

City University of New York (CUNY)

CUNY Academic Works

Dissertations, Theses, and Capstone Projects

CUNY Graduate Center

9-2017

One Endless Dance: Tanaka Min's Experimental Practice

John (Zack) Fuller

The Graduate Center, City University of New York

[How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!](#)

More information about this work at: https://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_etds/2379

Discover additional works at: <https://academicworks.cuny.edu>

This work is made publicly available by the City University of New York (CUNY).

Contact: AcademicWorks@cuny.edu

ONE ENDLESS DANCE: TANAKA MIN'S EXPERIMENTAL PRACTICE

by

JOHN (ZACK) FULLER

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Theatre
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
The City University of New York, 2016

© 2016
JOHN M. FULLER
All Rights Reserved

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Theatre to satisfy the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Date

Claudia Orenstein
Chair of Examining Committee

Date

Peter Eckersall
Executive Officer

Marvin Carlson

David Savran

Supervisory Committee

Bruce Baird

Outside Reader

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

One Endless Dance: Tanaka Min's Experimental Practice

By John (Zack) Fuller

Advisor: Dr. Claudia Orenstein

This work is the first in-depth study of the work of avant-garde Japanese dancer/choreographer Tanaka Min, and focuses on his extensive innovations in the fields of improvised dance, training, and choreographic method. These interrelated aspects of his experimental practice are intimately concerned with the relation between space and the body, employ collaborative methods, and are strongly influenced by the life and work of Hijikata Tatsumi (widely to considered to be the founder of the *butô* movement). They are also deeply informed by his choice to live his daily life as an organic vegetable farmer, a choice that I argue constitutes a radical experiment in the relationship between dance and everyday life. Tanaka's various activities are informed by the ideology of Body Weather (*Shintai kisho*), a personal philosophy that considers the body as omni-centric and in a state of continual change. I contextualize specific examples of Tanaka's practice using data gleaned through participant observation, archival research, and extensive interviews with Tanaka and those who have worked with him. Tanaka Min is widely recognized as a significant figure in Japanese *butô*. Misconceptions about *butô*, tied to the Eurocentric notion of the Japanese as a people defined by traditional practices, deprive contemporary Japanese performing artists of individual agency. Employing comparative analysis with the work of other experimental choreographers in Japan and the U.S., this work repositions Tanaka as a major innovator in international contemporary dance who throughout his career has extended the radical experimentation of both the Tokyo and New York avant-garde dance movements of the nineteen-sixties.

Table of Contents

Title Page	i
Copyright	ii
Approval Page	iii
Abstract	iv
Table of Contents	v
List of Figures	vi
Introduction	1
Chapter One Form, Tradition, and the Commodification of <i>Ankoku Butô</i>	18
Chapter Two Solo/Duo/Trio: Tactical Maneuvers in Improvised Spatial Practice	64
Chapter Three Seeds of an Anti-hierarchic Ideal: Summer Training at Body Weather Farm	114
Chapter Four Group Choreography: Subject(s) in Space	147
Conclusion	218
Appendix A Tanaka Min, interviews with Zack Fuller	226
Appendix B Summer Workshops 1997-2000: Description of Exercises	275
Bibliography	291

List of Figures

Figure 1: *Drive*, 99

Figure 2: *Drive*, 99

Figure 3: *Drive*, 100

Figure 4: *Drive*, 100

Figure 5: *Emotion*, 101

Figure 6: *Emotion*, 101

Figure 7: *Emotion*, 102

Figure 8: *Emotion*, 102

Figure 9: *Performance for the Foundation of the Love-Dance School*, 105

Figure 10: Blind stimulation work, 135

Figure 11: MB training on the Earth Stage at Body Weather Farm, 136

Figure 12: Imagining stimulation, 138

Figure 13: Set for Tokason's *Kidnapping*, 153

Figure 14: Exterior of a disused chicken coop, 154

Figure 15: Interior of a disused chicken coop, 155

Figure 16: *Gauging a Smile*, 156

Figure 17: Maijuku's *Rite of Spring*, 179

Figure 18: Maijuku's *Rite of Spring*, 180

Figure 19: Tanaka dances with the angel fallen from the proscenium arch, 184

Figure 20: Stage set for *Romance: Love in Fluxus*, 194

Figure 21: *Romance: Love in Fluxus*, 194

Figure 22: *Romance Love in Fluxus*, 195

Figure 23: *Romance: Love in Fluxus*, 196

Figure 24: *Romance: Love in Fluxus*, 200

Figure 25: *Romance: Love in Fluxus*, 201

Figure 26: Francesco Goya, *Los Caprichos*, Plate 20, 208

Figure 27: Tokason performance of *Goya's Forest*, 209

Figure 28: Main platform for *Terraced Paddy of Goya*, 210

Figure 29: *Hanamichi* for *Terraced Paddy of Goya*, 211

Introduction

Tanaka Min¹ has performed more improvised outdoor solo dances than any contemporary dancer/choreographer in the world. His training methods have been disseminated in Denmark, France, Spain, and other parts of Europe, as well as Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. In Japan he has received major awards for his choreographic work, including the 1997 Japan Dance Critics Association Annual Prize.² His version of *The Rite of Spring* (*Haru no saiten*) was featured in the film *Butoh: Body on the Edge of Crisis*. He was decorated as *Chevalier des arts et lettres* by the French Ministry of culture in 1990. A cultural hero in the Czech Republic, he staged secret underground performances in communist Prague, inspiring Vaclav Havel and other Czech artists. He has collaborated with writers such as Felix Guattari and Susan Sontag, visual artists such as Karel Appel, Murakami Takashi, and Richard Serra, and new music composers such as Haino Keiji, Cecil Taylor, and Iannis Xenakis. Despite these achievements, there have until now been no major studies of his work.

The purpose of this dissertation is to articulate concrete aspects of Tanaka's dance practice and the methodology, ideology, and aesthetic principles that inform them. Because of the paucity of scholarship on Tanaka's work, I have focused on recounting as objectively as possible what Tanaka has accomplished in the fields of improvised dance, training methods, and choreography, without reducing his work to a prescribed method or form. Tanaka Min is widely recognized as a significant figure in Japanese *butô*. My intention, however is to reposition him as

¹ In Japan, family names are placed before personal names. Japanese performers performing abroad often reverse this order to conform to the standard European name order. In this dissertation I refer to Japanese persons using the Japanese name order.

² "Dance Log: Min Tanaka," in Kuniichi Uno, Kobata Kazue, and Matsuoka Seigo, *Min Tanaka: Between Mountain and Sea: Photographs by Masato Okada* (Tokyo: Kousakusha, 2007), 103.

a major innovator in international contemporary dance who throughout his career has extended the radical experimentation of both the Tokyo and New York avant-garde dance movements of the nineteen-sixties.

In Tanaka's experimental practice the fields of improvised dance, training, and choreography appear at first to be very separate activities. They are, however, deeply interconnected with each other, and with Tanaka's daily life as an organic vegetable farmer. Tanaka's various activities are informed by the ideology of Body Weather (*Shintai kisho*), an ideology or personal philosophy manifested in the methodological principles found in Tanaka's improvised dances, workshops, and choreographic method. Initially developed in collaboration with cultural critic Matsuoka Seigo in a dialogue that has continued over the years, Body Weather considers the body as omni-centric and, like weather, in a state of continual flux. Body Weather values personal autonomy, collaboration, and constant variation as means of resisting the stratification of habituated form. Implicit in this anti-hierarchic ideology is the idea that dance (or any other art) is not privileged over daily life (nor vice versa), and therefore daily life should be as experimentally and physically rigorous as training and performance.

What little scholarship is available on Tanaka exists primarily within larger studies of *butô*. Misconceptions about *butô*, tied to the Eurocentric notion of the Japanese as a people defined by traditional practices, deprive contemporary Japanese performing artists of individual agency. Dance critics, promoters, and scholars often treat the work of dancer/choreographers associated with *butô* as separate from and unrelated to post-modern and contemporary dance in the United States and Europe. Certain Japanese choreographers have shaped their dances to conform to the tastes of Western audiences.³ Certain scholars, performing artists, promoters, and

³ See Judith Hamera, "Silence That Reflects: Butoh, *Ma*, and a Crosscultural Gaze," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 10 (1990): 53-60.

critics have presented *Butô* as something that is essentially Japanese. David Goodman described Hijikata Tatsumi's dance in the late 1960's as "nostalgic" and strongly influenced by traditional Japanese culture.⁴ Actress Roberta Carreri stated that the founders of *butô* "wanted to get back to their traditional cultural roots."⁵ *Sankai Juku*, the most successful and well-known *butô* group is promoted as "based in traditional butoh."⁶ This view ghettoizes *butô* as a tradition entirely distinct from modern and post-modern dance in the U.S. and Europe. It reduces Japanese dance artists to performing their culture, making it seem as if they are masters of a form rather than innovative artists possessing creative agency as individuals. This view has tainted the reception of work by Japanese dancer/choreographers such as the New York based duo Eiko and Koma, whose attempts to distance themselves from the word *butô* stem from, in the words of dance scholar Rosemary Candelario, a desire "for presenters, audiences, and dance critics to engage with the work on its own terms, not in terms of what it means to be Asian or Japanese."⁷

In fact, as performance scholar Julie Hodges and dancer/choreographer Akira Kasai (a major figure in the early *butô* movement) have pointed out, *butô* was intercultural from its inception.⁸ Hijikata Tatsumi and Ohno Kazuo, generally recognized as the two most important figures in *butô*, were both trained in German Expressionist dance (or *Neuer Tanz*), and inspired

⁴ See David Goodman, "Angura: Japan's Nostalgic Avant-garde," in *Not the Other Avant-Garde: The Transnational Foundations of Avant-Garde Performance*, ed. James M. Harding and John Rouse (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 250-264.

⁵ Ian Watson, "Interculturalism and the Individual Performer," in *Negotiating Cultures: Eugenio Barba and the Intercultural Debate* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 78-79.

⁶ "Sankai Juku makes Joyce Theater debut with Tobari-As in Inexhaustible Flux," press release, http://www.joyce.org/pdf/Sankai_Juku_PR.pdf (Accessed November 13, 2010).

⁷ Rosemary Candelario, *Flowers Cracking Concrete: Eiko and Koma's Asian/American Choreographies* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2016), 98.

⁸ Julie Holledge and Joanne Tompkins, *Women's Intercultural Performance* (London: Routledge, 2000), 137. See also Kasai Akira "Hijikata Tatsumi wo kataru: Ishiki no henkaku wo mezashita butô-ka," in *Hijikata Tatsumi no butô – Nikutai no shurearisumu,shintai no ontoroji*, ed. Takashi Morishita (Tokyo: Keio-Gijyuku Daigaku Syuppan-Kai Kabushikigaisha, 2004), 56.

by the novels of the French writer Jean Genet.⁹ Hijikata used a wide range of European art to provide images from which to develop movement for his dances. In addition to drawing freely from source material regardless of cultural origin, the experimental dance artists who started to call their work *butô* at the beginning of the 1960's were rejecting the established forms of modern dance and searching for new means of expression at a time when experimental dance artists in the U.S. were in the process of rejecting those same forms. In the United States in the 1960s avant-garde dancer/choreographers broke away from modern dance, as exemplified by the work of Martha Graham, to experiment with daily movement as dance vocabulary, improvisation as performance, new methods of dance training, and new methodologies for choreographic process. At approximately the same time in Tokyo, Hijikata Tatsumi, Ohno Kazuo, Kasai Akira, and others were also engaged in making radical innovations in Western style concert dance at a time when the dance technique of Martha Graham was the dominant form of Modern dance training in Tokyo.¹⁰ Avant-garde dancer/choreographers in both Tokyo and New York were breaking away from the same models in order to find new possibilities for dance, but going in very different directions. Nowhere was this more evident than in the use of character and subject. By the mid-1970's the dominant trend in the downtown dance scene in New York was what Sally Banes terms "analytic post-modern dance:" an objectivist style characterized by the elimination of costume, theatrical lighting, music, and character.¹¹ While choreographers such as Lucinda Childs presented works that were pure structure and movement; eliminating figurative elements such as character, Hijikata multiplied figurative elements to an astonishing degree. In his 1976 dance *Costume en Face*, for example, in the choreography for a single dancer he

⁹ Mizohata Toshio, *Kazuo Ohno and Tatsumi Hijikata in the 1960's* (Tokyo: Kazuo Ohno Dance Studio/BankART 1929, 2005), 7.

¹⁰ *The Development of Contemporary Dance in Japan: 3 (division 3) New Tide*, VHS, directed by Kusaka Shiro, Contemporary Dance Association of Japan (Tokyo: Video Corp, 2002).

¹¹ Sally Banes, "Introduction to the Wesleyan Paperback Edition," in *Terpsichore in Sneakers: Post-Modern Dance* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), xx-xxii.

combined figures from Japanese mythology with characters from works by artists such as Goya, Redon, Dali, Belmer, Fautrier, Bacon, Picasso, Beardsley, and Delaunay; animals, and characters from daily life.¹²

Tanaka Min, the self-proclaimed “legitimate son of Hijikata”¹³ who was strongly influenced by the work of the American post-modern dance pioneer Anna Halprin,¹⁴ is an inheritor of the legacy of both the Tokyo and New York avant-garde of the 1960s. Since breaking away from Western style modern dance, beginning with the dance *Subject* in 1974, he has engaged in an extended process of experimenting with and developing collaborative improvisation, training, and choreography. Harada Hiromi, author of *Butô Encyclopedia (Butô Taizen)*, considers Tanaka to have been the first representative of post-modern dance in Japan.¹⁵ I am expanding on Harada’s idea of viewing Tanaka’s early work as post-modern dance, arguing that he has utilized experimental tactics originally employed by U.S. based choreographers such as Yvonne Rainer, Steve Paxton, and Trisha Brown, and extended, combined, and developed them in unprecedented ways.

Tanaka Min, known as a major figure in *butô*, rejects the term *butô* in part because it no longer denotes the rigorously experimental work it once did, but suggests for many a form or style of Japanese dance. At the same time he refers to Hijikata Tatsumi, generally acknowledged to be the founder of *butô*, as his teacher and primary influence. He holds Hijikata to have been the embodiment of Body Weather.¹⁶ In one of my interviews with Tanaka he stated that Hijikata Tatsumi was not only important for *butô*, but “important for dance,” suggesting that the

¹² Hijikata Tatsumi, *Costume en Face: A Primer of Darkness for Young Boys and Girls*, notebook written by Moe Yamamoto and translated from the Japanese by Sawako Nakayasu (Brooklyn: Ugly Duckling Press, 2015).

¹³ Tanaka Min, “I Am an Avant-garde Who Crawls the Earth,” in Ethan Hoffman, Mark Holborn, Yukio Mishima, Tatsumi Hijikata, and Haven O’More, *Butoh: Dance of the Dark Soul* (New York: Aperture, 1987), 65.

¹⁴ Body Weather Laboratory, “Drive On: endless paper/papier sans fin,” (May 1980), 57.

¹⁵ Harada Hiromi, “Tanaka Min (Tokasan),” in *Butoh Taizen* (Tokyo: Gendai Shokan, 2004), 332.

¹⁶ Tanaka Min, interview with Zack Fuller, August 9, 2011.

separation of *butô* as a genre distinct from Western concert dance is unproductive.¹⁷ I am essentially saying the same thing about Tanaka that he said about Hijikata: an understanding of Tanaka's practice is essential to the history of experimental dance in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Before the activities described here, Tanaka trained in modern dance and ballet in in Tokyo with Hiraoka Shiga, a prominent modern dance teacher and choreographer strongly influenced by the work of Martha Graham.¹⁸ At this time Graham technique was still the dominant style of modern dance training in Japan.¹⁹ In the late sixties and early seventies he performed with Hiraoka's dance company and became established as a modern dancer in Tokyo.²⁰ He abandoned this career in 1974 to concentrate on improvised minimalist dance. For the next seven years he danced with extreme slowness, wearing nothing but an ace bandage covering his genitals, in a widely differing array of spaces including public areas such as streets, parks, and subway stations, as well as art galleries and private homes.²¹ Many of these performances were collaborations with Noguchi Minoru, a composer of *musique concrete*.²² In 1977 his activities attracted the attention of the art and cultural critic Matsuoka Seigo, and in 1978 he formed Body Weather Laboratories, a collective whose investigations into language, music, and the body grew out of Tanaka's discussions with Matsuoka.²³ In the same year he was invited to perform in Paris at the Festival D'Automne as part of the *Espace Temps-MA* exhibition. Rather than returning to Japan after the festival, he continued to travel, performing in

¹⁷ Tanaka Min, interview with Zack Fuller, August 8, 2011.

¹⁸ Jonathan Marshall, "Dancing the Elemental Body: Butoh and Body Weather; Interviews with Tanaka Min and Yumi Umiuimare," *Performance Paradigm* 2 (March 2006), <http://www.performanceparadigm.net/category/journal/issue-2/>.

¹⁹ *The Development of Contemporary Dance in Japan: 3 (division 3) New Tide*, VHS, directed by Kusaka Shiro, Contemporary Dance Association of Japan (Tokyo: Video Corp, 2002).

²⁰ Harada Hiromi, "Min Tanaka (Tokasan)," in *Butoh Taizen* (Tokyo: Gendai Shokan, 2004), 330.

²¹ Tanaka Min, Kobata Kazue, ed., "Bodyprint: Min Tanaka; Media Information," (Bodyweather Laboratory: Tokyo, 1981), 38-41

²² Tanaka Min, interview with Zack Fuller, August 8, 2011.

²³ Kobata Kazue, interview with Zack Fuller, October 15, 2012.

Europe and in NYC at The Clocktower Gallery under the Auspices of PS1 Contemporary Art Center, an organization that he maintains a relationship with to this day. In subsequent appearances in New York City and events such as the Avignon and Nancy Festivals in France and the Reykjavik Festival in Iceland, he met artists such as Karel Appel and Richard Serra, both of whom he would collaborate with in later years, and in the same period began collaborating with guitarist Derek Bailey and percussionist Milford Graves.²⁴ In 1981 he formed the dance group Maijuku (Dance School), which was initially composed of dancers from Japan and Europe who had participated in his Body Weather Laboratory.²⁵ In 1982 he co-founded Plan B, “Tokyo’s first artist-run nonprofit experimental multi-genre art space”²⁶ with Kobata Kazue. Plan B would provide a space for him to conduct experiments with his own solo and group dance, as well as a venue for other experimental performing artists. In that same year, he wrote a homage to Hijikata that was published in *YU* magazine, a periodical devoted to experimental artists for which Matsuoka was chief editor. This essay, “I am the Avant-garde Who Crawls on the Earth” (*Watashi wa chi wo hau zen’ei de aru*), was written in response to positive comments that Hijikata made about Tanaka’s dance in an interview in the Tokyo newspaper *Mainichi Shinbun*,²⁷ and eventually resulted in their collaboration on the 1984 *Performance for the Foundation of the Love-Dance School (Ren’ai butô-ha teiso koen)*, which Hijikata choreographed as a solo dance for Tanaka. In 1985 Tanaka opened Body Weather Farm in the village of Hakushu (now Hakuto City), in Yamanashi prefecture, about four hours west of Tokyo. He and the members of Maijuku lived there with other collaborators, learning farming

²⁴ “Dance Log: Min Tanaka,” in Kuniichi Uno, Kobata Kazue, and Matsuoka Seigo, *Min Tanaka: Between Mountain and Sea: Photographs by Masato Okada* (Tokyo: Kousakusha, 2007), 93-94.

²⁵ Kobata Kazue, interview with Zack Fuller.

²⁶ “Dance Log: Min Tanaka,” 94-95.

²⁷ Misaki Eri, “Min Tanaka, ‘What is Dance?’,” *New York Dance Fax* (September 2000), 7.

In 2000 Tanaka formed Tokason (Plum Arcadia). Originally conceived as a “global village,” in actuality the members of Tokason worked and lived at either Body Weather Farm, which was by that point a self-sustaining agricultural enterprise, or at Honmura. While Body Weather Farm produced a wide variety of crops, at Honmura Tanaka initially focused on cultivating tea, along with other crops such as buckwheat (*soba*), and making charcoal using a traditional clay oven.

In the first decade of the twenty-first century Tanaka began working as an actor in feature films, shifted away from performing in large theatres, and initiated new projects. In 2002 he appeared in *The Twilight Samurai* (Tasugare Seibei), for which he won The Japan Academy prizes for both best supporting actor and best newcomer. Since then he has worked fairly extensively as a film actor. There was a shift in the focus of his solo dance in 2003 when he began dancing in remote villages in Indonesia and India, for audiences who had never been exposed to types of performance other than their own traditional ones.³¹ This led to his initiation of a forest preservation project in Kalimantan Island, Indonesia in 2004.³² In 2006 Tokason stopped performing in large theatres, and gradually suspended their activities altogether. Body Weather Farm dissolved sometime around 2011.

Throughout this time Tanaka sustained a practice of improvised solo dance. As of this writing, Tanaka has stopped directing group dances and leading summer workshops. He no longer maintains a group of dancer/farmers. He focuses on his own practice of dance, as well as directing solo performances for his disciple, Ishihara Rin.

³¹ See Katsumi Yutani, ed., *Umihiko Yamahiko Maihiko : Min Tanaka's Dance Road in Indonesia* (Tokyo: Designing GYM Inc., 2007).

³² Tanaka suspended the Forest Preservation Project in 2015 because of demands for bribes by corrupt government officials.

Overview of Literature

Other than an interview with Bonnie Sue Stein in *The Drama Review* in 1986, very little has been published on Tanaka Min. Jean Viala included a very brief (one page, with several pages of photographs) section on Tanaka in the book *Butoh: Shades of Darkness*, where he noted the integration of elements of daily life into his work, contrasting his dance to companies like Sankai Juku and Dairakudakan, whose work is very visually oriented. An informative essay in French by Odette Aslan on Tanaka's early solo dance can be found in the collection *Butô (s)*. Harada Hiromi includes a section on Tanaka and Tokasan in her *Butoh Encyclopedia (Butô Taizen)*. Unlike any of the authors writing in English, Harada foregrounds Tanaka's relationship to post-modern and contemporary dance, noting the influence of the U.S. dancer/choreographer Anna Halprin on his early work. Recently two photo books on Tanaka's solo work were published: *Min Tanaka Between Mountain and Sky: Photographs by Masato Okada* and *Sea, Mountain, Dance: Min Tanaka's Dance Road in Indonesia*. Though both are primarily collections of photographs, the former contains an exhaustive timeline of Tanaka's activities between 1966 and 2007, and the latter a transcription of his narration of the film documenting his solo dance performances in Indonesia in 2004. An earlier photo book *Butoh: Dance of the Dark Soul* features a large series of images of him and his group *Maijuku*, as well as an English translation of his essay "I am an Avant-garde Who Crawls the Earth" (*Watashi wa chi wo hau zen'ei de aru*). An interview with Jonathan Marshall in the online journal *Performance Paradigm* contributed little to the available literature on Tanaka, as the interviewer was not possessed of the knowledge of Tanaka's actual practice necessary to formulate productive questions and contextualize Tanaka's responses.³³

³³ See Jonathan Marshall, "Dancing the Elemental Body: Butoh and Body Weather: Interviews with Tanaka Min and Yumi Umiumare," *Performance Paradigm* 2 (March 2006), <http://www.performanceparadigm.net/journal/issue->

Methodology

In analyzing Tanaka's practice of improvised dance, training, and choreography, I have focused on specific examples that exemplify reoccurring principles in his approach, while emphasizing the elements of change and heterogeneity that characterize so much of his oeuvre. These examples of Tanaka's embodied practice contextualize and are informed by Tanaka's personal philosophy of dance and daily life, as I have come to understand it through extensive interviews with him and his collaborators, and the study of his direction and feedback during rehearsals as recorded in rehearsal notes and on video.

The construction of oral history through interviews and archival research that I have engaged in would not have been possible without my status as a long time participant observer of Tanaka's work. I first met Tanaka in 1997 when I was cast in *Poe Project: Stormy Membrane*, a dance choreographed by him and based loosely on a libretto by Susan Sontag. After this I worked with him extensively as a dancer from 1997 to 2000, rehearsing and performing with him in Japan, the United States, and Europe, participating in his workshops, and in farming work at Body Weather Farm and Honmura. I returned to Japan in the summers of 2004 and 2005 to dance in Tanaka's International Dance Co-Production Series. When I began my dissertation, because of the relations I had established with Tanaka and those who worked with him, I was able to conduct extensive personal interviews with him, his long-time manager Kobata Kazue, and former members of his dance groups Maijuku and Tokason. I was given access to a wealth of archival materials: videos at Tanaka's archive at Dance Resources on Earth, photographs from the archive of photojournalist Charlie Steiner (who has been following Tanaka's work since the late 1970's), and unpublished documents from the private collection of Bonnie Sue Stein. My

[2/articles/dancing-the-elemental-body-butoh-and-body-weather-interviews-with-tanaka-min-and-yumi-umiutare/](#)
(Accessed January 24, 2011).

Skype interviews with Christine Quoiraud provided invaluable clarifications and supplementary material regarding her rehearsal and workshop notes (now archived at Le Centre National de la Danse in Paris). I have used this material to identify what I judge to be the essential principles of an interconnected process of training, performance, and everyday life.

Tanaka is at heart a universalist, and engages with source materials, theoretical concepts, and other artists without regard to culture of origin. At the same time, there are certain specifically Japanese concepts that strongly influence his approach to dance and daily life. I have made use of these in instances where an understanding of them can provide insight into his practice. The complex concept of *Ma*, for example, denotes an interval or space/time between (e.g. between dancer and audience, body and object, music and body, or thought and expression). In one of a series of formal interviews that I conducted with him, Tanaka told me that this concept strongly influences his relations with space in performance, training, and everyday life.³⁴ The aesthetic of *wabi*, which denotes a specifically rural poverty, is one that I see as strongly present in the values that shape Tanaka's dances as well as the sets and costumes prepared for them.³⁵

In Tanaka's dance, space often functions as partner or subject. In my analysis of his improvised outdoor dances I have employed the theories of Michel de Certeau, specifically his idea of pedestrian tactics as a means of reappropriating public space, in order to understand Tanaka's dance as both a research of space and means of obtaining personal agency. His dance exhibits a complexity of vocabulary and rhythmic structure comparable to that of the musicians

³⁴ Tanaka Min, interview with Zack Fuller, August 9, 2011.

³⁵ *Wabi* has strong associations with Zen Buddhism. Zen Frank Van de Ven, who was a member of Maijuku and worked closely with Tanaka for over ten years, states that in the early late 1970's and early 1980's Tanaka distanced himself from anything to do with Zen, which was very popular at the time, and that later he came to be more open to appreciation of this and other traditions. Frank Van de Ven, e-mail communication with author, June 12, 2016.

he has worked with, and I have applied concepts from music theory such as counterpoint and polyrhythm in analyzing his use of the body in relation to music.

Chapter Overviews

In Chapter One I contextualize Tanaka's relation to *butô*, and critique the construction of *butô* as a form or genre of Japanese dance. I argue that the construction of *butô* as a form or style of dance has influenced the promotion and reception of the work of experimental Japanese dancer/choreographers and facilitated the branding of *butô* as a commodity for consumption by Western audiences. The systematization of Hijikata's choreographic method by Waguri Yukio, Amagatsu Ushio, and other *butô* dancers who align themselves with the traditional performing arts of *nô* and *kabuki*, reifies the Eurocentric notion of the Japanese as a people defined by traditional practices. In this chapter I examine how the related concepts of tradition, form, and visual spectacle contribute to the commodification of *butô* within the global field of cultural production. I argue that the construction of *butô* as a relatively codified form of Japanese dance based on traditional principles is entirely opposed to the experimental practice of the founder of *butô*, Hijikata Tatsumi, as well as that of Tanaka Min.

Chapter Two focuses on Tanaka's improvised collaborations, with particular attention to the relationships between the body and space and the body and music. While often designated as solo performances, Tanaka's improvisations are highly collaborative: they are collaborations with musicians, visual artists, a particular place, or less frequently, other performing artists. As examples of this practice I analyze five different improvised dances. The first is the *Hyperdance* series, in which the place of performance itself constituted the subject of the dance. In these dances, (many of which involved the composer Noguchi Minoru), Tanaka danced all over Japan in a variety of outdoor locations. *Hyperdance* employed many elements characteristic of both early post-modern dance in the U.S. and the Tokyo anti-art (*han geijutsu*) movement, but

combined them in unprecedented ways. These elements included minimalism, nudity, quotidian movement, site specificity, improvisation, questioning the conventional boundaries between audience and performer, and blurring the distinctions between art and daily life. In the *MMD* project in 1981, a collaboration with percussionist Milford Graves and guitarist Derek Bailey, Tanaka continued his development of a polyrhythmic body capable of moving in different rhythms simultaneously, while externalizing a wider range of movement expression than in the extremely restrained *Hyperdance*. In 1982 Tanaka initiated the *Emotion (Kanjo)* series. *Emotion* contrasted strongly with the earlier dances in its extreme intensity of emotional expression, as well as the use of costume and objects from everyday life. *Performance for the Foundation of the Love-Dance School (Ren'ai butô-ha teiso koen)* marked Tanaka's most significant collaboration with Hijikata Tatsumi, who directed him in this dance using a methodology involving complex layerings of visual imagery, which Tanaka continued to make use of in subsequent dances. The fifth example, an untitled performance at St. Nicholas Church in Prague in 1990, I discuss in the context of the political significance of Tanaka's performances in Prague before and after the "velvet revolution."

Chapter Three examines the processes explored in Tanaka's summer workshops. Tanaka originally called his workshops Body Weather Workshops, however Body Weather for him is not a training method but an ideology informing all aspects of his dance and daily life, which was initially developed within the context of workshops focused on exploring the possibilities of the body. In this chapter I define the essential principles of this ideology, demonstrate how those principles informed the workshop activities, and discuss the implications of the workshop exercises for the development of the individual dancer. I argue that the ultimate goal of this training was to develop an ideal non-hierarchic body through exposure to a wide variety of physical stimulations and an egalitarian mimesis that inverts traditional pedagogical models.

The chapter also includes a history of the formation of Body Weather Laboratories, a group initiated by Tanaka in 1985 to develop new methods for the exploration of heightened body consciousness.

Chapter Four discusses Tanaka's group choreography, with an emphasis on choreographic method. As with his improvised collaborations Tanaka's choreographic experiments addressed concerns widely shared by choreographers involved in new dance since the nineteen sixties. Tanaka's approach to group work is highly collaborative: he choreographs through language rather than by demonstrating movement, and his dancers have a high degree of individual creative input. I focus on three examples of group performances where he used different methods of choreography. In Maijuku's version of *The Rite of Spring* (1990), the process was closely related to the Body Weather Workshops Tanaka was leading at the time. Workshop rehearsal sessions drew from varied elements that Tanaka associated with idea of a rite of spring, and generated a body of raw material for the dancers to draw from and use directly in performance. They explored creating dance from elements of the daily life of the dancers as farmers, from verbally transmitted visual imagery, (including imagery given to Tanaka by Hijikata), and studies of animal movement. This material was altered by and further developed from the stage set designed by sculptor and video artist Richard Serra.

In *Romance: Love in Fluxus* (2000), the individual performers created hybrid characters or personae from their own imaginations. The subject of the dance, a kind of extreme will or volition to engage with life, was abstract, challenging, and open to a wide range of interpretation. Each of the dancers developed their own image/movement combinations, which were altered and elaborated on in rehearsals under Tanaka's direction. Tanaka's directions to the dancers emphasized fragility, delicacy, the use of micro movements, and an asymmetrical omni-centered

body. As in *The Rite of Spring*, the dancers' movements were altered by the stage set, principally by a seventy-two-foot-tall tree that was its most prominent element.

In the *Goya* series (2000-2002) the performers developed a shared body of material from a common subject: Francesco Goya's *Los Caprichos*: a series of etchings depicting various aspects of human folly. Each dancer created a repertory of characters from the etchings, removed from their original cultural context. Images from different etchings were blended and combined in sequences of characters, actions, and movements. Tanaka emphasized the use of facial expression in the manner of Ashikawa Yoko, Hijikata Tatsumi's principle dancer and disciple. The series was performed in a variety of different places, with the repertory of material derived from the *Caprichos* reconfigured for and altered by each successive performance space.

In each of these chapters I discuss the relationship between farming and dance in Tanaka's work. While sustaining rigorous experimentation in the areas of improvised dance, choreography, and training for many years, through most of that time Tanaka has lived and worked as an organic farmer. For over twenty years he and the dancers he worked with lived and farmed together. When I began working on this dissertation, he and his group Tokasan were running two organic farms in Yamanashi Prefecture: Body Weather Farm and Honmura. Body Weather Farm is no longer in existence, though several former members continue farming, notably Suzuki Keishi, and Natsui Hidekazu, who now have their own successful small farms in Yamanashi. Although he does not now make his living as a farmer or support a group of dancer farmers, farming is still a very important part of Tanaka's life, and he works daily taking care of his own crops when he is not traveling for a dance or film project. In each of these chapters I emphasize that every aspect of Tanaka's dance practice is informed by the experience of his daily life working as a farmer. Tanaka's initial decision to live and work as an organic farmer was perhaps his most radical choice as an artist exploring the relation between dance and daily

life. On the most basic level farming provided a means of subsistence income (and food) for Maijuku and Tokason members, alleviating the need to rely entirely on outside funding sources. The farming lifestyle also provided access to a wealth of materials to be used in set construction and spaces in which to dance. Farming a wide variety of small crops exposes the body to a multiplicity of stimulations and physical actions, functioning as dance training not bound up with a specific cultural context. The use of farming as dance training constitutes a decommodification of dance practice, involving a use of space that overturns conventional hierarchical relations between places for dance training and the dancers who engage with them.

In each of these chapters I present Tanaka's work in the context of the legacy of avant-garde dance movements of the 1960s, demonstrating how he has taken the experimental tactics employed by Japanese and U.S. dancer/choreographers of that era and developed and reconfigured these in his improvised dance, training exercises, and choreographic work. While each chapter examines a distinct aspect of Tanaka's oeuvre, each builds on the other, identifying the reoccurring themes, methodological principles, concerns, and aesthetic values of an integrated experimental practice of dance and daily life.

Chapter One

Form, Tradition, and the Commodification of *Ankoku Butô*

When Tanaka Min first performed outside of Japan, at the Festival d'Automne in Paris in 1978, he was categorized as a *butô* dancer. According to theatre scholar Odette Aslan, the French press placed all the Japanese dancers invited to the festival in this category.¹ In Japan however, he was seen as someone outside of the *butô* movement.² In his own words, many people considered him to be “against *butô*.”³ In 1983 *Tanaka* published an essay in *YU* (Play) magazine titled *Watashi wa chi wo hau zen'ei de aru* (I am the Avant-garde Who Crawls on the Earth) in which he declared himself the “legitimate son” of Hijikata Tatsumi, the dancer/choreographer generally held to be the founder of the *butô* movement.⁴ This manifesto was in response to a report in the Tokyo *Mainichi Shinbun* (Daily Newspaper) that Hijikata appreciated the minimalist outdoor performances Tanaka was engaged in at the time.⁵ This exchange of mutual admiration eventually led to Tanaka helping Hijikata, who had been relatively inactive for about five years, to produce a series of performances at Plan B, a small performance space in Tokyo run by Tanaka and his associates. These included a retrospective of Hijikata's dance through film and slide projections, and a series of live performances: *Huku ofu 88: Keshiki e no ittan no kamigata* (Hook-off 88: One Ton of Hairdo for the Scenery). Tanaka performed in one of these:

¹ Odette Aslan, “Tanaka Min,” in Odette Aslan and Béatrice Picon-Vallin, ed., *Butô(s)*, Arts Du Spectacle (Paris: CNRS editions, 2002), 177.

² Harada Hiromi, “Tanaka Min (Tokasan),” in *Butoh Taizen* (Tokyo: Gendai Shokan, 2004), 332.

³ Tanaka Min, interview with Zack Fuller, August 8, 2011.

⁴ “Dance Log: Min Tanaka,” in *Min Tanaka: Between Mountain and Sea: Photographs by Masato Okada*, Kuniichi Uno, Kobata Kazue, and Matsuoka Seigo, (Tokyo: Kousakusha, 2007), 95.

⁵ Misaki Eri, “Min Tanaka, ‘What is Dance?,” New York Dance Fax (September 2000): 6.

Hijō ni kyūsoku na kyūkisei bromaido (Bromide That Can Be Inhaled Incredibly Quickly),⁶ a duet for Tanaka and Ashikawa Yoko, and in the following year Hijikata directed him in the solo dance *Ren'ai butō-ha teiso koen* (Performance for the Foundation of the Love-Dance School). After Hijikata's death Tanaka rejected *butō* as a category, and he has consistently refused invitations to perform at *butō* festivals in the U.S. and Europe.

In a statement on his official website announcing his 2009 summer workshop, Tanaka writes, "My workshop is by no means intended to teach Butoh; I'd rather like to smash down the tendency to believe as though there exists a genre of dance called Butoh."⁷ At the 2008 International Conference on Asian Theatre and the Western World in Thrissur India, he stated: "For me, *butō* is finished." He has made similar statements over the years, and these do not simply indicate resistance to the *butō* label or a desire to place himself outside of *butō*, but a critique of what *butō* has become. He uses the word as a conflicted term. In his workshops, rehearsals, and interviews he uses it both pejoratively, to describe an empty form or style, and in an approbative sense to describe an undefinable practice characterized by rigorous investigation into the possibilities of the body and consciousness in dance and daily life.

Despite his objections Tanaka has been seen through much of his career as a major figure in the *butō* movement, and has been referred to as a "*butoh* master" by those promoting his work in the West.⁸ Tanaka's career has certainly benefitted from his reputation as a *butō* master, it has substantially increased what in Bourdieu's terminology would be called his symbolic capital.⁹

⁶ I have used Susan Blakely Klein's translation for this obscure title. See Susan Blakely Klein, *Ankoku Butoh: The Premodern and Postmodern Influences on the Dance of Utter Darkness*, Cornell East Asia Series 49 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University East Asia Program, 1988), 81.

⁷ "Min Tanaka Official Website," <http://www.min-tanaka.com/> (Accessed April 20, 2010).

⁸ See for example MoMA PS1 Studio Visit, "Min Tanaka: Photos by Masato Okada," MoMA PS1, <http://ps1.org/exhibitions/view/159> (Accessed April 20, 2010).

⁹ Randal Johnston summarizes the term thusly: "Symbolic Capital refers to degree of accumulated prestige, celebrity, consecration or honour and is founded on a dialectic of knowledge (*connaissance*) and recognition (*reconnaissance*)." Randal Johnston, "Editor's Introduction," Pierre Bourdieu on Art, Literature and Culture," in

However, at the same time, the designation gives the false impression that Tanaka is trained in a specific form of dance (*butô*) that is the basis of his practice. Because misconceptions about *butô* are so widespread, I feel that it is necessary both to question received notions of *butô* as a dance form, and to examine how these misconceptions serve to perpetuate an orientalist view of contemporary Japanese performing artists that deprives them of their individual agency.

Ostensibly, Tanaka rejects the term because it no longer denotes the rigorously experimental practice it once did. It has become a category, and he is opposed on general principle to categorization and formalization of method, which he sees as restricting the freedom of both the human body and the human spirit. Additionally, Tanaka rejects *butô* because it is associated with dance companies such as Sankai Juku (School of Mountain and Sea) and Dairakuda-kan (Great Camel Battleship) and choreographers such as Waguri Yukio whose approach to dance has very little in common with his own.

While Tanaka's opinions have certainly influenced my own views on the topic of the commodification of *butô*, I am, for what I hope are obvious reasons, viewing this situation from a very different perspective. My initial questioning of the category was prompted by my encounters with Tanaka, his rejection of form, his criticism of other dancers, and my growing awareness of the scope and innovativeness of his own practice of dance and daily life. It was further fueled by the assumptions that I encountered in the U.S. regarding Tanaka, my relation with him, and my own practice of dance. While Tanaka rejects *butô* because the word has come to denote what to him is merely an empty form, I myself argue that the construction of *butô* as a form, style, or genre of dance influences the reception of the work of experimental Japanese dancer/choreographers and facilitates the branding of *butô* as a commodity for consumption by

Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, ed. Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 7.

Western audiences. This construction is tied to the Eurocentric notion of the Japanese as a people defined by traditional practices. The related conceptions of form, tradition, and visual spectacle, combined with the notion of *butô* as a dance of death depicting the horrors of the atomic bomb, contribute to the commodification of *butô* within a globalized field of cultural production, and Japanese choreographers have, as Judith Hamera has suggested, altered their performances in accordance with an internalized Western gaze.¹⁰

The word *butô* simply means dance, and prior to the 1960's it was used to designate dance that was other than *Nihon buyô* (traditional Japanese dance), most commonly Western style social dance.¹¹ In the 1960's it emerged as a name for work being created by Japanese dance artists who were trained in Western style modern dance, but engaged in a radical break from that style. Hijikata Tatsumi appeared on the underground performance scene in Tokyo in the late nineteen-fifties and became a major influence on avant-garde dance, theatre, and film.¹² According to Kurihara Nanako, he originally coined the term *ankoku butô* (dance of darkness) to distinguish his dance from both *Nihon buyô* and *gendai buyô* (western style modern dance).¹³ Kasai Akira, a contemporary of Hijikata's and a major figure in *butô* today, claims that he himself suggested using the term *butô* to differentiate their dance from these established forms.¹⁴ Often there is a temporal distinction made between *butô* and *ankoku butô*, with Hijikata's early, transgressive dances seen as *ankoku butô*, and second generation *butô* dancers dropping the

¹⁰ Judith Hamera, "Silence That Reflects: Butoh, *Ma*, and a Crosscultural Gaze," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 10 (1990): 53-60.

¹¹ Blakely Klein, *Ankoku Butoh*, 2.

¹² For Hijikata's influence on experimental theatre in Japan see Takahashi Yasunari, "Alternative Japanese Drama: A Brief Overview," in *Alternative Japanese Drama*, ed. Robert T. Rolf and John K. Gillespie, 1-9 (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992). For a discussion on his work in avant-garde film see Mark Franko, "Given Movement," in *Ritual and Event: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2007), 125-137.

¹³ Kurihara Nanako, "Hijikata Tatsumi: The Words of Butoh," *The Drama Review* 44, no.1 (Spring 2000): 12.

¹⁴ Kasai Akira, "Hijikata Tatsumi wo kataru: Ishiki no henkaku wo mezashita butô-ka," in *Hijikata Tatsumi no butô – Nikutai no shurearishumu,shintai no ontoroji*, ed. Takashi Morishita, 55-63 (Tokyo: Keio-Gijyuku Daigaku Syuppan-Kai Kabushikigaisha, 2004), 60.

ankoku and making dances that are less ‘dark.’¹⁵ Goda Nario, however, proposed that Hijikata’s *ankoku butô* (including the later dances in the *Hook-off* series that he created in 1983) was characterized by an intellectual rigor absent from other *butô* and could be best historicized as “the avant-garde within the *butô* movement.”¹⁶

In August of 2011 I conducted a series of formal interviews with Tanaka at his home and work center in Honmura Village, Yamanashi prefecture. In one of these I asked him to clarify his ambivalent use of the word *butô*: “I know that now you say that *butô* is finished and that you don’t want to have anything to do with that. What *was butô* for you when that was a word that you *did* find meaningful?” His answer was “I think for me it is very simple. *Butô* is Mr. Hijikata himself.” Tanaka often refers to Hijikata as the major influence on his dance and life, and simultaneously rejects the dance form Hijikata is famous for creating. This can come across as a deliberate mystification, something like a Zen *kôan*. In order to contextualize Tanaka’s rejection of the term *butô*, it is necessary to examine how the selection of particular elements of Hijikata’s practice and their codification following his death, resulting in the construction of *butô* as a tradition, form, or style of dance can be seen as a narrowing of Hijikata’s original project.

Hijikata and Early Butô

Hijikata Tatsumi was born in rural Tohoku, in Akita prefecture, in 1928. He began dancing in 1946, taking classes in modern dance in from Masumura Katsuko, a disciple of Ishii Baku.¹⁷ When he moved to Tokyo in 1952 his training included classes in ballet, flamenco, and

¹⁵ Sondra Fraleigh, *Butoh: Metamorphic Dance and Global Alchemy* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 83.

¹⁶ Gôda Nario, “On Ankoku Butoh,” in Susan Blakely Klein, *Ankoku Butoh: The Premodern and Postmodern Influences on the Dance of Utter Darkness*, Cornell East Asia Series 49 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University East Asia Program, 1988), 83.

¹⁷ Kurihara Nanoko, “Hijikata Tatsumi Chronology,” *The Drama Review* 44, no.1 (Spring 2000): 29. Ishii was a dance innovator who had trained in classical ballet and Dalcroze Eurythmics who developed his own style of

jazz dance, before studying modern dance at the Andô Mitsuko Dance Institute and performing with her company Andô Mitsuko/Horiuchi Kan Unique Ballet Group from 1953 to 1958.¹⁸ During this time a significant shift occurred in the modern dance scene in Tokyo. Prior to World War II, the major influence on Japanese Modern dance was the German *Ausdruckstanz* or *Neuer Tanz*. After the war, The American Cultural Council provided training in U.S. style modern dance in Japan. The major shift, however, came in 1955 when The Martha Graham Company toured Japan. After this, according to Kusaka Shiro, director of The Contemporary Dance Association of Japan, “For the next quarter of a century, American modern dance virtually steered the Japanese Dance World.”¹⁹ The success of the Graham Company opened the door for other U.S. choreographers such as Paul Taylor, Anna Sokolow, and Alvin Ailey, and the Graham technique became the most popular form of modern dance training in Japan.²⁰ So it was during a period when the modern dance scene in Tokyo was shifting from a *Neuer Tanz* influenced style to one dominated by U.S. style modern dance that Hijikata began to make dances that differed radically from both.

In Ando Mitsuko’s group Hijikata first met Ohno Kazuo, when they performed together in *Karasu* (Crow) in 1954²¹ (said to be Hijikata’s first public performance).²² Scholars such as Susan Blakely Klein and Sondra Fraleigh have given Ohno equal importance with Hijikata as a founder of *butô*. Jean Viala characterized Ohno as “the soul of butoh” and Hijikata as “its

modern dance in Japan. See Shiba Mariko, “Modern Dance in Japan: The Influence of Western Culture and What Japan Created On its Own,” Departmental Bulletin Paper, (Kobe University, September, 2006), 117-119, <http://www.lib.kobe-u.ac.jp/repository/81002873.pdf> (Accessed July 27, 2014).

¹⁸ Kurihara, “Hijikata Tatsumi Chronology,” 29.

¹⁹ *The Development of Contemporary Dance in Japan: 3 (division 3) New Tide*, VHS, directed by Kusaka Shiro, Contemporary Dance Association of Japan (Tokyo: Video Corp, 2002).

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ohno Kazuo and Ohno Yoshito, *Kazuo Ohno’s World: From Within and Without*, trans. John Barret (Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 132.

²² Ibid, 181.

architect.”²³ Ohno certainly deserves to be recognized as a dance artist of great significance, one who inspired and collaborated with Hijikata and whose performances in Europe helped bring international recognition to *butô*. However, Ohno never choreographed significant group work or produced the complex, provocative and influential writings that Hijikata did. At least two of Ohno’s most well-known solo works, *Ra Aruhenchina kô* (La Argentina) and *Watashi no okasan* (My Mother), were directed by Hijikata.²⁴ According to Kasai Akira, a major dancer/choreographer who studied under Ohno, *butô* was created by three men: Hijikata Tatsumi, Mishima Yukio, and Shibusawa Tatsuhiko.²⁵ Kasai’s statement is a provocative one, as neither Mishima nor Shibusawa were dancers. Mishima, a great admirer of Hijikata’s work, was a highly acclaimed novelist, a body builder, and a nationalist who committed *seppuku* (ritual suicide) in 1970 after calling for the restoration of the emperor to power.²⁶ Shibusawa was a French scholar and translator of De Sade and Artaud who was responsible for introducing Hijikata to the works of these writers, as well as to Genet, Lautréamont, and Bataille. During the 1960’s, French literature and theory were major influences on intellectuals and artists in Tokyo, as newly translated works became available, and Hijikata’s early work was deeply influenced by these transgressive French writers.

Kasai’s statement stresses the importance of language in the origins of Hijikata’s dance, as well as the influence of avant-garde European literature and thought. Hijikata’s dance *Kinjiki* (Forbidden Colors) 1959, usually said to be the first *butô* piece, took its title from one of Mishima’s novels and employed material from Genet in its content. Shibusawa’s influence on Hijikata was large, Hijikata dedicated his 1965 *Barairo dansu: A LA MAISON DE M.*

²³ Jean Viala, *Butoh: Shades of Darkness* (Tokyo: Shufunotomo, 1988), 62.

²⁴ Kurihara, “Hijikata Tatsumi Chronology,” 32.

²⁵ Kasai Akira, “Hijikata Tatsumi wo kataru,” 56.

²⁶ See Ian Buruma, “36 Views of Mishima Yukio” in *The Missionary and the Libertine: Love and War in East and West* (Boston: Faber, 1996).

CEVECAWA (Rose Colored Dance: To Mr. Shibusawa's House) to him. The French authors that Shibusawa introduced to Hijikata explored themes of sex and violence (and sexual violence). These themes were strongly present in *Kinjiki* (Forbidden Colors), a piece that shockingly presented male homosexuality, and featured a scantily clad twenty-one-year-old Ohno Yoshito (Ohno Kazuo's son) pursued in the dark by Hijikata and squeezing a live chicken between his bare thighs in an action intended to result in the death of the chicken, accompanied by gasping sounds as of someone in sexual ecstasy.²⁷ Genet's celebration of criminality, the ritualistic "killing" of a chicken, and the homosexuality presented in *Kinjiki* were not merely employed as transgressive content. For Hijikata, each of these elements had the potential to resist the commodification of the body demanded by a production-oriented society.

In his 1961 essay "To Prison" Hijikata wrote

To a production-oriented society, the aimless use of the body, which I call dance, is a deadly enemy which must be taboo. I am able to say that my dance shares a common basis with crime, male homosexuality, festivals and rituals because it is behavior that explicitly flaunts its aimlessness in the face of a production-oriented society.²⁸

This is one of the clearest statements that Hijikata made about his dance. While written relatively early in his career, his later writings embody in their form (or defiance of form) the resistance to commodification that he writes of here. Overall, they are provocative rather than prescriptive, and resist specific interpretation. What Sartre said of Genet's writings can be said equally of Hijikata's: "He opens up one of his myths; he tells us 'You're going to see what stuff it's made of,' and we find another myth. He reassures us only to disturb us further."²⁹ Like Genet's novels, they celebrate the abject, confound linear time, blend fantasy with biography,

²⁷ Kurihara Nanoko, "Hijikata Tatsumi: The Words of Butoh," *The Drama Review* 44, no.1 (Spring 2000): 18.

²⁸ Hijikata Tatsumi, "To Prison," trans. Jacqueline S. Ruyak and Kurihara Nanako, *The Drama Review* 44, no.1 (Spring 2000): 44.

²⁹ Jean-Paul Sartre, "Forward" to *The Thief's Journal*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (Lexington KY: Olympia Press, 2004), 3.

and blur individual identity. Similarly, the bizarre, violent and erotic actions in Hijikata's early dances, which were often hostile to the audience, could not be subsumed into a formalized visual spectacle such as the *butô* of *Sankai Juku* or *Dairakudakan* (the most well-known *butô* groups existing today).

Referring to *Kinjiki*, the critic Goda Nario, who spent much of his life observing, discussing, writing, and thinking about *butô*, writes

In the dance motif of "killing a chicken" which *Forbidden Colors* and *Revolt of the Flesh* share, one could plainly see the turbulent passion of the boy's youthful flesh, an expression of a dark sexuality which he could neither control nor be set free from.³⁰

According to Ohno Yoshito, the chicken in *Kinjiki* did not actually die,³¹ and there is some question as to whether Hijikata actually killed a chicken in his nineteen-sixty-eight dance *Hijikata Tatsumi to nihonjin: Nikutai no hanran* (Hijikata Tatsumi and the Japanese: Revolt of the Flesh), that Goda notes above. However, what Goda calls the "dance motif" of killing a chicken as an expression of a dark uncontrollable force is one that can be further examined as a dance that is uncontrollable, and therefore uncommodifiable. Miryam Sas reads this motif, as presented in *Heso to genbaku* (Navel and A-Bomb), a film that Hijikata collaborated on with Eiko Hosoe in 1960, in a way very similar to Goda's reading of the killing of the chicken in *Forbidden Colors* and *Revolt of the Flesh*, stating that in the most violent section of the film "the camera focuses on the contorted and subtle movements of the dead chicken's feet in the air..." presenting movements "...outside of the controlled and conceptualized language of conscious, intentional movement..."³² It is possible of course, that Sas's analysis of the motif was

³⁰ Gôda, "On Ankoku Butoh," 82.

³¹ Kurihara, "Hijikata Tatsumi," 26.

³² Miryam Sas, *Experimental Arts in Postwar Japan: Moments of Encounter, Engagement, and Imagined Return* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 167.

influenced by Goda's, and both are reminiscent of the philosophy of one of Hijikata's favorite authors, Georges Bataille. Bataille writes of the relation between ritual sacrifice and sexual activity that "Sacrifice replaces the ordered life of the animal with a blind convulsion of its organs. So also with the erotic convulsion; it gives free reign to extravagant organs whose blind activity goes on beyond the considered will of the lovers."³³ I would suggest that in "Forbidden Colors," the conflation of the killing of a chicken with an erotic act combines two actions, framed as dance, that emerge from impulses outside the control of the being who is moved or being moved. That is to say that extreme violence and orgasm both result in movements that the body experiences without being able to fully control. While sex and violence can be represented in dance in a stylized fashion, actually presenting the death of an animal as dance exhibits movement that is uncommodifiable, unrepeatable, not reproducible as choreography. The movements of the body in the depths of sexual ecstasy are likewise outside of the controlled sphere of intentional movement. While the killing of animals can certainly be commodified, as in factory farming and dog fighting, the movements of an animal in its death throes is a dance that cannot be controlled, repeated, or commodified. The same can be said for an attempt to kill an animal that did not succeed, in such a case the motif is even less controlled. Hijikata's use of sex and violence was not merely transgressive, but held the capacity to generate movement outside of the control of the dancers or the choreographer. This destabilization of authorial control was as much in opposition to the formalistic nature of modern dance at the time as it was in line with trends in the experimental arts in Tokyo in the late 1950's and the 1960's.

³³ Georges Bataille, *Eroticism: Death and Sensuality* (San Francisco, City Lights: 1986), 92.

Hijikata and Tokyo Neo-Dada

After *Forbidden Colors*, Hijikata resigned from the *Zen-Nihon Geijutsu Buyô Kyokai* (All-Japan Art Dance Association). Following this break with the Tokyo modern dance establishment, he collaborated with avant-garde artists from other disciplines, including visual artists from the Tokyo neo-dada movement. Tokyo in the nineteen-sixties was a place of radical experimentation in the arts, and there was a high degree of collaboration and mutual influence between avant-garde artists coming from theatre, visual arts, dance, and music. Hijikata collaborated with visual artists such as Akasegawa Genpei³⁴ and Ushio Shinohara³⁵, experimental theatre director/playwrights Kara Juro and Terayama Shûji³⁶, and composers such as Yasunao Tone.³⁷

While Hijikata had been making his break from the U.S. influenced modern dance scene, Akasegawa and Shinohara were similarly breaking from the modern art style *art informel*, the dominant style of modern art in Tokyo at that time. William Marotti has argued persuasively that the artistic concerns Hijikata engaged with during the nineteen sixties were shared by Tokyo avant-garde visual artists. These included a privileging of embodiment over representation demonstrated through ephemeral works exploring the possibilities of action, *objet*, and performance.³⁸ These artists were also interested in developing means of usurping individual authorship, often through collaboration or the simultaneous creation and destruction of art works,

³⁴ Akasegawa Genpei, *Tokyo Mikusâ Keikaku* (Tokyo: Parco-syuppan, 1984), 42-45.

³⁵ Iozaki Arata, "As Witness to Postwar Japanese Art," trans. Sabu Kohso, in *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against The Sky*, ed. Alexandra Munroe (New York: Harry Abrams, 1994), 28.

³⁶ Carol Fischer Sorgenfrei, *Unspeakable Acts: The Avant-garde Theatre of Terayama Shuji and Postwar Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 32.

³⁷ Akasegawa, *Tôkyô mikisâ keikaku*, 42-45.

³⁸ William Marotti, "Nihon no 1960 nendai zen 'ei geijutsu undo to Hijikata Tatsumi, sunawachi Hijikata Tatsumi no butô o hyoka suru shomondai'" (Hijikata Tatsumi and Japanese Avant-garde Art movements of the 1960s; Problems in Evaluating Hijikata Tatsumi's Butoh), *Choroleogia* 24 (2001), 48-53.

and the blurring of art and daily life through “surreptitious action, anonymity, and provocation.”³⁹

In 1962, on the anniversary of the end of World War II, Hijikata participated in the collaborative event *Haisen Kinen Bansankai* (War Defeat Day Anniversary Dinner), which featured former members of the notorious Neo Dada Organizers. Akasegawa Genpei describes it in his book *Tokyo Mikusâ Keikaku* (Tokyo Mixer Project).⁴⁰ This was Hijikata’s first collaboration with some of the avant-garde artists who would later influence the works that he directed himself. It employed autonomous collaboration, and the breaking down of barriers between art and everyday life. The tickets for the event read *Art Minus Art (memorial of losing the war) Dinner Arrangement Ticket*. The piece came to be known in retrospect as *War Defeat Day Anniversary Dinner*. According to Fluxus artist Nam Jun Paik, the cost of the tickets led the majority of the audience to believe that a dinner was included in the price of a ticket.⁴¹ Instead, the ticket price of the ticket only allowed the audience to watch the performers eat. These performers were the neo-dada artists Akasegawa Genpei, Kazakura Shô, and Yoshimura Masunobu, the composers Tone Yasunao and Kosugi Takehisa, and Hijikata himself. By the time they had finished eating most of the audience had left, and only four people remained to witness the rest of the performance. The artists presented a performance consisting of individually composed scores performed concurrently, some of which intruded on each other in disruptive ways. Beginning with Yoshimura standing on the stage in his underwear, vigorously brushing his teeth for thirty minutes until his gums bled, the actions that followed occurred simultaneously. Tone’s piece was a chance score that used a contour map to determine the height

³⁹ William Marotti, *Money, Trains and Guillotines: Art and Revolution in 1960s Japan* (Durham NC: Duke University Press 2013), 240.

⁴⁰ Akasegawa, *Tokyo Mikusâ Keikaku* (Tokyo: Parco-syuppan 1984), 42-45.

⁴¹ Nam Jun Paik, “To Catch Up Or Not to Catch up With the West: Hijikata and Hi-Red Center,” in *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against The Sky*, ed. Alexandra Munroe (New York: Harry Abrams, 1994), 80.

from which to drop rubber balls onto the strings of an overturned grand piano. Kosugi's musical score produced no music at all, but consisted of him first winding a string around all the objects in the space, then around himself by repeatedly turning in a circle. Hijikata began his dance by lying down on a table, then continuing to dance while crawling extremely low to the ground, periodically running to the sink to splash himself with water. Kazakura began his piece by tilting his chair until it fell onto the floor. He then stripped to his underwear, and branded himself on the chest with a branding iron of his own design, which Akasegawa had been heating up for him. The performance ended after Hijikata spontaneously grabbed the branding iron and applied it to Kazakura again.

War Defeat Day Anniversary Dinner blurred the distinctions between art and daily life, made its audience uncomfortable, and destabilized authorial intention. Masunobu Yoshimura's tooth brushing takes a daily activity and, through repetition *ad absurdum*, alienates it from its daily context. The resulting damage to his gums, resulting in bloody foam, forces a recognition of the materiality of the performer's body. Kazakura's self-branding similarly foregrounds the materiality of the body: the body becomes a canvas marked by the artist. As he had not been branded prior to this, the first branding is unrepeatable, since any additional brandings would be additional markings on the canvas of Kazakura's body. Hijikata's unexpected, spontaneous repetition of the branding is a challenge to Kazakura's masochistic commitment, subverting the notion of the work of art as the expression of a single artist's intention. Authorial intention is further subverted by the simultaneous presentation of the different actions in autonomous collaboration.

Later Akasegawa would collaborate with Hijikata in the latter's *Rose Colored Dance*, and *Anma* (Massuers). These "Dance Experiences" were similarly collaborative, disruptive, and employed disparate styles rather than a consistent form. In the philosophy of the artists of the

Tokyo neo-dada movement that Hijikata collaborated with, the rejection of form had a strong political agenda. The extent to which established artistic forms were equated with established structures of political power is expressed in the anecdote that during the protests against the *Anpo jōyaku* (U.S. Japan Mutual Security Treaty) in 1960, members of the Neo Dada Organizers alternated shouts of “Down with *anpo!*” with “Down with *anfo!*”: an abbreviation of *anforumeru*, the Japanese loan word taken from the French *art informel*.⁴² Hijikata himself had no explicit political agenda, and was friends with the ultra right wing Mishima as well as the left wing Shinohara. He was interested in unleashing what he saw as the untapped potential of human body, and continually questioning and probing the various forms of limitation imposed upon the body.

Form and Anti-form

Hijikata had no interest in traditional Japanese dance. Of *Nihon buyo*, the dance form used in *kabuki*, he said (in a comment reminiscent of or alluding to Artaud) “That kind of dance is completely cut off from the sacred domain where form consists of shouts and cries.”⁴³ Hijikata had of course studied several (Western) dance forms. His 1968 solo dance, *Hijikata Tatsumi to nihonjin: Nikutai no hanran* (Hijikata Tatsumi and the Japanese: Revolt of the Flesh), included a section where, Goda Nario writes “Western dances that are quite sensible, such as the polka or waltz, appeared before us distorted and chopped up, in order to overturn our

⁴² Alexandra Munroe, “Morphology of Revenge: The Yomiuri Indépendant Artists and Social Protest Tendencies In The 1960’s,” in *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against The Sky*, ed. Alexandra Munroe, 149-188 (New York: Harry Abrams, 1994), 151.

⁴³ Hijikata Tatsumi, “Plucking off the Darkness of the Flesh,” interview by Shibusawa Tatsuhiko, July 1968, trans. Kurihara Nanoko, *The Drama Review* 44, no.1 (Spring 2000), 50.

preconceived ideas.”⁴⁴ This piece was partially inspired by Artaud’s description of the reign of the Roman Emperor Heliogabalus.⁴⁵ Bruce Baird writes that:

It is not just that Artaud’s Heliogabalus stands for an upheaval of norms, but that he stands for a rebellion that has the potential to affect every aspect of life. We need to read Hijikata’s appropriation of Artaud in *Hijikata Tatsumi and Japanese People: Rebellion of the Body* as indicating a rebellion against a similarly wide range of targets including gender roles, social mores, political structures, national identity, and nation-state relations, and as threatening all of them with fundamental transformation or even destruction. In short, the rebellion of the body should be thought of as directed towards the conventions of any part of Japanese or Western culture that binds the body.⁴⁶

In *Revolt of the Flesh*, the rejection of specific dance forms is linked to the rejection of societal conventions that restrict the freedom of the body. In it Hijikata produced and distorted gestures in a way very much in line with Artaud’s theatre of cruelty, where “The actor does not make the same gestures twice, but he makes gestures, and although he brutalizes forms, nevertheless behind them and through their destruction he rejoins that which outlives forms and produces their continuation.”⁴⁷ The creation and destruction of form was a continual process for him, something that occurred within *Revolt of the Flesh*, and also in the long view of his choreographic experiments.

In the early 1970’s Hijikata developed more formalized methods of choreography. At the time, the dancer Kasai Akira saw the danger of this experimentation with form being taken as the definitive culmination of *butô*. Of the 1972 series *Shiki no tame no nijushichiban* (Twenty Seven Nights for Four Seasons) Kasai said that it seemed as if Hijikata were trying to create a form, and while he understood why a choreographer might want to do that, if the dancers he was working

⁴⁴ Goda, *Ankoku Butô*, 86.

⁴⁵ See Antonin Artaud, “From Heliogabalus: or The Anarchist Crowned,” in *Selected Writings*, trans. Helen Weaver (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 317-336.

⁴⁶ Bruce Baird, *Hijikata Tatsumi and Butoh: Dancing in a Pool of Gray Grits* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 124.

⁴⁷ Antonin Artaud, “Preface: The Theater and Culture,” in *The Theater and Its Double*, trans. Mary Caroline Richards (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 12.

with were to accept this as something finished or perfected, and call that “*butô*” that would be “the worst thing that could happen.”⁴⁸ That is precisely what did happen. Waguri Yukio made his debut as a dancer in *27 Nights for Four Seasons*, and his systemization of Hijikata’s choreographic method has helped to shape the perception of *butô* as a codified form related to Japanese traditional performance. Hijikata’s methodology involved combining specific body postures and movements with complex layers of visual imagery. These movement/image combinations came to be called *butô-fu*. Waguri bases his codified system of dance training on *butô-fu* derived from notes that he made during rehearsal sessions with Hijikata. He offers it as *Butoh-kaden*, available on CD Rom, DVD, and now as an application for iPod, iPhone, and iPad, available through Apple’s I-tunes store. Waguri’s website contains the following text: “This “Butoh-Kaden” CD-ROM, released by Justsystem Corporation as a cultural trailblazer, received great acclaim and it is now widely recognized that Hijikata Butoh is, in fact, BUTOH-FU.” The description continues “Butoh-fu texts may sound poetic, but each word represents a specific dance form, movement, and relationship between the body and the space.”⁴⁹

According to his profile on the website, Waguri worked with Hijikata for between five and six years: from 1972-1978 and then in 1985 on the *Tohoku kabuki keikaku* (Tohoku Kabuki Project) series, which Hijikata directed shortly before his death.⁵⁰ Waguri has taken selective aspects of Hijikata’s work during a five to six year period and constructed a formalized method from them, stating that this method is Hijikata’s *butô*. However, Hijikata himself did not stick to one particular style of dance. In a lecture delivered at Fu Jen University in Taiwan in 1997, Nakajima Natsu stated “Hijikata was like Picasso; every season, he would change the style of his works like a chameleon. This partly explains why each of his disciples developed very different

⁴⁸ Kasai Akira, “Hijikata Tatsumi,” 63.

⁴⁹ “Yukio Waguri-Butohzensha,” http://www.otsukimi.net/koz/e_index.html, (Accessed November 14, 2010).

⁵⁰ Ibid.

working styles.”⁵¹ Nakajima is a dancer who performed in Hijikata’s works in the 1960’s, then went on to found her own dance group, Muteki-sha (Foghorn Company). Her implication here is that each student is sticking with or developing what they received from Hijikata, rather than experimenting, as Hijikata did, with widely differing methods. When Nam Jun Paik said of Hijikata that “His friend Ohno Kazuo and his younger friends in Sankaijuku made certain parts of Hijikata’s aesthetics well-known in the Occident,”⁵² he implied that there were other aspects of Hijikata’s aesthetics that they did not bring to “the Occident.” It is understandable that disciples of Hijikata would focus on mastering and developing the technique that they learned from him. That is the standard master/student relationship, and there are many strong dancers who are not radically innovative choreographers. Not everyone can be a Merce Cunningham or a Hijikata Tatsumi. However, the fact that *butô* was introduced to the West in this diluted form, and that Hijikata is credited as its founder, gives the false impression that the *butô-fu* and the dance style based on them are the culmination of his practice, rather than a derivation of elements selected from it.

Nakajima believes that Hijikata did want to create a dance form, but died before he was able to do so. In a 1997 lecture, she stated

In the final stage of his work, Hijikata did not intend to leave *butoh* just as an “avant-garde movement.” He was working hard to create a system that is comparable to the codified theatre (codified dance/dance-theatre/theatre) such as classical ballet, Beijing Opera and Kabuki. It is unfortunate that he passed away before he was able to achieve his objective.

Nakajima’s view that Hijikata in his later years was trying to create a codified dance theatre is far from universally shared. While Hijikata was clearly interested in having a very specific control over the bodies and consciousness of the dancers in his pieces, and while he

⁵¹ Natsu Nakajima, “Ankoku Butoh,” lecture delivered at Fu Jen University decade conference, Taipei: “Feminine Spirituality in Theatre, Opera, and Dance,” (October 1997).

⁵² Nam Jun Paik, “To Catch Up or Not to Catch Up,” 79.

developed certain choreographic strategies or method, this is quite different from saying he wanted to develop a codified form. To say that he choreographed by combining complex images and movements, which he clearly did, is very different than saying that those specific images and movement combinations that he developed constitute a form, and that he wished those same image/movement combinations to be preserved as a training method after his death, as Waguri does in his CD-Rom/Application *Butoh Kaden*. While it is impossible to gauge Hijikata's intention, such a wish would seem inconsistent with his own experimental practice.

Of course the concept of form, or what constitutes a form is not clearly defined. It could be argued for example that realism in theatre is a form, or that contemporary dance is a form in the sense that a person would have certain expectations about what to expect in a program of contemporary dance. For Susan Foster, the dances of Deborah Hay, George Balanchine, Merce Cunningham, and Martha Graham "each exhibit a unique form."⁵³ There is no universal standard of how codified a set of practices need to be for it to be considered a form. However, when Nakajima uses the phrase "a system that is comparable to the codified theatre," she refers to something quite specific: what Patrice Pavis would call a "stabilized genre." It is this concept of dance or theatrical form that is most associated with Asian cultures. In Pavis' view culture is "transmitted by what has been called a 'social hierarchy' " and "Certain performance traditions in the most codified and stabilized genres transmit these techniques, and the players internalize, incorporate, a style of performance."⁵⁴ While there certainly can be innovation and creativity within a stabilized genre, there is also a clearly defined physical vocabulary which, though it may be altered somewhat, is nonetheless the basis for that form. Toita Michizo wrote, for example, that while *nô* changed with the appearance of the actor Kanze Hisao, because of a new

⁵³ Susan Leigh Foster, *Reading Dancing: Bodies and Subjects in Contemporary American Dance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 1.

⁵⁴ Patrice Pavis, *Theatre at The Crossroads of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1992), 10.

consciousness that he brought to the form, the *kata* (the formalized movements that are the basic vocabulary of *nô*) did not change.⁵⁵ Whether Hijikata ever had the intention to create a form in the classical sense is impossible to say. He was a *provocateur* who made contradictory statements depending on his mood and the person he was talking too. He may have told one thing to Nakajima and something else to Tanaka Min. It is clear however that he experimented with different forms over the course of his career, but never developed a codified form. What I am interested in is an Orientalist view of Asian culture as inherently bound by shared traditional forms, rather than open to the innovations of creative individuals, and how that construct contributes to the commodification of *butô*. This view is perhaps most clearly expressed by Ariane Mnouchkine, director of the *Theatre du Soleil*: “We westerners have only created realist forms. That is to say, we haven’t created a form at all, in the true sense. The moment one uses the word “form” in connection with theatre, there is already a sense of Asia.”⁵⁶ Conversely, when one uses the word “Asia,” or in this case “Japan,” in connection with theatre, there is already a sense of form. Aligned with this is a tendency for Westerners to see elements in Japanese culture that do not relate directly to traditional forms as products of (foreign) Western influence. In her recent book on the global *butô* diaspora, Sondra Fraleigh refers to surrealism as one of “several Western sources” that *butô* draws on.⁵⁷ In order to contextualize Hijikata’s relationship with surrealism it should be understood that by the late nineteen-fifties surrealism was already well established in Japan, and had been assimilated into urban Japanese culture. As Peter Eckersall writes: “The representation of Western society in Japan does not involve the cultural

⁵⁵ Cited in Frank Hoff, “Kanze Hisao (1925-1978): Making *Nô* into Contemporary Theatre,” in *Zeami and the Noh Theatre in the World*, ed. Benito Ortolani and Samuel L. Leiter (New York: Center for Advanced Studies in Theatre Arts, Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York, 1998), 77-78.

⁵⁶ Ariane Mnouchkine, “The Theatre is Oriental” in *The Intercultural Performance Reader*, ed. Patrice Pavis (London: Routledge, 1996), 97.

⁵⁷ Sondra Fraleigh, *Butoh: Metamorphic Dance and Global Alchemy* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 21.

representation of a mysterious other pursued by the European avant-garde. The European world is familiar and internalized in Japan.”⁵⁸

While Vicki Sanders and other U.S. critics would focus on what they supposed to be the essentially Japanese elements in *butô*, the Japanese theatre critic Senda Akihiko remarked that when viewing *Story of Smallpox* (Hosotan) in 1972 he was reminded of the science fiction novel *The Wind from Nowhere* by the British science fiction author J.G. Ballard. He does not mention that Ballard is British, or treat the novel as something foreign.⁵⁹ Various avant-garde groups: surrealists, futurists, Dadaists, and constructivists had been established in Japan since the mid-thirties. Of these, the surrealists were by far the most numerous.⁶⁰ Miryam Sas proposes that the experimental arts in Japan in the nineteen- sixties were in part a legacy of the pre-war Japanese surrealists. She notes Hijikata’s friendship with the surrealist poet Takiguchi Shûzo, and argues that both surrealism and Hijikata’s *butô* “aspire to effect a radical decentering of conventional systems of thought and consciousness, a rupture of existing symbolic frameworks.”⁶¹ The surrealist de-centering that Sas identifies is present in all of Hijikata’s writings. In his program notes, promotional materials, and essays he employed non-standard grammar structures, invented new terms such as *ma-gusare* (rotting space), and defied any sort of standard progression of ideas.⁶² Hijikata’s resistance to formal structures, the fragmentation and ambivalent gestures that characterize his dance and writing, are linked to Japanese surrealism, as well as to the French writers who inspired him: the proto-surrealists Genet and Lautréamont and the apostate

⁵⁸ Peter Eckersall, “From Liminality to Ideology: The Politics of Embodiment in Prewar Avant-garde Theater in Japan,” in *Not the Other Avant-garde: The Transnational Foundations of Avant-Garde Performance*, ed. James M. Harding and John Rouse (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 245.

⁵⁹ Senda Akihiko, “Those Slight Stirrings of the Man in the Wind: A Tale of the Smallpox,” in *The Voyage of Contemporary Japanese Theatre*, trans. J. Thomas Rimer (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1997), 29.

⁶⁰ John Clark, “Artistic Subjectivity in the Taisho and Early Showa Avant-Garde,” in Munroe, *Japanese Art After 1945*, 41.

⁶¹ Sas, *Experimental Arts*, 159.

⁶² Kurihara, “Hijikata Tatsumi,” 14-15.

surrealists Artaud and Bataille. An internalized surrealism was also present in his choreographic method, and I propose that this internalized surrealism is linked more closely to the concept of *ankoku* (darkness) of Hijikata's *ankoku butô* (dance of darkness), then the presentation of violence, transgressive sexuality, or other "dark" and potentially disturbing content in his dance.

Death and Darkness

A widespread interpretation of *butô* is that it is "the dance of death"⁶³ and performers represent ghosts or the dead. The view seems to derive from certain comments of Hijikata's, such as the oft-quoted remark that "Butoh is a corpse standing desperately upright."⁶⁴ The photo book *Butoh: Dance of the Dark Soul*, which came out in 1987 and formed the first impressions of *butô* for many outside of Japan, ends with the quote "To make gestures of the dead, to die again, to make the dead reenact once more their deaths in their entirety-these are what I want to experience within me."⁶⁵ The quote is from a nineteen eighty-five lecture "Wind *Daruma*" (Kazedaruma), a complete text of the translation of which is included separately in the same book. The same quote appears in *The Cambridge Guide to Asian Theatre* as evidence of Hijikata's acknowledgement that *butô* dancers represent "transhistorical ghosts and gods."⁶⁶ However, in the same lecture Hijikata also wrote that his dance was greatly influenced by his observations of the movements of very young children in the town of Akita where he grew up. He writes of falling into the mud in springtime as a child: "I can, I know, declare my butoh started there with what I learned from the mud in early spring, not from anything to do with the

⁶³ Paul Alain and Jen Harvie, *The Routledge Companion to Theatre and Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 136.

⁶⁴ Quoted in Fraleigh, *Butoh*, 67. This quote can also be found on numerous websites.

⁶⁵ Ethan Hoffman, Mark Holborn, Yukio Mishima, Tatsumi Hijikata, and Haven O'More, *Butoh: Dance of the Dark Soul* (New York: Aperture, 1987), 131.

⁶⁶ James R. Brandon, ed., *The Cambridge Guide to Asian Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 159.

performing arts of shrines or temples. I am distinctly aware that I am born of mud and my movements now have all been built on that.” Seen in its original context, to “make gestures of the dead” was something Hijikata wanted to experience, along with the attitude that a young child has toward his body, and many other physical sensations. To take the quote out of context, as a definitive statement on *butô* is reductive in the extreme, for in examining longer sections of Hijikata’s writing it can be seen that these continually resist this kind of authoritative interpretation. While death is certainly a reoccurring theme in his work (as it is in the work of many artists), it is not the dominant one, and his dance was not a dance of or about death.

In the critical reception of *butô* in the United States, the reductive view of *butô* as the dance of death occurs in conjunction with the entirely misguided notion that its aesthetic values derive from a need to represent the devastation of the atomic bomb. As Kurihara Nanoko has noted, the idea that *butô* is at heart an expression of, or a reaction to, the horrors wrought by the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the U.S. military in 1945 is one that was invented and disseminated primarily by U.S. critics. In the 2000 issue of *The Drama Review* she criticized this tendency, as well as the tendency for dance critics to stereotype *butô* as “something essentially “Japanese,”” arguing that Hijikata’s own writings belie these essentialisms.⁶⁷ The examples of this sort of thing that Kurihara gives are from the dance reviews in the nineteen eighties by Anna Kisselgoff and Vicki Sanders (quoted above). This false view has continued into fairly recent times. In April 2011 Joan Acocella, dance critic for *The New Yorker*, wrote in her review of Eiko and Koma’s installation “Naked”:

Many people have likened the couple’s work to Butoh—a comparison that Eiko and Koma object to adamantly. In fact, they have a lot in common with Butoh: the naked body, the primitivism, the slowness, the note of horror. These similarities may be due not to descent from Butoh, however, but to the fact that they and Butoh descend from shared sources: above all,

⁶⁷ Kurihara, “Hijikata Tatsumi,” 17.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki.⁶⁸

In addition to perpetuating the myth that *butô* descended “above all” from Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Acocella abrogates the choreographers own self-definition. Rather than attempting to understand *why* Eiko and Koma say their dance is not *butô*, she reduces their work to what she already knows about Japan: the traditional arts (she makes a reference to *nô*), and the suffering bodies of victims of atomic radiation. Her review is clearly informed by and perpetuates today the views on the origins of *butô* that Kurihara demonstrated to be false in the year two thousand.

Acocella’s disinterest in actually confronting or attempting to understand Eiko and Koma’s resistance to the *butô* label can be contextualized in relation to long-held attitudes towards depictions of Asians on stage in the United States. James Moy has described how after the opening of Japan and subsequent attempts to colonize Asia there was a significant increase in the depiction of dead Asians on U.S. stages. He writes: “American dramatists with the characteristic provincialism of the Eurocentric colonialist way of looking at the world, began killing off Asians-as if to articulate an unwillingness, an impatience, or simply *a lack of desire to understand*.”⁶⁹ Karen Shimakawa has argued that this “aestheticization of dead Asians,” of which Puccini’s *Madame Butterfly* is the most famous, informed the creation and reception of the Broadway musical *Miss Saigon*,⁷⁰ which opened on Broadway in 1991, six years after Sankai Juku’s first performance in New York City.⁷¹ The enthusiastic reception of *butô* by Western audiences in the 1980’s can be seen in light of a penchant for beautiful dead Asians. For U.S.

⁶⁸ Joan Acocella, “Bare Truths: Eiko and Koma in *Naked*,” *The New Yorker*, April 11 2011, http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/dancing/2011/04/11/110411crda_dancing_acocella (accessed December 20, 2011).

⁶⁹ James Moy, *Marginal Sights: Staging the Chinese in America* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1993), 84 (emphasis mine).

⁷⁰ Karen Shimakawa, *National Abjection: The Asian American Body on Stage* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2002), 24.

⁷¹ Jennifer Dunning, “Dance: Japan’s Avant-Garde Sankai Juku Arrives,” *The New York Times*, July 23, 1984.

audiences *butô* may have provided a doubly pleasing spectacle: visually pleasing “traditional” Asians, and beautiful dancing dead Asians.

It is not my intention to suggest that all audiences receive all *butô* performances in the same way, or that all non-Japanese people receive performances passively or would have the same impressions of the same *butô* performance. Neither do I wish to essentialize contemporary *butô* performances as being entirely commodified, there are many dance artists doing interesting original work that is labeled as *butô* or related to Hijikata’s legacy in some way. I am examining a particular trope, or rather a combination of tropes that occur with enough frequency in criticism, publicity materials, and interviews with performers to indicate a particular construct affecting the reception (and production) of *butô*, for many, to a greater or lesser degree.

In his choreographic method Hijikata employed complex, layered series of images. In the nineteen seventies, probably beginning around nineteen seventy-two during the preparation for Twenty-seven Nights for Four Seasons (*Shiki no tame no nijishichiban*)⁷² he was choreographing his dancers’ movements relatively precisely and then altering, shaping, and adding different qualities to these movements by giving them a complex series of images to visualize while dancing. These diverse images were culled from his studies of visual artists such as Goya, Fautrier, Bacon, and Bellmer, from his memories of his childhood in the rural Tohoku region of Japan, and from his own poetic imagination.⁷³ He communicated these images verbally to his dancers without (as Baird notes) ever providing dancers with an underlying narrative for the dance they were performing. The audience was of course not only unaware of an underlying narrative, but unaware of the images that the dancers were working with. Baird writes that

⁷² Goda, “On Ankoku Butoh,” in Klein, *Ankoku Butoh*, 87.

⁷³ See Bruce Baird, “Structureless in Structure: The Choreographic Tectonics of Hijikata Tatsumi's *Butô*,” in *Modern Japanese Theatre and Performance*, ed. David Jortner, Keiko McDonald, and Kevin J. Westmore (Lanham MD: Lexington Books, 2006), 93-108.

If we put this in Saussurian terms, we could say that Hijikata created hundreds and thousands of new signifiers and only supplied the signifieds or referents for a portion of the total, and what is more, supplied the referents to different people.⁷⁴

I propose that this way of constructing and presenting dances, where there are a tremendous number of elements informing and shaping the dance that the audience and individual dancers are unaware of, is a manifestation of Hijikata's conception of *ankoku* (darkness). Both dancers and audience were in darkness, in the sense that they were participants in and witnesses of a process where most of the elements shaping the dance were hidden.

Commodification and the Western Gaze

I would like to return now to the statement Hijikata made in 1961 that his dance “explicitly flaunts its aimlessness in the face of a production-oriented society.”⁷⁵ In a production oriented society, art is a commodity. In Marxist theory, a commodity is defined as something that supplies a human need and is exchanged for something else. When something becomes a commodity (is commodified) its value increases according to its ability to be exchanged for something else, and the human labor that goes into producing the commodity is valued according only to the degree that it can generate exchange. Commodity fetishism refers to when, under capitalism, goods are seen as having human powers independent of the actual human labor that produced them. Labor then becomes alienated from what it produces, and becomes itself a commodity to be exchanged.⁷⁶ Hijikata's continual rigorous experimentation and the complex layerings involved in his choreographic process required an engagement on the part of the audience that was inconsistent with passive consumerism. Hijikata's *butô* did not lend itself to

⁷⁴ Baird, *Hijikata Tatsumi*, 182.

⁷⁵ Hijikata Tatsumi, “To Prison,” trans. Jacqueline S. Ruyak and Kurihara Nanako, *The Drama Review* 44, no.1 (Spring 2000): 44.

⁷⁶ David McLellen, ed. *Karl Marx: Selected Writings* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000) 436-439.

commodification, for in order for dance to be commodified it must become a uniform, dependable product.

This is not to say that Hijikata was averse to success. His alliance with Mishima and Shibusawa, while providing him with intellectual stimulation, also served to elevate the status of his dance. To say that his dance was un-commodifiable is not to say that he did not make money from dance or that he would not have liked make more money from dance. He generated income by appearing in and choreographing for films, including Ishii Teruo's notorious *Edogawa Rampo zenshu: kyofu kikei ningen* (Complete Works of Edogawa Rampo: Horrors of Malformed Men).⁷⁷ His most successful financial ventures were a series of erotic nightclub acts. These productions shared some aesthetic elements with the works he choreographed for more respectable venues. Baird suggests that they were structurally similar,⁷⁸ and functioned as a kind of training for his dancers.⁷⁹ They were for the most part clearly distinct from his more serious works: the latter were infrequent, required extensive rehearsal periods, and rather than providing a source of income, he had to pay theatre owners to show them.⁸⁰ His interest in extended experimentation, in process-oriented work, was inconsistent with the need to sell tickets, to generate capital. Nam Jun Paik called Hijikata "unexportable."⁸¹ In order for *butô* to be exported to the West, it had to be constructed as a Japanese dance form.

⁷⁷ Released on DVD under the English Title *Horrors of Malformed Men*. *Horrors of Malformed Men*, DVD, directed by Teruo Ishii (1969; Burbank CA: Synapse Films, 2007).

⁷⁸ Bruce Baird, "Manufactured with Pride by Carmel Mercantile: Burlesque Dance and Fake Trailers in the Japanese Avant-garde Dance Butô," (Paper presented at the annual Society of Dance History Scholars Conference, Philadelphia PA, June 14-17, 2012).

⁷⁹ Baird, *Hijikata Tatsumi*, 82-83.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 82.

⁸¹ Paik, "To Catch Up or Not to Catch Up," 79.

Recent dance scholarship has looked at the tendency for traditional non-Western dance forms to become commodified for consumption by Western audiences.⁸² Susan Leigh Foster, critiquing the category of “world dance,” writes that dances from various cultures “...have become uprooted from their various locales and commodified and spectacularized for the global stage.”⁸³ *Butô* came to recognition in the U.S. in the nineteen-eighties at a time when multiculturalism was fashionable, and recent criticisms of the category “world dance” can be applied to *butô* as well.

Anthea Kraut, in an essay examining the racialized logic of legal decisions in dance copyright trials writes:

In the logic that sustains the category ‘world dance,’ non-Western cultures, regarded as unified wholes, possess dance traditions worthy of study and documentation by Westerners. As conventionally conceived, these dance traditions are created and maintained by communities of anonymous producers. In contrast, this line of thinking goes, Western traditions like ballet and modern dance are made up of discrete works with individual, identifiable authors, whose innovations propel their art forms forward.⁸⁴

Originally an avant-garde practice engaged in by radically experimental individuals, in order for *butô* to be commodified it had to be constructed as a dance form related to traditional Japanese culture. In his *Theory of the Avant-garde* Peter Bürger noted the tendency for avant-garde movements to be assimilated into mainstream culture.⁸⁵ In the case of dance created by Japanese choreographers, that assimilation is conditioned by orientalist constructs longstanding in the reception of Japanese dance in the West.

⁸² See Priya Srinivasan, *Sweating Saris: Indian Dance as Transnational Labor* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012).

⁸³ Susan Leigh Foster, “Worlding Dance: An Introduction,” in *Worlding Dance* (Hampshire UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 3.

⁸⁴ Anthea Kraut, “Racing Choreographic Copyright,” in *Worlding Dance*, ed. Susan Leigh Foster (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2009), 77.

⁸⁵ Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 53.

Pierre Bourdieu defines the field of cultural production as “the system of objective relations” between various agents or institutions “and as the site of the struggles for the monopoly of the power to consecrate, in which the value of works of art and belief in that value are continuously generated.”⁸⁶ Today in the contemporary performing arts, the field of cultural production is a global one. Within the international field of cultural production, the symbolic capital of Japanese choreographers increases when their work can be associated with Eurocentric notions of traditional Japanese culture. This has been the case ever since modern Japanese performing artists began performing outside of Japan. In 1899 the theatre troupe of Kawakami Otojiro arrived in San Francisco with the intention to present the contemporary play *Nisshin Sensô* (Sino Japanese War), only to be informed that the play could not succeed because U.S. audiences did not understand that China and Japan were different countries. When he and his wife Kawakami Saddayako presented faux-kabuki plays such as “*The Geisha and the Knight*,” featuring beautifully dying heroines played by Saddayoko, they met with great success.⁸⁷ The dancer/choreographer Ito Michio wrote that his use of Japanese costume in his solo performances in the London drawing rooms where he began his career in 1914 was due to the fact that he had been “advertised as a Japanese dancer.”⁸⁸ Historically, Japanese performing artists working outside of traditional forms have been reduced to performing their culture (or more specifically, a version of their culture tailored to Western tastes), in order to perform in the U.S. and Europe. This practice continues in the U.S. today, where visas are generally only given to artists providing something that cannot be produced

⁸⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 78.

⁸⁷ Ayako Kano, *Acting Like A Woman In Modern Japan: Theatre, Gender, and Nationalism* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 85-89 .

⁸⁸ Richard Taylor, *The Drama Of W.B. Yeats: Irish Myth And The Japanese Noh* (London: Yale University Press 1976), 112.

locally. In the case of *butô* and those associated with it, it was only after the success of Ohno Kazuo and Sankai Juku abroad that *butô* was accepted in Japan by audiences outside of a relatively small avant-garde scene. Bonnie Stein noted in 1986 that *butô* “suffers from what is called *gyaku-yunyu*, or “go out and come back.” Until an artist gains recognition abroad, s/he is unlikely to win approval in Japan.”⁸⁹ *Gyaku yunyu* can also be translated as “re-verse importing” or “re-importing.” Boyé Lafayette De Mente, gives an alternate valence to the term: “*Gyaku yunyu* refers to products manufactured outside of Japan by Japanese companies, and imported into Japan,” for example, when Japanese electronic companies construct their products in Asian countries where labor is cheap, then sell them in Japan as Japanese products.⁹⁰

Hijikata himself never travelled outside of Japan. As noted above, those most responsible for introducing *butô* to Europe and the United States were Hijikata’s long time collaborator and inspiration Ohno Kazuo and the group Sankai Juku. Ohno was a singular figure whose dance was very different from that of the younger generation of dancers who learned Hijikata’s choreography. His approach was very personal: emotionally inspired, with strong elements of improvisation, and close to his roots in German expressionist dance. He deserves to be remembered as one of the greatest solo performers in the field of twentieth century concert dance. His relation with Hijikata was that of a collaborator, Hijikata did not choreograph Ohno’s movement in the precise way he would the younger dancers he worked with.⁹¹ *Sankai Juku*’s director Amagatsu Ushio assimilated aspects of Hijikata’s methodology from Maro Akaji, who performed in Hijikata’s dances before forming *Dairakudakan*. Amagatsu founded the group in

⁸⁹ Bonnie Sue Stein, “Butoh: Twenty Years Ago We Were Crazy, Dirty, and Mad,” *The Drama Review* 30, no. 2 (Summer, 1986), 377.

⁹⁰ Boyé Lafayette De Mente, *Japan’s Cultural Code Words: Key Terms That Explain the Attitudes and Behavior of the Japanese* (Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing, 2011), 81.

⁹¹ See Ohno Kazuo and Ohno Yoshito, *Kazuo Ohno’s World: From Within and Without*, trans. John Barret (Middleton CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 132-141.

1975, after leaving *Dairakudakan* in 1972.⁹² For many audiences, *Sankai Juku* is the face of *butô*. Their quasi mystical dance rituals have great appeal for mainstream dance audiences around the world. They have contributed to the perception of *butô* as a dance form through their unified aesthetic, which includes the consistent use of white body makeup and shaved heads, and a physicality strongly influenced by *Noguchi Taiso* (Noguchi Gymnastics), an approach to physical training that considers the body as extremely fluid.⁹³ The perception of *butô* as a form was necessary for the work of Japanese dancers presenting new dance to be assimilated into the market for ‘world dance,’ a construct that Foster describes as “envisioned as local rather than transcendent, traditional rather than innovative, simple rather than sophisticated, a product of the people rather than a genius.”⁹⁴ Because the Eurocentric nature of that market does not allow for non-Western artists to be seen as fully individual, their status is related to what is perceived to be mastery of a cultural tradition rather than to individual creativity or innovation. In order for *butô* to be successfully received in Europe and the United States, it had to be marketed as a traditional Japanese dance form.

Tradition

As Mnouchkine statement above indicates, the concept of form is strongly linked to conceptions of Asian culture in popular Western consciousness. As Foster and others have argued, dance and theatre from non-Western cultures, including Japan, are viewed as traditional rather than innovative. In an interview with Ian Watson in 1993, Roberta Carreri of Odin Teatret

⁹² Kyoko Yoshida, “A Conversation with Ushio Amagatsu, Artistic Director of Sankai Juku,” *Walker Magazine*, <http://www.walkerart.org/magazine/2006/a-conversation-with-ushio-amagatsu-artistic-d> (accessed March 3, 2012).

⁹³ *Dairadakan* uses the Noguchi method as a major element of their training process. See Maro Akaji, “Artist Interview: Akaji Maro’s representative butoh work *Kaiin no Uma* performance in South Korea; He talks about butoh today,” interview by Konuma Jun-ichi (The Japan Foundation, Performing Arts Network Japan 6/17/2005) http://performingarts.jp/E/art_interview/0506/1.html# (accessed August 18, 2014).

⁹⁴ Susan Foster, *Worlding Dance*, 2.

exemplifies a widespread tendency to regard the work of post-modern Japanese dancer/choreographers as rooted in tradition. In her answer to a question about specific Asian performers who have influenced her work, she notes the influence of Ohno Kazuo and Nakajima Natsu and describes *butô* as a stabilized genre with a traditional core. She stated: “it has the core, which is the old core. You cannot forget the origins of butoh. Butoh’s founders, who were trained as modern dancers in post-war Japan, wanted to get back to their traditional cultural roots.”⁹⁵ Clearly Carreri is unaware (or was at the time of the interview) of the intercultural nature of “the origins of butoh” including the influence of Neo Dada and of French literature and theory. *Butô* did not originate from an attempt return to “traditional cultural roots.” Carreri’s reduction of contemporary Japanese dance to a traditional “core,” may be influenced by Nakajima, who Carreri trained with between 1983 and 1986. Nakajima stated that she and others working with Hijikata made “the same discoveries as noh actors made... but we had never learned these forms,”⁹⁶ leading Richard Schechner to conclude that “butoh is closely linked to noh and kabuki as well as other traditional Japanese arts.”⁹⁷ Schechner’s conclusion is an erroneous one, for to say that dancers experimenting with their bodies discovered certain principles that can be also found in codified forms is not the same thing as saying there is a direct link between those experiments and the those forms. Other experimental performing artists have experienced similar discoveries, including the discovery of principles found in embodied techniques from cultures other than their own. Meredith Monk, for example, discovered and

⁹⁵ Ian Watson, “Interculturalism and the Individual Performer,” in *Negotiating Cultures: Eugenio Barba and the Intercultural Debate* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 78-79.

⁹⁶ Bonnie Sue Stein, “Butoh: Twenty Years Ago We Were Crazy, Dirty, and Mad,” *The Drama Review* 30, no. 2 (Summer, 1986): 107-126.

⁹⁷ Richard Schechner, “Introduction: Jayaganesh and the Avant-garde,” in *The Future of Ritual: Writings On Culture and Performance* (London: Routledge, 1993), 15.

explored the use of the glottal break in her vocal work, which led many people to assume that she was influenced by non-Western vocal techniques such as Inuit throat singing.⁹⁸

Scholars such as Eric Hobsbawm and Raymond Williams have proposed that traditions are invented views of the past that serve the needs of the present.⁹⁹ Williams writes:

Most versions of tradition can be quickly shown to be radically selective. From a whole possible area of past and present, in a particular culture, certain meanings and practices are selected for emphasis and certain other meanings and practices are neglected or excluded. Yet within a particular hegemony, and as one of its decisive processes, this selection is presented and usually successfully passed off as ‘the tradition’ ‘*the significant past.*’ What has then to be said about any tradition is that it is in this sense an aspect of *contemporary* social and cultural organization, in the interest of the dominance of a specific class.”¹⁰⁰

Attempts to invent the tradition of *butô* can be found in promotional materials related to performance and training, and in scholarly criticism in and outside of Japan. Several *butô* figures have increased their symbolic capital through a linking of their dance to the traditional Japanese performing arts. The press release for *Sankai Juku*’s performance at the Joyce Theatre in New York in October 2010 describes their work *Tobari* as “an evening length piece based in traditional butoh.” It describes them as “Japan’s foremost Butoh dance company,”¹⁰¹ although the company has been based in Paris since 1982.

There are other instances of *butô* dancers linking themselves or allowing themselves to be linked to traditional Japanese arts. Tamano Koichi, a dancer who performed in Hijikata’s work and is now based in San Francisco, is promoted as having been designated a Living National Treasure by the Emperor of Japan. This is clearly stated in advertisements for his workshops (in

⁹⁸ Meredith Monk and Deborah Jowitt, “Meredith Monk in Conversation with Deborah Jowitt,” in *Art Performs Life: Merce Cunningham/Meredith Monk/Bill T. Jones* (Minneapolis: Distributed Art Publishers, 1998), 75.

⁹⁹ See Eric Hobsbawm, and Terrence Ranger, ed., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

¹⁰⁰ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 115-116.

¹⁰¹ “Sankai Juku makes Joyce Theater debut with *Tobari*- As if in Inexhaustible Flux,” press release, http://www.joyce.org/pdf/Sankai_Juku_PR.pdf (Accessed November 13, 2010).

English)¹⁰², yet there is no mention of him having received this honor in the official records of Living National Treasures. The designation of Living National Treasure is generally given to masters of the traditional arts. This fact, the absence of his name in any official record, and the fact that he has lived outside of Japan for many years clearly indicates that the assertion is untrue. While one cannot be sure that Tamano himself invented this blatant falsehood, he must certainly be aware of it, and the designation seems clearly designed to increase his symbolic capital through an association with established tradition.

Another example of an attempt to link *butô* to the traditional performing arts is Waguri Yukio's cd-rom/application *Butoh-kaden*. While *butô-fu* is Hijikata's term, the name *Butoh-kaden* is Waguri's own invention. It alludes to Zeami Motokiyo's treatise on *Nô: Fûshikaden*. *Fushikaden* is a record of material taught to Zeami by his father, Kan'ami. It was intended to supplement an already existing oral tradition, to transmit the secrets of the *Nô* art to a small circle of practitioners, including Zeami's descendents. The title is coined by Zeami himself, and has been translated as *Teachings on Style and the Flower*.¹⁰³ It is composed of four *kanji* (Chinese characters): 風(fu) is a *kanji* meaning wind that combined with 姿(shi) form or appearance could be translated as atmosphere or style. 花(ka) means flower and 伝(den) means transmission. So "butoh-kaden" could possibly be translated as "transmission of the flower of *butô*." However since *kaden* is not a word in and of itself in Japanese, Waguri's use of *kaden* here seems clearly an attempt to acquire symbolic capital for his project by linking it to a canonical text from traditional Japanese dramatic theory. This digitized record of a fixed,

¹⁰² Chicago Artists Resource, "Koichi and Hiroko Tamano of Harupin-ha," <http://www.chicagoartistsresource.org/dance/node/29226> (Accessed January 30, 2011).

¹⁰³ See J. Thomas Rimer and Yamazaki Masakazu, ed., *On the Art of the No Drama: The Major Treatises of Zeami* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

formalized method (specific visual images combined with specific physical postures) linked to a traditional form (*nô*) through its title and presented as the definitive *butô* is perhaps the ultimate commodification of *butô*.

The view of *butô* as somehow traditional appears frequently in dance criticism and scholarship. Vicki Sanders sees *butô*, despite Hijikata's rejection of traditional theatre and her own relation of his "darkness" to Artaud, as defined by traditional Japanese aesthetic values. She asserts (without providing convincing evidence) that *butô* requires dancers to attain spiritual as well as physical development, and that its dancers embody the aesthetic quality of *yojô* (overflow of feeling). She describes *yojô* as "the creative substance flowing from the dancer into the space at the moment of spontaneous combustion."¹⁰⁴ She suggests that Ohno Kazuo in *Admiring La Argentina* displayed the quality of *yûgen* (often translated as grace, with connotations of something dark or hidden), found in *nô*. While it can be said that Ohno embodied a dark grace, his highly emotional approach to dance, his use of improvisation, and the inclusion of the action of falling to the ground in his choreography contrast strongly with the restrained aesthetic of *nô*. Sander's analysis is ultimately reductive; while she acknowledges that Hijikata rejected traditional Japanese aesthetics, she concludes that "despite Hijikata's intentions, traditional Japanese aesthetics are not absent in *butô*, but simply re clothed in starker forms, more primitive movements, and in the awareness of human fragility in an age of nuclear weapons and decay."¹⁰⁵

While the Western gaze associates Asian bodies with ancient traditions, the idea of a modern form exhibiting an essential 'Japaneseness' played into a racialist exceptionalism that allowed for greater acceptance in Japan itself of the work of dancer/choreographers associated

¹⁰⁴ For a more nuanced reading of *yojô* as a fundamental value in Japanese poetics, see Steve Odin, *Artistic Detachment in Japan and the West: Psychic Distance in Comparative Aesthetics* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 99.

¹⁰⁵ Vicki Sanders, "Dancing and the Dark Soul of Japan: An Aesthetic Analysis of "Butô," *Asian Theatre Journal* 5, no. 2 (Autumn, 1988), pp. 148-163.

with the *butô* movement. Certain Japanese critics have seen in Hijikata's later dances as participating in a *nihon kaiki* (return to Japan): a return to a Japanese essence, and proposed that he was influenced by traditional Japanese performing and visual arts. Takahashi Yasunari states that Hijikata considered his *butô* "a kind of "ur-*kabuki*," a return to the roots of the indigenous sense of corporality," noting his influence on experimental theatre artists in Tokyo at that time.¹⁰⁶ Gunji Masakatsu claims that he was inspired by *kabuki*. Nomura Yukihiro proposed that he was influenced by medieval Japanese Buddhist art.¹⁰⁷ These Japanese scholars in turn influenced David Goodman, who sees Hijikata as "participating in and contributing to the nostalgic, "traditionalist" movement in the performing arts that was sweeping Japan" during the late nineteen sixties.¹⁰⁸ William Marotti argues persuasively that early *butô* was consistently experimental, resistant to formalization and not unified in terms of style. It was part of a wave of complex cross-disciplinary artistic experimentation that generally advocated embodiment over representation, and sought to obliterate distinctions between art and daily life. He argues that early commentaries by Mishima, essentialist readings of Hijikata's work in the 1970's promulgated by Shibusawa and others contributed to *butô*'s eventual acceptance in Japan, and tainted the work of later critics. He is specifically critical of Nomura, who argued that the aesthetic qualities of Hijikata's dance were determined by a bodily expression that was uniquely Japanese. Marotti argues that in this line of criticism the construction of a distinctly Japanese body replaced the search for new possibilities of the body with an unchanging Japanese body, removing the potential to challenge and provoke, eliding the complexities of its origins, and

¹⁰⁶ Takahashi Yasunari, "Alternative Japanese Drama: A Brief Overview," in Robert T. Rolf and John K. Gillespie, ed. *Alternative Japanese Drama* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992), 6.

¹⁰⁷ David Goodman, "*Angura*: Japan's Nostalgic Avant-garde," in James M. Harding and John Rouse, ed. *Not the Other Avant-Garde: The Transnational Foundations of Avant-Garde Performance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 261.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

reappropriating it to serve the interests of capital and the super-state.¹⁰⁹ Katsura Kan, at the 2011 Butoh Symposium at UCLA expressed his support for Marotti's argument (as well as relating his initial astonishment that such an accurate analysis could have been written by a U.S. scholar).¹¹⁰

It is accurate to say that in the nineteen-seventies Hijikata would develop more formalized methods, and incorporate some 'traditional' elements into his dance. However, the traditional elements in Hijikata's dance would not have seemed familiar to his audience. Steven Ridgely, in writing on the Avant-garde theatre director Terayama Shuji, who Hijikata collaborated with, points out that the use of pre-modern (or traditional) Japanese elements by contemporary artists in Tokyo in the nineteen-sixties was itself an avant-garde tactic.

We must keep in mind that by the postwar period the cultural and aesthetic traditions often taken to represent Japan (noh, kabuki, etc.) were *at least* as exotic to young Japanese as to non-Japanese- making such traditions functionally foreign even to those most geographically proximate to them. John Cage's engagement with Zen Buddhism and Terayama's use of kabuki-style makeup on stage are actually structurally identical: both hinge on tension between a culturally distant form and an awareness of a very different present.¹¹¹

I do not agree that Cage's use of Zen and Terayama's use of elements of *kabuki* are structurally identical. Cage's understanding of Zen informed his creative process, while the use of *kabuki* makeup is a visual signifier not affecting the structure of Terayama's work. However, the point that elements of traditional Japanese theatre were just as foreign to post-war Tokyo counterculture as their counterparts in New York is an important one. At the same time, as Baird has demonstrated, Hijikata's use of traditional elements was primarily transgressive or defamiliarizing.¹¹² A non-Japanese watching the film of Hijikata dancing in *Hosotan* is not likely

¹⁰⁹ William Marotti, "Butô no mondaisai to honshitsushugi no wana" (The Problematics of *Butô* and the Essentialist Trap), *Shiatô Âtsu* 8 (May 1997): 88-96.

¹¹⁰ Katsura Kan, talk at University of California, Los Angeles symposium "Between Experiment, Form, and Culturalism: Butoh in History and Contemporary Practice," (May 21, 2011).

¹¹¹ Steven Ridgely, *Japanese Counterculture: The Antiestablishment Art of Terayama Shûji* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 142.

¹¹² Baird, *Hijikata Tatsumi*, 153-154.

to be aware that the kimono he is wearing is a woman's, that his hair is in a woman's style, that the object dangling from his wig is a small shovel used for scraping coals from a stove, and that its presence is incongruous. A Japanese person might note the incongruity, and Hijikata's use of culturally specific Japanese elements would become doubly strange for them. While the "traditional" elements present in Hijikata and Terayama's work would not have felt familiar to Japanese audiences, I suggest that for Western Audiences in the U.S. and Europe, elements like the white body makeup used by Sankai Juku helped to place the dancers in a familiar category, due to orientalist assumptions that any performance by a Japanese person is rooted in a cultural tradition.

For Asian performing artists, the possession of traditional theatrical and dance 'forms' is a type of capital. A *nô* actor performing in Japan possesses what Bourdieu would term cultural capital, based on his mastery of the *kata* (forms) that constitute the physical vocabulary of that traditional art. If a *nô* actor performs in the U.S. or Europe, his status as a master of a traditional art gives him a degree of symbolic capital: he possesses something that Westerners cannot, an ancient, codified, culturally specific performing art. For Japanese choreographers presenting original work in the U.S. or Europe, aligning themselves with Japanese tradition is a means of acquiring symbolic capital not otherwise available to them. While contemporary U.S. and European choreographers acquire symbolic capital based on the perception of their work as innovative and original, this is often denied to Asian choreographers, who must acquire symbolic capital based on their "mastery" of a traditional form.

Because of this logic, for *butô* to become successful it was necessary to construct it as a form aligned with traditional performing arts. As Tanaka Min noted in my interviews with him, when something becomes a tradition, it becomes a known, encouraging passive spectatorship among the audience and a consistency incompatible with true experimentation among

dancer/choreographers: “If you have the word *dento* (tradition), people cannot be active.”¹¹³ The fixing of an aesthetic style, the codification of movement/image vocabulary, and a linkage to a culturally specific Japanese tradition by figures such as Waguri encourages the passive reception of the work of contemporary Japanese choreographers. Even for those Japanese dancer/choreographers with no interest in encouraging this view, the acceptance of what Kraut calls “the logic that sustains world dance” can be a practical necessity for those wishing to perform in Europe and the U.S., where the branding of *butô* has created a niche market. In October of 2009, the Berlin-based dancer/choreographer Kaseki Yuko had difficulty obtaining a Visa to perform at New York’s Japan Society. Yoko Shioya, the Artistic Director of Japan Society, wrote that the U. S. immigration office had requested them to submit materials to prove two things: “1) that butoh is a *culturally unique* art form of Japan; and 2) that Yuko is a master of this art form. This was tricky because her work does not conform to the standard butoh description of slow grotesque movement.”¹¹⁴ The fact that Kaseki’s choreography is entertaining and innovative and that she is a skilled dynamic performer was not enough for the Bureau of Immigration. To obtain a visa it was necessary to convince them that she was performing her culture. Kaseki’s case is a clear and recent example of how the symbolic capital of Japanese performing artists working in the U.S. and Europe increases when they can be associated with Eurocentric notions of the Japanese as a people grounded in ancient traditions. Kaseki’s dances are her own original creations, yet in order to perform in the U.S. she needed to disavow her originality and present herself as a master of a traditional form.

Given the difficulty of marketing contemporary dance work by non-European/U.S. choreographers, the construction of *butô* as a traditional form can be seen as a type of strategic

¹¹³ Tanaka, interview with Zack Fuller, August 12, 2011.

¹¹⁴ Inkboat/Cokaseki, *Ame to Ame* (Candy and Rain), program, Japan Society, New York City, October 15-17, 2009.

essentialism. Gayatri Spivak proposed that while universalizing discourses (such as certain types of feminism) affect minority groups in negative ways, creating a false homogeneity, and erasing diversity within minority groups, to strategically choose an essentialist discourse in order to achieve specific goals is a valid tactic.¹¹⁵ Kaseki's choice to allow her dance to be categorized as *butô* gives her the opportunity to perform in theatres and festivals to which she would otherwise not have access. The same can be said of Takenouchi Atsushi, who danced with *Hoppo-butô-ha* (Northern *Butô* School) from 1980 to 1984¹¹⁶ before embarking on a career focused on solo work influenced in part by his extensive study of traditional African dance.¹¹⁷ Like many non-Japanese contemporary dancers, Takenouchi trained in divergent dance techniques, yet his dance is promoted as *butô* because if it were not it would simply not be marketable. While such essentialism is understandable, I would argue that this tactic entails a loss of agency on the part of dancer/choreographers whose work is presented as *butô* because of the assumption that non-Western cultures possess dance traditions that are unified and produced by the culture as a whole, while Western traditions like ballet and modern dance are actively produced by innovative individuals. The construction of *butô* as a traditional form, the emphasis on form over innovation, alleviates audiences and critics from any need to understand the innovations and specific concerns of individual dancer/choreographers. It encourages passive spectatorship, an attitude entirely opposed to Hijikata's consistent will to provoke the audience to active engagement. In the work of the most established *butô* groups, this passive reception is compounded by a reliance on visual spectacle.

¹¹⁵ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Criticism, Feminism, and The Institution," interview with Elizabeth Grosz, in *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, ed. Sarah Harasym (New York, Routledge, 1990), 11.

¹¹⁶ "Profile," *Jinen Butoh: Atsushi Takenouchi*, http://www.jinen-butoh.com/profile_e.html (accessed August 20, 2014).

¹¹⁷ Takenouchi Atsushi in discussion with the author, July 13 2001, CAVE Artspace, New York.

Visual Spectacle

Along with the linked notions of tradition and form, the tendency of the more prominent *butô* companies to rely on visual spectacle allows for their more ready commodification. In 1988 Jean Viala and Nourit Masson-Sekine wrote of the work of *Sankai Juku*, *Dairakudakan* and others groups performing in the U.S. and Europe that they had become “image factories” with “the staging clearly taking priority over the dance itself.”¹¹⁸ By 2008 *Sankai Juku* had embraced that designation. Proudly displayed in their press materials is a quote from a review in *The Montreal Gazette* containing the phrase “Image after glorious image unfolds in a beautiful environment ... it's as symbolic as you want to make it, and it's as simple as can be.”¹¹⁹

Guy Debord, in the *Society of the Spectacle*, theorized that in capitalist society, visual spectacle is the primary means of rendering the members of that society into passive spectators:

This is the principle of commodity fetishism, the domination of society by “intangible as well as tangible things,” which reaches its absolute fulfillment in the spectacle, where the tangible world is replaced by a selection of images which exist above it, and which simultaneously impose themselves as the tangible *par excellence*.¹²⁰

This reliance on visual spectacle was or is present in the dance of *Sankai Juku*, *Dairakuda-kan*, *Byakko-sha* (White Tiger), *Dance Love Machine*, *Ariadone*, *Muteki-sha*, *Hoppô Butoh-ha*, and *Butoh-sha Tenkei* (Heavenly Birds): the groups formed by dancers who had performed with Hijikata. While some of the images these groups present may be grotesque, the fact that they are essentially visual compositions encourages spectators to receive the exotic spectacle passively. If we look back at Hijikata’s insistence on the uncommodifiable nature of his dance, at his performances that confronted their audiences, prompting an engaged spectator,

¹¹⁸ Jean Viala, “Hijikata’s Legacy,” in *Butoh: Shades of Darkness* (Tokyo: Shufunotomo, 1988), 100.

¹¹⁹ Pomegranate Arts Projects, “Sankai Juku” http://www.pomegranatearts.com/project-sankai_juku/index.html (Accessed February 1, 2012).

¹²⁰ Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (Detroit: Black and Red, 1983), 36.

it is clear that his dance was fundamentally opposed to passive, meditative visuality. While the creation of visual spectacle is certainly not unusual in the dance world, it takes on a particular valence when foregrounded as a value in the work of Japanese choreographers performing for non-Japanese audiences. Emily Roxworthy in her work on performances by Japanese Americans in the U.S. internment camps during WWII argued persuasively that a stereotypical view of Japan as a culture of spectacle is embedded in Caucasian American consciousness. She writes that the U.S. public's acceptance of the imprisonment of minority citizens was made possible in part by framing the internment "in visual terms that objectified the Japanese American other within an economy of Debordian 'mere appearance' that was based on a racialized understanding of Japan as a culture of artifice and surfaces." This policy of "obscuring psychological violence and material underpinnings of Japanese disenfranchisement" through the use of spectacle goes back to Commodore Perry's forced opening of Japan in 1853, accompanied by military displays and theatrical performances, which relied on a view of Japanese culture as concerned primarily with ceremony and artificial appearances.¹²¹ The implications of this longstanding U.S. view of Japanese culture as privileging visual spectacle, combined with the idea of *butô* as a dance of death exhibiting the same aesthetics as the traditional performing arts has disturbing implications regarding cross cultural audience reception when combined with the longstanding and entirely erroneous notion that *butô*'s origins lie in a need to express the horrors of the atomic bomb. What U.S. and European audiences receive is a spectacle of visual pleasing dead Asians, whose activities do not need to be understood because they can be safely framed as "traditional," and therefore "other."

To return to the phrase from Sankai Juku's website, "as symbolic as you want to make

¹²¹ Emily Roxworthy, *The Spectacle of Japanese American Trauma: Racial Performativity and World War II*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), 5.

it...and as simple as can be,” a visual spectacle depicting dead Asians, promoted as traditional dance, makes no demands on its audience: they are free to project their own associations onto the spectacle, or not. This passive mode of reception privileged by the spectacular mode, is in contrast to Hijikata’s own dance creations. In the dance of *Sankai Juku*, Hijikata’s provocative ambivalence, which resisted attempts at interpretation, is replaced by Amagatsu’s passive ambiguity, which allows the spectator to freely project his or her own assumptions onto the dance, or simply to take it in as exotic visual play.

Conclusion

I have argued that the construction of *butô* as a traditional dance form elides the innovations, techniques, and experiments of individual dancer/choreographers and perpetuates orientalist stereotypes of the East as characterized by tradition vs. the West as characterized by innovation. The establishment of *butô* as a fixed genre; the view of *butô* as a “dance of death,” and the tendency of the most successful *butô* groups to rely on visual spectacle, allowed for the commodification of *butô* within the global field of cultural production. While Tanaka Min’s career has benefited to some degree from the branding of *butô* that was necessary for contemporary Japanese choreographers to achieve success on the international stage, the view of Hijikata as a foundational figure and those who came after him as masters of a form that he created has obscured Tanaka’s significant innovations in the interrelated fields of improvised collaboration, performer training, and choreographic process. In each of these there is consistently an emphasis on physical space, or to use de Certeau’s terminology, of space as “practiced place.”¹²² Tanaka’s practice is an ongoing experiment where place is researched,

¹²² Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 117.

collaborated with, and absorbed through the physical body. The practicing of place relates directly to a practice of daily life that is resistant to formalization and commodification, bears a complex relation to tradition, and eschews visual spectacle in favor of embodied experience.

Tanaka's own relation with Hijikata was different than that of the dancer/choreographers discussed above. He did not actually meet Hijikata until 1983. Tanaka states that even when he was working entirely outside of *butô*, he was very aware of what Hijikata was doing. He had seen Hijikata's dance, including *Revolt of the Flesh*¹²³ and about 20 performances of the *27 Nights for Four Seasons* series. Although he was drawn to Hijikata, he intentionally kept a distance. He feared that if he worked with Hijikata he would lose himself in Hijikata's dance,¹²⁴ that Hijikata would "swallow" him.¹²⁵ At the same time he was not interested in learning Hijikata's *butô-fu* or in imitating his style of dance. For him, this would be like someone who wanted to be a great painter like Van Gogh learning to imitate Van Gogh's style of painting.¹²⁶ He states that it was Hijikata's "existence," on and off the stage, which he wanted to have, rather than his movement style. During a rehearsal for his international dance project *Forest Story* (*Mori no Monogatari*) in Tokyo in 2005, he spoke of his relation with Hijikata.

When I saw Hijikata the first time, I did not go to him to learn because I knew that if I went to learn his movement, I could not move like him. I wanted to have his kind of existence on the stage. Of course his movement was strange, very interesting, but movement could not make his existence. Most dancers are not interested in this, they want to make movement, make a method, make a form. This problem is not only for dancers, but for the human being.¹²⁷

¹²³ Kim Jiae, "Min Tanaka's Butoh," interview with Tanaka Min, trans Kobata Kazue, *Theme 7* (Fall 2006), <http://www.thememagazine.com/stories/min-tanaka/> (accessed November 12 2011).

¹²⁴ Misaki "Min Tanaka," 6.

¹²⁵ Kim, "Min Tanaka's Butoh."

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Zack Fuller, rehearsal notes, *Forest Story* (*Morino no Monogatari*), Tokyo, August 2005.

For Tanaka, Hijikata's "existence" appears to be characterized primarily by a rigorously sustained inquiry into the possibilities of the relation between language, sensation, and the body. His *butô* was "the result of a new way of thinking,"¹²⁸ not only about dance but about the various activities that constitute the daily life of someone who dances, including dance and the activities surrounding it. In Tanaka's dance there are no set *kata*, no defined vocabulary. As a self-identified avant-garde and "body anarchist,"¹²⁹ Tanaka rejects the formalization of Hijikata's *butô-fu* as "fascism."¹³⁰ At the same time, it should be remembered that Tanaka trained for many years in a highly formalized modern dance technique, was a successful modern dancer in Tokyo, and was and is capable of mastering complex choreography with ease. He rejected form after mastering form.

Tanaka's use of the word "traditional" is conflicted in a way similar to his use of the word *butô*. He frequently uses it in a negative sense, as referring to an empty form, and at other times he uses it in a more positive way. In his positive view of tradition, it indicates the will to continue to continuously develop something; not to establish something as if it were complete. He is not critical of tradition in this sense, but of the word itself and how it is employed. He states "If you have the word *dento* (tradition), then people cannot be active," because the thing identified as *dento* becomes a known: "*Kabuki*, ok *kabuki* I know." In one of the interviews that I conducted with him, I mentioned that Sankai Juku's most recent performance in New York had been advertised as "based in traditional *butô*." He recalled that his friend Kuniichi Uno, a scholar of French literature, had pointed out that in French there is very little difference between the

¹²⁸ Kobata, interview with Zack Fuller.

¹²⁹ Tanaka Min, interview with Zack Fuller, August 9, 2011.

¹³⁰ Tanaka Min, interview with Zack Fuller, August 12, 2011.

word “tradition” and the word *trahison*: “betrayal.”¹³¹ Tanaka often complains about people formalizing Hijikata’s approach to dance, or his own training exercises, in order to make money. While Tanaka is not opposed to making money from dance, he is opposed to establishing or fixing it as a form in order to do so, because this would limit the capacity for change and experimentation that he sees as vital to his practice, to practice *butô* as a “spiritual existence.”¹³² He clearly sees the establishment of a form as a type of commodification, and his own practice embodies the idea that one cannot invest oneself in a commodified art and maintain personal agency, just as one cannot have a conventional life and create experimental dance.

His view is line with that of political scientist David McNally, who has articulated the view that the commodification of labor is in fact the commodification of human experience.

It is often forgotten that the commodification of one’s time and creative energies, their transformation into things for sale on the market, has dramatic effects upon an individual’s sense of self, body, nature and others... Rather than just a specific way of organizing the allocation of goods and services, commodification also reorganizes the very forms of human experience, the ways in which we perceive and understand ourselves and our capacities.¹³³

In McNally’s view commodification is not simply about money, commodification affects consciousness, the individuals sense of identity and self-awareness. It can be said that this is particularly true in the case of dance, where the artist’s medium is his or her own body. McNally is writing specifically about the commodification of labor. While Tanaka has stated that he prefers to think of farming as his job and dance as an activity that he engages in,¹³⁴ from my own experience of participating in and observing in his work it is clear that his farming work is as

¹³¹ Tanaka Min, interview with Zack Fuller, August 12, 2011. In the interview Tanaka actually used the English word “destroy,” but the French *trahison* is usually translated as “betrayal.” “Tradition” is spelt the same way in French as in English.

¹³² Tanaka Min, interview with Zack Fuller, August 8, 2011.

¹³³ David McNally, “The Commodity Status of Labour: The Secret of Commodified Life” in *Not For Sale: Decommodifying Public Life*, ed. Gordon Laxer and Dennis Soron (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2006), 49.

¹³⁴ Pétra Vermeersch, “About Butoh: In Research For its Origin and Actual Meaning; An Interview With Min Tanaka,” *Contact Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2002), 30.

experimental as his dance. Both can be seen as forms of labor in the sense of Mark Franko's reading of Hannah Erandt's definition of the term, as a process rather than a product, and thus similar to dance."¹³⁵ At the same time, there is such a strong element of play in Tanaka's dance (albeit extremely rigorous play) that I would hesitate to strictly define it as labor. What is important is that Tanaka experiences both dance and farming as equally valid activities, both have the potential to expand the body's kinetic heterogeneity and sensory potential, and in order to do so both must be decommodified.

While some of the tactics Tanaka employs that resist commodification and expand his practice of dance and daily life differ from Hijikata's, his practice can be linked to Hijikata's through its consistently anti-formalist nature, rigorous experimentation, and a concern with the decommodification of dance and daily life. In Tanaka's case this is accomplished through a use of space that is opposed to the needs of capital in a production oriented society, and informed by his approach to farming work.

¹³⁵ Mark Franko, *The Work of Dance: Labor, Movement, and Identity in the 1930s* (Middletown CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2002), 2.

Chapter Two

Solo/Duo/Trio: Tactical Maneuvers in Improvised Spatial Practice

“For me, the life of a dancer is an uninterrupted process of performing just one endless dance.”¹

-Tanaka Min

Tanaka Min’s most prolific activities as a performer have been in the realm of improvised dance. These performances are often promoted as solo dance, in line with the general distinction often made in the categorization of contemporary dance as either solo piece or group piece.² However, in his conversations with me he remarked that he wanted to stop using the term “solo dance” as there is always some degree of collaboration involved in his improvised work.³ The collaborative nature of these dances is most evident in his work with musicians or visual artists. Yet even without the direct input of another person, the site at which the dances are performed shapes them to such a degree that many can accurately be said to be improvised collaborations with a particular place. Very frequently Tanaka chooses locations that are not designed to be or formally designated as performance venues. I suggest that the relevant distinction to be made in the categorization of different modes of Tanaka’s practice is not between solo and group dance, but between the improvisational tactics that Tanaka employs himself as a dancer, and the choreographic methodology he employs when working with a group. In this chapter I will discuss the former, in which Tanaka combined a multiplicity of tactics previously utilized by experimental dance artists in the 1960s, employing these in a practice of researching and being stimulated by physical space, expanding his physical vocabulary by constantly exposing his body to different sites.

¹ Quoted in *The Sea Inside The Skin/Moře Pod Kůží*, Ondřej Hrab, Kobata Kazue, and Tsuda Yoriko, eds., (Prague: TORST, n.d.), n.p.

² See for example, “Min Tanaka: Butoh Dancer in the Doghouse,” *The Japan Time Online*, Friday Nov. 10, 2006, accessed October 15, 2012, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/fq20061110a3.html>.

³ Tanaka Min, interview with Zack Fuller, August 8, 2011.

Both the scope and nature of Tanaka Min's work make it a challenge to analyze. Tanaka has performed literally thousands of improvised dances. Though in recent years he has ceased choreographing for groups of dancers, as of this writing he himself continues to perform frequently in Japan and Europe, and occasionally the United States. In these performances, dances presented under the same title are often completely different in terms of structure, set, costume, and movement quality and vocabulary. Conversely, in his early work, different titles were used for what were actually very similar activities in terms of costume, movement vocabulary, and the ideas being explored. Rather than a neat collection of dance pieces, one is confronted with series of dances whose titles, such as *Drive* (1977-1982), *Subject: Heuristic Ecdysis* (1999), *Locus Focus* (Ba odori) (2006-2016), or *I Don't Need the Path* (Ore no karada ni michi ha irenai) (2016), provide a pretext for open-ended experimentation, rather than a frame for contextualizing what the audience is witnessing. In an interview I conducted in August of 2011 Tanaka stated:

I have no concept of "the piece." Dance piece... Sometimes people ask me, for making a profile,⁴ 'What is your most important *dance piece*?' Everything. I have an impression, a strong impression about this experience for example. But it's not a *piece*. It's not *finished*.⁵

The above statement expresses a fundamental principle of Tanaka's personal philosophy: the resistance to "fixing" (in the sense of establishing or making permanent) any aspect of his dance. It was made in reference to both his work as a choreographer of group dances and his own improvised performances. In Tanaka's view, the establishment of any repeatable, reproducible form is ultimately a collusion with the various power structures that limit human agency by fixing and controlling the body, and thus inimical to the experimental practice of dance and daily life. Throughout his interviews and manifestos, there is an emphasis

⁴ Or what is often called a "bio" in the United States.

⁵ Tanaka Min, interview with Zack Fuller, August 8, 2011.

on the idea that modern human beings are controlled by forces outside of their conscious sphere, by “society,” or by “history.” He emphasized this when leading body workshops as well, repeatedly insisting on the importance of engaging in continual experimentation in movement practice, as well as altering the physical conditions of daily life.

Recent dance scholarship has explored the idea of improvisation in relation to human agency. Danielle Goldman argues that while improvisation in dance is often seen as a means to a kind of personal freedom of expression, an escape from the constrictions of daily life, it is actually “a practice intimately concerned with constraint.” Rather than a freedom *from* the constraints of daily life, rigorous improvisation is a means of developing the personal agency to make choices *within* the constraints of daily life. “It is an incessant preparation, grounded in the present while open to the next moment’s possible actions and constraints.”⁶ Goldman likens improvised dance to the “practices of freedom”⁷ proposed by Michel Foucault in his later writings. Tanaka is familiar with Foucault’s writings and is very conscious of the constraints placed on the human body by society. His improvisational practice of dance and daily life is composed of a series of very conscious choices. His comment that his dance is never “finished” should be read in light of the vital importance of continual experimentation and change in his personal philosophy. Tanaka made the comment that he does not make “pieces” of dance in the context of expressing reservations about having different aspects of his activities “blocked” or divided into categories, as I have done here in discussing improvised dance, training, choreography, and farming as distinct activities. I participated in all of these activities with Tanaka, and at the time I experienced each of them as very different. Dancing with Tanaka

⁶ Danielle Goldman, *I Want to be Ready: Improvised Dance as a Practice of Freedom* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 142-143.

⁷ See Michel Foucault, “The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom,” in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: New Press, 1997) 281-301.

when we were improvising together was a very different experience for me than participating in the workshops or developing group dances. Farming was never like a dance for me; sometimes it was enjoyable to work outside in nature, at other times it was tedious in the extreme. Tanaka is insistent that for him these activities are not separate from one another, and I feel it is important to take that seriously. However, I also feel that such statements can easily be misunderstood. For example, while Tanaka says that there is no difference between dance and farming, he would definitely not find it acceptable for someone working with him to break into an improvised dance in the midst of harvesting potatoes, for example, or to listen to recorded music while collecting eggs from the chickens in the chicken house. He would not condone presenting one of the workshop exercises as a dance performance. I feel that analyzing these activities separately, with the understanding that they are intimately linked can facilitate a more concrete understanding of them, the principles that inform them, and their relation to each other.

Similarly, while Tanaka's statement that no one of his dances is more important than another is intriguing, I have of necessity chosen certain exemplary performances to analyze here. In some cases my choice has been influenced by the discovery of a good quality video recording of a dance. Some dances seem historically important because of their extreme and unusual nature, such as the dance from the *Hyperdance* series that took place on an island covered in garbage. Some I have chosen because I judge them to hold a significant place in Tanaka's development, such as his early work with percussionist Milford Graves and guitarist Derek Bailey. Some, such as the performances in Prague prior to and immediately following the Velvet Revolution have a historical significance owing to the specific time and place of their occurrence.

Tanaka's "endless dance" is a practice that deploys a wide variety of tactical maneuvers to expand the possibilities of the human body and imagination. I use Michel De Certeau's term

“tactics” to describe the various processes or maneuvers that Tanaka employs in his practice. In this I am indebted to Mark Franko, who has argued that the use of pedestrian movement by choreographers such as Paul Taylor in the late fifties and early sixties constituted “acts of resistance” to what Marcuse called “the closed operational universe of advanced industrial civilization.”⁸ Franko uses the term “tactical economies of movement” to describe the use of stillness in the work of Taylor, proposing that his procedures were “not unrelated to what de Certeau called “anti-discipline” or a set of unrecorded tactics used in everyday life in advanced technological civilization.”⁹ I employ De Certeau’s concept of tactics as an “anti-discipline” in positioning Tanaka’s dance as a spatial practice that contests the boundaries between dance and everyday life in a struggle for personal agency. The tactics employed by Tanaka include minimalism, nudity, pedestrian movement, the use of non-traditional performance space, site specificity, improvisation as performance, playing with the relationship between audience and performer, and blurring the boundaries between art and daily life. All of these tactical maneuvers were previously utilized by avant-garde dancer/choreographers in the 1960s, in works categorized as post-modern dance. Minimal movement in the form of stillness functioned as a strong element in the work of Judson Dance Theatre, often incorporated as a possibility in a chance based score, as in Ruth Emerson’s *Timepiece* (1962).¹⁰ Central to the development of post-modern dance was the idea that any movement can be part of a dance, stemming from John Cage’s idea that any sound could be part of a piece of music.¹¹ This led to dances utilizing a vocabulary of pedestrian, or what former Judson Dance Theatre member Steve Paxton terms

⁸ Mark Franko, *Excursion For Miracles: Paul Sanasardo, Donya Feur, and Studio for Dance, 1955-1964* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2005), 91.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 97.

¹⁰ Sally Banes, *Democracy’s Body: Judson Dance Theatre, 1962-1964* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 43.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

“quotidian,” movement.¹² Paxton’s piece *Satisfyin’ Lover* (1967), where the movement vocabulary consisted entirely of walking, exemplifies this practice. Nudity was used by Anna Halprin in *Parades and Changes* (1965),¹³ in Paxton and Yvonne Rainer’s *Words Words* (1963),¹⁴ and in various works by Carolee Schneemann.¹⁵ Examples of “site-specific” dances in non-traditional, outdoor spaces include Trisha Brown’s *Roof Piece* (1971), and *Man Walking Down the Side of a Building* (1970).¹⁶ Improvisation as performance was explored in Brown’s early work, the performances of the group Grand Union,¹⁷ in the development of contact improvisation, and throughout the career of Simone Forti, a dancer whom Tanaka admires greatly. Examples of experiments with the relationship between performer and audience are found in the works of Meredith Monk, such as *Blueprint* (1967)¹⁸ and *Vessel* (1971).¹⁹

Harada Hiromi, in her *Butô Taizen* (*Butô Encyclopedia*), writes that prior to working with Hijikata Tatsumi, Tanaka was solely responsible for bringing post-modern dance to Japan, comparing his early work to that of Anna Halprin and Judson Dance Theatre. She foregrounds his interest in breaking away from the conventional relationship between audience and performer, challenging audiences to see themselves and their environment in new ways.²⁰ I would like to expand on Harada’s idea of viewing Tanaka’s early work as post-modern dance, with the understanding that any influence he received from the U.S. postmodern dancers who

¹² Steve Paxton, “500 Words: Judson Dance Theater: 50th Anniversary,” *Artforum International Magazine* (July 2012): <http://artforum.com/words/id=31419>, accessed August 25, 2012.

¹³ Janice Ross, *Anna Halprin: Experience as Dance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 181-188.

¹⁴ Banes, *Democracy’s Body*, 89-90.

¹⁵ See Carolee Schneemann, *More Than Meat Joy: Performance Works and Selected Writings*, ed. Bruce R. McPherson (Kingston, NY: McPherson and Company, 1979).

¹⁶ See Hendel Teicher, ed., *Trisha Brown: Dance and Art in Dialogue* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002).

¹⁷ Sally Banes, *Terpsichore in Sneakers: Post-Modern Dance* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), 203-218.

¹⁸ See Deborah Jowitt, “Monk and King: The Sixties Kids,” in *Reinventing Dance in the 1960’s: Anything Was Possible*, ed. Sally Banes (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 129.

¹⁹ Brooks McNamara, “Vessel: The Scenography of Meredith Monk. An Interview,” *The Drama Review* 16, no.1 (March 1972): 87-103.

²⁰ Harada Hiromi, “Tanaka Min (Tokasan),” in *Butoh taizen* (Tokyo: Gendai Shokan, 2004), 332.

preceded him was indirect, in the form of magazine articles and other media. While Tanaka's "naked" dances arose out of a similar questioning or search for new possibilities in dance, what he was doing was something quite different from the American postmodern dance of the sixties and seventies. The originality of his project consisted in part in of an unprecedented layering of a multiplicity of experimental tactics employed by both the U.S. and Japanese avant-gardes.²¹ In his work during the 1970s and 1980s, Tanaka combined various experimental tactics employed by U.S. based post-modern choreographers, blending and reconfiguring them in unprecedented ways, simultaneously combining the tactics of minimalism, nudity, site specificity, and improvisation while playing with the relationship between audience and performer. In addition, he personally developed two very significant tactics that were not present in the work of the U.S dance artists who preceded him. These are the idea of having two speeds (or "streams") in the body: an inner and outer speed²², and an approach to movement that I term 'polyrhythmic infantile kinesthesia': the development of an "infant body" capable of moving its limbs in independent rhythms. Beginning in 1983 he began to incorporate the use of props, costume, physical actions and emotional display into his dance. After working with Hijikata Tatsumi, he would incorporate Hijikata's use of diverse visual imagery to develop physical vocabulary and alter movement quality into this expanding practice. While continuing to develop the spatial practices explored in his early work, in recent years he has focused on the idea of dancing "from the bones," using the least amount of muscle necessary to produce movement.

Tanaka's philosophy and embodied practice resist formalized method, choosing instead continuous experimentation and change. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a greater

²¹ I employ Certeau's concept of tactics as an "anti-discipline" in positioning Tanaka's dance as a spatial practice that contests the boundaries between dance and everyday life in a struggle for personal agency (Certeau 1984).

²² This technique was important in Hijikata's work as well, but Tanaka seems to have developed it independently, before his encounter with Hijikata. Melinda Buckwalter emphasizes the importance of this concept in Tanaka's work. See Melinda Buckwalter, *Composing While Dancing: An Improviser's Companion* (Madison WI: University of Wisconsin Press 2010), 63.

understanding of that practice, without reducing it to a consistent form or method. In order to do this I have chosen to examine five dances performed between 1974 and 1990. Four of these examples: *Hyperdance*, *MMD*, *Emotion* (Kanjo), *Performance for the Foundation of the Love-Dance School* (Ren'ai butô-ha teiso koen), exemplify the use of particular tactics. The fifth, an untitled performance at St. Nicholas Church in Prague, Czech Republic, I include as an example of how the tactics Tanaka explored in the earlier dances are reconfigured within a historically significant space and time.

Dancing the Space: Subject/Butai/Hyperdance/Drive

Tanaka Min began his dance career as a student of Hiraoka Shiga. Though he also studied ballet and yoga, his formal dance training consisted primarily of modern dance based in the technique of Martha Graham, as taught by Hiraoka.²³ In the late 1960's and early 1970's he had a successful career in Tokyo as a modern dancer with Hiraoka's company²⁴ and in 1971 he began creating dances for himself in addition to performing with Hiraoka.²⁵ In an interview with Bonnie Sue Stein in 1986 Tanaka described an early solo, (one which he identifies as particularly significant), where he "tried to express nothing."²⁶ In this dance he hung in the air for five minutes, suspended by ropes under his arm, his body tucked into a ball, wearing only a *fundoshi* (an old fashioned undergarment covering the genitals but not the buttocks).²⁷ The name of this

²³ Jonathan Marshall, "Dancing the Elemental Body: Butoh and Body Weather; Interviews with Tanaka Min and Yumi Umiuare," *Performance Paradigm* 2 (March 2006), <http://www.performanceparadigm.net/category/journal/issue-2/>.

²⁴ Harada Hiromi, "Min Tanaka (Tokasan)," in *Butoh Taizen* (Tokyo: Gendai Shokan, 2004), 330.

²⁵ "Dance Log: Min Tanaka," in Kuniichi Uno, Kobata Kazue, and Matsuoka Seigo, *Min Tanaka: Between Mountain and Sea: Photographs by Masato Okada* (Tokyo: Kousakusha, 2007), 92.

²⁶ Bonnie Sue Stein, "Min Tanaka: Farmer/Dancer or Dancer/Farmer; An interview," *The Drama Review* 30, no. 2 (Summer, 1986), 144.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 144-145.

dance was *Kagura*, and it was performed at Toshi Center Hall in Tokyo in 1972²⁸ as part of a “new face series” presented by The All Japan Modern Dance Association. *Kagura* is a word normally used to refer to any one of a number of regionally specific folk dances having a social and religious function, whose purpose is to entertain a visiting *kami*, or spiritual entity.²⁹ In my interview with him he described the series as an event where about twenty “new face” (emerging or relatively unknown) choreographers were each given five minutes to present a dance, and that his was “very experimental” (and thus extremely different than any of the other dances presented).³⁰ Tanaka noted that “*kagura* means dancing in front of the god. God for me means nature,” and that this was also true for the early *Jōmon* people in Japan.³¹ *Kagura* is a significant dance in Tanaka’s early career because of its minimal movement, near nudity, and lack of expression: qualities that would characterize Tanaka’s dance practice until the premiere of *Emotion* (Kanjo) in 1983. By 1974 Tanaka had abandoned this career as a modern dancer and become known as a “naked dancer”³² performing wearing only an ace bandage wrapped around his genitalia. The first time Tanaka danced naked (without a *fundoshi*) was on June 22, 1974, at O.A.G. Hall in Tokyo, under the title *Subject*.³³ In this dance he presented himself with his wife and their infant daughter Ami, who were naked as well. His wife sat still on a grassy lawn, holding the baby in her lap. Tanaka repeated the action of jumping in the air and falling to the ground. He jumped into the air, pulled his knees to his chest, and then by jerking his head, shifted his center of gravity so that when he fell he would land on his side. He repeated this

²⁸ “Dance Log: Min Tanaka,” 92.

²⁹ Benito Ortolani, *The Japanese Theatre: From Shamanistic Ritual to Contemporary Pluralism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 13-14.

³⁰ Tanaka, interview by Zack Fuller, August 8, 2011.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Misaki Eri, “Min Tanaka, ‘What is Dance?’,” *New York Dance Fax* (September 2000), 7.

³³ Tanaka Min, *Boku wa zutto Hadaka data: zen-ei dansa noshintai ron* (I Was Always Naked: Body Theory of An Avant-garde Dancer), ed. Tanabe Sumie (Tokyo: Kousakusha, 2011), 21.

action many times.³⁴ Noguchi Minoru, a composer working in the *musique concrete* mode with prerecorded sounds and synthesizer, provided music, and the performance was done in conjunction with an artwork by Fukuhara Kintaro.³⁵

Tanaka Min's famous declaration "I don't dance in the space, I dance the space,"³⁶ emerged from a practice of site specific, improvised dance that he initiated following the performance of *Subject*. Using primarily *bisoku* (extremely slow) movement, naked save for an ace bandage wrapping his genitalia, he danced in numerous sites, many of which were public spaces. For approximately seven years he danced in this manner, lowering himself, often dancing on the ground where countless people had walked, spit, and deposited their refuse. During this time he kept his head and body hair shaved, dancing as frequently as possible, often performing two, three, or even four times a day, improvising very slowly with occasional bursts of faster motion.

In the naked dances Tanaka stripped away everything from his dance that he felt was unnecessary: costume, character, framing devices, decorative movement, emotion, and speed. Many were without music, but some were performed in collaboration with Noguchi, who would

³⁴ Harada, *Butoh taizen*, 330. Harada identifies the title of this performance as *Subject: Butai* (Dance Condition).

³⁵ "Dance Log: Min Tanaka," 93.

³⁶ This frequently quoted statement appears in online sources as both "I dance the space" and "I dance the place." This difference seems to have to do primarily with whether the source of the original quotation is oral or written. When speaking in English Tanaka uses the word space rather than place. With his group Maijuku he spoke frequently (in English) about "dancing the space," as former Maijuku member Tess Dequincey recollected in an interview in 1996, see Keith Gallasch, "Tess Dequincey and Stuart Lynch: Dancing the City," *RealTime* 11 (February-March, 1996): accessed August 17, 2017, <http://www.realttimearts.net/article/issue131/6033>. In the times that I worked with him he also preferred the word space. I recall him saying to me, "the space is more important than you," for example, which relates to the idea of dancing the space rather than using the space as scenery. The earliest version of the phrase in print that I have been able to locate is from 1981: "I dance not in the place but I dance the place" (see Tanaka Min, Kobata Kazue, ed., "Bodyprint: Min Tanaka; Media Information" (Bodyweather Laboratory: Tokyo, 1981), 35. Kobata Kazue, who often translates Tanaka's words for official publications, used "place" as the correct translation of the Japanese *basho*, rather than "space" which Tanaka prefers when speaking English. I have chosen to use "space" rather than "place," as I feel that Tanaka's relation with the site of performance is congruent with Certeau's idea of space as "practiced place."

set up his sound equipment in the street, park, or other location where Tanaka was dancing.³⁷

Photo and video evidence shows that while each one was different in structure, certain positions reoccurred frequently in these dances. Three of these are depicted in figures 2, 3, and 4: on the back curled into a fetal position, walking in a backbend with arms held in front of the body, and crawling.

During this period it would have been impossible for Tanaka to come up with different suitable titles for each individual performance. However, on the occasions when his performances were announced beforehand he would give sometimes call his dance different names. Before 1977 he often called his dance *Butai* (Dance State), *Subject*, or occasionally *Dance Doings*. Between 1977 and 1982 his dances were usually called *Hyperdance* or *Drive*. During this time Tanaka was often arrested, because of his near nudity. As he kept his genitalia wrapped up and his pubic hair shaved, he could never formally be charged with any crime and was generally released after no more than a few hours.³⁸ In 1975 he danced under the title *Dance Doings: Grassy Time II*, in an unlicensed performance in the entrance passageway to Kunitachi Train Station, and was warned by the police to stop dancing naked. Not heeding this warning, he was arrested on numerous other occasions, including in 1976 at the West Gate of the National Sports Stadium,³⁹ and in 1977 on a street in Ginza, one of the busiest shopping areas in Tokyo.⁴⁰ In 1977 the editors and staff of the avant-garde magazine *Yu*, including Kobata Kazue and senior editor Matsuoka Seigo, assisted him in realizing a series of performances throughout Japan. Tanaka began calling his dance *Hyperdance*, and from October 8 to December 22, 1977, he danced his 1824 hour *Hyperdance* series, improvising four or five performances per day in some

³⁷ Tanaka Min, interview with Zack Fuller, August 8, 2011.

³⁸ Odette Aslan notes that later, when Tanaka danced in a public street in Italy, his nudity led to him being jailed for several days. Odette Aslan, "Tanaka Min," in Odette Aslan and Béatrice Picon-Vallin, ed., *Butô(s)*, Arts Du Spectacle (Paris: CNRS editions, 2002), 181.

³⁹ "Min Tanaka: Dance Log," 92.

⁴⁰ Misaki, "Min Tanaka," 7.

150 different sites across Japan, indoors and out.⁴¹ Some of these were done with the permission of an individual in charge of the space; many were in public spaces with no official permission. Odette Aslan notes that these spaces included college campuses, temples, gymnasiums, art galleries, tent theatres, and riverbanks.⁴² According to a list of sites included in “Bodyprint: Min Tanaka; Media Information,” a booklet of photos and quotations related to Tanaka’s solo dance published by Body Weather Laboratories in 1981, they also included stairways and city streets, a factory, an old train station, a hotel dance hall, a lumber yard, many public parks, a bulldozer, a truck, the runway of a local airport, and *Yume-no-shima* (Dream Island), a small island in Tokyo bay that was used as a garbage dump. Approximately eighty percent of these dances took place in the Tokyo *Shuto-ken*, the greater metropolitan area of Tokyo.⁴³ While some of these were in spaces such as galleries or private apartments where people were at least expecting to see some kind of performance, many took place as unlicensed street performances where the audience included people who were not aware that they were watching a dance at all.

This type of dance activity was quite different from both the work being created by modern dance choreographers in Tokyo at the time, and the *butô* of Hijikata and those directly influenced by him. Kobata Kazue, who in 1975 was one of the editors of *Yu*, the magazine that organized the *Hyperdance* tour, relates that she met Tanaka socially before seeing him dance, and was interested in how he spoke and thought about dance. Although she knew that he was not associated with Hijikata, she still had some vague preconception that his dance might look something like *butô*, but when she saw him “Very quietly, subtly going up the stairs” in a back bend/bridge position, it was clear that this was “a totally new kind of dance or performance.”⁴⁴

⁴¹ Tanaka Min, Kobata Kazue, ed., “Bodyprint: Min Tanaka; Media Information” (Bodyweather Laboratory: Tokyo, 1981), 6.

⁴² Aslan, “Tanaka Min,” 178.

⁴³ Tanaka Min, “Bodyprint,” 38-41.

⁴⁴ Kobata Kazue, interview with Zack Fuller, October 15, 2012.

Something very similar to what Kobata describes is documented in Imura Toru's Ancient Green Land (*Kodai Ryokuchi*), a film that incorporates segments of seven performances by Tanaka from 1975-1977. The title is from a 1958 essay by Yoshida Issui, a section of which appears in "Bodyprint." The locations in the film are a staircase in what appears to be an apartment building, a street in front of a train station, two public parks (or possibly two different locations in the same park), a gallery space, an unidentifiable space in front of a concrete wall, and another street in front of or near a university. The soundtrack is an electronic, pulsing score by Noguchi Minoru, combined with the clacking shutter sound from the film camera.⁴⁵ The film begins with Tanaka slowly descending an indoor staircase, crawling in a position similar to an upward facing bow in yoga (or a bridge position in gymnastics): a backbend with the arms extending over the head, fingertips towards the hips, body supported by the hands and feet. He moves forward slowly by placing the crown of his head on the floor, releasing his hands, moving them forward a few inches, then following with the rest of his body. While each section of the film shows a dance that is different than those found in the other sections, there are elements that reoccur in different sections, suggesting that there were specific physical positions that Tanaka returned to in many of these dances. This is corroborated by Kobata's description and by a series of photos taken by Charlie Steiner of the *Drive* series in 1980. The bridge position is one, as is the motion of rolling side to side with the body fully extended. Other elements appear influenced by his study of yoga, positions similar to the plow pose and the cobra. These are never static, though the movement is very slow, and the positions are often asymmetrical. Pedestrian movements of crawling, lying down, sitting, walking, and squatting occur repeatedly. Transitioning from lying on the back to a shoulder stand by a backward roll occurs twice, as does

⁴⁵ The last two sections have music by Billie Holiday, but these seem to have been added to the film and not part of the original performance.

a standing position where Tanaka stands on the balls of his feet (a forced arch), legs together, knees slightly bent, torso curved as in a Graham contraction, arms extended with elbows slightly bent and fingers spread apart. Improvisation occurs both in the ordering of these elements, and in the subtle movements of the fingers, arms, and the muscles under the skin. It also occurs in the transitions between the repeated elements, which involve subtle shifts of weight. Tanaka's muscles are fully engaged throughout, he never relaxes, and he often deliberately makes both the positions and the transitions between them difficult for himself. Subtle weight shifts and alterations occur throughout.⁴⁶

Tanaka's nudity and the fact that much of his dance involved movements that placed large amounts of his body in contact with the ground enabled him to directly absorb physical stimulation from the physical space spaces that he danced with. Referring specifically to *Hyperdance*, Tanaka wrote in 1981: "Dance is not only a medium of the place, but also its stimulator... We moved without a stop and I danced at 4-5 places a day. On my body were engraved the memory of such places. I learned a lot about the relationship between language and body-about science, phenomenology, philosophy and sociology of the body. Thus I came to know more about dance."⁴⁷

One of the most striking characteristics of *Hyperdance* was the extensive variety of non-traditional performance spaces explored. On a practical level this freed Tanaka from relying on existing institutional structures to present his dance: he clearly wanted to dance as much as possible, and this could not be accomplished through traditional venues. At the same time, the variety of spaces provided him the opportunity to accumulate physical sensations, a process that Tanaka sees as being of the utmost importance in the development of a dancer.

⁴⁶ *Ancient Green Land* (Kodai Ryokuchi) 1975-1977, VHS, directed by Imuru Toru, n.d.

⁴⁷ Tanaka, *Bodyprint*, 6.

Felix Guattari described Tanaka as “totally folded into his own body and, however, hypersensitive to every perception emanating from the environment.”⁴⁸ A primary element of his practice is the physical research of the condition of the body through the action of exposing it to the widest variety of physical stimulation possible. This, as will be made clear in subsequent chapters, is of vital importance in both his training methods and in the choice to live as a vegetable farmer. In these early dances he exposed his body to a wide variety of physical stimulations both from the various weather conditions he performed in and from the spaces themselves, including the sensation of being forcibly moved by police officers. “Dancing the space” was a research of the space itself and the physical stimulations received from it.

The space he chose that provided the most extreme physical sensations was almost certainly *Yume-no-shima* (Dream Island), a small island in Tokyo Bay that was used as a garbage dump. Though it was cleaned up and opened in 1978 as a public park, in 1977 when Tanaka danced there, large portions of it were still covered in garbage. On December 4, 1977 Tanaka danced in five locations on Yume-no-shima. There were only two witnesses to this performance: his manager Kobata Kazue, and the photographer Okada Masato.

Tanaka wrote of this experience:

Countless flies fly up and land on my body. As I tense with fright, some unknown piece of rubbish pierces my body. I breathe out and relax. The sound made by the garbage is tremendously exciting. Before I lay down, the garbage here was just quietly and organically interconnected, ruled over by an infinite number of flies and the birds that come looking for food. While I’m still using the word “garbage,” I’m very far from the world that calls these things garbage, and I’m confused as to whether it really is the appropriate term.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Felix Guattari, “The Architectural Machines of Shin Takamatsu,” trans. Tim Adams and Catherine Howell, <http://www.jya.com/takamatsu.htm> (accessed April 25, 2010).

⁴⁹ Quoted in Kuniichi Uno, Kobata Kazue, and Matsuoka Seigo, *Min Tanaka: Between Mountain and Sea: Photographs by Masato Okada*, trans. Kobata Kazue (Tokyo: Kousakusha, 2007), 15.

Tanaka's description of his experience dancing on Dream Island emphasizes the tactile and the aural rather than the visual. Tanaka accepts the randomly arranged garbage into his body, accepts the stimulation of its sound and smell. By deliberately choosing an unstable environment for his dance, Tanaka subverts his own ability to control the space and pre-determine his movement in it. Rather than using the space as a scenic background to support the dance, the space becomes an active participant in the dance.

In other situations the audience was an active participant in the dance. Some of the *Hyperdance* performances were for audiences composed of both people who had learned by word of mouth or a handmade flyer that Tanaka would be dancing at a certain place, and those who came upon the dance by accident and had to create their own context for what they were witnessing. Tanaka was interested in engaging the audience, making them active participants in the performance. He did this in part by disrupting some of the basic assumptions of the relationship between audience and performer. For a performance at an art gallery he took out all the chairs, faced them in one direction and started dancing behind them, forcing the audience to choose how to watch the dance. They could either actively move their chairs, or stay and watch what they considered to be "the front."⁵⁰

Tanaka's frequent arrests during this period also served to engage the audience. He would generally have at least one compatriot to witness the dance and to deal with police in case of arrest. On the occasions when he was arrested he would continue dancing, at the same time observing the conversations between the police and the onlookers.

Sometimes people would say, "That is bad," or telephone the police. I would observe their reactions while I was dancing. Sometimes they (the police) would come and some people would say, "Why is this wrong? Why is this illegal?" and they would argue about it. It was *very* interesting. ...And I kept dancing of course. Sometimes they

⁵⁰ Tanaka Min, interview with Zack Fuller, August 8, 2011.

(the police) would roll me up in a sheet and put me in the van. This itself was a *very* interesting dance.⁵¹

Tanaka's arrest became a part of the dance itself, and would place the people watching in the position of having to choose whether the action they were witnessing should be repressed or not. Even those not actively engaged in calling the police, arguing with them, or vocally supporting Tanaka's arrest, would observe others doing so, and at least consider the morality or legality of whatever it was they felt he was doing. Tanaka's suggestion that being rolled up in a sheet and put in a van by the police was "a very interesting dance" applies both to the audience's experience and to his own. While aware of the physical stimulation of being arrested, another aspect of the spatial awareness attributed to Tanaka by Guattari included, in some instances at least, a type of sociological research of observing the choices made by those who were observing him.

Tanaka's interest in observing the choices made by those witnessing his minimalist dances reflects his interest in the agency of the human body on a larger scale. The idea that society controls our bodies, our actions, and our motivations is one that Tanaka has expressed frequently over the years. In 1986 he spoke to Bonnie Sue Stein about the importance of trying to understand "how our bodies are controlled historically."⁵² In his essay "I am an Avant-garde Who Crawls the Earth" he described himself as "engaged in a secret operation so that I will not be eaten up by society."⁵³ His personal philosophy and embodied practice demonstrate a belief that rigorous experimentation with the relation between the body and space can be a means of developing consciousness and personal agency.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Stein, "Min Tanaka," 147.

⁵³ Tanaka Min, "I Am an Avant-garde Who Crawls the Earth," in Ethan Hoffman, Mark Holborn, Yukio Mishima, Tatsumi Hijikata, and Haven O'More, *Butoh: Dance of the Dark Soul* (New York: Aperture, 1987), 64.

De Certeau proposes that while urban space is organized by the “strategies” of the local governments and technocrats who design and/or map it, the consumers inhabiting that space are able to “reappropriate the space organized by techniques of sociocultural production”⁵⁴ by using it in ways that it was not originally intended to be used. In *Hyperdance*, Tanaka consciously tested the limits of spatial reappropriation. While De Certeau’s consumer employs pedestrian tactics in ways that contest or elude the strategies imposed by those in power, obtaining a degree of personal agency through spatial practice, he is not fully aware that he is doing so. Tanaka, however, was and is quite conscious of the power relations that condition and restrict the body, and skeptical of the idea of dance as a practice of personal “freedom.” When in my discussions with him I suggested that a lot of the things that we were talking about seemed to be related to the idea of freeing the body from being controlled by society in some way he emphasized that such freedom was impossible without consciously researching how much society controls our motivation for the choices we make in life. While freedom is a nebulous and subjective concept, Tanaka proposes that it is possible “to recognize by oneself how much the person is controlled or not. Without thinking about it, no one can say “I’m free.” Free from what? Free of what?...People are losing the feeling now of “radical.” Radical way of researching motivation for example.” Tanaka’s statement, which is equally applicable to dance and daily life, suggests that before any degree of personal freedom can be attained, we as individuals need to research our motivations for the choices we make and how they are influenced by forces outside of ourselves. Certainly one major aspect of *Hyperdance* was this radical way of researching motivation. The radical choices to combine the use of public space with *bisoku* movement and near nudity, blending abstracted pedestrian movement with extra daily actions demanding a high degree of

⁵⁴ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), xiv.

strength and physical control, dancing three to five times per day, were choices that no other dance artist was making at that time. Committing to those choices allowed Tanaka to break free from the habits he had acquired through years of training in formalized dance technique, a technique that he had come to believe restricted not only the freedom of the body, but of human consciousness.

The combination of the minimalist devices of nudity and *bisoku* was not arbitrary. Both made him more sensitive to the space and the stimulations provided by the space. Additionally, combined with the absence of emotional or figurative expression, they functioned to transform Tanaka's body into an uncanny *objet*. In Tanaka's view, his nakedness made him less human in the eyes of his audience. In an unpublished interview from 1987 he stated that when he danced naked in a public space such as a street, he became so different from others that people would step right next to his face, something that for Japanese people is the height of disrespect. His nakedness made him an object in their eyes.⁵⁵ Harada also notes this transformation from human to *objet*.⁵⁶ I suggest that the manipulation of time was also central to this transformation: Tanaka's manipulation of time in the form of *bisoku* was an antithesis to the flow of urban life, and so contributed to his status of object.

William Marotti has demonstrated that the creation and display of objects deliberately incongruous with urban Japanese daily life was an important aspect of the Tokyo avant-garde of the 1960s. Some of Hijikata's cohorts from the Yomiuri Independent artists in the 1960's presented performances involving these objects in which, "surreptitious action, anonymity, and provocation marked the intersections with the everyday world."⁵⁷ The "Yamanote action" (1962)

⁵⁵ Tanaka Min, interview with Bonnie Stein, home of Ethan Hoffman, New York City, November 4, 1987, transcribed by Maria Sullivan, private collection of Bonnie Stein.

⁵⁶ Harada, *Butoh Taizen*, 330.

⁵⁷ William Marotti, *Money, Trains and Guillotines: Art and Revolution in 1960s Japan* (Durham NC, Duke University Press: 2013), 240.

for example, involved a group of artists including Takematsu Jirô and Nakanashi Natsuyuki. They brought uncanny objects on to a commuter train and held them, placed them in the train, and engaged in actions with them that were incongruous with mundane daily activity of riding the train.⁵⁸ The objects included Nakanishi' *Portable Objets*: clear polyester eggs containing a seemingly random assortment of small “partially destroyed everyday objects, including hair, a broken watch, shoes, glasses, bulbs, and the like,”⁵⁹ and Takematsu's *Cord*, a cord several meters long created from small broken objects wrapped in black cloth. The artists engaged in bizarre actions with the objects: examining them with a flashlight, cracking eggs on them, and licking them. Though there were differing opinions within the group as to the significance of the action, according to Takematsu “our starting intentions for the most part came out of taking the space of (everyday) life called a train and problematizing it.”⁶⁰ This was certainly one aspect of the activity that came to be called *Hyperdance*. In Tanaka's case, however, the *objet* he confronted the public with was his own body. Tanaka's early naked public performances achieved what the Tokyo neo-dada artists of the 1960's called an “agitating effect” (*kakuhan sayô*) on the general public, in part due to the transformation of his body into an uncanny object.

This transformation involved a very conscious engagement with urban time and space. In one of the interviews I conducted with him, Tanaka emphasized that his relation with space is deeply informed by the Japanese concept of *ma*, in which time and space are conflated.⁶¹ The word *ma* is often translated as “space between.” Richard B. Pilgrim, author of *Buddhism and the Arts of Japan* defines it as “an ‘interval’ between two (or more) spatial or temporal things and events,” carrying various meanings, “such as gap, opening, space between, time between, and so

⁵⁸ See Marotti, *Money, Trains, Guillotines*, 224-238.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 223.

⁶⁰ Quoted in Marotti, *Money, Trains, Guillotines*, 236.

⁶¹ Tanaka Min, interview with Zack Fuller, August 12, 2011.

forth.” It can refer to a room, to a rest in music, or can take on a relational meaning when referring to the space among or between one or more human beings.⁶² It is a concept that is central to the aesthetics of *Nô*,⁶³ the tea ceremony, and Japanese architecture.

The architect Isozaki Arata goes so far as to say that historically, for pre-modern Japanese, there was no separation between space and time :

In Japan space and time were never fully separated but were conceived as correlative and omnipresent...Space could not be perceived independently of the element of time and time was not abstracted as a regulated, homogenous flow, but rather was believed to exist only in relation to movements or space...Thus, space was perceived as identical with the events or phenomena occurring in it; that is, space was recognized only in its relation to time flow.⁶⁴

Isozaki’s statement is speculative, and may be influenced by Einsteinian theories of the space-time continuum.⁶⁵ The significance of *ma* for Tanaka’s practice in general and for *Hyperdance* specifically is not related so much to a desire to return to a pre-modern consciousness where space and time cannot be perceived as other than correlative as to a need to acknowledge that they are fundamentally inseparable, so that the research of time, in the sense of speed, rhythm, duration is inextricably linked to the research of space. To alter time is to alter space. So Tanaka’s extended research into *bisoku* movement was intimately connected to his research of space. Here I will discuss Tanaka’s use of time and space separately, with the understanding that they are intimately related.

For Certeau, “The functionalist organization, by privileging progress (i.e. time), causes the condition of its own possibility-space itself-to be forgotten; space thus becomes the blind spot in a scientific and political technology.”⁶⁶ *Hyperdance*, through its disruption of the

⁶² Richard Pilgrim, “Intervals (‘Ma’) in Space and Time: Foundations for a Religio-Aesthetic Paradigm in Japan,” *History of Religions* 25, no.3 (Feb., 1986), 255-256.

⁶³ See Kunio Komparu, *The Noh Theatre: Principles and Perspectives* (New York: John Weatherhill, 1983), 70.

⁶⁴ Quoted in Pilgrim, “Intervals,” 256.

⁶⁵ I wish to thank Bruce Baird for pointing this out to me.

⁶⁶ De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 95.

progressive flow of urban time, brought about a greater awareness of spatial practice in Tanaka's own consciousness and in some of those observing it. However, both the title *Hyperdance* and Tanaka's awareness of his own inner stream complicate the notion of *bisoku* as simply being movement that is very slow. His own experience was that while he seemed from the outside to be moving very slowly, inside he was moving very fast. This idea of having two independent speeds, or "streams," in the body, inner and outer, is a concept that is of major importance in his philosophy of dance. In *Hyperdance*, it involved a process of sustained mental activity, continually checking in with all the different parts of the body to see that they are engaged, being aware of and restraining impulses to make larger faster movements, while simultaneously being aware of the activity in the space around him. According to Tanaka the word *hyper* was not well known in Japan at the time. He learned it from Kobata Kazue, the aforementioned editor of *YU* who would later become his manager. Kobata explained it to him as a medical condition (as in hyperactive). When people asked him what "hyper" meant he told them (as a kind of joke) "more than super."⁶⁷ So for Tanaka, the name has connotations of both incredibly fast (as in the way "hyper" is used informally) and in the more formal definition of a prefix meaning over, beyond, or above: a dance beyond dance. In seeming contrast to the title of the dance, Tanaka appeared to be moving extremely slowly most of the time. While his outer speed seemed excruciatingly slow, his inner speed, not readily apparent to the average spectator, contributed to the uncanny quality of his presence.

The primacy of the manipulation of time in Tanaka's spatial practice (here in the sense of timing or rhythm) is also apparent in his conceptualization of the infant body. In my discussions with Tanaka in August of 2011 he stated that in the *Hyperdance* period he was interested in moving like a baby. He associates infant consciousness with the ability to move the

⁶⁷ Tanaka Min, interview with Zack Fuller, August 8, 2012.

limbs in different rhythms. This independency informs his relation with music as well. In the modern dance style that Tanaka was trained in, the dancer generally moves in time with the music. Tanaka was initially encouraged by the composer Noguchi Minoru to break that relationship, to have a rhythm independent of the music. He relates this to the idea he was developing in *Hyperdance*: “I dreamed I’d like to move my body like a baby. That means the right hand and the left arm have to have a different movement. The head has to have a different movement, the legs, the torso. I wanted to go into much more complex, complicated occasions.”⁶⁸ So in addition to having two different speeds in the body, a swiftly moving inner stream and an extremely slow outer speed, Tanaka was developing the ability to move his head and limbs simultaneously in different rhythms. Because of the extremely restrained movement style he employed in these dances, this rhythmic complexity took place primarily in the inner stream, not readily visible to those observing. While this complex inner rhythm would not be readily apparent to the average onlooker, it did contribute to the intensity and uncanny quality of his presence.

Hyperdance/Drive combined experimental tactics previously employed by U.S. based dancer choreographers in the 1960s. Tanaka’s combination of these different tactics was unprecedented and while many dancer/choreographers practice site-specific performance no other dancer has explored the number and variety of different sites that Tanaka has. When considered in the larger context of his personal philosophy and embodied practice, Tanaka’s oft-quoted statement that he dances the space refers to more than the observable physical environment. “I don’t dance in the space, I dance the space” privileges space itself over individual creativity. Like Certeau’s concept of space as “practiced place”⁶⁹ Tanaka’s notion of

⁶⁸ Tanaka, interview with Zack Fuller, August 9, 2011.

⁶⁹ De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 117.

space includes human beings and their activity, hence the need to engage them in the performance. Valorizing the physical space itself, these dances reversed the conventional hierarchy between performer and the place of performance. Combining quotidian movement (sitting, standing, walking, crawling) with uncanny postures such as the crawling yogic bow pose, suspended in time through the use of *bisoku* movement, these “naked dances” defamiliarized daily life, making pedestrian tactics visible.⁷⁰ This defamiliarization, as well as the disruption of audience expectation and lack of framing devices such as program notes, invited or provoked the audience to question basic assumptions about both the nature of performance and the practice of daily life. The public arrests further engaged the audience in an ethical debate on the use of public space. In these dances, Tanaka did not express the space, but internalized it. This practice of dance was a spatial research: a means of acquiring information, experience, and stimulation from the physical environment. Knowledge of things normally considered to be in the realm of the intellect (language, science, phenomenology, philosophy and sociology), were acquired through the body itself. In the years that he spent dancing in this way, Tanaka accumulated a wide range of physical sensations that he would recall and incorporate into his later dances.

MMD: The Polyrhythmic Body

Kobata Kazue continued to produce Tanaka’s work, and in 1978 she arranged for his participation at *Exposition MA Espace-Temps au Japon*: an exhibition of Japanese art, cinema and performance at the Festival D’Automne in Paris.⁷¹ Ashikawa Yoko appeared there as well,

⁷⁰ I use the term defamiliarization in the sense of “making strange,” the everyday: Bertolt Brecht’s *Verfrumdung*, or alienation effect. See Bertolt Brecht, “Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting,” in *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*, ed. and trans. John Willett (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964), 91-99.

⁷¹ Kobata Kazue, interview with Zack Fuller, New York NY, October 15, 2011.

performing a dance that Hijikata choreographed for her, *Yami no mihime jûni-tai: rûburukyû no tame no jûyonbon* (*Twelve Phases of a Dancing Girl of Darkness: Fortnight for the Louvre Palace*).⁷² Following the exhibition Tanaka toured in Europe and the U.S., including a solo at PS1/Clocktower Institute for Art and Urban Resources,⁷³ an organization he would maintain a relationship with for many years. A major shift in Tanaka's practice of dance came about in 1979 when he met the African American percussionist Milford Graves. When he first performed in Tokyo, Graves, who considered his music to be politically aligned with the Black Power movement, personally requested that Kobata Kazue be invited. Though Graves had not met her previously, Kobata had worked with the Black Panthers in New York and their supporters in Japan, and it is probable that someone involved in the Black Power movement in New York had recommended her to Graves as someone who would be supportive politically. Kobata invited Tanaka to attend the concert with her, and he was extremely excited by Grave's performance.⁷⁴ He initiated a collaboration with Graves, and in 1980 they performed together at Le Palace theatre in Paris,⁷⁵ at the Avignon and Nancy Festivals in France, and in 1981 at the Kaiitheater Festival in Brussels.⁷⁶ They would continue to perform together over the years.

Susan Blakely Klein saw Tanaka's work with Graves (who he has continued to perform with over the years) as an example of a general effort on the part of *butô* dancers to bring about "a nostalgic return to the primitive roots of dance..." in order to "overcome the pernicious effects of westernization." As evidence of this she writes (without mentioning Graves by name) that

⁷² Kurihara Nanako, "Hijikata Tatsumi Chronology," *The Drama Review* 44, no.1 (Spring 2000): 32.

⁷³ Harada, *Butoh taizen*, 330.

⁷⁴ Kobata, interview with Zack Fuller.

⁷⁵ Alain Paul Lequeux, "Tanaka Min: La Danse écorchée vive," *Pour la Danse: Choussons et Petits-Rats* 62 (Juillet-Aout-Septembre 1980).

⁷⁶ "Dance Log: Min Tanaka," 94.

Tanaka's solos are "often danced to the beat of live African influenced jazz drumming."⁷⁷ However, there was nothing nostalgic or primitive in Tanaka's collaborations with Graves, who was himself a major innovator in improvised music. In 1977 music historian Valerie Wilmer noted that: "Milford Graves...is one of the most important musicians playing the New Black Music. He is important as an innovator and also because he has been bringing his uncompromising music into the Black community since the middle 'sixties."⁷⁸ While it is accurate to say that Graves is influenced by African music and culture, his music is characterized by a free approach to rhythm not found in traditional African music. In the early 1960's he had developed the idea established by the drummer Sunny Murray of foregrounding the drums (rather than having them serve to back up and keep time for a horn soloist) and extended it to a degree where the drummer was entirely independent of the other instrumentalists. He was a major innovator in his approach to tonality, and in this he was influenced by his study of the Indian *tabla*. According to the alto saxophonist John Tchicai, before Graves came on the New York scene, no one had heard a percussionist who had "that same sense of rhythmic cohesion in polyrhythmics or the same sense of intensity or musicality" that was being explored by young horn players at the time (who were influenced by the innovations of Ornette Coleman).⁷⁹ Graves himself saw his music as political, intrinsically linked to the current political situation of the African American,⁸⁰ Tanaka was interested in the sonic and rhythmic possibilities of Graves's highly complex and innovative music. Neither saw their collaboration as a return to the primitive.

⁷⁷ Susan Blakely Klein, *Ankoku Butoh: The Premodern and Postmodern Influences on the Dance of Utter Darkness*, Cornell East Asia Series 49 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University East Asia Program, 1988), 14.

⁷⁸ Valerie Wilmer, *As Serious As Your Life: The Story of the New Jazz*, 2nd ed. (1977; repr., London: Serpents Tail, 1992), 19.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 164-168.

⁸⁰ Christopher Funkhouser, "Leroi Jones, Larry Neal, and *The Cricket*: Jazz and Poets Black Fire," *African American Review*, Vol. 37, Nos. 2-3 (2003), 239.

A year after meeting Graves, the British guitarist Derek Bailey performed in Tokyo and Tanaka was similarly impressed with him. He performed with Bailey at the Colon Dance Festival in 1981. That same year Tanaka participated in an event that Bailey produced called *Company Week* with twelve improvising musicians, at the Institute of Contemporary Art in London. *Company Week* was a semi-annual event initiated by Bailey and the group that he founded, The Improvisation Company.⁸¹ There, Bailey writes, Tanaka initiated what Bailey considered a failed experiment, where “people simply walked on and off the stage playing wherever, whenever and whatever they chose for as long as they liked.” After some hours, after the rest of the musicians had retired to the bar, Tanaka remained on the stage, exhausted and trembling.⁸²

After performing with both musicians separately, Tanaka proposed to Graves and Bailey (who, though aware of each other’s work, had never played together) to tour in Japan with him. The result was the *Project MMD 81-Improvisation* tour, which performed across Japan in 1981.⁸³ *MMD* stood for Min, Milford, and Derek.

The collaborations with Graves and Bailey were not entirely autonomous, in the way that the collaborations of Cunningham and Cage were, for example. In Cunningham’s work, the dance was choreographed very precisely, entirely independent of the music. The dancers never heard the music until the first performance, and any relations between the choreography and the musical score occurred entirely by chance. There is however, a degree of autonomy present in Tanaka’s collaborations with musician/composers in that the dance itself is not subordinate to the music, nor vice versa: they both have an equal presence in the space. In this sense they are

⁸¹ For a detailed history of *Company Week* see Ben Watson, “Company Weeks, 1997-1994,” in *Derek Bailey and the Story of Free Improvisation* (London: Verso, 2004), 205- 310.

⁸² Derek Bailey, *Improvisation: Its Nature and Practice in Music* (New York: De Capo Press, 1993), 135.

⁸³ Kobata, interview with Zack Fuller.

similar to the collaborations of dancer/choreographer Judith Dunn and the multi-instrumentalist jazz musician Bill Dixon, whose improvised performances in the 1960s and 1970s gave music and dance an equal presence (rather than the dance being an interpretation of the music or the music serving as accompaniment to the dance). Dixon and Dunn rehearsed together extensively in the studio, and discussed principles of improvisation in great detail in preparation for their performances.⁸⁴ Tanaka's approach is very different, he never rehearses or improvises with the musicians he works with outside of the performance. In his musical collaborations the dominant relationship is one of counterpoint, and that counterpoint takes place as a conscious choice in the real time situation of the improvisation itself (as shown, for example, in Tanaka's choice to slow down his movement when the music becomes very fast and loud). This is an approach that Tanaka has continued to use throughout his career, and he continues to work with a wide variety of different styles of music, never rehearsing or improvising with musicians before a performance. He does not attempt to dictate or even suggest a style of playing or particular qualities. His duos and trios are collaborations where a high degree of autonomy is present and the dance and music are given equal presence in the space.

A videotape of one of the MMD performances, at Niigata Community Center, on the island of *Honshu*, shows that Tanaka, Graves, and Bailey performed continuously for one hundred and fourteen minutes, almost two hours.⁸⁵ When the video begins, Tanaka is wearing olive green rain gear, and is visible onstage before starting to dance. It is likely that he has just been warming up, as he often prepares for a dance by running and jumping in place wearing this type of raingear. He shares the stage with Graves and Bailey; there is no attempt to hide the musicians or foreground Tanaka's presence visually in the space. Bailey is making sounds on his

⁸⁴ Goldman, *I Want to be Ready*, 57-75.

⁸⁵ *MMD Niigata Community Center* (Niigata Jichikaikan) 11/20/1981, videographer unknown, Dance Resources on Earth.

guitar; it is not clear at first if he is tuning his guitar, warming up, or if the music has begun.

There is no clear “beginning” to Tanaka’s dance either, he takes off the raingear and sits on a chair: naked, his body shaven, with light brown makeup covering his body.

Tanaka then leans back in the chair very slowly, leans his head back, and raises his arms. Only Bailey is playing at first; Graves sits listening, his head bobbing slightly. Tanaka, still balancing on the chair, arches his back, one arm sickled, one bent. He raises his legs, so that he is balancing on the chair with only a small area of his buttocks touching it. Turning his head to the right, he furls his fingers, making small movements that are difficult to see on the grainy video. Graves joins the playing as Tanaka slowly leans forward, coming off the chair into a squat, then straightens his legs so that he is standing, with the torso still bent over, balanced tenuously on the balls of his feet. At this point his movement is very slow (though not excruciatingly so as the movement often was in *Hyperdance*), with occasional moments of stillness accented by minute movements, visible as slight quivers of muscle. Arm gestures are mainly close to the body or mid range. Tanaka leans back to a standing backbend, knees bent, back arched, then straightens the spine as his arms extend fully to the sides, straight out from the shoulders. Graves stops the complex rhythm he is playing on his drum kit and begins striking a large gong, then adds high-hat cymbals. Bailey scrapes the strings on his guitar, making sounds that do not correspond to standard notes, in rhythms that do not correspond to any standard time signature. Tanaka, standing, begins moving faster, his arms float out and come to the sides, then he bends over again, stepping while wiggling his legs, changing the positions of one leg and foot, rotating from the inner thigh, then producing similar movements with his other leg. He continues walking, now very slowly, bent over, then straightens his spine, raising the body up, repeating the gesture of extending the arms. The arms and torso convey a feeling of floating. His legs are constantly, subtly changing and shifting positions, bending and extending. The body flows up and down,

with arms in a slightly different rhythm than the rest of the body. Tanaka bends forward from the pelvis with a straight spine; his knees bend and arms extend as he crouches into a squat. From the squat he then rolls onto his side, still slowly, but with a more erratic rhythm, still with a floating quality, very sensitive to the floor. Without travelling through the space he performs a delicate crawling movement. The delicacy contrasts with Graves's and Bailey's playing, which by now is quite wild and erratic. He then rises to a fully upright position, arms at his sides, with most of his weight on the right leg. Slowly rolling into a lying position, back flat on the floor, he shifts his weight to one side, then remains there, with only one side of his body in contact with the stage. He stays in this position, arms and legs floating for a while, then the roll continues, transitioning into a squat, then up to standing again, weight briefly on the heels. His speed increasing, he begins a spiraling motion with his arms, slicing the air. Suddenly ceasing this movement, he begins walking backwards, his torso straight, arms at his sides. He follows this with a series of loose, quick gestures with the arms, the torso sometimes turning from side to side, while his legs change the height of the body by bending in a range of different degrees. This is followed by quite quick circular stirring movements of the arms, and dynamic rhythmic changes in body, alternating with the straightening of the arms, legs and torso. Straight lines, curved lines, and turns, combine with the continuously shifting leg positions that change the height of the body. A series of quick steps follows, accompanied by bobbing motions of the head, the arms alternating between stirring the air and forming plastique shapes.

Throughout this dance periods of slower movement alternate with more frenetic ones, and even in these Tanaka always seems completely in control of every muscle in his body. His arms and legs are only occasionally in unison, most of the time they work in independent rhythms. His body exhibits a rhythmic complexity comparable to that of Graves's and Bailey's

music. After about one hour Tanaka stops suddenly. While Graves and Bailey continue playing he breaks for a couple of minutes, towels off, then comes back to continue the dance.

Tanaka's collaboration with Graves is particularly significant in that Graves' approach to rhythm mirrored the polyrhythmic infantile kinesthesia Tanaka had been developing himself in *Hyperdance*. When I suggested to Tanaka that his relation with music might be that of counterpoint, Tanaka referred to the term polyrhythm, which he learned from Graves: "Maybe my body has a polyrhythm."⁸⁶ He related this to his idea of the infant body that he explored in *Hyperdance*. In MMD, the polyrhythm of the body, present in the inner stream during *Hyperdance*, became much more prominent in the outer stream of Tanaka's movement. The musicians, normally relegated to the background, side of the stage, or offstage in a performance with live music, were given a spatial presence equal to that of the dancer. Tanaka employed the tactics of minimalist nudity and the infant body developed in *Hyperdance* in an autonomous collaboration that explored pure rhythmic possibility. The polyrhythmic infantile kinesthesia he had begun in *Hyperdance* became more complex, and much more prevalent in his outer stream as he chose to explore a much wider variety of speeds than he had used in his earlier dances.

Emotion (Kanjo): Emotion and Daily Life

Perhaps because Tanaka consistently foregrounds Hijikata as the major single influence on his dance, attempts to give an overview of his career tend to elide the performances in between *Hyperdance/Drive* and *Performance for the Foundation of the Love-Dance School* (Ren'ai butô ha teiso koen), making it seem as if he went from the "naked" dances, to *Ren'ai butô ha*, with the latter marking the major turning point in his dance. Harada Hiromi presents

⁸⁶ Tanaka, Interview with Zack Fuller, August 9, 2011.

him as moving “from *Hyperdance* to *butô*.”⁸⁷ The only published account in English to present a historical overview of his early period, a brief and overall fairly accurate piece by Eri Misaki in the now defunct periodical *New York Fax*,⁸⁸ also omits mention of anything between *Hyperdance* and *Ren'ai butô ha*. However, it is not a simple shift from the minimalism of the *Hyperdance* series to the much wider vocabulary of the dances that succeeded his collaboration with Hijikata. Two years prior to working with Hijikata he began calling his dance *Emotion (Kanjo)*. This is the series that Hijikata first saw Tanaka dance in, and it was strikingly different from *Hyperdance/Drive* and the *MMD* performances. During the first *MMD* tour Tanaka continued to dance naked. While the range of speeds, rhythms and movement qualities apparent in his “outer stream” was more varied than during the *Hyperdance* period, both *Hyperdance/Drive* and *MMD*, were exercises in pure movement: they avoided emotional, figurative, or narrative expression. *Emotion* by contrast was characterized by intense emotional expression, material based on physical actions, and elements of daily life.⁸⁹

The blending of dance and daily life is an aspect of Tanaka’s experimental practice that is present in his improvised dances, training methods, and choreography. The inclusion of elements of daily life into performance and the insertion of performance practice into daily life (including the disruption of daily life by performative actions) have been tactics employed by many avant-garde artists, including the Dada and Situationist groups and of course the artists associated with Tokyo Neo Dada that Hijikata had collaborated with. The inclusion of elements of daily life, and the use of specific tasks as elements in a performance were tactics previously employed by Anna Halprin, who often based dances on tasks, such as sweeping with a broom,

⁸⁷ Harada, “Tanaka Min,” 330.

⁸⁸ Misaki Eri, “Min Tanaka, ‘What is Dance?’” 6-9.

⁸⁹ In 1983, the year he met Hijikata, Tanaka began a new series called *Form of the Sky*, which also included elements from daily life, but did not have the raw emotional intensity of *Kanjo*.

carrying another person, or taking off clothes, and by Alan Kaprow. Kaprow's Happenings were intimately concerned with the intersections between art and daily life. In them he replaced the conventions of modern art with elements of daily life, often with physical actions such as brushing one's teeth or making a telephone call.⁹⁰ Kaprow, concerned with live art as a participatory experience, used elements of daily life in part as a defamiliarization effect. He wrote that the exaggeration and frustration of aspects of daily life "increase attentiveness, but only attentiveness to the peripheral parts of ourselves and our surroundings. Revealed this way they are strange."⁹¹ Halprin's task-based dances stemmed from an interest in the physical qualities that arise from functional movement (as opposed to movement choices based on perceived beauty or the capacity to evoke imagery or feelings).⁹²

Jean Viala writes that in the *Emotion* series (1982-1986), Tanaka began to integrate elements of daily life into his dance, quoting him as saying "That is why I now use costumes like sportswear or a raincoat, or props such as logs, a shovel, or a pail of water, as well as my voice—all of these things are part of the experience of daily life."⁹³ In his tribute to Hijikata, "I Am an Avant-garde Who Crawls On the Earth," published in *Yu* in 1983, Tanaka writes specifically about this dance:

I am an avant-garde who crawls the Earth. Since January of 1982 I have been giving a title to my dance: "Emotion." It is an experience to encounter the body, the most authentic body for me. I carry slowly a bucket filled with water. I scream to the water in the bucket. I carry a pickaxe on my shoulder, pound the floor with my feet repeatedly, and cry to the distance "Not yet? Not yet?"

I stare at my body as though looking might bore through it. I touch, lick, bite, pinch, beat, tear, and rub my body. I press a sickle onto my eyelids, grab my

⁹⁰ Jeff Kelley, "Introduction," in Allan Kaprow, *Essays on the Blurring Between Art and Life*, ed. Jeff Kelley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), xvii.

⁹¹ Allan Kaprow, "Performing Life (1979)," in Kaprow, *Essays*, 198.

⁹² Janice Ross, *Anna Halprin: Experience as Dance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 117.

⁹³ Viala, *Butoh*, 158.

penis, rub my belly, and make it swell. When I accumulate hundreds of simple acts of this sort, I feel sad not knowing why. I get divided. I observe.⁹⁴

Based on this description, Tanaka incorporated elements of daily life not only in the costume and props, but also in the accumulation of a number of physical actions. Though the structure of the dance was improvised (that is, Tanaka did not fix a specific order for the actions), there was an accumulation of specific material to improvise with. The violence of the actions described is striking, and indeed his daily life could be violent at times as well. He recounts that when he was young he would get in fist fights with other dancers. He fought physically several times with Maro Akaji, the leader of *Dairakuda-kan* (who he described as his “fighting friend”),⁹⁵ and once punched Tomoe Shizune, director of *Hakutobo* (whom he does not consider a friend), in the face.

A series of photos of a dance from the *Drive* performances and another from *Emotion* show the striking difference between the two dances. Figures 1 through 4 are from a *Drive* performance in 1980, a continuation of the *Hyperdance* activity. They show basic body positions that occurred repeatedly in the clips of the different dances in the film *Ancient Green Land* discussed above, including the curled in fetal position (fig. 2), and the walking backbend position with arms raised that Tanaka would return to in many of his later dances (fig. 3) While *Hyperdance/Drive* defamiliarized daily movements such as walking (fig. 1.) and crawling (fig. 4), *Emotion* brought elements of daily life onto the stage in the form of objects and physical actions. A series of photos from the 1983 performance of *Emotion* at La Mama E.T.C. show what Tanaka describes in the above quotations. The “log” he speaks of is here a huge piece of lumber. The bucket is filled with water. At one point he carries the bucket, spilling the water

⁹⁴ Tanaka Min, “I am an Avant-Garde Who Crawls the Earth: Homage to Tatsumi Hijikata,” trans. Kobata Kazue, in Ethan Hoffman, et. al, *Butoh: Dance of the Dark Soul* (New York: Aperture, 1987), 65.

⁹⁵ Tanaka Min, interview by Zack Fuller, August 8, 2011.

from it and splashing himself. At one point he sticks his head in the bucket. The intensity of the facial expressions in figures 7 and 8 are a striking contrast to the face in *Hyperdance*, which was empty, devoid of expression. The connection between himself and the space is expressed through the red cloth circling his right leg, the piece of lumber, and the exposed lumber supporting the balcony of the La Mama Annex, as seen in figure 6. The exposed supports also mirror the lumber that he holds, carries, sits on and wields in figures 5-7.

Emotion was a striking return to the emotional expression that post-modern dance rejected, presented in a raw, visceral mode with no narrative framework. It was as if all the feelings and impulses restrained in *Hyperdance* were allowed full range in *Emotion*. Tanaka's description of the accumulation of physical actions involved in *Emotion*, included in "I Am an Avant-garde Who Crawls On the Earth," suggests a very different process than that employed in *Hyperdance*, which was characterized by extreme restraint and sensitivity to physical sensations. The actions Tanaka performed in the *Emotion* series included not only mundane tasks (carrying a bucket, wielding a pickaxe), but violent actions (screaming biting, pinching, beating, and tearing), as well as non-functional movement. Rather than a defamiliarization of daily life such as occurred in Kaprow's Happenings, *Emotion* was a call for a greater intensity *within* daily life, for a more intense physical and emotional existence.

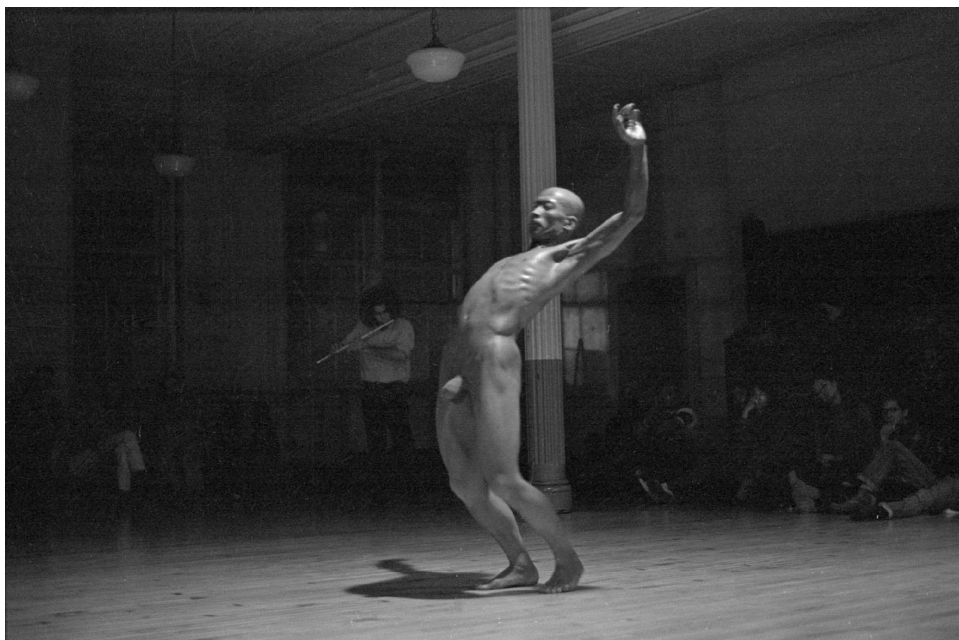


Fig. 1. *Drive*, Performance Space 122, New York City, 1980. Photograph by Charlie Steiner.



Fig. 2. *Drive*, Performance Space 122, New York City, 1980. Photograph by Charlie Steiner.



Fig. 3 *Drive*, Performance Space 122, New York City, 1980. Photograph by Charlie Steiner.



Fig. 4 *Drive*, Performance Space 122, New York City, 1980. Photograph by Charlie Steiner.



Fig. 5 *Emotion (Kanjo)*, La Mama E.T.C., New York City, 1983. Photograph by Charlie Steiner.



Fig. 6 *Emotion (Kanjo)*, La Mama E.T.C., New York City, 1983. Photograph by Charlie Steiner.



Fig. 7 *Emotion* (Kanjo), La Mama E.T.C., New York City, 1983. Photograph by Charlie Steiner.



Fig. 8 *Emotion* (Kanjo), La Mama E.T.C., New York City, 1983. Photo by Charlie Steiner.

Performance for the Foundation of the Love-Dance School (Ren'ai butô-ha teiso kôen)

When Tanaka was arrested for dancing naked in Ginza in 1977, it was widely reported in the news media. A journalist from the *Mainichi Shinbun*, a daily Tokyo newspaper, telephoned Hijikata Tatsumi and asked him for his response to the incident. Hijikata's response was "There is no dancer but him who is seriously trying to dance in this age." Tanaka was greatly pleased with this response.⁹⁶ Soon after this, "I Am An Avant Garde Who Crawls the Earth," in which Tanaka declared himself "the legitimate son" of Hijikata, was published. After reading the essay Hijikata came, unannounced, to see Tanaka's dance *Emotion*.⁹⁷ This was in 1983 at Plan B, "Tokyo's first artist-run non-profit experimental multi-genre art space," which Tanaka had co-founded with Kobata Kazue the previous year.⁹⁸ This encounter led to an event at Plan B directed by Hijikata that displayed projections of photographs and films of his dance in conjunction with music, under the title *Hijikata Tatsumi - Ankoku Butô*. In April of nineteen eighty-three Hijikata directed a series of dances at Plan B, *Hook Off 88: One Ton of Hairdo For the Scenery* (Hukku ofu 88: Keshiki e no itton no kamigata), which included a duet for Tanaka and Ashikawa Yoko titled *Bromide That Can Be Inhaled Incredibly Quickly* (Hijô ni Kyûsoku na Kyûkisei Bromaido).

After getting to know Hijikata through the productions at Plan B, Tanaka asked Hijikata if he would direct him in a solo dance. Hijikata agreed, and Tanaka performed the dance for three nights, September 11-13, 1984, at Yurakucho Dai-ichi Seimei Hall in Tokyo. By Tanaka's estimate, about two thousand people saw it each night. The music was by Noguchi Minoru, but Hijikata gave Noguchi recordings to include in the soundscape, including Artaud's 1948 radio

⁹⁶ "Misaki, "Min Tanaka," 7.

⁹⁷ "Dance Log: Min Tanaka," 93.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

broadcast "Pour en finir avec le jugement de Dieu" (To Have Done with the Judgment of God), a speech by Adolf Hitler, and the sound of military marching.⁹⁹

There is no film or video of this dance, only photographs. Some of these appear in the photo book *Butoh: Dance of the Dark Soul*.¹⁰⁰ Based on these, the set consisted of a raised stage covered in a black material (cloth or heavy paper), with a small, raised platform stage right, and a large round object lit from within, looking like some sort of large drum, such as a bass drum. A backdrop consists of an approximately 16'x6' off-white rectangle of cloth or *washi* paper, supported by very visible ropes. More ropes or chords can be seen behind it. Tanaka's shoulder length hair is matted, teased out and dyed an artificial reddish purple color. The top of his head is shaved so that the hair sticks out on either side like the ears of a floppy eared dog. A splotch of white makeup covers the top of his head and upper forehead and a line of white extends down his nose. His costume is a discolored, ragged, white cloth shawl and a skirt similar to a sarong of the same material. At some point in the dance it was removed, or Tanaka may have changed costumes, revealing a triangular black rubber covering tightly binding the crotch area, erasing his sex (see Figure 9). Above this, apparently attaching it to Tanaka's body, was a wide band made of black electrical tape or duct tape binding his waist. A thin cord appears to encircle his neck. A rear view reveals that the cord is not a circlet around the neck but that each end extends down the back, under the corset of black tape, through the straps of the rubber undergarment, and that at each end is tied a bud of garlic (one on each buttock). The cord visually echoes the visible ropes in the set. There is a rectangular section of paper with printed (roman) text, torn from a newspaper or book, glued to the upper left side chest, perhaps echoing the *washi* backdrop.

⁹⁹ Tanaka Min, interview with Zack Fuller, August 9, 2011.

¹⁰⁰ Holborn, *Butoh*, 67-75.



Fig. 9: *Performance for the Foundation of the Love-Dance School*, Yurakucho Dai-ichi Seimei Hall, Tokyo, 1984. Photograph by Mark Holborn, courtesy of Bonnie Sue Stein.

Kurihara Nanako writes that Hijikata “tied up the body with words.” In this case, he also tied up the body with rubber, tape, and cord. These provided physical sensations or stimulations to Tanaka, as well as limiting his range of movement (he could not bend forward, for example, with the chord around his neck). Tanaka had already been working with the practice of experiencing external physical sensations as a means of stimulating body awareness in the *Hyperdance/Drive* series, where receiving sensations from different physical environments was one aspect of dancing the space. In his outdoor workshops (discussed fully in Chapter Four) receiving sensations from other human beings as well as physical environments was a means of opening the body to new experiences and widening the possibilities for physical expression. In *Performance for the Foundation of the Love-Dance School*, the physical stimulation of the

costume added an additional element to a carefully rehearsed score constructed of an immense number of image/movement combinations.

Hijikata's choreographic process in this dance was to choreograph "through Yoko Ashikawa."¹⁰¹ Hijikata came up with a collection of images, separate images for the arms, torso, legs and head. According to Tanaka, there were one thousand images in total.¹⁰² Each morning Hijikata would work with Ashikawa, who would develop movements from the verbally given images under Hijikata's direction. Then Tanaka would come in and learn the movement/image combinations from Ashikawa, then develop them under Hijikata's direction. Then in the evening he would rehearse with Horikawa Hisako who would read the images to him while he repeated the choreography he had learned and developed.¹⁰³ Tanaka had to perform four separate movement/image combinations at once: one for each section of the body, as well as remember the specific order of the combinations.¹⁰⁴ Some examples of these images are: "a small person steps into your head through one ear, then leaves through the opposite ear;" "your hands open the pages of a book that is 3000 years old, gradually your hands become mummy hands;" "as you walk, you are stepping on birds' nests, when you step off each nest, the birds fly away freely behind you;" "there is a huge ocean in your stomach."¹⁰⁵ Some of them were seemingly impossible, "the wind blows the tip of your nose"¹⁰⁶ for example, and could only result in the most minimal, barely discernable movement, yet Hijikata would watch intently, judging whether

¹⁰¹ Tanaka, interview with Zack Fuller, 8/9/2011.

¹⁰² Tanaka, in Hoffman, *Butoh*, 66.

¹⁰³ Frank Van de Ven, personal communication, June 12, 2016.

¹⁰⁴ Tanaka, interview with Zack Fuller, 8/9/2011.

¹⁰⁵ Zack Fuller, body workshop notes, Body Weather Farm, 2000.

¹⁰⁶ Tanaka, interview with Zack Fuller, 8/9/2011.

Tanaka's movement was an authentic expression of the image. Then, just before the performance, Hijikata told Tanaka to "forget everything" and dance.¹⁰⁷

In *Performance for the Foundation of the Love-Dance School*, Tanaka and Hijikata combined Hijikata's bound body with a polyrhythmic body created from a surrealistic combination of visualized images. In it there was no established formal vocabulary that was a basis for the dance, if anything, the elimination of anything resembling modern dance technique in the naked dances had purged Tanaka's body of the habits developed in his formal dance training. The movements of the dance emerged through a highly collaborative process involving Hijikata, Tanaka, and Ashikawa. It is significant, not only for Tanaka's work, but for an understanding of Hijikata's choreographic process, that Hijikata provided Tanaka not only with imagery to be visualized, but also with physical stimulations through the costume. The importance of physical stimulation is key to understanding Tanaka's relation between dance and daily life, and the significance of farming for dance. The following year Tanaka, who was already spending time in nature as much as possible, in Hachioji, would found Body Weather Farm. As I will discuss in subsequent chapters, one of the primary values that Tanaka sees in farming as a daily practice for a dancer is that it provides the body with physical stimulations.

Prague Nights: Body Anarchism

Just prior to *Foundation of the Love-Dance School*, Tanaka performed in one of the riskiest situations in his career, under the title *Emotion*, in communist Prague, in what is now the Czech Republic and was then Czechoslovakia. The plan for the performance occurred through a chance meeting. Helena Honcoopová, a Czech citizen and Japanologist doing research in Tokyo,

¹⁰⁷ That Hijikata told him to "forget everything" before the performance is an anecdote that I heard from Tanaka informally on several occasions.

came to see a solo performance by Tanaka at Plan B. She spoke fluent Japanese, and Kobata Kazue, who had written her undergraduate thesis on the political crisis following Prague Spring, engaged her in conversation about the current political situation in Prague. Tanaka joined their conversation, and expressed a strong interest in going there. According to Kobata, the woman responded, “If you have the courage, maybe I could help.” Honcoopová contacted Ondřej Hrab, (now artistic director of the Archa theatre), and they organized a clandestine performance.¹⁰⁸ *Emotion* was presented at the Junior Club Na Chmelnici in the spring of 1984.¹⁰⁹ Tanaka entered Prague on a tourist visa, and before boarding the train in Vienna, Austria he removed from his luggage all press material, photographs, and letters: anything that would identify him as a dancer.¹¹⁰ The day of the performance, a select group of people were notified by a telephone call, and simply told that if they arrived at the club at a certain time they would see something interesting. They were told not to say anything about it to anyone. Most of the audience did not know they would be seeing a dance, those who did had no idea what sort of dance it would be.¹¹¹ Tanaka experienced so much fear before the performance that he remembers wanting to run away. Once he came onto the stage he exploded, and began screaming.¹¹² At that time there were actors, theatre directors, and rock musicians in prison, and Tanaka’s understanding was that anyone who freely expressed themselves might be imprisoned. Because he was dancing naked, he believed that if the secret police were to find out about the performance, he would be incarcerated.¹¹³ Tanaka returned to Prague over the years with his group *Maijuku*, and by the time the “velvet revolution” in 1989 ended communist rule and the censorship brought with it, he was something of a cultural hero.

¹⁰⁸ Kobata, interview with Zack Fuller.

¹⁰⁹ Ondřej Hrab, “The Prague Nights of Min Tanaka,” in *Sea Inside the Skin*, n.p.

¹¹⁰ Tanaka in Hrab, *Sea Inside the Skin*, n.p.

¹¹¹ Hrab, “Prague Nights,” n.p.

¹¹² Tanaka in Hrab, *Sea Inside the Skin*, n.p.

¹¹³ Tanaka, interview with Zack Fuller, 8/12.

Other avant-garde performing artists had also performed at the Na Chmelnici club, including Peter Schuman of Bread and Puppet Theatre, and The Living Theatre.¹¹⁴ Unlike these theatre artists, Tanaka's work had no actual political content; he was simply expressing himself in as free a way as he could. The freedom of the body and emotional intensity of his dance was seen by the underground artist/revolutionaries in Prague as political in itself. Ondřej Hrab writes:

Summarizing Min Tanaka's visits to Czechoslovakia paradoxically leads to a contemplation of the political concept of art. Political art is often considered to be a political message reshaped into some "artistic" form. In fact, it is nothing but the exploitation of art's emotional energy for the sake of a particular political cause. Min Tanaka's appearances in Czechoslovakia however became a political act, in spite of the fact that he merely danced, and never tried to sell his political views.¹¹⁵

The idea that dance can be political without advocating a particular political stance is one that Roger Copeland has explored in his analysis of the work of Merce Cunningham and John Cage. Copeland argues that Cage and Cunningham's work, while having no political "content" involves a "perceptual reeducation" that ultimately serves a political end, and is "more 'radical'- both aesthetically and *politically*- than most of today's manipulative, 'content-based' art that proselytizes on behalf of specific causes."¹¹⁶ *Emotion*, performed in this context, was political in a different way. Tanaka's dance modeled a freedom of physical and emotional expression that was opposed to the current political administration, or to any social system that seeks to limit or control the creative use of the body.

In one of my interviews with Tanaka I asked him if he felt that dance was political. He responded at first that it was not, but then added that the body desires freedom and that if the politically minded would think specifically about the body, then politics would change. He stated that we must be aware of "the hierarchy of the body," and think of how to break that hierarchy.

¹¹⁴ Bonnie Stein, interview with Zack Fuller, August 9, 2012, Moonrise Café, New York City.

¹¹⁵ Hrab, "Prague Nights," n.p.

¹¹⁶ Roger Copeland, *Merce Cunningham: The Modernizing of Modern Dance*, (New York: Routledge, 2004), 254.

The body makes a big hierarchy. For example, people used somebody for fighting or killing like a performance. It was a long time ago, but still people are doing similar things. ... They have to think how to break out the hierarchy of the body... for small people, big people, white people, black people, (people who use) strange language, all about the body.

When I pressed him on the topic, pointing out that he had used black flags on stage in *Romance* (1999), and that he had told me the black kimono he wore in his solo in Prague at St. Nicholas church was like a black flag for him, he responded “I am a body anarchist. Not a political anarchist, that’s a bit stupid.”¹¹⁷ This “body anarchism,” the freedom of the body witnessed by the Czech audiences during the clandestine dance at Na Chmelnici took on political significance because of the particular situation at the time, when any expression of freedom was a political act.

The significance of Tanaka Min’s dance for the arts community in Prague was demonstrated when, in 1990, Tanaka was invited to perform in the historic St. Nicholas Church in Old Town Square. According to Tanaka, the church had been closed under communism, and he was asked to re-open it with his dance. The church was filled to capacity for the performance. The untitled performance in St Nicholas Church on December 17, 1990 was very different from Tanaka’s first appearance in Prague. For most of video of this dance it is impossible to see the details of the interior of the two hundred and fifty-five year old church, as the lighting is of the starkly contrasting type that Tanaka favors. The music is the sonorous, ambient, electronic music of Noguchi Minoru, who performed live with Tanaka but does not appear to have been visible during the performance (he appears at the end to take a bow and receive the applause of the audience). Tanaka wears a black kimono, white face makeup, and his hair is long. There is a restrained, almost reverent quality to the beginning of the dance. Beginning in stillness, he slowly takes a couple of steps, slowly beginning a series of graceful flowing arm gestures and

¹¹⁷ Tanaka, interview with Zack Fuller, August 12, 2011.

subtle bendings of the spine. The arms are almost never symmetrical as they often were in *Hyperdance*. The careful, precise steps have an almost classical feel to them, and for a Western observer the combination of these graceful gestures and the kimono gives this dance a more “Japanese” feeling than the others I have described in this chapter. The arm movements are gestural but never mimetic. They have a greater degree of expressivity than in the earlier dances, perhaps from the influence of Hijikata’s image work. He rarely repeats the same gesture twice. The tonal atmospheric pulsing of Noguchi’s music reverberates through the church. After thirteen minutes Tanaka begins using more sudden movements, repeating some of the earlier gestures and body positions with greater speed. He walks in a backbend, arms reaching out and mobile, a position that he used in *Hyperdance* that appears again and again in his dances over the years. He plays consciously with the lighting, using the powerfully contrasting light and shadow as a partner. At one point his face and upper body are entirely in shadow, the arms lit, raising up, fingers grasping. For a couple of minutes the camera zooms in closer, revealing that Tanaka is dancing with his eyes, which are wide open. At first he seems to be looking infinitely far away. Sometimes the head moves and the eyes do not, sometimes the eyes move and the head follows. At one point he walks into the audience. Later in the dance he performs a series of sharp poses alternated by frenetic gestures. The polyrhythm in his body is very visible, and poses are held for different lengths of time, adding to the rhythmic complexity of the performance. A slow moment follows where he bends forward, hands to his face, hair covering the face and hands, giving the appearance of grief. Throughout the dance he is alternately tender, terrifying, light, twitching, spasmodic, grotesque, loose, wiggling, and floppy. Only twice does he ever go to the ground, falling forward and catching himself with his hands.

In the final section of the dance he steps into the area where the altar is, then moves with sweeping full-body motions. He returns to the standing backbend position, stepping in place,

arms extended, directly facing the altar, his back to the audience for about four minutes. Then he moves gradually down to a squat, then sits, bowing toward the altar. He remains there, bowing, as the lights fade out.¹¹⁸

In this dance Tanaka exhibits an extremely wide range of movement qualities, contained within an asymmetric aesthetic shaped by the physical characteristics of the space. It is a very good example of the way that Tanaka uses light as an active partner shaping both the space and the dance. While the structure of the dance is entirely improvised, there is clearly a wide range of material Tanaka has accumulated that is reconfigured in the particular time/space of the performance.

Conclusion

Tanaka's improvised dance is a highly collaborative experimental practice involving the development of an extreme kinesthetic awareness through the application of diverse tactics involving physical and social space. It is a practice of accumulation, entailing an accrual of physical experiences and bodily sensations.

Tanaka's dances in the late seventies to mid-eighties focused on specific elements that became the basis of an ever-expanding practice. The exploration of physical environments and the accumulation of sensations derived from them begun in *Subject/Butai/Hyperdance/Drive*; the visualization of complex imagery employed in *Performance for the Foundation of the Love Dance School*; the accumulation of physical actions and material from daily life in *Emotion*, the polyrhythmic infantile kinesthesia begun in the collaborations with Noguchi and further developed with Graves and Bailey, are tactics that he has continued to employ throughout his life in dance. By the time I encountered Tanaka in 1997, the solo dances he performed under the same title did not have the specificity of *Hyperdance*, or *Emotion*. His physical vocabulary and

¹¹⁸ St. Nicholas Church Prague, VHS, videographer unknown, Dance Resources on Earth.

movement qualities could differ radically from dance to dance, from space to space. While continuously expanding his physical vocabulary, in recent years he has developed the practice of dancing “from the bones,” using as little muscle as possible. That being said, the titles of some of his recent dances refer back to his earlier work, and explore some of the same themes. The series title *Locus Focus/Ba Odori* (Space Dance) (2006-present), reflects the continued importance of space as subject; the series titled *Romance* (1999) referenced the “love *butô*” of *Foundation of the Love-Dance School*; *Subject: Heuristic Ecdysis* (1998), and *Romance: Love in Fluxus* express the desire for continual change and renewal, and his use of the title *Infant Body Out of Joint* (2002) refers back to the idea of the infant body explored in *Subject/Butai/Hyperdance/Drive*.

A major challenge for any improvising dancer is to avoid falling into the same movement patterns over and over again. Over the years Tanaka has addressed this challenge by developing an extensive vocabulary of movement qualities, continually exposing his body to new images, new spaces, and new styles of music. By continuously exposing his body to new experiences, new working methods, and new sensations, he resists falling into habitual forms. His one continuously changing endless dance continues as of this writing, informed by the different spaces he has danced with, his previous dances, all the physical labor he has engaged in, and all the people he has collaborated with.

Chapter Three

Seeds of an Anti-hierarchic Ideal: Summer Training at Body Weather Farm

Tanaka Min sees solo dance, training, group dance, and daily life as deeply integrated aspects of an embodied ideology that he terms Body Weather (*Shintai kisho*). In this chapter I attempt to articulate the basic principles of a training methodology informed by this ideology and exemplified by the training exercises used by Tanaka in his workshops at Body Weather Farm from 1997 to 2000 (a detailed description of many of these exercises can be found in Appendix A of this dissertation). I present a short history of Tanaka's workshops and Body Weather Laboratories, the group that initially developed many of the exercises and methodological approaches employed in the later workshops. I position Body Weather as an ideology, outline the essential principles of Tanaka's methodology, and demonstrate how those principles appeared in workshop activities. I argue that the ultimate goal of this training was an ideal non-hierarchic body, to be pursued through exposure to a wide variety of physical stimulations and through an egalitarian mimesis that inverts traditional pedagogical models. This anti-hierarchic ideal was present in both the social body of the workshop as a whole, and in the individual bodies of its members. While the workshops were open to non-dancers, I am choosing to focus specifically on the workshop exercises and the anti-hierarchic ideal in relation to the development of the individual dancer.

During the period that I was participating in the workshops, I was also rehearsing and performing with Tanaka. The group dances Tanaka was directing at that time did not resemble the workshops, and the process used in developing the group dances was entirely different from that used in the workshops. The workshop exercises may have informed the movement of or stimulated individual dancers, but they were not presented as a basis for dance. It could be said

that the 2000 workshop was an exception to this. The summer workshop that year included an unprecedented amount of work on developing complex physical characters, an aspect of the dance activities that *Tokason* was undertaking at the time.

Tanaka consistently refused to explain the application of the workshop exercises to dance. He insisted that struggling with, discussing, and being confused by the exercises were valuable and vital elements of the training. Questions about how an exercise related to dance invariably met with a refusal to answer the question, often accompanied by a remark that the question was stupid and the individual asking it should think about it himself. Having now thought about this for myself, the following are my own conclusions, based on my activities as a participant observer in Tanaka's workshops, dance rehearsals, performances, and daily life, informed by Tanaka's words during the workshops and in my later conversations with him. It is not my intent to present a definitive method (which would go against the ideology that guides the practices described here), but to clarify aspects of a methodology that was always in flux.

Body Weather and Hijikata

There is a degree of confusion among scholars surrounding the training exercises developed by Tanaka and Body Weather Laboratories, and their relation to *butô* and Hijikata Tatsumi. Certainly many of the workshop participants came to Body Weather Farm because of a desire to learn *butô*, despite Tanaka's repeated insistence that he was not teaching *butô*.¹ The confusion arises in part from Tanaka's conflation with other *butô* dancers in the public eye, as I have discussed in previous chapters. Another factor is that individuals outside of Japan who have taken classes and workshops with different Japanese teachers developed their own *butô* classes

¹ When Tanaka stopped leading workshops in 2010, it was in part because people would often take his workshop, then claim to have studied *butô* with him, performing as *butô* dancers and teaching *butô* workshops using the exercises they had learned with him. Tanaka, interview with Zack Fuller, August 9, 2011.

and workshops where they mix exercises developed by Tanaka and training methods developed by Hijikata, Ohno Kazuo, or other *butô* dancers. Maureen Fleming's "Based in Butoh" classes in the U.S. during the mid 1990's included exercises developed by Tanaka as well as ones that she learned from Ohno Kazuo.² Diego Pinon's biography lists Tanaka as one of several "butoh masters" that he studied with and his "Butoh Ritual Mexicano" workshops incorporate training exercises from Tanaka's workshops.³ Anita Sai includes Tanaka's MB training, at her Nordic Butoh School in Denmark.⁴ It is therefore understandable, though inaccurate, that Judith Hamera writes "The Body Weather Movement Laboratory emerged from the modern Japanese dance form butoh..."⁵ or that Peter Snow once referred to Body Weather as a "form of Japanese Butô."⁶ Tanaka's experimentation with training methods, like his dance practice, began independent of any direct association with the *butô* movement. *Shintai Kisho Kenkyujo* (Body Weather Laboratories) emerged out of a series of workshops led by Tanaka in the Hachioji and Kokubunji areas of Tokyo in 1978. He had not met Tatsumi Hijikata when he started Body Weather Laboratories. The only direct relation between the *butô-fu* and Body Weather training was the later incorporation into Tanaka's workshops of the image work that Hijikata used to direct Tanaka in *Foundation of the Love-Dance School*.

It could be said that Tanaka's training methodology is fundamentally opposed to what is often taught as *butô*. Body Weather training is characterized by omni-centrality, a principle that relates directly to the anti-hierarchic values that pervade the work. Tanya Calamoneri, who has trained extensively in *butô*, taking classes and workshops with many different Japanese teachers

² I took Fleming's class at Great Jones Studio in New York City in 1995.

³ Diego Pinon Biography, Mandragos Art Space, <http://www.mandragoras.org/archive-posts/diego-pinon/>.

⁴ Stuart Lynch (Body Weather practitioner), interview with Zack Fuller, July 14, 2007, Copenhagen.

⁵ Judith Hamera, "The Romance of Monsters: Theorizing the Virtuoso Body," *Theatre Topics* 10, no. 2 (September 2000), 151.

⁶ Peter Snow, "Situation Vacant: Lines of Flight and the Schizo-potential For Revolution," *About Performance* 1 (1993), 80.

writes that many of these ask their students to find their “center.” In her view, this center refers both to the *hara* (an energetic center located below the navel), and a state of harmony between the internal and the external.⁷ As I will demonstrate below, Tanaka’s training is focused on developing an omni-centered body. *Butô* classes also emphasize visual imagery: Calamoneri also notes that most of her teachers distributed photographs of artwork for students to develop movements from.⁸ *Butô* teachers will often guide students verbally through a series of mental images.⁹ In Tanaka’s workshops, the emphasis was on receiving physical sensations from the physical environment and other human beings rather than on visual imagery. Tanaka’s workshops differed from most *butô* workshops in that the focus was on an omniscient body rather than one with an energetic center, and on physical stimulation rather than stimulation through visual imagery.

At the same time, Tanaka considers Body Weather, as a philosophy and way of life, very much in line with what Hijikata was doing personally, with what Tanaka calls Hijikata’s “existence”¹⁰ rather than what he taught his dancers. According to him, Hijikata felt this as well.

He relates:

One day he (Hijikata) asked me “Min, I am also Body Weather, is that right?” I said, “Of course, that’s right. You are a member of Body Weather.” Which means he knew, everything is moving, never coming back to the same point. Like our planet is turning right? But never coming back to the same point... That is Body Weather. Nothing can be fixed. It’s moving. Moving is the beginning and ending. Everything is moving, everything is moving. We cannot stop anything. This is Body Weather.¹¹

⁷ Tanya Calamoneri, *Becoming Nothing to Become Something: Methods of Performer Training in Hijikata Tatsumi’s Butô Dance* (PhD dissertation, Temple University, 2012), 5.

⁸ Tanya Calamoneri, e-mail message to author, August 11, 2013.

⁹ As was the case in Maureen Fleming’s classes and a workshop with the group Hakutobo that I took in 1989.

¹⁰ Zack Fuller, rehearsal notes, *Morino no Monogatari* (Forest Story), Tokyo, August 2005.

¹¹ Tanaka Min, interview with Zack Fuller, August 9, 2011, Dance Resources on Earth, Honmura, Yamanishi-ken, Japan.

Tanaka aligns himself with Hijikata through this emphasis on the continual motion and transformation that he saw in Hijikata's *butô*, which itself encompassed both dance and daily life. If, as he believes, the significance of Hijikata's work goes far beyond the formal innovations that he initiated, if rather than attempting to establish a genre as Nakajima suggests,¹² he was constantly researching the possibilities of dance itself, if one were to see *butô* as "Mr. Hijikata" himself" rather than the forms he created, then Hijikata's *butô* is not un-related to Body Weather. Both were or are engaged in a never-ending struggle for an ever-transforming, omni-central, and anti-hierarchic body.

Early Development: Body Weather Workshop/ Body Weather Laboratories

It was Matsuoka Seigo, the art critic who had helped produce the *Hyperdance* series, who initially came up with the term Body Weather.¹³ Horikawa Hisako, a founding member of Body Weather Laboratories, recalls that in 1978 Tanaka was performing with Noguchi Minoru, and after their performances they would engage in discussions with the audience. During one of these he distributed a flyer for the first "Body Weather Workshop." This workshop lasted three weeks, meeting four times a week, in the evening, and was focused on what would come to be called 'manipulations': a series of partnered exercises combining yoga, shiatsu, and physical therapy, with a focus on stretching and breath work. Though these would later become the only element of Tanaka's training to be systemized and numbered (after the formation of the first Body Weather Laboratory), at this point they were not set in a specific order. The members of the workshop included dancers from Maro Akaji's group *Dairakudakan*, several musicians, Kobata Kazue, and Horikawa, who was at that time an experimental vocalist interested in developing

¹² Natsu Nakajima, "Ankoku Butoh," lecture delivered at Fu Jen University decade conference, Taipei: "Feminine Spirituality in Theatre, Opera, and Dance," (October 1997).

¹³ Tanaka Min, interview with Zack Fuller, August 9 2001.

greater body awareness. Horikawa would come to work closely with Tanaka, leading Body Weather Workshops herself under his auspices. There were approximately fifteen to twenty students in all. After the workshop had ended, some of the participants wished to continue working together. Horikawa found a space in Kokubunji, the area she was living at the time, and invited Tanaka to come and lead workshops there. After leading the workshop for a while, he became interested in having a more collaborative, independent relationship with the group. He proposed that they should form a Body Weather Laboratory.¹⁴

The early Body Weather Laboratories developed both specific practices and *modi operandi* that Tanaka continued to experiment with over the years in his workshops in Japan and abroad. While the group developed ideas collectively, Tanaka served as a catalyst for the group. He drew people together with experience in body disciplines such as Oki yoga, acupuncture, and sports medicine.¹⁵ The group included primary school teachers, calligraphers, intellectuals, and a Buddhist monk.¹⁶ Matsuoka and Kobata Kazue were founding members. Most of those involved were not dancers or performers.¹⁷ They met every Saturday and Sunday in an old textile factory in Hachioji, where Tanaka was living at the time. Hachioji had historically been a center of silk manufacturing, but as trade with China increased in the post WWII period it became cheaper to import silk from China. As a result, the district contained a large number of unused spaces that had formerly been used to make silk. The group rented a building, put in a new floor, and painted the space. Tanaka proposed that they divide into four sub-groups, each with a different focus. One group researched the body, another sound, one focused on visual arts, and the fourth on

¹⁴ Horikawa Hisako, interview with Zack Fuller, September 27 2011, Brooklyn NY.

¹⁵ Frank Van de Ven, interview with Zack Fuller, July 19, 2007, Itxassou Pays Basque.

¹⁶ Horikawa, interview with Zack Fuller. See also Min Tanaka and Bonnie Sue Stein, "Min Tanaka: Farmer/Dancer or Dancer/Farmer: An Interview," *The Drama Review* 30, no. 2 (Summer, 1986): 148.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

language. Each group would develop their own workshop, and then share their research with the others.¹⁸

The term “workshop” is often used today in the United States to signify a short class given for a finite amount of time: anywhere from two or three hours to a few weeks. Tanaka, however, initially chose the word specifically to distinguish what he was doing from a conventional dance class. According to him, he was the first performing artist in Japan to use the word “workshop” in Japan in this sense of a collaborative investigation, or what *The New Oxford American Dictionary* defines as “a meeting at which a group of people engage in intensive discussion and activity on a particular subject or project.”¹⁹ He initially encountered the term in a magazine article on the U.S. dancer/choreographer/therapist Anna Halprin, whose activities were a major influence on the early Body Weather Laboratories. He relates that after reading about Halprin’s work “I felt I could not be a teacher, but I could be a workshop leader.”²⁰ Later, Tanaka would meet and dance with Halprin. He visited and performed at her center in Tamalpa, California, then arranged for her to come to Japan to lecture and lead a workshop.²¹ In an unpublished interview with Bonnie Stein he mentions dancing a naked duet with Halprin in 1983.²² Though they did not collaborate extensively her name appears first in a list of influences on the front page of “Drive On,” the bi-lingual (French and English) newsletter of Body Weather Laboratories Japan that was published in 1980.²³ At first glance the role of major influence on Tanaka’s training seems an odd one for Halprin. Much of her own work is focused on the creation of personal rituals and on psychological and physical healing, neither of which are of

¹⁸ *The New Oxford American Dictionary*, s.v. “Workshop.”

¹⁹ Tanaka Min, interview with Zack Fuller, August 9, 2011.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Tanaka Min, interview with Bonnie Stein, transcribed by Maria Sullivan, November 4, 1987, home of Ethan Hoffman, New York City (Private collection of Bonnie Stein).

²² Body Weather Laboratory, “Drive On: endless paper/papier sans fin,” (May 1980), 57.

interest to Tanaka.²⁴ Certainly however, Halprin's solo dances in outdoor spaces, which Janice Ross describes as "dances that used the body less as a vehicle of representation and discursive reason and more as a presence in the environment"²⁵ would have influenced him or at least resonated with him. As far as training methods were concerned, the major influence he received from Halprin seems to have been the idea of a workshop itself.²⁶ He was interested in alternatives to traditional dance pedagogy, and saw in Halprin's work the possibility of a non-hierarchical approach to training and researching the body.

Body Weather Abroad

Initially, Body Weather Laboratories in Japan encouraged the development of similar laboratories elsewhere. In an interview published in 1986 Tanaka stated there were sixteen Body Weather Laboratory "stations" worldwide.²⁷ In "Drive On," the following anonymous statement is found: "We welcome any individuals or groups that are interested in transforming themselves into a Body Weather Laboratory. We are waiting for your contacts, because such joint activities are indispensable for intensifying the idea of Global Body Weather Sphere."²⁸ In the early nineteen-eighties there were laboratories in Holland, Switzerland, and France. Performing artist and workshop leader Frank Van de Ven participated in one of these laboratories in the south of France in 1982, before going to Japan to join *Maijuku* and live at Body Weather Farm for ten years. He described some of their activities to me in a formal interview. In one of these laboratories, the group of roughly twelve to fifteen people stayed in a cottage in the mountains for two weeks conducting daily workshops. These workshops were led by two individuals from

²⁴ See Janice Ross, "Anna Halprin's Urban Rituals," *The Drama Review* 48, no.2 (Summer 2004): 49-67.

²⁵ Janice Ross, *Anna Halprin: Experience as Dance* (Berkeley: University of California Press 2007), 73.

²⁶ Tanaka, interview with Zack Fuller, August 9, 2011.

²⁷ Min Tanaka and Bonnie Sue Stein, "Min Tanaka: Farmer/Dancer or Dancer/Farmer: An Interview," *The Drama Review* 30, no. 2 (Summer, 1986): 148.

²⁸ Body Weather Laboratory, "Drive On," 59.

Paris who had spent about two months working intensely with Tanaka in Japan. While these individuals led the workshop, they were very open to input from the group, which developed its own experiments. Van de Ven describes one of these as follows:

One person would not talk for twenty-four hours, one person was blindfolded for twenty-four hours, one person didn't use the arms for twenty-four hours, one person didn't eat for twenty-four hours, one person didn't drink for twenty-four hours, two people were connected as Siamese twins for twenty-four hours, and then on top of that we did our daily program... Body Weather workshops. So in the cottage there was a stretcher for the guy who didn't use the legs and was carried by the blind (guy). The person who could not use the arms had to be brought to the toilet, had to be fed by the one who didn't drink. It was all really really intense. And then at night after a full day program and then eating, at night there would be discussions about the work going on.

The type of Body Weather laboratory Van de Ven describes no longer exists.²⁹ There are however, numerous Body Weather workshops in Europe and Australia, and Body Weather is now recognized as a training method for movement based performers, a designation that Tanaka himself opposes. After *Maijuku* disbanded in 1997, several of its former members began leading their own Body Weather workshops in parts of Europe and Australia. These were included Andres Corchero (Barcelona, Spain), Christine Quoiraud (France), Katherina Bakatsaki (Amsterdam, Netherlands), and Oguri (Los Angeles, U.S.A), Stuart Lynch in Copenhagen³⁰, and Tess Dequincy in Australia. The only individual to regularly lead workshops in the U.S. is former *Maijuku* member Oguri, who is based in Los Angeles. Tanaka himself has disassociated himself from those leading Body Weather workshops, stating that they want to fix Body Weather as a form or method.³¹ While a comprehensive analysis of Body Weather outside of Japan is beyond the scope of this chapter, it does appear that in Australia and Europe Body Weather

²⁹ Former *Maijuku* member Oguri calls his group Body Weather Laboratories Los Angeles, but it does not function as a space of collaborative research into the body in the sense that the early Body Weather Laboratories did.

³⁰ Lynch was not a member of *Maijuku*, but lived at Body Weather Farm for one year.

³¹ Pétra Vermeersch, "About Butoh: In Research For its Origin and Actual Meaning; An Interview With Min Tanaka," *Contact Quarterly* 27 No. 1 (Winter/Spring 2002), 31.

training has developed in ways different than in Japan, particularly in the relation between training, performance, and daily life. A brief look at these differences can serve to highlight the aspects of Tanaka's methodology that I am examining here.

Peter Snow, in his doctoral dissertation on Body Weather in Australia analyzes the practice of an international community of Body Weather Practitioners for whom Body Weather is a well-defined training and performance practice. Snow participated in one of Tanaka's workshops in 1990. Himself a performer who collaborates frequently with former *Maijuku* member Frank Van de Ven, Snow describes Body Weather as a way of life encompassing daily life, training, and performance, noting that it is "not only multiple, receptive and changing, but also relatively permeable and unbounded, and thus open to the multiple influences of weather." He acknowledges, however that there is "less direct intersection of daily life with the training in Australia," as compared to Japan.³²

Snow is acquainted with the work of other Body Weather practitioners, but his thesis focuses primarily on the work of Tess Dequincy, who has been a major force in establishing Body Weather as a training and performance practice in Australia. During the years that I was participating in Tanaka's workshops in Hakushu, Dequincy was organizing a large-scale Body Weather laboratory in Australia. Combining training, performing, and theoretical analysis, her *Triple Alice* project consisted of a series of "forums and laboratories" in 1999, 2000, and 2001 involving performance scholars, indigenous artists, (non indigenous) performing artists, scientists, visual artists, writers, and web designers. "The purpose of the laboratories is to draw on a fertile bed of cross-cultural, interdisciplinary practice from both indigenous and non-indigenous traditions in relation to the Central heartland of Australia" and "to hothouse a wide

³² Peter Snow, "Imaging the In-Between: Training Becomes Performance in Body Weather Practice in Australia" (PhD dissertation, University of Sydney, 2003), 75.

range of conceptual, cultural and critical issues. Out of these interdisciplinary, collaborative laboratories new works emerge, combining dance and movement, installation, text, photography, A/V and electronic media.”³³ While Tanaka’s workshops were distinct from the group works he directed, which were clearly dance, not multi-media pieces, Dequincy was conducting a project similar in nature to the early Body Weather Laboratories in Japan, on a larger scale, with the inclusion of indigenous performers and electronic media.

There are parallels in the methodological approaches of Dequincy and Tanaka. Like Tanaka, her work and that of other Body Weather practitioners is concerned with the intersections of everyday life, training, and performance. Both she and Snow foreground the importance of omni-centrality and change. Based on Snow’s description, Dequincy’s workshops were extremely rigorous and challenged participants to break personal habits and push themselves to the limits of their physical endurance and mental concentration. At the same time, a comparison between Dequincy’s Body Weather as analyzed in Snow’s dissertation and Tanaka’s workshops that I participated in suggests that Dequincy’s Body Weather differs from Tanaka’s in several ways. Generally, (non Japanese) Body Weather practitioners do not consider themselves dancers, and nowhere in Snow’s thesis does he refer to Body Weather as a practice of dance. Also, Tanaka’s workshops included daily physical labor in the form of farming work while Dequincy’s included little or none.³⁴ Furthermore, there is a specific order to Dequincy’s workshop which is seen as both necessary and inflexible. This consists of MB (a series of floor exercises, executed to the rhythm of recorded music, with participants in rows travelling across the floor),³⁵ manipulations, and what I would call workshop exercises or studies and Snow calls

³³ Tess Dequincy, “Triple Alice 3: 17 sept -7 oct 2001,” <http://dequinceyco.net/TA/tamain3.htm> (accessed March 20, 2013).

³⁴ None of the non-Japanese former members of Majuku or Body Weather Farm have continued to do farming work with any regularity.

³⁵ The initials MB are multivalent. In my interactions with him Tanaka has described them as standing for ‘muscle

improvisations.³⁶ There is also an emphasis on objectivity, a “shared agreement on a quantifiable objective parameter of an exercise,” that was not present in Tanaka’s workshops, at least not those that I participated in.³⁷ Lastly, there is a much more direct relation between training and performance. Dequincy (and Snow) see Body Weather as a performance practice. The execution of an exercise within a workshop is seen as a performance,³⁸ and exercises from the workshops are performed for outside audiences.³⁹

This direct relation between training and performance can be seen in Snow and Van de Ven’s “Body Weather based” performances, which developed out of their initial encounter in Dequincy’s *Triple Alice*. In their *Thought/Action* improvisations, Snow speaks, and Van de Ven moves. They respond both to each other and to the physical environment. According to Snow *Thought/Action* “consists in articulating the intensities of experience in movement and words.”⁴⁰ Their performances acknowledge the process of creating the work in a way that French critic Bertram Dhellemmes sees as in line with the principle of constructivism “where the process of elaboration, the material made and the connections between the different elements are at the base of a work.”⁴¹ Snow and Van de Ven’s practice of Body Weather performance involves the combination of movement and spoken language in a structure similar to some of the workshop exercises developed by Tanaka and Body Weather Laboratories in Japan, and disseminated by Dequincy and others. This is a very different relation between training and performance than in Tanaka’s group work, which was framed as dance, where exercises from the workshop were never presented directly, and in which the process of creating the dance was never articulated. In

and bone,’ ‘mind and body,’ ‘music and body,’ and ‘myself as a boy.’

³⁶ Snow, “Imaging the In-Between,” 267.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 254.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 254.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 223.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 231.

⁴¹ Peter Snow, “Performing All Over the Place,” in *Unstable Ground: Performance and the Politics of Place*, ed. Gay McAuley (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2006): 230.

the group dances directed by Tanaka that I participated in and witnessed, the actions the dancers were engaged in may have been informed by the workshop exercises (though in some cases the dancers had little experience with these), but the exercises were never a basis for the dance.

Like Tanaka, many Body Weather Practitioners see daily life, training, and performance as aspects of the same practice. In this context, Tanaka's choice to live his daily life as a farmer is extremely significant.⁴² For him, daily farming work is the best training for dance. This is a key difference between his practice and that of the international Body Weather community. For him, daily life itself is a training where the individual is an active observer in his own experience of a daily practice that includes farming and dance. Farming is an essential element of Tanaka's practice, was the primary form of training for his group *Tokason*, and an essential element of his workshops.

The 1997-2000 Summer Workshops

I participated in Tanaka's summer workshops at Body Weather Farm from 1997-2000, while I was rehearsing and performing in his group dances. I also participated in smaller workshops during the U.S. tour of *Poe Project: Stormy Membrane*, and a weeklong workshop in Ghent, Belgium during *Tokason*'s European tour in 2000. By this time *Maijuku* had disbanded. Some of its former members had left, those who remained had become accomplished farmers, and Body Weather Farm was a (barely) self-sustaining organic vegetable farm.⁴³ The summer workshops I participated in were four to five weeks long. They were led in English and Japanese, and participants came from all over the world. They were all led by Tanaka himself, with Yasunari

⁴² Although Tanaka no longer works with a group, he and his student Rin Ishihara still practice farming on a regular basis.

⁴³ Body Weather Farm is no longer in existence. Tanaka left in 1997 and it was maintained by Hidekazu Natsui, Suzuki Keishi, Tamai Yasunari, until 2012.

Tamai, a long-time member of Body Weather Farm, occasionally demonstrating or leading the MB sessions. Horikawa Hisako, who in previous years had led some of the workshops,⁴⁴ was present only as a workshop participant the first year that I was there, and left Body Weather Farm the following year.

The workshops I attended consisted of about five hours a day of workshop proper (the training exercises) alternating with farming work. Workshop members began the day at 5:30 a.m. with morning farming, primarily weeding and harvesting vegetables. This was followed by breakfast, then the workshop itself. In the afternoon there would often be more farming. The workshop took place in conjunction with a summer festival that was initially called Hakushu Summer Festival when it began in 1988, then Artcamp Hakushu from 1993 to 1998, then Dance Hakushu from 1999 until the final festival in 2009.⁴⁵ During the festival, workshop participants could watch the daily program of performances. At the time I was there, the workshop itself took place primarily in and around the “Earth Stage,” a large stage adjacent to a forest, a barn housing donkeys and goats, a tomato patch, and a small road. In the early years of the workshops at Body Weather Farm, the Earth Stage was constructed of pounded earth. By the time I arrived, there was a wooden stage to train on. In the first two years I was there, there was no roof, the stage was completely open to the environment. On rainy days we would work in a space called the Glass House, a greenhouse with a wood floor. In 1999 a roof was added to the Earth Stage, yet the stage remained very open to its surroundings. The trainings were accompanied by the constant stimulation of the environment: the August sun, the wind, the sound of rain on the roof, insects, birdcalls, the comments of village farmers passing by stopping to watch, and the constant drone of the cicadas. Occasionally the goats would invade the stage. Sometimes we would visit

⁴⁴ Horikawa, interview with Zack Fuller.

⁴⁵ For a descriptive review of the 2004 festival, see my article “Tradition and Innovation: The 2005 Dance Hakushu Festival,” *Performance Paradigm* 2 (March, 2006), <http://www.performanceparadigm.net/category/journal/issue-2/>.

other locations, such as a riverbed or a mountainside, necessitating new negotiations of and relations with space.

“Drive On” states that Body Weather Laboratories has no hierarchy, either among laboratories around the world, or in the internal structure of the individual laboratories.⁴⁶ Tanaka often stated that there was no hierarchy at Body Weather Farm. At the time I found this extremely difficult to accept, as the magnitude of his presence as a visionary leader clearly dominated all of the activities there. There certainly did seem to be a social hierarchy. There was Tanaka, and there were the long time full-time farm members, who held authority over newer members. During the summer festival and workshop there was Kobata Kazue, and specially invited guests such as Milford Graves, Simone Forti, Susan Sontag, and Annie Leibowitz who were housed separately and not asked to participate in farming work. Then there was the more nebulous heterarchy of the volunteers who came to support the Dance Hakushu Festival, workshop members, invited dancers such as myself who participated in but did not pay for the workshop, and the performers who came to participate in the festival. The workshops I experienced with Tanaka were not collaborative laboratories and workshop members were not free to propose their own exercises or other activities. Tanaka himself was clearly the leader. Because of this I found it very difficult to accept his assertion that there was no hierarchy at Body Weather Farm. To some degree it may be a case of Tanaka’s actions not being aligned with his words. However, while there certainly was and is a social hierarchy around Tanaka (despite his tendency to sever ties with people who have worked with him for a period of time), I have in retrospect come to see the principle of non-hierarchy as of primary importance in the methodology of the training exercises themselves. In the context of the workshop, to have no hierarchy was to have no teacher, no students, no part of the body that is more important than

⁴⁶ Body Weather Laboratory, “Drive On,” 59.

another, and no movement that is “better” than another. Rather than the mastery of technical forms, what is valued is a mind/body focus involving both the desire and will to expand the individual capacity to observe and accept stimulation.

Body Weather as Ideology

While practitioners outside of Japan may well consider Body Weather to be a way of life or philosophy, their promotion of Body Weather as a type of performer training has influenced the broad perception of Body Weather as a specific training method. Because of this I wish to distinguish Body Weather as an ideology from the idea of Body Weather as a training method. Tanaka sees his solo dance, training, group work, and daily life as aspects of the same practice, a practice permeated by the ideology of Body Weather. That ideology was formed in conjunction with Tanaka’s early solo dances and his discussions with Matsuoka Seigo, and first disseminated in conjunction with a series of workshops and laboratories focused on training the body to extend its capacities through relations with sound, language, space, and other bodies. For Tanaka to call his first workshop a Body Weather workshop was not to establish Body Weather as a training method, but to denominate a collaborative investigation informed by the ideology of Body Weather, just as Body Weather Laboratories was a laboratory informed by that ideology and Body Weather Farm was a farm informed by that ideology. Body Weather envisions the body as a force of nature: ever-changing, omni-centered, and completely open to external stimuli. Entirely opposed to hierarchization or formalization, it sees no part of the body as more important than another.

It has been noted that Body Weather exhibits parallels with the theories of Deleuze and Guattari⁴⁷ who link hierarchization to both centering and finalization as aspects of stratification and *overcoding*. They contrast these negatively with the *body without organs*: “the unformed, unorganized, nonstratified, or destratified body and all its flows.”⁴⁸ Tanaka similarly sees hierarchization and formalization as linked in that both restrict the body, reducing its potential for experience. Though it was never stated explicitly, Tanaka’s workshops were informed by what I would term an unachievable anti-hierarchic ideal. The creation of the anti- hierarchic body that Tanaka proposed involved the principles of autonomy, perpetual change, confusion, omni-centrality, and spatial practice informed by the concept of *ma*. It was to be achieved by an amalgamation of the egalitarian imitation of physical forms, orally transmitted mental image work, and the conscious reception of physical stimulation from the physical environment and other bodies. No individual’s physical capability was superior to another’s; time was not privileged over space, one culture was not superior to another, our bodies were to accept all places and weather conditions. Essential to the anti-hierarchic ideal is the idea that dance (or any art) is not privileged over everyday life, and that daily life should be as rigorously experimental as training and performance.

Methodology

Although I participated in several of Tanaka’s workshops, it is only with hindsight, going back over the notes from them and comparing them with other aspects of his practice, that I can claim to have any clarity about what he was proposing. While I entirely support his claim that his

⁴⁷ Frank Van de Ven developed a performance project with Rolf Meesters and Claudia Flammin in Amsterdam in 1998 “grafted on the work of Min Tanaka,” based on the idea of applying Deleuze and Guattari’s theories to the body See “How to Make Yourself a Dancing Body Without Organs,” <http://www.rolfm.dds.nl/webbwo/textzero.htm>.

⁴⁸ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 41.

workshops contained no fixed method (each workshop was very different from the previous one) I argue that there was a methodology at work there, and that to articulate some of the essential principles of that methodology can create a clearer understanding of this aspect of Tanaka's practice, without reducing it to a form or method. Tanaka has never specifically articulated a methodology or set of principles that his training is based on. Indeed, not articulating a methodology is one aspect of his methodology. When leading workshops, he would never explain the purpose of a particular exercise. Being confused about an exercise was seen as a valuable experience. Often a workshop member would express their confusion, saying "I'm confused... (about this exercise)" to which the reply from Tanaka or a farm member would invariably be "good!" To attempt to clarify the exercise (at least in the way that a participant wanted it to be clarified) would be to take away that individual's opportunity to be confused, to struggle with that confusion and find (or not find) their own solution. It would impose a form on the participant. He never explained the purpose of an exercise or corrected workshop members on an individual basis. In this sense, Tanaka was not a teacher. He has always insisted on the autonomy of those working with him, that they learn for themselves.

When Tanaka was actively leading workshops and directing the activities of a group of dancer/farmers he insisted that he had no students.⁴⁹ Initially I took to this to mean simply that he did not want people to come to his workshop, then return home claiming to be his students and to have learned "*butô*" from him. In retrospect I feel that his statement had more to do with a distrust of conventional dance pedagogy than with attempting to distance himself from those who attempt to elevate their status in the dance world by associating themselves with him. According to Horikawa Hisako, from the very first Body Weather workshops Tanaka provided little explanation for the exercises. The participants simply attempted the exercise, and each

⁴⁹ In recent years Tanaka has come to acknowledge former Tokason member Ishihara Rin as his apprentice.

person was free to experience it in his or her own way.⁵⁰ This autonomy continued to be present in the summer workshops at Body Weather Farm. Tanaka would never correct or give feedback to individual workshop participants (though there were many times when he would instruct us to give feedback to each other). In my interviews with him, Tanaka stressed that the most important aspect of Body Weather is that it, like the weather, is always changing. To explain too much would risk giving the impression that there was one particular purpose to an exercise, or one particular way of practicing it. At the same time, he would often give feedback to the group as a whole. In these talks he emphasized the need to break individual habits, to appreciate and imitate the movements of others, and to achieve greater specificity in individual interpretations of the exercise. Tanaka's view of the body as being constantly subjected to attempted control by outside forces suggests that true autonomy does not come easily, for what an individual dancer may experience as a spontaneous gesture may well be a socially conditioned habitual movement. In this context, true autonomy requires a rigorous use of the individual's will to break his or her habits in order to achieve a non-individualistic, non-hierarchic body. What the dancer does in daily life is therefore of great importance, because daily life conditions the body and mind to behave in a certain way.

Methodology Embodied in Farming

The daily life of the residents of Body Weather Farm consisted largely of agricultural labor, and as noted above, workshop members practiced daily farming as well. Farming work as practiced at Body Weather Farm exposed the body to a constantly changing variety of sensations. Working with each different crop engaged the body in a different type of physical action. Harvesting potatoes, for example, required a very different use of the body than

⁵⁰ Horikawa, interview with Zack Fuller.

harvesting peppers. Weeding a carrot patch involved a very different use of the body than weeding a rice field. The changes in weather provided further experiences for the body. To practice farming as dance training is anti-hierarchic in that it does not privilege training over everyday life. Rather than a training environment where the place is subservient to the needs of the people, the place functions as a teacher. One shared element in both the practice of farming as training and the workshop exercises themselves is the overwhelming amount of physical stimulations received from the physical environment. However, in order for farming to become training one must treat it as such, that is, to engage in it with conscious awareness of the space itself, including the stimulations received by the body from the environment.

Tanaka often complained that the workshop members (myself included) did not have the proper attitude towards farming. It is only through a conscious awareness of the body in the act of farming, the same degree of conscious observation as employed in the workshop exercises, that farming becomes training. The dancer/farmer approaches daily life as training: an opportunity to observe what is happening to the body during the course of daily activity. The mere physical act of farming does not constitute training, it is the conscious awareness of the body, the environment, and the stimulations received by the body from the environment, that make it training.

Methodology Embodied in the Workshop Exercises

Like the farming work, the workshop exercises exposed the participants to a variety of stimulations. They were constantly changing, reconfigured in an infinite variety of variations and combinations. Participants received stimulation from both the environment and their fellow participants, often simultaneously (see Figure 10). There were exercises exploring the environment, imagery, *bisoku* (extremely slow) movement, blind work, and work on developing

physical characters. There were exercises working on cultivating an awareness of minute sensations, and ones that focused on relaxing the body so as to move using a minimum of muscular effort. Many of the exercises involved partnering: one partner worked to manipulate, stimulate or “give an experience” to the other by lifting, touching, and manipulating their body. Partnering exercises were always followed by a discussion among the two or three partners.

Although the same exercises appeared in different workshops, they did so with a range of variations. Exercises changed radically according to the space they were performed in. It was a very different experience to practice the same exercise practice on the stage, on the grass, by the river, or on the side of a mountain. In Figure 9, two exercises are combined, one where a person is blindfolded, carried by two others and placed in a space of their choosing, and stimulation work (described in detail below), where an individual moves in accordance with stimulations given by one or two partners. Here, a workshop member experiences the stimulation of balancing precariously on a wooden bench while attempting to follow the stimulations given to him by his partners.



Fig. 10. Blind stimulation work, Body Weather Farm, 1999.
Still frame from a video by Anonymous.

The emphasis on, or time devoted to particular types of exercises varied from workshop to workshop. In 1999, for example, we began almost every day with MB (see Figure 11). In 2000 there was only one such session. Instead there were sessions of partnering exercises that went on for hours, a lot of image based work, as well as an unprecedented focus on character and position work.



Fig. 11. MB training on the Earth Stage at Body Weather Farm 1999.
Photograph by Anonymous.

MB is an aspect of the workshop that most resembled a dance technique class. However, even in MB struggle was valued over technical virtuosity. During the workshop in 1999, Tanaka admonished us for not making enough effort to learn the more complicated MB steps. There was one young woman who clearly did not have a lot of physical training and could not execute the step, but was trying extremely hard to do so despite the physical pain that she was clearly experiencing. Tanaka had her demonstrate, and held her up as an example of how to do the step. As there were many others in the group who could execute it ‘better’ than her, Tanaka’s point was clearly that she was using a huge amount of physical and mental effort to extend her physical limitations, rather than remaining in her zone of comfortable, habitual movement. Rather than the person best executing the step, the person using the most effort to go beyond their limitations was held up as an example. At the same time, in the above example we were encouraged to observe the unusual movements of someone striving to do something they could

not. We were asked to observe movements that, were we to be able to imitate them accurately, would expand our own physical vocabulary. This egalitarian observation and imitation of physical movement is both a significant aspect of Tanaka's own practice of dance (as I shall discuss in Chapter Four), and an example of the anti-hierarchic ideal in embodied practice.

Observation and imitation are of course key elements of the type of conventional dance class where a master teacher demonstrates movements, the students observe those movements closely, and attempt to copy them. In Tanaka's workshops, he never demonstrated any movement, instead he continually emphasized that we should study each other's bodies. The ideal was to observe closely and imitate the movement of a wide range of different individual bodies, even those made by people one might consider oneself to be a "better" dancer than. This is an inversion of conventional dance training where mastery of a form, or the ability to come as close as possible to the teacher one is studying with is the goal. In Body Weather training it is through observation and imitation that a body can be freed, to some degree, from habitual movement patterns. This is a key point, for it is one of the aspects of the training that is most consistent with Tanaka's insistence that there is no hierarchy in his group work.

One exercise that demonstrates the importance of partnering and stimulation in the development of the omni-centric anti-hierarchic body is variously referred to as "stimulation work," "pushing discussion" or "wind." The receiving partner stands in a relaxed base position. The giving partner touches a specific part of his or her partner's body, indicating a clear direction for the body part to move in without actually manipulating the body part and causing it to move. The receiver follows the stimulation slowly, as far as that body part can move in that direction, then follows with the rest of the body as far as possible without actually beginning to travel. After reaching the limit of the movement, the receiver begins to return to the base position. The base position is rarely reached, however, as the receiver is interrupted by further stimulations

from the partner giving the stimulation. Variations to the exercise include the use of different base positions, the addition of the image of giving and receiving wind, having the stimulation indicate speed as well as direction, and a focus on giving stimulation specifically to the partner's joints. Figure 12 shows a variation where one participant moves while imagining he is receiving simulations from his partner, who simply observes him. In each of these the mover's consciousness must attempt to adapt to an omni-centered body. Varying aspects such as base position, image, and the way of giving and receiving prevents the exercise from becoming formalized. Developing the facility to respond authentically to stimulations given by different people, would necessitate breaking or expanding on personal movement habits. Ideally, since each person gives stimulation differently, the receiver would respond differently to the stimulations of each new partner.



Fig. 12. Imagining stimulation, Body Weather Farm, 1999.
Photograph by Anonymous.

Some of Tanaka's workshops included long sessions of what he called 'image work,' based on the process he and Hijikata Tatsumi used in the creation of *Performance for the Foundation of the Love-Dance School* in 1984. Another exercise in omni-centrality, image work requires the participant to attempt to maintain a separate mental image for the head, torso, arms, and legs. For example: *a noisy fly lands on your forehead, your hands float up a waterfall, your feet become worms, a fishhook is pulling your chest*. Ideally, for each image the workshop member should create their own distinct movement (the outer stream) and perform the movement while keeping the image firmly held in the imagination (the inner stream). This represents a highly autonomous approach to Hijikata's image work, when compared with Waguri Yukio's *butô-fu*, for example, where a specific movement and a specific image are given simultaneously. Tanaka sees Waguri's type of image work as empty and fascistic. " 'Because of this image I must move like this.' It's fascism."⁵¹ In the Body Weather approach to image work, as Horikawa stated in her interview with me, because each person has a different body, they will also have different movement.⁵²

While the workshops at Body Weather Farm included image work, sensation and stimulation consistently took precedence over visuality. This is also in contrast to much *butô* training, where dancers are asked to imagine visual images, often from nature, as stimulating their body in some way. In Tanaka's view, simply imagining stimulation is not enough to engage a dancer's inner stream: the body has to experience actual physical sensations from nature.⁵³ He emphasizes that Hijikata himself grew up experiencing stimulation from nature in his childhood in rural Tohoku.⁵⁴ I suggest that this is a key element in Tanaka's approach to training, as well as

⁵¹ Tanaka, interview with Zack Fuller, August 8, 2001.

⁵² Horikawa, interview with Zack Fuller.

⁵³ Tanaka, interview with Zack Fuller, August 9, 2001.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

dance and daily life. If a person had rarely ever stepped on dead branches, for example, how could they imagine that sensation? My own experience in a workshop with the *butô* group *Hakutobo* in 1990 illustrates the difference between Tanaka's approach and a specific *butô* workshop. In the *Hakutobo* workshop we were asked to walk slowly across the floor in a deep knee bend, lower back arched, arms in front of us, while visualizing insects slowly crawling over our body and devouring our flesh. At Body Weather Farm, during an exercise where two people carried a third blindfolded individual to a place of their own choosing and observed them experiencing that space, I decided to place one member of my trio on top of a pile of dried, decaying donkey manure. In doing so I learned that decaying piles of manure are full of tiny insects, and observed my partner calmly experiencing the actual sensation of having insects crawl around a large part of her body. Of course this is not a direct parallel, feeling insects crawling on your skin and biting you is not the same thing as being entirely devoured by them. It does however, exemplify a difference between a stimulation based training and one focused on visualization.

At Body Weather Farm we experienced numerous stimulations from the environment, as well as having our bodies manipulated by many different individuals, each with their own history and habits. Though it was never explicitly stated, the ideal goal was for the workshop members to accumulate these stimulations into our bodies, along with the movements we had observed in our partners' bodies, expanding both the range of stimulations we were capable of giving to others and our own physical vocabulary.

Tanaka was frequently frustrated with the workshop members' inability (or lack of desire) to let go of their own personal habits. Though, as I have noted, he rarely corrected individual workshop members, he would often attempt to correct the group as a whole, usually by admonishing workshop members to be more observant of their own practice and of the habits of

others. In the 2000 workshop, for example, after doing stimulation response work for several days, he noted that people seemed stuck in their own habitual responses, repeating the same forms:

For me it is very difficult to watch your personalities. Your work looks so personal now. It is painful for me. Like (you are) stuck in an order. . . . If you cannot appreciate other people's movement, other people's bodies, then it is better to study a form.⁵⁵

Here Tanaka proposed that dancers without a specific formal technique (i.e. the workshop members) have a responsibility to study the movements of others with the same intensity with which someone training to master a complex dance form such as ballet, *Nihon buyō*, or *kathakali* would study the elements of that form. Tanaka never demonstrated any movement. The ideal was not to imitate him, but to imitate the movement of a wide range of different individual bodies, including movements we did not consider to be particularly interesting. This is an anti-hierarchic inversion of technique-based training where mastery of a form or the ability to dance like one's teacher is the goal.

In the workshop in 2000 there was an emphasis on dance. As workshop members we were asked to question our status or identity as dancers; to ask ourselves whether we were dancers or not. This may have been in part a response to a certain type of dilettantism. During the years that I visited the farm attendance at Tanaka's workshops included an increasing number of workshop members who had taken many movement workshops and spent a lot of time travelling internationally, but who were not committed to dance. As I argue above, Tanaka proposed an egalitarian mimesis where we were asked to learn the movement habits of those we might consider to be inferior dancers. This proposition represents a challenge for any dancer, whether their background is in technique or improvisation, to radically re-think their approach to training.

⁵⁵ Zack Fuller, Body Workshop notes, Body Weather Farm, Hakushu, Yamanashi-ken, Japan, 2000.

In order to develop the capacity to imitate the personal idiosyncrasies of a variety of individuals with the same degree of competence that a technical dancer would display in learning a new *kata* or repertory piece, almost anyone would need to change their approach to training on a fundamental level. Tanaka's statement that if one cannot appreciate the movement of others it is better to study a form is a key example of the principle of anti-hierarchization in the philosophy of Body Weather, embodied in the methodology of the body workshop.

In another address to the members of the 2000 workshop, Tanaka divided most of the participants into two categories: those who lack the will or courage to confront their own bodies (their habits, weak points, limitations) and those with "too much unconscious confidence," who mistakenly believe that they are so advanced that they have no need to do so.⁵⁶ Tanaka referred to himself as a "middle" level dancer.⁵⁷ He has often contrasted himself with those whom he calls "genius dancers" such as Vaslav Nijinsky and Ohno Kazuo: "It seems to me that some people are genius dancers, like they are chosen by God. I became a good workshop leader, but it is all from me."⁵⁸ In his view, he, like Hijikata, through his own force of will, attempts to acquire that which comes naturally to a "genius dancer." He proposed that those working with him attempt to have this type of existence. In his workshops, group dances, and daily life Tanaka consistently proposed the impossible, and he was disappointed, at times enraged, not that those around him could not achieve the impossible, but that we did not feel the need to try. What he proposed placed an extreme responsibility for self-directed training on the individual dancer: they must study the individual habits of each person's movement with the same intensity that a technical dancer would expend on learning a new *kata*, or a new repertory piece: as if each individual body were a new form to be studied.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

It is doubtful that most of the workshop members understood what Tanaka was proposing. One reason for this was the barrier of language. Tanaka led the workshops in English and in Japanese, yet for many of the participants, neither of these was their first language. Because Tanaka was at times deliberately obscure, and often used non-standard grammatical structure when speaking English, statements that were intended literally could be interpreted as figurative or metaphoric. Because he did not correct individuals, but only the group as a whole, it was easy for participants with “too much unconscious confidence” to rationalize their behavior with the presumption that his remarks were directed at others in the group and did not apply to them.

Another factor in this communication failure was the overwhelming effect of the workshop environment itself. Alissa Cardone in “Killing the Body-Ego: Dance Research with Min Tanaka at BodyWeather Farm, Japan,” gives a very lucid personal account of the experience of a first-time Body Workshop participant. She describes the effect of the workshop as a rending apart and bringing back together: “I fell apart and back together in unexpected, often confusing but essential ways-connecting to and discovering a greater consciousness about my physical existence.”⁵⁹ Cardone experienced a letting go of the “rational, analytical mind” and giving in to “the rush of sensation.”⁶⁰ She writes that what she gained from the workshop was the experience of being out of control, caused in part by the lack of clear explanation and the ensuing subjective interpretation of the exercises. She notes the impossibility of maintaining four separate images in segmented areas of the body. She notes the beauty of the landscape and the constant stimulations from the environment. Ultimately, she writes that “BodyWeather Farm and Min Tanaka invited me to embrace dance as a passionate life journey and see it as part of a greater spiritual

⁵⁹ Alissa Cardone, “Killing the Body-Ego: Dance Research with Min Tanaka at BodyWeather Farm, Japan,” *Contact Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2002), 15.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

existence.” While Cardone’s experience reaffirmed her commitment to dance, for Tanaka that was not enough, for despite his insistence on subjectivity and autonomous experience I am arguing that he did have something that he wanted to transmit to the workshop members, something more radical than an affirmation of the power of dance. What he intended was for the workshop participants to experience a need to change their approach to dance on a fundamental level.

Whether because of language barriers, the overwhelming atmosphere of the workshop environment, the radical nature of the concept itself, Tanaka’s insistence on not explaining the purpose of the exercises or giving individual feedback, or a combination of these factors, the anti-hierarchic ideal was not communicated to the workshop members. It may well be that, as he believes, many of them were not interested in changing themselves, just in increasing their own symbolic capital by adding another item to their résumé. Even so, he seems, at least to some degree, to have set up an impossible situation. Tanaka’s own rejection of form came only after years of intensive formalized training in modern dance. During the *Hyperdance/Drive* period he threw away the form he had mastered and spent seven years dancing in a completely different manner that was very specific, very personal, and very consistent. In his workshops, he similarly asked the participants to throw away their previous history for a fundamentally different approach, or at least, to expand on what they had developed in the past through a profoundly different approach. In the later workshops it was as if he expected people, in the course of a few weeks, to completely change their entire approach to movement, in a situation where they were so bombarded with stimuli that it was practically impossible for them to understand what he was proposing, or how to go about doing that.

Conclusion

Body Weather Laboratories, a group composed primarily of non-dancers, grew out of Tanaka's first workshops, and developed exercises and methodology used by and expanded on in the workshops at Body Weather Farm. In the early workshops Tanaka emphasized the responsibility of the individual workshop members to research the possibilities of the body themselves, through observation, spatial awareness, sensation, and language. The workshops that I participated in, although still including non-dancers, consisted mainly of people with some type of movement training, whether improvisation or technique based. For a non-dancer, the training could serve to open the body to sensation, to expand the possibilities of the body for physical experience. For a dancer the goal (or a goal) would be to then allow those experiences to expand the scope of his or her physical vocabulary or range of physical expression, and awaken and inform the imaginative mental processes that shift movement quality.

While not conceived as a basis for dance, Body Weather training, as embodied ideology, has strong implications for the development of the individual dancer. It proposes an ideal of an omni-centered anti-hierarchic body to be striven for through conscious acceptance of a wide and ever-changing range of sensation, and by egalitarian mimesis. The primary importance of change in this work is apparent in the many variations on the workshop exercises themselves. It is apparent in the changes in the language around those exercises from year to year. Performing the same exercise in different environments and under different weather conditions alters each experience, stimulating the body in different ways. Farming work itself is subject to constant variation, requiring the body to engage in varied positions and activities, subjecting it to the stimulations of weather, insects, and the exertion of physical labor. In Body Weather training, dance began in the spaces between language and the body, between observer and observed, between two partners discussing their experience, between the two streams in the body (inner

image and outer movement for example), and between the external environment and an individual's skin. What I have termed the anti-hierarchic ideal pervaded the workshops, in the participants' relations with space, the body, virtuosity, and pedagogic method. Tanaka's insistence that there was no hierarchy at Body Weather farm was something that I always questioned. It is clear to me now, in retrospect, that whether or not a social hierarchy existed at Body Weather Farm, the pursuit of an anti-hierarchic ideal was deeply imbedded in the exercises and methodology of the summer workshops.

Chapter Four

Group Choreography: Subject(s) in Space

Tanaka Min is known primarily as a solo improviser, and very little has been written about his work as a choreographer. However, from 1977 until 2006 Tanaka spent considerable amounts of his time and energy choreographing group dances, and his group works were performed throughout Japan, Europe, and the U.S.¹ These group dances were in many ways the most visible manifestations of his aesthetic and philosophical values. The principles of Body Weather: change, collaboration, omni-centrality, the anti-hierarchic ideal, and an emphasis on the autonomy of the individual body, were embodied in the group dances more overtly than in the summer workshops. The workshops focused on the internalization of Body Weather by the individual participants, but the group dances were created to be witnessed by an audience and their subject matter was externalized by the dancers in actions and personae. The methodology Tanaka employed in rehearsals was highly collaborative, and this required that he articulate his aesthetic values through language in order to transmit them to the dancers working with him.² These values shaped the actions, movements, and qualities that he elicited from the dancers, as well as the set, costumes, and lighting. A study of the choreographic processes involved in the creation of these dances can therefore facilitate a greater understanding of the totality of Tanaka's experimental practice.

Thus far I have I have attempted to demonstrate that while each aspect of Tanaka's practice is always changing, there are specific reoccurring concerns, values, and principles that were present in the work of Hijikata Tatsumi, in Tanaka's improvised dances, and in his

¹ As of this writing, Tanaka no longer choreographs for or maintains a group of dancer/farmers.

² This is not to say that there was no room for individual difference or even individual style. Certainly in Tokason, different members had different style of movement and different things they were interested in, and Tanaka never asked us to give those up.

workshops. I will now give a general overview of elements that I see as particularly significant in Tanaka's choreographic process, including the influence of Hijikata, the role of the subject, the investigation of spatial practice, and a collaborative rehearsal process. I will then analyze the way these elements functioned in the creation of three specific dances.

Tanaka sees the experimental work that Hijikata engaged in (including his solo dance, his use of language in relation to the body, and his work with his student Ashikawa Yoko), as a source of inexhaustible possibility.³ The group dances allowed Tanaka an opportunity to take his experiences with Hijikata and transmute them into experiments with other bodies. In his work as a choreographer he foregrounded different aspects of Hijikata's practice at different times and in different dances. At the time of Maijuku's *Rite of Spring* (Haru no saiten) (1990), the group was working with specific images given verbally to Tanaka by Hijikata. Maijuku used these images in both training and performance, developing some of their choreographic material from them. *Romance: Love in Fluxus* (2000) was developed in response to an idea proposed by Hijikata during his work with Tanaka on *Performance for the Foundation of the Love-Dance School*. In the *Goya* series (2000-2002) Tanaka emphasized the development of a repertoire of complex physical characters that he related to Hijikata's work with Ashikawa Yoko. I have taken each of the dances discussed below as an opportunity to foreground a different aspect of Hijikata's legacy as manifested in Tanaka's choreographic process.

Tanaka tended to use a common theme or source material to create series of dances that were restructured each time the dance was moved to a new space. Each existed in different versions, not in the sense of different stages of development prior to the completion of a final finished version, but in that they were completely restructured for particular occasions. Both the subject of the dances and the space the dances took place in generated new material that was

³ Tanaka Min, interview with Zack Fuller, August 8, 2011.

incorporated into these different versions. Sometimes this difference was reflected in the titles of individual performances such as *From the Etchings of Goya* (Goya no etchingu yori) (2000), and *Goya's Forest* (Goya no mori) (2000) but often dances that were very different were performed under the same title. This was the case with *The Rite of Spring*, and other dances such as *Kidnapping*. Performances under the same name could be completely different from each other, and while some principles of choreographic method were relatively consistent, each dance involved a different choreographic process, as I will demonstrate in the following studies of rehearsals for specific dances.

Tanaka's solo dance often interrogates or complicates the relation between performer and subject. As described in Chapter 2, dances such as *Subject* and *Butai* questioned the idea of the subject as distinct from the body, the space, or the audience. A major difference between Tanaka's improvised collaborations and his group dances is that the latter far more often drew material from a subject other than the body or the space. Tanaka created group dances using a wide range of literary works and visual art as source material. The sources for his group dances include the work of authors such as Artaud, Poe, Kenji Nakagami, Yoshida Issui, and L. Frank Baum. Several dances drew their material from Grimm's fairy tales. Tanaka based dances on the work of visual artists such as Vassily Kandinski, Edward Munch, and Francesco Goya. Generally speaking, he and his dancers would develop a collection of various elements from the source material including images, actions, movements, and characters or personae. In other dances the subject was more abstract, such as *Can We Dance a Landscape?* (Wareware ha fukei o odoreru ka) (1987), *Moon at Noon* (Hiru no tsuki) (1985), *Romance* (1999), and *Return to Bones* (Hone ni kaeru)(2000). Sometimes Tanaka invented scenarios inspired by elements in rural or pre-modern Japanese culture, such as *Ancient Women* (Kodai fujin) (1994), *Kidnapping* (Hitosarai) (2000), and *Fire Story* (Hino monogatari) (1999).

Subjects in Tanaka's group dances were shifting, multivalent, and collaboratively constructed. While the theme or source material gave the dancers a common focus, ultimately the material that composed the dance could include characters developed by the dancers, elements from the dancers personal history and daily life, and imagery developed by Tanaka and/or the dancers themselves. Thus much of the subject of the dance was not revealed to the audience, but remained in darkness. This omni-centered subject was altered by the characteristics of the particular space in which the dance took place: physical objects (set pieces or objects in found space), lighting, and music.

The group dances allowed Tanaka the opportunity to experiment with space and light from the perspective of an observer. Purpose-built sets and stages were used to a greater extent and on a larger scale in Tanaka's choreographic work than in his improvised collaborations. Rather than being built to support the movements of the dancers or to provide a visual background the sets that Tanaka used in the group dances altered the dancers' movements, often making it more challenging for them to move. This is unusual in dance, but not entirely without precedent. In Pina Bausch's collaborations with set designer Rolf Borzík, for example, Borzík's sets altered the dancer's movements in ways that challenged the dancers bodies, making movement more difficult. In Bausch's version of *The Rite of Spring* (1975), for example, the stage was covered with a thick layer of earth, and in *Come Dance With Me* (*Komm, tanz mit mir*) (1977), dead tree branches were scattered over the stage, creating obstacles for the dancers to negotiate.⁴ Similarly, in Tanaka's work, rather than the space being designed to support the choreography, the choreography was altered by the space.⁵ What is unusual about Tanaka's approach is the degree to which the spatial element fundamentally altered the choreographic content of the dances. In

⁴ "Rolf Borzík," Pina, Pina Bausch Foundation, Wuppertal, <http://www.pinabausch.org/en/pina/rolf-borzik> (accessed November 13, 2015).

this his approach was to deal with stages and sets in ways more often seen in site-specific dance than in concert dance. Victoria Hunter defines site-specific dance as “dance performance created and performed in response to a specific site or location. The practice is wide ranging and varied in terms of its aims, location and focus, from the rural to the urban, the political to the spectacle.”⁶ In Tanaka’s site-specific improvisations, beginning with his “naked” dances in the 1970’s and continuing into the present he researches a specific site and incorporates it into his physical vocabulary. Each dance is inseparable from the space or site in which it occurs. In his choreographed works for the stage, there was a similar relation with the sets constructed for the performance. The group projects extended the investigation of spatial practice that was both the focus of Tanaka’s early minimalist dances and a major component of his workshops. While the vast majority of them were based on a subject that was initially distinct from the performance space, the place of performance both altered the choreographic material developed from that subject (sometimes drastically) and generated new choreographic elements.

Whenever possible the dancers themselves participated in constructing these spaces. This was not a case of simple necessity, but an important aspect of preparing for the dance, a part of the choreographic process.⁷ By physically laboring on the construction of the space, dancers established a direct relationship with the space prior to dancing in it. In large professional theatres with professional stage hands this was not usually possible, but even in such situations the staff could occasionally be convinced to allow the dancers to help put down the dance floor, as was the case with *Romance* in 2000. In dances such as *Forest Story* (Mori no monogatari) (2004), in which I participated, there was no actual set (the dance was performed in a wooded area of Inokashira Park in Kichijoji, Tokyo), but even here we constructed simple wooden

⁶ Victoria Hunter, Introduction, *Moving Sites: Investigating Site-Specific Dance Performance* (Abingdon, Routledge: 2015), 12.

benches for the audience, using materials brought from the farm: logs and wooden boards. Outdoor performances on one of the stages at Body Weather Farm, or indoors at Plan B in Tokyo, provided full freedom to experiment with set construction.

During the Tokason period Tanaka would come up with a concept for the set, and all the members of Tokason would participate in its construction, often assisted by the volunteers who staffed the Dance Hakushu festival and frequently showed up elsewhere to support Tanaka's projects.⁸ One Tokason/Body Weather Farm member, Suzuki Keishi, became particularly adept at stage design, and took on a leading role in designing and constructing sets based on Tanaka's initial conceptions. Figure 13 shows a set for a production for a version of Tokason's *Kidnapping* (Hitosarai) at the Dance Hakushu Festival in 2004. It was conceived by Tanaka, designed by Suzuki Keishi and constructed by Suzuki, a group of volunteer staff, and other Tokason members on the Forest Stage at Body Weather Farm. It demonstrates the qualities that Tanaka values in constructed space: multiple levels, asymmetry, and a rough or poor quality. The contrasting angles of the moveable second stage and the *hanamichi* at the rear of the main stage complement the irregular forms of the wood and bamboo roof on the moveable stage, as well as stimulating the bodies of the dancers by requiring them to adjust their feet and body positions to the sloped surface. This set's essential nature emerged out of the experience of farming life. The moveable stage pictured here is constructed of materials gathered from around Body Weather Farm: wood and bamboo harvested from local forests in addition finished lumber and plywood. These are the same materials used to build sheds, chicken houses, and other structures used in the daily life of

⁸ Tanaka would come up with the concept for the costumes as well, although with Tokason it became more a matter of dancers drawing from a collection of old clothes donated by the local inhabitants of Hakushu.

a farmer (see figures 14 and 15). After the performance, they could be recycled and used to repair a farmhouse or a chicken coop, or to build a new set for a new performance.⁹



Fig. 13 Set for Tokason's *Kidnapping* (Hitosarai) on the Forest Stage at Body Weather Farm, August 2004. Photograph by author.

⁹ The roof of Tanaka's house in Honmura was once a stage floor. Tanaka, interview with Zack Fuller, August 9 2011.



Fig. 14 Exterior of a disused chicken coop at Honmura Village, August 2011.
Photograph by author.



Fig. 15 Interior of a disused chicken coop at Honmura Village, August 2011. The coop is constructed of the same types of materials as the set for *Kidnapping* above: unfinished wood, processed lumber, and bamboo. Photograph by author.

Figure 16 shows an indoor set from the *Goya* series. This set for *Gauging a Smile* (date) at Plan B in Tokyo was constructed for an intimate indoor space. The set demonstrates a poor aesthetic, is asymmetrical, and like the set for *Kidnapping*, built entirely of materials from Body Weather Farm and Honmura. In this case these materials were brought into Tokyo, bringing elements of the rural life of the dancers into an urban environment. The seesaw with no handles

is childlike and also presents an unstable element that altered the dancers choice of movements.



Fig. 16 Still image from a video recording of Goya Series: *Gauging a Smile (Bishô no keisoku)*, Plan B, Tokyo, 2001. Videographer unknown. Courtesy of Dance Resources on Earth.

Tanaka experimented with different processes in developing group dances. The three dances I focus on in this chapter: *The Rite of Spring*, *Romance*, and the *Goya* series are from different phases in Tanaka's career. Each involved a very different choreographic process. Each had a different relation to the source material, different methods of developing movement material, and a different relation with performance space.

Tanaka's way of working demanded that his dancers put a significant amount of individual creative input into developing their own choreography within the group context. He never choreographed by teaching his own movements to the dancers he worked with, but utilized choreographic processes that, while different for each dance, were always highly collaborative. This in itself was very much in line with what certain other post-modern dance choreographers were doing at the time, and had in fact been doing since early sixties. The chance methods,

improvisation, and logical deductive systems employed by Judson Dance Theatre, in their efforts to destabilize authorial control and widen the possibilities of dance as a performing art, led to a re-imagining of the role of the choreographer. Yvonne Rainer's performance demonstrations in the late sixties (where dancers familiar with her work created improvised dances based on Rainer's ideas),¹⁰ Kenneth King's space maps, where "Dance phrases were meticulously programmed as to their structural and organizational options, with pre-rehearsed units that were to be broken down, repeated, and combined improvisationally during performance," required that dancers make creative choices during the performance itself. In Wuppertal, Germany Pina Bausch demanded of her dancers that they input their own ideas, actions, personal motivations, and material from their daily lives into the rehearsal process. She would then construct a montage from the material developed by them, resulting in a dance that was precisely structured and essentially the same each time it was performed.¹¹ Even as former Judson dancers such as Trisha Brown and Lucinda Childs moved away from improvisation, to more formalized precisely choreographed works in the 1980's, Susan Foster argues that from that time the understanding of the role of the choreographer shifted from being someone who develops dance movements and teaches them to other dancers to being a "manager, facilitator, or director" of those involved in a dance project, including the other dancers.¹²

Tanaka's group dances were generally not improvised. Unlike his solo dances, the vast majority were carefully structured and rehearsed. Having a common subject provided the dancers with a shared base for their work in what was otherwise a highly individualized process of development and rehearsal. Unlike the workshops, where Tanaka gave very little individual

¹⁰ Nancy Reynolds and Malcolm McCormick, *No Fixed Points: Dance in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 405.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 639.

¹² Susan Foster, "Choreographies and Choreographers: Four Definitions of the Terms," in *Modern Dance: Multifaceted Dimension*, ed. Scruti Bandopadhyay (Kolkata, India: Rabindra Bharati University, 2008) 5-26.

feedback, his way of choreographing or directing consistently involved giving detailed feedback in response to the *etudes* of individual dancers. In Chapter Two I argued that the dances considered as Tanaka's solo works are actually collaborations: with musicians, artists, and spaces. The group dances were also collaborative, but they were not autonomous collaborations. Tanaka chose the subject, directed the dancers to alter the material they developed, and ultimately determined the final structure of the dance. While not strictly choreographed in the sense of ballet or modern dance, where each movement is precisely planned and timed, they had a clearly defined structure. In the works I discuss here the dancers developed their own movement scores, based on images and actions given to them by Tanaka (in *The Rite of Spring*), images and actions created by the individual dancers (in *Romance: Love in Fluxus*), or works of visual art (in the *Goya* series). Tanaka would then shape this material, complicating the dancers' movements, eliminating elements that he did not like, adding or altering movement qualities and rhythmic nuances, and altering floor patterns. Ultimately, Tanaka himself determined the aesthetic values of the dances as well as their overall structure.

In the group dances Tanaka would usually perform as a figure separate from the rest of the dancers. In cases where the subject was the work of an individual artist, such as Munch, Poe, or Artaud, there was often a clear sense of Tanaka's identification with that artist: that he was dancing as both himself and Poe, for example. While the other dancers' roles were carefully structured and rehearsed, Tanaka himself never rehearsed with the group, and his own performances in the group dances *were* improvised. He would usually dance a solo or two within the group dances,¹³ but most of the time his presence was peripheral to the actions taking place. He would often place himself in shadow, observing and balancing the space.

The dancers that Tanaka worked with never obtained the same degree of virtuosity as he did himself. Tanaka possesses a virtuosic control of the body, a unique sensibility in regards to space, and a sheer endurance that is unparalleled. To take other dancers and try to teach them his movement, to try to train them to dance like him would only result in shadows of himself. Rather than training the dancers to dance like him, he looked for individual expression within his own aesthetic, and his approach to choreography was a training in that aesthetic sensibility.

One aspect of Tanaka's aesthetic was certainly a quality that could be described as *poor*. He valued incomplete gestures, asymmetry, and the appearance of weakness. He eschewed the semblance of virtuosity, and any movement that seemed decorative or technically impressive for its own sake. The sets he used were also never merely decorative, and the costumes usually consisted of simple street clothes (during the Maijuku period) or old kimonos or western-style clothes in various states of distress donated by local villagers (during the Tokason period). Tanaka was certainly aware of the work of Jerzy Grotowski's Polish Theatre Laboratory, as well as that of Tadeusz Kantor, both of whose work has been designated "poor theatre" in English (although each had very different aesthetic values and artistic priorities).¹⁴ The English "poor theatre" is in fact inadequate as a translation of both Grotowski's *teatr ubogi*, an actor-focused theatre stripped of decorative elements, and Kantor's *teatr biedny*. As Magda Robanska points out, Kantor's theatre was a theater of "both material poverty and a psychological condition of complete destitution, loneliness, and loss" where the actors and the found objects that populated the stage were presented as equal in their pitiable condition.¹⁵ In Japanese, the term *wabi*, meaning "rustic poverty" or "rustic beauty" is one of several valued aesthetic qualities that

¹⁴ Tanaka visited the archives of the Polish Laboratory in 1987. In my conversations with him he demonstrated a familiarity with Kantor's work.

¹⁵ Magda Romanska and Kathleen Chiofi, *Post-Traumatic Theatre of Grotowski and Kantor: History and Holocaust in Akropolis and Dead Class* (London: Anthem Press, 2012), accessed November 19, 2015, Proquest eLibrary, 12.

emerged out of the tradition of Zen Buddhism.¹⁶ It is often combined with the word *sabi*, which can be translated as “impersonal loneliness.” *Wabi sabi* originated in the tea ceremony during the fifteenth century. Valuing imperfection, ambiguity, ephemerality, poverty, and change, it is often said to be the defining characteristic of the traditional Japanese arts. In the words of Leonard Koren “*Wabi sabi* is the most conspicuous and characteristic feature of what we think of as traditional Japanese beauty.”¹⁷

While I feel that there is a strong *wabi* quality in Tanaka’s work it is certainly not my intention to reduce Tanaka’s aesthetic to something widely held to be the epitome of Japaneseness, particularly as *wabi sabi* has been appropriated in recent years by U.S. authors who have inaccurately applied it to various aspects of Western culture. Koren, for example, sees *wabi sabi* as related to “many of the more empathic anti-aesthetics” such as beat, punk, and grunge.¹⁸ Robyn Griggs Lawrence, author of *The Wabi Sabi House*, writes, “There’s no right or wrong to creating a wabi-sabi home. It can be as simple as using an old bowl as a receptacle for the day’s mail, letting the paint on an old chair chip, or encouraging the garden to go to seed.”¹⁹ Yuriko Saito, however, emphasizes that “*wabi* aesthetics’ celebration of irregularity, imperfection, incompleteness, and insufficiency... is not an indiscriminate celebration of anything imperfect, insufficient or disorderly.”²⁰ The tea ceremony itself is highly formalized, structured to the most minor detail. The *wabi* items used in the tea ceremony “are aesthetically effective *because* they are placed in a space with strict geometric lines of a *tatami* mat border,

¹⁶ Steve Odin, *Artistic Detachment in Japan and the West: Psychic Distance in Comparative Aesthetics* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 99, 282.

¹⁷ Leonard Koren, *Wabi Sabi For Artists, Designers, Poets, and Philosophers* (Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 1994), 21.

¹⁸ Leonard Koren, *Wabi Sabi For Artists, Designers, Poets, and Philosophers* (Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 1994), 10.

¹⁹ Robyn Griggs Lawrence, “Wabi-Sabi: The Art of Imperfection,” *Utne Reader* (Topeka KS: Ogden Publications, 2016), 2. originally in *Natural Home*, September-October 2001.

²⁰ Yuriko Saito, *Everyday Aesthetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 171.

the regular pattern of the mats woven straws, and the regular geometric shapes of windows.”²¹ Saito emphasizes here that these objects, such as tea bowls with chips or cracks, form a contrast to the tearoom itself, the space in which the ceremony is performed.

So while there is a *wabi* quality in Tanaka’s work, it does not function in the same way as *wabi* does in the traditional arts. It is not presented within a symmetrical frame. Often, in fact, as I will demonstrate, Tanaka’s stagings extend the space; breaking the frame of the space and extending the action of the dance outside of the audience’s field of visibility. Tanaka urged his dancers to apply qualities of asymmetry, incompleteness, age and brokenness *to the body itself*, and in this his aesthetic is unlike any of the traditional Japanese performing arts.

The Need for a Group

In my interview with Kobata Kazue she suggested that what she describes as Tanaka’s “resignation to accept the need for a group,” may have come out of a conversation she had with him on the subject of the “impossible dream.” Kobata emphasized that she did not directly propose the idea of a group to him. However, his role as a leader of group activities, beginning with workshops, expanding to include public group performances, then the founding of Body Weather Farm, began around the same time as his association with Kobata. Her allusion to Don Quixote in referencing “The Impossible Dream (The Quest),” a song from the 1965 musical *Man of La Mancha*, has a particular significance. Tanaka has often mentioned Don Quixote as an inspirational figure, as a model to be emulated. He references Don Quixote in the synopsis he prepared for the cast of *Romance: Love in Fluxus*. He identifies with Quixote, and keeps a copy of the 1972 film version of *Man of La Mancha* in his video library at Honmura. In the context of

²¹ Saito, *Everyday Aesthetics*, 171.

his need for a group, his “impossible dream” made it necessary to engage others in his embodied practice, to attempt to realize the nature and scope of his vision.

While Tanaka had and has a very sincere interest in other peoples’ movement, other peoples’ bodies, and other peoples’ ideas, he also needed a group, on a practical level, in order to expand his activities. There is an essential contradiction in Tanaka’s character that relates to his need for a group. In one sense, he maintains a high degree of ideological purity. This is a part of his mystique, and one of the reasons so many individuals have been drawn to work with him. From the beginnings of his experimental solo dance he was strongly interested in the idea of anonymity, and many of his dances at the time were performed anonymously. At the same time he holds a very high estimation of his own significance as an avant-garde choreographer, and has shown himself to be extremely ambitious. Without a group of individuals committed to supporting and participating in his vision, many of his subsequent activities would have remained impossible dreams. It was the willingness of others to follow his vision, to work extremely hard for essentially no material recompense, that allowed him in the space of a few years to move from being an anonymous avant-garde street performer to directing a full-scale production at the Opéra Comique in Paris.²² The founding of Body Weather Farm, the maintenance of a troupe of dancer/farmers, the Artcamp/Dance Hakushu summer festivals, and the group performances themselves required not only dancing bodies but also working bodies. Tanaka has always attracted large groups of people willing to volunteer their time, energy and bodies to attempt his experiments. The existence of a core group of individuals dedicated to dance and also dedicated to (or at least willing to engage in) physical labor in the form of farming work and set construction was necessary for Tanaka to develop his ideas about the body, space, and subject through experimentation with other bodies.

²² Majuku’s first performance at the Opéra Comique was *Can We Dance the Landscape?* in 1987.

Early Happenings

Tanaka's first group dedicated to dance and farming was *Maijuku*, which was formed in 1981. Prior to that, between 1977 and 1981 Tanaka devised a few performances that involved other bodies. These early group works resembled happenings or task-based dance, using people from his Body Weather workshops who had an interest in performing. Like his other early collaborations they employed avant-garde tactics such as minimalism, site specificity, and a questioning of the relation between audience and performer. Performed in the streets of Tokyo, they involved combinations of actions such as someone taking off their shirt very slowly over the course of an hour, or noisily dragging an iron plate along a street. In a very early "Body Weather Performance" in the busy area of Shibuya, Tanaka and some people from his Body Weather workshops covered a church in huge rubber airbag.²³ One difference between these and his later group dances (as well as the autonomous collaborations discussed in Chapter Two) was that the performers were not trained. The performances consisted of actions that anyone could engage in. It was not until the formation of *Maijuku* that Tanaka began to devote significant energy to the development of a group dedicated to collaboratively creating dance performances while training, rehearsing, laboring, and living collectively. From the beginning of *Maijuku*, there was a clear distinction between the experiential research of Body Weather Laboratories, discussed in Chapter Three, and the performance oriented work of *Maijuku*.²⁴

Maijuku was formed immediately following Tanaka's tour across Japan with Milford Graves and Derek Bailey. During the tour many young people witnessed Tanaka's dance for the first time. According to Kobata Kazue, some of these who were hungry for a type of avant-garde activity saw Tanaka as a guiding force and became strongly interested in working with him in

²³ Kobata, interview by Zack Fuller.

²⁴ Bonnie Sue Stein, "Min Tanaka: Farmer/Dancer or Dancer/Farmer; An interview," *The Drama Review* 30, No. 2 (Summer, 1986), 148.

some way. Immediately following the *MMD* tour, in fall of 1981, Maijuku I was formed from members of the Body Weather Laboratory who were interested in creating performances.²⁵ The early *Maijuku* was a collection of musicians, dancers, and artists. Some of them had taken one or two workshops with Hijikata; others had no formal dance training.²⁶ Hisako Horikawa joined the group in 1978, and became a primary member, often given separate billing in promotional materials for performances.

Maijuku and The Rite of Spring.

The period around the initial performances of *The Rite of Spring* at the Hakushu Summer Festival in 1989 and The Opéra Comique in Paris in 1990 was an important period in the development of Tanaka's group work. Some of the members of Maijuku had been living at Body Weather Farm since its inception in 1985.²⁷ Their communal rural life provided a wealth of shared physical experience, ample opportunity for research and rehearsal, as well as abundant resources for space and materials to be used in the creation of constructed performance space. The opening of the non-profit performance space Plan B in 1982 allowed Tanaka to experiment freely with small scale group dances, as well his own solo collaborations, without having to undergo any sort of curatorial process. At the same time, Tanaka's notoriety in Europe, the management of Kobata Kazue, and his alignment with figures such as Felix Guattari, Michel Foucault, and Roland Barthes, allowed him the opportunity to make international contacts with major figures in the visual arts and to produce large scale productions abroad.

The solo and group performances at Plan B allowed Tanaka and the members of Maijuku to experiment extensively with lighting and set design. Maijuku members constructed sets and

²⁵ Maijuku was re-formed each year of its existence. Former members refer to Maijuku 1, Maijuku 2, etc. in reference to this.

²⁶ Kobata, interview.

²⁷ It should be noted that because Body Weather Farm was not self-sustaining at this time, not all of the members of Maijuku lived there year-round. Members would sometimes take jobs in Tokyo, or in the case of non-Japanese members, return to Europe to make money so that they could come back to the farm and work.

operated lights for performances there.²⁸ Providing opportunities for the dancers working with him to develop and perform solo dances, whether improvised or choreographed, was something that continued through the Tokason period. Later dances such as *Romance*, and Tokason's *Return to Bones* were essentially collections of simultaneously-performed solos. The opportunity to create and perform solo dances for live audiences gave the dancers more opportunities to experiment with ideas that they might use in later group performances. Tanaka's rehearsal process required individual dancers to generate their own movement material, and the solo dances gave Maijuku members an opportunity to focus intensely on developing their own dance.

The group also engaged in weekly training workshops. These workshops were specifically for the core members of Maijuku, and focused on their development as dancers. According to Quoiraud, Tanaka organized these workshops because "He needed our bodies in front of his eyes."²⁹ These workshops were important both for the dancers' training and so that Tanaka could be inspired through observing their training. These workshops were of a different nature than the ones I have previously discussed. While Tanaka's summer workshops contained many elements that could be applied to dance, the vast majority of them were open to people who had no background in the performing arts. Tanaka emphasized repeatedly that they were not intended as a basis for dance. Based on Quoiraud's notes and my conversations with her, these workshops for Maijuku prior to the *Rite of Spring* were geared specifically towards the development of Maijuku as a dance group, and towards developing a body of material to be used in performance. In contrast to the open workshops these closed workshops emphasized the idea that there would be observers, that the studies undertaken would be witnessed by an audience. Unlike the larger

²⁸ Christine Quoiraud, personal communication, November 25, 2014.

²⁹ Christine Quoiraud, Skype interview with Zack Fuller, December 28, 2014.

and more open workshops that I experienced at Body Weather farm, where feedback was generally given to the group as a whole rather than individuals, in Maijuku's performance focused workshops Tanaka gave a great deal of correction, direction, and criticism to individual dancers. In this they were much more like rehearsals, and unlike the open workshops they functioned in part to generate material to be used directly in performance. There was nothing like this going on during the time that I was working with Tanaka. During the Tokasan period and the post-Maijuku interim that preceded it there was no common training (other than farming work), and the rehearsal process was more individualized. For Maijuku, the studies, image work, and explorations in the workshops provided a body of raw material for the dancers to draw from in creating dances, including group performances at Plan B, their own solo performances, and *The Rite of Spring*.

In February of 1989 Tanaka assembled the core group that would develop and perform *The Rite of Spring*. The dancers for the first version of *The Rite of Spring* were Katerina Bakatsaki, Andres Corchero, Horikawa Hisako, Tess de Quincey, Christine Quoiraud, Jocelyne Montpetit, Nagatsuka Sei, Oguri, and Frank van de Ven. The first version of Maijuku's *The Rite of Spring* was an outdoor performance that took place in August of 1989, on the grounds of *Koma* shrine near Body Weather Farm in Hakushu, during a heavy rainstorm. The second version was in October of 1990, at the Opéra Comique in Paris,³⁰ with a set designed by the internationally renowned minimalist sculptor and video artist Richard Serra. In this version, the members of Maijuku were joined by several older French dancers and actresses (referred to in the production

³⁰ In 1992 the *Rite* was restaged in Eastern Europe, at that National Theaters in Prague and Bratislava, and the Sapporo Art Forrest. In 1995 a version was presented at Shonandai Cultural Center in Fujisawa, Japan. See "Dance Log: Min Tanaka," in *Min Tanaka: Between Mountain and Sea: Photographs by Masato Okada*, Kuniichi Uno, Kobata Kazue, and Matsuoka Seigo, (Tokyo: Kousakusha, 2007), 102.

notes as “*vielles femmes*” (old women). The music was by Tanaka’s longtime collaborator Noguchi Minoru.

In this dance Tanaka took a unique approach to his subject matter, broadening the scope of his subject. He engaged in a highly collaborative developmental process with his dancers, one that incorporated Hijikata Tatsumi’s image work, but was at the same time shaped by his own aesthetic sensibility. The material from this process was altered by and further developed from the performance space designed by Serra. Other than the use of Stravinsky’s score as accompaniment for the curtain call Maijuku’s *Rite of Spring* seemingly bore little relation to Nijinsky’s 1919 ballet.³¹ The subject of the original ballet was a tribe of pre-modern Russians enacting a series of rituals honoring the coming of spring, culminating in the sacrifice of a virgin girl who dances herself to death. Tanaka’s version omitted the human sacrifice, but one of the underlying themes explored in the dance (which may not have been apparent to the audience without the explanatory program notes) was the somatic consciousness of pre-modern human beings. This theme is one that reoccurs in many of his dances, is a key element in his research on the body in nature, and was the explicit subject of the 1994 Maijuku production *Ancient Women*. In his production notes for the Paris *Rite* Tanaka wrote “Our version of “The Rites (sic) of Spring represents the “necessity” of the coming of spring and of our getting together as a species.”³² He continued to describe how modern human beings have become increasingly distanced from nature and the powerful changes in nature occasioned by the coming of spring. Having lived as a farmer for about four years, Tanaka and the members of his group had

³¹ According to Tanaka’s program notes, there was a link to the original ballet through the inclusion of the “*vielles femmes*,” “who were born in France around the time that the original *Rite of Spring* was made.”³¹

³² Tanaka Min, “Production Notes: *The Rite of Spring* (first draft),” translated by Kobata Kazue, January, 1989, 1, Fichiers de Christine Quoiraud, Body Weather Laboratory (1980-1994), Japan/Paris Sacre du Printemps, 1990: Textes du Tanaka Preparatoires au Programme, Centre National de la Danse, Paris.

experienced a direct connection to nature, encountering the physical sensations of the changing seasons and observing the effects of the coming of spring on the natural world. He writes:

I started farming since 1985. Nature now means to me, as a farmer, a drama of a variety of endeavors dictated by the four seasons both macroscopically and microscopically. It is also a natural history of tragedies and comedies of living things. In nature, that is, in plants, clouds, trees, animals, mountains, insects, soil, air, water, etc., I find feasts and celebrations going on everyday. They are congregations of various species for soul-reposing, self determination and innovation.³³

The dancers in Maijuku did not represent a group of pre-modern humans celebrating the coming of spring through formalized ritual. Their “vital, sympathetic exchange with nature” involved taking nature into their bodies in an attempt to manifest the force of nature as a space where human beings of different ages and time periods comingled with animals, plants, and the weather. While the performance itself was enigmatic, the rehearsal process for the dance involved a direct exploration of diverse elements that Tanaka associated with the *Rite of Spring*, including the daily life of the dancers as farmers.

In the workshops preceding *The Rite of Spring* the group engaged in movement studies focused on designing ways to use the space, position work, image work, and the development of different walks. They prepared studies of animals, children, pre-modern people, and actions taken from daily life. Eric Sandrin’s documentary “Min Tanaka and Maijuku” shows a rehearsal for a group performance at Plan B where Tanaka gives the dancers a series of images and simultaneously demonstrates a combination of posture and gesture. Beginning with legs bent, with more weight on the left leg, his arms above his head in a circular form, fingers relaxed and open, he gives a series of images to the dancers, gesturing with his hands and arms, and demonstrating reactions to the images with his body.

³³ Ibid., 1.

You are making music. Here (gestures to indicate over the head) you have a harp. You are making the sound and you are listening to it with your ears. Your sound. Your hands become branches, old branches of a vine. You are under the tree. Many many grapes, just feeling the grapes. And you are calling your friends under the grapes.³⁴

Based on the documentary, one might conclude that this was characteristic of Tanaka's way of working at the time. This was not the case. According to Quoiraud, who was present at this rehearsal, Tanaka never demonstrated movement in rehearsal in this manner. Sandrin may have captured an uncharacteristic moment, or Tanaka may have altered his behavior for the camera.³⁵ In any case, this documentary does not give an accurate depiction of Tanaka's rehearsal process. During the time of *The Rite of Spring* Tanaka did give the dancers images to work with, but he rarely demonstrated movement for them to imitate. The dancer's movements were developed from the images by the dancers themselves. Tanaka would then modify these, altering or developing rhythm, effort, shape, and movement quality. There appears to have been several types of image work used by *Maijuku*. The first were a series of what Quoiraud describes as "Fundamental images for *Maijuku*" that were used in both training and performance.³⁶ These included a sequence given originally to the male dancers of *Maijuku* by Hijikata Tatsumi for a performance at a *butô* festival in 1985: a seemingly unrelated series combining human characters ("foolish boy" "hot lady"), animals ("flat fish" "spider"), gestures ("crossing arms" "looking through the hands"), sequential series of images of an animal underwater, and a sequence about a monkey subjected to various experiences.

The second were images that Tanaka came up with himself for particular sections of performances or for training. In *Maijuku*'s performances there was often a separation of the male

³⁴ *Tanaka Min et Mai Juku* (Tanaka Min and *Maijuku*), documentary by Eric Sandrin, "Min Tanaka and *Maijuku*" documentary Part 2/5, YouTube video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XX6nWhDvq14>, accessed December 10, 2014.

³⁵ Interestingly Tanaka recalled that Hijikata would completely change his behavior in rehearsals when there were outsiders, such as members of the press, present. See Tanaka Min, interview by Zack Fuller, August 9, 2011.

³⁶ Quoiraud, interview, December 28.

and female dancers. Men and women's sections were rehearsed separately. Sometimes specific images were given to the men or the women, at other times they were given to the group as a whole, at other times to individual dancers. Images created by Tanaka could be used, as Hijikata did, to gain a particular quality from the dancers,³⁷ or to evoke some new and unknown quality. For example, a study on making the body as small as possible, then making it as large as possible is accompanied by the image "ant becomes elephant."³⁸ At one point Tanaka divided the group into three smaller groups, giving each one a sequence of images based on a particular subject related to the themes of his *Rite of Spring*: children and old people; a woman being bathed in light; insects gradually emerging out of the ground into the sunlight.³⁹ The groups developed choreography from these sequences, and then in the following workshop session new actions and movement sequences were added from the dancers own imaginations.⁴⁰ The audience would of course have been unaware of what images the dancers were specifically working with.

In the approximately yearlong process leading up to the *Rite*, individual dancers generated their own image/action/movement combinations as well. In a rehearsal for the female dancers that took place in Hakushu for the Paris *Rite of Spring*, dancers added their own images to a basic action of walking while repeatedly lowering the body to a squatting position. Each dancer chose an image, examples include a pregnant woman giving birth, becoming a baby, a wet heavy

³⁷ See Bruce Baird, "Structureless in Structure: The Choreographic Tectonics of Hijikata Tatsumi's Butô," in *Modern Japanese Theatre and Performance*, ed. David Jortner, Keiko McDonald, and Kevin J. Westmore (Lanham MD: Lexington Books, 2006) 95.

³⁸ Christine Quoiraud, entry from a journal with unlined paper, March 24, 1989, Fichiers de Christine Quoiraud, Body Weather Laboratory (1980-1994), Mai-juku, Art Camp, Summer Art Festival in Hakushu, Festival 1989: Cahier de notes VI (travail sur le Sacre du printemps): janvier-mai 1989 + 1993 et 1994, Centre National de la Danse, Paris.

³⁹ Quoiraud, journal with unlined paper March 17, 1989.

⁴⁰ Quoiraud, journal with unlined paper March 24, 1989.

hammer in the rain, becoming small because the environment becomes big, becoming absent.⁴¹ Giving the dancers a common action and instructing them to choose images to accompany it alters and adds intention to the action while accentuating the variations of different individual bodies.

In the months prior to *The Rite of Spring* the dancers worked extensively with studies of animals. Both the Hakushu and Paris versions of the *Rite of Spring* used animal movement and imagery. In one workshop study done about five weeks prior to the Hakushu performance Tanaka asked the women of the group to make a study of five animals: dog, cat, goat, insect, and chicken. For each animal they were to come up with five “situations and movement.” The “situations” translated into physical actions. Quoiraud’s actions included, for example, dog “spinning, try to catch his tail,” chicken “plays with sand,” “shitting cat/makes a hole,” goat “fighting/ hitting goat from forehead,” fly washing face and arms.”⁴² These were all animals that the dancers would have the opportunity to observe in their daily life at the farm.

Tanaka proposed a very direct relation between the dancers daily life and their dance. In one exercise, for example, he instructed them to make a study where each one recalled all the movements he or she had engaged in that day in daily life that day, and enacted them in reverse order.⁴³ He directed the members of *Maijuku* to “extend the time” of their training into their daily life, to be consciously aware of how they were moving in daily life, emphasizing that they did not need to look for movements outside of their own experience. He instructed them to make

⁴¹ Christine Quoiraud, entry from a spiral bound journal, August 16 or 17, 1990, Fichiers de Christine Quoiraud, Body Weather Laboratory (1980-1994), *Mai-juku*, Japon/Paris: “Sacre du printemps,” 1990, Cahier de notes IV: août-septembre 1990 répétitions, Centre National de la Danse, Paris.

⁴² Quoiraud, journal with unlined paper July 19, 1989.

⁴³ Christine Quoiraud, entry from a journal with a black cover, February 10, 1989, Fichiers de Christine Quoiraud, Body Weather Laboratory (1980-1994), *Mai-juku*, Art Camp, Summer Art Festival in Hakushu, Festival 1989: Cahier de notes VI (travail sur le Sacre du printemps): janvier-mai 1989 + 1993 et 1994, Centre National de la Danse, Paris. Also Quoiraud, Skype interview with Zack Fuller, December 28, 2014.

a collection of movements from daily life, to be used in performances.⁴⁴

In preparation for the 1990 *Rite of Spring* in Paris there were extensive rehearsals that took place in Hakushu, at or near Body Weather Farm. In these rehearsals it was not possible to create a facsimile of Serra's floating panel. It was very present in Tanaka's mind, however, that sections of the dance would be performed on a panel and that the panel would often be at an angle, creating a slope. In the rehearsals, dancers were asked to think about the slope, and a path they would take down the slope.⁴⁵ Likewise Tanaka and the group rehearsed with the idea that they would be working with in Paris with a group of "vieilles femmes." Tanaka had a plan that there would be a section where the men of Maijuku would carry the French women, and different ways of carrying them were explored in rehearsals.⁴⁶

The rehearsals at Body Weather Farm culminated in an open rehearsal that was attended by the members of the open Body Weather Workshop that Tanaka was leading at the time.⁴⁷ This indicates that there was a relatively specific structure developed for the Paris *Rite*, but according to Quoiraud, much of this was dropped on arrival at the Opera Comique, and a new structure was developed inspired by Serra's set.

In *The Rite of Spring*, there was a clear distinction between the male and female performers. For the most part the performance consisted of groups of women engaged in very similar activities, alternating with groups of men occupied in their own distinct and enigmatic behaviors. There was interaction between the groups, including duet sections with male and female partners, but the dance was clearly structured for three gender specific groups: the women of Maijuku, the men of Maijuku, and the senior French women. When the Maijuku women first

⁴⁴ Quoiraud, journal with black cover, January 27, 1989.

⁴⁵ Quoiraud, spiral bound journal, August 17 or 18, 1990.

⁴⁶ Quoiraud, Skype interview with Zack Fuller, December 31, 2015.

⁴⁷ Quoiraud, spiral bound journal, August 20 1990.

appear on the platform they are all wearing white body makeup and are similarly dressed in distressed white skirts, naked from the waist up. The choreographic text describes them as “having an air of animals.”⁴⁸ In the dance they begin engaging different movements, then shift to holding similar positions, performing similar actions (though still with individual nuances in regards form and timing).⁴⁹ From a position on all fours facing downstage they shift to fetus-like positions, then to animal-like positions on all fours facing stage left. Then they begin crawling backwards down from the panel.⁵⁰ The senior women were also clearly a distinct group: they wore dark dresses, entered together holding branches, repeating “casual movements/gestures such as walking, squatting, holding hands and other playful movements.”⁵¹ Later they all carried water in different types of containers.⁵² The men are described as engaging in shared actions at their entrance, carrying “iron instruments” and “growling, screaming, crying, calling one another, roaring, laughing, limping, trembling in spasm—almost in trance.”⁵³ This appears to have been changed in rehearsal, the film shows them entering slowly and quietly. Later they are “playing the iron instruments with their body (sic) in a bizarre manner.”⁵⁴

This division by gender seems to have occurred frequently with Maijuku, and was much less usual in the rehearsals and performances that I experienced with Tanaka. In dividing his dancers by gender, Tanaka may have been influenced by Hijikata, who composed dances for all male and all female casts, as well as mixed groups.⁵⁵ The division of roles along gender lines is of course

⁴⁸ Tanaka Min, “Production Notes,” 1.

⁴⁹ *The Rite of Spring*, film document by Eric Sandrin, “Min Tanaka-The Rite of Spring,” part 1/7 and 2/7, YouTube video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E9QrTA-Q4Xg>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rdJa2Sh80os>, accessed August 12, 2015. The sequence described above begins at 6:15 on part 1/7 and finishes at 2:49 on 2/7.

⁵⁰ See Figure 3.

⁵¹ Tanaka Min, “Production Notes,” 1.

⁵² Tanaka Min, “Production Notes,” 5. Note: the pagination of this document is not consistent, the third and fourth pages are both numbered 3, and the fifth page is not numbered.

⁵³ Tanaka Min, “Production Notes,” 3.

⁵⁴ Tanaka Min, “Production Notes,” 3.

⁵⁵ Kurihara Nanako, “Hijikata Tatsumi: The Words of Butoh,” *The Drama Review* Vol. 44, No.1 (Spring 2000): 20, 21.

standard in many types of dance, including classical ballet. Tanaka may have been interested in gender as a specific type of physical difference, exploring how different types of bodies reacted to the same images and exercises. He certainly has a strong interest in pre-modern cultures and in imagining the way that the bodies of “ancient men and women” moved, and that movement would have been influenced by the division of labor according to gender found in those cultures. In *The Rite of Spring* the theme of the fertility ritual at the core of the original ballet, which Tanaka’s version internalized within the dancer’s bodies, could be expressed to the audience in part through this division.

While these etudes of animals, insects, ancient women and men, and activities from daily life were incorporated into *The Rite of Spring*, these studies were not meant to result in decipherable representations of specific subjects. Movements and actions from daily life, for example, were abstracted. At the same time Tanaka emphasized having a motivation for movement, not simply turning or walking, but doing so with a purpose: “To put will in the movement.” In one study for a duet the instruction was to “Walk towards the wall on one line. At one point turn and look towards your partner. Change (the) nuance of your chest, turn, degree of turn, speed, timing, nuance of the walk, neck, walking three times,” Tanaka told them to have a clear motivation for the action: “Because of what are you looking back?”⁵⁶

In the years that I danced with him Tanaka often emphasized motivation, frequently employing that exact word when giving direction, as he did with *Maijuku*. The term is one that for me carries associations with realism in acting technique, including the stereotype of the method actor asking, “what’s my motivation?” In Tanaka’s case, the goal was not psychological realism, but an engagement of the body’s inner stream. As I have discussed in previous chapters,

⁵⁶ Quoiraud, journal with black cover, February 3, 1989.

the idea of two streams in the body: an outer stream of visible movement and inner stream of imagery, intention or motivation, is of great importance in Tanaka's approach to dance. While most spectators are primarily aware of the outer stream, the inner stream underlies and adds qualities to that movement. Tanaka was insistent that his dancers avoid pantomime, or presenting actions in a way that could be directly read by the audience. In preparing for *The Rite of Spring* Tanaka frequently exhorted the dancers "Don't do, but dance." That is, do not show the audience the action or character, but dance it. In feedback to one dancer Tanaka spoke "You are trying to show the form or trying to act the image. After that, what can you do? (The) observer is like reading, finish(ed) to spend his feeling." Instead Tanaka proposed that the dancer "not finish the form completely." This would allow the audience time: time to complete the image, form, or action in their mind; time to take in the vibration transmitted from the dancer to the audience.⁵⁷ In Tanaka's view the difference between mime and dance is that dance should involve a degree of obscurantism: "You don't need to explain to show. Movement is much more inner movement... as an audience I wanted to feel the movements inside of yourself." As an example he contrasted the mime of Marcel Marceau who "has to do everything to tell the audience" with traditional dances from Africa and Australia where the movements are often taken from daily life but do not precisely imitate the actions of daily life in the way that a mime or an actor would.⁵⁸

In the animal studies as well, the goal was not to actually transform into a chicken, for example. "It's not imitation. We need to have some position to do the movement as a human. Of course structure of the body is different between human and animals. For example, a goat cannot open their size so much. We have to go into their sensitivity."⁵⁹ One goal of this study was to develop the ability to capture the sensitivity, feeling, or essence of the animal, and with this it

⁵⁷ Quoiraud, journal with black cover, February 17, 1989.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Quoiraud, journal with unlined paper, July 19, 1989.

would be possible to engage in activities that the animal itself could not, while maintaining that essence. One could do things that a goat could not do, such as opening up the body, but maintain the essence of the goat.

Tanaka feels that “to show the form” robs the audience of feeling and imagination. If a dancer treats an image or action as a mime would, showing a finished form or action, the observer is simply “reading,” and has no need to engage imaginatively or emotionally with the dance. If one performs an action that is complex, motivated, and incomplete it sends a vibration to the audience without explanation.⁶⁰ The observer then needs to actively engage his or her imagination in order to resolve the effect of that vibration, by completing it in the mind or by taking in its complexity without ascribing a particular meaning to it.

The idea of a work of art as a collaboration between artist and observer is one that has been a central concern of much experimental work in the visual arts, theatre, and dance in the twentieth century.⁶¹ Tanaka may have been influenced by the theories of Marcel Duchamp, whose dictum that “The viewer completes the work of art” was a central tenet of the Fluxus group⁶² as well as those artists involved in the Tokyo neo-dada experiments of the 1960’s.⁶³ His idea that representational mimesis robs the audience of their imagination is similar to Vsevolod Meyerhold’s rejection of naturalism as a style that “denies...the spectator’s ability to imagine for himself.”⁶⁴ Much of the work of the Judson choreographers demanded that the audience co-create the dance, the most extreme example being Trisha Brown’s 1969 *Skymap*, where Brown

⁶⁰ Quoiraud, journal with black cover, February 3, 1989.

⁶¹ For an in depth analysis of the role of the audience in theatrical production, see Susan Bennett, *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception*, second edition (New York: Routledge, 1997).

⁶² See Peter Frank, “Ken Friedman: A Life in Fluxus,” in *Artistic Bedfellows: Histories, Theories and Conversations in Collaborative Art Practices*, Holly Crawford, ed. (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2008), 163.

⁶³ See William Marotti, *Money, Trains and Guillotines: Art and Revolution in 1960s Japan*. Durham NC, Duke University Press: 2013.

⁶⁴ Vsevolod Meyerhold, *Meyerhold on Theatre*, ed. and trans. Edward Braun (New York: Hill and Wang, 1969), 27.

invited members of the audience to lie on their backs and use their imagination to create or travel across a map on the ceiling of different locations in the United States.⁶⁵

A similar idea can also be found in Japanese aesthetics. One characteristic of *wabi* aesthetics is for an object to appear incomplete: unfinished, broken or flawed. Yuriko Saito writes that an object that is incomplete, such as an old vase with a missing handle, encourages the person viewing it to complete it in their imagination.⁶⁶ It is also related to the concept of *ma* (between space). As previously noted, Tanaka sees *ma* as a key concept in his work and life. In this view the dance takes place in between the dancer and the observer, as well as between subject and space. While his early, naked, public performances often achieved what the Tokyo neo-dada artists of the 1960's called an "agitating effect" (*kakuhan sayô*) on the general public, his instructions to the cast of *The Rite of Spring* suggest a relationship with the audience where the viewer is actively engaged in the creative process. In this way the dance is ultimately a co-creation of the performers and the audience.

These unfinished actions and gestures that *Maijuku* engaged in were also multi-layered and omni-centered. The dancers in *The Rite of Spring* were asked to have the body engage in two or three different, unrelated actions at the same time, to separate the head from the action in which the body was engaged, for example. In one rehearsal for a section consisting of a group of simultaneously performed duets, the dancers researched "the past and history of the human walk" while their hands were "working hands" moving from the memory of actions employed in

⁶⁵ Wendy Perron, "One Route from Ballet to Postmodern," in Sally Banes, ed. *Reinventing Dance in the 1960's: Anything Was Possible* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 137-150. Perron experienced the piece as being invited "to cross a fantasy terrain." Gia Kourlas interprets it as "instructing the audience on how to mentally create an overhead map" see Gia Kourlas "A Twist on Getting Dressed: Try Doing it While Dangling.," *Dance, The New York Times*, February 14, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/15/arts/dance/15brown.html>, accessed January 16, 2016.

⁶⁶ Saito, *Everyday Aesthetics*, 186.

the labor engaged in during every day life, with the “feeling of the bones, not of skin.”⁶⁷ This sequence combined two unrelated pedestrian activities with individuated movements of the head and neck. The phrase “past and history of the human walk,” refers to the idea of attempting to return the body to the state of pre-modern human beings. In the manifesto “The Community for The Rite of Spring,” Tanaka wrote “I have respect for our ancestors whom we can trace infinitely back into the past,”⁶⁸ and in the choreographic scenario for the *Rite*, he indicates that “The men and the one woman in the front area walk like ancient men (our ancestors...)”⁶⁹ The combination of a pre-modern body, unfinished hand gestures derived from the daily experience of the dancers, and a quality of movement initiating from the bones resulted in a complex abstract dance that was evocative, without being figurative (in the sense of a presenting recognizable characters or actions from daily life). The idea of moving from the bones (“feeling of bones, not skin”), with a minimum amount of muscle is one that Tanaka would repeatedly emphasize in his later work with Tokason. In my experience, beginning with *Romance*, and continuing into the work with Tokason, and the *Forest Project*, he would often tell us to use less muscle or even no muscles. One quality that he was attempting to bring with this was a lack of muscular tension in the body. Frank Van De Ven stated that Tanaka occasionally expressed this idea in the Maijuku period, and that seems to be what the phrase “feeling of bones, not skin” refers to here.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Quoiraud, spiral bound journal, August 24, 1989.

⁶⁸ Tanaka, “The Community for The Rite of Spring,” 2.

⁶⁹ Tanaka, “Choreographic Text,” 4.

⁷⁰ Frank Van De Ven, interview with Zack Fuller, Itxassou Pays Basque, France, July 19, 2007.



Fig. 17 Maijuku's *Rite of Spring*, Opéra-Comique, Paris, 1990, with Richard Serra's floating panel and a film projection of the artist's hand in the background. Photograph by Charlie Steiner.



Fig. 18 Maijuku's *Rite of Spring*, Opéra-Comique, Paris, 1990.
Photograph by Charlie Steiner.

Ultimately the structure of the dance was determined by the place of performance. Once rehearsals were moved to Paris, the performance space elicited new actions and movements from the dancers. Serra's set consisted primarily of a large platform controlled by a crane that could be lifted and tilted at different angles. At the rear of the stage a film of a hand repeatedly snatching pieces of paper was projected at different points in the dance. Serra conceived his design prior to the beginning of Maijuku's rehearsal process, without knowledge of the themes Tanaka would be exploring with the dancers. Rather than the set being designed to support the dance, the dance was completely restructured by Serra's set, and for the performance in Paris Tanaka created a new score of images, actions, and directions, throwing out much of the material that had been developed in Hakushu. While in the rehearsals in Hakushu, Tanaka had urged the dancers to imagine the slope of the panel while developing their material, upon

encountering the space it became clear that it was not possible to develop choreography for a dance on a floating, moving, tilting panel without experiencing the use of the body necessitated by such a spatial element. The material on Serra's floating panel was developed in Paris on the panel itself.⁷¹

Serra's panel was the dominant spatial element of the *Rite of Spring*. It was an extremely versatile set piece, and Tanaka made full use of its possibilities. His choreographic text describes it in an early scene as looking "like a large farmhouse roof,"⁷² and later as "a gateway into darkness."⁷³ Dancers could perform either on or under it. It could be made to look smaller by the use of light. It could be lowered entirely to the floor, and then raised up to form a massive wall, as occurred towards the end of the dance. The panel could support the weight of at least six dancers, could be raised into the air or lowered completely to the ground, and could be tilted at any angle. It was located towards the rear of the performance space, thus it could function as a second stage, or could be isolated through the use of lighting as the space for a single scene. In an early section of the dance, Tanaka performed a solo, with the female dancers in silhouette on the panel behind him. In another section the women danced on the panel, engaging in animal like movements, wearing white body makeup, while the men danced in front of it wearing suits. Tanaka's use of the panel emphasized the separation of the male and female figures.

Some of the most powerful moments in the dance occurred when the panel moved. In the sequence that Figure 18 is taken from the panel both initiated the dancers movement and required that they adjust their physical positions, shifting weight in order to maintain physical control on the tilting panel. In Sandrin's film of the dance one can see this very clearly. At ten minutes and eighteen seconds into the dance the panel is tilted with the downstage side lower

⁷¹ Quoiraud, interview with Zack Fuller, November 1, 2014.

⁷² Tanaka, production notes, 2.

⁷³ Ibid. 6.

than the upstage. The women are moving while curled up in fetus like positions, either on their backs or sides, engaged in micro movements. The men are in front of the panel, holding large objects made of sheet metal that the choreographic text describes as “functioning like musical instruments.”⁷⁴ The entire panel is then lowered, and then the downstage side rises so that the platform is more level, necessitating a weight shift that alters the dancers’ positions. When the platform becomes more level, the women move into animal-like positions. Then when the platform tilts, lowering the side towards stage left, the women move backward down the slope, and exit, leaving Horikawa Hisako alone on the panel. Horikawa dances a solo at that point, the men with their instruments in front.⁷⁵ In this section the dancers were clearly responding directly to stimulation from the space, taking cues from movement of the panel, and altering their positions to accommodate its movement.

The French rococo style of the interior of the Opéra Comique contrasted strongly with both Serra’s set and the qualities displayed by the dancers of *Maijuku*. The stark, monolithic panel and giant hand were framed by what the noted American theatre architect J.E.O. Pridmore described in 1903 as “without a doubt the most elegant and beautiful proscenium in any theatre in the world.”⁷⁶ Notable features of the theatre’s proscenium arch are the molded angels in its upper corners. One moment in the dance serves as a particularly striking example of Tanaka’s engagement with space. Tanaka’s scenario calls for one of the angels to fall from the arch onto

⁷⁴ The choreographic text describes the men as “playing their instruments.” The instruments made no sound and because of the slowed down and incomplete gestures and the disconnected gaze of the dancers this image may not have been obvious to the audience.

⁷⁵ *The Rite of Spring*, YouTube video, 2/7, 1:04-3:35.

⁷⁶ J. E. O. Pridmore, “Observations on European Theater Building,” *The Muse* edited by Charles Elston Nixon, Vol. 3, No. 5 (June 1903), in *The Muse*, Volume 3, 305-311, Google E-book, 308, <https://books.google.com/books?id=jw3AAAAMAAJ&pg=PA304&dq=pridmore+“Observations+on+European+Theater+Building.”&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0CCMQ6AEwAWoVChMIh9rH2ZDmxwIVhaqACh2N-QCy#v=onepage&q=pridmore%20“Observations%20on%20European%20Theater%20Building%2C”&f=false>, accessed June 16, 2015.

the stage below.⁷⁷ This was accomplished by the construction of a rather grotesque “angel” constructed of stuffed fabric that dropped onto the stage about two minutes into the dance, landing on the stage with a loud noise. While the women of *Maijuku* danced, animal-like on the suspended panel, lit by the projected video, Tanaka danced with the angel. In this section Tanaka brought the spatial element of the theatre architecture separating the stage from the auditorium into the dance itself, at the same time extending the action of the dance out of the proscenium frame. The falling of the angel from the proscenium arch and Tanaka’s subsequent dance with it was simultaneously a symbolic damaging of the space, an incorporation of the architecture of the theatre itself into the contrasting set which it contained, and a very immediate interaction with the space that treats it as a collaborator: the angel moves from being decoration to becoming an equal partner in the dance.

⁷⁷ The choreographic text refers to the angel as a “cast mold” and makes no reference to Tanaka actually dancing with it. This plan appears to have been altered, for Sandrin’s film of the dance shows an angel that is a large stuffed doll.



Fig. 19 Tanaka dances with the angel fallen from the proscenium arch in *Rite of Spring*, Opéra Comique, Paris, 1990. Photograph by Charlie Steiner.

In summary, the subject of the 1990 *Rite of Spring* was Tanaka's vision of a *Rite of Spring* manifested in nature itself, an extension of the original subject of primitive people honoring seasonal change through ritual. The process involved in its creation was closely related to the process involved in the Body Weather Workshops Tanaka was leading at the time. The influence of Hijikata Tatsumi on the dance was a very direct one, involving the use of verbal imagery to develop dance material, in some cases imagery created by Hijikata himself. The set or performance space was constructed independently of the dance, and ultimately required that the dancers, after rehearsing for many weeks, develop new material as well as alter previously developed material in relation to the space itself. Ultimately the structure of the dance was

formed in relation with the space, including the architecture of the theatre in which it was performed.

The Interim Period and Romance: Love in Fluxus

Maijuku disbanded in 1996, after performing the dances *I Saw a Whale on the Grassland* (Sôgen ni kujira o mita), *I Was Born of the Earth* (Watashi wa tsuchi kara umareta), and three dances based on the works of L. Frank Baum: *Scarecrow of Oz* (Ozu no kakashi), *Tin Figure of Oz* (Ozu no buriki), and *Wizard of Oz* (Ozu no mahoutsukai). In the interim period between Maijuku and the formation of Tokason in 2000 Tanaka continued directing group dances. However, rather than maintaining a group who trained, worked and performed together, he assembled groups of performers for specific projects. The year that Maijuku disbanded Tanaka created a dance adaptation of Antonin Artaud's *The Conquest of Mexico*. Titled *El Conquista*, it was performed at a festival dedicated to Artaud (Artaud 100 Anos) in Sao Paolo, Brazil featuring Tanaka and a group of Brazilian dancers assembled for the project. *El Conquista* was then brought to Japan in 1997 and the dancers lived and rehearsed at Body Weather Farm for several weeks before the performance at Setagaya Public Theatre in Tokyo. In 1997 Tanaka recreated the 1994 *Munch: Dance of Life* with Norwegian dancers; developed *Grimm Grimm I* with dancers and actors from the Czech Republic, and *The Poe Project: Stormy Membrane*, with a cast of U.S. based performers who developed and rehearsed the dance while engaging in farming work at Body Weather Farm. In 1998 he restaged *Grimm Grimm I*, then created a completely new dance based on the Grimm's tales, titled *Grimm Grimm II*, in Prague with Czech performers. He then brought *Grimm Grimm II* to Japan, restaging it with Czech and Japanese performers who rehearsed and farmed together at Body Weather Farm. In the same year he

directed a dance version of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* in the city of Oita Japan. The performers were primarily dancers trained in classical ballet from the city where the performance took place.

While Tanaka had been working outside of Japan for some time previous to this, on projects that included choreographing for several opera productions in Europe, this appears to have been the first time he was bringing groups to Japan for specific productions and having them engage in farming work while rehearsing at Body Weather Farm.⁷⁸ It was during this interim period that I began dancing with Tanaka, beginning with *The Poe Project*. The creation of this dance involved the development of physical characters derived from Poe's stories. The focus on the creation of complex individual physical characters marked a shift in Tanaka's approach to group work. In *Maijuku*, dances were constructed from elements such as image work, animal studies, or studies of generalized human types, such as children or pre-modern human beings ("ancient men and women"). There was no focus on creating individualized characters. The emphasis on character that emerged during the interim period carried through into the final performances of *Tokason*.

Tanaka's approach to character development was neither formalized nor consistent. In *Poe Project*, for example, the dancers created multiple characters more or less related to those in Poe's stories and under Tanaka's direction constructed a score of physical actions, movements, and movement qualities for these characters. The dancers shifted from character to character. In many sections of the dance there was no indication as to who our characters were or how they related to Poe's stories. In *Grimm Grimm II* the characters were taken directly from the folk tales collected by the Grimm Brothers: the brother and sister on a journey, Rapunzel, the long-nosed princess, various witches. Some of the characters were identifiable to audiences familiar with the source material, some were not, but each was clear to both the individual performers and Tanaka

⁷⁸ The contract for *Poe Project* stipulated that the dancers participate in farming work.

himself. In *Godot* there were clearly assigned roles for Vladimir, Estragon, Pozzo, Lucky, and the boy, and the other dancers represented multiple reflections of these characters.

Certain strains of post-modern dance have been very resistant to the depiction of character, a resistance stemming in part from an initial urge to break away from what was seen as an overly psychological/emotional approach to character in Graham style modern dance. In an interview with Pé Vermeersch in 2000, Tanaka responded to a suggestion that the use of the word “character” in directing dancers might be limiting.⁷⁹ His response indicates a very complex approach to the use of character in dance, involving his idea of the body’s inner and outer streams.

It’s a step to get free. If you are always only you, this is very limiting. By bringing somebody else into you, you can get much more freedom. Because you cannot be that person, you have to come out from the person to yourself. To get free means to be in that person for a while, to be more yourself. You have your body and yourself. When you go in front of the people for dancing, you should bring a prepared body. In this body you have to have another body ready. This must be. Then maybe in this body you have to have maybe another yourself.⁸⁰

In this intriguing statement Tanaka verbalizes the ideal result of his approach to group choreography. For a dancer, the development of physical characters is a means of transcending one’s own limitations. Rather than limiting the possibilities of expression to the depiction of a single character, a new persona is created that is a composite of multiple characters and multiple aspects of him or herself. Complete transformation into another person is impossible, but the attempt at transformation intensifies aspects of oneself, and having another body (or “another yourself”) inside that body complicates and intensifies the dance as witnessed by the audience. Thus, when Tanaka talks about character, he is actually talking about a hybrid persona that

⁷⁹ In order to contextualize Vermeersch’s statement I would like to note that the interview and her comment took place following an early Tokason performance in New York called *Dreaming Trees: Flying in Nexus*, which was not very successful.

⁸⁰ Tanaka Min and Pé Vermeersch, “About Butoh: In Research For its Origin and Actual Meaning,” May 2000, New York City, http://www.bodyweather.net/articles/vermeesch_interview.pdf (accessed June 6, 2009).

emerges in between a series of imaginary characters and different aspects of the individual performer.

Romance: Love in Fluxus, began with the dancers developing characters, but these characters were not derived from a single literary source, and the subject of the dance was relatively abstract. The process involved in the creation of *Romance* was quite different from what I had experienced working in *Poe Project*, *Waiting for Godot*, and *Grimm Grimm II*. In these dances, characters were developed from or inspired by a single common source. In *Romance*, the characters were created from the imaginations of the individual performers.

The dancers for *Romance* were myself, Dana Iovacchini (U.S.A), Milvia Martinez (Panama), Dillon Paul (U.S.A), Maureen Phelan (Australia), Jorge Schutze (Brazil), Billy Clark (USA) Ishihara Shiho (Japan), Tamai Yasunari (Japan), and Tanaka Min.

The musicians were Frank London (U.S.A.), Mola Sylla (Senegal), Sam Bennet (U.S.A), Tamami Tono (Japan), and Joji Sawada (Japan).

The dance was presented as a “Multinational Co-Production/Dance, Music, Art...for the 15th Anniversary of Tatsumi Hijikata and Min Tanaka’s “Foundation of the Love-Dance School” with script and direction by Tanaka, music direction by Frank London, and with “inspiration” from Hijikata Tatsumi and Matsuoka Seigo.⁸¹ In a creative statement faxed to the dancers five months before the beginning of rehearsals Tanaka wrote about his plans for *Romance*, referring back to Hijikata and *Performance for the Foundation of the Love-Dance School*. At that time Hijikata was speaking about a concept of a school as “A movement driven by common identity and a strong urge.” *Romance* with an event, for example, or an object, or on a larger scale “An

⁸¹ *Romance: Love in Fluxus*, poster, private collection of author.

active volition for being alive.”⁸² In an early rehearsal Tanaka described this volition as similar to a romantic urge, but on a “wider scale than romance between humans.”⁸³

What will be common among the performers is the wish to evoke and incorporate into our body-memory very real and truthful emotions and sensations—no matter how intangible and how hard to verbalize they may be—before we and humanity as a whole fail to recall them.⁸⁴

In the synopsis that Tanaka prepared for the cast, crew, and musicians, he alluded to the figure of Don Quixote, writing that this concept of romance was “like chivalry. It is the act of breaking through history in an attempt to connect with one’s origin; or act of never giving up dreaming of the impossible. Above all, it is an act of placing one’s body there, as true self.”⁸⁵ The subject the dancers were being asked to research in *Romance* was one that was extremely abstract, challenging, and open to a wide range of individual interpretation.

The beginning of the rehearsal process coincided with the commencement of the construction of the set. The dominant spatial element of the original performance of *Romance: Love in Fluxus* was an extremely large (22 meters high) tree. The tree was “a composite tree constructed of hundreds of trees using bolts and nuts.”⁸⁶ The saplings that were used to construct the tree were of different species, as can be seen in Figure 22. There was greenery only at the top of the tree, consisting of cedar, cypress, and camellia foliage.⁸⁷ The tree was constructed in such a way as to partially obstruct the view of activities happening behind it, with a lot of empty spaces between the saplings. Dancers could move inside of the tree and climb up the tree from the inside, as in Figure 4. While the dancers did not actually rehearse with the tree until rehearsals moved to the

⁸² Tanaka Min “Creative Statement” Multinational Coproduction/Dance, Music, Art “Romance—Love in Fluxus,” in “RE: Next Project “Romance” in Japan, 1999,” Trans. Kobata Kazue, 1999, 3, private collection of author.

⁸³ Dana Iova-Koga, *Romance* rehearsal notes, August 4, 1999, private collection of Dana Iova-Koga.

⁸⁴ Tanaka, “Creative Statement,” 3.

⁸⁵ Tanaka Min, <ROMANCE---Love in Fluxus> synopsis for staging, Trans. Kobata Kazue [Scene 2], September 5, 1999, 7, private collection of author.

⁸⁶ Tanaka, Synopsis, 1.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

theatre in Tokyo, we witnessed its construction, and were always aware that it would play a major role in the dance.

The rehearsal process began with each dancer being asked to find a character and create a twenty-minute solo. In this instance Tanaka presented the concept of “character” in a very expansive way. The character needed to have very wide possibilities, to be different ages, for example, or exist in different historical times. It did not necessarily need to be male or female. Several of the dancers had recently created solo performances for the Dance Hakushu Festival, and Tanaka suggested that we could use material from those, that there was “no separation” between this and our solo dances.⁸⁸ In the subsequent weeks, rehearsals consisted of showing our solos to Tanaka while the rest of the group watched, receiving detailed individual direction on how to develop the solo, then working on our own to incorporate his direction onto our dance, adding more to it, and showing it again. Unlike in *Maijuku*, the women in the dance did not rehearse separately from the men. A duet section parodying the conventional idea of a romance was added, and a section at the beginning where the performers slowly raised bamboo poles with black flags at the top, while the *Kimigayo* (the Japanese National Anthem) played over the theatre’s sound system.⁸⁹ The bulk of the dance consisted of what were essentially overlapping and simultaneously performed solos. While the structure of the performance was quite fixed, improvisation in the nature of small nuances of gesture and rhythm were free to occur within that structure.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Zack Fuller, rehearsal notes, *Romance*, N.D. 1999.

⁸⁹ This was in response to the passage of the Act on National Flag and Anthem (*Kokki Oyobi Kokka ni Kansuru Hōritsu*), which formally instituted the *Kimigayo* as Japan’s National Anthem, resulting in its use at the beginning of sporting events. Tanaka and many other Japanese strongly objected to the passage of the act, seeing as a return to right-wing nationalism.

⁹⁰ Rehearsal for *Romance: Love in Fluxus* at Body Weather Farm, video recording by Kaori Yamashita, private collection of Zack Fuller.

The feedback or direction that Tanaka gave was most often directed at individual dancers. He would sometimes ask for a different quality or variation of the movement the dancer had proposed or add additional action, suggesting nuance to make the movement more complicated, or subtle changes in quality or rhythm. He would change the position of the dancer in relation to the audience, or ask that they vary their rhythm, or give them spatial patterns, paths through the space. At times his direction seemed focused on generating subtle changes in the qualities of the dancers' movement. Often his instructions could appear abstract.

The focus on feedback given to individual dancers was very different from that of the summer workshops, where Tanaka generally gave corrections to the group as a whole. However, there were some directions that reoccurred with enough frequency in his feedback to individuals to indicate some generalizable aesthetic criteria (as far as this particular dance was concerned). Dancers were repeatedly told to use as little muscular effort as possible: to move from the bones and initiate movement from the joints. Tanaka emphasized fragility, delicacy, the use of micro movements, and an asymmetrical omni-centered body involving the segmentation of body parts. As in *The Rite of Spring* there was an emphasis on motivation and clarity of intention for actions such as falling, running, turning, or walking.

As he did for *Rite of Spring*, at a point near the end of the process Tanaka produced a synopsis of the staging, where he described the actions and conditions or states of the figures on stage. This synopsis sometimes refers to the dancers by name, at other times by a title designating their character. The document is a mixture of quite practical information: the dimensions of the set pieces, the timing of the entrances and exits of the dancers; description of the dancers actions; and Tanaka's personal thoughts on the theme of *Romance*. His descriptions of the dancers' individual actions and movements are more detailed than the script for *Rite of Spring*, and he often includes descriptions of the motivation or emotional state of the characters

on stage. From the text it is not always clear whether these were what he saw in our work, or what he wished us to achieve.

Both Tanaka's direction to the dancers and the choreographic synopsis allude to conceptions originally formulated by Hijikata Tatsumi. The dance itself was based on Hijikata's idea of a love that transcended the conventional notion of a romance between two human beings. Another concept of Hijikata's that Tanaka worked with in this dance was that of the dancer's body being moved by a force outside of his or her own control: something or someone outside the body, or someone inside the body. Tanaka instructed Tamai Yasunari that he "should feel the pull of gravity from people underground."⁹¹ In a direction to me he told me "When you are standing, inside yourself you sit down. When you are sitting, inside yourself, you stand up."⁹²

Tanaka's direction to me is directly related to Hijikata's idea that he had a deceased older sister who lived in his body and would move before he did. In his 1969 essay "Being Jealous of a Dog's Vein" he wrote: "I keep an older sister living inside my body. When I am absorbed in creating a dance piece, she plucks the darkness from my body and eats more than is needed. When she stands up inside my body, I can't help but sit down. For me to fall is for her to fall."⁹³

In developing my part in *Romance* Tanaka directed me to walk as if there was another person inside my body (like Hijikata's sister) taking a step before I did, with my own movement following after. He stated that he had seen this quality before in my dance in an earlier rehearsal, but I had lost it. "Sometimes you want to move, somebody moved before your movement. You get confused, then start moving. Or when you walk, there is somebody start walking before you."⁹⁴

⁹¹ Iova-Koga, rehearsal notes, August 18.

⁹² Fuller, rehearsal notes.

⁹³ Quoted in Baird, Bruce, *Hijikata Tatsumi and Butoh: Dancing in a Pool of Gray Grits* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 112.

⁹⁴ Rehearsal for *Romance*, video recording #3.

It was not an image that I had been consciously working with; I had my own stream of images, like the other dancers. I attempted to incorporate this image into my dance, and was more or less successful. Tanaka's synopsis reads:

Zack's walking is enigmatic. Someone else is constantly moving before he moves himself. Before he sits down, something inside his body sits down. Perhaps, for instance, somebody is whispering within him "I am determined to go to the deepest end of sorrow."⁹⁵

The idea that Hijikata had an older sister who was sold into prostitution and then died is a fiction, part of Hijikata's self-mythologizing account of his childhood in Tohoku.⁹⁶ Tanaka's direction to use that image as a means of generating an enigmatic quality in a dancer's movement suggests that for dance itself, whether Hijikata's sister was sold into prostitution and died or not is not as important as the idea of someone else inhabiting the body and moving before they do. This particular conception of Hijikata's corresponds with the idea of omni-centrality that is such a fundamental aspect of the ideology of Body Weather. In *Romance: Love in Fluxus*, this omni-centeredness so fully present in the rehearsal process was characteristic of the set as well.

⁹⁵ Tanaka, synopsis for staging, 4.

⁹⁶ Baird, *Hijikata Tatsumi*, 111.



Fig. 20 Stage set for *Romance: Love in Fluxus* prior to a dress rehearsal at Setagaya Public Theatre, Tokyo, September 1999. Set design by Suzuki Keishi, still frame from a video recording by Charlie Steiner.



Fig. 21 *Romance: Love in Fluxus*, first entrance of the dancers and musicians, Setagaya Public Theatre, Tokyo, September 1999. Set design by Suzuki Keishi, still frame from a video recording by Charlie Steiner.



Fig. 22 *Romance Love in Fluxus*, Setagaya Public Theatre, Tokyo, September 1999. The wall at the rear of the stage with Ishihara Shiho “extruded from the geologic strata.” Set design by Suzuki Keishi, still frame from a video recording by Charlie Steiner.



Fig. 23 *Romance: Love in Fluxus*, Setagaya Public Theatre, Tokyo, September 1999. Milvia Martinez drinks sap from the “composite tree.” Set design by Suzuki Keishi, still frame from a video recording by Charlie Steiner.

Space

The great tree composed of different varieties of sapling that was the principal set piece was placed at the front and center of the main stage, just under the proscenium arch. Another composite structure of saplings was placed a few feet from the tree itself, extending downstage on a diagonal, representing the roots of the tree (see figures 20 and 21). This gave the appearance of a root system extending into the earth and then emerging above ground again. This relates to a motif that appeared frequently in Tanaka’s stagings, that of the “underground world:” a world under the earth inhabited by the dead and figures from dreams and folklore. In some of his group

dances the underground world was directly visible to the audience. In *Return to Bones* for example, the stage was raked backwards, so that the upstage area was much lower than the downstage, and parts of the dance occurred under the stage and were visible to the audience. In *Romance*, the underground world was unseen, but evoked by the roots emerging from underground to the surface, then back down again. It was also present in the inner stream of some of the dancers. Tanaka's synopsis describes the character of Milvia Martinez as wanting to become a one legged scarecrow, whose one leg is "a key to the gate to the underground world."⁹⁷ Tamai Yasunari is described as being struck by and becoming one with an "earth spirit," and myself as "drowned by gravitation and going toward the underground world."⁹⁸

At the rear of the stage was a moveable wall having the appearance of "geologic strata" eight meters wide and two and one fifth meters high.⁹⁹ The area in front of this wall was primarily occupied by Ishihara Shiho, who is described in the synopsis as "the woman of the wall,"¹⁰⁰ and "extruded from the geologic strata."¹⁰¹ A wooden airplane approximately two meters long, hung from the second floor balcony, and early in performance it "flew" slowly to the tree, suspended by wires.¹⁰² The airplane was formed like a "fighter plane," and according to the synopsis "it looks like a human body, but it could also be the alter-ego of the Big Tree."¹⁰³

The entire stage floor was covered with asphalt saturated felt, or roofing felt, a material similar to tar paper and normally used as an inner layer of lining material covering a wooden roof, which shingles are then laid on top of. Later Tokason performances frequently used this

⁹⁷ Ibid., 3.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 4.

⁹⁹ These measurements and description are from the synopsis, 1.

¹⁰⁰ Tanaka, synopsis, 8.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 2.

¹⁰² The tree was constructed under the direction of Suzuki Keishi by a host of anonymous volunteers during the Dance Hakushu Festival. The dancers participated a little bit in its construction. The wall was also designed and created by Suzuki Keishi.

¹⁰³ Tanaka, synopsis, 2.

roofing material as a dance floor, which Tanaka preferred to wood or conventional Marley dance flooring because of its ability to absorb light. While its non-reflective quality was the sole reason Tanaka gave for using this material, he must also have been aware of how it stimulated the dancers' bodies. Asphalt felt is everything a conventional dance floor is not. It is sticky; it provides a lot of resistance to the feet or whatever part of the body is in contact with it. It is abrasive, and marks the dancers bodies with scrapes and black streaks. Rather than making it easier to execute certain movements, such as turns, it makes them more challenging.

The group was costumed in distressed white and tan kimonos, our torsos bound with heavy organic Manila rope. This rope both stimulated the dancers bodies and restricted our movement to some degree. Each of us had a mailing label attached to us, with the name of a specific place in the world where we would be shipped to, as if we were packages. The destinations were chosen by the individual dancers and the mailing labels were so small as to not be visible to the audience.¹⁰⁴ To me this suggests a further extension of the space, a subtext of being headed towards somewhere else, somewhere we would like to go, being pulled towards a space far from the Setagaya Public Theatre.

Like the performance space itself, the characters in *Romance* were shifting, multivalent, and ambiguous. Different dancers at different times performed multiple characters simultaneously, or transformed from one character to the next. The synopsis describes Milvia Martinez as a woman losing her leg, a woman who wants to become a scarecrow, an old woman, and an infant who wants to drink sap from the tree.¹⁰⁵ Dillon Paul is described alternately as woman with unusable wings, and a caterpillar entering a chrysalis. Tamai Yasunari is described as a man possessed by

¹⁰⁴ The exception to this was Ishihara Shiho, who was naked for the first part of the performance, then had an oversized white robe placed on her by stage hands which she wore for the rest of the dance. Ishihara remained separate from the other dancers, she did not participate in the duet section.

¹⁰⁵ Tanaka, synopsis, 2.

an earth spirit, and as “carrying other beings inside his skin.”¹⁰⁶ Billy Clark chose to work with the character of a shaman, and Tanaka proposed that he was a shaman “who enacts Don Quixote made of dry branches.”¹⁰⁷

The choreographic synopsis did not fully detail the multiplicity of personae that each dancer worked with. According to the synopsis Dana Iovacchini’s character, was simultaneously a (male) pilot, a girl waiting for the pilot, and the pilot’s mother. She is described as experiencing a “multiplicity of emotions.”¹⁰⁸ According to Iovacchini herself, another figure she worked with in the dance was Onada Hiroo, the Japanese soldier who remained in hiding in the Philippines for the thirty years after the end of World War II because he did not believe that Japan had surrendered. Tanaka saw Onada’s story as exemplifying the idea of romance that we were working with, and he suggested the character to Iovacchini after discussing her initial movement studies of the pilot.¹⁰⁹ Ishihara Shiho is described at various times as a skeleton, a puppet, an “unborn baby,” and a young girl. From our conversations at the time I know that she was very focused on exploring the figure of the *oiran*: a pre-modern Japanese prostitute that Tanaka describes in the program notes as “anonymous, no name, no pedigree”¹¹⁰: the “ancient woman” who reoccurred in many of his dances. Tanaka also suggested, in an instruction given to Ishihara, that the omni-centered body could include a center outside the body, relating this to the body of the *oiran*, who he sees as having an omni-centered existence including a center that existed outside their body.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 3.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 4.

¹⁰⁸ Tanaka, Synopsis, 1.

¹⁰⁹ Dana Iova-Koga, phone interview with Zack Fuller, September 4, 2014.

¹¹⁰ Romance: Love in Fluxus, Program.

¹¹¹ Iova-Koga, Rehearsal notes, N.D.

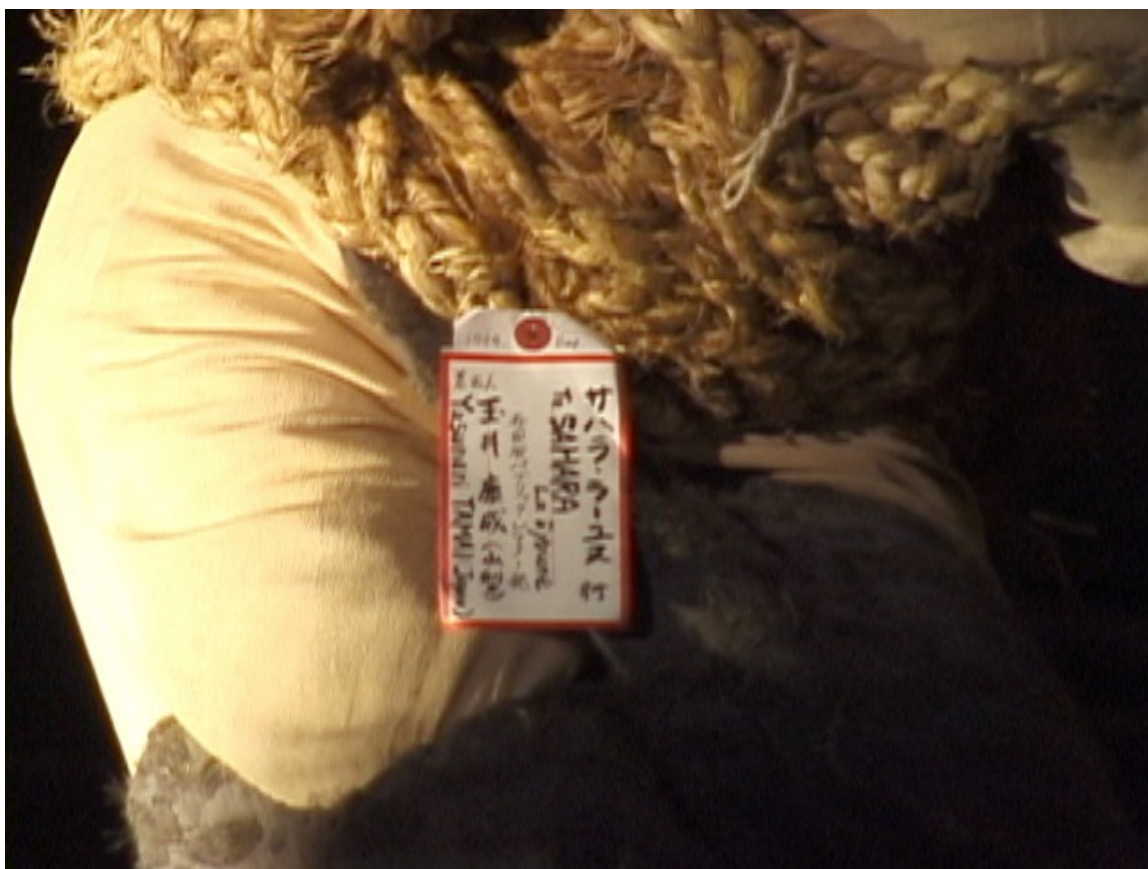


Fig. 24 *Romance: Love in Fluxus*, Setagaya Public Theatre, Tokyo, September 1999. Mailing label on Tamai Yasunari's costume indicating that he is to be shipped to the Sahara. Still frame from a video recording by Charlie Steiner.



Fig. 25 *Romance: Love in Fluxus*, Setagaya Public Theatre, Tokyo, September 1999. Tamai Yasunari dancing next to the roots of the great tree. Set design by Suzuki Keishi, still frame from a video recording by Charlie Steiner.

The music for *Romance*, like the spatial elements of the tree and the wall, was brought in after the structure of the dance was more or less complete. Tanaka suggested a basic structure to the musicians: there would be sections where the musicians played individually, sections when they played together, and the order of the solo and group sections would be consistent from performance to performance. Under the direction of trumpeter and composer Frank London, the musicians improvised within that structure.¹¹² This structured improvisation was framed by two musical compositions: the recording of the *Kimigayo* at the beginning of the dance, and the

¹¹² *Romance* rehearsal, videotape #4.

American spiritual *Amazing Grace* performed by the musicians at the end, during Tanaka's final solo. The other sounds in the dance were the sounds of thunder, accompanied by lighting effects suggesting flashes of lightning.

Concerning the relation of the dance to the music, Tanaka's direction was that it should be very independent.¹¹³ It was very important that the musicians not follow the dancers movements or "make the music *for* the dance" (have a similar rhythm or attempt to evoke a similar mood as the dancers). Likewise the dancers should not follow or visibly react to the music. In feedback to the cast after the first rehearsal with the musicians he emphasized that the "music does not need to create a scenery" for the dancers, but that "dance and music have to meet (here he gestured to make the form a triangle with his fingertips meeting above his head) somewhere else."¹¹⁴ This relationship between music and dance was and is present as a general principle in Tanaka's dance, an aesthetic quality that he values highly.

As with *The Rite of Spring* Tanaka's feedback to individual dancers during the rehearsals for *Romance* often included directions that took the dance material we created and altered it in accordance with a poor or *wabi* aesthetic. At one point early in the development of my solo his feedback was that my movements were too sharp, that "they must be diffused, like if you drop water on paper,"¹¹⁵ as in calligraphy where parts of the character are lighter than others.¹¹⁶ His feedback to Dillon Paul, a dancer with a strong background in contemporary dance technique, suggests a connection between a poor aesthetic and the avoidance of direct representation: "If I say I am an elephant, it is not necessary to express this, for it is for me. I want broken technique, broken beauty, before the technique. After the technique now it is well-known beauty."¹¹⁷ Here

¹¹³ This is consistent with the approach Tanaka uses in his improvised collaborations.

¹¹⁴ *Romance* rehearsal, videotape #4.

¹¹⁵ Zack Fuller, rehearsal notes, *Romance*, N.D. 1999.

¹¹⁶ Dana Iova-Koga, rehearsal notes, *Romance*, N.D.

¹¹⁷ Iovacchini, rehearsal notes, n.d.

again images are to be kept in darkness: they inform the movement, but are not expressed directly. In contrast to post-modern choreographers such as Trisha Brown, whose early improvisational experiments gave way to an approach to choreography characterized by strong dance technique and works that were precisely planned and rehearsed in regards to gesture and timing, Tanaka valued the imprecise, the incomplete, and the broken, eschewing any demonstration of technical virtuosity.

Both the set and the dancers' bodies displayed elements that could be described as *wabi*. Koren characterizes *wabi sabi* as “earthy, imperfect, and variegated.”¹¹⁸ This describes the spatial elements of the wall and the tree, as well as the costumes worn by the dancers. It is also present in the dancers positions and movements. In Figure 25, Tamai Yasunari's asymmetrical position is in accord with the space to such a degree that his right arm unconsciously echoes the shape of the tree “root” to his left. The poverty and the earth tones of his costume, even his skin, free of makeup, darkened by exposure to the summer sun in the course of his daily life as a farmer, displays a poor or *wabi* quality.

While sharing similar aesthetic values and methodological principles, the process used in the creation of *Romance: Love in Fluxus*¹¹⁹ was very different from that employed in *The Rite of Spring*. It was much more individualized. Unlike the work with *Maijuku*, Tanaka did not initially give the dancers images to develop material from; the vast majority of the images used in making the dance came from the dancers themselves. He often did not even ask what individual images the dancers were using. There was no common pool of images, as there was in *Maijuku*. There were no training workshops for the group (although the cast participated in the open workshop

¹¹⁸ Koren, *Wabi Sabi*, 24.

¹¹⁹ Tanaka used the title *Romance* for two (very different) dances that he presented at Performance Space 122 in New York City, in 1998 and 1999. Billed as his solo performances, I appeared in these as well as a shadow figure.

that took place during part of the rehearsal process). All of the cast members participated in daily farming work.

The performers in *Romance* developed composite personae, similar in nature to the “composite tree” that dominated the stage and was composed of different species of tree. Their activities were not presented through demonstrative mimeses, but obliquely, with the intention behind the actions obscured. Rather than representing individuated characters, the character studies and the transitions between these multiple identities, engaged in incomplete, broken or blurred actions, constituted the movement score for each individual dancer. The dancers did not appear to be dancing as “characters” because their characters were not mimetically described and there were no costume changes to indicate that a dancer was changing from one character to another.

The independently developed scores of the dancers were shaped by the place of performance, principally by the tree that was its most prominent element. We were aware from the beginning of the rehearsals that a huge tree would dominate the performance space, and we imagined the tree in our rehearsals. We witnessed the tree being built and participated in its construction.¹²⁰ When we moved to the theatre both the tree and the roofing felt covered floor changed the choreography we had developed, and new actions and movements emerged from our bodies from the stimulation of the space. Even without touching the tree directly, actions were shaped by the tree. The dancers felt an energetic pull from the tree, even when walking away from it or moving around it. The tree shaped the dance to such an extent that when *Romance* was performed in Europe, where we did not have a set, we needed to imagine the tree to provide motivation for our movement.

¹²⁰ The tree was constructed primarily by volunteer staff under the direction of Suzuki Keishi. The dancers also participated to a lesser degree.

Tokason and the Goya Series

Tokason was formed in the spring of 2000. Originally the group consisted of Ishihara Shiho, Dana Iovacchini, Nobuyuki Kikushima, Jorge Schutze, and Harada Yuji, who were living and farming full-time at Honmura farm, and Tamai Yasunari, Suzuki Keishi, Natsui Hidekazu, Milvia Martinez, and Maureen Phelan, who were living at Body Weather farm. I myself stayed at Honmura for periods of time in 2000, participating in farming work, rehearsals and performances.¹²¹

The formation of Tokason marked the beginning of a core group of dancers completely dedicated to farming as a practice of training and daily life. For Maijuku, training had consisted of Body Weather workshops and farming, with a strong correlation between workshop exercises and performance. In the interim period Tanaka worked with dancers with eclectic backgrounds in regards to movement and performer training, many with little experience of either Body Weather workshops or farming. For Tokason, farming itself was the training, and there were long periods when there was no dancing. While some Tokason members trained individually, practicing yoga, running, or meditation according to their personal inclination, farming itself was the primary mode of training, and the members lived and worked together, either at Body Weather Farm, or at Honmura. One of the principle crops grown at Honmura was tea, and there were long periods of time (weeks or months) with no rehearsals or workshops, when all that the members of Tokason living there did was tend to the tea bushes. In addition to the effect that this intense daily labor had on the bodies of the dancers, the practice of the carpentry skills required in

¹²¹ While it can be said that I was an early member of Tokason, I was never a dedicated farmer, and never lived at Honmura or Body Weather Farm for more than three months at a time.

farming work helped them become adept at constructing sets and stages, spaces that were often directly related to the materials used in farming life.

Tokason's first dance work was *Despair of the Wind* (Kaze no shitsui), at Plan B, with lighting by Tanaka's daughter Ami Tanaka, and electronic music by Takuya Takahashi. These two would provide lighting and sound for Tokason throughout most of the group's existence.¹²² Soon after this inaugural performance the group began an extended research into Francisco Goya's *Los Caprichos*. All of the performances of the *Goya* series were derived from *Los Caprichos*: a series of eighty etchings in aquatint, depicting various aspects of human folly. While the creation of *Romance* began with the dancers creating characters from their own individual imaginations, the *Goya* series, began with a common subject: a shared body of source material. Beginning with *From Goya's Etchings* in early 2000 until *To Be Liberated from Freedom-On This Culpable Constitution* in 2002, Tanaka staged more than seventeen different group dances based on *Los Caprichos*. The *Caprichos* themselves depict various types of human folly that Goya saw in the Spanish society of his day. They present a richly grotesque array of witches, devils, soldiers, gossips, goblins, bad parents, quack physicians, drunkards, criminals, laggards, and fools. Creatures part human and part animal appear next to vain and superficial members of the bourgeoisie, deceiving and being deceived by other members of their class.¹²³ The aristocracy and the priesthood are given their due, and there is an anti-clerical theme in many of the etchings.¹²⁴ As dance material Goya's etchings provided a range of unusual male and female characters employed in diverse physical actions, postures, and attitudes. While the stories of Poe and the Grimm Brothers presented a similarly diverse array of characters, in

¹²² Timeline, 104.

¹²³ See Francisco Goya, *Los Caprichos* (New York: Dover Publications, 1969).

¹²⁴ Philip Hoffer, "Introduction to the Dover Edition," in Francisco Goya, *Los Caprichos* (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), 4-5.

Goya's etchings the characters were rendered visually, and in an aesthetic style that accorded well with Tanaka's own.

In Tokason's *Caprichos* based dances, Goya's characters were decontextualized: there was no attempt to research or represent the cultural context of Goya's work. Each dancer created a repertory of characters from the etchings. Duets or trios were developed using characters from different etchings. In the rehearsals that I participated in Tanaka emphasized that while each plate depicted the character frozen in a particular moment, we needed be able to imagine the existence of that character in other situations. If a character was depicted as standing, for example, we needed to imagine how that character would sit, lie down, walk, run, etc. After developing several of these, we would then string together unbroken sequences of characters, actions, and movements, shifting from one character to the next, often overlapping or blending characters. The result was a collection of complex personae rather than a series of distinct characters. Different sections of the dance consisted of simultaneously performed solos, as well as sections where the dancers actively engaged with each other in duets or trios.

Characters from different plates were combined in the same dance sequence. In one rehearsal we were asked to choose three of the etchings and isolate three elements in each one, then create a dance from those elements. For example, plate number 20 "They Already Go Plucked" (figure 26) shows two women with brooms shooing little figures that look like walking plucked chickens with the heads of men. I selected the upper torso and arms of a woman holding a broom above her head, the same woman's foot, and the buttocks of one of the plucked chicken figures, and created a composite character from those elements.

With the *Goya* series Tanaka brought a new emphasis to the use of the face. In the early Tokason period, Tanaka often referred to Hijikata's work with Ashikawa Yoko. The works Hijikata choreographed for Ashikawa in the later part of his life, such as *Human Mold* (Hitogata)

drew on her ability to transform into a series of diverse characters. These transformations included strong changes in facial expressions, resembling a series of masks. On several occasions Tanaka related a story of Hijikata throwing an ashtray at Ashikawa during a rehearsal, screaming, “I don’t want to see Yoko Ashikawa’s face!”



Fig. 26 Francisco Goya, Los Caprichos, Plate 20: “Ya Van Desplumados” (They Already Go Plucked), 1799. Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Goya_-_Caprichos_20.jpg .

While having a common source, the process involved in creating the dances was still very personal, and the members of Tokason generally had distinct personal styles, habits, and qualities that made them highly individual in performance even while their dances were shaped by

Tanaka's aesthetic sense.¹²⁵ The individuated figures of the *Caprichos* were transformed through a collaborative process into omni-centered personae. Each dancer created movement phrases composed of layerings and combinations of specific characters and elements of characters taken from Goya's etchings. In addition to blending different characters, and creating composite characters from elements of different characters Tanaka encouraged the dancers to "steal" movements from each other, resulting in even further distancing from the original source, complicating and abstracting the source material. In accordance with Tanaka's "body anarchy:" the anti-hierarchic ideal, no one owned a particular movement, or a particular character.



Fig. 27 Tokason performance of *Goya's Forest* (*Goya no mori*), Nanorium Garden, Fujiyoshida City, April, 2000. This image shows the area closest to the audience, but the action

¹²⁵ Maijuku member Frank Van de Ven, in a Skype interview on November 10, 2014 related that he was struck, when he first saw Tokason perform, by the individuality of the performers. In his view, Maijuku was very much about developing a "group body," and was in this regard a very different project than Tokasan.

of the dance extended into the depths of the forest behind. Still frame from a video recording by Kaori Yamashita.



Fig. 28 Main platform for *Terraced Paddy of Goya*, Shikishimacho Town, Yamanashi, April 2000. Courtesy of Dance Resources on Earth.



Fig. 29 *Hanamichi* for *Terraced Paddy of Goya*, Shikishimacho Town, Yamanashi April 2000. Courtesy of Dance Resources on Earth.

The body of material developed by each of the dancers was reconfigured for and altered by each successive performance space. Figures 26 through 28 show scenes from three different performance spaces used in the *Goya* series. The first is from *Goya's Forest* at Nanorium Garden, Fujiyoshida City in 2000, and the second two are from *Terraced Paddy of Goya*, at Shikishimacho Town, Yamanashi in 2000.

The space for *Goya's Forest* was a forested area adjacent to an arts center. The photo here shows the front area of the performance area, where platforms were constructed on the ground, covered with asphalt saturated felt. Other platforms formed narrow bridges between trees, thirty feet or higher above the ground, and sections of the dance took place on these. There were also pulleys in the trees, and dancers wearing harnesses could be raised and lowered by

crew on the ground hauling on ropes (there was no attempt to conceal the ropes or the people manipulating them). Different characters would enter the visual field of the audience from quite far away in the depths of the forest. Lighting was in the form of torchlight and metal bowls containing flaming camping fuel, supplemented by electric lighting instruments. Because many of Tokason's performances used very dim lighting: torches, candles, or camping fuel, the existing video documentation is of poor visual quality and does not give an authentic sense of the spatial practice occurring in an actual production. The video recording of *Goya's Forest* and the still from it I have included here did not capture the multiple levels and extension of the dance from the area directly in front of the audience into the depths of the forest, the road behind it, and the ropes and pathways high up in the trees.

Other outdoor performances of *Goya* took place during daylight hours. *Terraced Paddy of Goya* was performed for an audience composed primarily of farmers, in Shikimacho, a small town in Yamanashi. The feeling of this work was generally lighter and more comedic than most of the others in the *Goya* series. The dance was timed to take advantage of the natural change in lighting that occurred as the day shifted from afternoon to evening. It began just prior to dusk and was timed to finish just after sunset, at which time the performance culminated with a display of fireworks.

Terraced Paddy of Goya took place inside of a flooded rice field. In early spring, when the performance took place, the field would normally have been dry, so it was flooded specifically for the performance. A large stage was constructed near the center of the rice field, covered in asphalt roofing felt, with a narrow *hanamichi* style platform extending from the edge of the field to the main platform (see Figure 29). The dance was performed on the stage, on the *hanamichi*, and in the mud and water of the rice field itself. Prior to a very brief (two day) rehearsal for the performance the dancers had already accumulated a repertoire of material from

previous *Goya* dances. Each of us then developed new material, combining this with reconfigurations of characters, composite characters and actions from previous performances. Elements of the dance that had previously been developed for and performed on a stage, were now performed in waist-high water on a base of mud. The space altered the quality of those elements, and provided physical sensations that could be added to the individual dancer's repertoire and used in future dances. The space also produce an element of risk and uncertainty, as did the inclusion of two chickens and a goat who entered with the dancers and were then allowed to improvise freely, adding further unstable components to the dance. The goat and the chicken are examples of elements of the daily life of the dancers brought into the performance (a practice that Tanaka had initiated in the *Emotion* series in 1982). The dancers' wore the same *jika-tabi* that they wore while engaged in farming work: close-fitting, flexible rubber-soled canvas shoes covering the ankles that separate the big toe from the other toes.¹²⁶ Additionally, Tanaka placed a bicycle in the watery field itself, then moved it around to different locations in the space. By placing it in the water with the kickstand engaged he could pedal in the field without travelling, spraying the other dancers with muddy water.¹²⁷

With this extended study of Goya's etching's Tokason members developed a repertoire of characters, composite characters, actions, and images that they could draw from to create entirely new dances in a very short time. With each performance these were arranged in new combinations, combined with new material, and shaped by each new space that the series was performed in.

¹²⁶ While lightweight *tabi*, such as *shiro-tabi* (white tabi) are used in traditional Japanese performing arts, these are more like socks. The heavier *jika-tabi* would be clearly recognizable as workers' shoes to a Japanese audience.

¹²⁷ There was a fleet of old bicycles in various states of disrepair at Body Weather Farm, kept for use by the workshop members.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have analyzed the process involved in the creation and performance of three group projects choreographed by Tanaka Min. In each of these dances: *The Rite of Spring*, *Romance*, and the *Goya* series, there was a different process of development involved, a different relationship between subject and space, and a different relation to the source material. In each there were also common elements: a collaborative process, a strong influence from the work of Hijikata Tatsumi, and a privileging of the place of performance. In each, Tanaka shaped the material developed by the performance in accordance with his own aesthetic values.

The group dances were part of an interconnected and developing process of dance and daily life, affording opportunities for Tanaka and his collaborators to experiment with the construction of space through set, lighting, and costume. Elements of daily life were brought into the performances, not only in the form of physical objects, but in the body memory of the performers, and at times in very conscious ways using actions taken from daily life as a basis for dance movements.

Each of the group dances were experiments in spatial practice, exploring the relation of the human being with place. In *The Rite of Spring* the set was designed and conceived independently by an artist unaware of the dancers' rehearsal process. In *Romance* the set was conceived and constructed in relation with the dance and there was a similarly composite nature to both characters and space. The dancers in the *Goya* series developed a vocabulary or repertoire of material that could be arranged, selected from and added to, enabling them to create new complexly structured dances in a very short amount of time in a variety of different spaces. In many instances the dancers engaged directly with the spaces prior to rehearsal or performance in the form of physical labor that shaped, constructed, or altered the space. The dances were in turn shaped by the spaces they were performed in, and the spaces stimulated the dancers bodies.

The slope of the moving panel, the asphalt saturated felt dance floor, the mud and the water and the grass and twigs and dirt of the forest all gave stimulations to the dancers that altered their movement.

As demonstrated in the above examples Tanaka preferred spaces, whether constructed or found, that involved multiple stages or levels within a larger space.

Many cases involved an opening of the space, breaking the frame of the space, or questioning the notion of a frame. Tanaka's dance with the angel in *The Rite of Spring* symbolically broke the frame of the proscenium arch of the Opera Comique. The tree roots leaving and re-entering the stage in *Romance* extended the space into the underground world. The actions of *Goya's Forest* extended into the tops of the trees and to areas of the forest that could not be seen by the audience.

Hijikata's influence on these dances was evident in Tanaka's use of image work in *The Rite of Spring*; the idea of romance as a powerful urge for connection with something greater than oneself in *Romance: Love in Fluxus*, the shifting series of complex characters and the use of the facial expression in the *Goya* dances. In separating dancers by gender, as he often did in Maijuku's dances, Tanaka may also have been following Hijikata's example. The group dances were pervaded by Hijikata's influence in their high degree of aesthetic obscurantism: in each of the performances the dancers were motivated by stories, intentions, characters, images, and actions that remained in darkness, hidden from the audience but informing their motivation and thereby the quality of their movement.

Hijikata's example was also a strong influence on the development of stage personae in the group dances. The dancers in these works embodied omni-centered subjects. In *The Rite of Spring* dancers were divided into gender specific groups, with each group engaging in the same or very similar actions at the same time, while sometimes working with different images

individually that altered the quality of those actions.¹ In *Romance* each dancer was for the most part completely separate from the others, following their own score of actions and movements informed by imagery unique to their individual character, with relations between characters usually occurring by chance. In the *Goya* series, dancers developed a repertoire of complex characters from a shared body of material, interacting with other characters in duets, trios, etc.²

Tanaka's role in choosing, conceptualizing, or altering the space for the performance was one aspect of the way that he shaped each dance according his own aesthetic sensibility. The qualities that he valued in set and costume were similar to those that he valued in the body: poverty, anti-virtuosity, asymmetry, and omni-centrality. In the costumes and set these values were achieved through the use of stark, raw or weathered materials, and costumes consisting primarily of street clothing. In the dancers' movements it involved the avoidance of representative mimesis, the prevalence of asymmetry, an ambiguous intentionality (having a motivation for doing something that is not demonstrated or disclosed), and an eschewal of skillful or decorative movement for its own sake. His dancers employed segmented bodies, with different parts of the body engaged in multiple unfinished gestures and actions. While Tanaka repeatedly emphasized motivation, and collaboratively created dance sequences based on images, characters, actions from daily life, or the movements of animals or plants, at the same time he generally insisted that his dancers avoid pantomime or direct representation in their dance.

Tanaka's role in the creation of the group dances was to instigate, shape, and develop the material generated by the dancers. In this he was, like many post-modern choreographers,

¹ While there was at least one Tokason performance where only male dancers performed, separation by gender was much more common in *Maijuku* than in *Tokason*.

² While both *Rite of Spring* and *Romance* included duet sections, these duets were conventional female/male pairings. In *Romance* the duets were parodies of the conventional idea of romantic love.

exploring alternatives to the conventional hierarchy of Western concert dance, where a single choreographer determines the movements of each dancer. His own particular methodology was one of choreographing through language: spending many hours carefully observing studies prepared by the dancers he worked with, then giving them detailed individual feedback.

Observing and dancing with others also fed his own practice of dance: he would often “steal” as he called it, movements from other dancers and use them in his own dance, and would encourage us to do the same. The process of rehearsing for a group performance generated new material that he could use in other contexts.

Conclusion

When I began formally interviewing Tanaka for this dissertation, I informed him that I planned to write about his solo dance, training, group dances, and work as a farmer. He responded: “My impression about what you spoke now, Tokason’s work, Maijuku’s work, solo work, farming work, relation with the farming and space: it’s blocked.”¹ He went on to say that for him there is no separation between these activities, and that none of them are ever finished. I however, initially experienced them as very distinct from one another. The workshop exercises did not constitute a basis for dance, as is the case with most dance training. The group dances were highly structured, while the improvised collaborations were entirely unrehearsed. I often found the farming work tedious and did not feel that it contributed very much to my development as a dancer.

The more I examine these specific aspects of Tanaka’s work the more I come to understand them as different manifestations of an experimental practice of dance and daily life informed by common principles. Therefore I have emphasized in each of these chapters, and stress again here the interconnectedness of these aspects of improvised dance, training, and choreography, and that in Tanaka’s experimental practice nothing is finished, nothing is ever complete. Tanaka’s improvisation, training, and choreography each involve a process of the accumulation of physical stimulations from physical spaces, other bodies, and manual labor. In each omni-centrality and multiplicity is privileged over the mastery of cleared defined form. Each involves ongoing experimentation in researching space through and in relation with the physical body. In all aspects of Tanaka’s practice, space, rather than being subservient to the needs of the body, alters the body, shaping both dance and daily life, in a reversal of the conventional hierarchy found in each.

¹ Tanaka Min, interview with Zack Fuller, August 8, 2011.

Among those influenced by Tanaka's work there is an ongoing discussion about whether Tanaka's work should be considered as entirely separate from *butô*. I argue that it should not be considered distinct from the *butô* of Hijikata Tatsumi, whose ideas have strongly influenced all aspects of Tanaka's practice, but that the concept of *butô* as a viable category of dance should be reassessed. Hijikata's image work influenced Tanaka's improvised dance and development of the polyrhythmic body. Tanaka's workshops incorporated that image work as well, and Hijikata's work with Ashikawa Yoko inspired the character and position work in some of the later workshops. In Tanaka's choreography, as in Hijikata's, dancers embodied multiple persona or hybrid characters, but these were composed of actions, images, and characters developed in collaboration with other dancers, rather than from the singular imagination of an individual. Hijikata was also a major influence on Tanaka's exploration of the relationship between body and language. Overall, it was the intensity of Hijikata's existence and his continuous experimentation that inspired Tanaka. Tanaka's insistence on not being categorized as a *butô* dancer is a critique of the idea that *butô* is a distinct genre of Japanese dance. Tanaka has stated that Hijikata was the embodiment of Body Weather,² which I have demonstrated is an ideology informing all aspects of Tanaka's experimental practice. This statement complicates both Tanaka's relation to *butô* and the nature of *butô* itself. I have argued here that the separation of *butô* as being something entirely separate from "Western" dance is an unproductive one, and that dance scholars should consider the contributions of Hijikata Tatsumi and Tanaka Min as important to the field of post-modern dance as, for example, the contributions of dancer/choreographers Merce Cunningham and Yvonne Rainer.

Pierre Bourdieu defines the field of cultural production as "the system of objective relations" between various agents or institutions and as "the site of the struggles for the

² Tanaka Min, interview with Zack Fuller, August 9, 2011.

monopoly of the power to consecrate, in which the value of works of art and belief in that value are continuously generated.”³ In theatre and dance, the field of cultural production is increasingly a global one. The construction of *butô* as a Japanese dance form allows non-traditional Japanese dancer/choreographers to acquire symbolic capital in the globalized field of cultural production. While Tanaka’s dance career has certainly benefited from his association with *butô*, he has not allowed that association to compromise his avant-garde practice, which is deeply concerned with a struggle for agency within a habitus increasingly defined by global capitalism. Though his dance is not overtly political in the sense of criticizing or proposing political policies, in his refusal to rely primarily on government or corporate sponsorship, to define a style, movement, or form, to deliver a consistent cultural product, he maintains a freedom to practice continual experimentation. As I have demonstrated, his philosophy is that in order for the body to have any degree of freedom, one must continuously alter the physical conditions of daily life as well as those of improvisation, training, and choreographic method.

Tanaka Min is full of contradictions. One of the most striking was his insistence on an absence of any hierarchy in his group when he was clearly the one in charge, to the extent of determining when the members of his group woke up, what they would eat, and their daily activities. Those around him clearly treated him as a leader, a teacher, a *sensei*. Despite this, the principle of a non-hierarchic methodology is of utmost importance in his practice. The anti-hierarchic or heterarchic principle of Body Weather is manifested in Tanaka’s autonomous collaborations with various musicians and found spaces. It appeared in his workshops in the equal valuing of bodies at different types and levels of training and technical skill, of struggle and confusion over mastery, and in an omni-centrality of the individual and social bodies

³ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1993), 78.

present. Tanaka's choreographic method was also highly collaborative and dealt with space as a factor that altered choreography to a high degree, a practice that reversed the conventional hierarchy of space as subservient to or supportive of finished choreography. In his embodied philosophy the development of the dancer involves physical labor in the form of set construction or adding elements to a pre-existing space, tasks that are generally relegated to stagehands and technicians. Most importantly, it requires a conscious practice of daily life as farmer. Tanaka's identity as dancer/farmer should be viewed in the context of the legacy of the avant-garde of the 1960s, where the blurring of art and daily life was an important aspect of many experimental arts. Allen Kaprow wrote that his Happenings were focused on "doing life consciously:" presenting activities from daily life as performance.⁴ The Tokyo neo dada artists in the 1960s brought their art into the daily lives of people as an "agitating effect" (*kakuhan sayô*). Tanaka created a similar agitating effect in the 1970s with his own body. The blending of dance and daily life has been present in Tanaka's work since he first broke away from the modern dance style. His early "naked" dances such as *Hyperdance* often involved interventions into the daily lives of unsuspecting people and at the same time were so frequent that during that during that time improvised dance effectively constituted the bulk of Tanaka's daily life. *Emotion* introduced elements of daily life in the form of objects and physical actions into his performances, elements that have been prominent in Tanaka's improvised dance and choreography ever since. Farming, as Tanaka practices it, involves "doing life consciously" on a daily basis. It is an extension of his improvised research of space via the body, a non-commodifiable method of dance training, and shaped the aesthetic values of his choreographic projects. This can be said of no other figure in contemporary or post-modern dance.

⁴ Allen Kaprow, "Performing Life," in *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, ed. Jeff Kelley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 195.

The essential principles of Body Weather: collaboration, omni-centrality, continual change, the exploration of the relationship between language and the body, and the blurring of the boundaries between art and daily life can be found individually or in some combination in the work of various experimental dancer/choreographers who began developing new approaches to dance in the 1960s: Anna Halprin, Simone Forti, and the members of Judson Dance Theatre and Grand Union in the U.S. Hijikata Tatsumi, Ohno Kazuo, and Kasai Akira in Japan. Tanaka, who initiated his experimental practice in the 1970s, combined these principles and embodied them in improvised dance, training, and choreography in ways that no other dance artist has done. His choice of organic farming as a lifestyle and livelihood is the most radically unique aspect of that practice.

Tanaka maintains that dance is not a job for him. Calling his dance by different names (*Butai/Drive/Hyperdance*), ceasing the use of the term Body Weather for his workshops once that term had become established as a designation for a training method, changing the name of his group, all demonstrate a desire to resist the commodification of dance practice. Though Tanaka once stated that he prefers to think of farming as his profession rather than dance,⁵ his approach to farming is no less experimental than his approach to dance. He never approached it as just a “job,” in the sense of its sole purpose being to make money. The easiest way to make money by farming is to grow one or two large crops, while Body Weather Farm grew a very wide variety of vegetables using very few machines, with the vast majority of labor being done by hand.

⁵ Pétra Vermeersch, “About Butoh: In Research For its Origin and Actual Meaning; An Interview With Min Tanaka,” *Contact Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2002), 30.

Viewed from the outside, Tanaka's activities as a dancer can appear entirely distinct from his daily life. He never presented farming work itself as performance, as did David Levine in *Bauerntheater*, for example.⁶ In his *oeuvre*, daily life directly influences dance directly and is informed by the same ideological principles. In a discussion with PS 1 curator Alanna Heiss in 2007 Tanaka positioned his farming work as a natural extension of his practice of dance in the 1970s, when he was dancing multiple times each day at outdoor sites, exposing his body to the elements. "In 1970's I was struck with an idea to connect body and weather. This allowed me to make a major leap in terms of my imagination and creative activities. Body weather and farming became reality in 1980's in words as well as in terms of the way we live." This quote expresses a direct relation between the ideology of Body Weather as manifested in the early naked dances and Body Weather Workshops and farming as a practice of daily life. What I have done in this study is to make that relationship concrete. While the concept of a connection between body and weather remains enigmatic and provocative, there are clearly identifiable ways that the principles of the ideology of Body Weather have manifested in various aspects of Tanaka's work, and clear ways that farming has shaped and informed that work. On the most basic level life at Body Weather Farm provided a means of subsistence income for Maijuku and Tokason members, as well as access to space for rehearsals and a variety of materials to be used in set construction. However, the aspect with the broadest implications for experimental dance is the idea of farming as dance training, which constitutes a decommmodification of dance pedagogy.

In an interview that I conducted with her in 2011, Horikawa Hisako, a very early member of Maijuku who worked closely with Tanaka for over ten years, related that after moving to the farm, practicing the training exercises under Tanaka's leadership became less necessary for the

⁶ See Marvin Carlson, "David Levine's *Bauerntheater*: The Return of the Matrix," *The Drama Review* 52, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 34-43.

group. Her experience was that “Until that time Min was more of a leader for us but after that time farming work and nature was teaching us.”⁷ In my discussion of Tanaka’s summer workshops I demonstrated the importance of the idea of space as teacher. Horikawa’s statement suggests that farming subsumed Tanaka’s role as leader in an extension of the heterarchic omn centrality of Body Weather Laboratories and the Body Weather Workshops.

Tanaka approaches farming, like dance, as an opportunity for the development of somatic awareness. Living in a village where the houses had no central heating and choosing to do most farming labor by hand, farming as a practice of daily life provided a situation where the bodies of Tanaka and the dancers who worked with him were constantly exposed to varied stimulations from the weather and environment, as well as the various physical tasks involved in farming work. Farming a variety of small crops exposes the body to a variety of stimulations and physical actions, functioning as dance training not bound up with a specific cultural context. It is through a conscious practice of daily life that farming becomes training for dance. As dance training, farming cannot be codified, systematized, or marketed as a training technique. As practiced by Tanaka, Maijuku, and Tokason it was a training that differed according to the changing of the seasons, weather conditions, and the daily needs of the land. It effectively resisted any attempt to be made into a form, system, or fixed style. It is a training that is uncommodifiable, and entirely opposed to the commodification of dance practice found in contemporary *butô* that I have previously discussed. Obviously neither farming itself nor its effect on the body and consciousness of the human being are inherently uncommodifiable or freeing. Foucault considered farming work as one aspect of a hierarchical system of expressions of power where,

⁷ Horikawa Hisako, interview with Zack Fuller, September 27 2011, Brooklyn NY.

“submissive subjects are produced and a dependable body of knowledge built up about them.”⁸

Tanaka’s way of farming constituted a de commodified training for dance because of the variety of crops he grew, the connection to place, and the conscious approach to receptions of the stimulations that farming provided the body.

There is currently a dearth of scholarship on Tanaka’s work. A cognizance of Tanaka’s innovations in the interconnected areas of improvised dance, training, and choreographic method is essential to an understanding of the scope and history of experimental dance worldwide. It is also vital in contextualizing his own statements regarding his practice, as currently available in published interviews and manifestos. A clearer understanding of Tanaka Min’s experimental practice opens up rich possibilities for scholarly analysis. The extensive collection of rehearsal and workshop notes by former Maijuku member Christine Quoiraud at Le Centre National de la Danse in Paris and the video archive at Dance Resources on Earth in Yamanashi contain a wealth of primary source material available for scholarly research. The more recent improvised dance activities documented in Yutani Katsumi’s documentary *Umihiko Yamahiko Maihiko: Min Tanaka’s Dance Road in Indonesia* and Amiel Courtin-Wilson’s film *The Silent Eye*⁹ are also deserving of scholarly analysis. This work, the first in depth study of Tanaka’s oeuvre, provides an historical overview, brings to light specific examples of dance practice, clarifies the methodological principles that inform Tanaka’s oeuvre, and will serve as a basis for future scholarship on Tanaka Min.

⁸ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Random House, 1977), 294-295.

⁹ See Steve Dollar, “A Director’s Obsession with a Jazz Pianist,” *The Wall Street Journal*, April 11, 2016, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/a-directors-obsession-with-a-jazz-pianist-1460417125> (accessed September 19, 2016).

Appendix A

Tanaka Min, interviewed by Zack Fuller.¹

Yokumori House, Dance Resources on Earth, Honmura Village, Yamanashi-ken, Japan.
August 8, 9, and 12, 2011.

Interview 1: August 8, 2:00 p.m., 2011.

ZF. First I wanted to be clear about what I might do with this. I want to be very clear with you and not do something behind you.

MT. The purpose for the interview.

ZF. The purpose of the interview. I'm writing my doctoral dissertation for my PhD in Theatre Studies

TM. For doctor.

ZF. Yes, then I'll be Doctor Zack, I'll have a doctorate in theatre studies. And in my dissertation, in my thesis, I'm focusing on your work, the group work, solo work, relation to farming, and space particularly. That's basically where I am. Now I'm at the beginning of that process, so for example I'll have a chapter on group work with examples of pieces from *Tokason* and from *Maijuku*, talking about the process, the way that you work, and also the performances themselves and anything that you have to say would help to understand that process. Mostly what I feel I'm doing is kind of documenting things that are well known to people who have worked with you but in terms of what's been written about your dance people don't know about that. That's essentially what I'm doing. So the interview I would use to add to that. I would also try to publish a couple of journal articles in academic scholarly journals where I might use some of the things that you say in this interview, as well. If that's o.k. with you. So that's basically that what I would be doing is putting it into the dissertation, which would be read by four professors on my committee and then hopefully publishing a journal article for example on the use of space in *Tokason* for example, something like that, something quite specific. (Pause). So, is that clear, is there anything...? I really appreciate that you set aside the time to do this because I know that you have a lot of things going on.

¹ I have made some minor grammatical corrections to Tanaka's remarks in these interviews. I have done this only in cases where it was very clear to me what Tanaka intended to say, and that a small change would make that intention clearer to the reader. For example, when speaking English Tanaka often uses the word "are" where a native speaker would say "is." In light of this I have changed Tanaka's words in the original interview "nature are very experimental" to "nature is very experimental." I have also sometimes added small linking words such as "am" or "by," for clarity's sake. On page 28, for example, Tanaka's original words were "when I impressed somebody else," I have changed this to "when I am impressed by somebody else," since the latter is clearly what he meant. Sometimes I have corrected the tense of a word to clarify whether he was speaking about the past, present, or future. The correct use of the article "the" presents a challenge for even the most fluent native Japanese speaker of English, and I have at times added or removed it here as appropriate. In cases where I am not absolutely certain of what Tanaka intended to say, I have left the text as is.

TM. My impression about what you spoke now: *Tokosan's* work, *Maijuku's* work, solo work, farming work, relation with the farming and space. It's like blocked... blocked?

ZF: Blocks, yeah.

TM: But for me, I have one very good example. I have no concept about "the piece." Dance piece. Sometimes people say "This is my piece" of dance. I cannot understand this. Dance cannot finish.

ZF. O.K.

TM: Never complete.

ZF: Right.

TM. It's always moving. So for example in 1985 we had a performance, but that is not a *piece*, that is dance.

ZF. O.K.

TM. That is not a piece. Sometimes people are asking me, for making a profile,² "What is the most important dance piece of you?" (My answer is) everything. I have an impression, a strong impression about this experience for example. But this is not a piece, it's not finished.

ZF. O.K.

TM. All running.

ZF. Sure.

TM. That is my very important concept, for me, talking about dance.

ZF. Yes, I understand that of course.

TM. You understand? I don't call the group *Tokason* Dance Troupe now, but it's continuing. I have nobody, but continuing. I'm not making a history.

ZF. Right.

TM. All together.

ZF. I really do understand, because for example you did the Goya dances and the *Rite of Spring* with *Maijuku* and the Goya with *Tokason* and there were many pieces, or many dances that had the same title, but they were completely different, totally different structure, different...

² Or what in the U.S. we would call a "bio," to be used in program notes.

TM. Goya in Moscow. Russian people, also they had many Goya piece. Goya experience, yeah. I've a quite different way of thinking about the dance performance. People are as if they are showing a piece on the stage but I don't think so. I would like to give a chance to feel the dance for the people.

ZF. It seems to me that when you have this thing like "This is my piece," like you said people ask you what's your most important piece, and a lot of dancers or choreographers or companies have a "signature piece": something that's their most important piece, it seems to me like that in some way encourages dance to become kind of like a product or a commodity. Something that's fixed. Which is something that you talk about a lot. To not "fix" things.

TM. It's a very simple thing for me. For example, in my brain I have many many words, sentences. Good sentences, but they were not mine. I studied a lot, I read a book and I was so impressed by somebody's writing. Then through my mouth that is coming out. But I forgot who said it, who wrote this. You understand?

ZF. I'm not sure, I think so, I was just about to ask you...

TM. It became my body. It's not staying in my library. So dance is not knowledge. Dance is purely dance. So we cannot freeze the dance, as a dance piece.

ZF. So for example with *The Dance of Life*, the Munch dance that you did. What was the way that you engaged with the material or the subject of Munch's work when you started to work with that dance?

TM: First of all I visited to watch the real paintings by Munch, many many times. Then I chose several paintings of his. Then from the painting I imagined the dance. So then I could organize the whole stream of the scene from the paintings.

ZF. When I watched it again, and of course I had seen it in the theatre in 1997 and then I watched the video of it again...

TM: In Tokyo?

ZF. Yes, I saw it in Tokyo, because when I was here with *Poe Project* you were doing that and Munch at the same time.

TM: Oh yes, same year.

ZF: I think it was the first group piece of yours that I actually saw, of course after working with you, and when I watched again on the video a few days ago it really struck me the strong presence of Munch himself in the piece.

TM. Yeah.

ZF. That really hit me this time, so one question I wanted to ask was do you feel that when you are dancing with the work of a particular artist, for example Munch or Poe, Artaud, or some of

the other people that you've done. Do you feel that you are dancing with the person as much as the creation?

TM: Yes. Persons are quite big, for example Munch and Artaud also. Yeah, I keep studying, and I keep trying to feel the person. Hmm (pause) But not expressing the person. Trying to be, exist the person. As the person. But it's not acting.

ZF: A couple of days ago, you mentioned that you felt *Tokason* was your most experimental work in a group. The process when I was working with you and with *Tokason*, was of course you never showed us any movement, any choreography. Each individual dancer was coming up with their own material and their motivation or inner stream as well: what kind of images. I was wondering, with *Tokason* did you put more responsibility on the dancers to create their own dance than in *Maijuku*? Did you feel in *Maijuku* you were choreographing more than with *Tokason*?

TM: I think the approach to create the, let's say, movement, was quite similar. I think it started always from the person. But I think at the period of *Tokason* I have a much better way to talk to the people.

ZF: I see.

TM: You understand? And it seems to me *very* different. For example, every year I do workshop, but I feel "wow my language is different from the last year."

ZF: Yes, I noticed that also.

TM: So this makes the people different. Even for example the same systematic work, for example manipulation, my explanation for the work is totally different.

ZF: That really hit me the second time I came to the workshop. I think I arrived a few days after it had started and people were doing the stimulation-response work and I thought "Oh I know this, because I did it last year." And it turned out they were doing it with wind, that was what you were doing that time, and I didn't know that. And my partner was like "I don't see the wind," and I was like "what wind, what's the wind"? And it struck me, I realized "Oh, this isn't the same thing we did last year."

I've heard you speak several times, talking about people wanting to fix the form of *butô* or fix the form of body weather. And of course you've said that *butô* is something that is finished for you and it's something that you want to throw out. This is something I'd like to talk about. Maybe we could start with *butô*. The need for people to fix the form or make *butô* into a form or a style, which I have thought about a lot because it is something I have to confront in the United States. I know that now you say that *butô* is finished and that you don't want to have anything to do with that. What *was butô* for you when that was a word that you did find meaningful to connect to?

TM: I think for me, very simple. *Butô* is Mr. Hijikata himself. And historically, when they started a very strong, how you say, movement, movement like in social, people could not understand. People were shocked for example, and there was no name. “What is this? What is this? What is this?” Then they themselves, Mr. Hijikata and people, friends around him, decided to call *butô*, for that activity. Then, beginning in France, people started to call it “*butô* dance.” They put dance behind *butô*. So *butô* itself is not dance yet. You understand?

ZF: Yes.

TM: *Butô* plus dance. *Butô* dance is... on the stage. But *butô* itself is the name of an activity.

ZF: So *butô* dance started when *butô* dancers, *butô* people, went to France?

TM: I think so. Beginning in France, people watched *butô* dance.

ZF: Yeah, like Kazuo Ohno and Sankai Juku and other people went to France and became successful.

TM: I didn't call my dance *butô*. So, just for the moment they needed to call, they had to have a name, like a sign. Not to call their dance as a category of dance. So for Mr. Hijikata, I'm sure he was very strongly influenced by dance itself. Then he kept researching dance.

ZF: Some of the scholars in the U.S. that are interested in Hijikata's work, some of them feel that the development of what Waguri Yukio calls the *buto-fu*, this kind of selection of images and movements that seems fairly fixed, that that was sort of the high development of his work for dance. The other day you were saying that is only 1% of Hijikata. And I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about how Hijikata worked with you when you were developing Ren'ai Butoh Ha and the process of that.

TM: Yeah, 1973, after his last performance in Kyoto he stopped working on the stage. Never danced. Then, I don't know when was that, 1974, or 5 he had the last Hakutobo piece at Asbestos. Then he closed the studio. Then all the students left, and only Yoko and Hijikata working together. It was working in the darkness, nobody knows what they did for six or seven years. I don't know how long exactly. But when I started Maijuku in 1981 he was still never appearing in front of the people or into the people.

ZF: But he was still developing...

TM: I'm sure, lots of work with Yoko. Then 1983 he came back in public to start showing his past work by film and slide, videos.

ZF: And you were involved in putting that together at plan B, is that right?

TM: At Plan B, yeah. Then Maijuku people joined to prepare for that. But his student was only Yoko Ashikawa. Not a student already. So people have to know this history. And Waguri of course he was not.

ZF: He wasn't there at all.

TM: He wasn't. And he started "*butô* dance" after Hijikata died.

ZF: Right. That's very clear.

TM: Maybe this is not important but when Hijikata died, and I and Yoko and the widow stayed with Hijikata's body all night, Waguri came drunken, and Yoko (became) really angry and kicked him out.

ZF: Hmmm.

TM: Yeah, really, it's something else.

ZF: Yeah, quite frozen and... There are some people in New York who think he's something special. I saw his dance once and it was...

TM: Those kind of things are the person, one person. In his body he knows what happened in the past and he knows what he did before. But in public, they hide it. That means they have not good darkness. You understand?

ZF: I think so.

TM: They have nothing to show from the darkness. Hijikata showed a lot from the darkness to the people.

ZF: So darkness, by "darkness" what are we talking about here?

TM: Because Hijikata called his dance at the beginning...

ZF: *Ankoku butô*.

TM: Darkness dance. Yeah.

ZF: Because I think when we read about that in English, darkness, we have associations with darkness not only of course in terms of the light and the dark but with things that don't get shown in public. For example the kind of sadomasochism and fetish sexuality that Hijikata was doing in some of his early pieces, or death or...

TM: Those kind of things are already spoken. For example Artaud, *Sado*: Marquis de Sade, many people already read or wrote in books. We can easily study, we can easily feel it, we can easily catch it. But Hijikata already finished studying that kind of thing. People don't need to repeat it to speak about Hijikata's work. It's clear, those influences gave him an idea, something, right? But I think he's much more huge. I'm sure. I'm always thinking "What is the darkness for him? What is the darkness?" Now in science, it is very very exciting, in this universe we have black matter. You understand?

ZF: Yeah, dark matter, yes.

TM: Dark matter. This is maybe darkness for him, I was thinking, because quite often he was speaking about the universe “What is controlling us?”

ZF: And that idea of control... I don't want to try to simplify that, but you often talk about what is controlling us. That history is controlling us, or having a form is a kind of control, and it seems that the kind of things you were talking about in the beginning that your dance is always changing, and also your life is always changing too. Every time I see you you're doing something different, you're doing something new, and is that a kind of way of...

TM: I have to tell you one thing, one day he asked me “Min, I am also body weather, is that right?” I said “Of course, that's right. You are a member of body weather.” Which means he knew, everything is moving, never come back to the same point. Like our planet is turning right? But never come back to the same point. You understand?

ZF: I think so.

TM: That is Body Weather. Nothing is possible to fix. And it's moving. Moving is the beginning and ending. Everything is moving, everything is moving. We cannot stop anything. This is body weather, very important concept.

ZF: And you feel that some people have tried to fix body weather as a kind of training method also.

TM: Mm hmm. If somebody is fixing the method he has to have a duty to keep observing the *change*ment of the people and of himself. Otherwise method cannot help you.

ZF: I think some of the people in, Europe for example, teaching body weather workshops would say that, and that they are doing that and that their work is not fixed, that they are continuing that process of observation.

TM: I can say just “good luck.” (laughter)

(The recording ends here. There was a problem with the recorder. The following is my memory of part of the rest of the interview.)

ZF: A few years ago you were dancing in farming villages in Indonesia and India, for audiences that had never seen modern dance or been to a theatre.

Are you still doing this kind of thing?

TM: Yes, also in Japan.

ZF: Are there places like that in Japan?

TM: Yes, people who have never seen dance in a theatre, only *bon-odori* or *kagura*, or dance on the T.V. Then they know my name from the tv and they hear that I am going to dance and they come and they are like “What is this?” And they are very honest.

ZF: The relationship between farming and dance in your work seems very complex. Would you talk a bit about that relation?

TM: At this point for me I can say that farming is dance.

ZF: You often complain about people who want to “fix the form” of butoh or body weather. Do you see collaborative work as resisting formalization?

TM: The human brain likes to make categories, it makes them feel comfortable, then they can say “I understand that.” People don’t want to be uncomfortable.

ZF: In 2000/2001 *Tokason* was sometimes called *Tokason Butô Group*. You also did a solo in 2000 called *Subject: Butô*. Were you interested in “reclaiming” the word *butô* at that time?

TM: Yes something of that, but not 100 %. I was playing.

ZF. You also mention the U.S. dancer/choreographer Anna Halprin as an influence, particularly in the development of Body Weather Laboratories. What aspect of her work was most influential to you? What sort of contact did you have with her and her work?

TM. The idea of a workshop itself. I was not interested in the student teacher relationship. I felt I could not be a teacher but I could be a workshop leader. When I read about her work, no one had heard the word “workshop” in Japan.

ZF: Did you take her workshop in California?

TM: No, I think I danced there at her place, at Tamalpa. Then I arranged for her to come to Japan and she gave a lecture and a workshop and some *Maijuku* members joined.

ZF: You also worked with the U.S. based choreographer Elaine Summers. Was she an influence on your early work as well?

TM: I danced with her once.

ZF: With *Hyperdance* sometimes the people watching would not know it was dance, is that correct? Sometimes people would come to see it but some people were just there.

TM: Yes. Sometimes people would say “that is bad” or telephone the police. I would observe their reactions while I was dancing.

(or the opposite) Sometimes they (the police) would come and some people would say “Why is this wrong? Why is this illegal?” and they would argue about it. It was *very* interesting.

ZF. And you kept dancing of course.

TM. And I kept dancing of course. Sometimes they (the police) would roll me up in a sheet and put me in the van. This itself was a *very* interesting dance.

ZF: Was Hijikata interested in dancing in non-traditional performance spaces?

TM: Yes, he told me that he danced outside a lot. Many things were lost (of Hijikata). Not recorded.

ZF. You use the word *butô* in two different ways. You say *butô* is finished, you reject the idea of *butô* as a form or genre, and then sometimes you talk about butoh as this mysterious always changing thing. It's like you have good *butô* and bad *butô*.

TM. I don't like to be consistent. I say something about *butô* and then the next day I might feel completely different.

ZF. I don't mean to talk about my dance, but I had an experience with a guy who saw my dance and was very excited about it because he had never seen anything like it before. Then someone told him "that's *butô*" and it kind of shut off his experience.

Second Interview:

August 9, 6 p.m. Ishihara Shiho present.

ZF: Yesterday, one of the things that was interesting to me is I asked you about the relationship between farming and dance in your work and some people have tried to "explain" that by saying "well the roots of theatre and the roots of dance in Japan started in farming."

TM: I think all over the world it's common, but not really by farmers.³ (Dance was started by) some people, the lowest in the hierarchy. Maybe out of lowest.

ZF: Like the outcastes.

M: Yeah yeah, those people used to... I think in Japan they still exist. My idea of my imagination is even when humans started moving from Africa to East, and to Europe, (but to Europe it's a bit later). On the way moving they already had some special people who are going to kill the animals and cook the animals. Or make the funeral people, workers for funeral. And also dancers, special dancers, shamans. Those people have a very special hierarchy, out of the kind of structure of society, always out of. And whenever society needs specialties they bring those people into the rituals, then they bring them back there after the work.

ZF: Then they go back.

TM: That is the original thing, all over the world I am sure. And some, how you say, smells or some figures still exist everywhere I think. Especially professionals, for example in Japan we have some people who are selling shoes, *geta*, those people are from that people. And also the meat shop. And leather bag people, workers for leather I guess also are from that field, because of animals.

³ Tanaka is making an important distinction here. What I understand him to be saying is that the roots of dance are deeply connected to farming, dance as an activity was not begun by professional farmers.

ZF. And that's still true today? The *buraku*, or the *hinen*...

TM. The *buraku*. But anyway it's very very important but still in Japan people don't want to speak about it. Comedians, they are also originally from them. Of course you know *kabuki* people.

ZF. And *nô*, originally.

TM. Asakusa was full of those people originally. Then in Edo period the shogun did not want *kabuki* to continue, but some people asked him "why don't you move the theatre to Asakusa?" then he agreed. Then *kabuki* could continue.

ZF. I think that, I don't know if we should try to go over the stuff that we talked about yesterday or just...

TM. Yeah, I want to add one thing, even that kind of, how to say, savage hierarchy feelings, I believe because of their freedom. Because society, in the society people feel tight, every level of the society. But they (the outcastes) are *outside*.

ZF. Ok, yeah.

TM. Yeah. We must imagine how they are free. Then they come into the society, they show their work, then just back to their freedom. Because out of the fence. Society is much more how you say, tight. And imaginationless, less imagination. They (the outsiders) are full of imagination because all of them are, let's say, artists.

ZF. There seems to be a connection between that and the idea that you were talking about that people want to fix the form of dance to make it more easy to understand and make them more comfortable.

TM. Yeah, even now I think real artists should have the feeling for freedom or younger and younger and younger spirit, like children. So for example, through expression, especially literature, most of the people are doubting about society like children. They have always kept the doubt. Dostoyevsky, Kafka, everybody. They are not joined to society as an adult. When they write literature they are a child, I'm sure.

ZF. Yesterday you were making a distinction between *butô* and *butô* dance. We were talking about how now *butô* has become a kind of a category or a style and you were saying that originally *butô* was *butô* and then when dancers started to perform in France it became *butô* dance, that kind of distinction.

TM. *Butô* dance. At the earlier moment, when *butô* moved to Europe, people called it *butô* dance. That is ok, I can appreciate, because *butô* is something else. But now people use (the word) *butô* as a (type of) dance.

ZF. As a dance form.

TM. Yeah, but where is form? (laughter) I was very proudful because *butô* had no form. Because spiritually *butô* is asking for people or for society, “what is your form?” That is *butô*. So, if *butô* has a form, it’s a really big misunderstanding of the spirit. So, *butô* for Hijikata means keep researching dance itself.

ZF. To keep researching dance itself.

TM. Yeah, and never complete. That kind of spirit. Or never establish.

ZF. So what you received from Hijikata working with him is that kind of spirit.

TM. Yeah, I think very strongly I was impressed by his work, his talking, that we never need to be established by others. And I myself also never need to establish myself. People have to understand (what) it means through history, human history. A success story means to be established. Or established by oneself, because of money, because of work. But for him, I never needed to be established. I never wanted to complete life. Life is never complete. But people say “My dance is my life.” But it’s already established, it’s a very narrow meaning: “When I’m dancing I feel life,” you know? Why not sports?

ZF. So would you say it’s more like your life is your dance?

TM. Hmm?

ZF. Would you say that for you it’s more that your life is your dance,

TM. Yeah,

ZF. Instead of my dance is my life?

TM: Yeah, yeah. Many famous dancers said, “Dance is my life.” But in their life, daily life and life on the stage is different for them. (For me) everything has to be in one, as a dance.

ZF. Yesterday you were saying that for you farming is a dance at this point.

TM. Yeah, I feel so. Not perfect of course, but very often I feel that, “oh this is my dance.”

ZF. What a lot of people don’t know about you is all the work that you put into your ideas for creating space in the theatre, designing the set. Like the other day I watched you kind of put together Shiho’s set piece by piece, and all the materials used were from the farm. Like you would never have those materials if it wasn’t for your daily life as a farmer. That’s maybe a very simple kind of aspect of that.

TM: Yeah, very good recycling, (points to the roof of the house we are in) this is from the stage.

ZF: Really? The roof?

TM: These boards...

ZF: So it's back and forth then, it's not just one way.

TM: Sure. Until it gets burned.

ZF: Do you feel that dance has influenced your way of farming?

TM: Way of farming?

ZF: Because it seems like the way that you do farming, for example if you want to make a lot of money farming, the best way is to grow one or two very very large crops, but you grow many many things and you're always experimenting. You have four asparagus plants and you're kind of working to keep them growing...

TM: Without experiment, life is boring, that is a *very* natural thing. Nature is very experimental.

ZF: One of the things that I wanted to ask you about Hijikata that I was sort of wondering about is, my understanding is, and I heard you mentioned this too, that he didn't really trust improvisation, was not really improvising.

TM: He often said "I was born as an improvisation. My life is improvisation. Why do I need to improvise on the stage?"

ZF. That's interesting.

TM. "My life is improvisation." And of course for him, to go deeper is not improvisation. He needed will, a strong will to go deeper into the dance. He had to have a structure.

ZF. This afternoon you were talking about Minoru Noguchi, you were talking about how his music had influenced your rhythmic movement. So I was wondering if you could talk about the relationship between music and dance.

TM. Originally music and dance were together. Ancient people. But even for us now, if the people living now listen to rhythms from African people for example, it's not like we hear the same rhythm. I think it's much more complicated. Their ear, their body has tons of possibilities or sounds. For us it seems like very exact rhythms but for them it's not. It's not mechanical. It's a body, body rhythms. So African rhythms, black peoples rhythms, are very difficult for other people. This is one thing. So, to adjust your body to the music, this is very much a modern way. Before they were not adjusting, because they could find out the rhythms inside of the body with the music. We are now listening to the music and then adjusting, fixing the rhythms. Like a discotheque. For example the waltz, it's too new in the history of the relation between music and dance. Originally it was really free. People just talking with music and dance, just talking through the body. But now people watch the body "Oh, you are really fitting with the rhythms." The rhythm has to exist in the body, inside the body first.

ZF: I was watching your dance (on video) with Milford Graves and Derek Bailey, it was like two hours or something, and I could see that Milford had his rhythm and you had a rhythm, I think

something that in music they call counterpoint. You weren't following his rhythm, well, I don't think anybody could follow his rhythm, you had a rhythm of your own that was almost as complicated as his rhythm existing in the same place at the same time.

TM: Milford called his rhythm a...I forget it. Maybe later...Ah, I got it: poly rhythm.

ZF: Polyrhythm.

TM: Right, so maybe my body has a polyrhythm.

ZF: Yes, I think so. I don't know anybody else who dances like that, so...

You talked a little bit about *Hyperdance*, the idea that it had no beginning.

TM. That period, 1975 I start calling (my) dance as *Hyperdance*. 1977. At that period I spoke, "I have no beginning, no end of my performance." At that period, 1977, of course the English (word) existed already, but in Japan people didn't know what is "hyper." And Kazue explained me hyper is from, how you say, medical. Medical people are using that. Then I started *Hyperdance* and people were asking "What is "hyper"?" I explained "It's more than super." (laughter) It's a joke, ne? Of course it's much more delicate, much more meaningful than super.

ZF. So she explained it to you as a medical term? Like hyperactive people?

TM. Yeah. And since that period I wanted to move the body in a different way, different part of my body has to have a much more, say, own movement. Like a baby. Baby can use four legs, two arms two legs, very much separated. But after five years old, six years old, already it's not possible.

ZF. Right.

TM. Because of the brain, in the society.

ZF. Yes.

TM. But a very young baby can move the arms and legs very independently.

ZF. That's very interesting.

TM. And I dreamed, I'd like to move my body like a baby. And that means right hand, left arm, have a different movement. Head has to have a different movement. Legs, torso. I wanted to go into much more complex, complicated occasions. That was that period, *Hyperdance*. Also I didn't want to make a structure of the whole performance. So sometimes people didn't know if this had started, or preparing, whatever. Then I would finish, not telling them I am going to finish. Just stop. But *Hyperdance* was shown almost always outside. Or not in the theatre, even inside of the house, but not in the theatre. Sometimes I carried out the chairs, all out, but then people had to find out how to watch. And front, I cut the meaning of front. It was very interesting. People had to take the place for watching. And sometimes I started dancing behind

them. And many of the people were waiting, because they decided “front is here.” They didn't want to look back. Many people.

ZF. It's interesting because Merce Cunningham had that idea, of course your dance is totally different than his, but that same idea that there's no front, or there's no center. Also that kind of complexity of rhythm among the dancers, but what you're doing is with your own body, with improvisation.

TM. 1978, my first visit to New York, I danced at the Merce Cunningham Studio. Merce and John Cage came to watch together, and Meredith Monk was there. Very interesting audience. (laughter).

ZF. Did you work with John Cage at some point?

TM. Not working. I met him several times. When I was in Reykjavik Art Festival⁴ he was also there and he presented a “cooking concert.”

ZF. Cooking concert.

TM. Yeah. He wanted to explain about macrobiotic, and he wanted to present to the Icelandic people, sashimi. Because they have so rich fish, and it's tasty.

Ishihara Shiho. Usually they don't eat sashimi, that's why...

TM. Yeah, yeah, they don't eat it, so that is why John Cage wanted. And he asked me “Can you eat in front of the people?” (laughter) Why not?

IS: It is *sakura*.

TM. *Sakura*.

ZF: So you ate as a part of the performance?

TM: As much as I can. (laughter)

IS: In the *kabuki* language we say that kind of things is *sakura*, cherry blossom. (To Min) Please explain *sakura* more.

TM: Someone is presenting something, and friend comes “Oh this is good, this is good,” to how you say...

IS: Trickster, kind of trickster...

TM: Making a stimulation to everybody, for this person.

⁴ In Iceland in 1980.

ZF. And did people want to eat sashimi after watching you eat it?

TM. Ah, not many.
(laughter)

IS. So *dame* (bad) *sakura*. (laughter)

TM. They are so doubtful.

ZF. So, can I ask you why you've decided to stop leading workshops recently?

TM. Maybe one most stupid reason is, as you know I'm always at the beginning speaking to the people: "I am not teaching *butô* dance, *butô*, at all." Of course I cannot. "And I don't want to tell you *butô* dance as movement, *butô* is much more spiritual existence for me." So I clearly tell them "I am not teaching you *butô*." And everybody said "Yes I know, we understand." But after the workshop finished, immediately people started "*butô* dance." Or teaching to others. People don't understand how painful this is for me. Because I explained my pure hope to the people. But they easily....they said "yes." I believed it, they said "Yes we understand", but they did not understand, and they did not believe, even themselves, because they said "yes." You understand?

ZF. I do! Yes. Believe me. (laughter)

TM. They said yes but their body does different things. This is something like a very historical deep question: "What is the relation in between language and body?" But my people in the workshop showed me the worst example.

ZF. By doing what you just described?

TM. Yeah, yeah. Some people started a *butô* school, for example.

ZF. And of course I know from your work that the relationship between language and the body is something that's so strong, because when you are working with a group you are directing through language, you don't even show them your own, you don't tell them what movement to do, you've always been accepting in that. And I think we're talking a lot yesterday a lot about how society makes these forms and these categories, you said that society likes to have categories because it makes people feel comfortable.

TM. So for example if somebody wants to be a dancer. A dancer is using the body, right? So that person has to really try to use their language *for* the body. But many of them are separated (from their body) by society. They are using language as if they are in society, and only the body wants to be "natural." So this separation makes nothing. You understand?

ZF. I think so.

TM. My way of thinking is from the body. But those people's way of thinking is from language. Language to the body is too slow. It takes a hundred years. If they honestly face to the body, to start thinking from the body, it's much quicker.

ZF. I'm not sure I really understood that, it's...

TM. Because language has almost finished to be established. Simple language. Meaning of language. People are using language for philosophy, for many different things. And in society people are using language for easy communication. Sometimes *very* deep communication. But language is already established, they can *use* it as they like. But the body cannot do (this).

ZF. Cannot be established.

TM. Yeah. Still unknown things we have. That is why our bodies are deeply related to human history. Because we have DNA. From the beginning of life. We have the beginning of life still in our body. Many many many many, more than many unknown histories we have. Japanese scientists called it "memory of life." Not memory of myself, memory of life. We all have it.

ZF. So if that's the case then why...

TM. Sorry, back to the question...

ZF. O.K.

TM. That was my quite important reason why I wanted to stop. The other thing is my name. Many of them need my name for their career. Only one month.⁵ (laughter). I know many of them are using (it) . But, I think you remember I'm dreaming to throw out my name.

ZF. Yeah

TM. To be a non-named dancer. I want to be. I'm on the way to be like that. But the people who worked with me used my name. How to escape from that?

ZF. Yeah I don't understand what that is with people who take your workshop or even a workshop where someone is saying they teach *butô*. Because if you want to be a ballet dancer you have to study for ten years but people take a *butô* workshop for one month and come back to New York and suddenly they're a *butô* dancer because they studied with Akira Kasai...

TM. It means cheap *butô*.

ZF. It really means really cheap *butô*, and there's a lot of it.

TM. *Butô* is instant.

ZF. Anybody can do it, it's easy.

⁵ Tanaka's summer workshops generally lasted from four to five weeks.

TM. Some profiles people sent me,⁶ people took many many *butô* workshops and these past five or six years I sent an answer “You don’t need (to come here), you have enough experience.” (Laughter) “You don’t need to come, you have totally enough experience of *butô*.”

ZF. That’s funny.

IS: Today I got an e-mail.

TM: Again *ne*, “I want to study *butô* dance in Body Weather Farm.” Who is advertising?

ZF: I think with the internet now, if something goes on the internet it sort of stays there. I don’t now what it is about Body Weather Farm because people seem to think that anyone can just go there and do farming and kind of hang out and do training and it’s this kind of paradise of farming and dance.

IS: Yeah, it’s true.

ZF. It’s true, yeah?

IS: Yeah, it’s very difficult to make answer. Because we are living here...

ZF. Yeah, it’s your house...

IS. ... as a normal person you know?

ZF: (pause) So, I got that, why you’re not teaching the workshop anymore. It seems that a lot of the things that we are talking about are related to freeing the body from being limited by...

TM. Freeing?

ZF. Being free from, or let’s say trying to free the body from sort of being controlled by society in some way...

TM. To recognize. Through the brain people understand, but to recognize by oneself how much the person is controlled or not. Without thinking about it, no one can say “I’m free.” Free from what? Free of what?

ZF. Right...

TM. People are losing the feeling now of “radical.” Radical way of researching motivation for example.

⁶ That is they were sending their profile or bio as part of an application for the summer workshop.

ZF. So it seems that a lot of the activities that you do are extremely collaborative. You spoke yesterday that when you first encountered Anna Halprin, when you first read about her workshop, that changed, or opened up a possibility....

TM. Oh yeah yeah, the word “workshop” did not exist before Anna Halprin. When I read her work and I opened my eyes “Oh, *workshop*, for dance. This is nice.” Because until that moment we are using “study” or “lesson” or “training,” that’s all. We never tried to use “workshop.” Then, this is what I (was) always doubting: just learn from the teacher, and the student has to just keep studying. One side it’s o.k., but not always. We have to have much more exchange, even in between the students for example. Then workshop having very nice structures to feel studying much more voluntary. Not always be studying. So I started to use workshop as a word very early, I think I’m the first one in Japan. (Before that) for the Japanese workshop was a space.

ZF. To build things in...

TM. Yeah, like in the opera house they have workshop for the set, stage set.

ZF. And of course when you were teaching body workshops that’s what you were doing. I felt we were really forced to interact with each other in a way that wasn’t always comfortable.

TM. I started using the word workshop for Body Weather Laboratory. Body Weather was started in 1977, and people, I was not telling them body weather is for dance. Body Weather is about the body, or human beings. We have a common thing, that is the body. Yeah? Inside is not common.

ZF. Yes

TM. Very doubtful right? But the body itself is *very* common. Because everybody is living in the body. Or with the body. This is very common. So Body Weather Laboratory is people like, of course musicians, dancers, painters, teachers, housewife, or any kind of people can join that. And we are not doing dance training. But we started MB training in the body Weather Laboratory, many different workshops we did. Even language workshop we had a lot. That was the beginning, Body Weather Laboratory, yeah.

ZF. And you’ve spoken about that.

TM. Hmm?

ZF. You’ve spoken about that in other...things, that are written down.

TM. Yesterday?

ZF. No, not yesterday, what was it, and interview with Bonnie Stein in the 1980’s where you talked about it

TM: I forgot everything... what I spoke with her.

ZF: Oh, sorry.

TM: It was in theatre magazine...

ZF: The Drama Review. Everybody remembers. Everybody remembers what you said to Bonnie Sue Stein in 1985.

TM: It was a long time ago

ZF: It was a long time ago

TM: Yeah, people has to believe I am growing.

ZF: Yeah.

TM: I'm body weather.

ZF: and so.... In the early *Tokason* period, you had mentioned that you felt *Tokason* was your most experimental group work and in that early time and in the time when I was working with you, the process you used of making dance or preparing a dance was very collaborative in that the dancers all came up with their own movements and often even their own imagery or motivation. Do you feel that way of working is in some way political? Or related to that idea of breaking the form or of not having a hierarchy or these other kind of things that you keep talking about?

TM: I think movement itself is quite formal. Even if you see very new movement, most of the movement of the human is formal. And reasonable. Even if it looks very abstracted, but quite reasonable. It's very difficult to do a meaningless movement.
(pause)

ZF. And is that something your interested in doing?

TM: No, no, but most of the people who start making a movement or creating a movement, each one of them thinks "my body is special" and "my movement is different from others." But if I say "movement" it's common, nothing is special. But the person is special, then it looks different because of the person. Of course the body history, each one has different experience, and history and environment for growing up is different, and it's all those kind of outer stimulations that make different feelings of the movement.

ZF: And then you encourage people to steal other people's movement.

TM: Sure, sure, because movement has to have a much more wider possibility. Then coming back to simpler possibilities is beautiful. But people don't want to be... richer. People want to keep their own movement. But I must say, movement is not (your) own.

ZF. Movements are not owned...

TM. Yeah, you are (your) own, but movement is not (your) own.

ZF. Ah...

TM. Yeah, I think that is a really simple thing, but people don't want...

ZF: Yeah, it's a simple thing but people don't want...

TM: Don't want, just don't want, that's all. But this is true, but people don't want.

ZF: We talked a little yesterday, or I asked you yesterday about the process of working with Hijikata on Ren'ai butoh-ha.

TM: Yes? Yesterday?

ZF: Well I felt like you never really answered the question.

TM: No no no, I don't remember.

ZF: Yes

TM: I explained about the process?

ZF: No you didn't, you didn't explain about it. (laughter) You talked a lot about very interesting things. But if you don't mind talking about that process I would be interested to hear about it.

TM: As you know, Waguri, *butô-fu*, it's still just one small small part of Hijikata's work. But he (Hijikata) always brought the feelings from nature.

ZF: Hijikata

TM: Hijikata. And sometimes animals. Chicken, monkey, dinosaur, or white bear, snake. Many animals from nature, and also wind, even air for imagination. Smell sound, bloodstream, many. Nothing of human emotion, human psychological things. Everything is from outside of the body, environment. Especially nature is in images for the movement. Almost everything.

ZF: That's very important. And so when you say bringing do you mean bringing into his body or into your body or into your ...

TM: Into anybody's

ZF: process to... but not in a

TM: It's, it's...

ZF: Systematic way...

TM: My work with him, through Yoko Ashikawa, was all by words.

ZF: He never showed you any movement to do.

TM: Not showing at all. Then I heard the language, then I imagined the sensation and I tried to move. That's all. Sometimes Yoko tried to move, and Hijikata watching.

ZF: So when you say through Yoko Ashikawa is that when you were working on the duet with her, or with.....?

TM: No no, alone.

ZF: Oh, but she was also there? When you were doing that?

TM: Yeah.

ZF: Oh she was there when you were preparing.⁷ And she would also move in your rehearsal for that?

TM: No.

ZF: But she was there...I know that she didn't dance with you in *Ren'ai Butoh ha*, but she was there in the rehearsal.

TM: She, Yoko.

ZF: Yeah, she, Yoko Ashikawa.

Shiho: *Ima, choto, chigao*.

ZF: Yeah, I think we are maybe misunderstanding.

Shiho: He said he had a solo piece made by Hijikata right? At the time the rehearsal was with Yoko Ashikawa all the time. Sometimes Yoko showing the movement for Min through Hijikata.

ZF: Ah. That's... is that... oh.

TM: Yeah, all directed by Hijikata.

ZF: Right, right. So it was directed by Hijikata...

TM: Of course.

ZF: ...but Yoko Ashikawa was there assisting.

TM: Assistant.

ZF: Stimulating you with movement ok. And so then when you... and you did a duet with Yoko Ashikawa, which seemed to be mostly her, she was more prominent, she danced more than you did.

⁷ For *Ren'ai Butô-ha Teiso*, the solo dance that Hijikata directed for Tanaka.

TM: Yeah.

ZF: And did you watch his directing her through that process as well? Were you there when Hijikata was rehearsing Yoko Ashikawa for the duet?

TM: Only once. I saw only once. At Plan B, before the performance, several times I saw the rehearsal, but Hijikata was quite tricky. When somebody was watching the rehearsal, he changed the rehearsal. For example, my rehearsal, for *Ren'ai Butoh-ha*, sometime journalists came, then they asked to watch the rehearsal. Then his direction is totally changed. Rehearsing for them...

ZF: Interesting. Was it sort of like a performance?

TM: Then when they left, Hijikata, "I'm sorry... O.K., back to the original."

ZF: How was it different when the journalists were watching, how did he change it?

TM: Yeah he is always changing so . For example calling the people. The way of calling for example Min. "Min-san, Tanaka-kun, Tanaka" many. All because of the occasion, he was changing. Tanaka-kun. Then after a while, I think about that occasion. "Wow, This way of calling me is very exact."

ZF: This is sort of related to the idea of language and the body, and I'm sort of jumping here, but when you went to France, originally...

TM: France

ZF: Yeah, I'm skipping from Hijikata to a different place, unless, is there anything else you want to say about *Ren'ai Butoh ha* at all?

TM: Yeah, this is the talk after Hijikata's death. Yoko Ashikawa came to our farm and stayed there for one year, and I spoke with Yoko often and the subject became *Ren'ai butoh ha* and that period Mr. Hijikata really tested my physical feelings because he asked me to move from the words. But it's all about the nature. So even if somebody says "Yes I understand," it's words, it's language. So how much the body could understand, he was testing me. And Yoko said, he quite often asked Yoko "Why Min knows?" The imagination "Not from the brain, body knows, his body knows."

SI: Why he can move?

TM: Then after *Ren'ai Butoh-ha* we had of course an after party, then drinking drinking, and I invited Mr. Hijikata to our studio, and then to my mountain house which was, a very small and poor house, and he came there and he spent all night talking with young people, including me of course. Then early in the morning, it was raining, and I was in the position of waking up and Hijikata was sitting at the porch watching the mountains and rain and he was crying. And the people start to wake up and he just... Then he went back to Tokyo and said to Yoko "I understood Min, why he knows." The nature let's say.

ZF: Because?

TM: Yeah, I was born in nature and grow up in nature and some passion for nature, so *butô-fu*. The *butô-fu* is explained to everybody as if it is understandable, but if the body quality or body imagination has that language or not... people can imagine through the brain but the body cannot imagine. Without having real imagination from a sensation the brain can understand the image, but physical sensations are different, most sensations are quite difficult to explain by language, you know. This is the point.

ZF: Yeah that is a really important point.

TM: *Butô -fu* is really 1% of the possibility. Or teaching people like empty movement. "Because of this image I must move like this." That's all. It's fascism.

ZF: Fascism, yes! Good, yes. And I think what you just said...

TM: I don't like it at all.

ZF: No, me too.

TM: For example Hijikata was telling me the image, then, "Try to move" from very small movement. Sometimes he told me "the wind touching to your nose top." So, how to move? Yeah, if you want to move this way it's not possible, and he was really watching ... So I tried to open, open the feelings. Then, nose start moving, not *I* start moving, not *I* start moving. Because the stimulation comes from outside.

ZF: What you said there about the body having to experience the sensations and not just have the images is really important it seems to make as a way of understanding why you spend hours outside farming every day instead of doing something else. This is a key point.

TM: Yeah, the city people go outside, go to the mountains, and many people open their arms "Ah nature." But this is a very much well trained imagination right? Everybody does like this "Ah, air is very tasty"(demonstrates this typical gesture of spreading the arms out and breathing in the country air) and I'm a bit doubtful. "You feel it ? Really? (laughter). Tasty? Are you sure?" But people are following...

IS: Want to be...

ZF: Yeah, they want it to be tasty.

Oh, did you use music in *Ren'ai Butoh Ha*?

TM: By Noguchi Minoru. Hijikata asked him. But Hijikata proposed him many tapes he gave to Minoru "I want you to use this." For example Artaud's talking, Hitler, and sound of people arming, army parade marching. That kind of sound is really suddenly "pah."

IS: Did he use it all?

TM: He appreciated, but he said after the performance: “Hijikata is too noisy.”

ZF: And the images that you used in the body workshops, the image work, was that coming from him from that experience?

TM: Mixtures.

ZF: You added your own things too.

TM: Yeah yeah, I added my ideas a lot.

ZF: And that’s a very very different way of working with images than the *butoh-fu*.

TM: I never fix the movement when I teach, yeah. When I propose the image work, the people have to use their image. Maybe only the brain. Some people through the sensation, some people just by the brain.

IS: Easy to see?

TM: Easy to watch, yeah...

ZF: Yesterday you were talking about...

TM: Or pantomime (laughter).

ZF: Pantomime, yes.

TM: Explain the words by showing the movement.

ZF: And you talked a little bit yesterday about the use of space. For example telling you about when you should begin dancing, you should start dancing before you come onto the stage.

TM: Ah that is linked to my performance is no beginning and no ending. So, especially at *Ren'ai Butoh-ha*, when I unconsciously went into the stage, then started dancing he immediately asked me “Where you came from? When your dance are started? You start dancing on the stage! This is not dance.”

ZF: So where should you start?

TM: I don’t know... I’m sure he asked me, “When did you start dancing? Ten years ago?”

ZF: Oh, like that.

TM: Yeah, maybe. “From which period you decide to dance?” All those kind of things have to be ready. Even I am not showing my body to the audience. When I made a duo with Yoko Ashikawa at Plan B then I went into the toilet of the Plan B performing space, for changing the

costume. And I really, because very busy, I had to change very quickly. Then I felt, “ Ah, a bit late.” Maybe less than a second. But Hijikata already irritated, after the performance he said “Everybody was waiting for you! Why you are late?” that’s really crazy.

ZF: I remember you said once about Hijikata talking to somebody who was running the light board, and he said they were just watching the numbers on the dial, and they should be watching the light, something you said years ago that really stuck with me. Because I like to do lights too.

TM: Yeah, don't believe. You are much more stronger, your body is much more strong, much more stronger. Believe it more than electricity. Do not be chased by your electricity.

ZF: Or by the numbers on the...

TM: Even now I am using that.

IS: You have to be in to the stage, even the lighting designer.

ZF: And of course you are also working, when you are working with Tokason you are also designing stages and moving the lights and designing the lights and running the lights yourself sometimes as well. So you’re really in every aspect of the performance which I think is again something that most people don’t know how fully that is...

TM: I really want to believe the body. Then I have to experience the lights, I have to experience the sound by my body, not be made somebody else. Of course sometimes I really deeply believe somebody. But I myself and also the people who are working with me really have to experience. (pause). Because, lights are sun and moon and fire and candle. We have always lights and we have always the chance to get the sensation of the lights. Or feel the meaning of the lights. Physically. Stage lights are very new (in) history. Electricity is very new.

ZF: Yeah, and of course you work with constructing space in theatres and then you work dancing in thousands of different spaces. I guess I wanted to ask you about space. One thing that that you said the other day is that you were going to stop calling your dance solo dance because you feel that you always have a partner?

TM: Not only partner. My body is one but when I’m dancing. I don’t feel one body. And I don’t feel me. So much. Sometimes I am somebody else. And I’m also dreaming to bring the people into my body, passing me. Then means this is not solo dance.

ZF: The people, which people?

TM: Many.

ZF: People meaning the audience? Dead people, imaginary people....?

TM: Yeah, especially (people from) my daily life, when I am impressed by somebody else then I’m doing that person.

ZF: When you are impressed by somebody else.

TM: Quite often after the workshop, if you watch my dance, I'm doing somebody else "ah, Min is imitating that person." "Min is imitating Shiho" for example. It always happens.

ZF: When you're in a group, dancing with a group, with Tokason for example, and you do a solo, often I would see you stealing movement from other dancers.

TM: Yeah, sure, sure.

ZF: It always looks very interesting to see somebody else's movement...

TM: Good things are always good for me.

ZF: Good things.

TM: Good things are always good for me. Yeah if I watch somebody else and I'm like "oh that's beautiful" then I want to try it in my body. This is my childhood spirit, still exists.

ZF: The desire to imitate...

TM: So it's... maybe if I explain the opposite way. If I discover something, I notice something wonderful, I want to speak this thing to anybody else, not for a specific person. Even if I meet somebody on the way I want to speak my experience to that person. I was that kind of child.

ZF: It's so different than the way so many dance companies are. In a lot of the butoh companies you'll see the leader is really the center and everyone is imitating their movement or sort of supporting them, but you are often off in the shadows...

TM: Body Weather is omnicultural. Like the sky. Always the center is moving. Typhoons are different (laughter), but the sky is always moving. Always.

ZF: Do you think that Deleuze' idea of the body without organs is something that is, ah, relatable to you?

TM: That is still very difficult to understand through my body. I understand, but...

ZF: Difficult to understand. So that means it's something worth trying to understand...

TM: Through my life, yes yes, with the *real life*. I can keep the concept in my brain, that's not so difficult. But if *I* am, if my life is that... So how to? So, what's this "understand"? What is this meaning? It's just knowledge?

ZF. O.K. I guess maybe what I mean is..... Yeah I understand what you're saying yeah. Well is that idea.... I mean, because I think that, another of the many things about you is that in the past

you've read a lot of theory. You've read Foucault and Deleuze and Guattari. You actually did a dialogue with Felix Guattari that was published in Japanese.

IS: And in French, English also...

ZF: And in French? Because I haven't been able to find it in French or English.

TM: (to Shiho) Yes? No. Felix Guattari.

IS: You mean the books?

ZF: There's a journal published with you and Felix Guattari having a conversation, a dialogue.

TM: Yes, it's by Asahi Newspaper.

IS: *Ah soka*, only in Japanese.

TM: Only in Japanese.

ZF: It's only in Japanese. But did he speak Japanese?

TM: No no.

ZF: I didn't think so. How did that... what language were you speaking?

TM: I did it in France at Felix's house, and three students, Japanese students, translated my Japanese to French.

IS: Students (of) Deleuze, Deleuze' students.

ZF: Deleuze Japanese students.

TM: No no Deleuze and Guattari...

ZF: Deleuze and Guattari.

TM: Are common.

IS: Ah, common.

ZF: Deleuze and Guattari were working together at that time.

TM: Yeah yeah.

IS: Working together at that time.

ZF: Ok not Deleuze, we are talking about Guattari. Ok I was just curious about that because it's only in Japanese and we can't get it in English.

TM: And Guattari came to Hakushu you know.

ZF: Oh, no I didn't know he came to Hakushu.

IS: Guattari had a poem about Min, do you know that?

ZF: Yeah, just a short thing. He said that...

TM: About the way of...

ZF: Way of being aware and folded totally into your own body but being aware of the space. A kind of architecture. He said some kind of architecture was like you. (laughter)

TM: Guattari and Deleuze both are suicide. Beautiful.

(Long Pause)

IS: One of the students came to Min's performance in Cervantes center.

ZF: Oh, yeah?

TM: Whose student?

IS: Ozawa San *desu yo*.

TM: Aki? He's living in Paris. But he's a researcher for Spinoza. He wrote a book about Spinoza.

TM: One of the students is (now) a very important French philosopher. Japanese French philosopher, Kunichi Uno. I think Kaori knows well. He came often to the festival.

Z: Yes I met him. I know him.

TM: He spoke about Artaud.

IS: He's one of the ones who translated (Min's talk with Guattari) at that time.

ZF: And I think he's also talking about Hijikata's dance as related to the body without organs and that's sort of why I brought that up.

IS: Ah, O.K.

ZF: But I understand what you are saying, that trying to understand dance through some kind of theory is not really a useful thing to do.

TM: Yeah. (pause) I can translate through my body about his philosophy.

ZF and SI: Ahhhh.

ZF: Maybe that's something...

TM: But my life is maybe not adjusting. So means, I can use that thinking way, but I cannot fix my life.

ZF: That's a very important distinction to make.

TM: My life is really really mixtured from many great people.

ZF: Yeah.

TM: Yeah, "I like to spend my life like him. Maybe I like *this* person." It's a chaotic dream. And of course I don't know my future. I want to keep my freedom.

(Long Pause)

Zf: Oh, this is something different. I just wanted to ask you a little about the forest preservation product, uh project ... (laughter)

TM: *Poe Project*?

ZF: No I know about *Poe Project* (laughter) Forrest Preservation Project.

TM: Forced?

ZF: Forest.

ZF: ...in India.

IS: In Indonesia

ZF: In Indonesia. Forest Preservation Project. What is going on with that?

TM: In the very beginning it was just after my travel for dancing. Then while I was travelling I had a very strong impression about the forest. Rainforest. And especially under the red circle.

IS: The red line. Red road, on the earth we have a red road.

ZF: Oh, the equator.

TM: Yeah. I had a dream already that the life under that red road must be really strong. Yes of course it's really strong, the trees and insects, animals, everything is. But forests are destroyed more and more. Each second it's going to lose. Then I heard many Japanese rich people are like

“Let’s gonna plant a tree.” It’s the easiest approach, *ne?* Then on the other hand it’s destroying, the cutting of trees is continuing.

ZF: Right.

TM: So I thought maybe stop cutting the trees. Or stop enter to the forest. Then I started finding a forest that is still very wild enough and very close to that red line. Then I found it in Kalimantan, then I proposed a plan for thirty years. Thirty years plan, *ne?* I planned for thirty years. This plan includes the village around the forest. Village people, the government, if they agree with my plan they must be able to lend me for thirty years. Then it has little bit difficulties because the government is changing changing changing and also because people are using the money for, how to say, keep going. Keep cutting the trees and selling the trees.

ZF: Because they can make money from that.

TM: Then already five years passed. Then finally still the village people want me to come back, working with them and defending the nature with them. I go back to Indonesia next December to make a contract with the government. But I really have to find out the method to establish the foundation for making a kind of structure. Office and working process. We have to build the small houses for people staying and also finding out the possibility to pay them for....

ZF: Wow.

TM: A big work.

ZF: And where you went the day before yesterday you went to meet with some people about re-using old farmland. I think Shiho was telling me the day before yesterday you went to a meeting with some people in Shizuoka. What was that about?

TM: Yeah, I think all over the world similar small village and mountain side people gave up to continue agriculture. For example the fields are really destroyed or back to a wild nature and the people are losing the real village scenery. Then I proposed to the people through the newspaper “let’s go renew the destroyed or thrown out field and start using it again.” And many people came and we founded a group to work together every month, one day or two days every month, but they already have about five new fields renewed. Then people start using as a vegetable field, for example.

ZF: Nice.

TM: It looks very active now.

ZF: Oh great.

MT: And each member of the group they have their original hometown, home village, and in their home they do quite similar things, now. It’s spreading out now. Very beautiful. I’m going to do similar things here in Yamanashi.

ZF: Yesterday when we finished we were going to talk about tradition.

TM: Hm.

Z; I don't know if you think feel it's too late to go on, if you feel it's too late or not.

TM: Yeah for example Hijikata said always we have to have the courage to break out the form which are built by yourself. That is your life, he said. We need a form but that is for your life, so life has to shake the form, if you have courage. This is tradition for me.

ZF: OK (laughter).

TM: Yeah, because form is not tradition. Form is empty. So who can answer what is the life tradition. For example Tibetan Buddhism? Asking a circulation? DNA? There are many answers. Through philosophies, through religions, but our daily life has to discover.

ZF: O.K. So we can talk about that.

TM: Yeah, because the human tradition discovered religion, I'm sure. Needed the religions, and needed the philosophy. It's not suddenly happened.

ZF: And then the religions became like a form.

Tm: Yeah, or political forms. Or political desire. Yeah, capitalism and Christianity developed in the same steps.

ZF: And when the missionaries went and changed people to be Christian they also changed them to be capitalist.

TM: Yeah.

IS: Then Indonesian project, forest project, maybe I can make a copy, but it's all in Japanese, quite huge. Quite complicated. Not so easy. But th Shizuoka project is much more at citizen level. So interesting thing is he has two. That's so far. But same as a nature things.

TM: Yeah, everything is related.

IS: Yeah, this is quite Min.

TM: I have not much this kind of imagination. All related.

ZF: Thank you very much, *otsukare samadeshita*.

TM+Shiho: *Otsukare samadeshita*.

IS: Nice questions, very interesting.

TM: Maybe very interesting answers.
(Laughter)

ZF: I think the answers are more interesting than the questions.

TM: I discovered quite new way of answering, yeah.

(at this point the interview is officially over. Shiho starts talking about body weather.)

IS: But you never talking about where happens thinking of the body weather, he never talking about that.

ZF: Where happens?

IS: When, or from where. Because it happens from Japanese language? Of course he's Japanese. But not only from him. Right?

TM: But people put the name on my talking. On my talking maybe or on my feeling or on my thinking. Of dance and my daily behavior.

IS: It is from Kazue and Matsuoka?

TM: Matsuoka.

IS: Seigo Matusuoka, this is a very important person for him I think, for his life. Of course I don't want to fix the important person but, quite important person.

ZF: But we should know as many important persons as possible. And particularly Japanese ones.

TM: He's still using body weather for his talking. Hijikata also sometimes asking me "Min, I am also body weather, is that right?" "Yes, of course, you are body weather." Many people agreed. Kazue was the first member of the body weather laboratory.

IS: Somehow we feel the body weather, this language, it's somehow separate from this talking, you know?

Zack: That's actually something I was wondering about because I know originally Body Weather Laboratories was a laboratory, and it was a lot of different people who were putting...different people had a...

Min: Yeah sure. We discussed a lot "What is body weather?" and we reached a very simple concept. Which is body weather is omniscient. No one should not be in the center.

ZF: So do you feel like you've been sort of put in the center?

TM: Mmm?

ZF: Do you feel like other people have tried to put you in the center?

TM: I'm moving...

ZF: You're moving

IS: Sometimes Kazue want to be center but he moving, he (is) pushing her: "no no no no no."

TM: Even the group discussion sometimes people strongly want to be a center, yeah. This is also strange. For example we discuss, for example, in between. Then, body weather has to exist in between. Then, I say my opinions here and she listens then she said her opinion over here, but mainly people are talking *this* way. Then I confused or I get very frustrated. But if you can watch both, in between, this is body weather. European people cannot understand it I'm sure.
(laughter)

IS: It's quite difficult. So that's why Matsuoko produced a very important exhibition in the Paris Louvre Museum. This is debut for the Min's foreign abroad. It is *Ma*, we call. *Ma* is this...

TM: In between.

IS: In between, in Japanese language.

ZF: Right. This is actually one thing I wanted to talk about.

IS: Maybe he said...

TM: In English it's translated like space, or time. But it is both, but maybe we have to add much more words for that.

ZF: Yeah, people use that word, scholars for example started using that word *ma* to talk about *butô*, but I think their understanding of it is quite small. Mine too, I don't understand it at all, but they're using it in a way that's not really complicated. Quite simple: the space in between.

TM: Yeah, for example, somebody dancing and people feel, "I am watching that person's dance." But I'm different. When I'm dancing, I feel the people, then dance has to exist in between. Dance should not exist only my body. So this is the dance.

ZF: In between the person watching and the dancer...

TM: ... something happens. Then this is the dance. This is not *my* dance, because I was getting the stimulation from the people, from the space, so my dance is already outside. You understand.

ZF: Yeah.

TM: But most of the dancers want to show "my dance." But I want to show *dance* there.

ZF: I see.

SI: Very difficult.

ZF: Very difficult.

TM: Yeah, very difficult to understand, because we see independency, this is a very thin word for me.

ZF: Independence?

TM: Mmm.

ZF: Right. Yeah. Well we could talk about that too....

TM: "I am independent!"

ZF: Or individuality....

SI: Oh right, right...

TM: It's all cheap work...

ZF: This is very complicated for you I know, individuality...

IS: Big subject for even the philosophers. Twentieth century passing but still going on. Maybe he said, "*Ma Farm*." Just junction (?) is different. For me, same things. Body weather people maybe *ma* people, it happens. Hijikata said that butoh is like this, right? Butoh is just, language...he said that, you (Tanaka) said.

Min: Even when he was alive, 1985 we had the first big butoh festival in Tokyo. At that moment many foreign journalists came, and he was saying "Oh, buyers come, they gonna buy green rice field. Means, in Japanese *aotagai*: people, buyers come, even they are not seeing the rice, just the plants, but they said, we buy this. So he said, oh already, *butô* buyers came.

ZF: And when was that?

TM: 1985.

ZF: At the *butô* festival.

TM: Yeah, and he said, before thirty years, coming thirty years, *butô* is going to disappear. Very soon, thirty years, after his death.

ZF: He said that publicly or he said that to you?

IS: Publically, right?

TM: Not publically, but he speaks it to many people. He could find out many chances to speak, not in a journalism.

ZF: I remember once you telling a story Hijikata was speaking and somebody asked him “what is *ankoku butô*” and he said...

TM: Oh yeah.

ZF: Can you tell that story again?... (laughter)

TM: “*anko, anko ku...*”⁸

Shiho: Now you know the Japanese language yes?

ZF: Oh yes, very well (laughter).

SI: So you know *anko ku*.

TM: For him, this is not a question. Serious question.

ZF: It’s not a serious question.

TM: So he had to answer a very different way. And he started to speak about the soy beans...

IS: From the soy beans, how to make the *anko*, right? Takes time precisely, how to boil...

TM: Very precisely.

IS: You have to boil thirty minutes.

TM: No no no, from the harvest.

SI: From the seeding.

TM: No no no, how to harvest. From the soy beans you need to talk about. “You know soy beans?”

ZF: I hadn’t heard that part, I just heard *ankoku* means “I like to eat *anko*.”

TM: For him, if you question to somebody, you have to really study. Or you have to really feel “what is this?” purely. But maybe, it was young girl...but we all felt, this is like a very artificial way she made a question. She didn’t really want to say anything about *ankoku*. Yeah if it was

⁸ The story as I remembered hearing it from Tanaka is that Hijikata was speaking once and someone in the audience asked him what *ankoku butô* was. Hijikata replied *anko ku* means “I like to eat sweat bean paste (*anko*).”

very pure question, maybe he could answer very deeply, but she looks like she has opinions about *ankoku* but she just asked “What is *ankoku*?”

ZF: Ah, that helps to understand that story better than just being a funny story. To contextualize that.

TM: Of course the people there at the same time, I think each one of the people also got some thinking. The people “Yes I know *ankoku*.” But is it true? Yeah, maybe he did a big question to everybody.

(Pause)

TM: Dark matter *ne*? Yeah I was shocked when I had first knowledge through the T.V. documentary about dark matter and if you think more wisely about the universe, that was very understandable. Without dark matter, how the universe can exist? Since then *ne*, I think even human world maybe over 90 percent we cannot see. How can you see a love? But people understand as if people knows love. But a lot of love is fake right? Courage, how to watch it? Sky is nothing, yeah? When it’s cloudy we can feel the sky, but sky is emptiness. Most of the world is not visible.

IS: Seems like Hijikata knew already before word happens: dark matter.

TM: I think so. His *ankoku*, darkness is really deep. Not black. And some people asking, “Light or darkness, which one is the first?” Hijikata was always laughing. And always different answer. (End)

August 12, 6 p.m.

ZF: So the last time we talk you proposed that we talk about tradition.

TM: Mmm hmm. But before that if you find out something else you should ask before moving to tradition...

ZF: Before moving to tradition....

TM: Yeah, if you find out...

ZF: Yeah, something from before... Ok, I was going to do tradition first, but ok. So I want to clear about, we talked about the process of you creating *ren'ai Buto ha* with Hijikata and there’s not really much that we really know about that, most people who are interested in your work.

TM: Yeah, most people don’t know, because we decided not to leave anything, only some photos, by Okada. Nothing was recorded.

ZF: So I was very excited, you talked about the music for example, also a little bit about the process. So just wanted to be clear that the process was that Hijikata gave you the images to work with, and then you created movement from the images. And you also said that Yoko

Ashikawa was often in the rehearsals and that she would sometimes show you movement that you would steal from her.

TM: Sometimes.

ZF: Sometimes, but most of the movement was coming from you. And how long did you rehearse for that piece?

TM: How many days? Like two months we spent. At that time I was on the way of workshopping in Hachioji before coming here, coming to Yamanashi. Mainly in the morning time, or sometimes afternoon. How many times a week? Three or four times. I just decided to go from Hachioji to Meguro, Asbestos Kan, then the other finished, then I speak with Hijikata. Then coming back.

ZF: So you were leading the workshops and then also rehearsing at the same time. And how did that dance sort of initiate, was it your idea, or Hijikata invited you to...

TM: I asked him some day in the Springtime. I decided to ask him if he has interest to give his idea on my body. To my body maybe. I just give my body for his interest.

ZF: And how many times did you perform that piece?

TM: Three days. Two thousand people, big crowd. Because most of butoh people are shocked "why Min Tanaka?" Before that almost everybody thought "Min is against *butô*."

ZF: Interesting. Why would they think you were against *butô*?

TM: Sometimes I speak about *butô* dance and I was not always, how to say, being in that kind of society. I was always out of. I was alone. But one day Hijikata came to see my performance. To Plan B. Since that night we start talking a lot.

ZF: Do you remember which performance that was that he came to see?

TM: It was called "Emotion." Series of emotion. But already he read my articles, poem-like articles...

ZF: Manifestos...

TM: Yes yes. I am the dancer who is crawling on the earth. I am the avant-garde. He already read it. Then he told me "I read it." And he remembered still all the sentences. It's amazing.

ZF: You said before that he had an amazing memory, that he could for example remember exactly the score that you had...

TM: Yeah, language too. I forgot but he didn't forget it. "You said like this in the book, you wrote it."

ZF: And before that you had been doing *Hyperdance*, before working with Hijikata. And after that, after *Ren'ai butô-ha*, did that piece become in some way, I guess not basis, but did your dance change after that?

TM: Yeah, sure very influenced, but it's not (by) the movement, the choreography is the words. It's not physical movement, it's a sensation mainly. So sensation shows the movement. It's maximum to minimum. It's small, but can be possible to move it bigger. All up to your creation.

ZF: And you had said that some people were shocked that he chose you to do that with. How was the reaction after the performance?

TM: Quiet. Very quiet.

ZF: You mentioned sensations and I wanted to ask you about space. The other day when we were talking I was really struck by the idea that the images aren't enough, that the dancer has to really experience the sensations, a lot of different sensations. And it seems to me that your sets that are constructed for the group pieces you do, are really providing a stimulation for the dancers, they're not just decorative. For example you use the slope a lot and you use this black paper on the ground. It seems really crazy to try to dance on that. Do you agree that is something important when you make a set for a group dance? Is that something you think about?

TM: Mainly for example, we are used to, familiar to dance on a very flat floor which is prepared for dance. But traditionally we didn't have that kind of floor. When people spend time on that dance floor, people do not feel the floor through the feet. And I really want to give sensitivities for the foot, floor. And this is very scientific, if you have a stimulation or if you feel the stimulation on the foot, it makes you something.

ZF: So the stimulation to the foot affects the whole rest of you.

TM: Yeah, relation with the point, some spot (of the foot) which is touching the ground. Or pushing the ground or having a gravity on the ground, this point can keep the whole body on the ground. Because of the point. If you unconsciously lose the point...you understand?

ZF: Yeah. You lose the balance.

TM: My way of standing is always I want to imagine the smallest point (of the foot) on the floor, then standing. This is big fun for me.

ZF: So the smallest point that is actually in contact with the floor.

TM: Yeah, it's not occupying the floor by the foot, just trying to feel the relation with the ground.

ZF: And it's not just when you are on your feet too, when you are lying down you also want to have the smallest part of your body in contact with the floor as well.

TM: Yes, so lying down means people don't feel the point, they are just meat. Then Hijikata said "Do not sleep, do not rest." You have to discover the point, then work. Even if people don't see you as a mover, you have to work. You understand?

ZF: Yes, to be still is not enough.

TM: Just sitting like an actor, or daily people, this is resting, but if a dancer takes this position, this is working.

ZF: That reminds me of something, I think you wrote something about William Forsythe's dancers a long time ago standing on the...

TM: Ah, standing on the stage, and just waiting for the next cue to start moving. That is really boring, yeah, and also sorry to the stage, or sorry to the space for the audience.

ZF: So even in stillness the whole body has to...

TM: ...should keep dancing.

ZF: The other day we talked about the idea of *ma*, the word *ma* and concept of *ma* and space. And in Japanese there are several different words for space. You had a dance called *Ba-Odori* (Space Dance). Are there other Japanese words or ideas about space that you relate to particularly?

TM: For me, *time* is first. Because on our planet, time never stopped, that's why time happened. You understand?

ZF: I don't know...

TM: If all the time we had sun, I think we wouldn't have time.

ZF: Yes, O.K.

TM: Time means including day or night. Time is not a clock. Time is circulation.

ZF: But you used to say "I don't dance in the space, I dance the space."

TM: Because of time human beings could have activities of the brain. We found consciously time from nature, from the movement of the earth. This is true right?

ZF: Yeah, sure, right.

TM: So, this discovery helps to grow the imagination. Space. So space comes from time for me. That is why imagination is the history of time. Or the history of the human being is our imagination. Even if I have no (common) experience (with you), our brains have the sensation of space, I'm sure.

ZF: O.K. Very interesting.

TM: So space is not only “space.” We have many many aspects for space. Space has everything. Even if nobody is there, we have somebody. Because you watch the space, right? I watch the space. We have somebody.

ZF: I remember once, we were I think in Italy rehearsing something and you told me “The space is more important than you.” Because it has so many experiences, it’s been there so long.

TM: Because my imagination starts not from me. I speak, I imagine, but this is so-called “tradition.” How to practice the imagination? You have imagination right, but how to get it? How could you create the imagination? You studied?

ZF: No. I guess it relates to something you said the other day about the dancer needing to become like a child. For me the imagination comes from childhood.

TM: For example, everyone educated, everyone who is not educated, once somebody steps into the forest they have a very strong heartbeat. Strange, there is nothing but being a human knows something from the past. Even if somebody (for the) first time stepped into the forest, (they would) have similar feelings in the forest.

ZF: So the imagination comes from nature.

TM: Yes, nature and our body’s history. The other day I said to you like a “memory of life.” Not memory of *me*, memory of *life*. Life input to our DNA the memory (of life). This is also very clear science, right? We already know, even watching a space, that it’s not one person’s original (space). Even if it is very new, it’s owed to the memory. That is why we can feel the sense.

ZF: Yeah. It’s “owed”?

TM: Owed to the memory of the human being.

ZF: Yes.

TM: So, what is the creation? Interesting.

ZF: Yeah.

TM: So, what is creation? It’s interesting. Our body itself is already tradition, full of the memory of life. Even if people are not educated, they have already the sense of the imagination. In some spaces, most people can relax. In some spaces most people feel tight.

ZF: OK.

TM: So (when) I prepare the space, that is not me. It’s the space itself. But for example, the floor has a very... my will happens. I want to give a sensation for the dancers for example. The other

day I prepared the stones for Shiho's performance. This (was) for a sensation and also some sounds, for the people.

ZF: Do you feel that when you dance in a new space you carry the memory of other spaces from the past?

TM: Sometimes. Other theatres for example, or other experiences. It's not always the same of course. If I go to some spaces, performing spaces, sometimes I really want to change (them) totally. I don't know why but mainly because of the people there.

ZF: From watching your dance it seems to me that sometimes for you the subject really is the space itself, and then sometimes you are bringing a lot of other things into the space.

TM: Yeah. It depends on the space. And space (also) means people or history. For example that town, or that city, that theatre, or that country. I'm not adjusting, I'm not judging but... I want to bring my feeling. My first dance at Prague, was really really scary, and even on the stage while I am dancing I wanted to escape. And I started to scream.

ZF: Because in that situation you were there under communism, you had to have a secret...

TM: Yeah yeah,

ZF: ...you had to have a secret performance.

TM: You had to really think about the secret police, if they come in I could not come back to Japan.

ZF: You could not go back to Japan...

TM: I'm sure, I'm sure. Even the rock musicians, many people were in the jail. And actors, theatre directors were in the jail, once they showed a kind of free feelings. And of course I was dancing naked.

ZF: So that situation was a kind of extreme political situation. Do you feel that dance is political?

TM: No. Not at all. The body needs or the body wants freedom. That is the basis. If politics were always thinking about the body, I (would) agree.

ZF: If politics were always thinking about the body...

TM: If the politician is thinking of the body or body history of the human beings. The body makes a big hierarchy for example. People used somebody for fighting or killing like a performance. It was a long time ago, but still people do similar things. But that is the same body.

ZF: Because it seems that a lot of the things you are talking about have to do with how our bodies are controlled historically.

TM: Yeah, politics is just a form of relations. Thinking of the form of human relations. But if they were thinking of the body purely, politics would change I'm sure. First of all they have to think how to break out the hierarchy. Of the body for example. For small people, big people, white people, black people, (people using) strange language, all about the body. So dance is totally not political. But dance must be, how you say, honorable. Honorable? Honorable mind to measure politics.

ZF: Honorable mind?

TM: Full of honor.

ZF: Full of honor?

TM: As a minor.

ZF: As a ...?

TM: A minority.

ZF: Ah, a minor, yes I see.

TM: A minority, for our power, or politics.

ZF: Dancers are the minority you're talking about?

TM: Dance itself.

ZF: Dance itself is a minority in relation to politics. Sometimes you put flags in your dances though. For example, the black flag in Romance, and you mentioned that you wore a black kimono in Prague ...

TM: Body anarchist.

ZF: Body anarchist, great.

TM: I am a body anarchist. Not a political anarchist, that's a bit stupid.

ZF: That's very clear. Ok those were the things I sort of wanted to follow up on. You started talking about tradition already. As usual your answers are going beyond my questions. You started to talk about this already but I wanted to propose that perhaps we could talk about the relationship between the avant-garde and traditional performance. Traditional theatre and avant-garde theatre. Or performance, dance.

TM: So, we have to think, *why* traditional theatre? So what is the theatre? I'm always having a question why people want to put tradition?

ZF: Yeah, me to.

TM: It looks like frozen, you know. Or value of the length of time, for example two hundred years continuing, that is why we call it traditional. So what is traditional? So traditional means form? Or inner movement, inner spirit, let's say. Which one?

ZF: It seems to be sort of like, when you use the word *butô*, sometimes you use it like "I want to throw out *butô*, *butô* is finished" but then you sometimes use it in a positive sense, as this kind of mysterious changing very intense surprising thing. So you seem to use the word in two opposite ways. So is it possible that tradition is similar that there is a kind of frozen tradition...

TM: Yeah,

ZF: ...and then there's a very alive tradition, traditions that are very alive?

TM: Yeah, yeah. We need to use that kind of, *butô* of course, but tradition also we have to use the two different senses. One is very *actively* we can use tradition. Tradition has to move, that is why tradition could exist. People *carry* on. For example dance is tradition of the human beings. You know? It's a over billion billion billion years. People continue dancing. Never finished. So dance itself is a really beautiful human tradition. You know?

ZF: Yeah. One of your early pieces in 1973 was called *Kagura*.

TM: Ah, my short, five minute piece.

ZF: Oh, it was five minutes? I didn't know that.

TM: Kagura. Mm.

ZF: Five minutes. What was that like?

TM: I was in the Japan Modern Dance Association, I was one of the members. Many, a *big* association. Then, their "New Face," series of new face dance. They gave us only five minutes for the dance, and over twenty persons showed a dance. New face performance, dance performance. In that time I showed (something) *very experimental*.

ZF: And what was that dance like, the five minute one?⁹

TM: It was my *kagura*. *Kagura* means dancing in front of the god. God means for me nature. Original nature, that is the beginning of shintoism, that is the beginning of *jômon* people. For *jômon* people nature is totally god.

ZF: You sometimes collaborate with people who have, I don't know what other word to use but since we're using the word, traditional performance backgrounds. You worked with Kanze Hideo and also some other folks. The *rokyoku* performer Fukutaro Tamagawa, other people and, for this kind of collaboration between your work which is so experimental and traditional performance, what sort of relationship do you feel is necessary for that type of collaboration?

TM: Especially I, (at) some moment, 1983,4,5. That period I worked with, how you say, language workers. For example *rakugo*, *rokyoku*, *kodan*. *Kodan* means telling a story. And I wanted to experiment while I'm dancing: if I hear language or specific stories, how can I dance? It was very interesting. Imagination of the language is very strong and people are sometimes packed by language, but vision is totally different from language right? So that kind of reaction from the audience, it made me really really fun.

ZF: So of course you weren't trying to show the language of the person speaking...

⁹ In this dance Tanaka hung in the air for five minutes, suspended by ropes under his arm, his body tucked into a ball, wearing only a *fundoshi* (an old fashioned undergarment covering the genitals but not the buttocks).

TM: I do not translate the language, but somehow I am living in the language world. People discovered the body moment to moment.

ZF: That's interesting, it reminds me of in your workshop when we were doing image work and we had partners and one partner would actually speak the images to the other partner, which is a very different experience than preparing the images and just visualizing them. I didn't really think about that before. And you said that for you the relationship between language and the body is extremely important.

TM: Yeah, you can just imagine if you are listening to something, then watching something at the same time. If you have a strong purpose: you have to *listen* to this or you have to *watch* this. So the other is a little disturbing to you. But you have no, how you say, specific risks. You have to *keep* listening for example. Then, you can enjoy both, right? But mainly you start "I want to understand this sound." Then people are much more listening t, but still interesting things are moving in front of them. Then naturally people start *relating* this world and this world. People have to use their own systems really.

ZF: So then they are sort of creating the dance too.

TM: Yeah, the audience can enjoy more than the performer.

ZF: I've heard you speak often about the idea of the shaman. And one thing that you said once that sort of struck me particularly is the idea that the shaman accepts everything into his body, or accepts everything into their body. Do you remember that?

TM: Yeah,

ZF: Yeah, it's something that you talked about before. And then another thing you've said is that a lot of dancers say they want to express something that's inside them but you want to pull something that's outside into your body. So I guess I would like to ask you, what is the shaman for you?

TM: Hmm. Shaman is a media, or emptiness, or one of the most talented bodyweather. (pause) Ancestor of the dancer. (pause). I met many shamans but they were quite open, acceptable persons, even in daily life. Sometimes fake shamans they are very much, how to say, strong expression to outside: "I'm a shaman." They are a bit stupid.

ZF: Did you meet them in Japan, or different places in the world?

TM: Japan, and abroad, yeah. Tibetan. Iceland, France, Canada, Native American. Quite a lot. Ainu. *Itako* are in the north of Japan, not Hokkaido. *Itako* is a woman who brings the dead people into her body, to speak as if the dead people came back here, then speak to the family. Somebody coming and asks "I want to meet my husband who died three years ago." Then this *Itako* starts to pray and soon the husband coming into her body and husband starts "Oh" to the wife. This is a kind of very important point to think about who I am, and self-consciousness. What is my *self*? What is your *self*? These questions are, especially Japanese culture, our culture is always we can, we can bring one self to outside. Sometimes I move to Shiho. Our daily life is

like, it is totally not necessary to keep yourself always with you. You can always in and out. That is our beautiful tradition I think. No, it's not necessary to call it tradition, but it happened since long long time ago.

ZF: I think that was one of the hardest things for some of the foreign people (working with you) to understand, how important the group is. When we were working together as a group.

TM: Since a long time Japanese people do not say yes and no clearly for example.

ZF: Yes, this was very confusing.

TM: I think we knew, we don't need to finish forever. And we feel, "I don't need to decide," like immediately "Yes!" It's both. Yes and no.

ZF: It makes it sort of hard to communicate sometimes.

TM: *Jibun* (reaches for paper and pen) Can I write?

ZF: Please.

TM: (writes): So this means myself. But this is me, or beginning. Ok? This is divide. Or share. Quite complicated. Sometimes we can say *jibun*, but at the same time *jibun*. Complicated, right?

ZF: Yes.

TM: But we can always share the self itself. I love this. When I respect somebody very strongly, very strongly I respect this person, I say *jibun*. Normally I say *watashi*, *boku*, different language. That is very much *myself*. But this one, if I use this *jibun*, means I'm sharing your thinking. That is great honor for me. That kind of meaning I have, then *jibun wa*, you understand *ne*? I speak like *jibun wa*.

ZF: Nice.

TM: *Songoku. Sogoku*, very much. "Oh I can speak with that person, O.K." Then "*Jibun wa, Tanaka Min to moushimasu.*" *Jibun, desu ne.* (pause) The self, inside, *wa, dakara*, for example if we say "my mind is dancing" sometimes this dancing is going up, out from the body and move to that tree. *Kokoro ga utsuru te ne.* Mind move to somewhere else, for example.

ZF: Right, so you're, so that kind of, you can, that...*muzukashi*.

TM: Very often I speak to the workshop people, try to come out from your body then watch your body, but if you always has keep staying in your body so you have to have mirror always.

ZF: Zeami said something about that.

TM: Yeah, sure, sure. For me the mirror is nature. I give the reflection, I feel the reflection of my body into the nature. *Kagami* is really... mirror is always boring.

ZF: Nature is a mirror.

TM: Yeah. I had an experience, I was living in Indonesia. *Deep* into the mountains. Small village. There were no window, glass window. Just wood.

ZF: No windows.

TM: No windows. Because of poor, or they have a primitive life.

Normally people watch the view by a window. Now in the city, everywhere mirrors. Buildings and show windows, everywhere. And many people watching *you* through the mirror. Yeah. People always recognize you by the mirror.
(pause, laughter)

ZF: I have to think about that awhile.

TM: I think many people need to watch the mirror to recognize you yourself. Snow White.
(pause) Snow White are very much... (inaudible).

ZF: Yeah.

TM: In the story the queen shows ugly.

ZF: Yeah.

TM: But the queens are everybody. Everybody is like a queen. I think original story is saying "you are the queen." No Snow White exists.

ZF: So that's also relating to the individuality that you were talking about before.

TM: Yeah human beings are always fighting about individuality. "What is myself?" It's very interesting.

ZF: I guess this is sort of relating again to the idea of the shaman and the idea of tradition, kind of living, lively intense tradition and kind of frozen or empty traditions. And we talked a little bit about the idea of healing as a kind of fashionable thing, a kind of fashion, how people are talking about dance as a healing practice or about *butô* as a healing practice.

TM: Yeah anyway, historically, or history means fashion, which is very much announced. Which is that very well known things are the history. Small things or not so... markable things are never left in the history. So history, especially dance history, is a fashion. Even now it's continuing. So *butô* is one of the fashions. That's all maybe. I mean, fashion is not stupid, sometimes people really need to follow the fashion, because people, many many people need it. For example some moment Pina Bausch was a fashion in Japan. People are big influenced by "dance theatre." Then dance and theatre mixtured? So I got angry.

ZF: (laughter)

TM: Because before that we have to clearly reach to dance *much* more deeply. Reach to the theatre much more deeply. What is the theatre? What theatre has to? But Pina Bausch made a fashion.

IS: Kunichi Uno said “history is a language.”

TM: History is a language, yeah, that is the question.

ZF: Yeah, that’s one of the things I’m sort of struggling with in looking at all of your work is because, as you say, in history you have these most important moments, but for me, of course there are very exciting moments, but it’s not like there are these “important pieces”, what we talked about before, important moments, but the important thing is the stream of all your activities, kind of going, and the scope. And the intensity of that.

TM: Yeah, if we can understand, we understand, tradition means *right* directions. So, what is *kabuki*? *Kabuki* started from *really* ...

ZF: Avant-garde...

TM: ...outside. And avant-garde... So what is tradition? They became traditional. Wow. So time gave them traditional as a word.

ZF: Yeah it seems sometimes that it becomes traditional when it becomes fixed. Even with kabuki the even changed the kanji for the kabuki, took out the prostitute.

TM: Uno Kunichi, Kunichi Uno, suggested, proposed about tradition and... *nan da ke?*... *mo hitotsu* (writes something)... *Sho kana*, Only one letter different, but this tradition is very much well-continued things.
This...

ZF: Transition?

TM: Only “d” becomes “h”

ZF: “H”? Trahition?

TM: It’s French.

ZF: Oh it’s French, o.k.

TM: French pronunciation, only one letter different. Trahition?

ZF: *Trahison*

TM: One letter change, and meaning is totally different. This is “destroy.”¹⁰ Tradition, even, tradition, most biggest tradition is our planet. Never stopped.

ZF: That’s pretty big to think about.
(pause)

TM: One second is never changing.
(laughter)

TM: This is joke-like things, but if we want something which never changes, yeah?

ZF: Yeah.

TM: This is against Body Weather. You understand.

ZF: Yeah, I do. Yes.

TM: But for me, tradition sometimes means much more good, how you say....full of will. Will to keep the things going on. Not be held by an... establishment.

ZF: It seems there’s also a sense of...

TM: Yeah, for example, if somebody said, “Oh, *kabuki*, o.k., *kabuki* I know.” This is maybe tradition, boring tradition. Well known things becomes tradition. *Butô* became tradition.

ZF: Punk rock also.

TM: Sankai Juku is quite funny for me, “Traditional *butô* dance.” They didn’t say “original *butô* dance.”

ZF: Yeah, traditional...

TM: We are already in the fashion.

ZF: “traditional Japanese butoh”

SI: *Trahison* and tradition

TM: Tradition, tradition, the word *dento*. People are not active at all. If you have the word *dento*, then people cannot be active. It’s surely boring.

ZF: Do you feel like with *Tokason* do you feel like you were doing something maybe like *kabuki* before it became a tradition. Like traditional theatre before becoming formalized?

¹⁰ Or *betray* might be a more accurate translation.

TM: Kabuki was very very wild. Very very wild. Tokason never wild.

ZF: I don't mean like kabuki literally, but I mean in the sense of being like a traditional dance before it became traditional.

TM: Hmmmm.

ZF: Maybe not.

TM: Of course kabuki was supported in Edo period by citizens, very strongly. For example Noh theatre was supported by the Shogun, always. That became tradition. So in the end it is, I think, some occasion needs support from the power. Then it can be a tradition.

Appendix B

Body Workshops 1997-2000: Descriptions of Exercises

The following are descriptions of the workshop exercises as I experienced them, based on notes taken from the workshops in 1997, 1998, 1999, and 2000.

MB is a series of floor exercises, executed to the rhythm of recorded music, with participants in rows travelling across the floor. It is always done on a stage or hard floor. *MB* exercises include rhythmic combinations of footwork, turns, stretches, and rhythmic patterns (such as slapping the feet with the hands in a rhythmic combination while skipping across the floor) combined with arm gestures and/or head movements. It could be said that it resembles a conventional dance class more than any other aspect of body weather: a leader demonstrates the movement and the participants copy it. Tanaka says that he based it on his observations of children playing. Like other elements of his practice, its nature is fluid and changeable, and this is reflected in the multiple meanings denoted by the initials *MB*: Mind and Body, Muscle and Bone, Music and Body, or Myself as a Boy. The workshop members are encouraged to move to the beat of the music, not to improvise or create their own rhythm as a dancer would in performance. While relatively codified, in Tanaka's workshop he often added new elements to "standard" exercises. For example, in 1998 a step that consisted of hopping from one leg to the other doing a series of precise quarter turns in the air, Tanaka added the element of writing one's name in the air one finger. In 1999, a wide cross step was combined with the gesture of touching the chin with the fist, and the image work (see below) of having ants crawling inside the mouth. While there is room for variation in the exercises themselves, as well as in the order (they generally start out simple but fast, then become more complex, then slow and stretchy for awhile,

then back to something more fast and complicated), there is a solid framework of relatively fixed steps, patterns, and movements.

Manipulations are a series of assisted stretches developed from yoga, acupuncture, sports medicine, and physical therapy. They are quite specific in nature, and have a clearly defined order. Manipulations are done in pairs. While one partner remains relatively passive, the other manipulates their body through a series of specific positions, pulling, pushing, and stretching their partner's body. Breathing is very important in manipulations. The person being manipulated breathes in through the nose and out through the mouth, with the mouth partially closed, making a "ssssssss" sound. His or her breath controls the timing of the manipulation. For example, in manipulation #1 the active partner places his or her hands on the passive partner's rib cage, and the passive partner inhales, with the image of breathing into the partner's hands. Then, as the passive partner exhales, the active partner pushes down on the ribcage, tilting slightly upward, elongating the spine. Tanaka emphasized the importance of observing one's partner's body. While the passive partner is receiving the physical benefit of the exercise, opening and stretching the body in ways that could not be achieved without the partner, the manipulator has the opportunity to study another body, to learn about that the condition of that particular body and what its needs and capabilities are. If someone finds a certain position painful, Tanaka emphasizes that they should not try to "escape" from the pain, but should go deeply into it and use it as an opportunity to learn about their own body.

Relaxation work is similar to manipulations in that a passive body is moved by one or more active bodies. However, in relaxation work the passive partner relaxes as completely as possible, they do not assist the active partner in any way. The active partner has no set structure, but moves the passive partner according to his or her own judgment, with the intention of giving relaxation to the body. This can include lifting, pulling, or shaking the limbs, torso, pelvis, or

head, rolling the body over, or dragging it across the floor. Smaller parts of the body such as the joints of the hands or feet should be included. While the instruction given for this exercise was consistently to give relaxation to the partner, Tanaka also emphasized giving one's partner a "good experience," and the experience of being a passive relaxed body moved by another is a central component of this exercise. Partners are changed frequently, and the experience of encountering different bodies, of being passively moved into unfamiliar positions, creates new possibilities for the body, and throughout the workshops there was an emphasis on moving beyond the limits of personal movement vocabulary and habitual patterns of movement. Often, after working in partners, we would form groups of three and work with two active people simultaneously moving and relaxing one passive person. In this case the passive person was able to experience physical sensations, movements, and positions it would be impossible to experience moving by oneself. With three people, a variation can be done where the person receiving relaxation is always carried by the other two. In some workshops we would practice a variation of this exercise where the passive partner was standing, using just enough energy to stand, while remaining as relaxed as possible. After both partners had received relaxation (or all three in the case of a three-partner relaxation), there would be a short discussion between each set of partners or threesome about the experience. While there was no set way of manipulating the body (as there was in manipulations), the workshop members could use what they learned about the body in manipulations to give a deeper relaxation and experience to their partner in subsequent sessions.

Stimulation Work (also called "pushing discussion" or "wind") can be done in pairs or in groups of three. The exercise is generally introduced in pairs. One partner begins in a neutral position: standing, relaxed, feet slightly more than hip width apart. The other, "giving" partner touches a specific part of the receiving partners body, giving them a stimulation indicating a

clear direction for the movement, with enough force so that passive partner can clearly feel the direction, but not enough force to actually manipulate the body part and cause it to move. The receiver follows the stimulation, slowly, as far as that body part can move in that direction, and then follows with the rest of the body as far as possible without actually beginning to travel across the floor. After reaching the limit of the movement, the mover begins to return to the neutral position. The mover almost never actually reaches the neutral position, as they are interrupted by further stimulations from the partner. The exercise generally goes on for eight to ten minutes before switching partners. After practicing this exercise once or twice, the stimulators were usually directed to time their stimulations so that the receiver always has two or three stimulations going at the same time. Tanaka emphasized that the person giving the stimulation needs to be physically engaged, and must move their own body, using as much energy as the person receiving the stimulation: “Your intensity for your partners body must be as intense as for your own.” He emphasized that the goal of the exercise is not technical perfection, but the effort of striving to go beyond one’s capabilities: “If you follow the stimulations to the limit, you will lose your balance, your control. This is ok; the point is not to show your beautiful movement, it is about your effort.”¹

There are many, many variations to this exercise. In the early Body Weather workshops this exercise was done with the imagery of wind, with the stimulator “giving wind” to their partner.² In the first workshop that I took with Tanaka, in 1997, there was no wind imagery given, the stimulator could give a stimulation to any part of the body, using any part of the hand: palm, edge of the hand, fingertips or combinations of these. In 1998 the image of wind was used with this exercise throughout the workshop, and the intensity of the stimulation (the amount of

¹ Zack Fuller, Body Workshop Notes, 2000.

² Stuart Lynch, interview with Zack Fuller, July 14, 2007, Copenhagen, Denmark.

pressure, the length of time touching the body, the speed), indicated how far to follow the stimulation. If a light wind stimulation was given, the receiver would not go to their physical limit in following the stimulation, instead they would choose the point to begin returning to neutral based on the force of the stimulation they received. In 1999 and 2000 there was no imagery used in the stimulation work, the emphasis was on giving the stimulation specifically to the receiver's joints and spine, and the receiver was to follow the stimulation to the limit of the movement each time.

Variations include the use of a different neutral position, a seated position, or the "animal position" where the receiver begins kneeling, on all fours. When the exercise is done in groups of three, one person receives the stimulations while two people give them. After workshop members had practiced giving and receiving stimulations with several partners, a variation was added where one partner moves while imagining receiving stimulation and the other partner observes. The mover should begin by recalling the memory of the hands giving the stimulation, not the memory of the movement, in order to avoid falling into repeated forms. A variation of this imaginary stimulation work is that while their partner is moving from the imagined simulations, the observer names or touches the body part that they judge the mover has "forgotten," that is not active. Another is that four people imagine receiving stimulation while rest of the group watches. Great mental effort is needed on the part of both stimulator and receiver to avoid falling into repeating patterns: "To move from places we normally do not to reach positions that are different for our bodies."³

A variation that was given in the 2000 workshop was to do stimulation work with the receiver moving their non-dominant arm and their head independently while receiving

³ Fuller, Body Workshop Notes, 2000.

stimulation to legs and body. In that same workshop it was done once in conjunction with live music, a very rare instance of Tanaka using music in the workshop for anything other than MB.

Blind Work refers to various exercises undertaken while blindfolded. Tanaka states that he began experimenting with it because he felt that people had moved away from a primitive way of seeing, that seeing had become “psychological.” Here are some examples:

1. The group is given a route to follow, which each workshop member records in his or her notebook. For example: beginning from Earth Stage, go to the outhouse, then the barn, then to the vegetable garden, find a ripe tomato, then return Earth Stage. After having five minutes to memorize the route, the group is divided into pairs. In each of the pairs, one partner is blindfolded. The blindfolded partner begins by spinning around in a circle until they become disoriented, then they have a half an hour to follow the prescribed route. Their partner follows along with them, warning them if they are about to encounter something potentially dangerous. The seeing partner should only speak if the blind partner seems in danger.

2. One partner is blindfolded and one is not. The blind partner freely explores the space for a half an hour while observed and guarded by the seeing partner, as above.

3. The workshop is divided into groups of three. One member out of each group of three is blindfolded. The blindfolded person relaxes, and the other two partners carry them, then choose a location within the workshop environment and place them there so that they can experience that particular space. After a time the non-blindfolded members pick up their blindfolded partner and move them again, repeating the process until time is called. The non-blinded partners must communicate with each other (verbally and/or non verbally) and agree on where the blindfolded partner should be placed. Once placed, the blindfolded person usually remains there, experiences the space in their own way for a period of time before being moved to the next space. There was no specific direction given for what the blindfolded person should do after being placed.

4. Everyone in the group is blindfolded, and told to move and explore their environment with the senses of touch, smell, hearing, and taste for a half an hour. They are encouraged to keep their senses open, and to change their physical positions while exploring the space.

In *String Work*, partners are connected by a string (or strand of thread, or piece of dental floss) wrapped around one finger. The length of the string is variable, and may depend in part on the size of the space. One partner is blindfolded; the seeing partner leads the other with the string. The blind partner must sense where the string is and keep it parallel to the ground. Both leader and follower work together to keep the string parallel to the ground, and both must maintain an awareness of their partner in space. The blindfolded partner should try to keep facing the leading partner. If the string becomes loose, it means the blind person is moving too fast, if it becomes tight, they are moving too slowly. One variation of this exercise is the use of *bisoku* movement, the blind partner moves as slowly as possible.

In *Stone Work* one partner places stones on the other's body, carefully choosing where to place them. The passive partner experiences the sensation of the stones.

In *Imagination Games* partners engage in shared activities with imaginary objects. For example, one partner tosses an imaginary ball to another partner. The number of balls increases: two, three, and four balls are tossed back and forth. Next the ball is sticky, or becomes very large. A similar exercise can be done with imaginary sticks of varying sizes.

Balance Games test and develop skills of balance and speed. For example, one partner holds out their hand. The other partner quickly moves to place their buttocks on it. As soon as they do so the partner holds out the other hand, until the partner has placed his or her buttocks on that hand. In another balance game, partners stand across from each other, touching their hands together, palm to palm. Without moving their feet, one partner tries to make the other partner lose their balance.

Hand Imitation/Hand Theatre: Two partners sit cross-legged, facing each other. One imagines that the space between their shoulder and lap is a small theatre their hands and arms are the performers. The other imitates the arm and hand movement of their partner. The leading partner should use different qualities, different rhythms in their movement, and the imitator imitates these as precisely as possible. Variations on this exercise are to add changing the positions of the torso, then shifting the position of the legs. The imitator must mirror the position of the legs and torso of their partner, as well as the nuanced movement of the hands and arms. In this variation, it is not necessary that the change in position of the torso and legs be large, but it must be clear that the legs (for example) are moving from one position to the next, not moving continuously, in contrast to the arms, which should have the same range of variations as they did when the torso and legs were static.⁴ Another variation on this exercise is *Upper Body Theatre*, where the lead partner holds his or her own knees, and moves the upper body, head, and face, while the other partner imitates. The lead partner must keep the hands holding the knees, but can use them to help shift the torso.⁵

Thirty Poses/Thirty Positions: While the workshop leader counts loudly “One, two, three, etc.” the workshop members change to a completely different physical position on each count. One should never take the same pose twice, and the poses should not flow in a linear or narrative fashion. Alternately, the exercise is done in pairs, with one partner counting, and the other one changing positions.

Changing Positions: One partner moves gradually to a position/pose. Once they stop moving, the other moves to take a position in relation to them. This exchange continues for a specified amount of time. A variation of this is to use a group of three rather than partners, with two

⁴ Fuller, *Body Workshop Notes*, 2000.

⁵ Dana Iova-Koga, *Body Workshop Notes*, 2000.

moving and one observing. In all of the position work the mover must maintain an inner engagement, a consciousness of the internal body. Even when holding a position the body must not be frozen: there must be an awareness, a liveliness throughout the body.

The exercise *Three Minute Pose* might be better termed character and position work. One partner forms a physical character over the course of three minutes, beginning with the feet. The character is created from the mover's own imagination. The mover should undergo a metamorphoses, researching each part of the character: feet, knees, elbows, etc. They should begin with the feet and add the face last. Their Partner observes. The three minute pose and the changing positions exercises can be combined with three persons: two moving, one observing. The movers take turns, the first one "inviting" a person or character into the body, moving to a position and holding it. The second mover moves, finds a character, then finds a position in relation to their partner. They should attempt to sense the partner's quality or presence and move in relation to that, as well as to the physical position. Close attention should be paid to the character's particular way of walking. Tanaka gave an example of the way that different individuals place more weight on different parts of the foot: "If you visit a shoe repair place you will be amazed at the different ways people wear out their shoes."⁶

Another character-based exercise is done with partners. One observes, the other walks slowly away from their partner, with their back to them. While walking, they start to "invite a person" into their body. They develop a physical character, beginning with the legs, then the torso, pelvis, arms, and lastly the head. When the character is complete, the mover turns slightly and looks towards the observer.

Another variation is to combine string work with characters. The string leads the moving partner, who transforms into a series of characters. The leader calls out different images for the

⁶ Iova-Koga, Workshop Notes, 2000.

surface the character is walking on: such as mud, sand, ice. Each time the workshop leader calls out a new surface, the mover must change to a different character.

Tanaka emphasizes that in the character work, such as the exercise above, there should be no attempts at emotional expression. Rather than showing or expressing emotion, the mover should focus on having another person's body inside them. Tanaka gave the example of Ashikawa Yoko, who developed more than one hundred different characters, but expressed no emotion while dancing. Because Ashikawa did not show emotion herself, her audience was free to experience a complex range of emotional responses.⁷

In the *Marionette* exercise one partner imagines that he or she is a marionette with strings attached to the joints. Beginning from a neutral position, the moving partner attempts to move like a marionette, imagining being manipulated by strings. The torso should remain fixed, unjointed, like a marionette's. The progression is self directed. One could begin, for example, by imagining one string moving a joint, then two, etc. The goal is to capture the mood or movement quality of a marionette, not to be creative, movement wise. The partner observes. A variation of the exercise is, after finding the marionette in the body, to imagine that the strings are suddenly cut, then fall to the ground.

Image Work came directly out of Tanaka's work with Tatsumi Hijikata. Some of the images used were those developed by Hijikata, and some were Tanaka's own. The group is given a collection of images for the face, arms, torso, and legs. These were given verbally to the group, and each person recorded them in a notebook. Ideally, for each image the workshop member should create their own distinct movement (the outer stream) and perform the movement while keeping the image firmly held in the imagination (the inner stream). The number of movements is built up gradually so that after a few days each member has a repertoire of movements/image

⁷ Zack Fuller, Workshop Notes, 2000.

combinations. The following is a record of all the images used in the image work sections of the workshops I attended. Variant titles and directions were given in different years, and I have indicated these when it seemed clear that Tanaka was using the same image, but with a significant variation , rather than a different image altogether.

Images for the Head and Face

- *Noisy Fly*: A noisy fly lands on your forehead.
- *Fester*: Your face is festering, with pus dripping from it. (You have an old mans face: your skin gets very old and starts to fester from many spots. Pus drips all over your face and saliva starts drooling from your mouth).
- *Hair Wind*: You have long hair that is blowing in a strong wind.
- *Flower*: Somewhere in front of you is a flower. Carry your nose to the flower, and smell the flower.
- *Incense/Incense Smoke*: There is a stick of incense on your head. Your head follows the smoke of the incense. (Incense smoke comes from the center of your head. Your head follows the smoke)
- *Nose Blood*: You have a nosebleed. The blood dripping from your nose moves down your lip.
- *Ear Pulling*: Someone is pulling your ear.
- *Jaw Brush*: You have a beard full of paint that you use to draw something on a piece of paper. (There is a brush under your jaw. Paint something on a surface that is parallel to the floor).
- *Noisy Fly*: A noisy fly lands on your face, moving from one place to the other, leaving, but coming back each time. You want it to leave.
- *Butterfly*: There is a butterfly on your forehead. You want it to stay. (A moth stays on your forehead).
- *Ants*: Ants are coming into your mouth, in a line. Healing you. Moving around your teeth, then leaving.
- *Head Jungle/Head Forest*: Many trees are growing out of your head. (A forest grows out of the back of your head).
- *Watch the Brain*: Your eyes are looking at your brain.
- *Steam*: There is a pan of hot water in front of you with steam coming out. Put your face in the steam.
- *Small Person/Brain Jump*: A very small person comes into your ear, steps into your head, and leaves from the opposite ear. (A small person is entering into your head from the ear and jumping into your brain).
- *Bacon Face*: Your face becomes a face in a painting by Francis Bacon.
- *Black Hole*: All the air of the world comes into your mouth, which is a black hole.
- *Nose Hole*: A small person is trying to open your nose hole from the inside. He is working hard to open it as big as possible.

Images for the Hands and Arms

- *Fire Hands/Fire Flame*: Warm your hands at a fire. First you feel the warmth on the skin, then the fire moves to the inside of your hands.
- *Blood Drip*: Blood drains from your arms and out of your hands, dripping from your fingertips.
- *Waterfall*: Your hands float up a waterfall. (Your arms are climbing up a waterfall).
- *Mummy Arm/Mummy's Arm*: Throw your arm into the desert. The arm dries in the sun. The blood and skin dry up, and the arm becomes a mummy arm. (A mummy arm is in the desert, completely dry).
- *Staircase/Elbow Staircase*: There are many small endless staircases around your body. Your elbows climb up and down the staircases.
- *Child Arms*: Your arms grow smaller to become their childhood size.
- *Internal Hands/Touch Organs*: Your hands want to go into your internal organs.
- *Flower Garden*: Above your head is a flower garden. Your fingers take a walk in the flower garden.
- *Elbow Flower*: Inside your elbow, flowers start blooming. Big flowers. Do you show them? Or keep them for yourself?
- *Small Window/Flying Hands/Open Window*: Your hands open a small small window. The hands fly away into the sky (Your arms open a small small window. The hands become a bird and fly away).
- *Hands in the Water*: Put your hands in the water. Your fingers start floating in the water as if they have their own life, like a plant in the water, or seaweed.
- *Smoke Arms*: Smoke comes into your hands. It goes into your skin, moves into your arms, and your arms start floating like smoke.
- *Old Book*: Your hands open the pages of a book. The book is over 3000 years old. Gradually your hands become mummy hands.
- *Running Wind*: Wind runs around your hands and fingers and arms.
- *Touching Face*: In the darkness, your hands are touching someone's face.
- *Call the Soul*: Your hands are calling a soul.
- *Fog*: Your arms walk in the fog and lose their way.
- *Memory Wrapping*: Your arms are wrapping your memory, your own memory.
- *Take the Organs*: Your arms try to take out all your internal organs.
- *Swimming Arms*: Your arms are swimming, but the water is getting harder and harder. At last your arms are in ice.
- *Catch the Cloud*: Your arms try to catch the clouds.

Torso

- *Torso Wings/Shoulder Wing*: Huge wings grow from your shoulder blades and your torso starts flying.
- *Small Snake/Snake Spine*: There is a small snake in your spine, traveling up and down. (Either your whole spine is one snake, or many small snakes move up and down your spine)
- *Hanger*: Put your torso on a hanger.

- *Armpit Sweat*: There is sweat running down your armpit.
- *On Your Back/On the back*: Someone (maybe your grandmother) is on your back. (One of your family is on your back. Skin to skin, touching.)
- *Organ Balloon*: Your internal organs get bigger and bigger, like a balloon being blown up.
- *Fishhook*: A fishhook begins pulling your chest.
- *Two Plates*: Two metal plates are pressing your torso.
- *Stomach Wave/Stomach Ocean*: You have a big sea wave in your stomach (There is a huge ocean in your stomach).
- *Wet Torso*: You have a wet torso.
- *Smoke*: You have smoke inside of your torso.
- *Big Rain/Torso Rain*: Your torso is under a big rain everywhere (Your torso is in the rain, totally wet).
- *Open Belly/Organs Out*: Your belly opens and all your internal organs come out. Internal organs grow and coming out of your belly, slowly.
- *Running Horses*: On your back many horses are running around. Then your back becomes a huge green field.
- *Two Boards/Torso Box*: Your torso is in between two big wooden boards. (Your torso is put in a very tight box, the wooden boards press your back from the sides).
- *Air Out*: From the breast, all the air goes out of you. (All the air comes out of your torso as if it were a balloon).
- *Sword*: Your back is cut diagonally by a sword, to a two millimeter depth.
- *Ants March*: A big group of ants make a parade on your spine.
- *Stomach Fire*: Your stomach is burning by fire.
- *Shoulder Dog*: A dog bites your shoulder blade.

Lower Body

- *Goat Legs*: You have goat legs and you are peeing and sitting down.
- *Smoke Legs*: Smoke is coming up from your feet through your legs. (Your legs become smoke) (Your legs are in the smoke, then the smoke comes into your legs. Inside your legs the smoke is moving).
- *Mud Hair*: There is hair in the mud, everywhere. You follow the hair with your feet. (You step into a muddy muddy area, you find long hair in the mud. Lots of hairs in the mud. Follow the hair with your feet).
- *Dead Bush*: Walk in a dead bush, breaking dead branches. Little by little your legs become dead branches.
- *Wings*: Huge wings grow out of your buttocks, and the wings start flying. Your legs follow the wings, becoming the legs of a bird.
- *Cow Piss*: Your legs are those of a cow. The cow pees, and the piss runs down the cow's leg.
- *Birds Nest*: You are walking, stepping on birds nests. When you step off the nest, the birds fly away freely behind you.
- *Log Bridge*: You are walking on a bridge made of one log that is smaller than your feet.
- *Steep Slope*: Your legs are walking down a steep slope.
- *Electricity*: You are stepping on electricity.

- *Glass*: You are walking on one flat piece of glass. Sometimes it breaks.
- *Chicken Legs*: You have the legs of a chicken.
- *Tail*: You have a long long tail, it is very fat.
- *Child Legs*: Your legs and feet become your child feet and legs.
- *Long Hair Legs*: From the buttocks to the toes you have long long hair.
- *Worm Feet*: Your feet become worms.
- *Bells*: There are many many small bells on your legs.
- *Thin Ice*: You walk on an iced over lake (You walk on an iced over lake, the ice is very thin).
- *Underground*: Somebody is pulling your legs under the ground. Many people are pulling.
- *Gulliver Legs*: Your legs are walking in the small peoples town.⁸
- *Elephant Legs*: You have elephant legs. The heel is more delicate than a human heel.
- *Sea of Garbage*: Your legs walk in a sea of garbage.
- *Playground*: A group of small people is playing inside of your leg.
- *Glass shoes*: You have small small glass shoes. Very tight.

The workshop members develop their own movement or position for each image, and should make each distinct. *Smoke Arms* and *Hands in the Water* for example must be clearly distinguishable, and ideally, for someone familiar with the images it should be clear which image the mover is embodying. The mover should not “explain” the image, or react to it emotionally, it must be internalized and clear to themselves. The movement is generally slow, and sometimes Tanaka’s direction is specifically that the movement be “minimal.”

The workshop members were given time to develop their image/movement combinations individually. Then there were different variations with partners, where for example, one partner calls out the names of the images one at a time, “directing” the order of the combinations, while the he mover transitions from one to the next, never returning to a neutral position. Then the directing partner would call out four images in quick succession, one from each category with the mover shifting from four images to four new images. In another variation, the movers gives themselves images, and the partners speak to them, asking what image is in body each part if it seems unclear. If the observing partner judges that the mover has “forgotten” a part of the body,

⁸ Referring to the nation of Lilliput in Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*.

the partner says so, asking for changes, verbally criticizes the partner, without offering any images. Another variation is to do the image work with the moving partner in a tree.

Ideally, in all of the image work the person moving and imagining should be quite specific about the images they are visualizing. For example, in the image *Head Forest*, how big are the trees; are they small, or is your head the size of a planet?⁹ Do the hands touch the belly in the *Internal Hands* image, or not? When doing *Elbow Flower*, do you show the flower, or keep it for yourself?¹⁰ In *Touching Face*, whose face are you touching? Exactly what part of your head is the incense on? How big is the fishhook? Is the dog biting your shoulder large or small? While the images themselves are common to the group, each individual must make very specific individual choices about both the images themselves and the movements that are combined with them.

Imaginations are another type of image work where the group is given a series of images in the form of a poetic narrative, and instructed to create an étude based on this. The ones used in the workshops that I participated in are included here.

Dog in the Pond

Dog standing on the bottom of a pond. Bubbles going up from the hair. You can stand on the bottom. You are in a box the size of your torso. Somebody is calling your name from above the water. You go out of the box. Above the surface of the water, a huge face is watching you. You listen to the sound of the voice, you cannot understand it. A very loud voice is hitting your skeleton from the inside. You try to fart. You fart, air comes out of your body. Gradually you lose balance. You lose your consciousness. Try to find something to hold on to. You find a water plant. More and more air comes out from your body. You become like garbage, and start floating in the water.

⁹ Zack Fuller, *Body Workshop Notes*, 1999.

¹⁰ Zack Fuller, *Workshop Notes*, 2000.

Monkey at the Swimming Pool

At the edge of the pool, a monkey is sitting. It is a hot day, the water is shining. You can see your face's reflection in the water. You are curious about it. You don't like it. You are wearing glasses. They keep falling off. You take them off, and throw them away. You want to pee. You pee. Start riding a bicycle. You soon lose your balance and fall down. A big butterfly comes and lands on your back. It stays awhile and then leaves. A crow flies down from above your head to attack you. You fight with the crow. You win, you are very proud. From your feet many many ants climb all over your body. You go into the water feet first, little by little your whole body goes in. At the same time the ants climb up your body and up your head to the top of the pool. With your head under the water, you watch the ants on the surface of the water. You feel dizzy. The water becomes a whirlpool. Your body is turning and being pulled down to the bottom to..... somewhere.

Drunken Cat

Drunken cat in the rain. Rain all the time, drunk all the time. This cat is totally drunk. Sleeping on a bench at a countryside railway platform. Rain comes. There is one light on a pole above your head. Many insects come to the light: big moths. They turn around your body, throwing powder on you. You don't like it. The cat tries to jump off the bench. Ground (concrete) is wet with the rain, a lot of water. A dog comes from in front of you. The cat starts preparing to fight. But the dog goes away, passing in front of the cat. A train comes, the door opens, and many people come out, stepping on your body. You are confused. You decide to walk beside one person's foot, that way you can be safe. The cat starts playing with this foot, enjoying the foot. The person leaves, you are alone. You feel very hungry. You walk around. You drop down from the platform to the railroad. There is a cold iron rail. The cat starts walking on the rail, slips down, start walking again, slips again. The cat gets bored, and goes to sleep exhausted, with the rail as a pillow.

From a Puddle

A puddle after some heavy rain
A body lying
Catching evening sun
A dark shadow, a figure of yourself on the surface of the water
Dark cloud hiding the sun, and the body is losing (sic) temperature
Your self on the surface of the water is changing
 little by little into a black bird.
There're (sic) changes from the body also wings from the
 shoulders, legs to the legs of a bird
After sometime, the blackbird is preparing to fly away,
 And it sees itself on the surface of the water
Just about to take off, looking into the
surface of the water again there's
a figure of a human kind just
 like before¹¹

¹¹ Tanaka Min, "Imagination 2: 'From a Puddle,'" private collection of Zack Fuller. This series of images was given in the form of a Xerox of Tanaka's hand written note and distributed to participants in the 1997 workshop.

Bibliography

Unpublished Interviews

Horikawa Hisako. Interview with Zack Fuller. September 27 2011. Brooklyn, New York.

Kobata Kazue. Interview with Zack Fuller. October 15, 2011. Off Soho Suites, New York City.

Lynch, Stuart. Interview with Zack Fuller. July 14 2007. Copenhagen, Denmark.

Stein, Bonnie. Interview with Zack Fuller. August 9, 2012. Moonrise Café, New York City.

Tanaka Min. Interview with Bonnie Stein. November 4, 1987. Home of Ethan Hoffman, New York City. Transcribed by Maria Sullivan. Private collection of Bonnie Stein.

_____. Interviews with Zack Fuller. August 8, 9, 12, 2011. Dance Resources on Earth, Honmura, Yamanishi-ken, Japan.

Van de Ven, Frank. Interview with Zack Fuller, July 19, 2007, Ixassou, Pays Basque.

Books and Articles

Akasegawa Genpei. *Tôkyô mikisâ keikaku*.. Tokyo: Parco-syuppan, 1984.

Albright, Ann Cooper and David Gere, ed. *Taken by Surprise: A Dance Improvisation Reader*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2003.

Artaud, Antonin. *Selected Writings*. Translated by Helen Weaver. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976.

_____. *The Theater and Its Double*. Translated by Mary Caroline Richards. New York: Grove Press, 1958.

Aslan, Odette and Béatrice Picon-Vallin, ed. *Butô(s)*. Arts Du Spectacle. Paris: CNRS editions, 2002.

Bailey, Derek. *Improvisation: Its Nature and Practice in Music*. New York: De Capo Press, 1993.

Baird, Bruce. *Hijikata Tatsumi and Butoh: Dancing in a Pool of Gray Grits*. Hampshire UK: Palgrave, 2012.

Banes, Sally. *Democracy's Body: Judson Dance Theatre, 1962-1964*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993.

- _____, ed. *Reinventing Dance in the 1960's: Anything Was Possible*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003.
- _____. *Terpsichore in Sneakers: Post-Modern Dance*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1987. First published 1977 by Houghton Mifflin.
- Bataille, Georges. *Erotism: Death and Sensuality*. Translated by Mary Dalwood. San Francisco, City Lights: 1986.
- Bennet, Susan. *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception*. Second Edition. New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Bharucha, Rustom. *The Politics of Cultural Practice: Thinking Through Theatre in an Age of Globalization*. Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 2000.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. Translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984.
- _____. *The Field of Cultural Production*. Edited by Randal Johnson. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.
- _____. "Social Space and Symbolic Power." *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 7, No.1 (Spring, 1989), 14-25.
- Brecht, Bertolt. *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*. Edited and translated by John Willett. New York: Hill and Wang, 1964.
- Buckwalter, Melinda. *Composing While Dancing: An Improvisor's Companion*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010.
- Burger, Peter. *Theory of the Avant-Garde*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992.
- Buruma, Ian. *The Missionary and the Libertine: Love and War in East and West*. Boston: Faber, 1996.
- Calamoneri, Tanya. *Becoming Nothing to Become Something: Methods of Performer Training in Hijikata Tatsumi's Butô Dance*. PhD dissertation. Temple University, 2012.
- _____. "Post-Butoh, or the Future is Melting." Paper presented at the Texas-Asia Graduate Student Conference, University of Austin, TX, October 2009.
- Candelario, Rosemary. *Flowers Cracking Concrete: Eiko and Koma's Asian/American Choreographies*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2016.
- Cardone, Alissa. "Killing the Body-Ego: Dance Research with Min Tanaka at BodyWeather Farm, Japan." *Contact Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2002), 15-22.

Carlson, Marvin. "David Levine's Bauerntheater: The Return of the Matrix." *The Drama Review* 52, no. 3 (Fall 2008), 34-43.

_____. *Theories of the Theatre: A Historical and Critical Survey, from the Greeks to the Present*. Expanded Edition. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993.

Certeau, Michel de. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Translated by Steven Rendall. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.

Copeland, Roger. *Merce Cunningham: The Modernizing of Modern Dance*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Cunningham, Merce, Meredith Monk, and Bill T. Jones. *Art Performs Life: Merce Cunningham/Meredith Monk/Bill T. Jones*. Minneapolis, MN: Walker Art Center, 1998.

Daly, Ann. "Darkness Into Light: a Decade in the West Transforms a Butoh Troupe." In *Critical Gestures*, 196,197. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2002.

Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Translated by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

Dries, Luk Van den, Maaïke Bleeker, Steven de Belder, Kaat Debo, and Kurt Van Houtte, eds. *Bodycheck: Relocating the Body in Contemporary Performing Art*. Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi B.V., 2002.

Eckersall, Peter. *Theorizing the Angura Space: Avant-garde Performance and Politics in Japan, 1960-2000*. Leiden: Brill, 2006.

Foster, Susan Leigh. *Reading Dancing: Bodies and Subjects in Contemporary American Dance*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.

_____, ed. *Worlding Dance*. Hampshire UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

_____. "Choreographies and Choreographers: Four Definitions of the Terms." In *Modern Dance: Multifaceted Dimension*, 5-26. Edited by Scruti Bandopadhyay. Kolkata: Rabindra Bharati University, 2008.

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. New York: Random House, 1977.

_____. *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*. Edited by Paul Rabinow. New York: New Press, 1997.

Fraleigh, Sondra. *Butoh: Metamorphic Dance and Global Alchemy*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010.

_____ and Tama Nakamura. *Hijika Tatsumi and Kazuo Ohno*. Routledge Performance Practitioners. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Frank, Peter. "Ken Friedman: A Life in Fluxus." In *Artistic Bedfellows: Histories, Theories and Conversations in Collaborative Art Practices*, 145-186. Edited by Holly Crawford. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2008.

Franko, Mark. *Excursion For Miracles: Paul Sanasardo, Donya Feur, and Studio for Dance, 1955-1964*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2005.

_____. ed. *Ritual and Event: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. London: Routledge, 2007.

_____. *The Work of Dance: Labor, Movement, and Identity in the 1930s*. Middletown CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2002.

Fuller, Zack. "Tradition and Innovation: The 2005 Dance Hakushu Festival." *Performance Paradigm* 2, March, 2006. <http://www.performanceparadigm.net/category/journal/issue-2/>.

Funkhouser, Christopher. "Leroi Jones, Larry Neal, and *The Cricket*: Jazz and Poets Black Fire." *African American Review* 37, nos. 2-3 (2003), 237-244.

Genet, Jean. *Our Lady of the Flowers*. Trans. Bernard Frechtman. New York: Grove Press, 1993.

_____. *The Thief's Journal*. Translated by Bernard Frechtman. Lexington KY: Olympia Press, 2004.

Goldman, Danielle. *I Want to be Ready: Improvised Dance as a Practice of Freedom*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010.

Gourreau, J.M. "Tanaka Min," *Pour la Danse: Chaussons et Petit Rats* no.47 (Decembre 1978-Janvier 1979), 13.

Goya, Francisco. *Los Caprichos*. New York: Dover Publications, 1969.

Guattari, Felix. "The Architectural Machines of Shin Takamatsu." Translated by Tim Adams and Catherine Howell. <http://www.jya.com/takamatsu.htm> (Accessed April 25, 2010).

Halprin, Anna. *Moving Toward Life: Five Decades of Transformational Dance*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1995.

Hamera, Judith. "The Romance of Monsters: Theorizing the Virtuoso Body." *Theatre Topics* 10, no. 2 (September 2000): 144-153.

_____. "Silence That Reflects: Butoh, *Ma*, and a Crosscultural Gaze." *Text and Performance Quarterly* 10 (1990): 53-60.

Harada Hiromi. *Butoh taizen*. Tokyo: Gendai Shokan, 2004.

Harding, James M. and John Rouse, eds. *Not the Other Avant-garde: The Transnational Foundations of Avant-Garde Performance*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006.

Hijikata Tatsumi. "To Prison." Translated by Jacqueline S. Ruyak and Kurihara Nanako. *The Drama Review* 44, no.1 (Spring 2000): 43-48.

_____. *Costume en Face: A Primer of Darkness for Young Boys and Girls*. Brooklyn: Ugly Duckling Press, 2015.

Hoffman, Ethan, Mark Holborn, Yukio Mishima, Tatsumi Hijikata, and Haven O'More. *Butoh: Dance of the Dark Soul*. New York: Aperture, 1987.

Holledge, Julie and Joanne Tompkins. *Women's Intercultural Performance*. London: Routledge, 2000.

Horrors of Malformed Men. DVD. Directed by Teruo Ishii. 1969; Burbank CA: Synapse Films, 2007.

Hrab, Ondřej, Kobata Kazue, and Tsuda Yoriko, eds. *The Sea Inside The Skin/Moře Pod Kůží*. Prague: TORST, n.d.

Iwabuchi Koichi. *Recentering Globalization: Popular Culture and Japanese Transnationalism*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2002.

Jortner, David, Keiko McDonald, and Kevin J. Westmore, eds. *Modern Japanese Theatre and Performance*. Lanham MD: Lexington Books, 2006.

Kaprow, Allan. *Essays on the Blurring Between Art and Life*. Edited by Jeff Kelley. Expanded Edition. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

Kasai Akira. "Hijikata Tatsumi wo kataru: Ishiki no henkaku wo mezashita butô-ka." In *Hijikata Tatsumi no butô – Nikutai no shurearisumu,shintai no ontoroji*, 55-63. Edited by Takashi Morishita. Tokyo: Keio-Gijyuku Daigaku Syuppan-Kai Kabushikigaisha, 2004.

Kawasaki Koichi. "Gutai." In *Art Tribes*, 145-152. Edited by Achille Bonito Oliva. Translated by Rhoda Billingsley and Adrian Hartley Cook. Milan: Skira, 2002.

Kaye, Nick. *Site-Specific Art: Performance, Place and Documentation*. London: Routledge, 2000.

Kim Jiae. "Min Tanaka's Butoh." Interview with Tanaka Min. Trans. Kobata Kazue. *Theme* no.7 (Fall 2006). <http://www.thememagazine.com/stories/min-tanaka/>.

King, Kenneth. *Writing in Motion: Body—Language—Technology*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2003.

Klein, Susan Blakely. *Ankoku Butoh: The Premodern and Postmodernism Influences on the Dance of Utter Darkness*. Cornell East Asia Series 49. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University East Asia Program, 1988.

Kolb, Alexandra. "Current Trends in Contemporary Choreography." *Dance Research Journal* 45, No 3 (December 2013): 29-52.

Kuniichi Uno, Kobata Kazue, and Matsuoka Seigo. *Min Tanaka: Between Mountain and Sea: Photographs by Masato Okada*. Tokyo: Kousakusha, 2007.

Kurihara Nanoko. "Hijikata Tatsumi: The Words of Butoh." *The Drama Review* 44, no.1 (Spring 2000): 12-33.

Kwon, Miwon. *One Place After Another: Site Specific Art and Locational Identity*. MIT Press: Cambridge, MA, 2004.

Laxer, Gordon and Dennis Soron, ed. *Not For Sale: Decommodifying Public Life*. Ontario: Broadview Press, 2006.

Lefebvre, Henri. *Critique of Everyday Life*. Translated by John Moore. London: Verso, 1991.

_____. *The Production of Space*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1997.

Lei, Daphne P. "Interruption, Intervention, Interculturalism: Robert Wilson's HIT Productions in Taiwan." *Theatre Journal* 63, no.4 (December 2011), 571-586.

Lequeux, Alain Paul. "Tanaka Min: La Danse écorchée vive." *Pour la Danse: Choussons et Petits-Rats* 62 (Juillet-Aout-Septembre) 1980.

Manning, Susan and Lucia Ruprecht, eds. *New German Dance Studies*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2012.

Maro Akaji. "Artist Interview: Akaji Maro's representative butoh work *Kaiin no Uma* performance in South Korea; He talks about butoh today." Interview by Konuma Jun-ichi. The Japan Foundation, Performing Arts Network Japan.
http://performingarts.jp/E/art_interview/0506/1.html#.

Marotti, William A. "Concerned Theatre Japan: The Graphic Art of Japanese Theatre." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 58, no. 4 (November 1999): 1140-1142.

_____. "Nihon no 1960 nendai zen'ei geijutsu undo to Hijikata Tatsumi, sunawachi Hijikata Tatsumi no butô o hyoka suru shomondai." *Choreologia* 24 (2001): 48-53.
http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/history/marotti/Choreologia_Hijikata_&_Art_Article.pdf.

_____. "Butô no mondasei to honshitsushugi no wana." *Shiatô Âtsu* 8 (May 1997): 88-96.

_____. *Money, Trains and Guillotines: Art and Revolution in 1960s Japan*. Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2013.

Marranca, Bonnie, ed. *Interculturalism and Performance: Writings from PAJ*. New York: PAJ Publications, 1991.

Marshall, Jonathan. "Dancing the Elemental Body: Butoh and Body Weather: Interviews with Tanaka Min and Yumi Umiuare." *Performance Paradigm 2* (March 2006).
<http://www.performanceparadigm.net/category/journal/issue-2/> .

Marshall, Lorna. *The Body Speaks: Performance and Expression*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001.

Mcauley, Guy, ed. *Unstable Ground: Performance and the Politics of Place*. Brussels, Peter Lang: 2006.

Mente, Boyé Lafayette De. *Japan's Cultural Code Words: Key Terms That Explain the Attitudes and Behavior of the Japanese*. Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing, 2011.

Meyerhold, Vsevolod, *Meyerhold on Theatre*. Edited and translated by Edward Braun. New York: Hill and Wang, 1969.

Misaki Eri. "Min Tanaka: What is Dance?" *New York Dance Fax* (September 2000): 6-9.

Mizohata Toshio. *Kazuo Ohno and Tatsumi Hijikata in the 1960's*. Tokyo: Kazuo Ohno Dance Studio/BankART 1929, 2005.

Moy, James. *Marginal Sights: Staging the Chinese in America*. Iowa City, University of Iowa Press: 1993.

Munroe, Alexandra, ed. *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against The Sky*. New York: Harry Abrams, 1994.

Nakajima Natsu. "Ankoku Butoh." Lecture delivered at Fu Jen University decade conference, Taipei: "Feminine Spirituality in Theatre, Opera, and Dance." October 1997.

Odin, Steve. *Artistic Detachment in Japan and the West: Psychic Distance in Comparative Aesthetics*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001.

Ohno Kazuo and Ohno Yoshito. *Kazuo Ohno's World: From Within and Without*. Translated by John Barret. Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004.

Ortolani, Benito. *The Japanese Theatre: From Shamanistic Ritual to Contemporary Pluralism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.

___ and Samuel L. Leiter, eds. *Zeami and the Noh Theatre in the World*. New York: Center for Advanced Studies in Theatre Arts, Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York, 1998.

Pakes, Anna. "Dance's Mind-Body Problem." *Dance Research* 24, no. 2 (Winter 2006): 87-104.

Pavis, Patrice, ed. *The Intercultural Performance Reader*. London: Routledge, 1996.

___. "Intercultural Theatre Today (2010)." *Forum Modernes Theater* 25, no. 1. (2010): 5-15.

___. *Theatre at The Crossroads of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1992.

Paxton Steve. "500 Words: Judson Dance Theater: 50th Anniversary." *Artforum International Magazine* (July 2012): <http://artforum.com/words/id=31419>.

Pilgrim, Richard. "Intervals ('Ma') in Space and Time: Foundations for a Religio-Aesthetic Paradigm in Japan." *History of Religions* 25, no.3 (Feb., 1986), 255-277.

Rath, Eric C. *The Ethos of Noh: Actors and Their Art*. Harvard East Asian Monographs 232. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asian Center, 2005.

Reynolds, Nancy and Malcolm McCormick, eds. *No Fixed Points: Dance in the Twentieth Century*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.

Richie, Donald. *Viewed Sideways: Writings on Culture and Style in Contemporary Japan*. Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 2011.

Ridgely, Steven. *Japanese Counterculture: The Antiestablishment Art of Terayama Shûji*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

Romanska, Magda and Kathleen Chiofi. *Post-Traumatic Theatre of Grotowski and Kantor: History and Holocaust in Akropolis and Dead Class*. London: Anthem Press, 2012. Proquest eLibrary. Web. 19 November 2015.

Ross, Janice. *Anna Halprin: Experience as Dance*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.

___. "Anna Halprin's Urban Rituals." *The Drama Review* 48, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 49-67.

Roxworthy, Emily. *The Spectacle of Japanese American Trauma: Racial Performativity and World War II*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008.

Saito, Yuriko. *Everyday Aesthetics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Sanders, Vicki. "Dancing and the Dark Soul of Japan: An Aesthetic Analysis of "Buto." *Asian Theatre Journal*. 5, no. 2 (Autumn, 1988): 148-163.

Sas, Miryam. *Experimental Arts in Postwar Japan: Moments of Encounter, Engagement, and Imagined Return*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2011.

_____. *Fault Lines: Cultural Memory and Japanese Surrealism*. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1999.

_____. "Hands, Lines, Acts: Butoh and Surrealism." *Qui Parle* 13, no. 2 (Spring/Summer 2003): 19-51.

Schneemann, Carolee. *More Than Meat Joy: Performance Works and Selected Writings*. Edited by Bruce R. McPherson. Kingston, NY: McPherson and Company, 1979.

Schneider, Rebecca and Gabrielle Cody, eds. *Re: Direction; A Theoretical and Practical Guide*. London: Routledge, 2002.

Senda Akihiko. *The Voyage of Contemporary Japanese Theatre*. Translated by J. Thomas Rimer. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997.

Shiba Mariko. "Modern Dance in Japan: The Influence of the Western Culture and What Japan Created on its Own." Departmental bulletin paper. SCBDMMT, Kobe University (September, 2006). <http://www.lib.kobe-u.ac.jp/repository/81002873.pdf>.

Shimakawa, Karen. *National Abjection: The Asian American Body on Stage*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2002.

Snow, Peter. *Imaging the In-Between: Training Becomes Performance in Body Weather Practice in Australia*. PhD dissertation. University of Sydney, 2003.

_____. "Performing All Over the Place." In *Unstable Ground: Performance and the Politics of Place*. Edited by Gay McAuley. Brussels: Peter Lang, 2006.

_____. "Situation Vacant: Lines of Flight and the Schizo-potential For Revolution." *About Performance*, no. 1 (1993): 73-87.

Sorgenfrei, Carol Fischer. *Unspeakable Acts: The Avant-garde Theatre of Terayama Shuji and Postwar Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakrovorty. *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*. Edited by Sarah Harasym. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Stein, Bonnie Sue. "Butoh: Twenty Years Ago We Were Crazy, Dirty, and Mad." *The Drama Review* 30, No. 2 (Summer, 1986): 107-126.

Srinivasan, Priya. *Sweating Saris: Indian Dance as Transnational Labor*. Temple University Press: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2012.

Rolf, Robert T. and John K. Gillespie, eds. *Alternative Japanese Drama*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992.

Tanaka Min. *Boku wa zutto hadakadata: zenei dansa noshintai ron*. Edited by Tanabe Sumie. Tokyo: Kousakusha, 2011.

____ and Bonnie Sue Stein, "Min Tanaka: Farmer/Dancer or Dancer/Farmer: An Interview," *The Drama Review: TDR*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Summer, 1986): 142-151.

____ and Pétra Vermeersch. "About Butoh: in research for its origin and actual meaning; an interview with Min Tanaka." *Contact Quarterly* 27, no.1 (Winter/Spring 2002): 22-33.

Taylor, Richard. *The Drama Of W.B. Yeats: Irish Myth And The Japanese Noh*. London: Yale University Press, 1976.

Teicher, Hendel, ed. *Trisha Brown: Dance and Art in Dialogue*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002.

Viala, Jean and Nourit Masson-Sekine. *Butoh: Shades of Darkness*. Tokyo: Shufunotomo, 1988.

Watson, Ben. *Derek Bailey and the Story of Free Improvisation*. London: Verso, 2004.

Watson, Ian. *Negotiating Cultures: Eugenio Barba and the Intercultural Debate*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002.

Westendorf, Lynette. "Indent-Second Layer." *Perspectives of New Music* 33, no. 1/2 (Winter-Summer 1995): 294- 32.

Williams, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Yutani Katsumi, ed. *Umihiko Yamahiko Maihiko: Min Tanaka's Dance Road in Indonesia*. Tokyo: Designing GYM Inc., 2007.