

**Choreographing Paint: Shared Concepts in Jackson Pollock, Merce Cunningham  
and Martha Graham**

**By**

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Jackson Pollock was not a dancer nor did he know much, if anything, about the specific choreographies and principals of Merce Cunningham and Martha Graham. And yet, Pollock's drip paintings share certain unexplored commonalities with their works. Although working with three different mediums, all three artists – Pollock, Cunningham and Graham – shared a fundamental interest in process and materials rather than narrative and literal representations. In addition to this inclination against narrative, certain formal aspects emerged as focal points in the work of all three artists. Specifically, the similarities are most apparent in way these artists engaged ideas of composition, viewers' interpretations of bodies and painterly marks, asymmetry and the effects of gravity. In addition to these formal concepts, the work of these three artists can be seen as reactions to the increasing modernity of post-war America.

Although scholars have previously offered connections between the underlying concepts found in the work of these three artists<sup>i</sup>, the majority of scholarship addressing their conceptual concerns does so within the confines of specific fields. For example, art historians and dance theorists have independently addressed the place of gravity in each artist's process.<sup>ii</sup> These discussions do not, however, connect the two artists' processes, despite the parallels. Similarly, Pollock scholarship is brimming with discussions of what Clement Greenberg deemed an "all-over composition."<sup>iii</sup> This attempt to fill space with

equally valued marks and movements is also central to the study of the choreographies of Merce Cunningham, as noted in the work of Mark Franko.<sup>iv</sup> Although this shared interest is briefly mentioned in David Anfam's *Abstract Expressionism*<sup>v</sup> and David Vaughan's essay in *Art and Dance*,<sup>vi</sup> there has yet to be any extensive affirmative discussion of this shared aim in relation to the many other commonalities between the three artists. These observations of past discussions of Pollock, Cunningham and Graham are not meant as rebukes, but instead are examples of missed or brief moments of interdisciplinary study. The intent of my present examination of the bodily vocabularies of Cunningham and Graham in relation to Pollock's drip paintings is to implement and connect past and present discussions of Pollock, Cunningham and Graham, in order to foster an understanding of the discursive intersections between their respective projects.

The work of these artists, as mentioned, embodies a general trend away from concrete subject matter and narrative. Although some of Pollock's works are titled with external referents like *Cathedral* (1947) and *Shimmering Substance* (1946), by 1950 he had generally abandoned formal titles in favor of numbered ones. To explain this shift, his wife, Lee Krasner, suggested, "numbers are neutral. They make people look at a picture for what it is – a picture."<sup>vii</sup> His works show an embrace of the materiality of paint and canvas, making the main subject of his most abstract work the materials themselves. This concept and Krasner's assertion come strikingly close to a statement made by Merce Cunningham who, when describing his choreography, said, "what is seen is what it is."<sup>viii</sup> Rather than choreographing dancers who were pretending or acting, Cunningham sought to show dancers as bodies simply "doing something."<sup>ix</sup> The same

can be said of the marks in Pollock's drip paintings, which do not allude to specific shapes or objects, but instead depict their own existence and creation.

Similarly, though Martha Graham's pieces often contain characters and plots, she placed emphasis on the bodies and the emotions contained in them, as opposed to particular narrative ploys. She sought the most basic expression and representations without "surface decoration" to distract from the formal and emotional qualities of the works.<sup>x</sup> Throughout her career, she began to shift attention away from traditional narrative and embrace abstraction. These later works often stray so far from a narrative structure that they have been described as ones in which, "nothing concretely transpires."<sup>xi</sup> Graham began the creation of her works, as she stated, "not with characters or ideas, but with movement"<sup>xii</sup> and viewed dance as, "an absolute...[that] is not knowledge about something, but is knowledge itself."<sup>xiii</sup> In the same way that Cunningham and Pollock emphasized basic materiality of their dancers and materials, Graham sought to consistently return attention to the body. She rid her productions of traditional costumes and movements, which attempted to deny the shape or natural actions of the body. In lieu of frills and what she felt to be unnatural movement, Graham dressed her dancers in form fitting costumes and embraced the natural force of gravity.<sup>xiv</sup> Although their works are not always completely devoid of narrative, Pollock, Cunningham and Graham's insistence on creating material-centered works tends to privilege a revelation of process as subject over traditional subject matter.<sup>xv</sup>

Although the works of these artists do not rely on narrative structures, it must not be assumed that the bodies and paint that fill the canvases and stages of these artists are meaningless. Through their materials, these artists sought to present viewers with what

they thought to be manifestations of bodily energy, be they bodies or marks. Pollock's lines are, as he described them, "energy and motion made visible."<sup>xvi</sup> This concept is a common thread throughout Pollock scholarship as well. Michael Fried, for example, echoed this comment saying, "line in these paintings is entirely transparent...to the pulse of something like pure, disembodied energy."<sup>xvii</sup> Both Cunningham and Graham's dancers articulate this same energy in their movements. Cunningham thought of the bodily expression of energy as one of the most exciting and primal uses of the body, describing it as "geared to an intensity high enough to melt steel."<sup>xviii</sup> While Cunningham emphasized the body as a conduit of energy, Graham and Pollock gave bodies and paint an additional role as records (though not explicit ones) of internal states. Both Pollock and Graham underwent Jungian analysis and their work from the post-war period is often connected to related ideas of the unconscious.<sup>xix</sup> Graham's dancing bodies have often been cited as physical manifestations of this Jungian concept.<sup>xx</sup> Likewise, Pollock's marks can be related to his unconscious emotions, as affirmed by his statement, "I want to express my feelings rather than illustrate them."<sup>xxi</sup> It is important to note that though both Pollock and Graham's work can be seen as records of an expressive output, they are not meant as manifestation of specific emotions or the unconscious. Instead, Pollock and Graham tended to use their own interior states to fuel their formalist intentions.

Both Pollock and Graham sought access to the unconscious through concepts of myth and primitivism,<sup>xxii</sup> both of which were strongly endorsed by Jungian practitioners and psychotherapists. Jungian thought posits that myths describe and express humankind's most basic experiences and emotions. As a result, Jungians consider myths to be deeply connected to a universal inner psyche of humanity. In what is often cited as a

distinctly American form of primitivism, based in Jungian thought,<sup>xxiii</sup> Pollock and Graham both employed a combination of Native American culture and Greek myth as source material for many of their works. In doing so, it can be assumed that they hoped to find a connection with past societies in order to expose something about themselves and their contemporary world. Both artists implemented these “primitive” sources in different ways. Pollock’s contact with Native American Art throughout his life has been well documented and his mixture and use of sand and paint, as well as Native American imagery, are considered to be related to this exposure.<sup>xxiv</sup> Similarly, scholars have also connected Graham’s “hieratic gestures,” found in her *Primitive Mysteries* (1931) and *El Penitente* (1940) to her interest and exposure to Native American ritual dance.<sup>xxv</sup> Both Pollock and Graham also implemented Greek myths in their works, most notably in Pollock’s *Guardians of the Secret* (1943) and Graham’s *Errand into the Maze* (1947) and *Cave of the Heart* (1946).

Scholars consistently differentiate the primitivist and Jungian source material of Graham and Pollock from that of Cunningham who, in his most well-known and mature works, rejected these sources.<sup>xxvi</sup> While this delineation is important to the individual study of these artists, when looking at them in relation to one another, the differences between the works Pollock and Graham and those of Cunningham can be seen as yet another link binding them as a triad. Despite varying source material, the work of these three artists displays a clear concern with man (and woman’s) relation to the modern world. Pollock himself described the post-war age as one defined by “the airplane, the atom bomb, [and] the radio,” and felt it was the purpose of modern artists to “find [their] own technique” to express their age.<sup>xxvii</sup> For Pollock and Graham, the best way to

discover their age was through introspection and subsequent use of abstraction or primitive archetypes as a means of communication. In essence, they rejected the outward realities of their age and the modernity that accompanied it, through a retreat within, in a process that Graham described as “the journey toward wholeness.”<sup>xxviii</sup> Within this framework, Cunningham has emerged in some scholarship as the antithesis to any sense of cohesion and introspection, since Cunningham embraced the disunities of modernity. He often sought to reveal this modern discord through his unique approach to collaboration (in which music, movement and scenery are created in isolation and only brought together for the performance, without or without direct relation to one another) or through his choreographic dissemination of focal points, both across the stage and within the bodies of his dancers.<sup>xxix</sup> Although the some of the approaches of Pollock and Graham are clearly different from those of Cunningham, they are linked in their need to grapple with an increasingly globalised, mechanized and modernized country.

Although Pollock, Cunningham and Graham dealt with their age through distinctive processes, they all shared a common desire that their audiences, as Pollock stated, would “look passively – and try to receive what the [work] has to offer and not bring a subject matter or a preconceived idea of what they are to be looking for.”<sup>xxx</sup> Despite their formalist intentions, Pollock, Cunningham and Graham seemed to be aware that their audiences would inevitably interpret their works in some personal way. In creating his works, Pollock was undoubtedly aware that the raw record of his output would incite some kind of response in his viewers, though his marks and compositions were not meant as illustrations of his emotions. Similarly, since Graham began with movement, her choreography is not, as mentioned before, meant as a literal

representation of specific emotions.<sup>xxxix</sup> Any catharsis or emotional experience felt by viewers of Graham's choreography was meant to be "immediate" and "unmediated."<sup>xxxix</sup>

A similar sentiment was expressed by Cunningham's musical collaborator John Cage, when he noted that something is always relayed to the audience from Cunningham's works and because the works can only be directly approached through unadorned movement, the concepts gathered are meant to be a matter of personal interpretation.<sup>xxxix</sup> The seemingly detached nature of Cunningham's choreographies, which prompted the audience's personal interpretation, has been cited as being closely aligned with the aloof work of artists like Jasper Johns. Scholars have used this association to place him in opposition to the works of Pollock and Graham, which are thought to be deeply psychological.<sup>xxxix</sup> This argument, however, overemphasizes the emotional qualities of Pollock and Graham's works. While, as described above, there is certainly an expressive core to the works of Graham and Pollock that is decidedly different than Cunningham, I would argue, as others have of Pollock,<sup>xxxix</sup> that the products of Pollock and Graham's emotional output are as interpretable and universal as the de-emotionalized work of Cunningham. Any insistence on disassociating Pollock from Cunningham on the basis of the supposedly purely emotional quality of Pollock's drip paintings<sup>xxxix</sup> discounts the intensely plotted and intentionally challenging opticality of these works. By asserting that his works featured "no chaos damn it,"<sup>xxxix</sup> Pollock affirmed the meticulous spatiality of his work, or what he called "damned busy painting."<sup>xxxix</sup> His declaration and related works conformed to Greenberg's claim, "the optical [is] the only sense that...pictorial art can invoke."<sup>xxxix</sup> One unifying feature between these three artists, then, is an intentional lack of mediation and articulation of

specific emotions, in order to allow for personal interpretation. While some of the works may have been formed from personal experience, the lack of a direct relaying of those experiences allows each viewer to understand the works of Pollock, Cunningham and Graham from an entirely personal point of view, without intercession from an omniscient artist.

Within their attempts to create unmediated art, several parallels can be traced between the formal qualities of the works of the choreographers and Pollock. Perhaps the most salient quality running through the best-known work of these three artists is their unique views on composition. In 1948, Greenberg described the work of Jackson Pollock as possessing an “over-all evenness.”<sup>xli</sup> He would later famously reword this concept and apply it to modern painting in general, describing these works as “‘decentralized,’ ‘polyphonic,’ ‘all-over’ picture[s].”<sup>xlii</sup> By equally emphasizing each individual part of the work, Pollock created paintings that he said, “[did] not have a center...but depend[ed] on the same amount of interest throughout.”<sup>xliii</sup> One of the best examples of this all-over technique is his *Lavender Mist*. Pollock’s equal valuation of each mark in this work results in an intricately woven web in which streams and jolts of paint bounce, collide, mirror and entwine one another, leaving the eye no comfortable place to land.<sup>xliiii</sup> Although the work is made up of individual parts, the first dizzying impression is that of wholeness. Distinct marks are only deduced once one has shaken off the initial awe and coupled it with discerning, though nearly futile, exactitude.<sup>xliv</sup>

The dynamism of Pollock’s all-over canvases is most closely aligned with the choreography of Cunningham, which dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov described as “‘organized chaos.”<sup>xlv</sup> Like Pollock, Cunningham chose to arrange his dancers in

relationships that did not feature one dancer or group of dancers over another, even though every body on stage might be executing entirely different movements.<sup>xlvi</sup> Cunningham experimented with this technique extensively in his works made for film. In a sequence from *Changing Steps for Film* (1989), Cunningham choreographed couples, indicated through color, executing different movements. Despite the dissimilar steps, it is difficult to focus on one part of the action for an extended period of time. Another sequence (seen above) features two dancers who, again, engage in seemingly unrelated steps. Traditionally, these soloists would trade space back and forth, with one dancer stepping aside for the other. In this instance, as was typical of Cunningham's choreography, the dancers move simultaneously and with no apparent acknowledgement of one another. The result is one in which foci are distributed evenly across the stage, "without specific climaxes."<sup>xlvii</sup> In addition to creating a spatial organized chaos, Cunningham also distributed importance evenly throughout the steps given to his dancers. While traditional choreographies have distinct orders and preparatory steps, Cunningham's phrases, if they can be reduced as such, have no hierarchical relation to one another and "each moment...is given the full weight of attention."<sup>xlviii</sup>

When compared with Pollock and Cunningham, Graham's works may seem less frenetic and the attention more focused; however, though dancers are sometimes highlighted over others on stage, there are moments in Graham's works where the focus is disseminated across the stage to multiple bodies engaged in different movements. In a portion of one of these later works, entitled *Diversion of Angels* (conceived in 1948), four men enter the stage through a repeated series of steps, but because they enter successively, they are each engaged in a different part of the dance phrase at different

moments. The resulting effect is best likened to a kind of kinesthetic round in which the eye bounces from one dancer to the next with no concrete resting place. Graham's combination of these moments with more concentrated ones makes their "all-overness" all the more evident.

The uniformity in the works of these artists is frequently thought to have no relationship to an ideal vantage point. When creating his works, Pollock, as claimed by Krasner, paid little attention to what Krasner called an "absolute frame."<sup>xlix</sup> In this sense, until the painting had to be hung, there was no directional orientation, which was a result of Pollock's multi-sided painting technique.<sup>1</sup> As a result, the works can not only be viewed from any position, but the viewer can visually enter the works at any place in their composition,<sup>li</sup> as opposed to an ideal (and traditional) center or focal point. Graham's post-war works have also been described as having "no single perspective," leading to the claim that these works were "the first real Cubist structures in dance."<sup>lii</sup> Similarly, Cunningham developed choreography that was not geared toward a traditional frontal audience. Instead, his dancers were plotted in relation to one another,<sup>liii</sup> resulting in a utilization of nearly eight directions, instead of the standard four (front, back, right and left.)<sup>liv</sup>

In addition to the evenness of Pollock, Cunningham and Graham's compositions all three also engaged ideas of asymmetry within their works. This asymmetry is not one that is created by emphasizing certain marks or bodies within the works over others, as this would destroy their "all-overness." Instead, the asymmetry was created through a relation of bodies and marks to one another, as well as within the shapes and bodies themselves. In the work of Pollock, compositional asymmetries mostly arise through a

contrast between areas filled with his marks and those parts of his canvases that are left open to the background or raw canvas beneath. In Pollock's *One: Number 31, 1950*, heavy marks engulf the right side of the canvas, occasionally spilling off its periphery. The left side, in contrast, is comparably barren, with only a few splatters of paint and a single loop seeming to dip its toe into the abyss beyond the canvas. Pollock achieved a similar effect in the top and bottom of the work by leaving an airy gap at the top and dribbling up to and over the bottom.

In a portion of Merce Cunningham's *Septet* of 1964, he and three female dancers gradually move through a series of held tableaux. Although there are brief moments of symmetry within the transitions between these living sculptures, the majority of them favor asymmetric shapes, which were created by using Cunningham as a bodily bridge between the three women. By dressing himself in black and the women in white, he made it seem as though he should be the center, but then purposefully denied a sense of balance. Many of the configurations could be entirely balanced, but the differing positions of each body around Cunningham destroy the possibility, as is the case in the first arrangement. In this instance, the three women around Cunningham are nearly evenly spaced and should construct an even triangle with him as its center. The differing positions of the left and right women, however, turn what should be a regular geometric form into an irregular shape.

Graham's sense of asymmetry seems less interested in geometrics and more concerned with vertical levels. In her technique, Graham developed a concrete and innovative relationship with the ground, creating asymmetry between figures. In her *Appalachian Spring* from 1944, the opening sequence features a series of maneuvers on

the ground, which are executed by a group of four women. These women perform their choreography while single figures execute separate movements or poses. As a result, the visual harmony of the scene is dissembled as a tension develops between weight and seeming weightlessness.<sup>lv</sup>

In addition to creating asymmetry within their compositions, Pollock, Cunningham and Graham infused their marks and dancers bodies with a similar imbalance. Although Pollock's drip paintings do not represent specific forms, there are several patterns and shapes that he repeated throughout these works. In an extensive analysis of the visual structure of Pollock's paintings, Matthew L. Rohn identifies several of these motifs, including three shapes he terms arabesques, butterflies and poles. The latter of these provides the best example of Pollock's play with asymmetry. When crafting these poles, Pollock tended to elongate the lines unevenly from their junction. In his *Convergence*, Rohn identifies two large white poles (illustrated below), one to the left and one just slightly off center. In the pole on the left, the mark is top heavy and the curves on either side of the center line are dissimilar and placed off-center from one another. The top horizontal line creates an additional unevenness in that the right side is thicker than the left. Pollock's off-center pole is equally disharmonious between left and right and top and bottom, with its top-heavy nature and disparate left and right lines.<sup>lvi</sup>

Similar asymmetries appear in the bodies of Cunningham and Graham's dancers. One of Cunningham's most recognizable maneuvers was an off-center jeté, in contrast to a more proportional one in which both legs are evenly extended from the body. This maneuver creates an effect that has been described as one in which "the dancers seem to hurl their bodies in several directions simultaneously."<sup>lvii</sup> These relational oddities

occurring on either side of what should be a dancer's visual center are evident in nearly every pose and transition Cunningham created. Each dancer seems to pull their limbs, heads and torsos to their extremis, as if gripped by forces outside of themselves.

Related bodily asymmetries appear throughout Graham's choreographies. Louis Horst, who often composed for Graham, described the technique as one that "foreswear[s] the symmetric in gesture or in posture."<sup>lviii</sup> The asymmetry in Graham results mainly from what she called contractions, which were generated from the dancer's core through an expelling of air.<sup>lix</sup> As a result, the body becomes lopsided; its vertebrae curved instead of neatly stacked atop one another. In addition to these contractions, Graham often twisted the body around its own spine and pelvis, creating dynamic disharmonies between the left and right sides. In her *Lamentation* (1943), Graham choreographed a piece that is executed from an almost entirely seated position. As a result, the body must be moved around a central point. Despite the centrality inherent in such a position, the body rarely hovers over the mid-line, but instead rotates around it, creating drastic asymmetries.

Graham so embraced this sense of seeming imbalance that she utilized it when training her dancers. In traditional training, dancers are taught to perform movements and combinations on both the left and the right sides. Graham's training, however, frequently favored one side over the other. For instance, Mark Ryder, a former dancer with the Martha Graham Company, recalls that her "falls" were taught and executed only on the left side of the body.<sup>lx</sup> This and other bodily contortions and unbalanced training which Graham employed were frequently highlighted through costumes, which often featured off-center lines, as in the costumes for *Errand into the Maze* (1947). As a result, the

viewer can never accurately determine the true center of the dancers' bodies, underscoring the asymmetries of their movements.

Many of the characteristics of Pollock, Cunningham and Graham's works discussed so far relate directly to one external force to which every material object on this planet is subject: the force of gravity.<sup>lxi</sup> While forms of painting and dance prior to Pollock, Cunningham and Graham sought to deny and work in spite of this force, these three artists acknowledged and utilized it as a crucial part of their creative process. By placing his canvases on the floor instead of working from an easel, Pollock employed gravity as an active participant. When describing Pollock's process, Krasner said he was essentially creating forms in the air, which then fell to the canvas.<sup>lxii</sup> Many of the effects he achieved through his falling paint could not have been created on a vertical surface and were a result of his understanding of how gravity changed the images that landed on his canvases. Several of his lines, like those in *Number 20*, give the impression that he began by slowly pouring paint and then slashed his implement across the canvas, creating lines that begin thicker than they end. In actuality, however, this effect was probably manufactured by changing the height from which he released his paint through an engagement of his own bodily levels.<sup>lxiii</sup> Pollock often contrasted these dynamic lines with heavy, thick pools of paint. In his *Number 28, 1950*, Pollock poured streams of black paint, creating four ominous blots in the lower half of the canvas. The texture and weightiness of these pools would have been drastically different, if not impossible, had he been working from a horizontal easel.<sup>lxiv</sup>

Cunningham also used gravity to his own benefit through heavy falls executed by rigid bodies. In the opening of his *Changing Steps for Film* (1989), a single dancer

executes a series of stiff, slow falls into a lunge position, as if incapable of resisting a natural downward pull. Later in the piece, four dancers engage in choreography during which one dancer seems unable to stand on her own and must be held up from gravity by the other dancers. As they move through a series of what are essentially artistically rendered trust falls, the sense of a gravitational force is relentless and acknowledged, if not embraced.

The true enthusiast of gravity's place in dance, however, is Graham. In her works, weight and gravity are used as a force that the body must constantly work with and against, remaining in constant play with it, as if it were another, unchoreographable body. Graham emphasized this tug-of-war between the body and external forces saying, "my dancers fall so that they can rise."<sup>lxv</sup> The rising came about through spirals and leaps, but the dancer always returned to the ground and its primal, inhuman force. Gravity gave Graham the opportunity to send her dancers cascading to the floor, while also allowing her to explore a new, largely unexamined realm of the stage.<sup>lxvi</sup> Her dancers sat, squatted and spread themselves on the ground, often creating shapes that she described as "figureless sprawl[s]...blot[s] on the ground,"<sup>lxvii</sup> not unlike the pools of paint Pollock poured. Through their investigation of the ground, Graham and her dancers relished an embrace and discovery of the force that kept them there.

In their efforts to challenge the accepted forms of their disciplines, Pollock, Cunningham and Graham provided future generations of artists, choreographers and scholars with works that present a formalist impression of post-war America. Through their implementation of a natural force, an embrace of asymmetry and an even spread of attention on all parts of their compositions, all three artist championed the formal aspects

of their works over traditional narrative. Although these artists did not necessarily create works with one another in mind, the idea of their shared interests provide an intriguing bridge between the ephemeral nature of bodies in motion and the concrete solidity of hardened paint.

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<sup>i</sup> These connections are made most notably in Stephen Polcari, "Martha Graham and Abstract Expressionism," *Smithsonian Studies in American Art* 4, no. 1 (January 1, 1990): 3-27. and throughout Roger Copeland, *Merce Cunningham: the modernizing of modern dance* (London: Psychology Press, 2004). They do not, however, engage all of the concepts addressed in this paper and I take issue with some of their claims. Specifically, my thesis rejects Copeland's claim that Pollock should not be aligned with Cunningham in scholarship.

<sup>ii</sup> Ellen Graff, "When your heart falls: The drama of descent in Martha Graham's technique and theater," *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory* 14, no. 1 (2004): 107; Claude Cernuschi and Andrzej Herczynski, "The Subversion of Gravity in Jackson Pollock's Abstractions.," *Art Bulletin* 90, no. 4 (December 2008): 616-639.

<sup>iii</sup> Clement Greenberg and John O'Brian, *The Collected Essays and Criticism: Arrogant purpose, 1945-1949* (University of Chicago Press, 1988), 56.

<sup>iv</sup> Mark Franko, *Dancing modernism/performing politics* (Indiana University Press, 1995), 84.

<sup>v</sup> David Anfam, *Abstract Expressionism, World of art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990), 194.

<sup>vi</sup> David Vaughan, "'Then I Thought about Marcel': Merce Cunningham's Walkaround Time," in *Art and Dance* (Boston: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1983), 84.

<sup>vii</sup> Berton Roueché, "Unframed Space," in *Jackson Pollock: Interviews, Articles and Reviews*, ed. Pepe Karmel (New York, NY: Museum of Modern Art: Distributed by H.N. Abrams, 1999), 19.

<sup>viii</sup> Copeland, *Merce Cunningham*, 38.

<sup>ix</sup> "Merce Cunningham (Hummingbird Films, 2007),

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXp7r96UTQ4&feature=youtube\\_gdata\\_player](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXp7r96UTQ4&feature=youtube_gdata_player).

<sup>x</sup> Deborah Jowitt, "Martha Graham and the Changing Landscape of Modernism," in *Art and Dance* (Boston: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1982), 72.

<sup>xi</sup> Mark Franko, "History/Theory - criticism/practice," in *Corporealities: Dancing Knowledge, culture and power*, ed. Susan Leigh Foster (New York, N.Y: Routledge, 1996), 27.

<sup>xii</sup> Dee Reynolds, "A Technique for Power: Reconfiguring Economies of Energy in Martha Graham's Early Work," *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research* 20, no. 1 (July 1, 2002): 5.

<sup>xiii</sup> Franko, "History/Theory - criticism/practice," 35.

<sup>xiv</sup> Jowitt, "Martha Graham and the Changing Landscape of Modernism," 73.

<sup>xv</sup> Noël Carroll, "Theatre, Dance, and Theory: A Philosophical Narrative," *Dance Chronicle* 15, no. 3 (January 1, 1992): 325.

<sup>xvi</sup> Jackson Pollock, "Handwritten Statement," in Pepe Karmel, ed., *Jackson Pollock: Interviews, Articles, and Reviews* (New York: Museum of Modern Art: Distributed by H.N. Abrams, 1999), 24.

<sup>xvii</sup> Michael Fried, "Jackson Pollock," in *Jackson Pollock: Interviews, Articles and Reviews*, ed. Pepe Karmel (New York, NY: Museum of Modern Art: Distributed by H.N. Abrams, 1999), 98.

- xviii Carrie Noland, "The Human Situation on Stage: Merce Cunningham, Theodor Adorno and the Category of Expression," *Dance Research Journal* 42, no. 1 (Summer 2010): 57–8.
- xix Polcari, "Martha Graham and Abstract Expressionism," 9.
- xx *Ibid.*, 19.
- xxi "Hans Namuth, *Jackson Pollock*, 1951,  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6cgBvpjwOGo&feature=youtube\\_gdata\\_player](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6cgBvpjwOGo&feature=youtube_gdata_player).
- xxii Copeland, *Merce Cunningham*, 58.
- xxiii Caroline A. Jones, "Finishing School: John Cage and the Abstract Expressionist Ego," *Critical Inquiry* 19, no. 4 (July 1, 1993): 636.
- xxiv W. Jackson Rushing, *Native American Art and the New York Avant-Garde: A History of Cultural Primitivism*, 1st ed., American studies series (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 189.
- xxv Copeland, *Merce Cunningham*, 60.
- xxvi Roger Copeland, "Portrait of the Artist as a Jung Man," in *Merce Cunningham: the Modernizing of Modern Dance* (London: Psychology Press, 2004); Roger Copeland, "Primitive Mysteries," in *Merce Cunningham: the Modernizing of Modern Dance* (London: Psychology Press, 2004).
- xxvii Karmel, *Jackson Pollock*, 20.
- xxviii Copeland, *Merce Cunningham*, 125.
- xxix Copeland, "Primitive Mysteries."
- xxx Karmel, *Jackson Pollock*, 20.
- xxxi Reynolds, "A Technique for Power," 9.
- xxxii Franko, "History/Theory - criticism/practice," 29.
- xxxiii Copeland, *Merce Cunningham*, 37.
- xxxiv *Ibid.*, 79–84.
- xxxv Jerry Saltz, "Let It Drip," *Village Voice* (New York, NY, December 22, 1998), sec. Art.
- xxxvi Copeland, *Merce Cunningham*, 92.
- xxxvii Jackson Pollock, "Letter to the Editor," in *Jackson Pollock: Interviews, Articles and Reviews*, ed. Pepe Karmel (New York, NY: Museum of Modern Art: Distributed by H.N. Abrams, 1999), 71.
- xxxviii *Ibid.*
- xxxix Clement Greenberg and Voice of America (Organization), "Modernist painting" (Voice of America, 1959).
- xl Clement Greenberg, "Art," in *Jackson Pollock: Interviews, Articles and Reviews*, ed. Pepe Karmel (New York, NY: Museum of Modern Art: Distributed by H.N. Abrams, 1999), 56.
- xli Greenberg and O'Brian, *The Collected Essays and Criticism*, 222.
- xlid Robert Goodnough, "Pollock Paints a Picture," in *Jackson Pollock: Interviews, Articles and Reviews*, ed. Pepe Karmel (New York, NY: Museum of Modern Art: Distributed by H.N. Abrams, 1999), 78.
- xliii *Ibid.*
- xliv William Rubin, "Jackson Pollock and the Modern Tradition," in *Jackson Pollock: Interviews, Articles and Reviews*, by Pepe Karmel (New York, NY: Museum of Modern Art: Distributed by H.N. Abrams, 1999), 130.
- xlv "An Interview with Merce Cunningham," *Charlie Rose*, April 6, 1995,  
<http://www.charlierose.com/view/interview/6947>.
- xlvi Franko, *Dancing modernism/performing politics*, 84.
- xlvii Anfam, *Abstract Expressionism*, 194.
- xlviii Copeland, *Merce Cunningham*, 37.

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<sup>xlix</sup> B. H Friedman, “An Interview with Lee Krasner Pollock,” in *Jackson Pollock: Interviews, Articles and Reviews*, ed. Pepe Karmel (New York, NY: Museum of Modern Art : Distributed by H.N. Abrams, 1999), 38.

<sup>l</sup> Ibid.

<sup>li</sup> Allan Kaprow, “The Legacy of Jackson Pollock,” in Karmel, *Jackson Pollock*, 87.

<sup>lii</sup> Jowitt, “Martha Graham and the Changing Landscape of Modernism,” 82.

<sup>liii</sup> Joshua Legg, “Cunningham Technique,” *Dance Spirit Magazine Online*, December 1, 2006, <http://www.dancespirit.com/articles/11>.

<sup>liv</sup> Copeland, *Merce Cunningham*, 30.

<sup>lv</sup> For a detailed discuss of Graham’s use of weight and gravity, see Graff, “When your heart falls.”

<sup>lvi</sup> For an extensive discussion of Pollock’s poles and asymmetries within his compositions see Matthew Rohn, *Visual Dynamics in Jackson Pollock’s Abstractions*, Studies in the fine arts no. 14 (Ann Arbor, Mich: UMI Research Press, 1987), 47–54.

<sup>lvii</sup> Copeland, *Merce Cunningham*, 29.

<sup>lviii</sup> Reynolds, “A Technique for Power,” 16.

<sup>lix</sup> Mark Ryder, “Mark Ryder,” in *Martha Graham: the Evolution of Her Dance Theory and Training* (Gainesville, Fla: University Press of Florida, n.d.), 58.

<sup>lx</sup> Ibid.

<sup>lxi</sup> It should be noted that a cursory connection was made between Pollock and Graham’s use of gravity by choreographer Bill T. Jones in an interview: Jones, Bill T. “Conversations with Anne”, June 6, 2009. [http://www.tcg.org/pdfs/events/conference/transcript\\_bogart.pdf](http://www.tcg.org/pdfs/events/conference/transcript_bogart.pdf).

And in Roger Copland’s *Merce Cunningham: the Modernizing of Modern Dance*, Copeland off-handedly refers to Graham and Pollock as “gravity-ridden” (pg 56).

<sup>lxii</sup> Barbara Rose, “Jackson Pollock at Work: an Interview with Lee Krasner,” in *Jackson Pollock: Interviews, Articles and Reviews* (New York, NY: Museum of Modern Art : Distributed by H.N. Abrams, 1999), 45.

<sup>lxiii</sup> Cernuschi and Herczynski, “The Subversion of Gravity in Jackson Pollock’s Abstractions.,” 623.

<sup>lxiv</sup> In Cernuschi and Herczynski, “The Subversion of Gravity in Jackson Pollock’s Abstractions.” the authors make the interesting argument that Pollock utilized gravity but then denied its presence by hanging his works vertically instead of horizontally. Although I am still grappling with this claim, it provides another corollary to the work of Graham and Cunningham, whose dancers also embraced and resisted gravity’s forces.

<sup>lxv</sup> Graff, “When your heart falls,” 110.

<sup>lxvi</sup> Graff, “When your heart falls,” 110.

<sup>lxvii</sup> Ibid., 108.