucault's (1988) technologies of the self, the five dance students in this study may understand their choices as freely derived and attained.

They may not see the larger normalization process whereby they train their bodies in an attempt to fit an external ideal; and they may not see how their "docility is experienced as control, power and pleasure" (p. 37). This may explain why Missy, like so many women with eating disorders, say that they feel power and control over their bodies. But this is also why we have to be careful about conceptualizations such as body awareness and somatic authority. Just as mirrors, the teacher, the self-discipline, the minute corrections, and so forth are techniques and voices that students internalize, a sense of ownership through somatic practice may be internalized too. While somatic practice may be a tool to examine these problems in dance class, and serve as an alternative to the physical and mental habituation of dance technique, it must also be problematized and looked at critically, so that it is not used in a way that it becomes another "truth game."

Conclusion

Through this analysis, I have attempted to problematize dance education from a Foucauldian perspective. This perspective is significant for dance education because most university programs in dance departments are based on a modern dance technique and approach that grew in the 1930's and 1940's as a revolt against the constraints of classical ballet. While ballet sought perfection and ideal bodies, modern dance embraced a more freeing, creative and empowering approach to the art form. Dance programs in universities tend to offer modern dance technique classes and choreography classes based on the individualism of major modern dance pioneers. However, as Ellsworth (1992) found with her film students, arts educators may not be as empowering as they think they are just because they claim to profess how to emancipate or free their students from a false consciousness (see also Green 2001). While dance educators may be attempting to "free" students through an arts education based on the techniques of modern dance pioneers such as Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham, whose techniques offer an expressive means to communicate art, they may not be aware of how power actually plays out in the dance classroom. The Foucauldian analysis offered here may be a way

to rethink dance pedagogy. Furthermore, this analysis provides some insight into how techniques of the self are implemented within a discipline that uses the body as a physical and social instrument. This instrumental use of the body reflects how society creates professions in which diverse techniques are used to internalize and construct selves and ideals through a system and institutionalization of body politics.

One may ask where the line is between desire and an imposed ideal. Is anything we want a culturally imposed idea? If, for example, after a period of self-reflection in which she challenges imposed ideas of body type, Missy chooses a muscular type, why is this cause for concern? How does she know that she is only trading one stereotype for another, and not tapping into a more grounded awareness of self? How does she know that she is not? These are excellent questions. But my point here is that there is no awareness of self outside of socio-cultural considerations and constructions of self. The idea of self is socially constructed and continuously moving and changing (Green, 1996c). A muscular ideal body in dance may be no more empowering than an emaciated one because it requires its citizens to work in often-abusive ways to meet this ideal model.

Yes, during the study I did struggle with the idea that Missy derived great pleasure from sculpting her body into a muscular body ideal. And I did ask myself how I could question such a choice when she seemed so determined and wanting to take on this image. I tried weight training myself and found that I derived pleasure from the activity. In fact I continue to go to the gym today and often enjoy such experiences. I struggle as a researcher and a citizen with this issue.

But technologies of self do exist. Is it wrong that Missy is playing a truth game with her body? Upon reflection, I do not think it is a matter of right and wrong but a question of why and how we mold our bodies in such ways. Do we wish to experience the kinesthetic rewards of movement? Or do we strive to copy such movements in order to soothe and/or satisfy the outside gaze. We help to create the world in which we are embedded. I think that what we can learn from Foucault is that, rather than trying to stop being docile bodies we need to

be continually aware of how our bodies are manipulated and controlled. I am not referring to embracing a particular aesthetic of beauty based on a particular construction of meaning, but rather to look at the ways the outside gaze can, while seemingly creating pleasurable body experiences may work to disempower us. Social habits may be experienced as pleasure or a "rewarding" or "good pain." In other words, the value of the conceptualization of any aesthetic ideal becomes problematic, particularly in dance education, where bodies are often molded to fit the outside gaze of the teacher authority. We may not be able to truly liberate our bodies through the pedagogical process but we can place a mirror on the ways that we create technologies of the self to promulgate our own power in the dance classroom.

Author's Notes

[1] Portions of this paper were previously published in Green, J. (1999). Somatic authority and the myth of the ideal body in dance education. *Dance Research Journal, 31*(2), 80-100.]

[2] Of course some dance educators do work against the behavioral paradigm. Many teachers are becoming aware of a growing need to give dance students ownership of their bodies and a number of dance education scholars have problematized an objectified approach to teaching dance (Alter, 1986; Brightman, 1997; Marques, 1995, 1998; Shapiro, 1996, 1998; Smith, 1998; Stinson, 1993; Stinson, Jones & Van Dyke, 1990).)

[3] Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of the five women.

[4] See Green, 1999 for a more detailed account of the students' journals.

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