

WHERE THE DANCER MEETS HER DIVINE:
DANCE AS RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE IN THE LIVES
OF LOIE FULLER AND ISADORA DUNCAN

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by

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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the thesis entitled

WHERE THE DANCER MEETS HER DIVINE:

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a candidate for the degree of master of arts,

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For all dancers in search of their divines.

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**Prelude:
Of Dance & the Extraordinary**

We stood huddled outside the Carousel Theatre. Eight years old, dressed in black tights, leotards, and wings made from purple tulle, standing barefoot; we knew that soon, we would have our moment. We had trained for this moment—for our turn to dance, to perform. Yes, we would be watched, seen, gazed at by the audience, but we very clearly knew that we should not return that gaze. The mysterious head of the studio, with her leathery skin, wide-brimmed hat, and hair always pulled back in a tight bun, chopsticks tucked in tight to hold it, would soon be making her rounds. Before each dancer performed, she leaned down, kissed our foreheads and whispered to us, “Remember your magic.” Dancers, we were taught, carried an innate “magic” that separated us from “ordinary” people. However, this magic could easily be lost, stolen, or given away. During rehearsals, the studio owner would circle around us, waving her arms, yelling, finding one dancer to intensely stare down. Her goal: to distract us, to make us look at her—for, in that instance, she could “steal” our magic.

Once, during a dress rehearsal, the studio owner sat in the audience, arms crossed, her discerning eyes trying to pick out the weakest dancers ... the ones most susceptible to becoming distracted. A dancer flinched (I do not remember who), and the studio owner yelled out her name, voice cutting over the music. “I just stole your magic!” she exclaimed. (We kept dancing ... we did not want to be next.) “Are you going to do this during the performance? Be distracted and give away your magic?” None of us wanted that. None of us were sure of the logistics of how to get our magic back once it was stolen. We only knew that we must keep dancing, refusing to be distracted, for in that

dancing moment, we were somehow *more* than everyone else in the world ... I guess you could say that we were magical.

**Introduction:
Following the Dancing Path:
Locating Fuller and Duncan**

The Dancing Path Unwinds

From a very early age, I became aware of the connection between dance (specifically modern) and the extraordinary. I might not have been able to define what that “extraordinary” was, but I always knew that dancing somehow occupied a different space than the mundane world. In other words, dancing *felt* different (deeper, richer, more intense) than any of my everyday experiences. As a child trying to keep hold of her “magic” and now an adult finding joy and meaning through movement, dance has never seemed ordinary to me, and the fact that I regularly engage in that which is extra-ordinary influences me on a daily basis. I am certainly not alone in this sentiment. Modern dancer Sara Pearson, a former member of the Louis Murray Dance Company, states, “When I danced I had a direct link to the universe inside of me as well as a way of connecting to the universe outside of me. I could think more clearly, feel more deeply, communicate more directly.”¹ Similarly, dancer and scholar Marilyn Bordwell DeLaure describes dancing as an experience of “hyper-awareness.” “When I dance,” she muses, “I feel the space differently—it is the space of possibility, space to be devoured, to be sliced, eaten, embraced, flown through.”² Dance, then, seems to be a space of possibility, of transformation, of existing as “more than”—simply phrased, dancing makes the dancer extraordinary.

Yet, is this *extraordinary* experience also a *religious* experience? This is the question that I began to ask as I transitioned from dancer to religious studies graduate

student. I began to consider it as a result of an email exchange with one of my high school dance teachers. Shortly after I decided to change my major from dance to religious studies as an undergraduate, I turned to this teacher for advice, expressing my frustration that I did not know how to dance without it being “my life.” To be honest, the decreased role of dance in my life led to a small identity crisis. Who was I if not a dancer? How could I describe myself as a dancer if it was not what I based my existence on? Perhaps, most devastatingly, I pondered the loss of my “extraordinary” status. In my experience, dancers regularly refer to those who do not dance as “normal” or “ordinary” people, and I did not want to be just an “ordinary” person. After all, as I learned as a child, dancers had magic, which made them special and unique. Without this “magic,” without this extraordinary status, I felt that any other position I might have in the world would be somehow “less than.”

In response to my concerns, my former teacher, who, at that point, had two small children, taught dance twice a week, and ran a personal assistant business, replied, “For me, dancing is a spiritual practice. It replenishes me; it strengthens me; I feel better when I do it.” Her point was that dance did not have to be what one thought about at all times or what one dedicated the majority of one's day to; instead, one could be present in the doing of it—whenever that doing is—and use that “doing” as a way to bolster one's daily life. Dance did not have to be one's sole identity in order for it to add meaning and richness to the other areas of one's life. Although, at the time, her response did little to calm my own concerns, her description of dance as “spiritual” interested me greatly, especially since, earlier in her email, she informed me that she was presently attending a liberal Christian church. As an enthusiastic new religious studies student, I began to

wonder how that “worked.” What did she find in dance that she could not find at church? Did her experiences of dance support her experiences in church? How did she reconcile her religious beliefs with this spiritual experience of dancing? How did one inform the other? These were questions I never asked.

Nonetheless, this idea of dance as a site of both extraordinary experience and religious and/or spiritual importance continued to intrigue me. Yet, as I began to research this connection, I became increasingly frustrated by both past and present scholarship concerning the subject. I found analyses of dances that utilized religious ideas and images, such as Kimerer La Mothe's consideration of American modern dancer Ruth St. Denis' “Christian turn” in her dance *Masque of Mary*.³ I discovered several investigations into occurrences of and explanations for ecstatic, trance, or shamanic dance, such as Kathy Foley's analysis of trance dance in West Java or Irit Averbuch's discussion of the use of trance in Japanese karuga dances.⁴ I also found several articles that discussed liturgical dancing, both from a historical standpoint and in contemporary church culture.⁵ However, these explorations leave little (if any) consideration for the experience of the dancer. Beyond choreographed dances concerning religious ideas, beyond dance housed in a church, temple, or shrine setting, and beyond dance deemed “religious” due to its connection with specific religious rituals, I wanted to explore how the act of a single person dancing, in a setting such as a studio, stage, or even a bedroom, could be considered religious.

Dissatisfied with the available scholarship on dance and religion, I turned my attention to theories concerning religious experience, hoping to find a way to explain what exactly makes an experience religious. As this search continued, I found myself

agreeing with religious studies scholar Wayne Proudfoot's assertion that this search was "futile."⁶ Just as the deceptively simple question "What is religion?" yields countless answers, so does the question "What is religious experience?" Nonetheless, futile searches can still inspire new questions, thoughts, and observations that do not end in futility. For example, while religious studies scholar Ann Taves acknowledges the many problems, issues, and discomforts in defining religious experience, she argues that its consideration can serve as a point of collaboration between the humanities and science, thus pushing all involved disciplines to develop further.⁷ Her particular project of considering religious experience through both the lens of religious inspiration and psychological, biological, and physiological processes resulted in a method of inquiry that resolved the tension between experience and explanation.⁸ While I do not consider the contributions of the sciences to understandings of religious experience, I too wanted to bridge two disciplines—religious studies and dance studies—in an effort to further understand religious experience. Thus, at a very base level, this thesis explores the question: What can dance studies and religious studies offer each other?

While an exploration of this question by itself could indeed fill the space of an entire master's thesis (or a book, for that matter), in order to avoid the mistake of essentializing experience, I decided to narrow my investigation to specific dancers. To essentialize experience, as legal scholar Theresa Grillo argues, is to see the experience as separate from all other aspects of the person and his or her life. Essentializing labels the experience as stable and, as Grillo states, "constant through time, space, and different historical, social, political, and personal contexts."⁹ In the case of dance and religion, essentializing occurs on two separate levels. First, one must assume that everyone

experiences dance uniformly, from a young male liturgical dancer in an African Methodist Episcopal church to a middle-aged woman in a wheelchair, dancing on a concert stage. Second, the religious experience that can emerge and/or synchronize with the dance experience must also be the same for all dancers, suggesting that dancing, regardless of the person “doing” the dance and his or her beliefs, ideas, and background, is the sole cause for a dancing religious experience.

Here, the importance of considering dance and religion from both a religious studies and a dance studies perspective emerges. To be sure, as dance theorist José Gil argues, dance is extraordinary due to its intemporality and set-apart-ness from regular time and space. Gil even labels all dance as “divine” due to these factors, therefore suggesting a definition of the divine that hinges on a reversal of everyday life, space, and time.¹⁰ Yet, Gil fails to consider that dance does not exist without dancers. If dance is divine, as he argues, then this divinity is created through the very process of dancing. Gil's “divine” only becomes such through the dancing movements of human beings. Embedded in each of these movements are the sweat, blood, thoughts, feelings, and stories of each dancer. In other words, the dance at the moment of its doing can only be done due to the preceding circumstances, choices, encounters, and experiences that brought the dancer to that dancing moment. Thus, to say that dance is innately divine is to say that the everyday life of dancers is a prelude to divinity. The dancer, then, through dancing, leaves the mundane world of the everyday and enters a “divine” state. As a dancer, I *want* to agree with Gil's statement that all dance is divine, and, certainly, at times, I have experienced this feeling of the transcendence of the everyday while dancing, but I have also danced without entering this state. Muscle spasms, tendonitis, the

impending death of a loved one, a fight with one's best friend—all of these “things” belonging to the mundane world can easily bleed into the dancing world. In these cases, dance cannot be wholly intemporal or “set-apart,” for the dancer—the creator of the dance—marks time through *both* mundane seconds and minutes and circles of the torsos and leaps through the air.

As a religious studies graduate student, however, I feel inclined to completely reject Gil's claim that all dance is divine. It essentializes dancing experiences and imbues this experience with religious connotations that dancers may or may not agree with. Yes, dancing is indeed extraordinary. (People generally do not pirouette, leap, and glide as they move from parking lots to offices, stores, and homes.) However, in order to carry this argument further, to push the boundaries of the extraordinary into the “divine” or religious while avoiding the hazards of essentializing, the scholar must turn to individual dancers and study, as Taves states, “the process whereby people constitute things as religious or not.”¹¹ Accordingly, I changed my driving question from “Is dance a religious experience?” to “How is dance a religious experience for an individual dancer?” To answer is not only to learn how dance serves as a unique setting for religious experience but to gain a sense of the processes, beliefs, and experiences that enable dance to become religious.

However, in order to proceed further, I had to first pick specific dancers to study. I decided to choose two dancers from the same time and location in order to allow for a deeper analysis of the wider religio-cultural landscape that they emerged from. Indeed, this larger project of exploring the intersection of dance and religious experience could easily yield several theses, books, and articles on countless combinations of eras and

dance styles, such as twenty-first century hip hop dancers and thirteenth century Whirling Dervishes. Each of these focuses will result in vastly different arguments and lead to entirely unique conclusions. In many ways, each specific focus serves as a puzzle piece; each contains a way to understand the question of dance and religious experience more thoroughly while simultaneously providing new insights and understandings of a specific era, culture, and dance style. In this thesis, I offer this piece to the puzzle: proto-modern dancers in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, specifically Loie Fuller (1862-1928) and Isadora Duncan (1877-1927).¹²

New Subjects, New Paths

I first became introduced to Fuller and Duncan in my high school and undergraduate dance history courses, where my teachers introduced Fuller and Duncan as both pioneers and mothers to the dance form we practiced several times per week. Both Americans in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, Fuller and Duncan each danced solo (although they each were accompanied by children occasionally) and left their own respective legacies to the world of concert dance.

Born on her family's farm in Fullersburg, Illinois, Marie Louise (Loie) Fuller quickly developed a reputation for outspokenness and showmanship. Shaped by the progressive ideas of her parents, Fuller saw no reason to suppress her opinions—a characteristic that she was known for throughout her life. As a teenager in Monmouth, Illinois, Fuller began acting in local plays and discovered her passion for performance. She joined touring companies of a variety of shows, including Buffalo Bill's traveling show.¹³ From there, she moved to New York City, and it was there that she began to

develop her approach to choreography and dance. Fuller discovered that through using silk fabric, she could create different characters, images, and feelings through her movement.¹⁴ Furthermore, she found that through the use of stage lighting and color, she could intensify this effect so that she disappeared and reappeared in and out of the darkness in forever-changing shapes. After introducing her new form of dancing to America, she moved to Paris, where she became an important fixture among the cultural elite, including Edouard Marchand (manager of the Folies-Bergère), Alexandre Dumas, Sarah Bernhardt, and Marie Curie.¹⁵ There, she also inspired many artists of the Art Nouveau movement, as well as becoming an icon of the Symbolist movement.¹⁶ Drawing from Spiritualist and Theosophical ideas of the late-nineteenth century, Fuller expressed motion in all of its forms—dance, color, and light.¹⁷

Isadora Duncan, on the other hand, grew up in northern California, where she taught herself to dance to the rhythms of nature (a practice she found much more interesting than school). She dreamed of creating the “Dance of the Future” and looked to inspiration from nature, Greek mythology and art, opera and classical music, and philosophers, poets, musicians, and artists, such as: Nietzsche, Walt Whitman, Jean Jacques Rousseau, and Richard Wagner. Plagued by tragedy (such as the drowning death of her two young children) and torrent affairs (she refused to marry), Duncan nonetheless created an art form and a training technique for young dancers that relied on the premise that through an open connection of the solar plexus, one could see the soul’s “Spiritual Vision,” and, through this vision, one could dance “the divine expression of the human spirit.”¹⁸

Fuller and Duncan both hold a place of importance in modern dance history.

Dance historian Nora Ambrosio's *Learning About Dance* (2002), a popular textbook in college dance departments, rightly lists both women as “forerunners” to modern dance.¹⁹ Dance critic Jack Anderson labeled Fuller as a “pioneer of modern dance,” while Ambrosio refers to Duncan as the “mother of modern dance.”²⁰ As dancer Sharon Friedler notes, Fuller and Duncan, along with Ruth St. Denis (1879-1968), “prepared the climate for what later became modern dance and were the primary mentors for the succeeding generation.”²¹ They both eschewed ballet and popular dance with intentions of creating dance forms that supported spiritual, artistic, and/or intellectual ideas, thus paving the way for a type of dance that continuously reinvents, changes, grows, and regresses according to its participants' needs and desires.

In order to understand whether dance was a religious experience for Fuller and Duncan, I divided my study into three sections. These sections, in part, developed from sociologist Nancy Ammerman's edited volume *Everyday Religion* (2007). In the introduction, Ammerman argues that in order to understand the ways in which people experience religion outside of specific religious institutions and organizations, one must refrain from placing one's own definition of religion onto one's subjects. Instead, she argues, scholars should “ask what makes some social events and individual actions religious in the minds of the actors and how those definitions are shaped by the various cultural and institutional contexts in which they take place.”²² Thus, in order to understand how dance was (or was not) a religious experience for Fuller and Duncan, I must not only understand how they understood dance but the context in which this understanding developed.

Accordingly, in Chapter One, I begin with a study of the religio-cultural

atmosphere of modern society from which Fuller's and Duncan's dances emerged. I divide this chapter into two sections. First, in order to solidify my understanding of modernity and modern society, I engage in two popular, yet contradictory, theories on modernity. Through engaging with narratives of both disenchantment and enchantment (the world devoid of meaning versus the world overflowing with new meanings), I arrive at the conclusion that both hypotheses are correct. Modernity can be both ... according to the individual person's background, experiences, desires, goals, and circumstances. I then integrate sociologist Anthony Giddens' and philosopher Charles Taylor's conceptions of embedding, disembedding, and re-embedding as a way in which to explain and navigate the dual channels of enchantment/disenchantment. Using these new tools, I explore the religious expression and experiences of moderns in the West at the turn of the twentieth century in order to be able to place the actions, interests, and activities of Fuller and Duncan within the same religio-cultural structure of their contemporaries.

With a sense of the religio-cultural atmosphere established, I turn my attention to Fuller and Duncan in Chapter Two. I continue to implement the language of embedding/disembedding in an effort to consider the various institutions, organizations, ideas, and individuals that Fuller and Duncan engaged with. Inspired by religious studies scholar Thomas Tweed's theory of religion as a site of crossing, I ask, where are the “religious” elements in these encounters, or, in which encounters do Fuller and Duncan find concepts and ideas key to their understandings of the world and the dance? In order to understand how dance might be a religious experience for both, I focus my attention on those encounters that Fuller and Duncan viewed as especially important, crucial to their understandings of the relationship between the world and their selves—meaningful,

religious, and/or spiritual. I continually ask how these encounters manifested in their dances and begin to see how, for Fuller and Duncan, dance served as a site to engage with the knowledge, understandings, and ideas that arose from these encounters.

Finally, in Chapter Three, I turn to the idea of dance as religious experience. Here, I engage with both dance theory (José Gil's paradoxical body) and religious studies scholarship (William James' definition of religion and Catherine Bell's ritualization) in order to situate a religious experience within a dancing body. I first explore the ritualization of dance for both Fuller and Duncan, considering their belief in the importance of intention for a successful performance. Then, I focus on José Gil's construction of the paradoxical body as an ever-emptying source driven by the dancer's desire. I connect this concept of the paradoxical body with William James' understanding of religious experience, and, through this connection, I argue that Fuller and Duncan desired, through dance, to engage with that which they considered ultimately important and overwhelmingly real, or, as James might say, “divine.”²³ Ultimately, I conclude that dance was indeed a site of religious experience for Fuller and Duncan—an experience created through their dynamic processes of embedding and disembedding in the religious ideas and institutions of modern society.

A Final Note

Throughout this study, I use the metaphor of dance/movement improvisation to connect, structure, and demonstrate my points. Metaphor, as linguist George Lakoff and philosopher Mark Johnson argue, “allows us to understand one domain of experience in terms of another.”²⁴ Indeed, as I began organizing my research and trying to make sense

of the vast information I found, I began to see many similarities between the concepts I wanted to include in my argument with exercises and techniques commonly used by dancers to open up new approaches to movement, such as site-specific improvisation and Contact Improvisation. I find that by integrating imagery of physical movement and discussing mind/body dialogue, seemingly-abstract thoughts, ideas, and concepts begin to take more physical forms, or, in other words, they become something that can be physically imagined.

Additionally, this approach does not project theories and ideas onto a still form; they still retain their dynamism. Dance philosopher Maxine Sheets-Johnstone explains the constant unfolding that is dance improvisation, stating, “Improvisation is process through and through, a form which lives and breathes in the moving flow of its creation, a flow experienced as an ongoing present, an unbroken now.”²⁵ Accordingly, the metaphor of dance improvisation serves as a reminder that although Fuller and Duncan do not move in the present time, this does not decrease the spontaneity, interactivity, awareness, and intention they moved with throughout their lives. As religious studies scholar Robert Orsi argues, the “deadness” of historical figures too often allows scholars to impose their own narratives and needs upon them. “But historians must be open,” Orsi states, “to the shock of the unpredictability and difference of the past, which means open to the possibility of the past living in its insistence on telling its own story and so confounding us.”²⁶ Thus, like an improviser engaged with other improvisers, we must acknowledge that we cannot predict where and how the other improvisers will move. We might look for patterns in their movement, but in improvisation, as in life, patterns become disrupted, distorted, or totally disregarded.

With this in mind, I paid attention to Fuller's and Duncan's patterns of movement, both in performance and everyday life, and, indeed, I found myself repeatedly surprised. My research process became interactive, with Fuller and Duncan acting and me reacting. This process reminds me of “mirroring,” one of the first exercises typically explored in an improvisational dance class. Mirroring is typically done with two partners (but can be performed in a large group). One partner acts as the lead, initiating the movement. The other partner (the follower) faces the lead and attempts to mirror his or her movements as closely as possible. Yet, no matter how closely the follower replicates the lead's movement, she or he will never completely embody it. The follower does not know when and how the lead will change shape, direction, or speed; all she or he can do is watch with awareness and remain in a continuous space of kinesthetic possibility, *following* (and thus engaging with) the lead while acknowledging that she or he will never *become* the lead. Accordingly, I followed the leads of Fuller and Duncan, privileging their own writings and letters above the sources of other “followers.” Undoubtedly, I missed some of their movements along the way—no follower is ever sharp-eyed enough to catch all of the subtle nuances of the lead's movements—a flick of the eyes, a curl of a toe, or a lowering of the arm by just a centimeter. Nonetheless, as I engaged with Fuller and Duncan, I discovered how, for each dancer, dancing was a religious experience, set apart from the everyday and guided by the spiritual and religious knowledge that they encountered and interacted with throughout their lives.

**Chapter One:
Moving in Modernity:
Disenchantment, Enchantment, and the Modern Mover**

Prelude to Version A

A group of six dancers stand in a park. No chairs, benches, water fountains, or tracks can be found in this park—only trees, bushes, grass ... and a large set of monkey bars. The dancers stand next to the monkey bars, wondering why their improvisation instructor called them there. After a few minutes, the instructor appears, a clipboard in his hands and a smile on his face. “Dancers,” he states brightly, “what you see before you is the beginning of a new playground! Right now, it might only contain monkey bars, but, in thirty days, there will be a jungle gym, a fort, a swing set, a slide, and a seesaw.” The dancers nod, still wondering what they would be doing with the lone monkey bars. Flipping through his notes on the clipboard, the instructor starts to describe their improvisational task. “Now, I’ve checked with the Department of Parks and Recreation, and they gave me clearance for this project,” the instructor begins. The dancers shift, a bit nervously. One of the dancers, Devon, briefly wonders if she should be wearing a hard hat for this assignment. Oblivious to the dancers’ uneasiness, the instructor continues, “Your task will be to meet here, at this time, everyday for the next thirty days and to improvise for a full hour. The monkey bars will act as the boundary for your movement; in fact, you must keep a part of your body connected to the monkey bars at all times—whether it be a fingertip or your whole torso. Any questions?”²⁷

Troy raises his hand. “Can we acknowledge each other and have contact while we dance?” The instructor nods, “Absolutely!” Andy strokes his beard for a moment,

thinking, and then asks, “Are we supposed to be working on accomplishing anything during this time?” (In his thoughts, this question continues, “...besides avoiding getting hit by a stray nail from the construction?”) “Hmm, that's a good question,” the instructor muses. “Well, ideally, what you accomplish is found in the moment-by-moment process of moving—of remaining centered in the present despite the chaos of the construction that surrounds you. Additionally, think about the difference between discovery, familiarity, and boredom. Can you maintain a sense of exploration by day 22? Can you relish in a now-familiar movement on day 18, or does it just seem frustratingly repetitive? Do you always want to move, or do you just want to be still at times? Any more questions?” No one speaks. “Well,” the instructor smiles, “let's get started!”

The first week goes by relatively easily. Exploration abounds as the dancers begin to familiarize themselves with the possibilities found in moving around, against, and with the monkey bars. From here, however, the similarity in dancers' reactions ends. By the end of the third week, two of the dancers—Troy and Devon—have had enough. They feel like they have been doing the same movements again and again. Devon crawls along the top of the monkey bars for what feels like the hundredth time, and Troy suspends upside down from one of the bars with a bored expression on his face and watches the continuous construction surrounding him. By the fourth week, Troy and Devon feel like sitting down and protesting the improvisation, but they keep moving, aware of their commitment to this particular improvisation. Thus, bored ... tired ... and frustrated, the two dancers move not from a place of creativity and exploration but with a sense of repetition and necessity.

At the end of the thirty days, the instructor once again assembles the dancers.

Troy and Devon begin to high five each other, glad to be done. Their movement stills, however, once they note the slightly-crazed expression in their instructor's eyes. The instructor smiles, looks at each of the dancers, and starts, "Congratulations on completing this phase of the improvisation!" ("*Phase?!*" Troy thinks.) "Look around you," the instructor continues, "We now have a complete playground! Your new task: experiment with the entire playground space now that we have new pieces of equipment to move with. With this assignment come new rules: you can explore any piece of equipment, including the monkey bars. With this in mind, there will be times where you are not directly touching any of the equipment because you are traveling back and forth between the various structures. However, you cannot just improvise in open space with no intention to move towards a new object. For thirty days, this will be your task! Are you ready?"

Four of the dancers answer affirmatively; Erica even jogs in place and does a few air punches in excitement. Devon and Troy, however, gaze back at the instructor with wide eyes, both thinking that this assignment must be some kind of "dance punishment" for consistently marking the steps in ballet class rather than doing them full out. When the next day (the start of the new 30-day cycle) arrives, Troy watches Erica, Lora, Jill, and Andy scatter around the playground, each enthusiastically moving towards a new structure with delight. Troy sighs and returns to the monkey bars, climbs up the side rail, and hangs upside down. He saw the construction of the new pieces of equipment; he has no desire to explore them. After all, what is left to explore when one has seen the structure progress from bare frame to embellished equipment? No, Troy would much prefer to hang upside down on the familiar, swinging slightly, wondering when he will

ever be able to stop this sequence of moving. A shadow passes over him, and he looks up to find Devon once again crawling across the tops of the bars. Dejectedly, they share a look, cursing the improvisation while simultaneously trapped inside of it—disenchanted not only by the improvisational process but by the playground itself. They keep moving—but only because they have no other choice.

Improvising in Modernity (Version A): The Playground of Disenchantment

What would it mean to constantly be in motion—to consistently travel forward in a locked vehicle known as 'progress'? What happens when one discovers that he or she cannot unlock this vehicle—that he or she has no choice but to move? These are the questions of disenchanted modernity, specifically the modern Western world during the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. Yet, before considering the motivations for this disenchantment, one must ask: what is meant by the term “modernity”? Is it a place? Space? Time? Why, it is all of those—it is the setting, the atmosphere, the landscape, and the very motivation for this story. On one hand, modernity refers to a period of time (originating in seventeenth-century Europe) characterized by dramatic differentiation in approaches to and understandings of social, political, and economic organization, such as the development of the nation-state, division of labor, and separation of public and private life.²⁸ However, modernity is more than a time period. It is also a way of life, or a worldview. In scholars' efforts to describe this worldview, certain characteristics repeatedly appear, including an increased regard of rationality, secularism, faith in science, importance of progress, new explorations of the mind/body relationship, an increased rate of change, and wider and more diverse consequences of these changes.²⁹

This idea of change is especially important, particularly when one begins to think of this change as movement. After all, as scholar Harvie Ferguson notes, “The only changeless element in Modernity is the propensity to movement.”³⁰ With falls and rises of empires, nations, government and economic systems, technology, and scientific thought, modernity spins rapidly, never stopping, always moving—its centrifugal force powered by change. According to this particular narrative, modernity requires all who inhabit it to move—they know of no other way. Ferguson carries this argument further, suggesting that the structure of modernity leads humans to fundamentally change how they express themselves in relation to the world. “Human autonomy,” he states, “is actualized in dynamic self-transformation rather than in the creation of a fixed structure.”³¹ Central to this statement is Ferguson's premise that the rise of the subject/object (or ego/world) dynamic completely obliterates human ability to believe in the merit and truth of a stable system, or, as he describes it, a “motionless world.”³² After all, Ferguson supposes, individual desire and inclination inspire movement. Without subjectivity, where does the desire to progress, move, or change originate?³³ Nowhere! Simply (and rather crudely) put, pre-moderns did not (and could not) change since they saw themselves as part of a system rather than as individual subjects—if the system did not change, neither did they.

Indeed, the rise of the subject/ego synchronizes with the rise of new understandings of science, technology, politics, economics, religion, and philosophy. Ferguson would likely suggest that this is no coincidence—the subject seeks to continuously transform—to move. These abundances of knowledge, then, can be understood as the physical results of internal subjective movement, or, in other words, individual ideas becoming material things or written concepts. Let us consider some

examples of the creative wealth that these subject-driven bursts of movement can create, specifically in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century America (i.e. America during the lifetimes of Loie Fuller and Isadora Duncan). During this time, changes abounded as manufacturers and inventors continuously introduced world-transforming technologies. Alexander Graham Bell unveiled the telephone in 1876. Shortly thereafter, Thomas Edison invented the phonograph in 1877. He further contributed to the technological milieu with the invention of the first light bulb in 1879, a central light, heat, and power system in 1884, and the silent film in 1904. Furthermore, in 1901, Ransome Eli Olds introduced the “Curved Dash Oldsmobile,” the first mass-produced automobile in the United States. Yet, discovery also predominated the medical science field. Bacteriology emerged as a scientific discipline in the late 1870s, and, in the 1890s, scientists discovered the rabies vaccine and the diphtheria anti-toxin.³⁴ Additionally, during this time, Women’s Suffrage gained power (culminating in the 19th Amendment in 1920). The number of immigrants also increased significantly. During the period from 1890 to 1914, 15 million immigrants entered the United States.³⁵ Undoubtedly, America rapidly changed, multiplied, and grew during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—a process which, as Ferguson would state, unfolded as a result of the rise of the subject/object differentiation.

One can seek object after object, but, still, no internal spark will be lit—no interest piqued. Yes, modernity moves, but it moves without meaning, guided by the force of moderns seeking that which is impossible to find—a dynamic interaction between self and other, subject and object—something ... anything ... that excites or causes wonder: something that obliterates all thoughts and experiences of boredom. Ferguson exemplifies

this dilemma through a discussion of the first part of Søren Kierkegaard's *Either/Or* (1843). In *Either*, a young man seeks pleasure after pleasure only to conclude that his “most faithful mistress” is melancholy.”³⁶ While the pleasure might initially feel good, it quickly dissolves into emptiness, leaving the young man to conclude, “All I see is emptiness, all I live on is emptiness, all I move in is emptiness.”³⁷ Each new pleasure throws the young man into altarity, and he emerges untouched, bored, and full of melancholy. He cannot integrate the pleasure into himself because, as Ferguson states, “imagination . . . places its relentless question mark over every momentarily settled state of being.”³⁸ The young man doubts each experience, leading him to conclude that each pleasure is meaningless. He cannot grow through experiencing them, nor can he claim to gain a sense of purpose through them, exclaiming, “How barren is my soul and thought, and yet incessantly tormented by vacuous, rapturous, and agonizing birth pangs!”³⁹ He cannot stop moving, and, as a result, he must always remain unfilled . . . empty.

The emptiness of *Either's* young man becomes even more complex when one considers its nineteenth-century time frame. During this time, new sciences, such as evolution, geology, and phrenology, rapidly developed, leading philosopher, scientist, and theologian William Whewell (1794-1866) to coin the term “scientist” as a challenge to the notion of “natural philosopher.” Whewell viewed “natural philosophy” as having a romantic connotation, reminiscent of philosophers who dabbled in various sciences in order to eloquently speak of their perceptions of the natural world. A “scientist,” on the other hand, looked at facts, utilized the scientific method, and performed experiments based on the laws and principles of the material world.⁴⁰ This distinction led Whewell to issue a warning to his readers in *The Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences* (1840). He

states, “[The examples of sciences] will have in them nothing to engage [the reader's] fancy, or to warm his heart. I am compelled to detain the listener in the chilly air of the external world, in order that we may have the advantage of full daylight.”⁴¹ In other words, the reader must be prepared to disregard fantasies of the natural world in order to live under the advantages of its “truth.”

Unfortunately, for those (such as the young man) seeking out pleasure, meaning, and a sense of fullness, science seemed only to suggest an unyielding “chill.” One might be able to sit in (and understand the reason for) the daylight, but this does not necessarily mean that the daylight can instill one with purpose. Sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920) was one such example. In “Science as Vocation,” a 1917 lecture delivered at Munich University, Weber described how he found the modern world lacking and increasingly devoid of activities, experiences, and beliefs that might lead to a sense of happiness or contentment. The culprit for this calamitous conundrum? Science! The scientist, Weber argued, must be prepared to never rest in finality; she or he must never become attached to her or his results. “Scientific fulfillment,” Weber states, “asks to be 'surpassed' and outdated.”⁴² Science, like modernity, moves. With this in mind, *Either's* young man would most likely be extremely dissatisfied as a scientist; this career would only serve to reiterate his feelings of perpetual transience. How can he find solid meaning when he can never even rest in a single, untouchable answer?

Perhaps this is not a question he would ask. Perhaps science might serve as an answer for the young man—something to hold on to during those chilly nights. To this, Weber might shrug his shoulders and declare the young man's thinking as flawed—a flaw that many moderns shared. In his speech, Weber portrayed many moderns (especially

young adults) as naïve—certain that mastery lay within their reach at all times yet unaware that scientific mastery is fleeting. Furthermore, this surety of mastery leaves little (if any) room for the involvement of the unexplainable or mysterious, a supposition that caused Weber to label the world as “disenchanted.”⁴³ Weber portrayed the disenchantment of the world as the outcome of the rise of modern science and the resultant decline in religion.⁴⁴ Gone were ideas of the magical, the numinous, and the spiritual; they retreated into silence as moderns forged an increased reliance on and identification with rationality. One no longer needed religion or God for explanation or meaning. Instead, through the processes of rationalization and scientific reasoning, the mysterious could always be explained (i.e. one could always see the blueprint of the invention). Whereas, previously, religion might provide the one delight that leads *Either's* young man out of his despondency by giving him an experience that could effectively fill his imagination, religion in the nineteenth century sat on the wayside of experiential possibilities—outdated and irrelevant compared with the scientific dynamism that characterized the modern world.

Conversely, rather than opposing rationality's overthrow of religion, Harvard professor George Santayana (1863-1952) embraced it. In *The Life of Reason* (1905), Santayana argues that “religion pursues rationality through the imagination...It gives imaginative substitute for science.”⁴⁵ Thus, while religion might fill the imagination, giving the subject a sense of meaning, this meaning is not real—a mirage for the weary traveler of the modern world. According to Santayana, the modern must become cognizant of the mirage in order to progress; religion, he argues, is not necessarily “bad,” it is simply obsolete. With the advent of rapid scientific discovery, religion loses its

purpose. Science replaces religion as a more exact route to rationality. For Santayana (and Weber), the modern world is synonymous with rationality and science; change is simply a result of humanity's more-refined rational impulse that drives discovery.

Not all people responded positively to these assertions. Poet Bliss Carman (1861-1929) depressingly noted that Santayana left him with “a sense of vast loneliness and universal sorrow.”⁴⁶ In lamenting the loss of truly innovative visual and performing artists, composer Irène Dean Paul (1879-1932) argued that the “rationalist is one whose measurements of life are stultified by theory,” suggesting that rationalism in the arts resulted in passionless creations.⁴⁷ In *The Life of the Spirit* (1909), philosopher Rudolf Eucken (1846-1926) theorized that beneath the hustle and bustle of modern life, no ultimate meaning exists that gives humans spiritual satisfaction. Eucken concludes that, ultimately, life is but “a single huge show in which culture is reduced to a burlesque.”⁴⁸ In this case, however, there is no final curtain, no grand finish. The actors have become the characters; with scripts internalized, they perform modernity, unsuspectingly living in disenchantment.

In examining the reflexive writings of Weber, Carman, Paul, and Eucken, one certainly cannot ignore the overwhelming sense of dissatisfaction, melancholy, and disenchantment that their observations beget.⁴⁹ I, for one, imagine the four of them sitting at a bar, gazing down into glasses of scotch or whiskey, exchanging stories of the uninspired artistic endeavors and unfulfilled imaginative yearnings that constitute the disenchantment of modernity. Assuredly, I am not the only scholar to craft such a scenario. In *The Disenchantment of the World: A Political History of Religion* (1997), historian Marcel Gauchet describes disenchantment as “the disentanglement of

contemporary religious phenomena from their original reason for existence,” a process, which he argues, leads to the “end’ of religion.”⁵⁰ Philosopher Leszek Kołakowski, in *Modernity on Endless Trial* (1990), discusses the result of disenchantment, stating, “With the disappearance of the sacred, ...arises one of the most dangerous illusions of our civilization – the illusion that there are no limits to the changes that human life can undergo.”⁵¹ Kołakowski argues that society *seems* to progress because we believe that, as humans, we can transform or change anything: progress moves on an upward curve solely due to human autonomy.⁵² Sociologist James A. Beckford, in *Religion and Advanced Industrial Society* (1989), also describes the nineteenth century idea of religion as that which is detrimental to society. He states, “Religion has come to represent a source of disorder in a world increasingly dominated by advanced industrial societies,” suggesting that religion and modern society cannot coincide.⁵³ Gauchet, Kołakowski, and Beckford are but a handful of scholars to present the disenchantment narrative of modernity ... and it is a compelling case. One cannot deny the melancholy that seemed to permeate the modern world. After all, if caught in a refrain of never-ending motion, an atmosphere of rapid discovery becomes ordinary. Accordingly, all inventions are temporary – discovered, created, and then left behind as artifacts tainted with fast-diminishing remnants of subjectivities. Yes, the subject creates them, but he or she never integrates these inventions as part of a stable sense of self, for, in modernity, there is no such thing. Like a vapor, disenchantment expanded across the modern world, leaving moderns empty and melancholic, lacking meaning and purpose – moving along an unrelenting trajectory known as 'progress'.

Interlude: To Enchant, Re-Enchant, and Disenchant

From their tired place on the monkey bars, Devon and Troy nod, agreeing with Weber, Carman, and Paul. If modernity is a playground, then they are certainly disenchanting. Yet, one must remember that Troy and Devon are not the only improvisers on the playground. By only examining their experience, we leave Mark, Jill, Erica, and Andy dancing in darkness. Imagine the instructor only setting his gaze on Devon and Troy, completely ignoring the experiences of the other dancers. As the instructor watches, he takes notes, which include observations such as, “Appear to be bored. No interest in exploring other structures. Movements have become repetitive. Innovation around them has served as no inspiration.” With only these notes, the instructor might conclude that the dancers detested the playground improvisation and that it offered them no new sense of how their bodies might move in differing spaces across time. Yet, this would be only a partially accurate conclusion. To build a full analysis of the improvisational exercise, the instructor must consider the experiences of *all* dancers.

Similarly, while one cannot deny the very real feelings of Weber, Carman, Paul, and many of their contemporaries, one must acknowledge that these experiences do not constitute a whole, universal experience of modernity. Nonetheless, several scholars, such as Gauchet, Kołakowski, and Beckford, look only at the metaphorical monkey bars instead of the entire playground, and, of course, they find disenchantment. Yet, I feel compelled to look past the monkey bars. While I acknowledge the disenchanting experience of Troy and Devon, I find my gaze shifting to those other dancers. Look! Andy just jumped off the fort, while Erica rolled sideways down the slide. Yes, these new ways of exploring movement and structure capture my gaze, and, thus, my observations

are very different than the instructor's. As folklorist Cristina Bacchilega notes, theories are “stories about stories,” and every story can be told a myriad of ways.⁵⁴ Modernity can be a story of repetition, frustration, and boredom – an endless sentence to be in-motion – but it also can be a story of exploration, innovation, and dynamism – an endless opportunity to move in new and exciting ways.⁵⁵

With this in mind, I return to the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries and see new forms of enchantment continuously arising. Consider, for example, the abundance of enchantments found in literature, recreation, and the arts. Fiction teemed with fantastical characters and locations. In 1900, L. Frank Baum (1856-1919) published the first of his Oz novels, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, which explored lands of fantasy, enchanted and magical creatures, and the quest for one's heart's desire.⁵⁶ In 1911, Frances Hodgson Burnett (1849-1924) published *The Secret Garden*, in which a bedridden boy is healed through positive thinking and the embrace of the abundance of life and nature found in the garden. Two years after its publication, Burnett stated, “We are on the eve of marvelous revelations. The air is surcharged with the thought of it.”⁵⁷ In the world of the arts, Sergei Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes* performed such exciting and wondrous productions as *The Firebird* (1910) and Nijinsky's “L'Après-midi d'un Faune” (1912), both of which uniquely offered audiences the opportunity to enter into a fantasy world. Poets, such as Stéphane Mallarmé (1842-1898) and Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891), engaged in the interplay between written language, imagination, and creative reception, transforming the writing process into a space for enchantment.⁵⁸ Additionally, audiences flocked to see magicians, such as P.T. Barnum (1810-1891) and Harry Houdini (1874-1926), perform amazing, logically-impossible feats.⁵⁹ By the late 1880s, as scholar Simon

During notes, magical shows regularly contained a hypnotism portion, in which audiences could be delighted by the ‘mysterious’ powers of the mind.⁶⁰ Enchantment absolutely permeated the atmosphere during this time.

Granted, in some of these examples, enchantment only arises as a response to disenchantment. In these cases, new enchantments are synonymous with re-enchantment. For some scholars, such as Joshua Landy and Michael Saler, re-enchantment can only occur in a secular, Godless, world. Religion (which, for them, refers to creeds, institutions, and belief in God) no longer holds sway over disenchanted moderns who have fallen into the unyielding forward motion of modern life.⁶¹ Re-enchantment, then, is the process by which new strategies for filling a “God-shaped void” emerge and are implemented.⁶² Landy and Saler imagine religion as a losing opponent in the domain of modern life, stating, “Each time religion reluctantly withdrew from a particular area of experience, a new, thoroughly secular strategy for re-enchantment cheerfully emerged to fill the void.”⁶³ Yet, I am left unconvinced that religion lost any sort of ‘battle for modernity’. Landy and Saler declare that secular enchantments, such as spectator sports and magic shows, successfully replaced religion, but they fail to consider that perhaps these “new enchantments” fulfilled the same needs for moderns as new experiences of religion.

For many, these “new enchantments” merged with new explorations in spirituality through calls to cultivate one's soul, develop one's moral character, and/or find connections between religious ideas and concepts and one's own life. For example, in 1881, attendees at the Baptist Ministers’ Conference (BMC) engaged in a discussion of how spirituality could strengthen a minister’s influence over the congregation.⁶⁴

Ministers felt great concern over the difference between outward religious expression and inner spiritual experience. According to a *New York Times* article about the BMC, among ministers, “spiritual life has been rotting like the trunk of a decaying tree of deceptive exterior appearance.”⁶⁵ For these ministers, the pursuit of the spiritual life implied that they “practiced what they preached;” they embodied the principles of their religion. For others, the concept of spirituality emerged as a way to move beyond the boundaries of religious institutions and to embrace a personal experience of something that created a sense of constant awe and/or serenity. In this use of spirituality, the ‘soul’ emerges as one’s direct connection to spiritual truth. Nora Batchelor, in “The Soul’s Inalienable Birthright” (1902), argues that “the soul sits as supreme ruler and arbiter” inside the spiritual world, thus inextricably linking the soul to spirituality.⁶⁶ Therefore, as people sought to engage with spiritual ideas and experiences, religion became a tool through which individuals could, if they desired, find and encounter concepts and ideas that would guide them to new ways of being and experiencing life. Indeed, secular enchantments did not usurp religion as that which modernity holds important. Instead, modern individuals found the freedom to actively and fluidly engage with religion – disembedding, re-embedding, and embedding according to their needs, desires, and wants of enchantment.⁶⁷

Prelude to Version B

Lora, Jill, Andy, and Erica stand in the middle of the playground. They just received their assignment to improvise with all pieces of the playground equipment. Jill's eyes turn to the new seesaw; she remembers watching the construction crew piece it

together and feeling a sense of sadness in the process. The construction crew assembled the seesaw on day five of the monkey bar improvisation, and Jill spent the subsequent twenty-five days eying the lonely structure. While she found the construction process surrounding her to be fascinating, she could not help but observe that all of these structures mean nothing without the presence of human beings. After all, what purpose does an isolated seesaw serve in the world? Thus, now, within the frame of a less formal structure, Jill begins to dance towards the seesaw, excitedly skipping and leaping along the way.

Once there, Jill begins to dance around the structure, exploring the negative space created by its presence. The seesaw rests on one end of its long plank, leaving the other end in the air. Jill crawls under the elevated end, feeling the shadow of the plank provide coolness against her back; she slowly begins to roll up to standing, finding that she can only rise as far as her mid-back before the seesaw and her body meet. She feels the weight of the plank against her back and reaches up and grasps the plank with her hands. Bending and straightening her knees, Jill explores how the seesaw moves with her body, noting this new sensation of being beneath a structure while controlling its movement. Then, in a quick succession of movement, Jill drops to her right side and rolls out from under the seesaw. Jumping up, Jill gains a bit of momentum and runs four steps before leaping on top of the seesaw center. She shifts her weight from right to left foot, noting the corresponding motion of the seesaw. Shuffling her legs out further, Jill notices that the seesaw's range-of-motion decreases the wider her feet are. Taking a deep breath, Jill jumps both feet to the center of the seesaw; the plank is now in perfect alignment. Jill begins to jump back and forth across the center point when her attention is diverted by

Andy's leap off the fort. "That looks fun," she thinks, "So long, seesaw. Off to the fort for me!"

Meanwhile, across the playground, Lora approaches a dome-style jungle gym with a sense of curiosity. While on the monkey bars, Lora found herself repeating a particular movement sequence. First, she swung around one of the support bars, letting her feet lift off the ground as she revolved. Next, she quickly climbed up the side bars, using only feet to climb, balancing herself with outstretched arms. At the top side bar, Lora let herself begin to fall, waiting until the last possible second before grabbing on to an overhead bar. She then quickly swung from bar-to-bar going forward, and, upon arriving at the opposite side, Lora reversed her movement. At the end of the first side, Lora extended her feet towards a middle side-bar. Once she made contact, she immediately let go of the overhead bars and let her upper body pitch forward into space, feeling the upper side bars press into her legs as they restrained her from falling entirely. Then, Lora would reach out for a support bar and begin the sequence again. Now, at the jungle gym, Lora wonders how this sequence might change. With no specific support rails in sight, Lora allows the entire right side of her body to lean against the dome, and, slowly, she begins to roll clockwise against the structure. After a full revolution, she begins to climb up the dome. At first, she uses no hands (per her monkey bars sequence), but, due to the jungle gym's lack of straight verticality, she finds herself unable to maintain balance. She places her hands on the dome for the rest of her ascent. Once at the top, Lora realizes that she must go down into the underside of the jungle gym to swing from bar to bar. She leans down and grasps the top bar of the dome, and then jumps through an adjoining hole; her feet dangle a couple of inches off the ground at the end of

her drop. Swinging from bar to bar, Lora finds that, unlike the monkey bars, her feet go from not touching the ground to touching depending on the height of the bar she swings to. Finally, upon completing her swinging sequence, she laces her legs through an opening and lets her upper body fold forward. As she completes her sequence, she realizes that although the sequence itself is the same, the execution, details, and experience of it differ due to the new structure.

Simultaneously, as the instructor's eyes shift from Devon and Troy to Jill and Lora, he feels as if he is witnessing an entirely different improvisation. He begins to take notes based on Lora's and Jill's movement, and he finds that they differ drastically from his previous notes. He writes, "Exploring how bodies interact with new structures. Finding similarities and building relationships between old and new structures. Seem excited by the new possibilities. Movement is executed with exuberance and curiosity." The instructor realizes that the newer, looser structure allows dancers the luxury to either completely disengage from their experience with the monkey bars or to expand upon their monkey bar experience with the assistance of a new structure. He watches Jill and can find little connection in her seesaw movement to the monkey bar movement he witnessed earlier. Conversely, he watches Lora and notes several similarities. In both cases, he recognizes that by expanding upon their structural settings, these improvisers are experiencing new ways of moving. For these dancers, the long improvisation does not offer an experience of tiredness and frustration; it offers an experience for continuous discovery and unlimited ways to move.

Improvising in Modernity (Version B): New Possibilities, New Enchantments

What would it mean to constantly move, prompted by nothing more than one's own desire to be in motion? To travel forward or back, up or down, right or left, straight or zigzag according to one's own desires and needs? To constantly find delight and excitement in the new possibilities found in this dynamic realm of movement? These are the questions of enchanted modernity, where new possibilities emerge when rules or structures are lifted. Here, moderns improvise much in the way of Lora and Jill, suggesting that the collapse of rules surrounding one specific structure, or way of life, is but an invitation to explore other ways of being. Some "modern movers" will continue to explore the new, rule-free environment of the original structure (including the possibility of re-asserting the rules), and others will discard the 'old structure' completely and find new structures to move in. All movers must decide how they wish to proceed, and equal opportunity for exploration and creation exists both inside and outside the original structure.

Philosopher Charles Taylor parallels this idea of humans as less-structured improvisers in *A Secular Age* (2007), using his own phrase, the "Great Disembedding," to refer to the process by which humans "disembedded" from a single, collective belief system and way of life and scattered into differing groups based on core beliefs and understandings of human responsibility. Taylor traces this break in societal embeddedness back to the last millennium B.C.E., when, as he states, "'higher' forms of religion appeared."⁶⁸ These 'new religions' each led to breaks in what Taylor considers to be the "three dimensions of embeddedness: social order, cosmos, human good."⁶⁹ A rather simplistic summary of these breaks may be described as such: the divine/transcendent

realm became separated from the 'cosmos,' thus leading to a concept of 'human good' based not in society but in an understanding of the divine; this, in turn, led to multiple fragmentations of society as societal members no longer collectively agreed on what human good should look like.⁷⁰ In the modern age (beginning in the seventeenth century), these groups splintered even further. Previously, each group complemented each other, as each group served a function that ensured the continuance of the social hierarchy. An example of this, Taylor states, is the “mediaeval idealization of the society of three orders, oratores, bellatores, laboratores: those who pray, those who fight, and those who work.”⁷¹ Enlightenment thought, however, disrupted these orders as society came to be redefined as that which exists for the “(mutual) benefit of individuals.”⁷² Each individual owed a debt to society, but they could choose how to fulfill this debt in a myriad of ways. In other words, all jobs or specializations merited the same societal value, leaving abundant room for individual exploration and creation.⁷³ In a way then, disembeddedness from society leads to individual embedding in a specialization, which, in turn, re-embeds one in society through the fulfillment of one's societal debt. Individual action and specialization become the very processes through which humans recognize themselves as members of society.

Sociologist Anthony Giddens' also sees disembedding as one of modernity's unique characteristics. However, for Giddens, disembedding refers not to the rise of the individual in society but rather to a separation of context from a localized culture and into a ubiquitous expanse of time-space. One of the reasons for the difference between Taylor's and Giddens' use of the term can be found in their time-frames. While Taylor discusses disembedding from a “pre-modern” way of life, Giddens considers

disembedding as situated in modernity. Yet, both are interested in a disruption of society and the effect on relations. Giddens, in his analysis of modernity's social institutions, describes two types of disembedding processes. Both result in, as Giddens states, the removal of "social relations from the immediacies of context."⁷⁴ First, "symbolic tokens" are interchangeable items which exist outside the culture of their creation.⁷⁵ For example, money does not change as it passes from person-to-person; its value remains regardless of its possessor.⁷⁶ Second, "expert systems" refer to structures of knowledge and expertise that continually operate in the background of daily life. Giddens uses the example of driving one's car to describe this concept. Without knowing how the car operates, one can still trust the expert systems utilized in its production – safety features, the construction of the engine, the brake system. People continuously trust in expert systems, whether conscious of them or not.⁷⁷ In other words, each time a credit card is used for transaction, society does not need to decide what it will mean; the system is already in place.

From here, let us take a step back and place Taylor and Giddens in conversation. For Taylor, disembedding leads to a new structure of society in which individuals, and not groups or 'orders', are the movers. For Giddens, disembedding is a feature of society, a place in which individuals must continuously interact with the abstract world of faith and trust in order to function efficiently. For Taylor, disembedding is synonymous with the lifting of the structure of the monkey bar improvisation. For Giddens, disembedding occurs repeatedly within the second, more loosely-structured improvisation – a dancer jumps off a fort, another cuts through the air on a swing, and another disengages from one piece of playground equipment to find another. In each case, the dancer must exercise

faith and trust that she will land, not be tossed from the swing, and find a new piece of equipment to engage with.

Thus, whether disembedding leads to an understanding of society based on individual specialization or to a disruption of the social order through an experience of faith and trust, both understandings of the term lead to a space of individual decision. What shall be my specialization? What do *I* want to do? What will my next move be after I land on the ground from the fort? How will I proceed with my business after I make this transaction? The very process of disembedding requires the individual to perform daily improvisations as she or he faces the post-disembedding moment. As dancer/scholar Susan Leigh Foster notes, “The improvising dancer tacks back and forth between the *known* and the *unknown*, between the familiar/reliable and the unanticipated/unpredictable,” suggesting that the very process of improvisation relies on an acceptance that one will continuously transition through these opposing states-of-being.⁷⁸ In other words, the improviser accepts the unknown while knowing that, at some point, she or he will find the known again. In turn, once the improviser rests in the known, she or he knows that this is but a temporary state. Without one, the other is not possible, and, in order for individuals to continue to specialize and explore within modern society, they must be able to operate in their own version of the improviser's known and unknown – disembeddedness and embeddedness.

Disembedding opens spaces for both old and new forms of embedding, and, with these spaces surrounding modern “movers,” each individual must decide the direction in which to move. Thus, the idea of enchantment in modernity can instead be rewritten as the dynamic process of disembedding and re-embedding/embedding into new

experiences – whether that is something shaded with past structures or something entirely new. Regardless, as political scientist Jane Bennett notes, the experience of enchantment often hinges on three overlapping factors: moments of awe, sites of spectacle, and experiences of hyper-sensation – all of which coincide with the experience of movement improvisation.⁷⁹ Both Jill and Lora experienced awe as they found new and exciting ways to move, saw their new playground structures as sites of possibilities and exploration, and felt a heightened sense of sensation as they interacted with these new structures. To embed or re-embed is to be enchanted – not because one is passively surprised or awestruck but because one is actively doing and existing as never before. Yet, in order to take this concept out of the playground and into the nineteenth and early-twentieth century, a few, specific examples will be discussed to demonstrate the process through which enchantment is created through innovation, choice, and activity.

Reverend William Norman Guthrie (1868-1944), of St. Mark's-in-the-Bouwerie Episcopal Church, chose to re-embed in the face of his disenchantment. Feeling frustrated with the traditional style of worship, Guthrie sought new ways to bring a sense of rejuvenation and excitement to religion. In other words, rather than languishing on the monkey bars, disenchanting, Guthrie sought to incorporate new structures with the old so that worshipers might once again experience enchantment in religion. In a 1912 *New York Times* article, Guthrie suggests that both the fine and performing arts might serve as a way to draw dwindling churchgoers back to church. Guthrie remarks, “People are on guard against religion, but they are not on guard against art. There is a universal appeal in art, and if we are to reach a universal religion it will be through art, not through ethics or dogma.”⁸⁰ With this in mind, Guthrie began integrating non-ecclesiastical music (such as

Beethoven's symphonies), paintings, different flashes of color, eurythmic ritual dance, and theatre into church services.⁸¹ In 1923, after Bishop William Manning, Episcopal diocese of New York, questioned Guthrie's use of such tactics and warned him to immediately cease these “new” activities, Guthrie defended his beliefs in front of a crowd of 2,500 supporters.⁸² Describing Christianity as “behind the times,” Guthrie asked, “What can we moderns get as a substitute for a body of dogma? ...We want no substitute for Christianity. We want something adjuvant to Christianity in reconquering the external world.”⁸³ Thus, Guthrie saw symphonies, ritual dances, and paintings as ways to bring Christianity to the modern world. Instead of leading one away from Christianity, Guthrie felt that these activities led one into an everyday experience of God. Religion, he argued, needed to once again enter “practical life.”⁸⁴ For Guthrie, modernity signaled the gradual disembedding of religion from daily life. However, like Lora, Guthrie experimented with bridging the 'old' with the 'new.' In other words, Guthrie sought ways for Christians to re-embed themselves into Christianity by bringing worship services into the modern world.

Similarly, in early November of 1881, Albert Benjamin Simpson (1843-1919) resigned from his duties as minister of Thirteenth Presbyterian Church in New York.⁸⁵ Simpson wanted to concentrate on evangelizing to the lower classes. Denouncing the denominational tendency to build churches in wealthy parts of town so that the upper class would not have to hobnob with the lower class during Sunday worship, Simpson argued that preachers should simplify their oratorical style and focus on evangelizing the masses in a nondenominational setting.⁸⁶ Simpson saw the city as doomed, infested with both physical and spiritual disease. Thus, in order to combat this disease, Simpson embarked on an evangelistic mission to preach in secular spaces, such as theatres, city

halls, and street corners.⁸⁷ Simpson, however, did not stand alone in his desire to evangelize the entire city. During this time, the Salvation Army, an evangelical organization founded in London, began increasing its presence in American cities. In order to reach the masses, the Salvation Army held several events, such as parades and circuses, in busy sections of the city. Ideally, these events would bring people out of the saloons and into the streets, where they would then experience numerous sensations as they saw the theatrics, felt the reverberations of the sounds, and heard the music. These events often led to deep conversion and transcendent experiences, prompting historian Lillian Taiz to attribute the Army with creating “an urban working-class version of the frontier camp meeting style.”⁸⁸ Here, both Simpson and Salvation Army leaders and organizers blended modern forms of entertainment with evangelical teachings in order to reach the urban populace. By lifting the structure of traditional church services and settings, Simpson and the Salvationists created a new type of religious experience for moderns. Far from disenchantment, this experience holistically blended the physical, the spiritual, and the emotional in order to provide the attendee with the ultimate enchantment.

Yet, Simpson's motivation to resign as leader of the Thirteenth Street Church stemmed not only from his desire to evangelize the masses but also from his interest in integrating faith healing into his services. Simpson did not always believe in faith healing, but, after a string of illnesses that forced him to temporarily step down from the pulpit, Simpson knew that something must change if he wanted to continue his evangelical work. Per doctor's orders, Simpson went on a summer-long vacation in 1881 to Old Orchard Beach, Maine. While there, Simpson attended a faith convention led by

Episcopalian layman and homeopathic physician Charles Cullis (1833-1892).⁸⁹ Cullis did not denounce modern medicine, but he felt that modern physicians should not be considered the sole authorities on health. He argued, “Let the world have the doctors, and Christians the great Physician.”⁹⁰ After hearing hundreds of people give accounts of being healed through faith, Simpson made the decision to put his health in the hands of God, the master healer. A few months later, Simpson experienced divine healing during a climb up a 3,000 foot mountain. Although at first he felt his lungs and heart could not handle the grueling trek, he found that the more he continued, the easier the climb became. He states, “I became conscious that there was another Presence.... When I reached the mountain top, I seemed to be at the gate of heaven, and the world of weakness and fear was lying at my feet.”⁹¹ From that point forward, Simpson integrated faith healing into his lectures and sermons.

Simpson shared an interest in faith healing with several of his evangelical contemporaries. As religious studies scholar Heather D. Curtis notes, “During the 1870s and 1880s, faith healing was a frequent topic of debate and discussion among Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Adventists, and various other evangelicals.”⁹² Curtis suggests that this debate developed as a response to the rationalism and materialism of the nineteenth century.⁹³ With philosophers like Santayana and Eucken identifying religion as irrational and irrelevant, Curtis' argument certainly seems sound. After all, how could evangelicals carry out their mission to convert if all the possible converts saw religion as pointless and unbeneficial? Faith healing, then, offered a function and purpose for religion in a sphere where rationalism and science seemed to be failing.⁹⁴ In the instances of Simpson and Cullis, faith healing strengthened their

Christian faith and allowed them to evangelize through the testimony of their healthy bodies. Even though both separated from their initial structures (Presbyterian and Episcopalian forms of worship), they did not move away from Christianity. Instead, they re-embedded themselves in a new experience of Christianity that allowed them to meet the challenges of the modern world through a holistic approach to faith – one that required practitioners to unite belief with behavior and body. In the face of the less-structured improvisational space of the late-nineteenth century and early-twentieth century, Simpson and Cullis utilized their creativity and exploration to find new ways to experience Christianity, allowing them not only to re-embed themselves in their faith but to strengthen it.

Faith healing, however, expanded beyond the realm of evangelicals. Some practitioners departed from Christianity completely while others found radically new ways to be Christian. Like Jill, who disengaged from the monkey bars to find new (and more fulfilling) movement in the seesaw, spiritual healing served as the format through which many practitioners re-imagined religion. One result of this religious innovation was the formation of American metaphysical religions, such as Spiritualism, Theosophy, Christian Science, and New Thought. Although each metaphysical religion differs, they each center around an interest and belief in the power of the mind over matter, a correspondence between a divine Mind and the individual mind (i.e. the individual mind is a microcosm of the creative powers of the infinite), and specific methods for channeling and moving spiritual energy.⁹⁵ As religious studies scholar Catherine Albanese argues, the central responsibility of the metaphysician is to work to maintain a continuous, open connection to the divine.⁹⁶ This, then, creates a tension for the

metaphysician as he or she must emphasize the importance of the mind through engaging in bodily activity, such as meditation, healing practices, movement, music, and art.

Consider, for instance, the Spiritualist séance that emerged in the mid-nineteenth century. During these meetings, a medium would attempt to establish contact with the dead. Participants could judge the strength of the medium's connection through external occurrences and physical manifestations, such as tapping sounds, flashes of light, and the actual taking over of the medium's body by a spirit. As religious studies scholar Ann Braude argues, Spiritualist séances allowed people of lapsing faith to engage in a spiritual activity based on scientific evidence. People did not have to believe in the legitimacy of a séance in order to attend it. Rather, as Braude states, Spiritualism “asked them to become 'investigators,' to observe 'demonstrations' of the truth of Spiritualism produced under 'test conditions' in the séance room.”⁹⁷ A successful séance, then, offered participants the opportunity to embed into a new form of religious experience – one that did not require faith without evidence. Instead, in this case, the enchantment of the séance experience led to belief.

For example, in *Evenings at Home In Spiritualist Séance* (1882), English Spiritualist Georgiana Houghton (1814-1884) describes the first séance she held at her home in 1870. In a darkened room, Houghton opened the séance with the recitation of the Lord's Prayer. Shortly thereafter, one woman (Miss Neyland) remarked that she could see the angel Gabriel. Houghton then reports that all participants felt the flutter of wings across their skin. From there, the apparitions and sensations continued, as the various participants saw and heard various deceased relatives, such as fathers and cousins. At one point, Mrs. T. stated that she felt as if something was trying to lift her up. Although

Houghton did not *see* Mrs. T.'s levitation, she reports that she *heard* the placement of Mrs. T.'s voice move up, hover, and then move down.⁹⁸ Ultimately, the séance not only engaged but heightened the senses of its participants, casting them into a state of hyper-awareness as they vigilantly listened to, felt, and 'saw' spirits. It was an experience of enchantment, but it also simultaneously served to embed participants into the new religion of Spiritualism through the process of scientific inquiry.

In 1875, two Spiritualists – Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907) and Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891) – met at the farm of brothers William and Horatio Eddy in Chittendon, Vermont in order to carry out such a process of scientific inquiry.⁹⁹ Both Olcott and Blavatsky were discontent with Spiritualism and its emphasis on the material world. Frustrated with both the spirits' refusal to comply with his questions and investigative process and the brothers' inability to control the spirits, Olcott felt that the medium must be able to exercise his or her own control at all times. When, at the farm, Blavatsky informed Olcott that she had developed a method through which she could control the spirits, a relationship immediately formed. Shortly thereafter, Olcott and Blavatsky co-founded the Theosophical Society.

Blending spiritualism, occultism, mind cure, Eastern philosophy, and mysticism, Theosophists believed in the harmony between science and religion, the existence of the same, essential religious truths within all religious traditions, and the idea that spiritual masters, such as Jesus and Buddha, could aid a person in attaining spiritual consciousness.¹⁰⁰ For Theosophists, the material world represented something to be conquered; only once one escaped the trappings of the flesh could the soul ascend closer to the Supreme Being. In *Isis Unveiled* (1877), Blavatsky writes, “A man’s idea of God,

is that image of blinding light that he sees reflected in the concave mirror of his own soul, and yet this is not, in very truth, God, but only His reflection.”¹⁰¹ The essence, or majesty, of God exists in that mirror; yet, sometimes the mirror is dusty or streaked. By polishing the soul, a person could capture a greater glimpse of the divine. Sometimes, when the mirror is clearest, an individual will no longer be able to see the outer world.¹⁰² In order to 'polish' this mirror, Theosophists engaged in a number of spiritual and/or mystical activities (such as magic, movement, painting, and studying the effects of light and color), all of which placed the doer in firm control of his or her experience.¹⁰³ Indeed, the Theosophist could unite or reunite with the divine but only if the Theosophist engaged in the intense study and effort this path required.

Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910) also reflected on the consequences of perceived separation from the divine. However, for Eddy, one expressed one's state of spiritual union not through art but through health. In *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* (1875), Eddy writes, “Mortal mind and body are one. Neither exists without the other, and both must be destroyed by immortal Mind. Matter, or body, is but a false concept of mortal mind.”¹⁰⁴ For Eddy, the body became an indicator of one's relationship with God. An ill body signified a separation from Truth and being out of balance with spiritual Laws. Eddy likens human existence to a dream – what we believe, see, and feel might seem real, but, upon waking, we realize the illusion of the experience.¹⁰⁵ By understanding God and rewriting the scripts of materiality, one can achieve true spiritual living. In this state, one remains in perfect health, and can, in fact, achieve immortality, practicing Christian Science until, as Eddy writes, “God's kingdom comes on earth.”¹⁰⁶ For Christian Scientists, material experience must be eschewed in order for the true,

divine-centered experience to be attained.

Subsequent Christian Scientists disagreed with Eddy's denial of the material world, leading to the creation of several new metaphysical movements at the turn of the twentieth century, such as Unity and Divine Science.¹⁰⁷ The key difference between Eddy's Christian Science and these later forms lies in the question of materiality. While Eddy fervently denied the reality of the material world, later Christian Scientists argued for its existence. Despite this difference, the body still remained a central theme, as, in both cases, a diseased body represented a separation from God. Unity co-founder Myrtle Fillmore (1845-1931) credited her healing from tuberculosis to the repeated phrase, "I am a child of God, and I do not inherit sickness."¹⁰⁸ Similarly, Charles Fillmore (1854-1948), Myrtle's husband and Unity co-founder, advocated the bodily generative powers resulting from spiritual connection. In *The Twelve Powers of Man* (1930), Fillmore writes, "A change in ideas must necessarily produce a change in the body, and there is a perfect response in every center of consciousness when Spirit has been welcomed as the rightful inhabitant of the body."¹⁰⁹ Thus, the body becomes a site representative of spiritual status. Accordingly, everyday life offers the opportunity to change this status negatively or positively, depending on the thoughts and feelings of a person. Embedding in the experience of New Thought, then, is a daily negotiation of body and activity – again, enchantment does not just 'happen' perchance – it is an experience that is cultivated diligently.

Solo Improvisations: The Enchanted Individual

The preceding four examples of embedding into a new religious expression and

experience (Spiritualism, Theosophy, Christian Science, and New Thought) all have one thing in common – they are recognized as religions by scholars. While each of these religions faced opposition in gaining the right and/or recognition to be described as such, the scholarly discussions of these religions have shifted to their cultural, historical, and political importance.¹¹⁰ Meanwhile, experiences and expressions not connected to one specific religion are all too often ignored. One must remember that the individual undertakes the process of re-embedding and embedding, and sometime she or he embeds into an experience shared by several other people, but, on the other hand, sometimes the individual embeds into an unshared experience. My interest is in those unshared experiences, specifically in the cases of Loie Fuller and Isadora Duncan.

Unshared, however, does not necessarily mean unusual or extraordinary. Like Olcott, Blavatsky, Eddy, and the Fillmores, Fuller and Duncan drew from a wide variety of religious influences in the crafting of their approach to dance/movement. Thus, just as one cannot examine Theosophy without discussing Spiritualism and Eastern religions, I cannot discuss the dance styles of Fuller and Duncan without acknowledging the factors that shaped and guided the underlying beliefs and understandings that both led to and helped refine their particular artistic approaches. In doing so, the extent to which their approaches to dance/movement were guided by religious and spiritual ideas of their time come to light. Here, in this space of creative exploration, we can begin to see Fuller and Duncan as participants in the same dynamic improvisation of modernity as Weber and Olcott. They too faced the option to re-embed or embed, to find enchantment or declare enchantment dead, and, by tracing the process through which Fuller and Duncan decided which of these options to follow, one begins to recognize that dance, like the Spiritualist

séance, operated as a place to materially experience and test the spiritual ideas they encountered.

**Chapter Two:
Improvisational Encounters:
Locating Religion within the Lives of Fuller and Duncan**

A Prelude of Contact

The dancers stand in the middle of a large studio. With a smooth sprung wood floor beneath their feet and a breeze filtering in through the high open windows on either side of the studio, the dancers feel relieved to no longer be under the hot sun at the playground. The overhead lights are off; soft beams of outside light illuminate the studio space, allowing the dancers to see each other. A covered piano sits in the corner of the studio; large mirrors line the front wall; ballet barres border the remaining walls. The instructor rises from his seat on the piano bench and clears his throat, “Alright, dancers, today we will be working with Contact Improvisation!” Devon and Erica exchange excited smiles, while Troy quickly raises his hand. “Can Andy be my partner?” Troy animatedly asks. “Well,” the instructor begins, “it depends. You see, Contact Improvisation is not about pre-planning or anticipating. You won't know who you will be partnering until the moment of contact. The goal is not to force a particular movement or connection to happen. Instead, the idea is to meet, explore, and see what emerges from the dynamic interplay between you and your partner. What happens when a foot meets a torso, or a leg meets a shoulder? These are connections you'll be exploring. Any questions?” The dancers shake their heads.

“Okay,” the instructor continues, “then, let's begin. Everybody, find a space on the floor. We're going to start by walking ... with our eyes closed. Everyone will be walking slowly so that no one inadvertently ends up with an elbow in the eye. Now, at some point,

while walking, you will most likely encounter someone else ... and this is where your Contact Improvisation begins. Once you encounter someone, open your eyes and begin to explore. Remember, Contact is not just about touching body parts; it's about weight sharing and supporting, exploring and finding. Be conscious that something unique is being created through this improvisation. Alright, enough talk from me! Everyone take a deep breath, close your eyes, and begin to walk.”

Following the instructor's cues, Erica closes her eyes. Slowly, she shifts her weight onto her left foot as she picks her right foot up to begin walking. As she walks across the floor, Erica listens closely to the sounds contained in the room. She wonders if she will be able to hear when another dancer is close by. Feeling the sunlight hit her back, she realizes that she must be close to the window. She begins to change her direction when another dancer walks into her, stumbling slightly against her back. Rather than immediately moving away, Erica leans into the contact. She feels the mystery dancer's shoulder press into her upper back as the dancer supports her weight. The dancer behind her begins to fold forward, causing Erica's back to move from the dancer's shoulder to the flat surface of the dancer's back. Arched over the dancer's back, Erica opens her eyes to find she is connected to Andy.

Andy feels the weight of Erica's upper body against his back as he is folded forward. He begins to slowly walk his hands out along the floor, bringing his body parallel to the floor. Erica slowly steps her feet out as Andy continues to move closer to the floor. The closer Andy is to the floor, the more of Erica's weight he supports. Once Andy is parallel to the floor, balanced between his hands and the balls of his feet, he pauses, unsure of where to next move. Sensing his pause, Erica uses one of Andy's

inhales to propel her backwards as she slides her head to the floor and somersaults over Andy's back. She then crawls under Andy and uses her back to support Andy's weight, and, as Erica rolls up from the floor, she returns Andy's body to a vertical position. Now, both standing, Erica and Andy must decide whether they will continue their contact improvisation or seek out new partners. Andy, deciding on the former, steps toward Erica, but Erica, deciding on the latter, closes her eyes and steps away. Content with the connection she made with Andy, Erica is ready to explore contact with a new partner and find the new possibilities that emerge from each unique interaction.

The Dialogue of Contact: Interactive Embedding

On September 8, 1993, religious studies scholar Thomas Tweed attended the feast day celebration of Our Lady of Charity at the Virgin's shrine in Miami, Florida. After watching the ritual, Tweed began the process of synthesizing and analyzing his observations and, ultimately, felt frustrated. This frustration had little to do with what he observed; rather, Tweed felt that the theoretical databank of religious studies contained little, if any, currency that might allow him to build a complete analysis. One of Tweed's major contentions concerned the issue of transnationalism. How could he discuss the ceremony in a way that acknowledged both the ritual's and participants' connections to Cuba? How might he describe how the Miami celebration not only concerned Catholic Cuban traditions but also Cuban-American Catholic traditions (and the negotiation between the two)? Ultimately, Tweed decided, he needed to find a theory that allowed him to discuss “*movement, relation, and position.*”¹¹

Like Tweed, I find that these three components are essential to the understanding

of my subjects. Fuller and Duncan both lived and worked in places other than America. For example, Fuller resided in France for a number of years, while Duncan lived in Russia in the early 1920s. Second, their influences were not solely American. By integrating the ideas of philosophers, artists, and musicians, such as Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), Richard Wagner (1813-1883), and Auguste Rodin (1840-1917), Duncan and Fuller also intellectually crossed American borders. This is not to say, however, that border crossing only occurred when Fuller or Duncan physically or intellectually moved beyond America. Considering the widespread processes of embedding and re-embedding into new and/or changing forms of American religious life, as discussed in Chapter One, one can easily see how the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries provided a ground for continuous and overlapping border crossing as people sought out new religious expressions and experiences (e.g. William Norman Guthrie bringing in Hellenistic ritual dance to an Episcopal worship service). Thus, like, Tweed, I faced the question of how to discuss the importance of border crossing and the negotiations of ideas and concepts that accompany it.

Tweed solved this conundrum by crafting a theory of religion that met his analytical needs. He argues, "Religions are confluences of organic-cultural flows that intensify joy and confront suffering by drawing on human and suprahuman forces to make homes and cross boundaries."¹¹² Through this theory, Tweed suggests that religions are not stagnant. Instead, religions constantly shift, unfold, and grow according to the needs and expectations of people both situated and moving in time and space. For Tweed, this theory works perfectly; he is able to analyze the feast day celebration in all of its components. Yet, one should note that Tweed's research concerned an event already

considered 'religious' – a Catholic feast day. Tweed never attempted to argue whether the feast day was religious or not, rather, his goal was to ascertain how it came to exist in that particular Miami manifestation. In other words, Tweed's theory analyzes how religions function and are used by believers but not how they are formed or created. Thus, when Tweed states, “Religions enable and constrain *terrestrial crossings*; ...*corporeal crossings*; ... and *cosmic crossings*,” he sees a specific religion as the metaphorical boat that carries the adherent to the other shore.¹¹³

Yet, what happens when one considers that the boat does not just arrive on the other shore by itself? The water can either help to push the boat along or prevent it from gaining speed. A person can use oars or a motor and steering wheel to pilot the boat in order to row or steer to a specific, desired location. Conversely, a person can choose to turn off the motor or to not use the oars and allow the boat to float with the current. Ultimately, the movement of the boat is achieved through a collaboration of forces; it cannot be attributed to any one item or event. Thus, while Tweed sees religion as the forces behind the crossing (a view that works for his purposes), I see religion (or, more specifically, religious experience) as that which can result from and form through the *processes* of crossing.

While, in Chapter Three, I will focus on dance as site for religious experience for Fuller and Duncan, I find it essential to at first consider the processes of crossings from which these experiences emerged. In order to do so, I needed to find a way to discuss border crossings and encounters in a framework that did not presuppose that some sort of result had already occurred. As I began integrating the concepts of dance improvisation with my research, I realized that one form of improvisation, Contact, provided a

particularly well-suited method for considering the dynamics of interaction between person, idea, institution, and/or activity.

Postmodern dancer Steve Paxton developed Contact Improvisation in the early 1970s due to his dissatisfaction with the lack of interaction and exploration between movement duos in the concert dance world. He explains, “Although you might have another twenty-five people in the room with you, you kept a certain distance from everybody so you wouldn't be kicking them. You learned technique as an isolated person, and then you crossed the floor, perhaps even in groups, but always with distance.”¹¹⁴ Paxton found this antithetical to what duets aimed to be. Duets, in his opinion, aimed to establish interaction and connection, but, so long as partners maintained a sense of being an individual unit, no real relationship ever formed. Contact Improvisation, then, acts to remedy this by placing the relationship between two movers as the purpose for movement.

With few rules dictating its implementation, Contact Improvisation thrives on a sense of exploration. As dancer and scholar Ann Cooper Albright explains, “Contact [is] based in the physical exchange of weight In Contact, the experience of internal sensations and the flow of the movement between two bodies are more important than specific shapes or formal positions.”¹¹⁵ An understanding arises that the dance is perpetually unfolding through the process of contact. Furthermore, the dance is created through negotiation; it is the result of the active and engaged relationship between the movers as they explore their points of contact. This means that each mover engages in a process of perceiving the other mover and the space they move in, exploring the possibilities for how to respond to the other mover, and engaging in action once a

movement decision has been made. Yet, this is not a process that occurs once; it occurs repeatedly and simultaneously as each mover must constantly re-perceive and re-evaluate based on how the other mover responds to his or her actions.

Similarly, Fuller's and Duncan's beliefs on choreographing, structuring, and performing dance changed, shifted, and even became reinforced through each contact (people, places, and ideas) they encountered throughout their lives. Yet, all too often, dance biographers, historians, and scholars discuss Fuller's and Duncan's dance styles as something stable and codified, suggesting that their approaches to dance developed either independently of outside influences or due to outside influences at a specific point in time. For example, scholar Helen Thomas describes Fuller's dance from the perspective of the audience, stating, "The audience witnessed the blurred form of a woman in a profusion of drapery whose image was magically transformed, through the manipulation of drapery and light, into an elusive materiality which took on the shape of natural objects."¹¹⁶ While this is not an incorrect description, Thomas neglects to set this imagined audience viewing in a specific year and place, thus suggesting that *all* Fuller audiences witnessed this at each performance. Yet, audiences who saw Fuller as "Miss Pepper, a deserted waif" in the 1882 touring season of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show would describe Fuller's performance in markedly different ways.¹¹⁷ How, then, did Fuller arrive at that point in Thomas' description? What factors led her there, and, once there, did her dance remain stagnant? Similarly, dance critic Elizabeth Kendall describes Duncan's dance as already developed and solidified by the time she traveled to Russia in the 1920s, arguing, "Isadora ... became a world artist who influenced the art-dance of Russia ... as much as or more than she did American dance."¹¹⁸ This suggests that the

Duncan-Russia relationship was not reciprocal; Duncan influenced Russia, but it laid no claim on her artistic outlook. Yet, according to Duncan, Russia offered an environment more conducive to creating and expressing art. In a 1923 *New York Times* article, Duncan states, “America knows nothing of love, food, or art. We have freedom in Russia. Here the people do not know what it is.”¹¹⁹ This suggests that Russia did, in fact, play an active role in helping Duncan's view and experience of her art form change and grow.

Both of these examples demonstrate that the art forms of Fuller and Duncan changed over time depending on circumstances, surroundings, and encounters. Thus, to describe their approaches to dance/movement as unchanging and constant completely negates the dynamic processes of disembedding and embedding that Fuller and Duncan engaged in throughout their lives. Furthermore, by reframing dance (both the philosophizing and performing of it) as the result of contact between Fuller or Duncan and an idea, person, or even country, we can begin to see the extent to which religion and the desire for and expectation of religious experience played a role in leading Fuller and Duncan to choose dance as an artistic and spiritual medium. This chapter, then, serves as an exploration of contact. With this in mind, I pay attention both to Fuller and Duncan and those places, ideas, people, and groups that they encountered. After all, the dance that emerges from contact depends on *interaction* not solitary action. This will be, by no means, an exhaustive list of all Fuller's and Duncan's “points of contact;” rather, I consider a few, pivotal 'points' for each dancer. In doing so, I hope to demonstrate that, like Blavatsky and Eddy, Fuller and Duncan actively found and explored new ways of embedding into meaning, purpose, and enchantment in modernity.

Improvisational Encounters, Part I: Loie Fuller

Loie Fuller liked to tell a story. She told it both in her 1913 autobiography *Fifteen Years of a Dancer's Life* and in an 1888 article that appeared in the weekly magazine *The Theatre*. The sequence of the story varies from account to account, but the details synch in both versions. In this story, Fuller recounts her “first stage appearance” at the age of two at the Progressive Lyceum in Chicago – a Sunday-school-like meeting that Fuller attended with her brothers. After several Sundays of watching other children and adults recite poems, proverbs, and prayers, Fuller decided that she too wanted to recite something. Her opportunity arrived when the committee that organized the recitations visited her class. Fuller asked to “speak a piece,” which both amused and delighted the committee members and teachers; after all, she was only two. Nonetheless, the committee granted her permission to do a recitation that very day. After a brief wait, the Lyceum leader called on Fuller to recite. She “trotted” up to the speaking platform, crawled up the stairs to the stage on her hands and knees, stood up, and bowed (imitating the style of previous orators). Then, she either recited “Mary Had a Little Lamb” or the short prayer “Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep.” Here, the accounts vary. In the article, Fuller states that she recited the nursery rhyme first and then the prayer on the subsequent Sunday. In her autobiography, Fuller reverses this order.¹²⁰ In both accounts, after she finishes her first recitation, an unforeseen predicament arises – how to get down from the stage. Before anybody could help her, Fuller sat down at the top of the stairs and slid down them, causing the audience to erupt in laughter. Feeling great indignation at their amusement, Fuller walked back to her seat, shook her fist at them and ordered them to stop laughing. The following week, after her recitation, Fuller slid down the stairs in the same manner –

only, this time, none of the audience (including her “pale and trembling mother”) laughed.¹²¹

For Fuller, this is an important story. After all, she had a wealth of stories and incidents to draw from. After describing her first performance in her autobiography, Fuller states, “The incidents of my performances would suffice to fill several volumes. For without interruption, adventures succeeded one another to such an extent that I shall never undertake the work of describing them all.”¹²² Yet, with an abundance of stories at her disposal, Fuller told this one twice. Despite this fact, Fuller biographers and scholars have not fully analyzed and explored this story. In *Traces of Light* (2007), scholar and choreographer Ann Cooper Albright refrains from considering Fuller's early influences, instead choosing to begin her study with Fuller's dance career as an adult. In *Loie Fuller: Goddess of Light* (1997), biographers Richard Nelson Current and Marcia Ewing Current attribute Fuller's “treasuring” of this incident to a memorable first performance experience, an example of her innate performance presence, and her natural speed in memorizing text.¹²³ Scholar Rhonda Garelick carries this analysis further in *Electric Salome* (2007) by identifying two specific themes that emerge from Fuller's anecdote in *Fifteen Years* (*The Theatre* article is never mentioned).¹²⁴ First, Garelick notes Fuller's description of her mother's dramatic reactions to her second recitation (she was not in attendance for the first). Second, Garelick considers Fuller's claim of the spontaneity of these performances. Yet, Garelick identifies these themes without considering the setting and context of the Progressive Lyceum. Garelick describes the Chicago Progressive Lyceum as where Fuller's “‘freethinker’ parents attended Sunday services.”¹²⁵ Similarly, Current and Current introduce the Progressive Lyceum by stating, “The Fullers did not go

to church on Sunday; they went instead to the Progressive Lyceum with other freethinkers.”¹²⁶ These descriptions, however, are not entirely accurate.

If confining one's reading solely to Fuller's autobiography, the Lyceum does indeed appear to be an alternative to church for freethinkers. Fuller even states that she attended the Lyceum with her parents every Sunday.¹²⁷ Yet, when one reads Fuller's account in *The Theatre*, one finds a slightly different description. Fuller writes, “The 'Chicago Progressive Lyceum' was the 'Sunday-school' I attended with my brothers.”¹²⁸ In one account, she attends with her parents and, in the other, with her brothers. This discrepancy becomes more interesting when one considers that Fuller's mother was not in attendance during the first recitation (no mention is made of her father). Then, when her mother accompanied Fuller to her second recitation, she sat among the invited guests who did not take part in the children's activities.¹²⁹ If, as Garelick states, “The toddler Loie manage[d] to eclipse a Sunday religious service with her poem,”¹³⁰ then why was her mother considered a guest and not an attendee?

The answer comes to light when one considers what, exactly, the Progressive Lyceum was. Lyceums, or, more accurately, Children's Progressive Lyceums, emerged in the 1860s and 1870s and drastically grew in popularity in the 1880s as an alternative Sunday school for children of spiritualist parents.¹³¹ Spiritualist philosopher Andrew Jackson Davis (1826-1910) developed the Children's Progressive Lyceum based on the model of education in the spirit world.¹³² In the “Summer-Land,” Davis argued, higher, angelic beings taught both the physically and mentally young without the use of books. Instead, they drew on the connection between mind and matter. For example, the angelic instructors taught astronomy by placing the children in a marching pattern that

represented the solar system. Then, as the children moved, they began to understand how the solar system moves in accordance with the directives of the Father.¹³³ Thus, during the Lyceum, children engaged in a number of physical exercises that not only taught them about art, literature, and music but about the spiritual world and the connection between the intellect and order of the Father and the nature and matter of the Mother.¹³⁴

From here, with an understanding of the Lyceum in place, we can return to Garelick's analysis of Fuller's story, which she concludes by arguing, "This childhood memory performs a kind of retroactive or staged innocence—a quality that will prove essential to both Fuller's art form and her own explanations of it."¹³⁵ While I agree that this story is important in understanding how Fuller viewed herself as an artist, I feel that Garelick misses much of the critical importance of its telling by not setting it within the context of Spiritualism. Garelick sees Fuller as an independent mover, one who guides her performance along based solely on her own whims and desires. I, on the other hand, view Fuller as a mover in a duet – between the Lyceum/Spiritualism and herself. This restructuring allows me to demonstrate the repeated importance of the Lyceum and Spiritualism throughout Fuller's life.

First, in what is perhaps the most stunning area of contact between Fuller and the Lyceum, is Fuller's very approach to movement. Although biographers and scholars disagree on the amount of formal dance training Fuller received,¹³⁶ most agree that Fuller's initial inspiration to use fabric in conjunction with bodily movement originated in her exposure to the popular 'skirt dancing' of the day.¹³⁷ While I agree that skirt dancing doubtlessly influenced Fuller, I also see one pivotal differentiation from it – Fuller never emphasized her lower body in her dances. Popular skirt dancers of the late nineteenth

century, such as Alice Lethbridge and Kate Vaughan, integrated many kicking and waltzing steps into their dances.¹³⁸ Fuller, on the other hand, restricted her lower body movement to such motions as walking, shifting weight, and bending. In other words, she only moved her lower body if she felt that the movement created by her upper body (and hence the fabric) merited it. For example, in her earliest and most well-known dance, *La Serpentine* (1892), Fuller repeatedly performed one of her signature movements – the serpentine spiral. In this dance, Fuller stands at the center of a stage, dressed in a long gown of white Chinese silk. The audience can only distinguish Fuller's hands and face – the silk gown covers the rest of her body, its many folds and panels making the dimensions of Fuller's body utterly imperceptible. Utilizing the rods sewn into the sleeves of her gown, Fuller bends her knees slightly, bringing her arms slightly in front of her body. This causes the generous amount of fabric hanging down from her sleeves to flow softly forward. She then percussively pushes her arms out to one side and continues this circular movement until her arms are overhead. As her arms move from side to overhead, Fuller twists her torso sharply, causing the fabric to spiral in the air as it floats high above her. To the audience, the fabric appears to twist and spiral like a serpent.¹³⁹ Yet, rather than adding to this movement (and possibly accumulating more height in the fabric) by jumping or running across the stage, Fuller remains relatively stationary. Indeed, Fuller's lower body acts as support only; her arms are the primary movers.

What might explain the differentiation between Fuller's dance and skirt dancing? In order to answer this question, we must bring in the Lyceum as a point of contact. In *The Children's Progressive Lyceum: A Manual* (1893), Andrew Jackson Davis outlines a series of exercises commonly performed at the Lyceums. Of these exercises, the “Wing

Movements” are the most well-known among the Lyceum community. Davis explains, “The 'Wing Movements' consist of systematic motions of the arms and upper portions of the body.”¹⁴⁰ After the singing and reciting portions of the Lyceum, adult instructors advised the children to stand up and form lines; they then directed them in a series of “Wing Movements,” meant to create the feeling of having wings through arm motions. Davis describes the basic movement of the series as such:

The hands are placed in front of the person, the palms together, with the right hand uppermost, the fore-arm being horizontal. The right hand is then thrown out with a graceful curve to the extent of the arm, at which point the palm is upward. The hand is then brought up with a graceful recurve to a point just above, and at the left of the forehead, the open hand now pointing up, with the palm outward; then another short recurve at the same height [*sic*] with the last and to the right, leaving the hand pointing a little obliquely outward—the forearm perpendicular—palm as before, and about over the shoulder. This hand is then brought down directly to the left hand, when the same motions are repeated usually four times. They then change, placing the left hand uppermost, and making the reverse motions in the same manner with the left hand. After this the motions are made with both hands simultaneously; and in this case the hands are brought down palm to palm, the fingers pointing horizontally outward and thumbs uppermost.¹⁴¹

While Davis' description can, at times, seem rather unclear, the overlaps between Fuller's movement and the “Wing Movements” are remarkable – curving arm patterns, repetition of these curves, and directing the arm from side to overhead to the front of the body. Here is the point of contact; here is where one can realize that Fuller never completely disembedded from the Lyceum experience of her childhood. Instead, just as Guthrie attempted to connect Episcopalian beliefs with modern needs and desires, Fuller forged a connection between the Spiritualist Lyceum and the modern entertainment stage.¹⁴² Fuller's dance did not solely originate from a form of popular entertainment, for it was grounded in Andrew Jackson Davis' and the Progressive Lyceum's “Wing Movements” – movements meant to serve as an essential part in developing a healthy temple for the spirit to reside. After all, as Davis states, the physical body is the “basis on

which [the spirit] may be erected as a sublime and bright superstructure for the eternal spheres.”¹⁴³ To be clear, I am not suggesting that Fuller's dances served as a continuation of the “Wing Movements”; instead, I see her dances as a site of negotiation – a place to bring together popular entertainment and mid-century Spiritualist ideals *on her own terms*, according to her own needs.

With this in mind, I believe a further investigation into points of contact between Spiritualism and Fuller's dancing experience is merited. While Fuller may or may not have identified as a Spiritualist, she certainly knew a great deal about Spiritualism due to her background. Spiritualist and psychic medium George Wehner agrees with this assertion. After being invited to Fuller's Parisian home for dinner in 1926, Wehner reflected on his visit in his autobiography *A Curious Life* (1929). Wehner states, “I soon discovered that [Fuller] herself was very psychic and had more of an understanding of the subject than she led most people to believe. Her parents had been spiritualists.”¹⁴⁴ In fact, Fuller seemed quite efficient at identifying psychics; when she arrived (late) to the dinner, she pointed at Wehner and declared, “That's the medium. You can tell by his eyes he's a psychic. They all look like that—always looking off at nothing.”¹⁴⁵ This, however, was not the only time Fuller made a remark about eyes. Once, Fuller told writer Ella Sterling Mighels that the human eye was “the most marvelous thing in the world,” for through the eye, a person can behold color.¹⁴⁶

Both Fuller and Andrew Jackson Davis believed in the importance and effects of color in and on human life. In fact, when Davis developed the Lyceum curriculum, he took special care in choosing the colors of the badges that the different Lyceum groups wore. Davis acknowledged that this attention to detail might seem trivial to some, but, he

argues, “Each particular shade of color, conveying a particular shade of significance, acts upon the mind (*via* the optic nerve) through a definite and never-varying number of ethereal vibrations.”¹⁴⁷ Each color contains a different number of vibrations and thus influences the mind differently. For example, green produces a sense of friendship while white vibrates to signify purity and life.¹⁴⁸ As a student advanced through the different Lyceum groups, he or she also moved higher up the color scale. A student began in the Fountain Group, wearing a red badge for “basic love,” and ended in the Liberty Group, wearing a white badge to demonstrate the spiritual light they gained as they progressed through the Lyceum curriculum.¹⁴⁹ Thus, like movement and music, color served as a method through which Lyceum children united mind and matter to enrich their spirits.

Fuller, like Davis, believed in attention to color detail. “Colour,” she wrote in her autobiography, “so pervades everything that the whole universe is busy producing it, everywhere and in everything.”¹⁵⁰ Similar to Davis, Fuller emphasized the connection between colors and vibrations and believed in using color to influence one's emotions and feelings.¹⁵¹ She argued for an increased human knowledge of color and predicted that, one day, humanity will wonder how we ever existed with such an abysmal recognition of color's uses.¹⁵² Additionally, Fuller integrated colors in her dances so as to demonstrate the connection between color, movement, emotion, and sensation. By utilizing a magic lantern,¹⁵³ Fuller created an effect of continuously changing colors upon the white silken fabric she wore and moved in, and these colors coincided with particular movement qualities. In a 1901 interview with *Pearson's Magazine*, Fuller discusses how green light suggests “flowing movements” that makes one think of water and how yellow light requires slower, more serene movements which suggest attaining the “sublime.”¹⁵⁴ This

suggests that colors directly influenced the movements Fuller performed, making the total dance experience dependent not only on internal bodily cues but external sensory perceptions. Just as the Lyceum curriculum required the joining of music, movement, colors, and creativity in order to educate children, Fuller created dances with more than just her body. By joining movement with colors, lights, fabric, and music, she purposefully manipulated matter to create a specific effect on her audiences.

Unfortunately, the only surviving films of her dances are either in black-and-white or in color added after the filming process. Without Fuller's carefully choreographed marriage of color and movement, we cannot receive the full effect of her creative methods. After all, Fuller acted as color and lighting director for all of her shows; in order to impress upon the audience the total effect of her performance, all elements of the stage had to be carefully synchronized. However, this synchronization was not meant to solely create a dramatic or pleasant viewing experience – Fuller instead endeavored to create very specific effects. She is not simply speaking of combining colors to create an artistic effect; she desired to combine and sequence colors in order to create a spiritual effect. Fuller believed that this combination of movement, color, and light could awaken the minds and imaginations of her audiences; in fact, she argued that her dances opened the minds of her audiences, allowing them to “receive” the ideas and images her dances produced.¹⁵⁵ Just as Davis believed that color could “impress” feelings and sensations upon the Lyceum children, Fuller believed that her performances (of which color was an integral part) could influence her audience's minds. Fuller's use of and belief in the effects of color, then, connects with the Lyceum's teachings of the power of color. However, here, another contact partner must be acknowledged, for although Fuller never

completely disembedded from Spiritualism and the Lyceum, she embedded in a new movement that shared similar interests in mind, matter, color, and creativity – Theosophy.¹⁵⁶ After all, as an active mover in modernity, Fuller met with several contact partners throughout her life.

To be sure, Fuller knew of Theosophy and its co-founder Helene Blavatsky. In fact, when entrepreneur Sam Hill (1857-1931) appointed Fuller with the task of organizing the new Maryhill Museum in Washington in the 1920s, she suggested that Hill devote rooms to specific, important historical subjects, such as Greece, Napoleon, and *Madame Blavatsky*.¹⁵⁷ This demonstrates that Fuller not only knew of Theosophy but viewed its co-founder as one of the most significant figures in history. Fuller's knowledge of both Spiritualism and Theosophy coincides with religious studies scholar Stephen Prothero's argument that Theosophy developed out of Spiritualism. Prothero asserts, “Early theosophy represented an attempt by elites like Blavatsky and Olcott to reform spiritualism by 'uplifting' its masses out of their supposed philosophical and moral vulgarities.”¹⁵⁸ In many ways, this too was Fuller's mission. She wanted her audiences to see and understand more of the nature of life, motion, and color through her performance. Fuller felt that she created a new type of dance – one very different and much more important than the popular skirt dancing.¹⁵⁹ Both skirt dancing and Spiritualist exhibitions attracted audiences based on their spectacular nature. Indeed, by the mid-nineteenth century, popular Spiritualism emerged as the entertainment industry capitalized on its ability to thrill and delight audiences.¹⁶⁰ Thus, both Fuller and Blavatsky worked to raise their ideas and art forms above what they perceived to be popular devaluing.

It is important to note, however, that Fuller's connection to Theosophy does not

suggest a simultaneous drawing away from Spiritualism. Instead, Fuller embedded further into the idea that color and light produce effects upon the spiritual and mental worlds of human beings. Color, light, and motion enchanted her – not necessarily Spiritualism or Theosophy. Her religious allegiance, or dedication to that which she deemed ultimately important, belonged to her work of integrating these elements in dance performance and not in any one specific group or way of thinking. Theosophy offered her further ways of thinking about color and light as spiritual elements.

For instance, Theosophists Annie Besant (1847-1933) and Charles Leadbeater (1854-1934) co-authored *Thought-Forms* (1905), a small volume that examined the spiritual connection between thoughts and color. According to Besant and Leadbeater, thought-forms, with their various accompanying vibrations and colors, serve as the energetic medium through which an individual soul influences the world around and beyond the physical body.¹⁶¹ If the individual does not know how to control and direct these thought-forms, then the person does not see the world correctly. Besant and Leadbeater liken this to living in a cage that one can neither get out of nor see through.¹⁶² All negative thought forms only serve to reinforce the binding of this cage while the individual remains unaware of his or her innate ability to break free from this cage through conscious directing of thought-forms. Each thought, Besant and Leadbeater argue, produces a specific set of vibrations, which are accompanied by a color. In turn, this interplay of vibrations and colors produces an effect – either material or spiritual.¹⁶³ By consciously forming clean and pure thoughts, one can create a vibration/color set that results in something “beautiful” and free from “selfishness.”¹⁶⁴

Similarly, Fuller wished to create an effect on her audiences through her use of

color in conjunction with movement and light, and, as evidenced by her reviews, she often succeeded. Marcus Tindal, of *Pearson's Magazine*, described his impression of Fuller's performance with awe. He writes, "Around her, as she dances, float and flow a thousand yards of soft, shimmering silken stuff, following, magnifying her every movement, *taking definite forms to express definite ideas*; and on her white dress all beautiful colours clash and mingle."¹⁶⁵ For Tindal, the colors amplified Fuller's movement, strengthening the ideas she endeavored to create among her audience. Fuller worked very hard to produce such an effect; she left nothing to chance in terms of choreographing color sequences – she knew precisely what colors would coincide with specific movements and even knew the angles and shadows the interplay of color and light would create. In an 1896 *New York Times* interview, Fuller reflects on her attention to color, stating, "I arrange the light colors pretty much as an artist arranges his colors on his palette. You must know about colors, the effect of one color on another, and of their combinations also, just as the painter does."¹⁶⁶ This quote demonstrates the degree to which Fuller viewed color arranging and sequencing as vital to her performance. Like the Theosophist who must work in order to gain the ability to direct his or her thoughts consciously, Fuller invested a great deal of time in cultivating her color knowledge. This is not to say that Fuller intentionally drew upon the ideas found in *Thought-Forms* in order to create a specific effect; after all, Besant and Leadbeater wrote *Thought-Forms* almost a decade after Fuller first performed solo. However, by noting the overlaps between Fuller's work with color and Theosophist thought on color, we can begin to recognize the extent to which Fuller and Theosophists addressed similar concerns and sought experiences that thrived on intentional and active individual effort in order to

produce specific spiritual effects. Theosophists worked within the medium of the mind while Fuller worked within the medium of performance, transmitting her ideas to her audience through her motions, an idea that also relates to and synchronizes with several of French astronomer Camille Flammarion's ideas on the spiritual effects of color and motion.¹⁶⁷

Flammarion (1842-1925) (also an author of several books examining Spiritualism and natural phenomenon) shared an interest in the effects of color with Fuller, and this shared interest created the basis for a deep friendship.¹⁶⁸ In *Fifteen Years*, Fuller describes Flammarion's experiments, noting specifically an experiment in which Flammarion exposed human subjects to a colored light for two hours at a time. Interested in the outcome of this experiment, Fuller asked him if he believed that color could, in fact, produce an effect on one's spirit. He replied affirmatively – verifying Fuller's own beliefs through scientific experiments.¹⁶⁹ In this case, contact led to a deeper embedding in a particular belief.

It is impossible to know the extent to which Fuller's views changed or intensified due to her friendship and conversations with Flammarion. However, in a chapter devoted to her beliefs on color, light, music, and movement, Fuller echoes ideas found in Flammarion's fictional science-inspired novel *Lumen* (1892), published in English twenty years before the publication of her autobiography. Following the same pattern as Plato's *The Republic*, *Lumen* is a dialogue between 'Lumen' (Light), a roaming soul, and 'Quarens,' Lumen's pupil. Lumen teaches Quarens about the many planets and alien lifeforms he has encountered throughout his non-corporeal travels. In one section, after Lumen describes the Men-Plants of the planet Swan, who can hear, see, and speak despite

not having ears, eyes, and throats, Quarens questions how this is possible. Lumen replies, “You will cease to wonder at this if you will reflect that light and sound are only two *modes of motion*. There are in nature ... a thousand different modes of motion.”¹⁷⁰ This connects to an earlier point of Lumen's, in which he stated that humans receive “impressions” from these motions – impressions in the form of images and sounds.¹⁷¹ Thus, motions in nature result in human sensory perceptions. Similarly, in *Fifteen Years*, Fuller describes the connection between her performance and the audience:

To impress an idea I endeavor, by my motions, to cause its birth in the spectator's mind, to awaken his imagination, that it may be prepared to receive the image. Thus we are able, I do not say to understand, but to feel within ourselves as an impulse an indefinable and wavering force, which urges and dominates us. Well, I can express this force which is indefinable but certain in its impact. I have motion. That means that all the elements of nature may be expressed.¹⁷²

Here, it is interesting to note that Fuller does not say that she “endeavors” by her dance or movement. For her, dance operated as one of the motions in the performance – but not the only one.¹⁷³ Thus, when Fuller concludes, “I have motion,” she is not only speaking of dance but of all of the elements used in her performances – music, lighting, colors – for they are all motions that she carefully and deliberately synchronized to create specific sensations and impressions in her audiences. Like Flammarion, Fuller believed that motions create impressions in the minds of humans, and, like Flammarion, Fuller saw motion as natural processes in which information and sensory data could be transmitted from one point to another. To be sure, Fuller discovered her performance process before she met Flammarion, but this relationship created an open and mutually-respective space for both Fuller and Flammarion to learn from each other and fine-tune their ideas.¹⁷⁴ Rather than encountering opposition, Fuller found agreement, offering her an opportunity to embed further into her beliefs through contact. Contact, then, occurs not only between

an individual and a specific religion. Two individuals can also meet, make contact, explore with, and learn from each other.

Sometimes, however, contact can lead an individual to change or embark on a new path or project, such as in the relationship between Fuller and sculptor Auguste Rodin (1840-1917). Fuller and Rodin enjoyed a great friendship, built on mutual admiration of the other's artistry. In fact, Fuller also selected Rodin as a theme-room for the Maryhill Museum.¹⁷⁵ Rodin, likewise, admired Fuller, and described her as "a woman of genius, with all the resources of talent."¹⁷⁶ In each other, they saw a reflection of artistic innovation and inspiration. Rodin, like Fuller, was internationally known and lauded. According to art historian John Hunisak, Rodin gained an almost-mythical reputation during his lifetime; critics often referred to him as a modern-day Michelangelo.¹⁷⁷ With a common interest on the body and art, Rodin inspired Fuller with his belief that "the form and attitude of a human being reveal the emotions of the soul."¹⁷⁸ In fact, in 1909, Fuller used Rodin's series of hands sculptures (motivated by his belief that all body parts can be vehicles for the soul's expression) as inspiration for a new dance, *La danse des mains* (Dance of the Hands).¹⁷⁹ This dance differed dramatically from Fuller's previous dances. When the curtain rose, audiences did not see a woman dressed in a long white silk gown; they saw instead a pair of hands, and that is what they saw for the remainder of the dance. Using no fabric or displays of color, this dance consisted of the movement of the hands, illuminated only by a small spotlight. Reviewer Jean d'Orliac, in *Le Théâtre*, praised *La danse des mains*, writing, "The entire human being, with all his multiple emotions, is evoked by these expressive fingers whose rhythms move her supple hands."¹⁸⁰ Here, Fuller disembedded from color, disembedded

from explorations with light, and, instead, focused on expressing motion through her hands.

Fuller's decision to concentrate on small, minute movements of the hands directly reflects Rodin's influence. Throughout the 1880s and early 1890s, Rodin sculpted thousands of hands as part of his desire to study how one single body part could contain the entirety of life.¹⁸¹ As music critic James Huneker notes in the introduction to *Rodin: The Man and His Art* (1917), Rodin sought to capture the vitality and rhythm of life and nature in each of his sculptures. Of Rodin's initial process of sketching his subjects, Huneker remarks, "His drawings are the swift notations of a sculptor whose eye is never satisfied, whose desire to pin to paper the most evanescent vibrations of the human machine is almost a mania."¹⁸² For Rodin, each single body part contained numerous motions and vibrations, and, by concentrating on one single part instead of the whole body, one could gain a richer understanding of the multiple expressive cues found in each part of the body. For Fuller to shift her focus from expanding the body beyond the end of her physical self to creating a dance solely based on the movement of the hands (a small, contained part of the physical self) demonstrates the degree to which Rodin influenced her. In many ways, Fuller's expression of motion relied on the tripartite relationship of movement, light, and color, and her new interest in exploring motion in one single body part suggests that, through her relationship with Rodin, she began to view the human body as a much more complex and rich site of motion than she initially believed and/or thought it to be.

From Rodin to the Progressive Lyceum, Loie Fuller's points of contact demonstrate her desire to embed into spiritual and religious ideas on light, color, and

motion. Some of these points helped clarify and strengthen already-existing beliefs, such as Theosophy. Other points, such as Rodin's friendship, offered her the opportunity to explore new ways of working with motion. While Rodin's ideas did not dramatically alter Fuller's views, they did inspire her to engage within the boundaries of her physical body – a stark contrast to her usual practice of elongating the presence of her body through fabric and momentum. These points of contact also demonstrate the degree to which Fuller's dance resulted from her interactions with the spiritual and religious ideas she encountered throughout her life – ideas that she purposefully continued to engage with long past her childhood attendance at the Lyceum. Thus, as Ann Braude argues that the séance provided a space for Spiritualists to “test” and embed in their beliefs, Fuller's dance of motion (movement, light, and color) served as a space to 'test' these ideas. Each performance – each dance – served to further enchant her because each performance offered her the opportunity to holistically experience the ultimate fusion of her points of contact.¹⁸³

Improvisational Encounters, Part II: Isadora Duncan

Isadora Duncan also liked to tell a story. During a Christmas celebration at Duncan's primary school in Oakland, California, a teacher began handing various candies and sweets to the children, exclaiming, “See, children, what Santa Claus has brought you.” Duncan had an issue with the teacher's statement – she did not believe in the existence of Santa Claus. As a very young child, Duncan's mother, a Catholic-turned-atheist, told her that Santa Claus did not exist. Santa Claus, her mother explained, existed only for children who had parents rich enough to be able to imitate him. As a single

mother of four children, this was an impossible task for Mary Dora Gray. Thus, as the teacher began to excite the children with talk of Santa Claus, Duncan stood up and announced to the class, “There is no such thing as Santa Claus.” The teacher did not respond well to such a display and taunted Duncan, telling her that only children who believed in Santa could receive candy. “Then I don't want your candy,” Duncan replied. This resulted in a trip to the corner for Duncan, where she stubbornly refused to exhibit regret for her behavior. Instead of standing quietly, she repeatedly shouted, “There is no Santa Claus, there is no Santa Claus” until her teacher, exasperated, sent her home. There, Duncan's mother comforted her and told Duncan that she was absolutely right for denying Santa Claus' existence, stating “There is no Santa Claus and there is no God, only your own spirit can help you.”¹⁸⁴

As one of the first anecdotes in her autobiography, Duncan used this event to demonstrate that, even as a child in primary school, she was a “revolutionist.”¹⁸⁵ Duncan biographer Peter Kurth seconds this notion; in *Isadora: A Sensational Life* (2001), he refers to the young Duncan as a “baby Bolshevik,” connecting her love of Russia as an adult to her childhood rebellions.¹⁸⁶ To be sure, this story sets the tone for the rest of her autobiography by creating an expectation for dramatic displays of revolution in Duncan's life. However, this story also serves another purpose ... it introduces one of the first points of contact that shaped Duncan's approach to dance, for Duncan concludes the story by noting that, as part of her mother's efforts to comfort her, her mother read her one of the lectures of Robert Ingersoll (1833-1899), the “Great Agnostic.” Duncan's mother, an avid follower of Ingersoll, frequently read his works to her children in an effort to instill a sense of morality and gumption in them.¹⁸⁷ Ingersoll, then, stands as a formative

influence in Duncan's life – one that she re-embedded in continuously through both teaching and dancing.

Ingersoll gained the title the “Great Agnostic” after his views concerning religion became a detriment to his political aspirations. Ingersoll certainly had a decorated history; he rose to the position of colonel in the Union Army, and he served as Illinois Attorney General from 1867-1869.¹⁸⁸ However, after publicly voicing both his agnosticism and his distaste for religion, particularly Christianity, no political party dared to support him as a candidate. Nonetheless, the Republican Party still frequently asked Ingersoll to deliver speeches at their conventions, and, there, he began to gain public recognition for his oratorical skills.¹⁸⁹ From there, Ingersoll began traveling across the United States, speaking not only on agnosticism but self-education and the new humanism of the nineteenth century.¹⁹⁰ Humanism, as Ingersoll taught, hinged on the establishment of a sense of respect, morality, and justice in everyday life. Rather than praying to an outside source for change or claiming (but not acting according to) a specific religion, humanists believed that religion, as specific denominations, groups, and institutions, must loosen its grip on society so that humans could find morality within themselves.¹⁹¹

Ingersoll both influenced and befriended such nineteenth-century luminaries as Clarence Darrow (1857-1938), defense attorney for John T. Scopes in the 1925 Scopes “Monkey” Trial; renowned conductor Anton Seidl (1850-1898); and American author Mark Twain (1835-1910).¹⁹² Although Duncan never met Ingersoll, her exposure to his lectures profoundly affected her views of the soul and art – two concepts extremely important to her view of dance. Ingersoll, in fact, connected the soul with art in his 1891

lecture at a dinner held in honor of portrait artist Frank B. Carpenter. He states,

The way I understand art is this: In the first place we are all invisible to each other. There is something called soul; something that thinks and hopes and loves. It is never seen. It occupies a world that we call the brain, and is forever, so far as we know, invisible. Each soul lives in a world of its own, and it endeavors to communicate with another soul living in a world of its own, each invisible to the other, and it does this in a variety of ways. That is the noblest art which expresses the noblest thought, that gives to another the noblest emotions that this unseen soul has. In order to do this we have to seize upon the seen, the visible. In other words, nature is a vast dictionary that we use simply to convey from one invisible world to another what happens in our invisible world. The man that lives in the greatest world and succeeds in letting other worlds know what happens in his world, is the greatest artist.¹⁹³

Thus, for Ingersoll, art is the medium through which one expresses the soul, or one's interior world. The material, or natural, world gives physical shape to the "noble" thoughts and emotions of the soul. Artistic mediums, such as paint, pens, clay, and, in Duncan's case, the body, serve as tools of the invisible soul. Sequestered in the brain, this invisible soul directs the body to engage with these mediums in order to create change in the physical world.¹⁹⁴

Similarly, Duncan argued that all dance must be preceded by the instruction and motivation of the soul, mind, or spirit (she often used these words interchangeably). In her autobiography, *My Life* (1927), Duncan notes, after watching famed ballerina Anna Pavlova (1881-1931) train and rehearse for three hours, that she established her school with an entirely different set of principles and intentions than ballet academies. Ballet schools, Duncan argues, focused solely on training the body, but, in her school, "the body becomes transparent and is a medium for the mind and spirit."¹⁹⁵ This belief often led Duncan to denounce dance instructors who attempted to incorporate her types of movements in their classes. For example, after being persuaded to watch a group of Russian children supposedly trained in her style of dancing, Duncan stood up, threw

down a bouquet of flowers the children gave her earlier, and announced, “I lay these flowers on the grave of my hopes! What you are doing is dreadful, dreadful! Instead of creating something simple and beautiful, you make these girls prostitute movement in vulgar harem dances.”¹⁹⁶ Even though the teacher of these children thought that she was, in fact, truly teaching her students in the style of Duncan (she had, after all, trained with a former Duncan dancer), she missed the most important component of Duncan's dance: the dance must never be done as a solely a bodily exercise; it must originate in the soul.¹⁹⁷

Duncan explains this concept in her 1906 essay “A Child Dancing,” stating,

The child must not be taught to make movements, but her soul, as it grows to maturity must be guided and instructed; in other words, the body must be taught to express itself by means of the motions which are natural to it. We do not allow the child to make a single movement unless it knows why it makes it. I do not mean to say that the meaning of every motion must be explained to the child in words, but that the motion must be of such a nature that the child feels the reason for it in every fibre.¹⁹⁸

For Duncan, bodily movement must never be meaningless – never rote or lackluster.

Movement must always have a cause, and that cause is the soul. Therefore, the soul must be the principle focus of the dancing teacher – not the body. With the proper cultivation of the soul, the child would dance in the style of Duncan not out of imitation but from inner expression. As Ingersoll argued, art served as the medium through which the invisible soul communicated to the world. A more “noble” soul led to a nobler work of art, and Duncan certainly felt her dance to be noble. Duncan believed her dance to be a high art form and compared it to Rodin's sculptures. She explains, “The dance is not a diversion but a religion, an expression of life. I know nothing about those who make a mere amusement of the dance.”¹⁹⁹ For her, dance required dedication and devotion; dancers, she believed, must do more than simply move their bodies; they must endeavor

to live a life that was, in fact, worthy of and conducive to expression. Therefore, when Duncan, with the aid of her sister Elizabeth, created the Isadora Duncan School of Dance (a full-time, live-in school) in Germany in 1904, she only allotted two two-hour sessions per week of dance. During the rest of their study time, students learned history, literature, art, languages, music, science, math, and Swedish gymnastics (a system of exercises meant to enhance coordination and balance).²⁰⁰ Therefore, when her pupils (the “Isadorables”) danced, they expressed life – the life that Duncan designed for them, one shaped not by religious doctrine but by the notion that each student had a soul that could be shaped, cultivated, and strengthened through education, experience, and understanding. These pupils, then, learned the same lessons of the new humanism at the Isadora Duncan School of Dance as Duncan learned as a child. Thus, Duncan became embedded in Ingersoll's teachings, and, as an adult, she chose to consistently re-embed in his ideas.

In fact, this contact point between Duncan and the new humanism gains even more importance when one considers the influence of humanist ideas on her approach to the dance. Although it is not clear the extent to which Duncan interacted and/or was exposed to certain humanist leaders and teachers, one can still note similarities between Duncan's ideas of dance and humanism. While she might not have known specific leaders (other than Ingersoll), she certainly knew the teachings and ideas of the humanists. One startlingly clear connection emerges from the beliefs of Felix Adler (1851-1933), founder of the Society for Ethical Culture, with Duncan's description of discovering her dance.²⁰¹ Adler, the son of a rabbi, strove to merge his experience, training, and education in Reform Judaism with his interest in Transcendentalism and Unitarianism. His interest in

promoting “deed” over “creed” ultimately led to the creation of the Society for Ethical Culture in 1876 in New York City.²⁰² Adler considered “duty” his religion, and, he argued, this religion of duty originated from a deep sense and experience of inner morality. In fact, experience was key to Adler's new religion – one builds and strengthens one's sense of morality, strength, and resolve through daily spiritual experience.²⁰³ Julius Cohen, a contemporary and follower of Adler explains this idea, stating, “Adler urged his hearers always to believe there was a Godhead in all of us, that there was something *divine* in us, but that it was to be found only by reaching down into ourselves and bringing it up.”²⁰⁴ Thus, Adler's followers learned that spiritual experience occurs through a deep inner process in which the most 'divine' part of oneself is sought, found, and, finally, expressed.

Duncan similarly describes her dance process, created in 1901, in *My Life*. For Duncan, one did not just 'start' to dance; instead, the dance hinged on an internal spiritual movement, or the movement of the noble interior – the soul. Standing in stillness, Duncan would place her hands on her solar plexus and begin an inward search. In *My Life*, Duncan describes how she 'found' her spiritual source during long hours in a Parisian studio. She states, “I sought the source of the spiritual expression to flow into the channels of the body, filling it with vibrating light—the centrifugal force reflecting the spirit's vision.”²⁰⁵ Then, once she found that “centrifugal force,” she began to move. She located the “divine” within, and, then, once she “brought it up,” she danced. Duncan's dance reads like a specific, applied example of Adler's teaching of locating the 'divine' within and bringing it to the surface – the material world.²⁰⁶ Nonetheless, Duncan's application of humanist ideas to her dance stands in stark contrast to the more widespread

humanist activities, such as campaigning for social justice issues and advocating secularism in politics.²⁰⁷ Thus, while the new humanism influenced how Duncan perceived human activity (as that which must be spirit/soul-directed), it did not lead her to dance – for that, another contact point must be explored.²⁰⁸

Duncan never personally met this point of contact, French opera singer and theatrical instructor François Delsarte (1811-1871), but she encountered his ideas of bodily expression throughout her life. Delsarte, in the mid-nineteenth century, sought to create a safe and holistic system for the development of dramatic expression after years of harming his voice through improper training and exercises. However, before the system could be fully developed, Delsarte first solidified a number of guiding principles, most notably: the Law of Trinity and the Law of Correspondence.²⁰⁹ First, the Law of Trinity decrees that all things in the universe exist in threes. Accordingly, movement can move outwards from the center, inwards to the center, or representative of the center itself. Furthermore, according to Delsartism instructor Genevieve Stebbins, the body itself is divided into three zones: head/mental, torso/moral, and limbs/vital. Each of these divisions has further triune sub-divisions.²¹⁰ Second, as scholar Nancy Lee Chalfa Ruyter states, the “Law of Correspondence concerns the relationship between tangible and intangible, outer and inner, movement and meaning.”²¹¹ In an address before the Philotechnic Society of Paris in 1865, Delsarte spoke of the spiritual dimension of the Law of Correspondence, proclaiming, “To each spiritual function responds a function of the body. To each grand function of the body corresponds a spiritual act.”²¹² For example, when the eyes look downward and away from an object, this symbolizes, or corresponds with, the adulation of the self in a state of mystical attention to the subject.²¹³ According

to Delsarte, a bodily experience *is* a spiritual experience.

Delsartism spread to America by the latter half of the nineteenth century; over 400 teachers taught Delsartism across 38 states, including California and New York (Duncan's principal locations in the United States).²¹⁴ While impossible to pinpoint the distinct moment in which Duncan first became exposed to Delsartism, dance studies scholar Ann Daly notes that instruction books on Delsartism were widely circulated in the 1880s (Duncan's childhood years).²¹⁵ In fact, as Daly first observed, Duncan's description of one of her first dances sounds remarkably Delsartean. In *My Life*, Duncan remembers how, as a teenager, she set a dance to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's "I Shot an Arrow." In order to teach the children the movements, she read the poem and asked them to interpret it through gesture.²¹⁶ This process emulates the Delsartean system of performing specific gestures and movements in response to music and speech, suggesting that, as a teenager, Duncan had yet to connect Ingersoll's ideas of the soul and art with the Delsartean connection of body and spirit.

Interestingly, Ingersoll's and Delsarte's processes mirror each other. Whereas Ingersoll argued that the soul must cause the body to act, Delsarte believed that the body can influence the soul. In fact, Delsarte saw the soul fundamentally different from Ingersoll. Describing the soul as sad, alone, and tired, Delsarte argued that while the body might be seen as beautiful (and thus loved) in one's youth, it becomes a "repelling mask" in one's mature years.²¹⁷ The soul therefore remains "buried under the ruins of the body," aching for joy and nourishment.²¹⁸ Art, he argued, supplies this nourishment. Through art, the soul can escape the prison of the body. As Delsarte states, "The powers of art are the wings of the soul ... given to indirectly promote its divine ascension."²¹⁹ For Delsarte,

human action caused the soul to move – the exact inverse of Ingersoll's soul/art thesis.

This tension between Ingersoll's and Delsarte's conflicting views of art and the soul frequently manifest in Duncan's writings. For example, in 1903, Duncan and her family left the United States on a “spiritual pilgrimage” to Greece.²²⁰ Once there, she had a profoundly moving experience. For four months, Duncan stood at the foot of the Parthenon, almost in a state of trance. She wanted to move – to dance the dance of Terpsichore, but ... no movement came. Finally, after many days of staring at the Parthenon, she realized that the columns might appear still but that they are always moving, reaching upwards, co-existing with each other. With this recognition in place, she felt inspired to begin her dance, stating, “My arms rose slowly toward the Temple and I leaned forward—and I knew I had found my dance, and it was a Prayer.”²²¹ This reads as an entirely different “discovery” narrative than the experience she describes in the 1901 Parisian studio. Instead of her motivation stemming internally, she finds it externally – in nature and architecture.

These inconsistencies between internal and external inspiration frequently emerge in Duncan's writings on dance. She alternates between such statements as: “Fine art comes from the Human Spirit and needs no externals” and “The dancer [has] to seek in nature the most beautiful forms, and the movements which inevitably express the spirit of those forms.”²²² Both dancers and scholars consistently gloss over these discrepancies in order to create a tidy, codified system of Duncan-style dance. For instance, the Isadora Duncan Dance Foundation (IDFF) offers classes in “Duncan technique,” consisting in exercises taught at Duncan's schools of dance.²²³ Yet, Duncan did not have a specific technique. Theresa Duncan, one of the “Isadorables” at the Grunewald school, verifies

this, stating, “[Duncan] had no method, no theory, no pedantic arrangements of steps, and not the slightest pedagogical idea.”²²⁴ Additionally, as Peter Kurth notes, Duncan toured most of the year; her sister, Elizabeth, ran the school.²²⁵ Therefore, when scholar Carrie J. Preston uses the exercises utilized in IDDF classes as a source to analyze the dance style and technique of Duncan, she really is analyzing a technique implemented, formed, and codified by either Elizabeth Duncan, or by Irma Duncan and Anna Duncan (both Isadorables), who taught IDDF founder Lori Belilove.²²⁶

Similarly, Ann Daly argues that Duncan's dance can, in fact, be systematized, stating, “Duncan's writings yield a consistent theoretical framework,” which she then separates into seven components, including “The source of dance is 'Nature'” and “Dancing must express humankind's most moral, beautiful, and healthful ideas.”²²⁷ Daly's listing of the components of Duncan's “dance theory” forces Duncan's dance into a system, thus creating a finished product, or style; yet, when Duncan's dance is considered as a constantly unfolding process, one realizes that there is no finished product. Duncan even acknowledged this in a draft of a 1906 letter to a German newspaper, stating, dance is a “gradual evolution of my own being and a work of all my life,” acknowledging that so long as she lived, her dance would evolve and change.²²⁸ Thus, by reconciling Duncan's dance into a specific dance theory, scholars erase Duncan out of her dance. To acknowledge her inconsistencies is to acknowledge Duncan and the many circumstances, or points of contact, she endured, found joy in, and grew from. Like in Contact Improvisation, Duncan “danced” with many partners, resulting in a dance that progressed due to the dynamic interaction between the “movers.”

Therefore, Duncan's contradictions between interior and exterior inspiration

fluctuate according to her points of contact – points that are dictated by her needs, desires, encounters, and interests. The sites of Greece inspired her, and her own soul inspired her – both inspirations were just; both inspirations were valid; both were situated within specific contact points at the moment of experience. Yes, at times, these differing points of contact can lead to contradictions, but these contradictions should not be ignored or used as a reason to discredit Duncan's dance. As American poet Walt Whitman (1819-1892) writes in “Song of Myself,” “Do I contradict myself? Very well, then, I contradict myself; (I am large—I contain multitudes.)”²²⁹ As the self-proclaimed “spiritual daughter of Walt Whitman,” Duncan too 'contained multitudes' finding inspiration to dance in many forms and from many places.²³⁰

Duncan most likely knew of Whitman from an early age; Ingersoll frequently referenced Whitman in his lectures and considered Whitman a personal friend.²³¹ However, as American studies scholar Ruth Bohan argues, Duncan first became seriously interested in Whitman's poems in 1903, when she became friends with Austrian scholar Karl Federn (1868-1925), who, at the time, was translating eighty poems from Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* into German.²³² This interest intensified in 1904 when Duncan met and fell in love with Gordon Craig, a great Whitman admirer.²³³ In fact, Craig once gave Duncan one of Whitman's original manuscript poems, a gift Craig considered especially suitable since he saw a clear Whitmanic presence in Duncan's dance.²³⁴ As Bohan notes, from Duncan's disregard of previous performance structures to her extolling of the beauty of the human body, Craig believed that Duncan's art form embodied Whitman's call for, as he states, a “new brood, native, athletic, continental, greater than before known.”²³⁵ However, it is important to recognize that Duncan's 'contact' with Whitman had not yet

fully developed at the time Craig first made this connection.²³⁶ Certainly, Whitman's poems and Duncan's dance overlapped; after all, they were both, at times, responding to the new humanism. Yet, we can only ascertain the extent to which Whitman influenced Duncan's approach to and creation of dance by considering changes or additions made post-contact.²³⁷

Duncan's admiration and reverence for Whitman is clear; when alone, she often held her Whitman original manuscript in her hands and marveled that she held the same piece of paper that he once did.²³⁸ Furthermore, she traveled with a complete collection of his poems and kept a book of his poems as her "*livre de chevet*" (bedside book).²³⁹ Although she might at first have read Whitman in response to Craig's enthusiasm, Whitman's poems quickly aroused her own interests and passions. In other words, she made the decision to further embed herself in Whitmanian thought. She saw a connection between his poems and her dance, and, often, when a benefactor, friend, acquaintance, audience member, or reporter claimed that he or she could not understand Duncan's dance, she used the poems of Whitman as a verbal explanation.²⁴⁰ This is not surprising, for, like Duncan, Whitman made contact with several religious ideas and used his art form to test, deny, affirm, and/or exult these ideas.²⁴¹

Like Duncan, Whitman believed in the virtue of the soul and of the natural body; these overlaps likely explain why Duncan felt such a connection with him. However, Whitman also emphasized the importance, majesty, and spiritual significance of nature. He believed that, through nature, one could understand the entirety of existence, as all nature is connected. He writes, in "Song of Myself," "the unseen is proved by the seen," arguing that one must turn to the physical – the natural – in order to answer one's

metaphysical questions.²⁴² Scholar Diane Kepner explains this process, stating, “If we can learn to recognize and understand the expression of universal unity within every particular object we see and every sensation we feel, then, in Whitman's view, we can come to a better sense of our place in the universe.”²⁴³ Through nature, one could very well learn how to “celebrate” oneself, for, as Whitman 'sings' in “Song of Myself,” every particle of nature also exists within one's self.²⁴⁴ Ultimately, nature serves as humanity's greatest teacher.

Of the many aspects of nature, Whitman found waves to be a particularly valuable teacher. Indeed, in “Had I the Choice,” Whitman declares that he would reject the opportunities to study with Homer and Shakespeare in order to learn from the ocean. He implores to the sea, “Would you the undulation of one wave, its trick to me transfer.”²⁴⁵ In another poem, “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking,” Whitman, imagining himself as a young boy, beseeches the ocean to deliver to him the word “superior to all.” The ocean responds by sending the word “up from the waves.”²⁴⁶ Thus, for Whitman, waves were not only a source of knowledge; they were a messenger of knowledge from a greater source – the entirety of the ocean. Whitman found these ideas extremely important, as evidenced by his admittance of structuring his verses so that they visually appeared as waves - “fitfully rising and falling.”²⁴⁷ These hints of motion through simulated waves allow the reader to fulfill one of Whitman's directives from “Song of Myself,” in which Whitman instructed his readers to observe a “drop or motion of waves” in order to understand him.²⁴⁸

Duncan certainly followed Whitman's directive to observe waves, and, although she never insinuated whether these observations led to a greater understanding of

Whitman, she did chronicle the influence of these observations on her ideas of dance in both *My Life* and in her essay “The Dancer and Nature.” Duncan first spoke of waves in her writings in 1905, the same year she met Whitman enthusiast Craig. In fact, her very first mention of waves can be found in a March or April 1905 letter written to Craig. In the middle of this letter, Duncan disrupts the text by drawing a wave, with the word “Love” written underneath each wave crest and above each wave trough. Beneath this illustration, she simply wrote, “Waves—love waves.”²⁴⁹ As biographer Francis Steegmuller notes, Duncan wrote this letter while working on her essay “The Dancer and Nature,” in which she outlines wave movement as vital to understanding the “true dance.”²⁵⁰ She writes, “This great wave movement runs through all Nature, for when we look over the waters to the long line of hills on the shore, they seem also to have the great undulating movement of the sea I see waves rising through all things.”²⁵¹ Whitman's poetry, then, not only inspired Duncan to think about the movements of nature, but, after reading the many waves of his poems, she began to see waves everywhere. Wave movement, Duncan observed, hinged on an interplay with gravity – one resists gravity (the wave crest), and then one relaxes into it (the wave trough). Thus, while Whitman stands in suspense, waiting for “the undulation of one wave, its trick to me transfer” Duncan discovers this trick, and it is movement – a dance that she knows how to do, for the same movements found in nature can also be found within her.

Indeed, in many ways, “The Dancer and Nature” serves as a space in which Duncan infuses her views on dance with Whitmanic ideas. For example, she describes the “true dance” (as opposed to the false dance) as paralleling the movements of nature, suggesting that, at the time this was written, Duncan adhered to Whitman's view that all

that which exists in nature also exists within oneself.²⁵² Humans, as part of the natural world, *should* naturally move as nature does. Instead of moving, as Duncan states, “to set geometrical figures based on straight lines,” dancers should allow the movements of nature, which reside in all, to spill to the surface; like waves of the ocean, the dancing body moves as a response to a vast underlying cause – the inspiration of the soul.²⁵³ Only by following this inspiration can one's movement be expressive of “the great movement which runs throughout the universe.”²⁵⁴ Duncan's contact with Whitman, then, instilled in her a method through which to judge dance as true or false, natural or 'modern.'²⁵⁵

However, in addition to this new set of criteria, Duncan also began to see her dance as significant – a tool for changing society for the better. While Ingersoll and Adler threw their efforts of cultivating the soul into social justice, Duncan danced. While Whitman observed the ocean, Duncan danced and metaphorically became the ocean – her movements were the waves, thus allowing audiences to step into the Whitman role of observer. In “What Dancing Should Be,” she imagines this scenario, envisioning all the great poets and philosophers calling to her, pleading with her,

O Woman, come before us, before our eyes longing for beauty, and tired of the ugliness of this civilization, come in simple tunics, letting us see the line and harmony of the body beneath, and dance for us. Dance us the sweetness of life and its meanings, dance for us the movements of birds, the waters, waving trees, floating clouds Give us again the sweetness and beauty of the true dance.²⁵⁶

Duncan's dance, she believed, could replenish humankind – a view that coincided with the nineteenth-century nature religions (such as Transcendentalism) that Whitman engaged with. Nature, as Albanese argues, “offered a model of societal harmony,” in which all people were intrinsically valuable, for they all could take part in the harmony of the greater whole, and, indeed, of all of life.²⁵⁷ Thus, Duncan's contact with Whitman and her decision to continually embed in his ideas allowed her to not only expand her

understanding of her dance – its movements and processes – but to see her dance as not only artistically important but as needed and vital in the world she lived in.

Yet, despite her views of the importance of dance to the world, dance always remained important to herself. Duncan's motivation for and experience of dancing changed throughout her life, depending on her points of contact and life circumstances, but despite these changes, dance remained important, for it was in the dance that she experimented with and experienced the many ideas she encountered in non-dancing time. Although Duncan's dance rarely served as a site for fusion of her contact points (as Fuller's dance did), Duncan's points of contact inevitably influenced her dance. If she deemed an idea important, she incorporated it into her dance; yet, once incorporated, this idea did not become permanent. Like a repertoire of songs, Duncan drew from these ideas depending on her specific circumstance, and this process allowed for her to continually validate as important, special, and, in her words, “sacred,” meaning that, through dance, one's soul could be transformed.²⁵⁸

Many of Duncan's points of contact were, like her, attempting to embed, disembed, and re-embed in and from their own points of contact. For example, Delsarte disembedded from eighteenth-century French philosopher Voltaire's (1694-1778) argument of the irrationality of the Trinity by proving its merit through a specific application – his Law of the Trinity.²⁵⁹ Similarly, Adler rejected the specific dogmatic beliefs of Reform Judaism while applauding its practicality and focus on community and action.²⁶⁰ Thus, when he founded the Society for Ethical Culture, he included the aspects of Reform Judaism he valued and dismissed the other elements. Duncan, then, like her points of contact, dynamically and deliberately maneuvered through an abundance of

religious ideas, dismissing those she did not find compelling and integrating the others according to her own needs. Remembering that enchantment is not a passive experience but an active process of disembedding and embedding/re-embedding, as discussed in Chapter One, we can see that Duncan engaged with religious ideas in the same manner as many of her fellow moderns – through creativity, activity, and exploration.

Losing Contact

This chapter by no means serves as an exhaustive list or exploration of Fuller's and Duncan's points of contact. In addition to the spiritual and religious sources left unexplored, Fuller and Duncan also engaged with ideas and experiences of technology, gender, politics, nationalism, and more. However, my purpose has not been to meticulously analyze each aspect of Fuller's and Duncan's dances but rather to demonstrate the central importance of religious and spiritual ideas on their approach to and understandings of dance. Furthermore, by tracing these points of contact, we can begin to understand that Fuller's and Duncan's dances would be vastly different had they not encountered these ideas and influences. If, then, I understand religious experience as that which can result from and form through the *processes* of crossing, I had to examine those points of contact that would shape Fuller's and Duncan's ideas of religion and the spiritual.

Through integrating the process of Contact Improvisation with the spiritual and religious crossings in Fuller's and Duncan's lives, I began to see that, just as a dancer in Contact gains new knowledge from each experience with a partner, Fuller and Duncan grew, changed, and learned in response to their own points of contact. Furthermore,

Contact Improvisation requires the dancer to continuously embed and disembed as he or she moves from partner to partner, or even from one site of contact (neck to partner's back) to another (left hip to partner's right knee). Yet, the dancer carries the previous Contact encounter to the next; each time, he or she is able to trust a partner more completely, support another person's weight more evenly, or be more conscious of the many movement possibilities available to him or her. Thus, as Fuller and Duncan actively embedded and disembedded from their 'partners,' their knowledge expanded, and this knowledge affected their dances. Nonetheless, Fuller did not physically dance with Rodin, and Duncan never shared the stage with Walt Whitman; their dancing experiences were uniquely their own. How, then, do I understand these experiences, knowing that they are a direct result of Fuller's and Duncan's many sites of contact? To answer this, I must lose Contact and directly face Fuller and Duncan.

**Chapter Three:
Dance as Religious Experience
Desire, the Divine, and the Dancing Body**

Intentional Improvisation

The dancers sit in a loose circle in the middle of the studio, catching up with each other while gently stretching their muscles. “I wonder what we'll be doing today,” Andy muses while stretching forward over his extended legs. “Well, wonder no further!” a voice booms. The dancers turn, startled – they never heard the door to the studio open. The instructor stands against the door, arms folded across his chest, an excited smile on his face. He walks towards the dancers, pausing above their seated forms to create suspense. Ceremoniously, he unfolds his arms to reveal a stack of bandanas in his hands. He extends his hands forward, towards the middle of the circle and then lets the bandanas fall from his fingers. The dancers blankly stare at the bandanas. Devon looks at them doubtfully. “Are we going to be doing an improvisational bank robbery?” she asks, eyebrows raised. The instructor sighs, “No. We -.” “Oh, I know,” Troy chimes in, “We're going to be improvisational dancer pirates! Grrrrrande jeté, matey!” “Wrong again,” the instructor replies.

He continues, “Today, we will be working with intention and improvisation. You will all be blindfolded so as to remove external stimuli and to deter possibilities of interaction with your fellow dancers. Alright, so everyone take a bandana and spread out. Make sure you have a good amount of space between yourselves.” The dancers follow his command, each picking up a blindfold and scooted, walked, or jogged to different spots in the studio. Once they are in place, the instructor speaks, “Okay, now, before you

blindfold yourself, I want you to think of a word – any word. It can be a name, an emotion, an object – the possibilities are limitless. However, this should not be a word you stretch for. In other words, if you're feeling a bit blue today, do not make your word 'puppies' or 'kittens.' I want this to be a word representative of where you are or how you feel *right now*.” The instructor pauses for a moment, letting his directions take effect. A minute or two later, he asks, “Has everyone chosen their word?” The dancers nod. “Good, now tie on your blindfolds.” As the dancers begin to place their bandanas around their eyes, he gives them further instructions, “I want you to let this word inspire the movement you do. Try to imagine this word as a force, guiding your movement, motivating your muscles. Don't worry about bumping into other dancers; I will ensure that there are no catastrophes. Okay, begin to move when your blindfold is on and you feel ready.”

Devon ties the bandana around her head, feeling the cloth rest against her eyes and darken her view. With a vacation fast approaching her in a few days, Devon chooses the word “relaxation.” She thinks of schedule-free days, waking up late, walking on the sandy shores of the beach, exploring the local cuisine, and leisurely sipping on freshly-squeezed lemonade as a breeze ruffles through her hair. Her right arm lifts slightly, as if caught in the breeze; she leans slightly into that arm, imagining the breeze gently pulling her forward. Leaning into the flow of this imagined breeze, Devon slowly runs forward – large, low runs, filled with inhaled and exhaled. Over and over again, she repeats the word “relaxation,” and, each time she does, she recommits herself to a dance that encompasses all the qualities she associates with that word.

Meanwhile, Andy is on the other side of the studio, furiously kicking his legs in

front of him. He slices through the air with the side of his hand, and then throws himself into the air, as if attacking an opponent. Before class, he received a letter from the Internal Revenue Service, informing him that he would be audited. His word, “agitation,” accurately describes his current emotional state. Andy directs his irritation out through his bodily extremities; he imagines that he can shoot laser beams from his fingertips, so he slices the air with fury. He flings his left arm across his body, and uses that momentum to lead him into a side roll, quickly falling to the floor and rising once again. He quickly contracts and arches his spine, each contract-release sequence like an exclamation point of agitation. His body tenses; his breath becomes shallow, and he feels as if the agitation is crawling underneath his skin, itching to come out in a staccato dance of wrath. He imagines the agitation pouring forth from his pores; he lifts a hand, and the dance continues.

Jill, on the other hand, is dancing a much different dance than Devon and Andy. Lately, she has been going through a difficult time with her best friend of ten years, and now she is afraid that a friendship that has meant a great deal to her might dissolve. When the instructor told her to choose a word, the only word she could think of was “loss.” She begins her dance in stillness, almost afraid to journey into that space where the fear of loss can no longer be suppressed. The dance demands that she confront it; in fact, the dance cannot exist unless she allows herself to feel the loss and let it direct her movements. Her heart feels heavy, and she begins to imagine it as a weight, pulling her body down. Her head rolls down, followed by her neck, then her back. She reaches her hands to the floor and falls towards them; then, she melts into the ground, finding no motivation to fight the gravity that presses against her. Curling into her right side, Jill

brushes her head against the floor, imagining herself wailing her loss. She takes a deep breath, only to find that her exhale comes in stilted intervals. Turning her head to the side, Jill buries her eyes in the crook of her right arm, and, only then, does she notice the wetness of her blindfold.

The instructor stands in the front of the studio, watching the dancers, and, although he does not know what words are driving them to move, he can see that their different intentions have led to vastly different dances. He tries to not judge these dances, knowing that each intention has its own value. He recognizes each dance as a unique expression – for each dance is formed through the unique combination of dancer, intention, emotion, and thought. From Devon's luxurious runs to Jill's sorrowful fall, the instructor knows that these dances can never be fully recreated, for the dances, at this moment, hinge on the underlying words that direct the dancers' movements.

Experience Beyond Imitation

In Loie Fuller's and Isadora Duncan's cases, imitation was not the sincerest form of flattery; in fact, they considered it a blatant insult to the integrity of their art. Yet, for Fuller, these 'insults' did not threaten her career. For example, in 1892, when Fuller first discovered that a dancer regularly imitated her at a Folies-Bergère performance, Fuller trembled and broke out in a cold sweat, believing that this imitator would be her “utter annihilation.” However, after watching her imitator's performance, Fuller felt relieved; her imitator was “ordinary” and “inefficient.”²⁶¹ In fact, watching her imitator dance only served to reinforce Fuller's belief of the importance and extraordinariness of her dancing. This experience provided Fuller with proof that although other dancers might perform her

style of movement with more delicacy and grace, *her* dance – the original – was far more valuable. Other dancers, she argued, could never successfully perform her style of dancing, for, as she argues, “To be the same they must be created in the same spirit.”²⁶² Other dancers could imitate her use of fabrics, lights, colors, and movement, but they could never recreate the intentions, motives, and desires that underlay Fuller's dance. For Fuller, the extraordinariness of her dance hinged on the spirit in which it was created.

Duncan, like Fuller, believed that her dance must be created in the same spirit in order to truly be her dance, as evidenced by her outburst at the children's dance recital discussed in Chapter Two. Duncan, however, also had her fair share of imitators. Margherita Duncan, Duncan's sister-in-law, in a tribute printed in *The Art of the Dance* (1928), recounts one incident of flawed imitation in 1916. After agreeing to participate in Percy MacKaye's *Masque of Caliban* at the Lewisohn stadium in New York City, Duncan found herself standing near a group of young female chorus dancers. Trained by one of her imitators, the dancers looked at Duncan with a great deal of admiration. One dancer excitedly spoke, “If it weren't for you, we wouldn't be doing this. Don't you feel proud?” Duncan turned to her and simply said, “I regard what you do with perfect horror.”²⁶³

Yet, what was the source of this horror? What about their movements, costumes, and/or performances did Duncan object to? In *My Life*, Duncan answers these questions when she considers the errancies of her imitators. “My imitators,” she reflects, “had become all saccharine and sweet syrup, promulgating that part of my work which they were pleased to call the 'harmonious and the beautiful!' but omitting anything sterner, omitting, in fact, the mainspring and real meaning.”²⁶⁴ Her imitators – with their flowing movements and Greek-style tunics – only imitated the most surface level of Duncan's

dance. These movements, Duncan felt, had nothing beneath them – no purpose, no inspiration; these imitators could never create the same kind of beauty Duncan could. Once, in the middle of a passionate argument, Duncan declared, “I have given people beauty. I have given them my very soul when I danced. And this beauty did not die. It exists somewhere...”²⁶⁵ Grounding her sense of beauty in Whitman, Duncan believed that internal beauty, or, as Daly states, “essential human goodness,” connected one not only with other people but with the entire universe.²⁶⁶ By giving her audiences beauty, Duncan gave them far more than a pretty or wondrous site to behold – she gave them the core of herself and, in doing so, endeavored to re-infuse the world with harmony.²⁶⁷ Her imitators, she believed, failed to understand that beauty was not created through the body; it was housed in the soul and expressed through the body.

Both Fuller and Duncan believed that there was a right and wrong way to do their dances, and that even if one copied all the external elements of Fuller's and Duncan's dances, one would still be dancing incorrectly. As creators, choreographers, and dancers of their respective dances, Fuller and Duncan built their dance worlds from their points-of-contact, and imitators could never truly step into these dancing worlds unless they too engaged with these points-of-contact and deemed them important and meaningful. Thus, when Fuller and Duncan taught their forms of dance to classes of children, they taught not only movement but ideas on life, literature, the arts, and more. They taught them not how to imitate them but how to arrive at a state in which these forms of dance 'naturally' occur. Only Fuller and Duncan could truly train dancers in their respective forms of dance, for only they could guide the dancers through the knowledge needed to dance not as an imitation but as a genuine expression of their new forms of dance.

This tension between imitation and authenticity reflects a crucial point in the world of dance. Dancers may inhabit the space of the dance, but the choreographer/structurer creates these worlds, and, if the intentions and directions of the choreographer become lost, then the dancer does not really inhabit the world the choreographer endeavored to create. As dancers/choreographers Lynne Blom and L. Tarin Chaplin argue, the choreographer does far more than create movements, he or she, Blom and Chaplin state, “imbue[s] them with an interpretation, an attitude, a purpose [and] envisions the piece and motivates its growth.”²⁶⁸ The choreographer, then, creates both a new world and a set of directives for how that world should be 'lived.' Fuller's and Duncan's imitators never received these directives, and, without them, they could never truly dance within the worlds Fuller and Duncan created through movement.

Yet, Fuller and Duncan never set their dances on another solo performer. They both choreographed/structured their dances and then danced them. In other words, they created a new world, or plain of existence, through choreography/structure, and then entered this world as they danced. Thus, they created the environment for a specific experience, and then they stepped into the experience. Furthermore, this was an experience drastically different than everyday life. Part of this was due to the nature of dancing (movement outside the boundaries of pedestrianism), but the specific experience of this world-altering movement depended on a successful preparation and intention for performance. This process merits a further investigation, as it allows us to understand the special circumstances in which a dancing religious experience occurred for Fuller and Duncan. By recognizing how dance served as a site different than the everyday, we can begin to grasp how dance offered Fuller and Duncan the opportunity to engage with that

which they considered special, extraordinary, and meaningful, for in this usurpation of daily life, Fuller and Duncan could test and experience their understandings of life, the universe, and even the extraordinary outside the boundaries of a world overlaid with ideas, theories, and conceptions not their own. Yet, how did they reach this new world? In other words, how do the processes of choreography and dance result in creating and occupying a new world, and why is this a world conducive to religious experience? To answer these questions, I turn to religious studies Catherine Bell's theory of ritualization.

Creating New Worlds: Ritualization and Dance

According to religious studies scholar Catherine Bell, "Ritualization is a way of acting that is designed and orchestrated to distinguish and privilege what is being done in comparison to other, usually more quotidian, activities."²⁶⁹ Central to this idea is the concept of practice. This implies that action precipitates and constitutes the move from the ordinary to the extra-ordinary. Although the doer remains the same, the doing changes. However, this change in doing cannot be lateral. For example, one might shift from walking to running, but these are both pedestrian acts that belong in the realm of the everyday. Ritualization, then, implies a 'doingness' that is beyond the mundane. Although brushing one's teeth, washing one's face, and checking one's email are specific, ordered, and repetitive practices, they do not generally propel one out of the trappings of monotony. The change in doing must move on an upward curve, in which the doer rises from the plateau of the mundane to the peak of the extraordinary. However, it is important to note that the act of doing creates a site for this specialness; the site does not already exist in and of itself. Bell notes, "Ritualization appreciates how sacred and

profane activities are differentiated in the performing of them, and thus how ritualization gives rise to (or creates) the sacred ... by virtue of its sheer differentiation from the profane.”²⁷⁰

Dance provides an interesting case study of ritualization. Dancing *is* differentiated movement; to dance is to move with purpose (or purposeful indifference). To dance is to escape the laterality of everyday movement and engage with all the levels (high, medium, and low) and spatial planes (transverse, sagittal, and frontal) of the body. To dance is to shrug off the confines of socially acceptable public movement and engage the body in movement encased in emotion, language, beauty, the sacred, the ugly, and more. To dance is to find stillness in each moment as the dancing body continuously encompasses space. Poet T.S. Eliot attempts to describe this phenomenon in “Burnt Norton,” writing, “Neither from nor towards/at the still point, there the dance is.”²⁷¹ At each moment, the dance is still, but this is a stillness created by movement. Dancers know how to create space to give rise to this vibratory stillness. They know how to create space within their bodies – in the spread of the shoulder blades and the lifting of the thighs. They know how to create space in which gravity and air become their partners – slicing through the air with a leap and letting gravity assist them back to the ground. They know how to create space within their minds – pushing past fears and allowing for creativity. Dance is all about time and space; the dancer connects the two. Thus, dance *is* extra-ordinary because the doingness of it is a process of performing and existing within the extra-ordinary. This conclusion opens a space for us to envision dance as the process of creating special and/or extraordinary space through the dancing body.

Dance theorist José Gil agrees with this new space or way of being that dance

provokes, describing it as the plane of immanence. He states, “To dance is to create immanence through movement: this is why there is no meaning outside of the plane nor outside the actions of the dancer.”²⁷² Each movement springs forth from the dancer's interior motivation and intention and manifests in outer bodily movement; the created world of the dance depends on the embodied action of the dancer to survive. If dancing “creates immanence through movement,” then one must acknowledge that without the efforts of the choreographer/dancer, this immanence would never exist. The immanence created through dance, then, is synonymous with the extension of the choreographer and dancer beyond their physical bodies. Dance studies scholar Sondra Fraleigh refers to this concept as the dancer's “body of space” and argues that this “body of space” forms a place.²⁷³ For example, Fraleigh states, think of an arch constructed by common building materials, such as steel and concrete. Now, think of a dancer's arching back. In this case, the dancer creates the arch but also *is* the arch. In our everyday lives, we travel around and through arches, but, in the space of the dance, we become them. Thus, in our everyday lives, we travel in a world created through physical structures that we often had no part in creating; yet, in dance, every structure is created by and formed of the dancer, for the structure can only exist so long as the dancer and choreographer deem it to be so.

Gil's “plane of immanence” and Fraleigh's “body-of-space” both place the dancer and the dance firmly outside the boundaries of the everyday. If, as Bell argues, mundane and extraordinary activities are differentiated by the performance of them, then dance can be nothing other than absolutely extraordinary. Yet, ritualization depends not just on a difference in action but on the doer's privileging of one action over another. It is one thing to argue that all dance is extraordinary and quite another to argue that all dancers

experience dance as extraordinary. Ritualization does not occur in a vacuum. In Gil's and Fraleigh's theories, dance, by its very nature, is extraordinary, regardless of the dancer's thoughts, circumstances, emotions, and sensations. In Bell's theories, these factors cannot be ignored, for the extraordinariness or specialness of dance can only be achieved *if* dancers approach dance with the sense that, yes, this *is* something different and more than the everyday. For dancers who regularly dance, dance *can* be like brushing one's teeth.²⁷⁴ Without an intention of and preparation for dance as a special, or, as Bell might say, "sacred" space, then this "plane of immanence" and "body of space" is only different than the everyday; it is the choreographer and dancer who decides if it is 'more than,' extraordinary, special, or sacred – all of those words that imply reverence, a higher status, and an exalted state. Therefore, to understand if dance was, in fact, ritualized for Fuller and Duncan, one must look beyond the actual movement; one must investigate the intentions and preparations that created the space for this movement to emerge.

Loie Fuller had motion, and she wanted to express it. As described by her commentary on imitators, she believed that her motion must be created in a very intentional manner. As director of lights, costume, stage, movement, and color, Fuller precisely planned every single detail of her dances. She often ran her rehearsals until four or five in the morning; displeased electricians often walked out before she finished setting her dances.²⁷⁵ For each of her dances, Fuller used between fifteen and twenty color projectors with rotating color wheels, which were sometimes overlaid with glass discs Fuller cut and painted herself.²⁷⁶ Fuller controlled every single aspect of her dance, and, there was a reason for this, only she knew the exact motions she endeavored to create. She explains, "Ignoring conventions, following only my own instinct, I am able to

translate the sensations we have all felt without suspecting that they could be expressed.”²⁷⁷ Only Fuller had the knowledge needed to translate the sensations she wanted to express through her dance – knowledge gathered from her connections to Spiritualism, Theosophy, and Flammarion's science. Therefore, only Fuller had the knowledge and instincts needed to create her specific dancing world, for none of her imitators understood the “spirit” in which it was created.

Undoubtedly, then, Fuller considered her dances a space to engage with that which she considered spiritually important – motion, colors, lights, and movement. Yet, in order for Fuller's dance to be considered ritualized, then she must have considered it as both distinguished from and more special than daily life, which, I believe, she did. Fuller once remarked that motion was more “truthful” than language, and, as humans privilege language in everyday life, Fuller felt that people's “powers of comprehension” were, as she states, “perverted.”²⁷⁸ Her dances were more 'real' than any language-driven activity of the everyday. To be sure, Fuller saw her audiences as belonging to the world of the everyday, unable to harness the “indefinable and wavering force” which resided in them.²⁷⁹ Fuller could; she had motion. For her, her dance was ritualized not because she needed to escape from the everyday but because everyday people lived incorrectly – as motionless beings with flawed comprehensions birthed from the fallacies of language. So long as she was in motion – motion that she purposefully created through intense preparation and scrutinizing study – Fuller occupied a world of truth. Dance/motion and the everyday were indeed incorrectly separate.

For Isadora Duncan, the demarcation between dance and everyday life was very clear. She divided everything in her life between “Art” and “Love.” Art represented her

work – dancing, teaching, and dance-making. Love consisted of her relationships with her children, family, friends, and lovers.²⁸⁰ This is not to say, however, that these areas never conflicted. Just a few weeks after meeting Craig, Duncan wrote to him, complaining, “I danced *awfully* last night—half the time I was quite unconscious I was there ... I think that as an inspiration for a Dancer *you* are not a success.”²⁸¹ Here, Duncan indicates that an element of her “Life” cannot successfully mix with her “Art.” The two must be separate. Furthermore, Duncan insinuates that her successful dancing required her to consciously embed herself into a set of correct intentions and inspirations – intentions and inspirations that, as Chapter Two demonstrated, structured around spiritual ideas that connected Duncan's dance with nature, the world, beauty, and goodness.

Duncan certainly believed her dance should occupy a special space, different than the everyday, and she also acknowledged that this space took effort to create. In 1907, while recovering from a difficult birth process, Duncan wrote to Craig,

I am slowly getting strong—I practice a little each day. The beginning is like breaking stones. One loves to work when once begun, but it *is so difficult to reach the right state to begin* To *wrench* oneself from Time & place and self & enter where time & place & self do not exist—that is great pain—but then also a great reward. Is there anything comparable to the feeling of having come in contact with that eternal idea of Beauty—a wrench, an awful suffering, a feeling of battering for ages against an impassable barrier, & then suddenly & sharp a glow, a light, a connection with the idea like entering into a God—a happiness indescribable, triumphant—That's what I feel when I try to work....²⁸²

Duncan absolutely believed that the space created through dance was different than the everyday. In the dance, all aspects that marked the mundane world – time, place, and self – became obliterated as Duncan danced beyond the boundaries of the ordinary and entered the extraordinary. Gil and Fraleigh suggest that this happens through dancing, regardless of intent, but, for Duncan, this usurpation of the everyday and entrance into a

plane of immanence could only occur when she followed the proper steps and channeled the correct intentions. Dance indeed was a ritualized activity for Duncan, and this is why none of her imitators ever gained Duncan's approval. Ritualization is, as Bell argues, “a way of acting that is designed and orchestrated to distinguish and privilege what is being done,” and Duncan's imitators never understood the 'way of acting' that Duncan 'orchestrated.’²⁸³

Examining the ritualization of dance in the lives of Fuller and Duncan allows us the space to understand that dance does indeed provide a setting for religious experience. As Bell emphasizes, ritualization does not automatically equate to religion or religious experience.²⁸⁴ However, ritualization can give us insight as to how religious experience emerges. Ritualized activities move people across the threshold of the everyday and offer them the opportunity to engage with that which they consider ultimately important and/or meaningful from within the same world that they see these objects, ideas, and beliefs as originating. The question that remains, then, in the cases of Fuller and Duncan, is: did dance, as a ritualized activity, serve as a religious experience, and, if so, what part of this activity constitutes as 'religious'?

Dance and Desire: Locating the Divine

In 1902, psychologist William James (1842-1910) was intrigued by religious experience. Considering the myriad new religious embeddings and disembeddings taking place around him, this comes as no surprise. Indeed, in his *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), he discusses the religious experiences of many of Fuller's and Duncan's contemporaries, including their points-of-contacts, such as Theosophists Annie

Besant and Madame Blavatsky and Walt Whitman.²⁸⁵ With overwhelming examples of religious experiences occurring in spaces both inside institutional constructs and outside of them, James believed one uniform definition of religion could never explain these diverse experiences happening among people with radically different belief structures. In other words, James believed religion could not be reduced to a single, specific cause. Instead, James saw religion as having multiple forms and appearances, defining it as, “the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider divine.”²⁸⁶ Thus, for James, religious experience was synonymous with religion.

Unlike James, I am unprepared to make this leap from religious experience to religion, but, nonetheless, I find his consideration of experience key in understanding how Fuller's and Duncan's dances were, if performed correctly, religious experiences.²⁸⁷ As explored in the previous sections, Fuller and Duncan danced in solitude – even when performing in front of others – for only they could create and occupy their danced worlds. What is left to understand, then, is what they believed the divine to be. James, foreseeing the possible problems his listeners and readers might find in trying to identify the divine, defined it as that which a person perceives as fundamentally godlike. James explains further,

For one thing, gods are conceived to be first things in the way of being and power. They overarch and envelop, and from them there is no escape. What relates to them is the first and last word in the way of truth. Whatever then were most primal and enveloping and deeply true might at this rate be treated as godlike, and a man's religion might thus be identified with his attitude, whatever it might be, towards what he felt to be the primal truth.²⁸⁸

James sees the 'divine' as a site in which a person all-encompassingly experiences his or her version of fundamental truth and power. For Fuller, her divine consistently remained

'motion.' She saw it as the highest truth, and she understood it as a powerful spiritual force. Duncan's divine, on the other hand, changed; she believed in the power of one's soul as that which is most driving, and, at other times, she saw nature as the most pervasive force. Sometimes, these two ideas interacted, where the soul expressed natural proclivities, and, at other times, she emphasized one idea over another. What remains is that her divine was informed by the spiritual and religious ideas she engaged with, such as humanism and Transcendentalism, and dance served as a site to experience these ideas, in the "solitude" of her created world.

Thus far, I have considered how Fuller's and Duncan's dances were ritualized and engaged with Fuller's and Duncan's concepts of the divine, as understood by James. What is missing, however, is a consideration of how the divine and the ritualized dance overlap. Through ritualization, their dances became sites of the extraordinary and of the most real. Through their engagement with their various points-of-contact, Fuller and Duncan consciously embedded in those ideas they believed to be 'divine.' Where does their divine enter, then, in their created and inhabited worlds of movement? These worlds, with their specialness and heightened reality, seem to be the ideal place for the divine to emerge, but, as only Fuller and Duncan could create their dancing worlds, their divine must also emerge from within them.

José Gil explains this process of the dancer's emergent body by framing dance as the "emptying out" of movement, the process by which interior motivation becomes actualized motion.²⁸⁹ This process of emptying the "interior space" of the body leads to the annihilation of one's organs, thus "[destroying] the organization of the organism."²⁹⁰ In other words, one's body, and, to a greater extent, one's self, is completely freed from

the solidity of the organs, thus shedding all structures and programs included in the framework of the human. This leads to an “interior paradoxical space” that is both empty and “composed of ‘interstitial matter’ ... the matter of becoming,”²⁹¹ meaning that emptiness corresponds with possibilities. As the dancing body “becomes,” its nature for emptying continuously pushes these possibilities to the surface. Yet, what drives this becoming, and what, exactly, empties from this Body-without-Organs? For Gil, the answer is desire, a word which he connects with the verb “to assemble.”²⁹² To assemble is to create, like a painter mixing colors or a poet composing rhymes. “To desire,” Gil argues, “is already to start building ... a space or plane where desire can flow and unfold its power.”²⁹³

Therefore, if Fuller desired motion, then her danced world became imbued with motion, and if Duncan desired nature, soul, or beauty, then her danced world became a plane of immanent nature, soul, or beauty. As evidenced by the contacts, encounters, ideas, and feelings that shaped their understanding of their dances, Fuller and Duncan saw the dance as a place to engage with their divines, and, when those divines became the impetus for movement, the divines merged with the desires needed to motivate the body to dance. Their divines were their desires, and, as Fuller and Duncan danced, their divines became uniquely real in the world created through the dance. Therefore, Fuller and Duncan separated from the ordinary world and engaged in the extraordinary through their danced processes of ritualization; then, through their desires, they filled this world with their divines – with their understandings of and believes in the spiritual and religious matters they engaged with throughout their lives.

Dance *was* a religious experience for Fuller and Duncan. Like other modern

movers, such as Madame Blavatsky and William Norman Guthrie, Fuller and Duncan dynamically embedded and disembedded with religious and spiritual ideas, and, like Blavatsky, Guthrie, and many more, they created an experience that encompassed all of the embeddings they deemed valuable and true. However, unlike Guthrie, Blavatsky, Charles and Myrtle Fillmore, and A.B. Simpson, Fuller and Duncan did not attempt to create or change an already established religion. They worked not in churches or with doctrines, with deities or spirits; instead, they danced, and, in so doing, their divines became an undeniable, pervasive, and real presence in their danced worlds.

Conclusion:
Prolonging the Final Bow, Yearning for the Encore

Awareness, Attention, Letting Go ... An Improvisational Exercise

“Alright, dancers, we're going to start class with a little improvisational exercise today,” I stated, gazing at the dancers in my modern dance class, noting that while some of them looked excited, others looked as if I announced that class would be starting with one hundred push-ups. I held up a small plastic bag, filled with small slips of folded white paper. They looked at me – some curious, some dubious. I walked to the center of the studio and ceremoniously dumped the contents of the bag on the floor. “On each of these slips of paper,” I began, “there is a body part written down, such as right hand or left knee. I'll start the improvisation by drawing the first body part. Then, you focus on initiating your movement with that part. For example, if you draw 'right shoulder,' you might ...” I suspended my instructions as I demonstrated allowing my right shoulder to initiate my movement – a forward right shoulder roll causes me to fall forward, a right shoulder shrug sends both my left shoulder and head down to the left.

“However,” I continued, “Anyone of you can draw a new slip at any time. When you do, read it out loud, and, from that point forward, that is the body part you must initiate movement with ... until someone decides to draw a new slip. The point of this is to develop an awareness on many levels. First, you really have to focus in on that single body part in order to explore the variety of ways it can move. How much range of motion can you find in your ankle? What happens if you roll it forward? What happens if you move it slowly? Quickly? Second, you begin to explore new avenues of movement. Often, when we begin to choreograph or improvise, we automatically pull from more

familiar movements – jumps, turns, runs. Yet, when you concentrate on allowing a single body part to initiate your movement, you begin to organically flow into movements that are not-so-familiar. By shifting your focus, you begin to unearth a multitude of new movements. Finally, third, you might get annoyed, and that's part of your awareness, as well. Sometimes, we find ourselves in a really great flow when, all of a sudden, someone else draws a new body part. Then, you *have* to change, and you might not like that – you might want to protest – No, that's too soon! Simply note that annoyance, then let it go, for there will *always* be another part to explore, and, once this exploration is done, you can go home and explore further with the part that moved you. Alright, any questions?"

The dancers shook their heads. "Okay, then," I bent down and picked up a slip of paper, "First body part – head!" I stepped back to watch. A couple of the dancers seemed a bit uncomfortable, moving their heads in small, unfocused motions. Other dancers jumped right into the activity and began traveling across the floor, using the weight of their heads to pull them forward, backwards, and side-to-side. After two minutes, no one had yet picked a new slip. They all seemed to be eying each other, trying to decide whether everyone was ready. I realized that they were trying to be polite with each other ... but dancing is not always polite, sometimes you *have* to change directions before you think you are ready. Finally, a dancer picked a new slip, drawing "right shoulder." Another minute passed before another dancer chose something different. In a ten-minute period, only about six body parts were chosen. I watched dancer after dancer approach the pile of paper slips uneasily, shifting their eyes to each dancer, trying to ascertain whether they would be upset by the change.

Finally, in the last three minutes of the improvisation, the changes began to be

spaced closer together. Dancers no longer appeared to hesitantly approach the paper pile. Instead, they approached with confidence, knowing that it was, in fact, safe and acceptable for them to choose another body part before the other dancers were ready, for this too was part of the improvisation – this process of letting go with no goodbye, of immediately welcoming a new bodily prime mover, of longingly looking back while faithfully moving forward. As I watched them, I felt a sense of both beauty and sorrow. I saw the beauty of exploration, and I observed a sense of reverence for the seemingly-infinite movement options located in a single joint, tendon, or muscle. Then, I saw a sorrow for lost possibilities, found at those moments of transition where they must discard a movement on the verge of completion – the seeming unfairness of being denied a concluding gesture. The beginning of movement with a new initiating body part also encompassed the farewell to the previous part – when an ending is never granted, the only space for a 'goodbye' is in the new beginning.

When the improvisation ended, I asked the dancers to do a 'check-in' with their bodies – to note the areas that felt stretched, energetic, and ready for more movement and to note the areas that felt tight, bound, and unused. Then, I asked them to notice their feelings regarding the differing states of their bodies. When I asked them for feedback regarding the improvisation, one dancer replied, “It was really interesting to move a part of my body that I never really think about moving – not specifically or in detail, at least. It made me excited about choreographing my next solo!” Another dancer stated, “I feel incomplete. Part of me feels like demanding that we continue the improvisation until every single body part has had a chance to initiate. I know that wouldn't really work time-wise, but I feel so disjointed, like I have two bodies almost – the one that moved and the

one that didn't.”

As I listened to them speak, I reflected on my purpose for creating the improvisation. I never intended for the dancers to move through every single body part; instead, I wanted to create an experience that allowed the dancers to interact with their bodies differently and become aware of new movement possibilities. I viewed the dancers' desire to continue the improvisation as evidence of its success – regardless of whether they enjoyed the improvisation or became frustrated with it, they had to move differently, and, until one moves differently, one never knows that other movement possibilities exist. I reminded the dancers of this after the final dancer finished sharing her experience. “There are so many different ways to move,” I stated, “every subtle change in your habitual movement can lead to countless expanses of your movement vocabulary, and you can explore these changes at any times. In fact, you can make these cards at home and do the improvisation on your own. However, now ...,” I smiled, “we need to continue with the rest of our warm-up.”

Of Endings and Entireties

Endings are not synonymous with completion; an end does not demonstrate the attainment of all knowledge, nor does it suggest that all possibilities have been explored. Here, in this ending, I feel a hesitance to let go; like the dancers in my class, I am frustrated that I did not explore all the options available. Questions still abound: How do Fuller's and Duncan's experiences change or help develop our understandings of women's religious experiences at the turn of the twentieth century? Specifically, how might their experiences coincide with the Spiritualist women outlined in Braude's *Radical Spirits* or

the women in the early New Thought movement, as discussed in Beryl Satter's *Each Mind a Kingdom* (1999)?²⁹⁴ Did other dancers during this time share similar experiences? How did Fuller and Duncan view audiences, and how did audiences view them? Did their audiences have a religious experience, as well? What does it mean for a religious experience to be both a component of a performance yet deeply personal? What does it mean for an experience to be witnessed?

In addition to these general questions, I am deeply interested in how changes in Fuller's and Duncan's life influenced their relationship to dance. How did Fuller's eight-year romantic and collaborative relationship with Gabrielle Bloch, sixteen years her junior, influence her perceptions of herself and her art? After all, 'Gab,' in many ways, idolized Fuller, once writing of her, "Soul of the flowers, soul of the sky, soul of flame, Loie Fuller has given them to us. Words and phrases avail nothing. She has created the soul of the dance, for until Loie Fuller came the dance was without soul!"²⁹⁵ How did Bloch's support change, strengthen, and/or influence Fuller's dance? How did her children's drowning deaths in 1913 affect Duncan's will to dance? Duncan became deeply depressed, even suicidal, after their deaths. Shortly after their deaths, Duncan wrote, in a letter to Craig's wife, "I feel as if *I* had died with them- what is here left seems such a poor shadow- what shall I do with it- all my life gone- and my work too- for how shall I ever *dance* again- how stretch out my arms except in desolation."²⁹⁶ Duncan connected movement and dance to the highest expression of life, and, suddenly, she no longer wanted to experience life. She wrote to her pupils, after her children's deaths, "I have reached such high peaks flooded with light, but my soul had no strength to live there—and no one has realized the horrible torture from which I have tried to escape."²⁹⁷ Yet,

Duncan did dance again, and she never stopped believing in its importance for the education of her pupils. Why is this? What does this suggest when one can no longer bear to have an experience yet deems this experience vitally important for the development of beauty and love in the lives of others?

These are questions that hover at the boundaries of this project, and, while I hope to explore them in the future, I must find contentment with the efforts I have made thus far. Through examining the intersection of dance, religion, spirituality, and modernity in the lives of Loie Fuller and Isadora Duncan, I stepped closer to understanding how dance can serve as a site for religious experience and making meaning. I fulfilled my original intention – to explore the question: Can dancing be a religious experience? Yet, I only asked this of two dancers, and I find myself wanting to ask the same questions of contemporary ecstatic dancers in a Midwestern city and of krumpers in South Central Los Angeles. I wonder how the continued consideration of this question might lead to a more collaborative approach between religious studies and dance studies. How can religious studies scholars learn more about the nature and/or function of religion through the study of dance, and how might dance studies scholars gain a deeper sense of the subjective experiences of both dancers and choreographers through considering dancers' and choreographers' religious connections, beliefs, and ideas?

Of course, I am also hesitant to end this project because it has personally affected me. I began to venture out into the dance world again as I researched and interacted with Fuller and Duncan. Their commitment to their dance forms and their complete disregard of critics who considered them too “fat,” “plump,” “unattractive,” and/or “bloated” to dance inspired me to return to dance on my own terms. I always felt that I had something

to say about dance – about its importance and who has the right to dance, and I always felt that dance offered me a way to express ideas and concepts much larger than myself. Through choreographing and dancing, I could imagine fantastic worlds, explore emotions, feelings, and thoughts I did not know how to verbally express, and find wisdom through movement. Eventually, though, I came to the conclusion that few wanted to hear my thoughts on dance and/or see my dances.

While Fuller and Duncan are certainly not the sole reasons for my return to dance, they are one of the reasons. Now, when I teach dance, I endeavor to build dancers up instead of breaking them down, I encourage them to bring their life experiences into their dancing, and I stress that their dancing experience is uniquely their own – and that my dance class is a safe place to have that experience. I tell them that no matter their technical level, their dancing is important and valued because no one else can dance like them ... and, as much as I am saying these things to my students, I am also saying them to myself.

Fuller and Duncan were not technically brilliant dancers, but, through their creativity, dedication, and sense of purpose, they changed the world of dance, and their efforts led to the development of modern dance. Although certainly their efforts were aided by the prevalence of similar experiences of creative disembeddings and embeddings among their contemporaries, they still faced their share of critics; yet, they consistently believed in the importance of their dances, despite critics, life-changing events, and failing health. To be clear, I do not strive to emulate them artistically, personally, or professionally; I do, however, look to them and am reminded that I am a dancer, and no one can take this away from me, and, in this way, my improvisational

interactions with them will never end. Thus, as I instructed the dancers in my class to go home and do the improvisation on their own, I am leaving this project and even this university, but this improvisation – this dance – with Fuller and Duncan will continue wherever I go.

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- ¹ Sara Pearson, interviewed by Rachel Vigier, in Rachel Vigier, *Gestures of Genius: Women, Dance, and the Body* (Stratford, Ontario: Mercury Press, 1994), 196.
- ² Marilyn Bordwell, as quoted in Sondra Horton Fraleigh, *Dancing Identity: Metaphysics in Motion* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004), 69.
- ³ Kimerer L. La Mothe, "Passionate Madonna: The Christian Turn of American Dancer Ruth St. Denis," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 66, no. 4 (Winter 1998): 747-769.
- ⁴ Irit Averbuch, "Shamanic Dance in Japan: The Choreography of Possession in Kagura Performance," *Asian Folklore Studies* 57, no. 2 (1998): 293-329; Kathy Foley, "The Dancer and the Danced: Trance Dance and Theatrical Performance in West Java," *Asian Theatre Journal* 2, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 28-49.
- ⁵ See, for example, Susan Bauer, "Dance as Performance Fine Art in Liturgy," Valerie DeMarinis, "Movement as Mediator of Meaning: An Investigation of the Pyschosocial and Spiritual Function of Dance in Sacred Liturgy," Carla De Sola, "... And the Word Became Dance: A Theory and Practice of Liturgical Dance," and Judith Rock, "Dance, Texts, and Shrines," in *Dance as Religious Studies*, eds. Doug Adams and Diane Apostolos-Cappadona (New York, N.Y: Crossroad Pub. Co, 1990).
- ⁶ Wayne Proudfoot, *Religious Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 155.
- ⁷ Ann Taves, *Religious Experience Reconsidered: A Building Block Approach to the Study of Religion and Other Special Things* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2009), 4-8.
- ⁸ Ann Taves, *Fits, Trances, & Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1999).
- ⁹ Theresa Grillo, as quoted in Sherene Razack, *Looking White People in the Eye: Gender, Race, and Culture in Courtrooms and Classrooms* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 157.
- ¹⁰ José Gil, *Metamorphoses of the Body*, trans. Stephen Muecke (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 167.
- ¹¹ Taves, *Religious Experience*, 21.
- ¹² While Duncan and Fuller created new styles of dance that broke from the balletic and popular dance mold, there was no such thing as modern dance at the time in which they actively danced and performed. Modern dance, as sociologist Helen Thomas explains, "refers to performance art dance that is not founded on the *danse d'école* (ballet) nor in the various forms of popular dance entertainment." While Fuller's and Duncan's dances certainly 'fit' Thomas' description, one must remember that modern dance is a specific art form - one in which Fuller and Duncan did not operate in. *Dance, Modernity, and Culture: Explorations in the Sociology of Dance* (London: Routledge, 1995), 24.
- ¹³ Marcia Ewing Current and Richard Nelson Current, *Loie Fuller: Goddess of Light* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1997), 11-15.
- ¹⁴ Loie Fuller, *Fifteen Years of a Dancer's Life: With Some Account of Her Distinguished Friends* (Boston: Small, Maynard & Company, 1913), 33.
- ¹⁵ Current and Current, 63-4, 85, 153-4.
- ¹⁶ Linda J Tomko, *Dancing Class: Gender, Ethnicity, and Social Divides in American Dance, 1890-1920* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 41-2.
- ¹⁷ This will be explored further in Chapter 2.

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- ¹⁸ Isadora Duncan, *My Life* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corp, 1927), 75.
- ¹⁹ Nora Ambrosio, *Learning About Dance: An Introduction to Dance as an Artform and Entertainment*, 2nd ed. (Dubuque, Ia: Kendall/Hunt, 1997), 86.
- ²⁰ Jack Anderson, *Art Without Boundaries: The World of Modern Dance* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1997), 10; Ambrosio, 86.
- ²¹ Sharon E. Friedler, "Fire and Ice: Female Archetypes in American Modern Dance," in *Dancing Female: Lives and Issues of Women in Contemporary Dance*, eds. Sharon E. Friedler and Susan Glazer (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic, 1997), 109.
- ²² Nancy Ammerman, "Introduction" in *Everyday Religion: Observing Modern Religious Lives*, ed. Nancy Ammerman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 5.
- ²³ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 37-9.
- ²⁴ George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 117.
- ²⁵ Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, *The Primacy of Movement* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Pub, 1999), 485.
- ²⁶ Robert A Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), xxvii.
- ²⁷ The names of the improvisers are those of my fellow Religious Studies graduate students. All names and likenesses are used with permission. I wished to incorporate them into the process, as they have been metaphorically dancing with me this past year throughout this process.
- ²⁸ See Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 1-7 and Paul Heelas, "Introduction: On Differentiation and Dedifferentiation," in *Religion, Modernity, and Postmodernity*, ed. Paul Heelas (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 1-2.
- ²⁹ See Kelly Besecke, "Speaking of Meaning in Modernity: Reflexive Spirituality as a Cultural Resource," *Sociology of Religion* 62, no. 3 (2001): 365-6, Ferguson 1-19, Giddens 1-17, and Heelas 1-4.
- ³⁰ Harvie Ferguson, *Modernity and Subjectivity: Body, Soul, Spirit* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 11.
- ³¹ Ferguson, 3.
- ³² Ferguson, 12.
- ³³ While I find Ferguson's premises fascinating, I am not completely comfortable in the argument that subjectivism did not arise until the Enlightenment, nor am I convinced that 'pre-moderns' lacked the propensity to move. Nonetheless, his argument is important for the sake of this particular narrative of modernity. As will come to light further in this chapter, this particular version of modernity is itself a myth.
- ³⁴ Nancy Tomes, *The Gospel of Germs: Men, Women, and the Microbe in American Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 6.
- ³⁵ Edwin Gaustad and Leigh Schmidt, *The Religious History of America: the Heart of the American Story*

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- from *Colonial Times to Today* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002), 209.
- ³⁶ Søren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or: A Fragment of Life* (London, England: Penguin Books, 1992), 44.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 53.
- ³⁸ Ferguson, 133.
- ³⁹ Kierkegaard, 45.
- ⁴⁰ G. N Cantor and Sally Shuttleworth, "Introduction" in *Science Serialized: Representations of the Sciences in Nineteenth-Century Periodicals*, eds. Cantor and Shuttleworth (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004), 2.
- ⁴¹ William Whewell, *The Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences: Founded Upon Their History, Volume I* (London: J. W. Parker, 1840), 14.
- ⁴² Max Weber, "Science as Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, trans. Hans H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), at *Weberian Sociology of Religion*, http://www.ne.jp/asahi/moriyuki/abukuma/weber/lecture/science_frame.html. (*italics in original*)
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁴ By 'religion,' Weber speaks specifically of Christianity and people's belief in and reliance on God.
- ⁴⁵ George Santayana, "Reason in Religion," in *The Life of Reason, or the Phases of Human Progress* (1905) (New York: Dover Publications, 1980), at *Project Gutenberg*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/15000/15000-h/vol3.html>.
- ⁴⁶ Bliss Carman, "Santayana," *New York Times*, January 27, 1906, p. BR45.
- ⁴⁷ Irène Dean Paul, "Musings," *Music & Letters* 3, no. 4 (1922): 407. Dean Paul was also known as Poldowski. Conversely, Santayana noted that "the man who would emancipate art from discipline and reason is trying to elude rationality, not merely in art, but in all existence." Santayana claimed that to disengage from rationality was to operate in the foolish (and illusive) realm of "self-sufficiency." Santayana, "Reason in Art," in *The Life of Reason, or the Phases of Human Progress* (1905) (New York: Dover Publications, 1980), at *Project Gutenberg*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/15000/15000-h/vol4.html>.
- ⁴⁸ Rudolf Eucken, *The Life of the Spirit: An Introduction to Philosophy*, 2nd ed., trans. F.L. Pogson (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1909), 87.
- ⁴⁹ Santayana cannot be placed with the others – he is excited about the turn to rationality.
- ⁵⁰ Marcel Gauchet, *The Disenchantment of the World: A Political History of Religion*, trans. Oscar Burge (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 4.
- ⁵¹ Leszek Kołakowski, *Modernity on Endless Trial* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 72.
- ⁵² Here, Kołakowski does not critically support this view, but he does believe in its pervasive existence in the modern world.
- ⁵³ James A Beckford, *Religion and Advanced Industrial Society* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 12.
- ⁵⁴ Cristina Bacchilega, *Postmodern Fairy Tales: Gender and Narrative Strategies* (Philadelphia:

University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 5.

- ⁵⁵ Here, it is interesting to consider the idea of “multiple modernities.” This notion recognizes that the Western construct of modernization is not the only way to experience modernity. As scholar S.N. Eisenstadt notes, “The idea of multiple modernities presumes that the best way to understand the contemporary world is to see it as a story of continual constitution and reconstitution of a multiplicity of cultural programs.” In other words, modernity fluctuates, shifts, and rises in multiple ways in (and within) different cultures. Thus, not only can a specific culture experience modernity differently than another culture, those within the culture might drastically see and experience modernity in radically different ways. S.N. Eisenstadt, “Multiple Modernities,” *Daedalus* 129, no. 1 (2000): 2.
- ⁵⁶ L. Frank Baum practiced spiritualism. See Rebecca Loncraine, *The Real Wizard of Oz: The Life and Times of L. Frank Baum* (New York: Gotham Books, 2009). Additionally, Baum offered an intriguing observation on the intersection of modernity and imagination in the introduction to *The Lost Princess of Oz* (1917): “Imagination has brought mankind through the Dark Ages to its present state of civilization. Imagination led Columbus to discover America. Imagination led Franklin to discover electricity. Imagination has given us the steam engine, the telephone, the talking machine and the automobile, for these things had to be dreamed of before they became realities. So I believe that dreams--day dreams, you know, with your eyes wide open and your brain-machinery whizzing--are likely to lead to the betterment of the world. The imaginative child will become the imaginative man or woman most apt to create, to invent, and therefore to foster civilization.”
- ⁵⁷ “Mrs. Burnett and the Occult,” *New York Times*, October 12, 1913, p. BR542. In this article, Burnett also states that she is “not a Christian Scientist, ... an advocate of New Thought, ... disciple of the Yogi teaching, ... a Buddhist, ... a Mohammedan, ... a follower of Confucius. Yet I am all of these things.”
- ⁵⁸ Dee Reynolds, *Symbolist Aesthetics and Early Abstract Art: Sites of Imaginary Space* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 5-6.
- ⁵⁹ See Simon During, *Modern Enchantments: The Cultural Power of Secular Magic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).
- ⁶⁰ During, 152. Interestingly, during this time, hypnotism also became an explanation used by criminals to explain their ‘innocence.’
- ⁶¹ Unfortunately, Landy and Saler fail to specifically define what they mean by religion. I summarize what they mean by religion through considering what they think has been lost from the modern world (such as “creeds” and “God”). Additionally, they reject new religions, such as spiritualism as part of the re-enchantment narrative, considering them that which seeks to “replace the old” rather than create a new experience that speaks to new needs for the modern individual. Joshua Landy and Michael T. Saler, “Introduction: The Varieties of Modern Enchantment” in *The Re-Enchantment of the World: Secular Magic in a Rational Age*, eds. Landy and Saler (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 2.
- ⁶² Ibid.
- ⁶³ Ibid., 1.
- ⁶⁴ “Spirituality in Ministers,” *New York Times*, Feb 15, 1881, p. 3.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶⁶ Nora Batchelor, “The Soul’s Inalienable Right,” *Mind* 11 (1902): 299. For more information on the rise of spirituality at this time, see Jeremy Carrette and Richard King, *Selling Spirituality: The Silent Takeover of Religion* (London: Routledge, 2005) and Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Restless Souls: The Making of American Spirituality: From Emerson to Oprah* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2005).

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- ⁶⁷ Which, of course, included the option to be disenchanted.
- ⁶⁸ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 151.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid., 152-3.
- ⁷¹ Ibid., 164.
- ⁷² Ibid., 159.
- ⁷³ Of course, whether one's specialization does fulfill a societal debt is a matter of interpretation. For example, while many critics lauded Isadora Duncan for her contribution to the arts, others criticized her harshly for, what they perceived as, a distasteful display of the female body and a detriment to the art of dance.
- ⁷⁴ Ibid., 28.
- ⁷⁵ I use 'items' here very loosely – this can be a physical item or a mental item, such as a piece of knowledge.
- ⁷⁶ Giddens, 22.
- ⁷⁷ Ibid., 27-8.
- ⁷⁸ Susan Leigh Foster, "Taken by Surprise: Improvisation in Dance and Mind" in *Taken by Surprise: A Dance Improvisation Reader*, eds. Ann Cooper Albright and David Gere (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 2003), 3.
- ⁷⁹ Jane Bennett, *The Enchantment of Modern Life: Attachments, Crossings, and Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 4-5.
- ⁸⁰ "Reinvigoration of Religion Will Come Through Art," *New York Times*, June 9, 1912, p. SM2.
- ⁸¹ See Tisa J. Wenger, "The Practice of Worship for the Future of Christianity: 'Eurythmic Worship in New York's Roaring Twenties'" in *Practicing Protestants: Histories of Christian Life in America, 1630-1965*, eds. Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp, Leigh E. Schmidt, and Mark Valeri (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 222-49 and T.R. Ybarra, "Churches as Play Places," *New York Times*, February 20, 1921, p. XX2.
- ⁸² "Dr. Guthrie Stirs Throng by Defense," *New York Times*, December 17, 1923, p. 1.
- ⁸³ "Guthrie Upholds Rites of Paganism," *New York Times*, December 10, 1923, p. 6.
- ⁸⁴ Ibid.
- ⁸⁵ Heather D. Curtis, *Faith in the Great Physician: Suffering and Divine Healing in American Culture, 1860-1900* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 172.
- ⁸⁶ Ibid., 173 and "Preaching to the Masses," *New York Times*, January 2, 1882, p. 8.
- ⁸⁷ Curtis, 174.

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- ⁸⁸ Lillian Taiz, "The Salvation Army Adapts Popular Culture in Spreading its Gospel," in *Major Problems in American Religious History: Documents and Essays*, 1st ed., ed. Patrick Allitt (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), 255.
- ⁸⁹ Curtis, 170-1.
- ⁹⁰ Charles Cullis, as quoted in James William Opp, *The Lord for the Body: Religion, Medicine and Protestant Faith Healing in Canada, 1880-1930* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 51.
- ⁹¹ A.B. Simpson, as quoted in Albert Edward Thompson, *The Life of A.B. Simpson*, official authorized ed. (Harrisburg: Christian Publications Inc., 1920), 78.
- ⁹² Heather D. Curtis, "Acting Faith': Practices of Religious Healing in Late-Nineteenth-Century Protestantism" in *Practicing Protestants*, 139.
- ⁹³ *Ibid.*, 158.
- ⁹⁴ Consider, for instance, city-wide health scares, such as the repeated cholera epidemics in the nineteenth century and the 1918 influenza pandemic. At this point, germ theory was still an emerging science, and physicians were relatively powerless to stop these outbreaks. For more information, see: Alfred W Crosby, *America's Forgotten Pandemic: The Influenza of 1918*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) and Charles E Rosenberg, *The Cholera Years: The United States in 1832, 1849, and 1866* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). Additionally, as sociologist William Rothstein argues, the independent practitioner model in nineteenth-century America caused physicians to fiercely compete with each other for clients. If clients felt that a particular physician was not producing positive results, they could easily replace the physician with another independent practitioner. This caused several physicians to prescribe treatments that led to quick, short-term results instead of slower courses of treatment that resulted in a more-sustained state of positive health. William G Rothstein, *American Physicians in the Nineteenth Century: From Sects to Science* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), 13.
- ⁹⁵ Catherine L Albanese, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit: A Cultural History of American Metaphysical Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 13-14.
- ⁹⁶ Catherine L. Albanese, "The Subtle Energies of Spirit: Explorations in Metaphysical and New Age Spirituality," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 67, no. 2 (June 1999): 309.
- ⁹⁷ Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America* (Boston, Mass: Beacon Press, 1989), 4.
- ⁹⁸ Georgiana Houghton, *Evenings at Home in Spiritual Séance* (London: E.W. Allen, 1882), 1-3.
- ⁹⁹ Albanese, *Republic*, 271-3.
- ¹⁰⁰ Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Restless Souls: The Making of American Spirituality*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005), 158-9.
- ¹⁰¹ Helena Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled: A Master-Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology*, 6th ed. (New York: J.W. Bouton, 1893): xviii.
- ¹⁰² *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰³ This is not to say, however, that *all* art is spiritual; certain techniques must be engaged. For further discussion of these techniques, see: Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art, and Painting in*

Particular (1912), trans. Francis Golfing et al. (New York: Wittenborn, Schultz, 1947).

- ¹⁰⁴ Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, 1875 (Boston: The Writings of Mary Baker Eddy, 1994): 177.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 188.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 202.
- ¹⁰⁷ Technically, Christian Science descendents, such as the ones discussed in this paragraph, would not be considered Christian Science today. However, during the late 19th century, this term was used to connote all mental science/divine science movements. Differentiations in terminology only started to become distinct at the turn of the twentieth century as Eddy fervently fought against what she saw as the perversion of her teachings.
- ¹⁰⁸ Myrtle Fillmore, as quoted in Gail Harley, "New Thought and the Harmonial Family," in *America's Alternative Religions*, ed. Timothy Miller (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 327.
- ¹⁰⁹ Charles Fillmore, *The Twelve Powers of Man* (1930) (Unity Village, MO: Unity House, 1999): 166. Fillmore began developing his teachings of the Twelve Powers in 1912. However, it was not published as a complete series until 1920 in *Unity Magazine* and was not published as a stand-alone book until 1930.
- ¹¹⁰ See, for example, Albanese, *Republic*; Braude, *Radical Spirits*; Joy Dixon, *Divine Feminine: Theosophy and Feminism in England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); Stephen Prothero, "From Spiritualism to Theosophy: "Uplifting" a Democratic Tradition," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 3, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 197-216; Beryl Satter, *Each Mind a Kingdom: American Women, Sexual Purity, and the New Thought Movement, 1875-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Schmidt, *Restless Souls*.
- ¹¹¹ Thomas A. Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2006), 5.
- ¹¹² *Ibid.*, 54.
- ¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 123.
- ¹¹⁴ Steve Paxton, as quoted in Cheryl Pallant, *Contact Improvisation: An Introduction to a Vitalizing Dance Form* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2006), 10.
- ¹¹⁵ Ann Cooper Albright, "Present Tense: Contact Improvisation at Twenty-Five," in *Taken By Surprise*, 206.
- ¹¹⁶ Helen Thomas, *Dance, Modernity, and Culture: Explorations in the Sociology of Dance* (London: Routledge, 1995), 56.
- ¹¹⁷ Sandra K Sagala, *Buffalo Bill on Stage* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008), 222.
- ¹¹⁸ Elizabeth Kendall, *Where She Danced*, 1st ed. (New York: Knopf, 1979), 12.
- ¹¹⁹ "Isadora Duncan Off Will Never Return," *New York Times*, February 4, 1923, p. 15. As an interesting aside, in this article, Duncan denounces Prohibition and the bootleggers for causing America to produce inferior alcohol. Claiming that it could kill an elephant, Duncan announces that she would rather have the "black bread and vodka" of Russia.

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- ¹²⁰ Although I found no concrete reason for this discrepancy, I believe that it might be the result of a friend or relative of Fuller's 'correcting' her recollection after the original publication.
- ¹²¹ Loie Fuller, *Fifteen Years of a Dancer's Life: With Some Account of Her Distinguished Friends* (Boston: Small, Maynard, 1913), 20-24; Loie Fuller, "My First Appearance on Stage," *The Theatre* 3 (1888), 8.
- ¹²² Fuller, *Fifteen Years*, 24.
- ¹²³ Richard Nelson Current and Marcia Ewing Current, *Loie Fuller: Goddess of Light* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1997), 8.
- ¹²⁴ Rhonda K Garelick, *Electric Salome: Loie Fuller's Performance of Modernism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 21-23.
- ¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.
- ¹²⁶ Current and Current, 8.
- ¹²⁷ Fuller, *Fifteen Years*, 20.
- ¹²⁸ Fuller, "My First Appearance."
- ¹²⁹ Fuller, *Fifteen Years*, 22.
- ¹³⁰ Garelick, 22.
- ¹³¹ Logie Barrow, "Socialism in Eternity: The Ideology of Plebeian Spiritualists, 1853-1913," *History Workshop*, no. 9 (Spring 1980): 56.
- ¹³² Andrew Jackson Davis, *The Children's Progressive Lyceum: A Manual* (Boston: Colby & Rich, 1893), 10-20. Davis is often referred to as the creator of philosophical Spiritualism, or harmonialism, as opposed to séance Spiritualism (Albanese, *Republic*, 218).
- ¹³³ *Ibid.*, 18-19.
- ¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 17.
- ¹³⁵ Garelick, 23.
- ¹³⁶ Garelick, for example, argues that Fuller had no training (3), while Current and Current argue that her father ran a ballroom dance academy and passed his skills on to his daughter (13).
- ¹³⁷ Albright, 18; Current and Current, 30-1; Garelick, 27-8. Skirt dancers, wearing flowing, billowy skirts, performed a variety of waltzing and balletic steps while undulating the skirt with the movement of their hands, arms, and torsos (Albright, 18).
- ¹³⁸ John Ernest Crawford Fitch, *Modern Dancing and Dancers* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1912), 74-5.
- ¹³⁹ Albright, 15; Garelick, 3.
- ¹⁴⁰ Davis, 148.
- ¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 148-9.

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- ¹⁴² Interestingly, at the time when Fuller began her solo performances, Spiritualism's heyday was in the past. No longer a source for popular entertainment or a meeting place for reformers, Spiritualism faced increasingly lapsing numbers during the 1890s. This suggests that although Spiritualism did emerge in modernity, it did not remain 'modern.' See Braude, 192-3.
- ¹⁴³ Davis, 17.
- ¹⁴⁴ George B. Wehner, *A Curious Life* (New York: H. Liveright, 1929), 370-1.
- ¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 370.
- ¹⁴⁶ Ella Sterling Mighels, *Life and Letters of a Forty-Niner's Daughter* (San Francisco: Harr Wagner Publishing Company, 1929), 105.
- ¹⁴⁷ Davis, 160.
- ¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 164.
- ¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 21-2.
- ¹⁵⁰ Fuller, *Fifteen Years*, 66.
- ¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 65-7.
- ¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 67.
- ¹⁵³ A magic lantern is an early form of the slide projector – glass discs were used to project images (or in Fuller's case, colors) onto a stage or screen.
- ¹⁵⁴ Marcus Tindal, "Queen of the Dance: A Special Interview with La Loie Fuller," *Pearson's Magazine* 12 (1901): 598-9.
- ¹⁵⁵ Fuller, *Fifteen Years*, 71.
- ¹⁵⁶ In *Fifteen Years*, Fuller frequently speaks of the hypnotic effect she had on audiences – that she left them mesmerized. For instance, when 'auditioning' for a stage manager, she notes that as he watched her, he moved closer and closer while his eyes began to glimmer (37-8). For an interesting article concerning Fuller, hypnosis, hysteria, and electricity, see Felicia McCarren, "The "Symptomatic Act" circa 1900: Hysteria, Hypnosis, Electricity, Dance," *Critical Inquiry* 21, no. 4 (Summer 1995): 748-774.
- ¹⁵⁷ *Current and Current*, 312. Interestingly, George Wehner remarked that Fuller and Blavatsky were remarkably similar in appearance (370).
- ¹⁵⁸ Stephen Prothero, "From Spiritualism to Theosophy: "Uplifting" a Democratic Tradition," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 3, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 198.
- ¹⁵⁹ Fuller, *Fifteen Years*, 33.
- ¹⁶⁰ Bret E. Carroll, *Spiritualism in Antebellum America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 125. For example, Carroll states, P.T. Barnum invited the infamous Fox sisters to stay at his hotel and 'perform' for guests in 1850.
- ¹⁶¹ Annie Wood Besant and Charles Webster Leadbeater, *Thought-Forms* (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1905), 25-7.

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- ¹⁶² Ibid., 26.
- ¹⁶³ Ibid., 18.
- ¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 19.
- ¹⁶⁵ Tindal, 595. (emphasis mine)
- ¹⁶⁶ “‘La Loie’ Talks of Her Art,” *New York Times*, March 1, 1896, p. 10. This remark also coincides with Russian painter Wassily Kandinsky’s (1866-1944) interest in the effects of color. Kandinsky believed that viewing color can “develop into an experience.” Although once we close our eyes or turn a different direction the color is gone, its ‘impression’ still remains, arousing deeper feelings and sensations. Kandinsky uses a musical metaphor of the piano to clarify this argument. “Color,” he notes, “is the keyboard, the eyes are the hammers, the soul is the piano with many strings. The artist is the hand that plays, touching one key or another purposively, to cause vibrations in the soul.” Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art, and Painting in Particular (1912)*, trans. Francis Golffing et al. (New York: Wittenborn, Schultz, 1947), 43-5.
- ¹⁶⁷ Fuller, *Fifteen Years*, 71.
- ¹⁶⁸ See, for example, Camille Flammarion, *Death and Its Mystery*, trans. Eleanor Stimson Brooks (New York: The Century Co, 1921); Camille Flammarion, *Haunted Houses* (London: T. F. Unwin Ltd, 1924); Camille Flammarion, *Mysterious Psychic Forces: An Account of the Author’s Investigations in Psychical Research* (Boston: Small, Maynard and Company, 1907); Camille Flammarion, *The Unknown (L’inconnu)* (New York: Harper, 1905).
- ¹⁶⁹ Fuller, *Fifteen Years*, 113-7.
- ¹⁷⁰ Camille Flammarion, *Lumen, Experience in the Infinite*, trans. Mary J Serrano (New York: Cassell Publishing Company, 1892), 189 (emphasis in the original).
- ¹⁷¹ Ibid., 110-1.
- ¹⁷² Fuller, *Fifteen Years*, 70-1.
- ¹⁷³ In fact, Fuller responds to the question “What is the dance?” with “It is motion” (Ibid., 70).
- ¹⁷⁴ Most likely, Fuller met Flammarion shortly after her first visit to France in 1892. During her 1896 Parisian tour, Fuller stayed at Flammarion’s country estate in Juvisy-sor-Orge as a guest. “Loie Fuller is Here,” *New York Times*, February 23, 1896, p. 8. This confirmation of beliefs, however, was reciprocal. According to Garelick, “Flammarion ... arranged for Fuller to become a member of the French Astronomical Society for her investigations into the physical properties of light” (7). Additionally, in an 1895 edition of the magazine *Current Opinion*, the “Comings and Goings” section reported that Flammarion was penning the story of a ballet in which Fuller would have the leading part. Although this never became a reality, it demonstrates the degree to which Fuller inspired Flammarion. *Current Opinion* (Current Literature Pub. Co, 1895), 271.
- ¹⁷⁵ Current and Current, 312.
- ¹⁷⁶ Fuller, *Fifteen Years*, 127.
- ¹⁷⁷ John M. Hunisak, “Rodin Rediscovered,” *Art Journal* 41, no. 4 (Winter 1981): 370.
- ¹⁷⁸ Auguste Rodin, as quoted in “Rodin,” *Bulletin of the Art Institute of Chicago* 18, no. 6 (1924): 70.

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- ¹⁷⁹ Albright, 176.
- ¹⁸⁰ Jean d'Orliac, as quoted in Albright, 177.
- ¹⁸¹ Albert Edward Elsen and Rosalyn Frankel Jamison, *Rodin's Art: the Rodin Collection of the Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts at Stanford University*, ed. Bernard Barryte (New York: Oxford University Press US, 2003), 592, 541. Elsen and Jamison note that Rodin supposedly sculpted 12,000 hands and smashed 10,000 of them (592).
- ¹⁸² James Huneker, "Introduction," in Judith Cladel, *Rodin: the Man and His Art, with Leaves from His Notebook* (New York: The Century Co, 1917), x.
- ¹⁸³ Braude, 4. Fuller's experience will serve as the subject for Chapter 3. This chapter simply allowed us to reach that space in which we could talk about her experience from an informed position.
- ¹⁸⁴ Duncan, *My Life*, 11-2.
- ¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.
- ¹⁸⁶ Peter Kurth, *Isadora: A Sensational Life*, 1st ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co, 2001), 5.
- ¹⁸⁷ Duncan, *My Life*, 11-2.
- ¹⁸⁸ Susan Jacoby, *Freethinkers: A History of American Secularism*, 1st ed. (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004), 162-5.
- ¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 169-70.
- ¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 173-4.
- ¹⁹¹ *The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Ethical Movement, 1876-1926* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1926), 95.
- ¹⁹² Jacoby, 178; Henry Theophilus Finck, *Anton Seidl; a Memorial by His Friends* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1899), 181; Thomas D. Schwartz, "Mark Twain and Robert Ingersoll: The Freethought Connection," *American Literature* 48, no. 2 (May 1976): 183. According to fellow nineteenth-century author, William Dean Howells, Twain saw Ingersoll as "an evangel of a new gospel—the gospel of free thought" (Schwartz, 183).
- ¹⁹³ Robert Green Ingersoll, "Art," December 1, 1891 in *The Works of Robert G. Ingersoll: Tributes and Miscellany* (New York: The Dresden Publishing Co., 1915), 137.
- ¹⁹⁴ Interestingly, this greatly corresponds with the interest of Theosophists. Both Ingersoll and Blavatsky believed that the physical world could be influenced through the medium of the mind.
- ¹⁹⁵ Duncan, *My Life*, 165. Duncan's invitation to watch Pavlova rehearse came during a dinner held at Pavlova's house in St. Petersburg. There, she met both Ballets Russes founder Sergei Diaghilev and painter (and costumer/scene designer for the Ballets Russes) Léon Bakst. Interestingly, Duncan claimed that Bakst was clairvoyant and recounted how he read her palm during the dinner and told her, "You will have great glory, but you will lose the two creatures whom you love most on earth" (165). This occurrence serves as one of several events in *My Life* in which Duncan illustrates the forewarnings she received of her children's deaths.
- ¹⁹⁶ Irma Duncan and Allan Ross Macdougall, *Isadora Duncan's Russian Days & Her Last Years in France* (New York: CoviciFriede, 1929), 218.

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- ¹⁹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁹⁸ Isadora Duncan, "A Child Dancing" (1906), in *The Art of the Dance* (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1970), 75.
- ¹⁹⁹ Isadora Duncan, *Art of Dance*, 142.
- ²⁰⁰ Kurth, 167. Interestingly, Duncan chose this location in Grunewald (a forested area in southern Berlin) at the behest of German composer Engelbert Humperdinck, who lived next door to the site.
- ²⁰¹ Adler, in fact, moved in many of the same intellectual circles as Ingersoll and respected Ingersoll a great deal, paring his influence on humanism with that of Thomas Paine and Voltaire. *Fiftieth Anniversary*, 95.
- ²⁰² Adler at one point served as President and Vice-President of the Free Religious Association. Through the RSA, Adler no doubt gained a deep understanding of differing liberal religious views. Ralph Waldo Emerson was the first member of the RSA, and Frederick Douglas also served as Vice-President at one point. See William Potter, *The Free Religious Association : Its Twenty-Five Years and Their Meaning* (Boston: Free Religious Association of America, 1892).
- ²⁰³ Felix Adler, *The Religion of Duty* (New York: McClure, Phillips & Co, 1905), 108.
- ²⁰⁴ Julius Henry Cohen, *They Built Better Than They Knew, Volume 1946* (Freeport, N.Y: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 33.
- ²⁰⁵ Duncan, *My Life*, 75.
- ²⁰⁶ The acknowledgment of the influence of the new humanism on Duncan's dance also serves to challenge Ann Daly's argument that "Duncan projected an arc between late-nineteenth century romanticism and the secular collectivism of the 1930s: she shifted between these two realms and facilitated the transition, although she never completed the leap" (Ann Daly, *Done into Dance: Isadora Duncan in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 220). Daly places Duncan in a late-nineteenth century atmosphere of romanticism, but she neglects to consider that the late-nineteenth century also was a time of increasing interest in secularism. *Of course* Duncan never completed the "leap" - this was impossible, for two, clear demarcated "realms" did not exist.
- ²⁰⁷ See Gillis J. Harp, "'The Church of Humanity': New York's Worshipping Positivists," *Church History* 60, no. 4 (December 1991): 508-523.
- ²⁰⁸ It is interesting to note that even though humanism deviated from the same 'religion' Weber declared to be declining, humanists did not see the world as disenchanting. Instead, they argued that enchantment could be found inside each and every human in the form of goodness, morality, and justice.
- ²⁰⁹ Delsarte developed these laws out of his own religious/spiritual beliefs. The Law of the Trinity points to his devotion to Catholicism. Angélique Arnoud, one of Delsarte's students (as well as a Delsartism instructor), described Delsarte as "glorifying" in Catholicism (Arnoud, "Delsarte's Religion," 304). In fact, a myth emerged that Delsarte required any interested students to take an examination on Catholicism and take the catechism (Arnoud, "Delsarte's Theatre and School," 289). The Law of Correspondence, on the other hand, connects to Delsarte's interest in Swedish mystic Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), who argued that the material world corresponded to the spiritual world. In fact, one of his followers described Delsarte's system as "Swedenborg geometrized" (Stebbins, 38). Angélique Arnoud, "Delsarte's Religion" in *Delsarte System of Oratory*, 4th ed. (New York: E.S. Werner, 1893); Genevieve Stebbins, *Delsarte System of Expression*, 6th ed. (New York: Edgar S. Werner Publishing and Supply Co., 1902).

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- ²¹⁰ Genevieve Stebbins, *Delsarte System of Expression*, 6th ed. (New York: Edgar S. Werner Publishing and Supply Co., 1902): 117.
- ²¹¹ Nancy Lee Chalfa Ruyter, "The Delsarte Heritage," *Dance Research* 14, no. 1 (1996): 63.
- ²¹² Francois Delsarte, "Address of Francois Delsarte Before the Philotechnic Society of Paris," in Stebbins, 67.
- ²¹³ Stebbins, 227.
- ²¹⁴ Nancy Lee Chalfa Ruyter, *The Cultivation of Body and Mind in Nineteenth-Century American Delsartism* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1999), 57-8; Linda J. Tomko, *Dancing Class: Gender, Ethnicity, and Social Divides in American Dance, 1890-1920* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 19.
- ²¹⁵ Daly, 4. Duncan clearly respected Delsarte for his contributions in connecting body and spirit through movement. In an 1898 interview, she credited Delsarte as "the master of all principles of flexibility and lightness of the body." Duncan, as quoted in Kurth, 30. Duncan's connection with Delsarte can be traced across two additional points: first, theatre director and producer Edward Gordon Craig (1872-1966), one of Duncan's most significant romantic partners and father of her daughter Deirdre, agreed with this sentiment, and observed that Duncan kept a copy of one of Delsarte's books in her room. Second, Duncan was great friends with playwright and poet Percy MacKaye (1875-1956), son of the only American Delsarte disciple, Steele MacKaye. Duncan includes a poem Percy MacKaye wrote in her autobiography. MacKaye wrote it after seeing her pupils dance, so it carried special significance to her. Edward Gordon Craig, "A BBC Radio Talk," in Isadora Duncan, *Your Isadora: The Love Story of Isadora Duncan & Gordon Craig*, ed. Francis Steegmuller, 1st ed. (New York: Random House, 1974), 363. Duncan, *My Life*, 332.
- ²¹⁶ Duncan, *My Life*, 21.
- ²¹⁷ "Delsarte's Address Before the Philotechnic Society" in Genevieve Stebbins, *Delsarte System of Expression*, 6th ed. (New York: Edgar S. Werner, 1902), 29.
- ²¹⁸ Ibid. Delsarte actually did not agree with the general consensus that the body is beautiful. He hesitated to fully discuss "the sad reality of our ugliness" due to his wish not to offend the "ladies" in the audience. Yet, he cautioned his audience, "Let us not deceive ourselves; we are not beautiful" (31). After all, how could the human body compare to art, God, or the soul?
- ²¹⁹ Ibid, 34.
- ²²⁰ Kurth, 109. It is not surprising that her Delsartean influence would stir to the surface in Greece. The most popular American Delsartean instructor, Genevieve Stebbins, frequently posed in Grecian tunics (Kurth, 30) and integrated Greek statue posing into her curriculum (Stebbins, 444-456).
- ²²¹ Isadora Duncan, "The Parthenon" (1903 or 04), in *The Art of the Dance* (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1970), 65.
- ²²² Duncan, *My Life*, 253 and Duncan, "What Dancing Should Be" in *Art of Dance*, 72.
- ²²³ The Isadora Duncan Dance Foundation, "Educational Packages," *Lori Belilove & the Isadora Duncan Dance Company*, http://www.isadoraduncan.org/edu_pkg.html.
- ²²⁴ Theresa Duncan, as quoted in Kurth, 170. Isadora Duncan gave each of the Isadorables her own last name upon entering the school, as she considered them her children.

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- ²²⁵ Kurth, 168.
- ²²⁶ Carrie J. Preston, "The Motor in the Soul: Isadora Duncan and Modernist Performance," *Modernism/modernity* 12, no. 2 (2005): 282. The Isadora Duncan Dance Foundation, "Isadora Dance Company Members," *Lori Belilove & the Isadora Duncan Dance Company*, http://isadoraduncan.org/about_coMembers.html.
- ²²⁷ Ann Daly, "Isadora Duncan's Dance Theory," *Dance Research Journal* 26, no. 2 (Autumn 1994): 4-6.
- ²²⁸ Duncan, *Art of Dance*, 130.
- ²²⁹ Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself," 51 in *Leaves of Grass* (Philadelphia: D. McKay, 1900), 92.
- ²³⁰ Duncan, *My Life*, 31. Duncan also considered her dance students to be the "spiritual offspring of Walt Whitman" (*My Life*, 252).
- ²³¹ Jacoby, 225. Ingersoll considered Whitman "as the supreme poet of the age." In fact, ante-mortem, Whitman personally requested that Ingersoll speak at his funeral. In a eulogy for his friend, Ingersoll stated, "[Whitman] wrote a liturgy for mankind; he wrote a great and splendid psalm of life, and he gave to us the gospel of humanity—the greatest gospel that can be preached" (as quoted in Jacoby, 226).
- ²³² Ruth L. Bohan, "I Sing the Body Electric': Isadora Duncan, Whitman, and the Dance," in *The Cambridge Companion to Walt Whitman*, ed. Ezra Greenspan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 168-9.
- ²³³ Craig once said of Whitman, "Walt in a book is alive—but Walt walking, dancing, is LIFE." As quoted in *Your Isadora*, 72.
- ²³⁴ Bohan, 170, 173.
- ²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 173.
- ²³⁶ It is not surprising that Craig made this connection; after all, both Duncan and Whitman expressed their creative thought and ideas through dances and poems (respectively) partially inspired by new humanism.
- ²³⁷ Whitman did not only influence Duncan's dance; he influenced her views of what it means to be a woman. Bohan, 176-7.
- ²³⁸ Bohan, 174.
- ²³⁹ Duncan, *Your Isadora*, 73; Duncan, *My Life*, 233.
- ²⁴⁰ Duncan, *My Life*, 233; Duncan, "I See America Dancing" (1927) in *Art of Dance*, 47-50; Bohan, 177-8.
- ²⁴¹ David S Reynolds, *Walt Whitman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 88-100. Whitman found inspiration from many different religious systems and ideas, such as Swedenborgism, liberal Protestantism, Hinduism, and American Transcendentalism.
- ²⁴² Whitman, "Song of Myself" 3, 33.
- ²⁴³ Diane Kepner, "From Spears to Leaves: Walt Whitman's Theory of Nature in 'Song of Myself,'" *American Literature* 51, no. 2 (May 1979): 184.
- ²⁴⁴ Whitman, "Song of Myself" 1, 31.

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- ²⁴⁵ Walt Whitman, "Had I the Choice," as printed in John W McDonald, *Walt Whitman, Philosopher Poet: Leaves of Grass by Indirection* (Jefferson, N.C: McFarland & Co, 2007), 184.
- ²⁴⁶ Walt Whitman, "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking," 10, 11 in *Leaves of Grass*, 407.
- ²⁴⁷ Walt Whitman, as quoted in Bliss Perry, *Walt Whitman: His Life and Work* (New York: AMS Press, 1969), 87-8.
- ²⁴⁸ Whitman, "Song of Myself" 47, 89.
- ²⁴⁹ Duncan, *Your Isadora*, 91.
- ²⁵⁰ Francis Steegmuller, *Your Isadora*, 91; Duncan, "The Dancer and Nature" (1905), *Art of Dance* 69. This essay, in many ways, reads as Duncan's reactions to Whitman. It was written as an address to women, in which she envisions a new womanhood founded on natural movement (thus bestowing the female body back to nature and out of strict corsets, movements, and ways of being). Duncan's relationship with Craig made her re-examine her beliefs on the role of women in society, and, in Whitman, she found a fellow artist who extolled the equality of genders and the beauty in the body. See Duncan, *Your Isadora*, 73 and "The Dancer and Nature."
- ²⁵¹ Duncan, "The Dancer and Nature," 68-9.
- ²⁵² *Ibid.*, 69.
- ²⁵³ *Ibid.*
- ²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 68.
- ²⁵⁵ Remember, there was no such thing as "modern dance" at this time; instead, Duncan viewed the modern dance as all dances that went against nature.
- ²⁵⁶ Duncan, "What Dancing Should Be," in *Art of Dance*, 73.
- ²⁵⁷ Catherine L Albanese, *Nature Religion in America: From the Algonkian Indians to the New Age*, Chicago history of American religion (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 8-9.
- ²⁵⁸ Duncan, "Dancing in Relation to Religion and Love," in *Art of Dance*, 122.
- ²⁵⁹ James C. Livingston and Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, *Modern Christian Thought: The Enlightenment and the nineteenth century* (Fortress Press, 2006), 28.
- ²⁶⁰ Felix Adler, *Reformed Judaism: a Lecture Delivered before the Society for Ethical Culture at Chickering Hall, November 22, 1885* (New York: Lehmaier & Bro. Prin., 1885), 6-7.
- ²⁶¹ Fuller, 53.
- ²⁶² *Ibid.*, 34.
- ²⁶³ Margherita Duncan, "Isadora," in *Art of Dance*, 18.
- ²⁶⁴ Duncan, *My Life*, 339.
- ²⁶⁵ Duncan, as quoted in Lola Kinel, *This is My Affair* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1937), 252.

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- ²⁶⁶ Daly, *Done into Dance*, 36. Duncan's emphasis on Beauty manifested in how she taught her pupils. In her autobiography, Isadorable Irma Duncan recalls how she learned her first English words from a poem Duncan regularly read to them – John Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn." Duncan emphasized two lines in particular: "Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty, – that is all/Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."
- ²⁶⁷ Duncan believed the ancient Greeks lived in such a way, and that humans must return to this harmonious state. Duncan, "Terpsichore," in *Art of Dance*, 90-1.
- ²⁶⁸ Lynne Anne Blom and L. Tarin Chaplin, *The Intimate Act of Choreography* (Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1982), 8.
- ²⁶⁹ Catherine M. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 74.
- ²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 91. Thus, for Bell, the sacred is defined by what it is not: the profane. I do not follow Bell's definition for two reasons. First, Duncan often used the word 'sacred,' and, in order to not overlap Bell's definition with Duncan's understanding of the concept, I allow Duncan the privilege of the word. Second, I am hesitant to give 'sacred' a blanket definition; instead, I believe that one's understanding of 'sacred' must arise from each unique situation one studies.
- ²⁷¹ T.S. Eliot, "Burnt Norton," *Four Quartets* (1943), <http://www.tristan.icom43.net/quartets/norton.html>.
- ²⁷² José Gil, "The Dancer's Body," in *A Shock to Thought: Expression After Deleuze and Guattari*, ed. Brian Massumi (London: Routledge, 2002), 125.
- ²⁷³ Sondra Horton Fraleigh, *Dance and the Lived Body: A Descriptive Aesthetics* (Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987), 181.
- ²⁷⁴ In fact, I was taught to utilize tooth brushing time as an opportunity to work on my ballet technique. This never felt extraordinary.
- ²⁷⁵ Fuller, 57.
- ²⁷⁶ Garelick, 42.
- ²⁷⁷ Fuller, 70.
- ²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 72.
- ²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 71.
- ²⁸⁰ Duncan, *My Life*, 239.
- ²⁸¹ Duncan, *Your Isadora*, 50.
- ²⁸² *Ibid.*, 212.
- ²⁸³ Bell, 74.
- ²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, viii, 14.
- ²⁸⁵ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 27, 333-4, 75-77.
- ²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 34.

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- ²⁸⁷ I rather feel as if James 'dodges' defining religion. His definition points to individual experiences while telling us little of the nature of religion, how it is constructed, and the understandings that inform this construction.
- ²⁸⁸ James, 36.
- ²⁸⁹ Gil, "Dancer's," 126.
- ²⁹⁰ José Gil, "Paradoxical Body," trans. André Lepecki, *TDR: The Drama Review* 50, no. 4 (2006): 32.
- ²⁹¹ Ibid.
- ²⁹² Gil, "Paradoxical," 29.
- ²⁹³ Gil, "Paradoxical," 31.
- ²⁹⁴ Beryl Satter, *Each Mind a Kingdom: American Women, Sexual Purity, and the New Thought Movement, 1875-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).
- ²⁹⁵ Gabrielle Bloch, as printed in Fuller, *Fifteen Years*, 264. Bloch first saw Fuller perform in 1892, when she was fourteen. However, they did not start living together until 1905 – when Bloch was twenty-seven.
- ²⁹⁶ Duncan, *Your Isadora*, 325.
- ²⁹⁷ Duncan, "A Letter to the Pupils," in *Art of Dance*, 108.

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