



PERFORMANCE  
PHILOSOPHY

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## BODILY SCHEMATA AND SARTRE'S *I AND ME* REFLECTION AND AWARENESS IN MOVEMENT

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As a dancer, I have been involved in many different investigations of the moving body to understand what it is capable of in terms of unlimited, non-exhaustive expression. These investigations have taken place in a range of movement practices that train the body in dance technique and performance. Some of these practices suggest that a dancer gains special access to an awareness of the felt moving body as a spontaneous, pre-reflective source of bodily constitution, thus claiming experiences of embodied consciousness. For example, in authentic movement the dancer will move spontaneously from impulse. Planned movements or the decision to move from felt sensations are resisted to enable spontaneity.<sup>1</sup> In the practice of BodyMind Centering (BMC), a body of bones, skin, muscles, tissue, organs, fluids, glands and cells are sensed through an imagined attention directed towards these integrated systems.<sup>2</sup> Exercises are developed to sensuously perceive their shape, weight, relations, texture and motility in order to effect action and increase awareness of these internal mechanisms generally hidden to us in everyday experience. These examples share a commitment to obtaining a very specific awareness of the body and its source of constitution. Practitioner methods differ, as do their claims for how access is possible. In this paper, I argue that reflection is integral to an awareness of the body and its senses, and so question certain dance practices that claim access to a realm of pre-reflective, non-intentional movement.<sup>3</sup> My questioning suggests a problematic philosophical slippage from active reflection to a more suspicious realm of pre-reflection that ultimately compromises the aims of most somatic approaches that emphasise “attention”, “deep awareness” (Eddy 2009) and the opportunity for those engaging in these practices “to reenter and experience their bodies more fully through movement” (Stromsted 2007, 201).

One such philosopher to problematise self-awareness and the relationship between body and consciousness was Jean-Paul Sartre in his essay of 1937, *The Transcendence of The Ego: An existentialist theory of consciousness*. Here he argues that self-knowing or awareness is impossible without some form of reflection that is constituted beyond consciousness itself. Consciousness only 'is' insofar as it intends objects in the world; it is both pure intentionality and wholly transcendent.

Sartre's re-structuring of consciousness in relation to the constitution of the ego is first seen in his model of reflection, and second, as a movement of transcendence within intentional consciousness. In the first part of this article, I will consider Sartre's model of reflection in relation to his thoughts on the body's relationship to consciousness in *The Transcendence of the Ego*, and draw upon the ontological distinctions of the body he makes in *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology* (1943). From this, I will develop Sartre's thesis of transcendence and model of reflection, suggesting that the so-called 'hidden' organising structures of the body, understood in embodied cognition as bodily-schemata (the kinaesthesias/proprioception), can be accounted for if our attention is not directed inward toward the body, but turned toward external *sites of interaction* where bodies are extended through clothing, costume and/or digital technologies. Just as Sartre's theory of object transcendence attempts to go beyond the vagueness of an ego-oriented interior, the role of object transcendence in dance practices for accessing the deeper structures ('depth structure') of bodily movement *reverses* our attention from an internal focus to an external one. This perspective does more than just critically rehabilitate historical dance forms like ballet and modern in response to British New Dance that resisted these mirror-led practices by internalising the dancer's experience, it highlights how this 'second reversal' from an internal to an external focus on the body can be useful in contemporary forms of dance making that involve digital technologies *supraextending* the moving body.<sup>4</sup>

## 1 Sartre's model of reflection

### 1.1 Unreflected Consciousness and Ego

There are two levels in Sartre's model of reflection for consciousness, the *unreflected* and the *reflected*. Unreflected consciousness reflects upon reflected consciousness that intends—in the traditional sense of intentionality: having consciousness *about* something—its own objects of perception: that chair, that thought, etc., but it cannot be reflected upon itself, nor easily intuited. For Sartre, unreflected consciousness does not possess an Ego.<sup>5</sup> "The I is the Ego as the unity of its actions [while] the me is the Ego as the unity of states and qualities" (Sartre [1937] 2004, 30). As a unity of *actions, states* and *qualities* that occur in the world, the Ego on Sartre's account is never a unifying, or structuring agent of consciousness. Concerning ourselves only with actions and states in the following discussion, all physical actions like "playing the piano", "driving a car", and "writing" are all transcendent objects as they are actions "taken from the world of things". Mental actions like "doubting, reasoning, meditating, and making a hypothesis" are also about things in the world, and are therefore transcendent (Sartre [1937] 2004, 33). When it comes to states, take for example the statement, 'I hate Peter', the *state* of hatred is a transcendent object of a concrete intuition (just

as much as Peter the person is) and can be apprehended on reflection; “it is *present* to the gaze of reflective consciousness, it is real” (Sartre [1937] 2004, 30). The Ego in whichever unity is the *object* of consciousness found “in the world” outside of us, rather than as some internal part lurking in, above, or behind consciousness; “it is a being in the world, like the ego of another” (Sartre [1937] 2004, 19).

Sartre’s conception of the Ego is epistemically and ontologically different to the way in which Immanuel Kant is understood to have taken up consciousness in his formulation of the self as a conceptual ‘I think’:

The I think must be able to accompany all my representations; for otherwise something would be represented in me that could not be thought at all, which is as much to say that the representation would either be impossible or else at least would be nothing for me (Kant [1781] 1998, Pt. II. Div. I. Bk. I. Ch. II. §16, 246).

For Sartre, the Kantian ‘I think’ does not in reality accompany all our representations (perceptions and thoughts). He argues that Kant speaks only of the possibility that “I should always be able to consider my perception or my thought as mine” (Sartre [1937] 2004, 19); and that we should not understand it is an existential given, or “*real entity*” (Sartre [1937] 2004, 20).

Sartre’s conception of the Ego is also a renunciation of Husserl’s positing of a “pure ego” transcendently attained through his famous phenomenological device, the *epoché*. The *epoché* was central to Husserl’s project to establish phenomenology as a foundational descriptive science. His method of reduction was employed to establish the ontological and universal structural conditions for an irreducible ego, cleared of all those debilitating transcendencies (including the psychical and psycho-physical aspects of “me”) by “parenthesiz[ing] everything which that positing [within an everyday, natural attitude] encompasses with respect to being” (Husserl [1913] 1998, 61). For Sartre, the result of this reductive maneuver is where Husserl goes wrong: aiming at an Ego now reduced to something non-empirical that trails behind, or hovers above consciousness. The ego, now, is an abstract version encumbered by an impersonal “I” attempting to unite all the instances of temporal consciousness. In practising phenomenology, Sartre sees no reason to go beyond intentionality: having consciousness about something, even when this something is consciousness itself.

If we consider claims to pre-reflective awareness in terms of Sartre’s model of reflection and his concept of the Ego, what can be understood from an analysis of the body in somatic dance practices? But firstly, for Sartre, unreflected consciousness does not possess an Ego as reflected consciousness does. This entails that there can be no “I” in relation to a psycho-physical me as unities of states and actions that constitute experience in this unreflected mode. Furthermore, if we accept Sartre’s criticisms of Kant’s and Husserl’s foundational ideas about the self and ego that arguably contribute to thoughts on self-awareness, no other version of the ego (if guided by a conceptual ‘I think’, or a ‘pure ego’) could promote an awareness constituting personal experiences, such as this is ‘my sensation’, ‘my movement’, ‘my body’. And even if we considered that unreflected consciousness did possess an Ego (in the Sartrean sense), this Ego would still need to exist outside

of consciousness in the world, like other egos and objects. By and large, Kant's, Husserl's and Sartre's differing accounts of the ego bring no facility for self-awareness to an unreflected consciousness, nor arguably any other mode of consciousness that claims itself to not be subject to reflection. The questions now at hand are: how does the body relate to the Ego if it is unreflected? How can we have any kind of self-awareness of the deeper structures of the body if it cannot be reflected upon via an Ego?

## 1.2 Egos, Body and Reflection

For Sartre, a body can only be understood causally in relation to the Ego's unity of *states* and *actions* that occur in the world. Sartre's examples of "playing the piano", "driving the car", and "writing" are instances of "concerted" *actions* by a psycho-physical me (Sartre [1937] 2004, 33). But it is with some concern that we find no depth to the body in Sartre's reflection upon these physical activities. Rather, attention towards the piano keys, the music produced, or the resultant words on a page bury the felt or imagined body in his totalising analyses. The body's posture, finger strokes, steering, head turning, and gripping are withdrawn from the many available modes of reflected awareness. This is a consequence of the psycho-physical me's *fugitive* nature as Sartre develops it in *The Transcendence of the Ego*.

The psycho-physical me is unknown to us outside of the transcendent unities of states and actions in the world—actions that are infinite and contingent activities of the Ego. If we want to know *this me*, we need to take a step back for vantage, but as we do that "the me accompanies us in this withdrawal" (Sartre [1937] 2004, 86). For Sartre, the body also steps back in any attempt to acquire a vantage point. It is a fugitive from being known outside of its transcendent activities. The only account we can make of ourselves is a reconstitution of fragmented facts from those other than me; others provide us with knowledge of our body in its constitution.

Presupposing that we are in a direct relationship with the world as objects, Sartre makes an ontological distinction between two modes of bodily Being in his later text of 1943 *Being and Nothingness*. The first mode is the body being nothing other than *for-itself*. In its *nihilating* escape from being (the *in-itself*) the *for-itself* demands a body in order to engage with the world. But for Sartre, the body being *for-itself* is "never a given which [we] can know" (Sartre [1943] 1958, 309). In contrast, the second mode—a body *being-for-others*—is the way our body is described to us by others: how it becomes known through others and "how it is placed in the perspective of the Other-as-object" (Sartre [1943] 1958: 305). These two modes are important for understanding how somatic dance practitioners wanting epistemic certitude of their embodied selves through movement will need to take their body as an object. For now, I will focus upon this second mode to further develop Sartre's model of reflection in relation to his thesis of object transcendence and to insist upon an approach that requires an external attention to the body, rather than an internal one.

In discussing a body *being-for-others*, we might take the example of the somatic practice of BodyMind Centering: a system developed by American Occupational therapist Bonnie Bainbridge-Cohen in the 1970s. In BMC, the body is experienced from within, while consciousness and body

are inextricably experienced as an embodied whole. A somatic practice is broadly defined as “paying attention to bodily sensations emerging from within” and involves moving “slowly and gently in order to gain deeper awareness of the ‘self that moves’” (Eddy 2009, 6). BMC claims that we can learn something about *the self* through movement and the exploration of our embodiment.

One model for describing first-person authority of our inner intentions is what philosopher, David Finkelstein calls *detectivism*. Detectivism is a way in which we can speak about our own thoughts, feelings and intentions. On this account, “consciousness is understood as involving a kind of inward observation or perception” (Finkelstein 2003, 5). Detectivism may be attributed to somatic practices that attempt to interrogate embodied consciousness through inward perception. For instance, BMC practitioners claim that:

[w]hen we are talking about blood or lymph or any physical substances, we are not talking about substances but about states of consciousness and processes inherent within them. (Bainbridge-Cohen 2008, 3)

But how do we know this? How do we know that a somatic experience of body can be united with consciousness; that it can affirm consciousness and provide special access to our bodily experience through inward perception?

In practising BMC, I have hissed into a single kidney with a concentrated breath for more than six hours at a time, and imagined moving from the nucleus of my own cell structure in tiny dances of the mitochondria. I have never seen my kidney, ascertained its precise location, or experienced kidney pain. During this exercise, I vaguely located the region of kidney through mental imaging. These images were formed from illustrations and photographs from an anatomy book, and feeling the shape of a one-to-one scale plastic model. Imaging was helpful in undertaking an exercise where my breath was to move my organs. In terms of constituting my body, I was immediately aware of the inhalation and exhalation of breath at a sensory level: the rising and falling of the chest, and circulation through nose and mouth, but the point of the exercise was to become aware of an internal organ not normally felt, an organ otherwise engaged in involuntary processes and movements. In this exercise, I was required to constitute my body reflectively and imaginatively as a *being-for-others*. As Sartre points out in *Being and Nothingness*:

I [too] was apprehending a wholly constituted object as a *this* among other *thises*, and it was only by a reasoning process that I referred it back to being *mine*; it was much more my *property* than my being. (Sartre [1943] 1958, 304)

By and large, I would argue, BMC somatic techniques are examples of hyper-reflection and awareness constituted through a body *being-for-others*. For example, as I sit in this chair, I feel the bony edge of my sis bone connecting with the edge of my heel along a strong line of sensation; I can only describe this anatomically. In another example, I can imagine a plumb line that carves my body into two symmetrical halves, while at the same time ignoring an observable dissymmetry shown in a mirror, where one hip protrudes slightly more, and is a little higher than the other. In both cases, the body is constituted from sensation aided by an objective knowledge of anatomy.

Such felt imagining makes available a sensorial palette for designing and controlling bodily expression. For example, I can create a dialogue between the left and right half of my torso, becoming aware of this division by sensing that area of my body imaginatively constituted by a rudimentary knowledge of anatomy, but also sensorially from the ongoing experience of breathing, and the memory of pain from cracking a rib at age 14. From this, I might impose qualities of movement (sharp staccato, smooth snake-like undulations, volumetric suspensions) or even imagine one side of the torso containing angry bees flying in all directions, while the other side ripples like a pond disturbed by a thrown stone. Here, I constitute the body as *being-for-others*, and in the butoh-esque example where the body moves in relation to two conflicting images, it is a body *being-other-things*.<sup>6</sup> I come to awareness as a mode of reflection through imagination. But, the question of how a body can be “wholly body and wholly consciousness” in these experiential examples, without being a *body-for-others*, becomes untenable (Sartre [1943] 1958).

For Sartre, the first mode of bodily being, the body *being-for-itself* is just that, “wholly body and wholly consciousness”, but never united with a constituted body. The *for-itself* mode of being is an unperceived centre guiding our orientations with the world of objects. But in our attempt to unite the body with consciousness through reflection, we constitute a body *being-for-others*. As an ontological necessity, we are beings-in-the world; this is the *in-itself* claim of existence. Our most primary relation to this existence is the body *being-for-itself* in its *thereness*; it is the “unutilizable” centre. We find this in Husserl, and later in Merleau-Ponty, where they speak of the body as a *zero point of orientation* (Husserl [1928] 1989, §18, 61; Merleau-Ponty [1962] 2002, 105). But if, as Constance Mui asks, “the body is flesh/substantial/an opaque thing, how could consciousness be embodied and still remain translucent?” (Mui 2010, 90). How is it possible to relate a material body to nonpositional consciousness? Sartre insists that the *body-for-itself*, in its ‘I am my body and I exist’, needs to be forgotten, backgrounded, ignored and unreflected. It becomes a fugitive from our knowing. Ultimately, as Katherine Morris highlights, the body’s “duty is to ignore itself” in Sartre’s formulation (Morris 2010, 89). Despite the fact that a body *being-for-itself* is “our primary relation to the in-itself: our being in the world”, Sartre still deems it impossible to have an awareness of the body from this ontological mode (Sartre [1943] 1958, 306). He insists that the *in-itself* and *for-itself* are “on different and incommunicable levels of being” (Sartre [1943] 1958, 305).

Let us now consider some possible challenges to a body *being-for-others* in awareness through two cases of spontaneous movement, one from an everyday example and the other from authentic movement practice. In an everyday case of non-intended bodily movements and affects that erupt spontaneously, we may unexpectedly burst into laughter, burp, blush, dribble, itch, double over in pain, cough, sneeze, yawn, twitch, shiver, and sweat. If spontaneous bodily events, taken in isolation, are not intentional acts in and by themselves, how is awareness possible if not operative as a reflective act? If these bodily events endure beyond a single involuntary eruption, we can reflect upon them temporally in terms of a body *being-for-others*. If caused by some intentional activity, they are embedded within what Merleau-Ponty terms a “network of intentionalities” that can be reflected upon as a synthetic unity: we laugh at the joke; we choke from water caught in the wind-pipe while drinking; and we itch a spot from the mosquito that annoyingly disappears when we turn the light on (Merleau-Ponty [1962] 2002, 484). A possible way of understanding these

bodily events with Sartre's model of reflection is to describe this border between the reflected and unreflected as a porous *threshold of spontaneity*. At this border, the sudden eruption of involuntary bodily movements and affects are constituted as my cough, blush or twitch through an immediate, marginal or hyper-reflective awareness.

Extending this analysis to dance practices of spontaneous movement as a second case, we can inquire into the scope of potential awareness of our moving bodies. Authentic movement, for example, involves the mover actively engaged in the bracketing of concerted action so that his/her body is in a free state to move spontaneously, the bracketing must persist in order to be authentic. The mover is always actively resisting his/her control and planning of movements, while exerting a more overarching form of control: one is *not* to think of moving, while all one thinks about, or waits for, is movement. Furthermore, any moment of spontaneity that spikes through the threshold is experienced as an immediate awareness transitioning into reflection accompanied by an overarching meta-reflection that operates to resist planned movement: for a sudden flick of the wrist can move into a historically prescribed pathway of movement that this form wants to overcome. In general, I would suggest, authentic movement is a practice of meta-reflection that observes bodily movement erupting from a threshold of spontaneity. As a practice of meta-reflective vigilance, this threshold is repeatedly returned to in order to stymie the development of conscious movement patterns. As challenges to a body *being-for-others*, the spontaneity of movement—whether as an eruption of some unexpected bodily event, or movement that “emerges from the depths of the unconscious and manifests in conscious awareness”—do not escape hyper-vigilant *conscious* reflections at any point in the event or practice (Tantia 2012, 57). This is more so in the case of authentic movement, which engages our thinking in a “rational”, “orderly” and “manageable” way—the very modes of mind that founder of the movement Mary Whitehouse implored the practice to “disregard” (1999, 44). In an authentic mover’s “moving to be moved”, they work with such conscious rigour to actively shut “out external visual stimuli” to attain a “deep sensing experience, which has the ability to reach into the very tissues of the body [to] evoke imagery, emotion, body sensation, memory and dreams” (Stromsted and Haze 2007, 58). All this work seems to affirm what we objectively know about the body as given, rather than hidden, and to “evoke” fictions that are conducive to creative dance practice, but not necessarily providing clearer insights into the ‘self’, or increasing access to an enigmatic consciousness as practitioners of the form seek.<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, the term *embodied consciousness*, and like terms, are bandied about with special weight in somatic discourse and practice, as if they follow radically different procedures of access to the anatomically, objectified body that a body *being-for-others* describes (Shusterman 1998; see commentary on somatic practices in Sellars-Young 2013, 75-90). In constituting our bodies through a model of reflective awareness that has a dynamic depth, I am not convinced that somatic practitioners need to delve beyond reflection to find some pre-reflective, self-originating source unknown to us. Rather, they should focus their attentions upon the body as it is externally constituted, given readily to reflection. Ironically, this idea resonates with one of Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen’s opening remarks found in her seminal text on BMC practice: “The mind is like the wind and the body like the sand; if you want to know how the wind is blowing, you can look at the sand”

(2008, 1). BMC does not, however, stay primarily focused on the sand, but in fact looks more to the wind, and the source of that wind in an eagerness to delve into the internal depths of feeling and sensing that are beyond the tracks in the sand. My concern echoes Sartre's questioning of Husserl's investigations of consciousness and the needless positing of a transcendental ego that stands above or behind a psycho-physical me: Why is this me not enough? Is it not adequate to accept the ego-body as a reflected transcendent object, rather than reducing it to some unreflected mode of embodied consciousness (Sartre [1937] 2004, 21)?

The fear of objectifying the body in experiential dance practices is rife (Whitehouse [1958] 1999). The lived body (*Leib*) is accepted as a subjectivating method for inward and internal awareness and so entails adopting a certain viewpoint from behind, within or above consciousness.<sup>8</sup> However, I would argue that the overt subjectivisation of bodily awareness as a precious space for superior somatic access is highly problematic in its vagueness, while to accept an awareness of the body as a process of Sartrean transcendence is to engage modes of reflection that mitigate the problems of forcing an imagined unity between body and consciousness. This latter view implies two things, (1) it deals only with bodily constitution at the level of the reflective ego, and (2) it asserts external perception—even third person based perception as description—over the more complex and mysterious accounts of internal perception found within psychology, cognitive science and philosophy of mind.<sup>9</sup> And yet, reflection must be seen in terms of the body's 'depth structure' (bodily schemata), otherwise we fall short of providing a more distinctive account of the body, as Sartre appears to in his earlier writings.

Existence aside, Sartre expresses little motivation for thematising the body. His analysis—for the most part—finds the body in retreat from reflected consciousness, and his investigation is presupposed by an attitude of *unastonishment* about the body. So what can Sartre's thesis of transcendence contribute to those who are *astonished* by the body?

## 2 Bodily schemata as depth structure

For those who are astonished by the body, there is a need to bring into relief the deeper organising structures of the moving body, rather than allowing it to withdraw. In the creative arts, whether it is in designing movement on bodies for performance, studying their interaction with digital technologies, teaching dance, or writing about dance, such an attendance potentialises more choice in design and richer descriptive accounts in reviewing. Bodily-schemata are the deeper organising structures of the moving body, the kinaesthesias or proprioceptive system that form the basis of muscle contraction and our posture as we move within intentional actions. They are our bodily capabilities framing our more explicit sensations, and provide us with the possibility for movement (Sheets-Johnstone 2010, 2011; Gallagher 2005; Welton 2004).

The consensus amongst phenomenologists and advocates of 'embodied cognition' attempting to account for bodily-schemata is that we can have no conscious, reflective awareness of these enigmatic body maps to movement. Such an account does not deny that something more fundamental structures and organises our conscious movement, but these bodily-schemata are



considered inaccessible in their connectedness to our *preconscious being-in-the-world* (Welton 2004), or remain unknowable as *prenoetic performances of the body* (Gallagher 2005).<sup>10</sup> Bodily-schemata present a limit to both self and bodily awareness because they are futural possibilities informing how we will move (Welton), or imperceptible and only available to marginal awareness in relation to other intentional acts (Gallagher). If this is the case, then what can be apprehended or known about bodily-schemata?

For Sartre the body is everywhere, and so are the senses; and “yet everywhere” they are inapprehensible” (Sartre [1943] 1958, 416). The body can be found extended across the tools that it utilises:

[...]it is at the end of the cane on which I lean against the earth; it is at the end of the telescope which shows me the stars; it is on the chair, in the whole house; for it is my adaption to these tools. (Sartre [1943] 1958, 428)

If we accept that the body and its perceiving senses are extended across objects and materials that we use or wear, is it possible to sidestep the problems of constituting our body based on dubious claims of inner bodily-awareness, or our inapprehension of bodily-schemata? Rather than cast these aspects into unintelligible, unknowable realms termed the ‘preconscious’ or ‘prenoetic’, is it not possible to apprehend them, if only partially, through the objects and materials that extend them?

There are two implied presuppositions if we develop this view: the first is to accept that the body and its senses are transcendent objects amongst others in the world. The second implies if we are apprehending the body’s depth structure in relation to an object, then we are focused upon a *site of reciprocal interaction*, rather than the body *for-itself*. In the next section, I will consider such external sites of interaction where the body’s movements are extended beyond the body and boundary of skin as observable objects.

### 3 Bodily-schemata extended and supra-extended through objects and materials

In the 1920s, neurologist Henry Head observed that a ‘body-schema can extend to the feather in a woman’s hat’.<sup>11</sup> This often-used observation in embodied cognition theory supports the view that the deeper organisational structures of proprioception are visibly apprehended beyond the boundary of the skin. My own experience of women walking the streets with feathers in their hats follows a day at the races in Randwick, the site of one of Sydney’s racecourses. By early evening, the streets of nearby Paddington crawl with inebriated women donning (ironically like proud peacocks) an array of fascinators eagerly attempting to fascinate. Feathers bob, jiggle, swish and sway upon stiletto points. One need only watch the feather to ascertain how well the underlying structures of bodily movement are doing after many pops of champagne. My point here is that we can observe the way other bodies move at a deeper structural level by paying attention to the site of interaction where the feather and moving body meet. Arguably such external observations can produce a more nuanced account of a dynamically moving body through acute attention towards

micro-shifts in orientation and weight, motion and rest, micro-movements and adjustments of balance—to name only a few. Granting the subtlety of a feather’s motion, and other external causes that move the feather (say for instance, a breeze), make the observation somewhat causally convoluted. We can take this example as a clue for apprehending bodily-schemata in less subtle extensions of the body within performance, especially when the performer is able to engage in reflective practices.

Despite the current philosophical consensus that reflective awareness of bodily-schemata is impossible as noted above, I would argue that we can begin to observe these deeper structures by looking toward the body externalised through a process of Sartrean transcendence. Rather than looking inward, it becomes a case of looking outward toward instances of externally constituted movement. To some extent this perspective is developed by Finkelstein in his work on self-knowledge where he, through Wittgenstein, considers the correlation of three different first-person authority statements expressing a single mental state. He identifies three examples: (1) “when we speak directly about our state of mind”; (2) “when we speak about what is expressed by our behaviour; and (3) when we merely ascribe mental states to ourselves in thoughts” (Finkelstein 2003, 112). For Finkelstein, these three statements all bear an equal relation as language expressions to the same mental state they describe. On this account, my internal sensing of movement is no more an authority on bodily awareness, than external expressions of this movement described directly or through my thoughts.

The feather example is from the perspective of an external observer and so does not directly overcome the problem of bodily awareness for the performer—or for the drunken ladies trying to fascinate a mate. If we are to step into the performer’s shoes to apprehend one’s own bodily schemata, the field of interactive digital performance could function as one means amongst others to provide the performer with external information about his/her deeper bodily structures through external sites of interaction.<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, the return to the external apprehension of movement presents a reversal of concerns held by dance makers involved in experiential dance decades before contemporary work in dance technology events. These traditions can be traced back to what Sally Banes identifies as the postmodern period of dance in the United States, especially with the first generation of Judson Church Dance Theatre artists on the East Coast, and the teachings of Anna Halprin on the West (Banes 1994). Britain was also a stronghold for experiential dance practices emerging in the 1970s, forming what “*has* come to be called new dance”. According to Emilyn Claid, British new dance ‘interrogates, reappraises, deconstructs and reconstructs codified techniques’ through the practices of “body-mind centering, Aikido, Alexander technique and release-based knowledges” (Claid 2006, 80). The reversal of the dancer’s perceptual attention from the external to the internal was a revolutionary process of “letting go of the mirror”. With codified classical and modern dance,

[d]ancers learn each technique by embodying the external representation of the performed language. These are the mirror-reflected languages, working from the external images to the internal kinaesthetic. In contrast, body-mind techniques focus on the internal anatomy of the body where there is no externally constructed performance as such. (Claid 2006, 80)

The mirror-reflected languages of classical and modern dance forms that were 'let go' by British new dance and postmodern styles arguably engage with Sartrean transcendence, in that, an awareness of movement is accessed by viewing the external image, and consciousness of this movement is constituted outside of the body. Like these mirror-reflected modes of moving, the use of interactive technologies in art and performance supra-extend the body in the form of projected images thrown on a range of surfaces, including the flesh of the moving performer. They offer a contemporaneous response to the 'classic-modern' versus 'new dance-postmodern' debate regarding external and internal awarenesses. Traditional technologies like lighting supra-extend the body at different scales in relation to the corporeal body in a play of moving shadows and/silhouettes. The performer can visibly watch their projected self in real-time, or as a temporally manipulated image in playback. In more emergent tracking technologies the movements of the dancer and image are co-created. Both are constrained by the other in their spatial relations (the dancer usually needing to work within a defined space to be recorded and/or mapped), but these constraints offer a myriad of possible movements as visual and/or sonic outputs.

In my experiences of working with choreographer Carol Brown and programmer Mette Ramsgard Thomsen in a workshop based instantiation of their work *Sea, Unsea* (2009), my movements recorded by an infrared camera were drawn in realtime as abstract visual representations by virtual agents within specifically designed software. Dressed all in black, except for hands, feet and face, these agents were attracted to my exposed flesh in a live recorded image, drawing the pathway of my movements as a constant line dynamically folding and unfolding in geometric, origami like patterns. What was interesting in this experience in the first instance was the reorientation of reflective awareness away from the sole concern of 'how I had moved', 'how I was moving', and 'how I might move'. Even though the image projected was not a direct reflection of my form in any detail, I was aware that my movement choice was mutually affected and responsible for the way in which the pattern was drawn, and the causal relation between my moving and the drawn representation became ambiguous. I was not familiar with the system, so became apprehensive about ignoring audience in order to watch the screen and retain my connection with the moving lines. There was no set choreography, so I rehearsed a triangulated, separated awareness between moving, the projections changing and my prospective audience.

Secondly, my orientation, levels, speed, and limb relations produced a different visual representation, which I noticed on screen without any prior planning of my limbs. I observed visual forms supraextending my moving body on screen. Even though these representations were abstract in form, I could reflect on major limb relations and the logic of my moving without recourse to internal sensation. My experience of this interactive system is a leading clue to how limits to an awareness of bodily-schemata might be overcome through paying attention to external visual representations of the body supraextended by digital technologies. Further research of more sensitive interactive systems would strengthen these insights, both as a performer and audience member. In particular, such research might examine systems that create a more fluid and time-sensitive graphic that not only tracks points, limbs or colours of the body, but moves with relative force, dimension, weight and texture as a precise articulation of the interaction point between the three-dimensional moving body and two-dimensional graphic.

## To conclude

A performer does not need an apodictic internal awareness of the body to affirm their experience of bodily-schemata. Inner bodily awareness is not the authoritative expression of our bodily states. Counter-intuitively, these deeper, hidden structures of bodily-schemata can be apprehended as external, transcendent expressions. In *The Transcendence of the Ego*, Sartre reflects cursorily on the body by paying attention to egoic acts. He somewhat evades the body in his quest to separate the ego from consciousness, and to ontologically describe the body as *being for others*. And yet, as I have argued here, if our internal reflections constituting body meet their limits with bodily-schemata, Sartre's thesis of transcendence provides a different kind of access to understanding bodily constitution without forcing an imagined unity between body and consciousness and affirming more than we can know, for here we are required to look outward, rather than inward, to gain a better insight into these prefiguring bodily structures of movement.

For dance practices that 'let go' of externally constituted modes of apprehending movement to ascertain some pre/non-reflective internal awareness, the ideas presented in this article—through the philosophy of Sartre and the experiential insights gained from dancing within an interactive digital system—not only challenge the voracity of their claims, but present a more contemporaneous *reversal* of the internal over the external through performance technologies along with access to the very depth structures that somatic-led practices seek.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Authentic movement evolved in the 1950s from the work of Mary Whitehouse who attempted to develop "a body/mind integrative approach to personality" in psychological therapy. Successors of Whitehouse's approach to mind, body, movement and imagination include Joan Chodorow, a Jungian analyst and dance therapist who brought together authentic movement and depth psychology, and Janet Adler a dance movement therapist who "codified the discipline of authentic movement" and approached it more as a healing practice (Tantia 2012, 57).

<sup>2</sup> Attention is directed at a body both visually and sensuously imagined. This is different to attending directly to something seen or even felt.

<sup>3</sup> One does not need to look far into the literature on somatic dance practices to understand that reflection is a key mental strategy for a dancer or practitioner to gain an experiential awareness of their bodily sensations and movements. See especially Martha Eddy's historical survey of the somatic tradition from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to current contemporary practice for examples of approaches to reflection. Eddy likens the tradition to "a field of wild flowers with unique species randomly popping up across wide expanses" (2009, 6). See also Stromsted (2007) and Batson and Wilson (2014).

<sup>4</sup> My use of the prefix 'supra' as opposed to 'super' is to describe precisely that which extends beyond the limits of a thing, or is outside of it.

<sup>5</sup> I will capitalise Sartre's concept of Ego to distinguish it from other conceptions.

<sup>6</sup> Butoh is a Japanese avant-garde dance form that was created in 1959 to respond to a rapidly modernising,

Westernising, reconstructive post World War Japan. It is described as more than a performing art in its close links with social change and “an evolution in ways of thinking” (Alishina 2015, 12-13). While butoh may be identified by a range of differing characteristics (12), Sondra Fraleigh (2010) describes it in terms of its imagistic practice:

(Yoko) Ashikawa [one of the female founders of butoh] taught that butoh grows out of felt imagery, and that internalizing the idea or image is the difficult part, because you must get rid of the conscious effort of visualizing before you can internalize. She added that the audience for butoh might not receive the exact image the dancer internalizes, but they cannot mistake the imaginistic [sic] process. The process for imaging for both the dancer and the audience is the aesthetic core of butoh. “Butoh accepts that fiction is another kind of reality,” she said, “Should you be able to really visualize an enormous eye looking at you from behind?” she asked. The answer is basically “Yes” (199, 142).

<sup>7</sup> Authentic movement is described by the Authentic Movement Community “as a meditative, spiritual practice that integrates body and mind for increased access to consciousness” and “as part of psychotherapy process, for enhanced sense of self and well-being; often bringing unconscious thoughts to awareness” (Authentic Movement Community 2016).

<sup>8</sup> Following the body’s exclusion from the activities of the *epoché* in *Ideas I*, as a transcendence of the natural world (Husserl [1913] 1998) Husserl reinstates the body in his arguments for bodily constitution and self-awareness in the reconstitution of material nature in *Ideas II*, making a fundamental distinction between the lived-body (*Leib*) and the physical body (*Körper*). Bodily self-awareness is made possible through the lived experiences (*Erlebnis*) of our sensings within the occurrence of touch. Sensings are prior to any objectification of the body constituted as mine but may be reflected upon through directed phenomenological reflection towards these instances of touch: a body in perpetual contact with its world (Husserl [1928] 1989). Phenomenologists since Husserl continue to use this distinction, keeping with *Leib*, rather than *Körper* in their phenomenological investigations. Sartre is one exception, however, in his objectification of body as a body *being-for-others*.

So far as the physicians have had any experience with my body, it was with my body *in the midst of the world* and as it is for others. My body as it is *for me* does not appear to me in the midst of the world. Of course during a radiology I was able to see the picture of my vertebrae on a screen, but I was outside in the midst of the world. I was apprehending a wholly constituted object as a this among other *theses*, and it was only by a reasoning process that I referred it back to being *mine*; it was much more my *property* than my being (Sartre [1943] 1958, 303-304).

<sup>9</sup> For a classical view of inner perception in psychology, whereby inner perception is not seen as an act or activity, but a secondary consciousness that is always present within mental activity, see Brentano (1973); for accounts in cognitive science see Hurlburt and Heavey (2001); and in philosophy of mind see Cassam (1994) for classic and contemporary debates on self-knowledge, and Burwood, Gilbert and Lennon (2005) for a more general discussion on inner perception in this tradition.

<sup>10</sup> The prenoetic performance of the body involves those habitual postures and movements that are not conceptualised, visualised or emoted (as is the case with body-image). The prenoetic is where the body “acquires a certain organisation or style in its relation with its environment”, but which is not readily brought to consciousness and includes the non-conscious aspects of proprioceptive activity (Gallagher 2005, 32). Prenoetic movements help to structure consciousness and the perceptual field within which they are entwined.

<sup>11</sup> Reference found in Gallagher (2005, 32) and also in Arbib (2003, 994): “a woman’s power of localization may extend to the feather of her hat”.

<sup>12</sup> If feathers or costume are material extensions of the human body, technological extensions (i.e. projections, shadows, amplified sounds) present supra-extended embodiments, a describable feature of experiences for performers and audience in digital technology events. Inspired by Merleau-Ponty, Susan Broadhurst writes:

[i]n digital practices, instrumentation is mutually implicated with the body in an epistemological sense. The body adapts and extends itself through external instruments. To have experience, to get used to an instrument, is to incorporate that instrument into the body. The experience of the corporeal schema is not fixed or delimited but extendable to the various tools and technologies which may be embodied. (Broadhurst 2009, 9)

Don Ihde goes further:

[i]f I am right about the secret norm of a here-body in action, it should also be noted that such a body experience is one that is not simply coextensive with a body outline or one's skin [...]. One's "skin" is at best polymorphically ambiguous, and, even without material extension, the sense of the here-body exceeds its physical bounds. (Ihde 2002, 6)

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