Title: *Dance Like a Man?*: Investigating Masculine Aesthetics in Contemporary Dance through Archival Analysis and Embodied Practice

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Introduction

I'm falling off my center, and I can't catch my breath. I whip my head from left to right to left, descending to the marley floor as my hair slips out of my neat ponytail. This rhythmic thrashing of my upper torso kindly reminds me of the headbanging crowds at my favorite rock concerts. Once the palms of my hands reach the intimidating floor, my left foot takes over in full force, swerving behind myself until the rest of my body relinquishes itself into an upright position. I see white stars materialize through my cloudy vision–something that I didn't think existed outside of cartoon characters–and I attempt to refocus my attention. But I don't have a chance to think or recover. The aftermath of the force causes my pelvis to slant further and further, and my body propels five feet horizontally across the room. My heart pounds at newfound rates, my calves quiver in pain, my skin flushes into a fiery red. I have never moved my body to this intensity, this speed, or this force. I am uncomfortable. Yet, I have never felt so free.

This moment describes my transcendental experience during my learning of Abby Zbikowski's *Radioactive Practice*. My body was challenged to move in ways that my previous dance training never permitted me to unleash which caused me reflect on my gendered upbringings in the dance studio. Growing up in a private dance studio setting, I never danced

with boys. In my experience, dance was an afterschool hobby that was primarily reserved for young girls while contact sports, such as football or basketball, held secure places for boys. My fully female dance classes subconsciously reinforced gender stereotypes of womanhood, stressing the importance of grace and obedience, but not emphasizing equal importance on making mistakes, pushing physical limits, or getting strong. In my experience, my dance classes were synonymous with values of femininity where I had limited room to break the norms and push gender boundaries. Since I dedicated my entire upbringing to dance activities rather than male-dominated activities, my embodied experiences lacked the same force and power that I saw boys enabled to investigate. Because of dance, my kinesphere felt limited, and I had to seek out other ways to lean into my "masculinity," such as playing sports in my neighborhood or in physical education classes.

This dichotomy of my personality types between dance settings and all-gendered settings led me to consider how these qualities of masculinity show up in dance on the concert stage. (My research solely concerns concert dance which differs from dance activity that occurs in social settings.) My research inquiries on masculine dance aesthetics began with an examination of masculinity throughout dance history. In the discussion of masculinity in contemporary dance, Ted Shawn looms large in dance history with his all-male dance company. In the 1930s, Shawn created the first all-male dance company that utilized aesthetics of masculinity and manliness to heighten their physical strength, often by appropriating ideas of masculinity from non-Western cultures. Shawn's decision to incorporate masculine movements was intentional in rejecting the current gender stereotypes placed on men in dance, and he strongly held the belief that qualities

such as “physical strength,” “endurance,” and “mental control” were defined by men (Shawn 92-93).[1]

To understand how masculinity has been interpreted by dancers’ bodies in contemporary dance over the past century, my research required a more holistic perspective beyond Ted Shawn’s white male embodiment. Two other choreographers, though vastly different, came into the picture for me: José Limón (1908-1972) and Abby Zbikowski. As a Mexican American artist and one of the most famous and revolutionary dance figures of the mid-20th century, Limón’s choreography reflects his “macho” body type and bravado, and he uses similar motions and archetypes reminiscent of Shawn. Yet, unlike Shawn, Limón straddled racialized perceptions of his own work related to Latinidad, immigration, and indigeneity. On the other hand, Abby Zbikowski, a present-day female choreographer, instills force and strength that is unbound by gendered conventions in her movement generation. Zbikowski’s hyperphysical, non-gender-specific dance movements reflect the intense physicality that is required of professional athletes or stereotypically holds merit in masculine movement forms. All three choreographers assist in my investigation of how masculinity has shown up in concert dance throughout history and showcases how masculinity in dance encapsulates a range of movement styles and aesthetics.

Methods

To carry out this research, I engaged two approaches to archival research: 1) I utilized traditional archives such as film, images, reviews, photographs, choreographic notes, personal diaries and letters, and Labanotation scores from The Ohio State University Libraries Special Collections Dance Notation Bureau, Jacob’s Pillow Archives in Becket, Massachusetts, and the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts; and 2) I engaged with dance theorist Priya

[1] Jacob’s Pillow Sh288t c.2, Box 287, The Ted Shawn Collection, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival Archives, Becket, MA.

Srinivasan's definition of the "bodily archive," the kinesthetic (body-based) knowledge I have garnered through my dance training and embodied research. Srinivasan defines how the bodily archive "leaves its traces in live bodily interactions, whose history remains captured in muscle memory and through bodily labor and kinesthetic contact" (Srinivasan 17). Srinivasan extends this further to say that the traces can be "uncovered by searching for movement in the written record and in the live encounter between bodies" (Srinivasan 17). I engaged with this concept of the bodily archive by learning Ted Shawn's *I Am Climbing Jacob's Ladder* (1933) solo choreography from Labanotation score, embodying an excerpt from Abby Zbikowski's *Radioactive Practice* (2022) through a one-on-one coaching experience with company founder and dancer Fiona Lundie, and training with the José Limón Dance Company at their winter intensive program in New York City.

In addition to my archival research methods, I conducted other qualitative and field research methods which helped provide contextual evidence for my argument. When researching Shawn, Limón, and Zbikowski, I engaged in conversations with dance scholars and professional artists such as Dr. Hannah Kosstrin and Dr. Valarie Williams of the OSU Department of Dance, Dante Puleio and the Limón Company dancers, Norton Owen and Patsy Gay of Jacob's Pillow Archives, and Fiona Lundie from Abby Z and the New Utility. Through these conversations, I gained another perspective of the choreographers and their movement aesthetics or choices, and oftentimes, I received a personal anecdote associated with movement or person I was studying. Additionally, I observed live dance performances of Zbikowski's *Radioactive Practice* at the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, Ohio, as well as an open rehearsal of Limón's *The Moor's Pavane* with the Limón Company. I also read dance scholarship about Shawn, Limón, and Zbikowski, as well as sources related to masculinity and gender in contemporary dance by

notable scholars in the field. Lastly, visiting and touring the historical site of Jacob's Pillow provided a frame of reference that complimented my other research on Shawn and his work.

Findings

Many periods in European and American histories show a tendency to rely on gender binaries as bounded categories. Furthermore, conversations about masculinity in dance are often limited to macho displays of manhood or male characters, particularly in heteronormative ballets that focus on highlighting the prowess of the female ballerina as partnered by one or more heroically strong men. By referencing my archival and embodied research of Ted Shawn, José Limón, and Abby Zbikowski, I argue that masculinity is not bound by gender, nor to a specific dance form or style. Rather, a spectrum of masculine qualities in concert dance encompasses a series of elements, or combination thereof, such as: presence, stoicism, confidence, full-body movement, physical or manual labor, sports and athletics, focus on pelvis, weight, ease in and out of floor, and humanness. I group these elements into four categories: presence, full-body movement, weight, and emotional/spiritual connection.

(1) Presence

Masculine movement often manifests in the consummate presence of the dancer. In Shawn's, Limón's, and Zbikowski's choreographies, the dancers command the attention of the audience, maintain a sense of readiness for the next action even in moments of stillness, and change the energy and dynamics of the space. In Shawn's *Dance of the Ages* (1938), his company of Men Dancers display a heroic masculinity. Their toned, firm, and V-shaped physiques are displayed through their minimal clothing pieces, their scapulas maintain a fixed position as their shoulders pull backwards and downwards, and their posture remains stoic

(Shawn).[2] In Limón's repertory, the dancers' upper body lies "above conversation level," as noted by the Limón dancers, where the clavicle bone stretches wide and the gaze motions at a slight upward angle. For example, after completing a Limón movement phrase at the winter workshop, I slowly released my arms to my sides, reshuffled my feet into their original starting position, and stood tall with my back straight, chest forward, and eyes diagonally in front of me. Lastly, in my learning of Zbikowski's *Radioactive Practice*, the presence of the body lived in my core (abdominal muscles). My core muscles had to be engaged enough so that if someone attempted to push me over, I would not fall. The movement demanded me to be aware of my body and the space I occupied. Though slightly varied, these three depictions of presence signify that masculinity establishes the dancers in positions of authority and agency, demanding recognition and attention from the audience.

Moreover, Shawn demonstrates presence by incorporating a sense of stoicism through his chest positioning. While stoicism is not a universal aspect of masculine presence, Shawn utilizes stoicism to convey his masculinity and heroism. In a program for the Denishawn Dancers, there is a photograph of Ted Shawn embodying and culturally appropriating a "Toltec Emperor," as he was known to produce. In this image, Shawn is dressed in full regalia, his back arches slightly, his chest props forward, and his shoulders and elbow stretch behind him. The program describes Shawn as "heroic," comments on his "beauty of form and posture," and identifies Shawn as a "perfect specimen of physical manhood".[3] This piece is an example of the way Shawn appropriated ideas of indigeneity for his masculine embodiments. In this image, along with many other performances by Shawn, Shawn looks calm, controlled, physically unharmed, and

[2] .269, Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers: Dance of the Ages (Parts 2, 3, 4), Moving Image, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival Archives, Becket, MA.
[3] Ted Shawn and the Denishawn Dancers Program, 1922, Dance Notation Bureau, SPEC.TRI.DNB.38.60, Lawrence and Lee Theatre Research Institute, Ohio State University.

powerful. Just by standing in a static position, the audience can identify that Shawn shows no sign of weakness and that he is in complete control of his body.

Additionally, all three choreographers demonstrate presence through a complete presentation of confidence. For example, when viewing Abby Z and the New Utility's live performance of *Radioactive Practice,*[4] every dancer had confidence instilled in their movement as if it was a required element of the performance. In one moment, dancer Jinsei Sato forcefully completes a movement sequence and then stops just a few inches in front of the audience. In a moment of stillness, Sato looks at the audience directly in the eyes and even gives a slight smirk of the mouth before proceeding into highly physical and anatomically challenging movement. In this intimate moment, the dancer was asking for my full attention on him and his body. When doing movement of this caliber, the dancer must exceed a certain threshold of self-confidence. Masculine choreography requires dancers to occupy a dynamic and active sense of masculine confidence and to not be afraid of—indeed, to exert or over-perform—showing their confidence to the audience.

(2) Full-body movement

Another element of masculine movement is its use of whole-body movement. For some choreographers, this reflects manual or physical labor. Shawn asserted that participating in manual labor, such as gardening or helping with the construction of Jacob's Pillow, best prepared his men to perform masculine movement (Foulkes 92). By using physical labor as a source of inspiration for choreography, Shawn identified and took note of the whole-body movements that physical labor produces and found that the arm movement is often a "continuation of the body"

[4] I attended Abby Z and the new Utility's performance of *Radioactive Practice* on Saturday, November 19, 2022 at the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, Ohio.

(Shawn 118).[5] In the "Water" section of Shawn's *Dance of the Ages,* the male dancers kneel in unison and mimic movements that are required when rowing a boat. With their hands in fists and arms angled in front of them, the dancers sway back and forth with resistance, exposing their back muscles and the physical effort that results from rowing a boat in water (Shawn).[6] Shawn also argues that smaller, delicate movements with an emphasis on wrist articulation signifies femininity and resembles actions specific to women such as "sewing, cooking, or rocking a child to sleep" (Shawn 118).[7] Because physical labor is often stereotyped as a manly occupation, and because Shawn believes that housework is confined to women's capabilities, Shawn's use of large body movements allows his dancers to defy the effeminate stereotype that is often placed on men, especially in ballet or previous contemporary dance forms.

However, exclusively utilizing full-body movements does not automatically qualify as a representation of masculine movement, and Shawn's choreography serves as a contradiction to his claims about full-body movements. In Shawn's *Sixth Prelude from The Well Tempered Clavichord*, a dance created at the genesis of his Men Dancers company, four male dancers wear only briefs while the rest of their bodies are exposed. The dancers remain perched up on their knees as their torsos undulate forward and backwards in a wave-like motion, similar to Doris Humphrey's 1928 *Water Study* choreography. The dancers use gentle gestures and delicately sweep their arms and upper body in an arc, and these circular, tender movement patterns and qualities are comparable to ballet forms (Shawn). By performing these movements as a group of men in minimal clothing, rather than appearing like a strong camaraderie, the Men Dancers

[5] Jacob's Pillow Sh288d, Box 287, The Ted Shawn Collection, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival Archives, Becket, MA.
[6] .269, Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers: Dance of the Ages (Parts 2, 3, 4), Moving Image, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival Archives, Becket, MA.
[7] Jacob's Pillow Sh288d, Box 287, The Ted Shawn Collection, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival Archives, Becket, MA.

reflect underlying themes of homosexuality and intimacy. While the movements use the full body, they are still delicate and gentle, which emulates femininity (as argued by Shawn in the previous paragraph). When these feminine movement qualities are embodied by a group of men, the movement reproduces stereotypical homosexual representations. Through this example, I argue that full-body movements need to be accompanied by other elements of masculinity, such as speed, an outward display of strength, or manual labor tropes in order to be considered masculine. Without the support of other masculine qualities, any movement form that uses the entire body (such as ballet) would not qualify as masculine choreography and performance simply because it uses whole-body movements.

Zbikowski's choreography remains consistent with the idea of physical labor that I mentioned previously regarding Shawn, yet her use of labor is a utilitarian result of her vigorous and muscular choreography. Rather than attempting to resemble and recall the labor required of physical work, such as using a scythe (Shawn 118),[8] Zbikowski's movement in itself is physical labor. There is a level of athleticism and strength that is required to execute her movement effectively, impressively, and safely. In Zbikowski's *Radioactive Practice,* the dancers defy physical boundaries and perform movements that only highly athletic individuals can successfully do. In the piece, the dancers withstand minutes of nonstop, hyper-active choreography. The dancers catapult their bodies into and out of the floor, thrust their pelvis from low levels to high levels, repeatedly kick their legs and toss their arms, and even sustain balancing positions or plank positions after performing this high energy movement. Their exhaustion is visible and audible, as their sweat flies off their body with each gesture, their breathing becomes heavier, and their grunting becomes louder as the choreography becomes

[8] Jacob's Pillow Sh288d, Box 287, The Ted Shawn Collection, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival Archives, Becket, MA.

more intense. This choreography in itself is labor, even if it does not consist of motions that are reflective of manual labor. The sheer strength and force required for this movement conveys a sense of physical labor that falls within the understanding of masculinity.

Many choreographers also use full-body movements through recollections of sports and athleticism to embody masculinity. When Shawn created his all-male dance company, he believed that "athletics best prepared men for masculine movement," and he preferred that his dancers have a background in sports rather than dance (Foulkes 90). In Shawn's *Olympiad*, the dancers use their own physicalities to exemplify movements similar to sports. In one section, one dancer lunges in a wide stance, shifts his weight back and forth with his arm behind him as if he is gearing up to throw a football and gages the distance of the stage.[9] In this performance, it is evident that the dancers do not have years of extensive Western contemporary dance training: their legs are not perfectly straight, their toes are not pointed, and their limbs do not reach high extensions. However, the dancers' sports gestures and ferocity behind their movement comes across as athletes, not dancers. Since sports are oftentimes seen as a male reserve, their dancing comes across as masculine.

Additionally, in my learning of *Radioactive Practice*, I had to tap into this sports-like physicality to execute the full range of movements. When speaking with Fiona Lundie, the company dancer who coached me through the moment, she described that this choreography was collaborative and that many of the movements are derived from her background in sports such as diving, gymnastics, and synchronized swimming. Instead of focusing on the aesthetic of the movement, I needed to utilize my entire body and kinesphere beyond what I was used to in my past dance experience. I needed to use my entire body simultaneously as if I was executing a

[9] 0.258, Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers, Moving Image, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival Archives, Becket, MA.

floor routine in gymnastics, tackling another player in American football, or shot blocking in basketball. Zbikowski's dancers also approach their dance like a sporting event, where they are encouraged to vocally cheer for their peers when they are waiting on the sidelines. Even though dance and sports have similar physical requirements, these clear references to sports makes the choreography appear more masculine to an audience.

Lastly, masculine movement uses whole-body movement through an emphasis on motion, rather than shape. In my participation in Zbikowski's technique classes and my coaching experience with Lundie, Zbikowski and Lundie often described the movement using physics terms, such as momentum, centrifugal force, potential energy, and power. With these physics terms (which derive from a male-dominated field), Zbikowski focuses on the feeling and motion of the movement through space, not the aesthetic quality or picturesque moments that would depict masculinity. I was discouraged from thinking about the shape of the movement, which contrasts from my previous experiences in dance classes where I was pressured to hit a certain shape or line, or the movement was described using French ballet terms. When I retrained my mind to think about the motion of the movement, rather than what it looks like from the outside, I was forced to think about how I can use my whole body to carry me from one movement to the next.

(3) Weight

When discussing weight in masculine movement, the dancers concentrate their weight in their pelvis, feel weight in all parts of their body, and they allow their body to feel the full effects of gravity through risk-taking. When taking dance classes with the Limón Dance Company, Puleio and dancers described how the pelvis was the center of the movement. During one exercise, we were directed to gesture our arm in an upward motion. Rather than thinking about

the arm as a single entity that points to the sky, the instructor advised us to think about how the movement of the arm can proceed by beginning from the pelvis. At this moment, I investigated how the weight of my pelvis can send energy into my extremities. Additionally, Zbikowski's work uses the pelvis as an initiator of all movement. When learning Zbikowski's work, I redirected my focus to my pelvis, thinking about how my pelvis can act as an engine for the movement. When the energy lives in my pelvis, the movement becomes much more grounded, and my vertical positioning remains at a low level.

Masculine choreography does not just think about weight in the center of the body, but also in the extremities. One of Limón's most famous movements are drop swings of the arms and upper body. During my training at Limón, we practiced using the full weight of our arms to successfully achieve an authentic swing of the arms. Instead of thinking about a shape, the goal of the exercise was to release enough weight of the arm in order for the arm to reverberate into a swinging motion. Additionally, during my embodiment of Zbikowski's work, I struggled finding weight in the fingers. During one section, I threw my arms in front of me in alternating motions as if I were throwing energy at someone in front of me. Initially, I was not able to find a release of weight in my fingers, and my hands were finding a static "star" shape. Later, when Lundie instructed me to find weight in my fingers, I allowed my fingers to go limp, which was still not the correct idea. In this investigation, I found that masculinity is not defined by the full release of weight that results in "deadweight," but rather the dancer needs to release enough weight in order to maintain energy and strength throughout the body and limbs.

When thinking about weight in masculine choreography, there is also a sense of risk that must take place. While the majority of the weight should reside in the pelvic area, a dancer does not center their weight in their pelvis throughout the performance. Instead, masculine

choreography features movements that fall off balance and the dancer's center weight to a point where the dancer is in a threatening position. In *Radioactive Practice,* it was rare that my pelvis aligned vertically below my sternum. The pelvic area was very mobile and swiveled in a 360-degree motion throughout the phrase. In one moment, I quickly shifted my pelvis from an upright position into an inverted position. Within a single, swift motion, my pelvis rose above my head, and it was difficult to maintain balance in this position. Similarly in Limón's movement, the pelvis remains mobile, but rather than moving in a 360-degree motion, it moves in a swinging motion reflective of a pendulum. During one phrase, my standing leg was straight and in relevé, while my working leg gestured low at a 45-degree angle. Instead of balancing upright, I had to tilt my pelvis to the side so that I would fall off my standing leg. Both of these instances required my pelvis to move off my center of weight so that I was in an unstable position. By moving the weight of the pelvis, these choreographies utilize risk-taking to showcase masculinity.

Lastly, weight manifests in masculine choreography through the ease of getting in and out of the floor. For example, in Adam Weinert's reconstruction of Shawn's *Dance of the Ages*, two of the dancers jump off of both feet, stretching their arms and feet behind them. Once their feet make contact with the floor, the dancers quickly roll onto their back in a complete supine position. After a split second, the dancers engage their core muscles to lift their body off the floor, swivel their legs behind them, and push their palms into the floor to result in a plank position.[10] In one section of *Radioactive Practice*, I began in a squatting position with my left knee facing upward and my right knee touching the floor. In one swift motion, I spring into the air and switch my legs so that if somebody snapped a photograph of myself mid-air, I would be

[10] 7277, Dance of the Ages, Moving Image, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival Archives, Becket, MA.

in the squatting position with the alternate leg position. Once gravity took over, I had to return to my original squatting position on the floor. At this moment, I had to quickly engage my core and quadricep muscles in order to find enough momentum to vault and propel my body into the sky, and safely land back on my two feet. By being able to seamlessly change levels vertically, the dancers embody masculinity through their sheer strength and ability to articulate the weight of their bodies, which then detaches masculinity from gender.

(4) Emotional/spiritual connection

Masculine movement involves an emotional or spiritual devotion to the work that is often rooted in either humanism or religiosity and highlights the dancers' individualities. At its core, each choreography resembles themes and aesthetics that are common to the human condition. During my week-long intensive with the Limón Dance Company, almost every class used the term "humanistic" to describe the work. In using the term, the instructors wanted to employ the idea of agency within the work, therefore, the dancers were able to make some choices within the choreography they were given. As a student at the intensive, I was reassured that I did not need to look like any other dancer in the room. The ideas of agency and choice-making tie back into the masculine qualities of power and control in the choreography. Additionally, Zbikowski's choreography highlights humanism, and she describes her work as involving the "psyche-emotional" and "socio-cultural complexity of contemporary life" (Abby Z and the New Utility). During my coaching experience, I anticipated that Zbikowski's choreography would only be physically challenging, but I later discovered that the choreography was also emotionally and mentally challenging. By pushing my physical boundaries and performing multifaceted tasks, this choreography tested my mental limits and what I thought my body could handle. In order to

be open to making mistakes, I had to emotionally commit my entire body and soul into the work. Without this element of the whole human, the work would not be possible.

Additionally, I argue that Zbikowski's humanistic elements to her work is what makes her masculine movement distinct from her counterpart Elizabeth Streb who is also known for challenging the body's potential and accomplishing highly physical tasks in her choreographic work. While Streb's choreography features athletics similar to sports, and her dancers' morph suits reveal how muscularly defined and exceptionally strong they are,[11] her work is absent of the individuality and human connection that Zbikowski accomplishes. Ann Cooper Albright argues that Streb's choreography "gives the dancers very little time to register their own experience of the movement," which causes the dancers to look more machine-like than humans (Albright 39). By only incorporating intense physicalities without a glimpse into the individual dancer and their emotional devotion to the work, the choreography looks one-dimensional and isolated from the real world and realities of human beings.

In addition to the humanistic elements of masculine choreography, some masculine choreography incorporates Christian ideals and values. In 1956, José Limón choreographed *There is a Time* inspired by a passage of poetry in the Bible. This poem states that "there is a time for everything," including a time "to be born," "to die," "to weep," "to laugh," and "to dance" (*The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Ecclesiastes 3.1-8). While Limón's work references a religious text, this passage features experiences that are universal to human beings and aligns with the humanistic values I mentioned above.

Shawn's devotion to Christianity is also apparent in his work and arguably more pronounced than Limón, and Shawn believed that dance was a pathway to purity, joy, the divine,

[11] 7166, STREB: From Ringside to Extreme Action, Moving Image, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival Archives, Becket, MA.

and God. Shawn's entrance into the dance field stemmed from his prominent religious and hyper-masculine beliefs. Shawn originally attended divinity school, but later dropped out "to pursue his spiritual path through dancing, using his practice to restore the lost art of movement to the Christian service and simultaneously bring faith to the art of dance" (Scolieri 124-125). In Shawn's book, he wrote that "in this man-ruled world there is the feeling that God intended all of the really important affairs of the world to be in man's hands." Therefore, dance should not be excluded and should not be inhabited exclusively by women (Shawn 88).[12] In *I Am Climbing Jacob's Ladder*, a dance choreographed to a religious hymn, Shawn's religious ideologies are evident and are linked to Muscular Christianity, "a Progressive era social movement that emphasized the links between patriotism, athleticism and religiosity" (Scolieri 28). This particular solo is a clear profession of Shawn's faith and how he contextualized the concept between dance and religion in order to heighten his masculinity. At several points throughout the solo, the dancer stands up straight with both feet together, and their arms stretch out wide, mimicking the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. When embodying this movement from Labanotation score, this specific position provoked in me a feeling of vulnerability. By standing front and center on the stage with my wingspan stretching the maximum of my kinesphere, my entire body felt exposed to the point where I had no opportunity to hide. This obvious reference to Shawn's religiosity and spirituality ties back into the element of presence and forces the audience to look at the dancer and derive meaning. In this position evoking the crucifixion, once again, Shawn commands the space, welcoming the attention of the audience and proudly professing his beliefs.

Lastly, in my discussion regarding the emotional and spiritual connection of the work, I would be remiss not to discuss how Shawn mapped his masculinity through the appropriation of

[12] Jacob's Pillow Sh288t c.2, Box 287, The Ted Shawn Collection, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival Archives, Becket, MA.

Indigenous dance. While Shawn respected and appreciated Native American dance and culture, he "removed those dances from the physical, spiritual, and legal contexts in which they are practiced" and used the vigor and strength of Indigenous dance to highlight the masculinity of him and his dancers. He believed that characteristics of Native American dance were in accordance with Delsarte's "Christian-based philosophy of movement as expression of inner truth" (Shea Murphy 114). Because male dancers received backlash in regard to effeminacy during this time period, he appropriated Native American dance as a method to deflect these claims and deal with his homosexuality (Shea Murphy 124). Shawn's emotional connection to the work often involved appropriation of other cultural dance forms that are clearly linked to nature and spirituality.

Discussion

From an outsider's perspective, these choreographers are vastly different. From Shawn's stoic archetypes to Limón's flow through space to Zbikowski's power and force, these three movement innovations look dissimilar to the naked eye, yet they all convey a sense of masculinity. Through my archival, embodied, and qualitative investigations, I found that masculinity in dance is not bound by gender binaries, but rather the aesthetics of masculinity are mapped onto and interpreted differently depending on the people performing the work. Masculine qualities such as strength, presence, taking up space, athleticism, and spirituality have different implications in different people, and these qualities are not restricted to male choreographers and dancers. Through these examples, we recognize that Shawn, Limón, and Zbikowski's choreographies look starkly different, yet they share many qualities that can be argued as masculine.

Dance theorist Harmony Bench argues that "masculinity reads primarily through the dancers' physical appearance, including developed muscles, choice of attire, and movement styles" (Bench 145). However, through my embodied research, I was able to step into the choreography in order to dismiss how the purely visible qualities such as body shape, muscle definition, and clothing choices impact my view of masculinity by understanding it anew through my body. My research notes the importance of understanding how context relates to the definition of masculinity, where context is crucial to consider when viewing choreography from a specific place and time period, as well as understanding the context and viewpoint of the spectator and researcher. I acknowledge that this definition of masculinity is fluid and everchanging, and that this specific analysis is determined by my "gender, social background, ethnicity, age, sexuality and other components of identity" (Burt 7). As we have seen throughout history, this definition of masculinity can change overtime and can also change depending on the geographical and cultural implications of the dancing. The masculine choreography that I analyzed is a product of Western ideals, so in order to further this research, it would be fundamental to consider choreographers beyond the North American continent.

Additionally, it is important to analyze the ways that young women, such as myself, are socially trained not to take up space around them, use the fullness of their body and kinesphere, and take risks pertaining to their center of gravity (Albright 47). In my experience learning the movements of Shawn, Limón, and Zbikowski, my feminine upbringing in the dance studio setting brought up tensions in experiencing the breadth of the movement and the commitment required to authentically and honestly perform the work. These experiences gave me permission to push my physical bounds, take up space both vertically and horizontally, and capitalize on my inner strength and vigor that has been dormant inside my body for many years. As a cisgender

female-identifying dancer with Western dance training roots and recent exposure to Africanist forms, I have the capability of tuning into my masculine side when dancing, regardless of my gender identity or the style of work I am performing.

Lastly, while my research primarily considered masculinity, this research overall shows how all movement qualities and aesthetics show up differently depending on the dancer and choreographer. In my analysis, one can note how each of the qualities that I discussed (i.e., full-body movement) is not interpreted exactly the same by each choreographer and dancer, and their interpretation of the quality is largely dependent on the context of the dancer and choreographer. This is not limited to masculine qualities, but any and all qualities apply to these findings. There is not one correct way to execute the movement, as each movement quality consists of a wide range of variation and will continue to get wider and more nuanced throughout time. This research also emphasizes the importance of the individual dancer in how the audience develops meaning of the work. Rather than simply viewing the choreography at face value, once a researcher dives into the history and context of the individual performer, they can realize and discover the choice-making behind the performance which helps contextualize the performance to the time period and location.

Conclusion

My research is significant not only in terms of the insights it contributes to a discussion on masculinity and masculine aesthetics in dance choreography and performance, but also in demonstrating the fullness of what archives can be and the power of embodied archives as resources for research. In a discussion about spectatorship, Burt argues that a “crucial difference between the way we look at dance and the way we look at two- or three-dimensional visual art and film is the fact that dancers are alive in front of us (Burt 50). My research takes this

discovery one step further by allowing the choreography to be alive inside of my own body– the most intimate approach that research can get. By using my prior kinesthetic knowledge coupled with my new kinesthetic experiences, I discovered ways that I can step into someone's movement forms and learn more about history through their movement. My somatic experiences of the movement qualities alongside other archival sources provided a more encompassing perspective on the choreographies that I was analyzing.

Movement is a large part of human life, and by embodying the choreographer's corporeal experiences, I found I could apply my shared history of a practice to draw answers about the choreography and its impact on people. As a dancer and mover myself, it is vital for me to reflect on my previous movement experiences and negotiate biases in order to unpack the present movement experiences that I was analyzing. Since I am a dancer with a vast movement history, my personal embodied research offered a unique perspective on masculine movement compared to a spectator with limited embodied experiences related to this movement. Since I argue that qualities map onto dancers' bodies in various ways, my embodied research shows that this is not limited to the people I am studying, but it can be applied to my dancing body as well. My interpretation of masculine choreography looked different compared to the choreographers I researched, and my embodied research specifically led to this realization that dance qualities are not bound or static. By using my full body, not just my eyes and ears, to conduct research, I could step into any moment in history while acknowledging my full self and embodied histories. While cameras and videos and writing devices have not always existed throughout history, and as technology continues to develop in the future, bodies and movement have always been present and will continue to be present. This is a reminder that though embodied archives are ephemeral, its impacts are long-lasting, and my own dancing body can be used as a tool for research that

transcends time and location. Dance research involves humanistic methods of analysis, and I found that the most important realizations in my research occurred when I engaged with my bodily archive in addition to other archival and evidential sources.

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