UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

CONFLUENCES 9

Deciphering decolonisation in Dance Pedagogy in the 21st century in Cape Town, South Africa

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Hosted by

SCHOOL OF DANCE
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WELCOME LETTER

Dear Delegates

Central to the subject of Dance Pedagogy is the body, and for so many, violence to their dancing bodies has taken on multiple forms: systemic/institutionalised; communal or cultural; and media-related oppression *et. al*. On this sombre note, many of us have gathered as 'pedagogues of hope' to consider and learn from our peers' experiences on what has, and can be done to rid ourselves of such subjugation and trauma. I welcome you to *Confluences 9* which suggests an entry point and a deciphering, if you will, of crystalised colonialism stagnant in the 21st century. How can we retrace our roots when names and languages have been obliterated? What new sounds should be sung when drums were confiscated? Where do we ignite new fires when beliefs are ridiculed and some art is scorned? How to dance to our own tune in 21st century?

I am rejuvenated by the range of conference activities: papers, workshops, posters, performances, exhibitions that have been prepared by the *Confluences 9* team since 2015. Thank you. The nuanced reflections of our many illustrious delegates will be presented over the next 3 days and is a tribute to both these VIP guests and dance scholars everywhere. I am deeply grateful to our Keynote speaker, Lliane Loots whose advocacy for Dance from the south seems to hold no bounds. Lliane has a long association with the UCT School of Dance and for me (Lliane was my Master's supervisor). She has acted as our compass in her capacity as an external examiner and through her artistic works which are critiqued in our curriculum. Lliane continues to guide our dance scholarship in the region. Another fearless choreo-activist and self-declared, 'intersectionist', Dr Anita Ratnam has also embarked on a journey with us to fuel the debates on Contemporary Indian Dance to new and seasoned audiences. Welcome Anita as you shift this complex terrain.

To all our speakers, panelists, presenters, videographers, dancers – some of you returning and others new, we are very mindful of the extraordinary efforts that you have undertaken to be with us (overcoming dire travel funding and other hurdles). You have finally arrived! And, we warmly welcome each one of you. Please be safe and enjoy our beautiful city of Cape Town this Winter (and bring us more rain with your next visits). Many of our workshop presenters seemed unsure of their invitations and the acceptances by our peer reviewing committee. Could this be that your acts of subversion are already so potent as to erase a colonial past? I would like to suggest that this is in fact so. Therefore, we have included the fields of disability arts, notions of hybridity and modernity, suggesting some of the cutting-edge work in dance which may be the ideal tools needed to disrupt old patterns and irrelevant values.

The challenges and tensions between African and black remain, as do questions of aesthetic vs. semiotics in Dance. Perhaps, *Confluences 9* will advance deeper dialogues between traditional and contemporary dances for us to find a way back to the body – a humanitarian discourse for Dance Pedagogy.

Yours sincerely

DR GERARD M. SAMUEL

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Part I – Keynote Speaker

LEARNING TO SPEAK IN MY MOTHER TONGUE: RUMINATING ON CONTEMPORARY DECOLONISING DANCE PRACTICES FOR MYSELF AND MY AFRICAN CONTINENT.

Lliane Loots
University of KwaZulu-Natal:
Drama and Performance Studies

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Abstract

Taking an ethnographic turn, this paper does not offer any definitive contemporary solutions towards decolonising dance practice in South African (and Africa) but offers instead, as the title suggests, ruminations on an embodied and personal dance journey that reflects on two distinct pedagogical arenas; the first is a need to re-evaluate and assess the viability of chosen dance training methods (or what we might call technique) and together with this, secondly, the cognate teaching practices. Potentially what I journey into proposing is an attempt to create a critical dance pedagogy that does not always look at Western/Northern based models as the only viable – often defined as universal training methods. I go back to Ngûgî wa Thiong'o (1981) and his call to mitigate the effects of the 'cultural bomb' and think about what this means for dance practice. And, finally, I ask myself to re-learn (as dancer, choreographer and teacher) to speak in my mother tongue – a dancer returning to her body, her skeleton, her blood and bones as the primary way of being and knowing the world – a decolonised territory of meaning and storytelling.

In setting out to write this paper, I am wanting to reflect and interrogate almost 25 years of my own personal involvement in contemporary dance in South Africa and on my African continent. This involvement spans an academic career as a dance lecturer at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, the desire to create alternate teaching praxis for dance and dancers in South Africa, to re-think and re-imagine the race, gender and class politics of access to dance training, performing and dance spaces, and my own on-going work as a professional choreographer. I am wanting to reflect on my work that has attempted to bring together my own multiple identities as dance researcher, teacher and choreographer as I begin to interrogate, through this academic text and the writing and reflecting process, on my own artistic process as a dance maker, dance educator, and a choreographer. I engage discourse and tell stories in two mediums: the linguistic and the physical, and like all good storytelling, the beginning point is always the self; and more acutely for a dancer and choreographer (and feminist), the body.

This paper and presentation thus aims to be one text written *with* a body answering to another text written physically *on* and *through* a body – the corporeal acts of dance-making and dance teaching. I claim Randy Martin's (2004:59) notion of "dance as a continuing site of self-recognition" and take up the

auto-ethnographic turn (see, for example, Holman Jones, 2005), of looking into the embodied self as a site of meaning-making and, indeed, authentic study.

1994 saw me graduate with a Master's degree in Gender Studies and step into permanent employment as the designated 'movement' (as it was then called) lecturer in the Drama and Performance Studies Programme at the then University of Natal (UND). I was 29 years old and had just witnessed my own troubled country transition into its first year of democracy. I had a history of civil disobedience and political exile, short courses in contemporary dance from various UK based institutions, and twelve years of seemingly irrelevant but very rigorous ballet training behind me. I entered the workplace at a time of not only a transition in the countries geo-political frame, but a transition of the UND Drama Department. Within two years of my appointment, 90% of the staff complement had either retired or left and so the programme was given a clean sweep. My in-put was to move away from the thinking that 'movement' training on offer would serve this historically strong but quite Western focused theatre programme, to fighting tooth and nail to turn dance into its own designated stream of study. I refused the term 'movement' and started to recirculate dance studies as UND transitioned into the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Part of this initial post 1994 shedding of old paradigms and ways of thinking, teaching and researching around Performance Studies was the first tentative steps into decolonising (WaThiong'o, 1981) higher education; into beginning to let the teaching and learning on offer reflect the post 1994 political and social climate of change, of hope and of opening the doors of learning for all. For me this was the beginning of a long (and still continuing) deeply personal and deeply political journey into re-imagining, re-thinking, re-evaluating and re-modeling my own praxis as teacher, researcher and dance maker.

In essence, this is what this paper is; a reflection and interrogation of both my internal and external processes of decolonising old paradigms of training, writing/researching and making dance and trying to re-imagine an inclusive dance practice in South Africa, and, in Africa (pushed along by my own collaborative practice with various fellow African artists and dance makers).

It is, in many ways, an autoethnographic study of a 25 year transitional space in my own engagement with dance that is set against the larger geo-political, social and cultural battles of South Africa. That these battles continue and are ever present is also a testimony to the fact that the act of decolonising, the act of interrogating racism, sexism and class discrimination, need constant vigilance and are an on-

going struggle for post-colonial and post-apartheid artists, academics and teachers in South Africa. My intention is that these personally interrogated stories offer a microcosm of larger issues that focus a lens on how arts (and dance in particular) have been, are, and become, a tipping point in the enactment of lived – and significantly embodied democracy. In essence I claim this autoethnographic methodology as "a way for me to couple inquiry into what is felt, fantasized, and thought … with questions concerning the embodied experiences of dancing, research, and curriculum in relation to sociocultural context" (Pinar 1988:138-139).

Further, I am reminded by Wall (2006:9), fighting to remember the early second-wave feminist slogan and point of visceral theorising: 'the personal is political', that

> […] those that complain that personal narratives emphasise a single, speaking subject fail to realise that no individual voice speaks apart from a societal framework of constructed meaning. There is a direct and inextricable link between the personal and the cultural. Thus, rich meaning, culturally relevant personal experience, and an intense motivation to know are what typify and strengthen autoethnography.

In an engagement with re-conceptualising and re-imaging dance (as researcher, teacher and choreographer) I set myself up to take on Ngugi WaThiong'o's call to seek – in all my praxis - "relevance to our situation … [and the] contribution towards understanding ourselves … by establishing the centrality of Africa" (1981:94). I continue to understand this as the highest of imperatives as I aim self-criticism/self-reflections towards myself and to my historical ways of having been taught as a young white South African growing up with the privileges of white apartheid colonial education (and those 12 years of rigorous [white] ballet education). Mudimbe (1985) suggests that a counter narrative to the epistemic hegemony of colonial and white privilege in education and in learning, is to use "reflexivity and critical analysis" (1985:2016) so that all within the learning environment (especially those historically excluded from knowledge making) begin to think about themselves as "subjects of their own destiny that are able to re-invent the past and envision their own future" (Mudimbe, 1985:2016). Returning to Ngugi, this is perhaps what he might have called "a quest for relevance" (1981:87).

In constantly unfolding various forms and spaces for dance I consider the two approaches to the acts of decolonisation as identified by Guruba (2015) in his writings around decolonising higher education in Kenya. The first identified approach is to "add new items to an existing curriculum". Honesty prevails when I am left to consider that much of the 1994 curriculum changes effected by myself and my colleagues took this form. As I stepped away from the 'movement' syllabus and fought for an authentic

and self-contained dance stream, I was guided (as we, perhaps, all are?) by what I knew and what I had been taught. Antonin Artaud's idea of "finally do(ing) away with idea of the masterpieces reserved for the so-called elite but (which are) incomprehensible to the masses" (1958:53) was not possible at this time as I still had a whole process of decolonised re-learning and un-learning to personally undergo. I also became aware that while we, as university academics, were engaged in the process of transforming and reforming, there was little work done on de-centering epistemic colonial, white, paternalistic and class bound adherence to what was argued as "epistemic violent normative ways of learning truth" (Heleta:2016). In many ways this has not changed and the 2015/16 *#feesmustfall* movements in South African higher learning environments have proved this. As Letsekha (2013:14) has said;

> [...] the call for decolonisation of the curriculum is neither an advocacy to be anti-West, nor is it discouragement to learn from the West and the rest of the world. Rather, it is a call to make higher education relevant to the material, historical and social realities of the communities in which the universities operate.

So while some 20 years of decolonising reform was attempted (and continues to be attempted) by myself and some like-minded academic colleagues within the formal university teaching situation, the systemic and paternalistic ownership of space and 'truthful' knowledge continues to make a total transformation slow, difficult, and full of painful and exhausting staff room encounters. This work is on-going but as my own desire to re-think, re-frame and re-construct dance praxis began to burn and open up with my own reading, writing and dance making post 1994, I began to look outside of the formal teaching and learning environment of the university. Painfully (and still colonially) referred to as "community engagement" by UKZN work codes and employment evaluations, I was happy to begin working external to UKZN to take on Guruba's (2015) second approach to decolonised learning and education.

Simply put, this second approach is to "rethink how the object of study itself is constituted and then to reconstruct it and bring about fundamental change" (Garuba, 2015). The lack of qualified and trained black dancers in South African (and particularly KZN and Durban) had me, in 1994, start open and free adult dance training classes that I called "FLATFOOT DANCE" – this was a slight tongue in cheek antithetical testament to the Western ballet notion that flat feet – black feet – cannot dance. I was seeking a space to encounter a different artistic and political dance reality and pedagogy. I operated with no funding and simply the good will and political and artistic impulse to offer dance training to those who has historically and economically been denied access due to the apartheid systems. This

process allowed me to offer small choreographic works at any and all free platforms in Durban until, in 2003, I made the decision to begin applying for funding to secure a more permanent base for some of the exceptional dancers who were emerging. In 2003 FLATFOOT DANCE COMPANY becoming a professional full registered contemporary dance company.

My work with FLATFOOT DANCE COMPANY has opened up space to re-imagine, what I hope is an attempt to decolonise my own dance pedagogy and choreographic practice and has been, for over 20 years, the autoethnographic subject of much of my academic research. I have been afforded the space – within my UKZN "community engagement" – to effect intense self-scrutiny in my art making and teaching and this paper is a beginning of a negotiating and interrogation of this journey. That this work with FLATFOOT has changed how I negotiate myself as a South African dance practitioner and as an Africa, is the circular route that allows this work to feed back into my more formal dance education work at UKZN.

Decolonising Myself?

Into a very complex debate around contemporary identity, and in an attempt to engage the feminist positionalities of intersectionality, or what bell hooks would call the "interconnecting web of race, class and gender" (1986:21), and I add, ethnicity and nation, I emerge as choreographer, dancer, teacher and academic. For me this is a daily battle to journey across the bridge that connects the ghosts of South Africa's traditional ancestors and my own white historical roots as I mediate, not only personally but also politically, what it means to be African in an increasingly globalised imagined 'Africa'. Perhaps I am what Gayatri Spivak (1990) would call the "post-colonial critic" as I seek to "render the historical and institutional structures from which [I] speak visible" (1990:67) and that this is an act of radical cultural politics. Like Spivak (1990), who has sometimes claimed that her self-exiled diaspora position from her own land of birth (India), often gives her a clearer perspective from which to interrogate post-colonial cultural practice, but who also claims herself as Indian and thus as internal to the debates, I also find myself both internal and external to the country and continent I call home.

This **internal/externality** is a position of personal and theoretical multiplicity that belies any attempt to reduce identity to the simplicity of race, class and gender only. Thus whiteness, for example, while not a homogenous identity position in and of itself, is often not synonymous with 'African-ness'. Too often 'whiteness' is associated with (for example) colonial power or the 'oppressor' such that 'black and white'

become an all-encompassing, and rather reductionist, binary. This binary opposition often has the effect of silencing the complex contemporary ways in which, for example, a large percentage of the middle class consumer class in South Africa, are now black (see for example, Bond, 2002).

While my economic experience of being African, and my race, may not be that of the residents two kilometres down the road from my university in Cato Manor, we share, what Chandra Mohanty has so eloquently called a "common context of struggles" (1991:8), and this includes the fight **within** the nation state of South Africa; be this for democracy, better arts funding, access to food, water and housing, or global environmental legislation that stops South Africa being forced to trade its clean air with American and European dirty multi-nationals.

Being a South African woman also carries the renewed reality that not one woman I know, rich, poor, white or black, feels they are safer to walk home alone at night. Thus, apart from my race, my gender still places me in a subordinate position to an African patriarchy that still sees one in four women raped in South Africa (https://africacheck.org/factsheets/guide-rape-statistics-in-south-africa/). As a woman my access to speaking and, more importantly, to being heard (Spivak, 1990:62) in both economic and spiritual divides of my city, country and continent, is hampered by my gender and a history of male-owned traditional and modern laws and customs.

My nationality, which is fourth generation South African, firmly roots me in Africa and thus firmly part of the 'developing' world (sometimes referred to as the global south). Not only, therefore, am I internal to my own city of Durban and its First and Third World divides; of Barbie dolls and African traditional medicines, but I am thus forced to navigate my identity as a journey – a dance if you will - around a multiplicity of border crossings (Naficy, 2001). I am also cognisant, in my dance work within the rest of the continent (Zimbabwe, Senegal, Cameroon, Nigeria, Mali and Kenya) that as a South African, I am also seen to have access to so much more than my continental colleagues who, in most instances operate in countries with no arts funding for contemporary dance and no Departments of Arts and Culture to harangue and complain about. As South Africans we are often painfully seen as the rich spoilt *enfant terrible* of the continent.

I have taken some time to talk about the complexities of my own identity, I suppose, in an attempt at re-articulating myself as South, as African, and as being in a constant search for alternate and counter

narratives to Western and paternalistic versions of (dance) history; to embrace the border crossings that are necessary as I step onto a path to finding these new multiple embodied ways of being and doing as an artist and educator.

Decolonising my Dance Pedagogy?

Doing the dance around identity leaves me, like many of us in the room, trying to imagine a way out of singular value systems in dance be these in preferred training systems or choreographic processes. We have all sat through those terrible comments when somebody declares, with no history or conscience, that "ballet is a very good way to train any kind of dancers", or even, "you cannot call yourself a dancer unless you have studied Graham, Horton, Limon, Cunningham […]" – the list goes on? We begin to understand the rage that accompanies the recent student movements that have identified how system of teaching and their attendant pedagogy, render localised, black, female, disabled (for example) dancing voices silent. Or as Arundhati Roy (2004) has said, "There's really no such thing as the 'voiceless'. There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard." (http://sydney.edu.au/news/84.html?newsstoryid=279)

I am reminded of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1981) and his writing about what he called the biggest 'cultural weapon' wielded and daily unleashed by imperialism against an artistic collective defiance. This cultural weapon of the imperialist – for want of a better explanation, those who seek to rule by creating dependency - is what he called the 'cultural bomb' (1981:3). The after effect of this Imperialist 'cultural bomb' is to annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their language, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities, and ultimately in themselves. This 'cultural bomb', once exploded, makes us see our past as a wasteland of non-achievement and it makes us want to distance ourselves from this history of what seems local and thus like nothing worthwhile – it makes us want to identify with that which is furthest removed from ourselves. This 'cultural bomb' is not a bomb that goes off loudly; it does not fall from the sky from a foreign plane; it is more a quiet, silent amorphous bomb that goes off in fits and starts from within until, one day we wake up and find that we no longer know who we are, we no longer know what to think or feel and so we allow the machinations of international corporate and globalised capital to tells us how to look, think, feel, love, and dance. We no longer have real memory and history because the endlessly re-written political and cultural version of who we are, are sold to us like truth. Our minds have been colonised.

It is a beautiful argument and it is a germane moment in history to be reminded of it; I believe it still stands more than 30 years since wa Thiong'o wrote it. Postcolonial and independent Africa is, like all of us, still shedding and re-evaluating its past.

Coming to ways of decolonising my dance pedagogy thus sits, for me, in two distinct categories;

The first is a need to re-evaluate and assess the viability of dance training methods (or what we might call technique) and with this, secondly, the cognate teaching practices. I re-iterate Garuba's (2015) idea that the impulse to decolonise, to "rethink how the object of study itself is constituted and then to reconstruct it and bring about fundamental change" (Garuba: 2015), is (and has been) a guiding principle in my journey. Through the numerous programmes I run through FLATFOOT DANCE COMPANY (be this a professional dance company, our professional training mentorships, and the huge number of township community youth dance programmes that we run), of necessity I have needed to address the particulars of the context in which I work. This means an addressing of localised issues (amongst many others) such as:

- Poverty

- High levels of HIV/AIDS

- Teenage pregnancy in a gendered landscape of traditional Zulu patriarchy and authority

- Severely rigid gender and social role expectations for the boy and girl child

Many of the rural and urban youth I and the full-time professional dancers of FLATFOOT work with make up 56.8% of a South African population that faces severe poverty and many do not eat every day (http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=739&id=1)

I am left constantly trying to find alternative meanings (decolonised meanings) to the concept of 'dance development' or indeed 'community dance' because the project of improving people's lives should never be abandoned. To this end I have engaged radical education theorist Paulo Freire (1970) as the first step to offering alternative ways of imagining a localised and perhaps education paradigm that allows for the agenda of growing people rather than, in the context of this paper, Northern hegemonic (and epistemically violent) based economic and social agendas; and indeed dance practices.

Education is never a neutral process. How we are taught and what we are taught often carry political agendas around our perceived place in society – this is wa Thiong'o (1981) 'cultural bomb'. In Freire's seminal work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), he began to outline an alternate system of learning and teaching that he called "liberation education" (1970:53). This education moved away from looking at learners as empty vessels that needed to be filled with the knowledge that a teacher would bestow on a pupil (what Freire called "the Banking System of Education" (1970:54). He argues that, at best, this way of thinking about learning is deeply alienating to any learner turns the learner into a "welfare recipient" (1970:55). To this end he proposes a problem-posing method of education which allows the learner/pupil to draw on their own localised knowledge and understanding of the world. As such the educator and pupil enter into a mutual learning process. He argues that education is liberation, and further that "liberation is a praxis" (1970:60).

Freire did not, of course talk about dance but this profound understanding of the political, social and cultural imperative of education (what I would like to refer to as the beginnings of a decolonised paradigm for education) becomes a very useful insight into re-thinking dance education and development practices that are not wholly based on Western/Northern based models of what a dancer should learn, be and look like.

In a post-development paradigm that seeks to look into dance education, training and development, I begin to imagine a dance education programme located in South Africa that is not only about a well pointed foot and a well-executed contraction, but about this agenda of 'growing people'; that education and pedagogy should be about "becoming more fully human" (Freire 1970:55). Of necessity, this involves a deep understanding of an engagement with arts and culture as the very rubric of 'development and education', and a deep understanding that in the context of Africa and South Africa, dance education can become an activism for re-thinking who we are both locally and globally and what we are worth.

I thus began to abandon my thoughts, in our dance development youth work, around teaching 'good technique' (a strangely Westernised/universalised idea that all contemporary dance begins with Humphrey and Graham) in favour of beginning to use dance and dance education as a tool – or indeed a strategy - towards other kinds of learning that engaged the list of issues I raised before (poverty, HIV/AIDS, gender inequality etc).

Our FLATFOOT programme thus, in working with these over 800 youth in KZN every year, is to use dance as an intervention methodology which begins to use the problem posing method of education. Through dance and its engagement with the body, we begin to interrogate issues of race, gender and health that ask the learner to begin to re-think their own social and cultural relationship to localised system which they have identified as being oppressive in their lives.

We enter and set-up these programmes knowing that many of the young learners who participate will never seek to or become professional dancers or choreographers. They voluntarily join these programmes because, firstly, it gives them a cultural outlet for self-expression (something not often given space in impoverished Township or rural education systems). Secondly, it teaches a sense of critical agency that values who they are and what they have to say (especially valuable with our girl-child gender interventions), and finally – something we never really talk about in critical pedagogy- it is great fun and allows for social interaction between different races, cultures and genders that offers different ways of being in community.

The further interesting development, fourteen years into running these types of dance intervention programmes has been the *secondary* achievement of actually training up some very fine young dancers many of whom are now stepping into our professional company as performers. This is an area that leaves me with a lot to think about as it unearths the commonly accepted dance training practice that asks for endless repetitions and hours and hours of training and practice. While I do not want to undermine this method of training and teaching (we all know the innate value of repetition!), I am enlivened by that idea that embracing the use of dance in South Africa as an education methodology to do what Freire argues (to educate learners to "becoming more fully human" (1970:55) has had the very welcome effect of developing young dancers with enormous technical ability. And perhaps this also begins to look at the ideas that Erick Hawkins spoke about years ago, of creating "thinking dancers" (see Celichowska 2000).

Perhaps what I journey into proposing is an attempt to create a critical dance pedagogy that does not always look at Western/Northern based models as the only viable – often defined as universal - training methods. I am beginning to ask and question around what it mean to train or develop a dancer in the South (in Africa) and how our own context specific scenarios (the more difficult challenges being

poverty, hunger, disease and African patriarchy – not meaning at any point to indicate that this is the only picture of Africa) mean we need to find a more decolonised critical pedagogy that is particular rather than universal.

I am also deeply engaged with the idea that changing the paradigm or educational philosophy – pedagogy - around dance teaching, has had the effect of localising the learning that starts with listening. The big – and maybe controversial – open terrain is that I have not as yet spoken about what we teach; what does the technical training look like?

Decolonising my Dance Technique/s?

I have called this paper *"learning to speak in my mother tongue"* and in a circumvented route (with all divergent paths necessary), I am only now getting to it. It is here that I really want to get to the base line of what I imagine decolonising dance practice might be. I have spoken about the need and the difficulties faced in decolonising curriculum. I have spoken about finding new engaged educational pedagogy to suit local and African agendas for learning dance (both at formal institutions and within community practice), and now I want to step inside the dance studio and continue – alongside all of you – to think and imagine on decolonised training systems and methods.

Going back to the call of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1981) to mitigate the effects of the 'cultural bomb' – profound and needed as it is – the landscape and the postmodern schisms of Africa in 2017 have changed. Almost 36 years ago, wa Thiong'o was writing at the tip end of Africa's modern era and so his words fell astutely on a continent moving towards independence and self-governance, and with this and the exit of the colonial masters, a need to return to finding out what made us/makes us African. wa Thiong'o wrote at a time when Africans needed to go back into their own history and remind themselves of who they were – and I don't for one moment believe this need is over - but while I hold on deeply to this provocative 1981 call for decolonisation, I feel that there is also a need in 2017 not to fall into the trap of imagining that all cultural and traditional practices (that wa Thiong'o advocated returning to) are somehow pure, valuable and just. Simply put, for example, as a woman living on the African continent, I am mindful of the many ways in which various African patriarchies silence, harm and render women and the girl-child unheard. The continent still abounds with girl-child abductions, arranged and force marriages, female circumcision, gender divisions of labour; the list goes on. As a feminist, I cannot sanction returning to localised and traditional cultural practices and ways of being that, for example,

harm and silence myself and my continents sisters. I feel then that wa Thiong'o needs revision and re-thinking 36 years on. And I think he would be up for this as, in essence, is not the very call for decolonising, a call to re-vise, re-think and re-imagine new and appropriate ways of learning, being and making? I am hoping that this re-vising, re-thinking and re-imagining is an on-going and shifting contemporary practice and not one bound by an almost 40 year gap.

So, how do I enter the dance studio and what do I teach?

As I go back into global contemporary dance history I am firstly struck by the fabulous Hegelian/Marxist flow of (for want of a better phrase) progress. We see Martha Graham, José Limon and Doris Humphrey struggle against the bourgeois and decadent late 19th century ballet, to find new ways to move; they contract, they rise and fall with gravity, and they fight for new dance languages that speak to their bodies, their modern histories and their politics. A few years on – as the ant-thesis to a Modern dance thesis – we see Judson Dance Theatre and Grand Union say "no" and return to found everyday movement. David Gordon makes a duet with a chair that is simply 2 bodies doing everything they can on, around and through a chair – it is ordinary and it is mesmerising. Yvonne Rainer finds a comfortable way to move in *Trio A* (1978) that begins to challenge the notion of energy and display of female dancers. Trisha Brown moves outdoors so that dance performance is not owned by an elite theatre audience. Alongside them, Alvin Ailey starts to address racism in dance and begins to choreograph works that spoke to black history and black African American politics. And so dance history moves and pushes forward … I could go on, but what I am struck by is the idea that each one of these practitioners was, in their own way, decolonising an accepted dance history that they had inherited and which they felt – *IN THEIR BODIES* - was no longer viable to tell the stories that they wanted to dance. All of them, found new ways to train and move and all, in time, have become (for us in Africa) imported technical training methods that we are now, ourselves, beginning to question and challenge?

In a similar way I could also tell a Hegelian/Marxist history of South Africa's contemporary dance history; how we have taken, modified, used, re-used and re-invented ourselves. The Johannesburg based *Moving Into Dance Mophatong* is a good example. Started in 1978 by Sylvia Glaser at a time of intensified racial oppression and separation, MIDM began to make work that responded to Glasser's work as an anthropologist and her profound desire to create contemporary dance that spoke to her situated African context. Her vision of Afro-Fusion that has at its core a type of modified Graham

technique, has become one of the key signature training systems in this country for dancers. When Vincent Mantsoe took over and shared the reins of the artistic direction of MIDM, changes occurred. Mantsoe's own engagements with Eastern Dance forms and mysticism began to resonate in a shifted technique and training such that the MIDM dancers learnt to move with Mantsoe to support his choreographic vision. This changed again when Gregory Maqoma stepped in and his post-modern African dance vision started to shift the company into yet another direction. This too is shifting with Mark Hawkins now as Artistic Director. I am excited by the shifts and the movement. I am encouraged that the re-vision, re-thinking and re-imagining - decolonising – is situated in the body and the deep desire to find localised and relevant ways to move that speak to the here and now of contemporary Africa and not some imagined mythical land constructed by a tourist gaze. I am even more excited with the idea of dance training and technique in a shifting terrain that is constantly up for slippage and movement.

In the light of this, I wonder too, with dancers like Dada Masilo, what we say about ballet? Do we shut Masilo down and say that she has become a tool of colonial and oppressive dance practice? Or do we marvel at her re-vision (her decolonisation?) of ballet and how she has used and manipulated an old colonial form into a methodology for speaking to contemporary Africa? Because ballet has been used historically – and as part of a colonial impulse - to silence and exclude other bodies, do we throw it away? Or do we find ways to re-think, re-vise and re-imagine this rather profound system of training dancers in a way that severs the political allegiances with Colonial elitism and violent, systematic oppressive dance training systems?

I am inspired, in this regard, by the work of Claire Wooten (2006) who at York University began an engagement with her own love of ballet and the teaching of ballet, and a need to re-think this within her own paradigm of feminist pedagogy. Challenging what she calls the "highly ritualized ballet methods of training" (2006:122), Wooten starts to include a different pedagogical approach to technique teaching that works to take into account that most of her students are female, and as such, she works to build and not break down dancers given social gender politics, she works on positive re-enforcement and not negative criticism. She allows for peer evaluation and student journal writing to engage mind body connection in the ballet class. These are not 'new' methods to any of us – maybe new in thinking about this in regards to ballet? – but what she has identified is a gendered re-vision of an old technical system of training that has a very big history of harm, damage and exclusion.

So, perhaps, in the end, I am not going to throw away any system of training dancers in my process of decolonising, maybe what I am going to do instead, is begin to question the contemporary agenda of how these systems operate, are used and how that may or may not speak to who we are, and the stories we need to tell as Africans?

I come back to my title, *"learning to speak in my mother tongue"*; I am reminded – as dancer, choreographer and dance teacher – that English is my second language. Every time I step in the studio, I willingly and joyfully return to my mother tongue – the body. I am not going to prescribe how other bodies should move and what they should look like moving, I am not going to tell other bodies what stories they should tell when they dance … but what I am going to do is continue to find my own on-going healthy, non-aggressive and inclusive ways of moving that supports my vision as a choreographer/story-teller and dance teacher. I will continue to expect that same level of discipline, dedication and personal commitment from the dancers I work with and train, and I will find ways to assist and journey with these dancers as they to begin to break through externally defined and inherited ways of moving that do not speak to their own embodied political and spiritual sense of being.

I end with a quote from an interesting contemporary dance practitioner called Frey Faust whose work on his 'Axis Syllabus' continues to inspire me in my journey back to my mother tongue; to blood, sinews, tendon, ligaments and the bones of the body. Faust actually calls his Axis Syllabus 'decolonising the body' and it has nothing to do with what the body does, what it looks like, what story it is telling … it journeys back to the connecting tissue of the body – the fascia - as the place of true knowing and being inside the body;

> *The body is mostly made up of an involuntary, spiralling web of tensegritous suspension that generates, regulates and manages the forces and energies arising from movement, the fascia. We can therefore look to fascia as the most pertinent aspect of our possibilities and potentials. My impression however, is that the perception of the body and many approaches to educating it exact a wilful imposition of aesthetic concepts that compromise a harmonious relationship to the fascia, and can actually turn it into the enemy of the skeleton.* [http://axissyllabus.org/resources/fascia-a-perspective]

I feel confident that none of us – dancers, choreographer, academics and teachers - wish to be the enemy of our own skeletons. In an on-going journey to find authentic ways of being and moving, I am

reminded of the intense simplicity and intense complexity of coming back to the most fraught political terrain on our planet – the body. For me, this is where the process of real decolonising begins.

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Lootsl@ukzn.ac.za
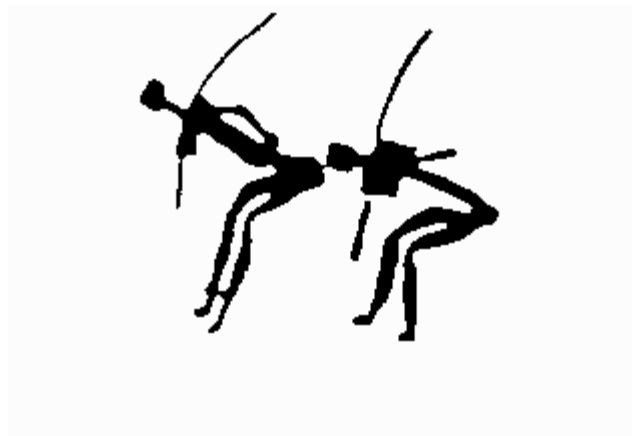
Part II – Scholarly Papers

CHALLENGING PERFORMANCES OF HEGEMONY IN GENDER REPRESENTATION IN TANGO: LIBERATION THROUGH PEDAGOGY

Adriana Miranda da Cunha
University of State of Santa Catarina (UDESC), Brazil
Postgraduate Department of Theatre (PPGT)

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to explore ideas of liberation in relation to the present tendencies of gender representation in Tango, mainly focusing on the pedagogic model observed in Johannesburg, which tends to perpetuate hegemonic discourses through terminology, codes and subjectivities in which gender binaries are normalized. Such representations reduce, or even reject, plurality and diversity by sustaining specific power dynamics, necessarily related to the roles of men and women. I argue that the dances for couples are embedded in historically and socially constructed stereotypes; thus, the dynamics observed in ballrooms, so called social meetings, are not capable of reflecting present gender complexities and identities. Also, there are very few black representatives in the Tango community in Johannesburg. I engaged with different methods during dance meetings based on investigative approaches, such as body mapping, micro-performance, group discussions and questionnaires to collect data together with a group of 9 participants, who had different gender identities themselves. This dynamic helped to envision an array of pedagogical processes to develop a more embracing and inclusive Tango dance. I made sense of all the information collected during fieldwork, by correlating theories of performance, critical pedagogy, gender and queer studies. We found that the experience facilitated a dynamic based on the "enticement" and the "accurate listening" between partners, keeping the form of Tango and its techniques, but breaking the gender structure of usual pedagogic methods. These methods created a collaborative pedagogy with the purpose of inclusive pathways of dance embodiment.

Key words: *Tango, gender representations, collaboration, pedagogy of dance, diversity.*

If gender is not an artifice to be taken on or taken off at will and, hence, not an effect of choice, how are we to understand the constitutive and compelling status of gender norms without falling into the trap of cultural determinism? (Butler, 1993 Preface:ix).

Depicting Gender Representations in Tango Dance: Lived Experience as Facilitator

If social organizations tend to determine, or even impose on us an existence with fixed gender identities in order to regulate social behaviours, I argue that, at least in dance, practitioners should be enticed to enter the imaginary sphere and experiment different identities through interchanging multiple roles. This is the most relevant role of dance: flowing non-verbally and corporeally between abstract and concrete realities in order to reinvent different ways of existing as the body makes meaning of such experiences.

My work as a movement facilitator in Brazil, the country where I was born, was always conducted as if I were researching movement with aspirants of dance, facilitating a knowledge that they already have, and have forgotten. In classes, I have been prioritizing egalitarian relations with participants by calling 'dance meetings' (meetings with oneself, and the other), and, in order to generate knowledge about human material and body movement, the methods involved inviting participants to share personal triggers, within notions of critical pedagogy instead of more traditional ways of understanding "dance steps". These kinds of processes, in which the participant is invited to search inner references to a better comprehension of the body's mobility, allowed sometimes an access to the ark of memories, or matters that are contained in the underground part of our psychological reservoir. The keys used to engage in such processes were used sometimes by being in touch with other forms of art, or sometimes mapping the body as a source of lived experiences in order to develop forms of intra or inter dialogues about movement. By that I mean that the concept of *investigation* always permeated the meetings.

The body, epicentre of subjectivities, is capable of inventing categories of real and unreal, private and public, nature and culture (Villaça, 2010:63), however, concepts of the *body* are immersed in normative definitions mediating such categories. The dance exists engaging with methods in which the emphasis is in the corporeal perceptions allowing the comprehension of subjectivities, in a subjective way. It is possible to embrace the lived experience that each being already has, within a range of characteristics and gestures, to the re-cognition *in* several forms of interrelationship. Therefore, the body is understood as communicative and expressive, capable of formulating its own intelligence and make meaning of its own history.

For many years I've worked with ideas of femininity connected to concepts of the profane and sacred, mainly teaching belly dancing to groups of women, with a ritualistic and mythological approach, resulting in a subtle form of gender activism. This approach shaped much of the way I understood women's bodies and the roles women could possibly assume in the dance meetings, situating the group work as a powerful pathway of interchanging experiences, socially and individually. The dance meetings included processes embracing cultural, psychological and historical contexts in order to develop dynamics that could enable participants to have free access to creative improvisations within dance forms. In addition, the cognitive process of each individual was always a key aspect in the choices of pedagogical methods: the words and the images collectively used; the pace of the engagement with technical information; the resources and didactical structure. Each participant has been considered a continuous source of knowledge for the pedagogical development.

The perceptions I had about women's bodies though, changed completely when I started to work with couples, on the dance floor of the Johannesburg context. The whole approach had to be adjusted to a *new form of understanding women's bodies and roles*, which now was situated obligatory in relationship to men's bodies, or to explain more clearly, to a new dance role of the follower. That was a crucial element to start this research journey. In spite of the fact that I was still working in the field of dance/movement, dynamics of connection and expression regarding the roles of the leader and of the follower gave me the feeling that women's voices/bodies/desires were being silenced during the learning processes.

As a belly dancing facilitator, I used to engage with women creating safe spaces to share experiences and perceptions. Now, working with dance couples I found that I had to give much more attention to men's development than to women's due to the very characteristics of their dance roles, leader and follower. I understood that, in the core of the relationship in the dance couples, there were forms of gender relation based on the invisibility of women's creativeness, and that this invisibility suppressed their desire to move according to their imagination because of the core of the relationship between the leader and the follower. With that, I recognized hegemonic representations in the performance: I had to teach women to *silence their desire to create movements freely,* and to develop docile bodies in order to 'receive commands' to allow the creation and expressivity of their partners. I itched

to review my own engagement in gender theories and understand the relevance of the body embedded in such a relation.

Within this perspective, I decided to question such dynamics from inside-out. Thus, this paper is the outcome of almost three years of lived experience in Johannesburg - South Africa as a dance facilitator of couple's dances, and embraces knowledge developed in those other not so distant memories about women's bodies. Also, it brings about reflections on a focused group developed with nine participants, with different gender identities, who were not Tango dancers, but were keen to challenge the binaries on couple's dances in a project called De-Gendered Ballroom Classes. The project contemplated five encounters investigating pedagogical structures of Tango aiming at the deconstructions of the gender and dance roles. I am very thankful for the participant inputs and efforts to help think through the relationship of practitioners and possible changes for hegemonic elements.

The aim here is to describe the research processes within theoretical and practical analysis of the fieldwork, which comprised the development of a focus group willing to discuss forms of gender relations in the performance of Tango. The research indicated directions to new modes of teaching-learning dynamics on the pedagogy of dance in order to challenge hegemonic representations in this genre of dance. By rethinking collaborative dynamics, the aim is to point directions to a more egalitarian and inclusive ways of *tanguear.*[1]

In this sense, my observations resonate with Antonio Gramsci's (1976) when he understands hegemony as the *normalization* of unequal power dynamics. Therefore, challenging hegemony was the starting point of a journey in which I could not fully at the beginning grasp the ending point. It is important to acknowledge that my interest lies in the *relationship between two bodies in dialogical movement* that are embedded in gender representations, *not in a specific technique* of dance or performance. However, the analysis traced around Tango, could be analogically applied to any other Western dance among couples, which has its historical heritage in characteristics from the French balls during the 15th century. To be more specific, I am not interested in deepening the technical analysis of Tango steps, neither the aesthetic elements, nor the analysis of the history and culture of Tango. Thus, the binary relations of *any* style of dance in the field of couple's dance can be

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[1] *Tanguear:* Spanish neologism which transforms the word Tango (noun) into an action (verb).

mirrored in this analysis, and the limitations of this study lie in the political provocations to transform the gender representations, and the pedagogical aspects that perpetuate such fixity. I am focused on the hegemonic representations in the relationship between bodies perpetuated by the pedagogy applied to couple's dances.

In the field of theories of dance, couple's dances are a performance that have been historically shaped by different contexts: from the Minuet classical dance of the European nobility in the medieval age (Wosien, 2006:51), to the iconicity of the Hollywood-Broadway Productions in the early 20th century projecting African American culture with the 'Swing' and the 'Rhythm' (Haley, 1974). Nowadays couple's dances are one of the most widespread types of social dances around the globe, with many social potentialities. Couple's dances in Johannesburg, for example, play an important role as social practice: many dance studios are spread throughout the city - from town to suburbs and townships - and many schools have them as an extra-curriculum practice. Competitions are part of the annual schedules for schools and community centres, with prizes, trophies and certificates promising a future to children practitioners. One of the protocols of weddings ceremonies is the wedding dance. Therefore, the practice is embedded in multicultural elements and social responsibilities, with teachers, learners and practitioners from a fair range of races and classes.

Nonetheless, the Johannesburg scene is very conservative and restrictive when it comes to thinking about gender politics in social ballrooms. As a social practice, studios devote a lot of effort to increase the engagement of both young and adults by promoting parties, classes and events; couple's dance are seen as a "market", evoking the image of life style. For singles, it is a way of meeting new people, and for the couples, a way of having fun together and improving connections in their relationships through a body language, and for married people, is a form of reconnection. In both cases, it is a healthy physical practice in which dancers share pleasant moments within a codified mode of moving with the other. Yet, the 'other' must be a body representing the opposite sex, reinforcing and perpetuating gender binaries.

The discussion here brings about the present pedagogical dynamics as the main intersection between traditional and contemporary practices. The pedagogy of dance determines the social behaviour in couple's dances by co-relating the dance and gender roles, articulated

together (the role of the man as leader, and the role of woman as follower). The field of dance and pedagogy was challenged from different angles (concepts of body, performance, and gender) during the fieldwork. Determinations of dance and gender roles generate hierarchies and silent segregation to any being that does not identify with such gender configurations.

As a researcher, woman, Latina,[2] and foreigner in the Johannesburg terrain, I used all the privileges and limitations experienced to create meanings and to be able to articulate concepts that, hopefully, will reverberate through the dance field. The cultural differences between the pedagogical practices in my background and the pedagogical practices in Johannesburg, made me aware of the need to question the present pedagogical dynamics.

Reasons to Interrogate Relations Silently Negotiated

According to Jacques Derrida (2002), 'change' is an inherent element constituent of the representations of power (which intend to become fixed) and the changes of social relations correspond respectively to the changes of power (also the directions of social changes do not follow a determinate one-way direction). So, I present possibilities to change hegemonies in gender representations focusing on the pedagogical aspect of Tango. However, for change, the community voice is necessary to define directions insofar as they specify desires and needs. Historically, gender relations are embedded in relational elements and tend to be associated to binaries, in terms of mediation for sexualized bodies, and the struggle against binaries lives in *inverting* and/or *deconstructing* hegemony precisely in opposite and polarized relations (Scott, 1991:18-21). It is important to frame the approach of the concept of deconstruction:[3]

> The very condition of a deconstruction may be at work, in the work, within the system to be de-constructed. It may already be located there, already at work. Not at the centre, but in an eccentric centre, in a corner whose eccentricity assures the solid concentration of the system, participating in the construction of what it, at the same time, threatens to deconstruct. One might then be inclined to reach this conclusion: deconstruction is not an operation that supervenes afterwards from the outside, one fine day. It is always already at work in the work. Since the disruptive force of deconstruction is always already contained within the very architecture of the work, all we finally have to do to be able to deconstruct, given this 'always already', is to do memory work (Derrida in Dick & Kofman, 2002).

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[2] Linguistic: the feminine of Latin.
[3] Excerpt of the documentary *Derrida*, 2002. At: 14:51 minutes

In this sense, I've enjoyed the position of being part of the dance-instructors' 'market'[4] and the Tango-dancers' community in Johannesburg, so I could potentially and critically look at these practices from inside-out, and present critical perspectives of its pedagogies and politics.

Lastly but not least important, critical pedagogy based on Paulo Freire (2013) and Guacira Lopes Louro's (1997) liberation theories inspired the reflections throughout the research process: "The fundamental effort of education is to help with the liberation of people, never their domestication" (Shor, 1993:25). The transmission of knowledge, or the pedagogy of Tango dance, is filled with codes that can enclose the body: from how to step, to how to look at the partner and engage with the opposite sex (*cabeceo*),[5] how to keep the posture (*pinta*),[6]) and how the functioning of the couples during the performance should be. These normative definitions are intrinsically related to the concepts of femininities and masculinities. Invariably normalizations perpetuate binarizations based on the dynamics of, first, differences (us and them), and second, similarities (when convenient to a grouping). It is important to think how dance subscribes to notions of femininity and masculinity in the body perpetuating subjectivities that are socially constructed. During fieldwork, the understandings of diversity and difference in pedagogical approaches (Louro, 1997; Giroux, 1992), brought about new forms of embodiment engaged in collaborative modes of dance. The problem-posing[7] method, opposed to the banking system[8] method of teaching, held collaborative aspects of the relations among participants, rather than, hegemonically, prioritizing the will of one: in the fieldwork, we considered all dancers as potentially creators of movement.

Ideas around Pedagogy

The pedagogy of dance is a relevant area of action to question dynamics about the body, and social dynamics embedded in specific body performances. The education reaffirms content

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[4] The word 'market' is in brackets because it is how dance-instructors, and studios refer to the field of couple's dances. However, I don't identify with this terminology due to its direct transformation of an art form into a product or the process of commodification.

[5] Spanish language: translation 'nodding'. The gesture is made to invite a lady to a dance (www.tejasTango.com/terminologias).

[6] Spanish language: translation 'appearance, presentation'. Include clothes, grooming, posture, expression and manner of speaking and relating to the world (www.tejasTango.com/terminologias).

[7] One of the methods of critical pedagogy that aims to develop critical thinking where "students learn to question answers rather than merely to answer questions (Shor, 1993:26).

[8] Freirean designation of a system of education where the teacher understands the learner as an empty entity who needs to be filled (depositing) with predetermined information, not considering their background, context and previous experience as part of knowledge. (Freire, 2013 :62).

connected to values and beliefs. According to general statements within the dance field, the knowledge transmission of couple's dances are connected to traditional structures. Isabel Marques (2004) researches dance pedagogy (or the field of study of methods to teach and learn). She created an analogy to better comprehend pedagogy as a *concept*. Pedagogy is a 'map' (content), and its 'streets' (didactics) would be the pathways available, the routes teachers would trace to move with learners from one point to another on the map. This analogy is very fertile in the analysis of methods of teaching and learning.

Focused on pedagogical aspects, I had, at this point, two main sources of analysis: the combination of observations of my previous experience as a teacher, and the reflections over interviews conducted for this project. This source made me engage in critiques of the structures and methods of teaching couple's dances. In an attempt to represent, structurally, such dynamics during textual production, I developed two *pedagogical graphics* capable of representing the hegemonic aspect of the gender relations.

In the first one, I traced the traditional structure associating the fixed roles of *dance* and of *gender*, which gave me the visual perception of the performative relation:

TRADITIONAL STRUCTURE

Leader = MAN	⟶	Follower = WOMAN

Fixed role
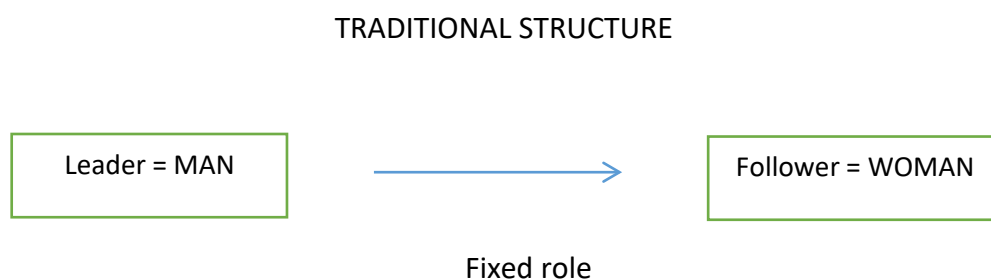
Then, by detaching the gender element, and eliminating it from the dance roles (leader and follower), the following model would transform the roles into a flexible dynamic to interchange power. What seemed a very simplistic solution to a binary opposition, in fact, became the inspiring method to be investigated during the following phase, the *dance meetings*, concerned with the application of the pedagogical model.

| Leader | ←——————→ | Follower |

Flexible roles
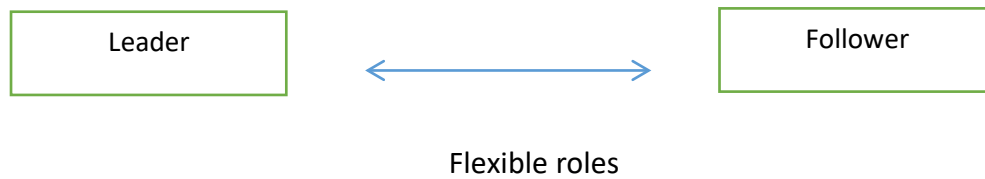
This new possibility of learning, which I called the *de-gendered model*, was the methodological proposal to start the investigation with a focused group. The main element that differs from traditional methods is the elimination of the gender fixity. The idea was that any person with any sexual orientation could engage with the dance roles. Learners and practitioners would have to learn steps from both dance roles, and they could negotiate and interchange them according to partners and performance. It would be an open platform to negotiations engaging in communication. This communication could be verbal, but I imagined several approaches based on collaboration and notions of improvisation to support non-verbal dialogues, which could transform the dance into a very exciting and unpredictable body language.

Conceptually, the model would open space to the complexity of the couple's relation, as well as to diversity, starting from scratch, the classroom dynamics would frame the basis of connection amongst people. But the outcome of this investigative project went far more beyond my humble expectations of challenging the fixity of the power of the leader.

Fieldwork Description

The practical research, the *dance meetings* with a focus group was shaped to enter in the ambit of movement investigation. Within hypothetical states of the body, I embraced the concept of the *lived experience as a source of valuable knowledge* and the analysis of cognitive and investigative processes. The body is understood as a catalyst of experiences, and capable of learning through self-realization. The theoretical components of this phase were aligned with performance, gender and queer studies. The preparation included a range of methods to engage with the group: 1 - movement investigation or the so call dance meetings, 2 - body mapping, 3 - group discussions, 4- micro performance and *Milonga*, and 5 - questionnaire.

The participants volunteered through e-mail contact given on posters[9] spread inside of Wits University Johannesburg, as well as in Braamfontein. The space available to shelter the research was the 14th floor, at the University Corner Building, Wits University. The research was open to participants inside and outside campus, and it was composed mostly (60%) of students and staff members from Wits University. All the participants engaged in the research voluntarily.

It was advertised as the *DE-GENDERED ballroom or Argentinian Tango dance classes*, and engaged with participants virtually, forming an email group to negotiate agendas and content. We had 5 encounters comprising one and half hour (1,5h) each, over a month and a half. The group included 9 participants, some of them had previous experience with dancing, others briefly, and one was currently attending ballroom classes as a learner.

The participants:

1- A: female, mixed race, 23 years old, student, bisexual.
2- B: female, white, 20 years old, student, homosexual.
3- C: female, black, 40 years old, worker, heterosexual.
4- D: female, white, 57 years old, resigned, heterosexual.
5- E: female, white, 21 years old, student, homosexual.
6- F: female, white, 23 years old, student, bisexual.
7- G: female, black, 26 years old, worker, heterosexual.
8- H: female, black, 21 years old, student, bisexual.
9- I: male, Indian, 26 years old, worker, homosexual.

None of the participants had Tango lessons previously, which gave them a kind of neutrality in relation to the technical aspects. I presented the following basic steps of Tango, firstly with the traditional pedagogical approach, and afterwards the approach of the De-Gendered method. Due to the short period of the research, the group decided to develop only four basic steps of Tango in order to prioritize the walks as the main dynamic of body connection:

Camiñadas (walks, basic dynamic of displacement in the dance floor)

El Abrazo (frame, within notions of leader and follower)

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[9] Poster: appendix 1. The drawing was made by me, and the idea was to present two asexual bodies with no representation of hierarchies dancing together. The concept of the layout was minimalist, no colours, containing only enough information about the research.

Quadrado[10] (the basic 8 steps of Tango in which dancers trace a square pattern on the floor)

Ochos adelante y asi atrás[11] (pivoted movement of legs)

The de-gendered model was the object of study, and the idea was to engage with a 'more-or-less' structured plan to the meetings in order to keep an open space: warm ups, interactive activities within specific themes, technical development, practices, reflection. This structure was then permeated by drama approaches to engage in dialogue: discussions, problem-posing, body mapping, and group reflections. The specificity of Tango within its aesthesis, enriched the research in many different levels, for instance, when discussing ideas participants had about the performance. The Tango music, as a platform for dance, evoked debates about rhythm and musicality. Elements of the body performance evoked excitement and challenged the group. Also, the group could engage in social practice with the participation of a Tango dancer. The research allowed learners, who had high levels of strangeness or distance to challenge the standardization and fixity of gender and dance roles. They question processes of reification of hegemonies. Although participants engaged in the de-gendered model, the group discussed traditional models embedded in power practiced in the dance field, as some of them had such reference to compare. Participant 'B' shared her perspective about power in dancing:

> [...] being a follower is not a passive role at all, it's probably more active than the leader, I think ... I think that is just deeply embedded in power ... the leader is the dominant and the man ... and that was really frustrating, I think. You have to decide who's going to be the man, who's going to be woman? This is just wrong I think.

The excerpt above shows a confusion about which roles "B" was talking about, the gender or dance roles. Participants gave important inputs about technique and power. Participant 'E' shared her view about the investigation of exchanging roles (power) while dancing, demonstrating feelings of frustration towards projections of stereotypes on dancing:

> I found quite interesting was "how we are going to make shifts?" because you sort of lose track of how you suppose to move, like in a second, it's like your mind suddenly has to reset, how to move backwards how to move forwards, and I think that is quite interesting getting back into the sudden shift of power.

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[10] Spanish language: translated as 'square'.
[11] Spanish language: translated as 'figure eight forward and backward'.

In this case, "E" was referring to the exchange of roles. The participatory interaction helped to think about new possibilities of relations throughout the dance meetings. Yet about power, participant 'I' raised questions about equality versus hierarchies:

> [...] and this is a conversation that we have about gender equality, the challenges are not about empowering woman, when we talk about gender equality it's about the fact that binaries themselves are necessarily unfair, rather race or gender or sexual. Then I wonder if 'can we do a dance like this and do not have that binary regulation? And not have necessarily …. a person dominant?'

The feedback given by "I" was a turning point in the project. I remember going back home disturbed by what he said. The idea so far was to challenge the gender stereotypes impregnating the dance roles. But after the insightful reflection, the constellation of the De-Gendered Ballroom method lost its meaning according to the following session in this paper. From that point on, the group took a new direction, to technically explore new forms of connection critically thinking about the role of the leader and follower.

Other forms of discussions, such as the debate after watching a range of interviews with long time instructors speaking about how they understand and teach dance roles, also allowed deep conversations about gender. Fertile insights were posed by participants in this matter. Participant 'I' shared his perception of the interviews:

> It seems to me that the dance is necessarily about masculine and feminine roles and even when the instructors are trying to be progressive about their ideas, still it's about negotiating roles, necessarily masculine and feminine, and maybe it's because dancing between two people that's the only binary this mode of dance can imagine, […] I think that's not good enough, that's a bit boring. […] and it was one male instructor who mentioned this, but this is quite a Western concept of gender actually quite a new thing, when we think about this particularly ways binaries manifest, and then I wonder if other forms of dance from other cultures allows fluidity, and when it comes to expression and that's something to maybe think about.

The fact that the group was trained in a *de-gendered technique*, within methods of critical pedagogy and problem-posing framing political elements of hegemony and gender binaries, participants already wanted to deconstruct, negotiate roles and experiment different possibilities during the micro Milonga we had organized with guests. In this experience, the fixity of the role of the dancer was already questioned as an element of strangeness by some of the participants. Hence, we could realize that the response to the social performance proved to be immediate allowing safe space for diversity, if the pedagogy embraces collaborative methods.

These discussions led the group to conclude that *if* the pedagogy of dance embraces the acceptance of plural forms of gender and relations, the change would occur in the social environment. By making possible the inclusion of other gender categories and the negotiations of the body's performances, the Tango dance would be more inclusive.

The critical element of 'questioning' opened space to produce good evidence of deconstruction of binaries. With that, I believe that *the pedagogy of dance proved to be a potent tool of transformation in the field of gender politics.* On the whole, I understood that the power relationship between leader and follower, even if minimized or not fixed, did not change in the core of the relation. Still, it is necessary to engender a performance which could be fully embedded with concepts of collaboration and improvisation, as artefacts of creation.

Liberation through Pedagogy

There are possibilities of engagement focusing on the core of the relationship between the two performers. Hence, the thread of arguments over this session is to point directions to change the present gender politics in Tango in Johannesburg.

During fieldwork, associations between *form* and *content* in the field of pedagogy supported the construction of the lines of approach to express and embrace pluralities and heterogeneities for social purposes. We, the participants and I, challenged the fixity of binaries during fieldwork, yet, hierarchy was playing a role. The question is, how can we discuss paradigms in Tango embedded within concepts of improvisation and collaboration without subverting its form? I argue that it is possible to create *conditions* embedded in corporeally fair negotiations in order to embrace and mediate d*ifferences* between poles.

 I am proposing two things: one is the articulations of the core of the relationship between dancers, insofar as the functionality of both dancers assumes an egalitarian value. That is a big challenge since the dynamics between dancers, traditionally, is organized under a hierarchical mode. In this sense, I am arguing for a change of the *culture of leading* in dance, embracing a collaborative dynamic. Collaboration, here, means embracing the will of both as a form of creation. That also means, leading and following must not be deconstructed, and both dancers must be actively creators. Both must take account of the responsibilities for the relation that should not be pre-established, but freshly shaped "as it goes".

Embracing collaboration may seem impossible to long-term traditional practitioners, according to cultural models, but when changing the traditional mode to a contemporary mode of understanding the body, it becomes less impossible. It would be necessary to create a new picture of Tango: both dancers are responsibly active in the creation, both are proposing steps, they are dancing with integrity in their bodies, both take care of the surroundings to avoid accidents, both have independence of moves, and both are listening to the body of the other within the music. There is a considerable expansion in the elements of the dance, and 'how' performers are engaging with each other.

The change is subtle and it may not be reflected in the form of the body's engagement at all. By that I mean, I am talking about the mood of giving-receiving, which in a collaborative mode, *both dancers* give *and* receive, rather than the leader gives and the follower receives. This last dynamic is related to obsolete concepts of masculinities and femininities. Participant 'I' gave an outstanding reflection on the roles of the leader and the follower, which are linked to forms of predominance:

> we are still moving between poles … the challenge is, I don't know if that would work, maybe we need more options, maybe it's not just about following and leading but about resisting and maybe that would mean 'you move in a different way' or maybe it's about instead of leading, enticing … there are other ways to think about and negotiate movement I guess. I feel like if you keep the poles, those particular poles, you still, at best, saying 'it's fine following, you can take power later, but that doesn't change the binary itself.

This reflection suggests that the change goes beyond the simplest interchange of hierarchical roles. Again, it is necessary to reformulate the core of the relationship. The basis of engagement must fully embrace concepts of *collaboration*. There are many ways to engage in the concept, in fact, the very characteristic of collaboration as a concept suggests that every relationship should be, hypothetically, entirely negotiated.

For instance, I could argue that collaboration requires two major states of the body: the listening mode, and the presence mode. One might think now that those states are already a conditional part of the performance. Yes, and they are operating simultaneously, but with different intentions. The leader listens to the music; the follower, mostly, listens to the body movement of the leader. The leader is present in its internal process of creation, making sure that accidents will not happen in the ball; the follower is present in the response to the commands of the leader. The same states of listening and presence are operating with

completely different intentions, barely they meet genuinely, given the specificity of the functionality of each dancer.

In this case, it could be said that the leader and the follower would engage in the same states of the body, but the functionality of traditional roles establishes the engagement with states in very different places; and, to make it worse, they are embedded in hierarchy. So, dancers are not engaging in a relationship with one another, but they are engaging with the roles they must play using the other as an agent, or a trigger, for action.

In terms of improvisation, dancers train to know exactly what to do, and they seek out comfortable zones while dancing. Derrida (2002) emphasizes the vicious aspects that language has intrinsic to its functionality (insofar as it carries culturally constructed signifiers), predetermining signified ideas. Yet, improvisation, according to Derrida, is not easy and is the most difficult thing to do:

> One ventriloquizes, or leaves another to speak in one's place: the schemes and languages that are already there. …there are already a great number of prescriptions that are prescribed in our memory and culture. All the names are already preprogramed. It is already the names that inhibit our ability to ever really improvise. One is obliged more or less to reproduce the stereotypical discourse, and so, I believe in the improvisation, and I fight for improvisation, but always with the belief that it is impossible. (Derrida in Dick & Kofman, 2002)

As Derrida (2002) said, the most difficult part of improvising is the fact that we have a restrictive vocabulary to communicate, and we often revert to the same schemes. We should fight, as Derrida suggests, for improvisation, seeking for modes of relation in which embodiment accounts for pluralities of beings, possibly avoiding pre-established schemes. When dancers engage in the pre-established steps or sequences, that is not improvisation, but the reproduction of schemes. Dancers engage in very predictable moves, *thinking* that they are improvising.

Understanding the relationship between the two bodies as a unique and unfinished dialogue, allows spaces for collaboration and improvisation through a vast camp of study and exploration. Unravelling the present fixity of *gender* and *dance* roles would demand the development of guidelines for technique from the part of the actual practitioners and instructors. The change must have a starting point, amplifying the modes of performance.

In this sense, there are a few restrictive points related to the sphere of the pedagogy. Tango, which mostly is structured as group classes, has an unstable attendance from learners. The gender structure is restrictive. Most Tango classes are taught through sequences of steps, embracing directives to improvisations, but only from the perspective of the sequences' structure. In other words, there is no exploration of the individual's movements within the music. Generally, people learn one or two steps and they play around the linkage between them. Although there is some exchange of partners, there is no playful mood. Tango classes are serious and traditional.

The Conclusion Is: De-Gendered Or Enticing?

This research aimed to rethink practices in which couple's dances and Tango are embedded in Johannesburg. I was part of the local Tango community during this research, therefore, I was able to closely observe and identify some social dynamics worth questioning, from inside-out. More than questioning social dynamics in Johannesburg, the question was about the modes of performance that the traditional Tango proposes in the core of the relationship among dancers. In this sense, the scope of the questions I posed throughout the argumentation could be projected to other binary dances. I am interested in how people appropriate and reinvent the Tango performance in order to express themselves and communicate. Tango is passionate, dynamic, intense, profound and sexy. The genre of dance offers so many poetic dimensions and so many forms of human communication. Its aesthesis is mysterious and emotional.

From a social perspective, Tango is an excellent tool to create dialogue, embracing culture, intuitiveness, rhythm, communication, music, movement, non-verbal language, negotiations, listening, power, collaboration, giving, receiving, sharing space, and improvisation. All those levels of engagement were briefly or deeply experienced somehow in this research. In spite of all these qualities, dance can represent forms of inequality and oppression, precisely because of hegemony. According to contemporary theories of body and performance, traditional Tango can be seen as a very controlling and exclusivist platform.

The relevance of the research, then, meets the forms of frustration that people might have experienced when trying to dance and had to engage with layers of non-egalitarian covert values. The codified nature of the steps of Tango does not, in itself, characterize hegemony. In fact, it constitutes beauty and plasticity. Changing the core of the relationships would not

necessarily mean changing the aesthetics of the dance. I remain supportive of its plasticity in 'duo' thinking more about body dialogues in a communicative pathway, rather than performances of domination. The challenge is not about changing the form of Tango. The challenge lies in deconstructing the content of the relationships, or, in the unavailability of space to breaking down hierarchies, dominance and subordination. The challenge is about the possibility to embrace new forms of relationships, not bounded by the command or the will of one person.

In spite of the gaps in the instructors' formation, and the rigid conservative mode that dance may be embedded in at times, dancing is an important pathway towards relations empowerment, self-expression, self-knowledge, intricate communication, practice of the imagination, reinvention of the self and the world. So, the question, lastly, is not only about gendered or de-gendered modes of engagement, but also about how one finds kind and gentle processes of collaborations in Tango in a diverse and egalitarian way. The important aspect to be acknowledged is that performances of hegemony are *passé*.

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cunhamadri@gmail.com

BODY POLITICS IN ZIMBABWE: THE AFRICAN BODY IN BALLET TRAINING

Alina Zhuwawo & Dr Nehemiah Chivandikwa

University of Zimbabwe

Abstract

Concerns have been expressed over western methods of teaching that do not consider the need for different strategies and bodily configurations in Zimbabwe. These concerns arise from the assumption that western training can, and will, steadily alter African identities. Our wish is to problematize body politics in Zimbabwe without over-emphasizing the subjugation of the African body in ballet training. We seek to magnify power relations by looking at both subjugation and resistance as they emerge in Foucault's theories of power. However, special attention will be given to forms and mechanics of resistance for the purpose of this paper. We interrogate how the African body is implicated in body politics in the context of ballet training using the accounts of twelve selected Zimbabwean ballet students as case studies. Body politics refers to how the body is both a product and an agent of power. The concept of body politics in this study is drawn from Michel Foucault's thesis that the body is a site of social control and power; by which in most instances, the body becomes a vessel that awaits instruction from discourses that subjugate individuals. Dominant power produces docile subjects, however, though power subjugates individuals, it is possible to resist because power relations co-exist with resistance. Current ballet scholarship generally posits that ballet training has a designated 'ideal body' that all participants must strive for. Existing scholarship seems to overemphasise the 'docile' body in ballet training. Our focus is to reveal the complexity that the African body can dance ballet, while re-structuring it to suit specifically African 'embodiment'. The African body in this research refers to the black African residing in Africa, though the study will be limited to the black Zimbabwean community.

Keywords: Foucault, domination, resistance, agency, body, ballet

Introduction

Concerns have been expressed over western methods of teaching that do not consider the need for different strategies and bodily configurations in Zimbabwe. These concerns arise from the assumption that western training can and will steadily alter African identities (see Ravengai 2011). This study problematizes body politics in Zimbabwe without over-emphasizing the subjugation of the African body in ballet training. The writers seek to magnify power relations by looking at both subjugation and resistance as they emerge in Foucault's theories of power. The study interrogates how the African body is implicated in body politics in the context of ballet training using Afrikera's Professional Dance Classes as case studies. Body politics refers to how the body is both a product and an agent of power. The concept of body politics in this

study is drawn from Michel Foucault's thesis that the body is a site of social control and power; by which in most instances, the body becomes a vessel that awaits instruction from discourses that subjugate individuals. Dominant power produces docile subjects, however, though power subjugates individuals, it is possible to resist because "it would not be possible for power relations to exist without points of subordination which by definition are means of escape" (Foucault 1982:787). Thus, with the presence of power, resistance is inevitable. Green (2002) Prochnow (2012), Ridley (2009) all seem to regard ballet as a system with dominant discourses that oppress individuals. They posit that ballet training has a designated 'ideal body' that all participants must strive for. We reveal the complexity that, the African body can dance ballet, while re-structuring it to suit specifically African 'embodiment' (See Ravengai 2011). The African body in the study refers to the black African residing in Africa, though the study will be limited to the black Zimbabwean community. The authors are aware of the problems that might arise from excluding other races, but for the purpose of the study, which has strong grounding in cultural divisions, the African body will be defined as such. However, it crucial to note that the results of this study are subject to the age at which the ballet students begin training. The data collection methods for this study included interviews with students of ballet and the teacher. In addition, the authors observed rehearsals and performances. Alina Zhuwawo(the first author) was also one of the students in ballet classes under consideration, and this study draws extensively from her insights as recorded in her personal journal

The Case Study: *Afrikera Arts Trust*

The practice of ballet in Zimbabwe became prominent when the National Ballet was formed approximately sixty years ago (Eve Stranix, Personal interview 2016). The teachers and ballet supporters at that time went around the nation practising ballet. National Ballet primarily focused on classical ballet and it later branched to the Zimbabwean community launching a movement called "VanaVanotamba" in 1984 (The Outreach Program). The movement engaged children under twelve in the Harare high density areas. It later branched out to black teenagers in schools giving scholarships to the more promising students (Eve Stranix Personal Interview 2016).

The Dance Foundation Centre, a free three year dance program was later formed comprising of school leavers in the high density Harare suburbs. The graduates were employed by the Tumbuka Contemporary Dance Company or the Outreach Programme (the young children's dance initiative). The dance companies, to date, concentrate on contemporary dance. The students involved in these programs learn ballet and other dances. The Dance Foundation Centre later closed giving way to the Afrikera Arts Trust, a similar program but no longer under The Dance Trust of Zimbabwe (Eve Stranix Personal Interview 2016)

Afrikera Arts Trust (AAT), encompasses Afrikera Professional Dance Training (APDT), Afrikera Dance Theatre (ADT) and Essence on Women Dance Ensemble. Afrikera Professional Dance Training is a three year program. Most of the students participating in the APDT program come from the high density areas in Harare and they are school leavers with poor family backgrounds. They attend the program on scholarships. The program is fairly new, having started in January 2015 with eleven students who graduated recently.

The curriculum comprises of several dance classes, Pilates, Tai Chi, Floor Barre, Western African, Traditional Dance, Ballet, Latin American Dances and Capoeira. These classes are taken once a week except for ballet which is taken four days a week. Upon being asked why ballet was an exception, the Director of the programme stated that ballet is the foundational dance in the program. She stated that her goal is to build competitive professional dancers and ballet works to increase the vocabulary for the students.

Foucault's Theories of Power and Resistance

To Foucault (1993) power is everywhere, in every nook and cranny of human interaction. For him, it is a commodity that allows people to control the actions and thought patterns of others. To Zimbabweans encountering ballet training for the first time, this notion provides new and unexplored possibilities. At the core of the tools of subjugation is the main conditioning of the body in ballet training. Foucault (1977) categorized body conditioning into four groups, which are, cellular conditioning, organic conditioning, genetic conditioning and conditioning by combinations. Cellular conditioning is a method that trains the dancer towards spatial awareness. It is prescribed that the space and the dancer share a bond that is crucial and

should be diligently monitored. This is acquired through the monitoring of movements and energy used to acquire precision (Foucault 1977). Organic conditioning is acquired through the temporary activity regiments a body is required to go through, that is, movements and schedule (Foucault 1977). A dancer is required to have a series of exercises that he goes through at a steady pace using a timetable and schedule. This is achieved through consistency. Genetic conditioning is acquired over time through exercises that are marked as progress or progressing (Foucault 1977). It is slightly similar to organic conditioning except genetic conditioning is subject to progress evaluation over time. Conditioning by combinations, illustrates that this is a synthesis of forces, that is, tactics used to attain efficiency. It is acquired through study and knowledge of the craft. In the case of a ballet dancer, knowledge of all the technical terms, props and history of the dance. In that way, assessment and improvement can be acquired. In this instance, we review the outlined conditioning method analyzing how the students' bodies respond to them. Do they follow these schedules faithfully? Do they do exercises in classes only or outside class, and what does this mean for their bodies? In this paper, we investigate the occurrences in the APDT ballet classes to find out if there are moments of agency and resistance in the students and what this means for Foucault's discourses on domination. Is docility an absolute phenomenon in APDT dance class or is it pregnant with complexities?

The body learns consciously or unconsciously through the process of imitation, from the non-locomotive to the locomotive states. For example, a girl child is never given instructions on how to modestly walk, but through the process of imitation, she acquires the standard and modest gait with most women in her surroundings. In the same manner, dance training follows the same process of development as explained above. It is a system that requires conditioning and mastery over the body, forcing the body to learn to follow and imitate the dance tutor's movements. We seek to question whether it is possible for these students to follow the teacher faithfully without mistakes, and if they able to or not, what this means in the context of docility and resistance.

Foucault's first work in the early 1960s concentrated on the omnipresence of power and its strangle-hold on individuals with little room for resistance (see Thompson 2003). However, he

later realized (and admitted) that he concentrated "too much on the techniques of domination" (Foucault 1993:204). As a response to this realization, he began to study the "co-constitutive" and "relational" interaction of power and resistance (Thompson 2003). This means that, power and resistance became the major tenets of his theory of power. Foucault proposed that, "[…] in order to understand what power relations are about, perhaps we should investigate the forms of resistance and attempts made to disassociate these relations" (Foucault 1982:211). Green (2002), Prochnow (2012) and Fitz, A.I (1998) emphasize the docility of ballet dancers in the western ballet training using Foucault's theory of power and docile bodies. Some scholars, such as Green, explored somatic theories as means for acquiring agency for dancers. Yet there is another dimension to Foucault's theory they left unexplored. He believed that the dominance of power and resistance co-exist. He proposed that power is there to react to resistance, though he later amended this belief by introducing the 'Care for the self' concept (see Thompson 2003). These are the technologies of the self where the individual worked towards his own freedom, "[…] as self-determining agents capable of challenging and resisting structures of domination in modern society" (McNay in Besley 2005:79). The individuals to Foucault, "[…] in their struggle against it (power), resist the grip it has on them" (Foucault 1980:142). He also proposed that, "like power, resistance is multiple" Foucault (1980:142). It seems that the same rate at which ballet has multiple exercises and rules of engagement, the same rate African ballet students may multiply their tactics to cope with the regulations in their training. Resistance according to Foucault takes many forms, and though Butler (1989) states that the resistance that exists in power relations is an unconscious one, Foucault's resistance theory suggests possibilities of conscious resistance. Vinthagen and Johansson define resistance categorically, stating that:

> 1. Everyday resistance is a practice (neither a certain consciousness, intent, recognition, nor an outcome); 2. It is historically entangled with (everyday) power (not separated, dichotomous or independent); 3. Everyday resistance needs to be understood as intersectional as the powers it engages (not engaging with one single power relation); and 4. It is heterogenic and contingent due to changing contexts and situations (not a universal strategy or unitary action form) (2013:1).

Based on these definitions, the current study explores possibilities of both conscious and unconscious resistance in the case study under consideration. Thompson (2011) analyzing

Foucault's resistance theory states that, the subject in the grips of power has the choice to either participate in his subjugation or chose alternative parts within the system. We will draw on the above theorization to suggest that the African ballet dancer chooses which changes are to occur to his or her body and which should not. This is a process of familiarizing oneself with one's body and "…it is important to know oneself and care for one self, it is equally important to know 'thy limits'" (Papadimos et al 2013).

We explore in depth this form of resistance and ascertain whether this knowledge of the body affects the decisions of the Afrikera Professional Dance Trust students on what parts of the training to embody and what parts to reject. Thompson (2011) calls it a shift from passivity to autonomy. Subjects in resistance can choose potential in the discourses available to them. Thorpe (2008:210) quoting Markula and Pringle, states that, individuals seek to "[…] recreate an identity within the … apparatus domination." Ballet training is a system that is formed within this "apparatus of domination". This type of resistance is conceptualized as self-formation (Thompson, 2003). Thomson also states that, while commenting on Foucauldian Power Theory, "whatever the new types of agency may be, they must be such that they enable us to govern ourselves and so form ourselves in ever new and different ways" (Thompson 2003:124). Thus, we will ascertain what forms this resistance takes and whether they exist in the APDT dance training.

Cultural Discourse

Our hypothesis is that, because the African body has gone through a different training, it is difficult to engage ballet training as it originates from a different cultural background. It is important to examine what characteristics the African training (and upbringing) has 'imposed' on the body and how this complicates ballet training. The African body is a "cultural body" (see Ravengai 2011) and a cultural body is a body that has been fashioned according to customs and norms of a certain society. It has been taught and dictated to move in a particular way. Ridley summarizing Foucault's 'Disciplinary Technologies' states that "Disciplinary technologies are the techniques in a culture that create individuals as bodies to be controlled" (Ridley 2009:336). The enforcers of cultural regulations are the individuals in the society engendering this culture.

The fact that the body is a site for social control and power, means that it is the tool that 'regimes of power' use in a bid for domination over populations (Foucault, 1980).These 'regimes of power' imbed themselves in the lives of individuals. Culture is such a system; it molds the corporeal entity in the ways of linguistics and physical motion. Foucault regarded culture as, "[…] a hierarchical organization of values, accessible to everybody, but at the same time the occasion of a mechanism of selection and exclusion" Foucault (2001:173). This suggests that culture is contained within a group of people and each group is unique in its control over individual bodies. Culture then becomes an institute that has its own ideal body standard. This study deploys the concepts to explore and interrogate what emerges when the African body is completely immersed in the western ballet training while simultaneously trying to discard all the embodied life-long cultural lessons. This hypothesis is used to develop a proposal that the African body is in a better position to redefine the rules of engagement in ballet training because of its already acquired cultural structure.

Agency of the African Body

Judith Butler interpreting Foucault's work suggested resistance as mere 'slippage' in the face of power (see Butler 1989). An unconscious and unintended counter action against dominant discourses. Subjects perpetrating this type of resistance are willing to participate in the discourse but certain conditions do not permit them. This paper explores how the condition of the African body, this "embodiment" of the African behaviors which influences body structures, (Ravengai 2011) sets the ground for inevitable resistance against the ballet structure. Another type of resistance clearly exists, a deliberate one, with the subject consciously and intending to go against disciplinary structures. Foucault proposed that school classrooms have become:

> [...] subject to a whole micro-penality of time (lateness, absences, interruptions of tasks), of activity (inattention, negligence, lack of zeal), of behavior (impoliteness, disobedience), of speech (idle chatter, insolence), of the body ('incorrect' attitudes, irregular gestures, lack of cleanliness), of sexuality (impurity, indecency) [...] (Foucault, 1979:178).

If the student is deliberately, "inattentive" because he or she is bored, then his or hers is a deliberate act of resistance. We found instances of this type of resistance in the APDT ballet

class and we will explore it in detail in this paper. We will show how both types of resistance are at work in the case study.

Resistance of the Unconscious:

Given the above quotation, this section explores unconscious resistance. In this form of resistance, the subject or the individual does not go out of his way to act against the dictates of power but he/she is a victim of circumstances which allow him to resist, an unintentional slippage (see Butler 1989). Thus this form of resistance is not confined to mass demonstrations, it is found in every personal engagement with fellow human beings and it can be found in APDT ballet training classes.

Traditional Dance Body Construction and Resistance

The Afrikera Professional Dance Trust has one student (Larry,-not his real name) who practised, somewhat seriously, the traditional African dance. The first author asked Larry, a former traditional dancer in ballet class, what he found difficult in his ballet training and he stated that, "The point is something else. It is hard … sometimes the leg refuses to strengthen … posture in ballet is hard … so complicated" (Personal interview 2016). In asking the above question, the idea was to know why these particular movements were so difficult for him and he said that he was used to traditional dances. The first instinct, at the beginning of this study was to say an African body is that of an African dancer and it is a fairly plausible statement that African dances are a reflection of African culture and society (see Welsh Asante 1999). However, this assertion does not account for the modern Zimbabwean culture. Many Zimbabweans in the township areas are not practically familiar with the traditional dances but that does not mean they have ceased to be Africans. We would say they are modifying the culture within the Zimbabwean cultural parameters set long ago. The above reflections explain the reason why construction of the body by Zimbabwean traditional dances, has been made part of this study and not the whole study.

Zimbabwean dances are grounded; the relationship with the ground has to do with the agricultural activities of the Zimbabwean culture (see Asante 1999). For example, *Mhande* was performed to celebrate harvest times and the movements showed ploughing, winnowing and

harvesting. Rutsate (in Mango 2015:15-16) states that, "*mhande* is an indigenous song dance performed for the *mutoro* ceremony, the annual rain ritual of the Karanga." The dance requires bent backs, bent knees (always) and flat feet. It is these elements that led us to understand why the body parts Larry mentioned resisted the dictates of ballet. His body was already constructed in the form of the Zimbabwean, traditional or cultural dancer. He had problems straightening his back because he was used to dancing with a bent back and at a low level. His legs sometimes resisted straightening and his feet refused to point to the exact standards of ballet feet because he had danced for so long on flat feet that getting the feet to point in ballet became a struggle. Such resistances occur because "[…] subjects can fail to flawlessly re-perform the discourses and practices that constitute them" (Kesby 2005:2045). Larry still tries to efficiently point his feet in class though, as Larry said, "even the teachers say the point needs improvement" (Personal interview 2016). His is a form of resistance that was made possible by the state of his body (a culturally constructed one). Evans et.al (2010:121) commented that, "[…] in Butler's notion of performativity, we explore a wider stance on agency 'with the ability to alterations of available discourses' though power structures remain." Larry's body has not achieved the exact requirements of ballet but he has acquired the ability to embody an altered ballet structure.

The Body and Spatial Resistance

The authors had a long conversation with one of the APDT graduates (Milton-not his real name) and realized that resistance comes in many forms and in this case, cultural construction contributed substantially. Mauss (1968) comments that, the way in which people sit, walk or eat depends on the way culture has inscribed these skills onto their bodies and this is true of Milton. Milton was born a left hander; his left side was more dominant than the right, and in Zimbabwe, using the left hand to eat or to shake hands with someone in greeting is frowned upon. He recalls being beaten regularly every time he used his left hand at culturally inappropriate occasions. Milton had to learn to use the right hand and eventually the right side of his body became more dominant. He goes into ballet training and is then required to use both his sides. Milton had to discard every notion he had learnt in order to participate in ballet training accordingly.

The first author had a similar dilemma except Milton had a slight advantage over her. He simply had to recall the use of his left side and the first author had been born right handed. Lawson quoted in Ridley (2009) believes that every day practices have to be overcome because they hinder the construction of a graceful body. The fact that the first author used her right side in her everyday activities caused problems with her ballet training. Every exercise in ballet class is performed utilizing both sides with eight designated directions. Foucault (1995:152) alludes to the fact that, "disciplinary space tends to be divided into many sections as there are bodies or elements distributed." We therefore argue that 'failure' to be contained in these spaces is a form of resistance. In the center of the class, where ballet students do exercises facing the mirror, they perform leg movements like 'grand battement', 'développé' and 'piqué', starting with the right leg then the left leg. The same structure is exercised on the diagonal, except the movements become combined sequences, going diagonal right then diagonal left. Up to now, the first author's left side is the 'weakest' point. Picking up movements with the right side is easy but picking it up with the left is always a struggle and even when she does pick it up; it is never good or perfect. Thus, when the exercises move to diagonal left, the confusion and 'mediocre' performance begins. In this instance, the encouragement of the Zimbabwean black culture to put more value on one side of the body than the other led to the first author's struggle to balance these sides as required by the ballet technique. Fitz (1998:24) comments on the fact that, "once a dancer knows the … points of the room, she is able to manipulate her body to respond to any lines which could be performed according to a verbal command by the choreographer". This means that, because the first author did not seem to make my left side respond efficiently, as required, she was always in a state of rebellion (albeit unintended) against her teacher's commands. After every class, she redid her exercises, trying to master and dominate her left side, but she could not do it to perfection, thus, her body achieved some sort of agency that allowed her to work within her limits and manipulate these weaknesses and she still is dancing ballet. Papadimos et al. (2013) equate agency with a frank awareness of limitations, which leads to caring for oneself, a notion that Foucault says leads to the subject's ability to remodel themselves within power structures and achieving some level of freedom (see Foucault 1988). Campbell-Thompson (2011) validates this line of thinking by suggesting

that resistance produces a subject who is not a passive product of existing power relations, merely following the model set by the structures. The subject can redefine and reinvent themselves within these structures.

Culinary Practices and Resistance

It is a western notion that equates beauty with slenderness (see Dzvairo 2015). A publicized San Francisco ballet school intake, listed requirements that included a slender body, arched feet and straight spine (Jackson 2005). Ballet dancers have always had the tradition of keeping a diet to achieve a certain body structure. Girls have to be slim, lightweight and 'never eat sweets' (Green 2002). Green simply meant that ballet dancers avoid eating foods that are guaranteed to increase weight. The first author once asked her ballet teacher what foods she could recommend in order to keep healthy and slim bodies. She recommended lots of fruit, eggs and vegetables (Alina Zhuwawo journal 2016). Given these dietary requirements, we began wondering: with the current Zimbabwean economic situation and the fact that most of the students at the APDT program are from the lower class, how was this 'healthy' eating going to be accomplished? From what we could get from discussions with back ballet students, breakfast consists of carbohydrates, that is, bread with butter and tea, lunch consists of either rice with tomato soup or meat, supper consists of *sadza* and vegetables and maybe meat. This is the standard meal structure of most of the students at the dance school because that is all the family can afford. We asked Glory what challenges she is encountering in her ballet training and she said, *"[…]I have to lose weight. It's the greatest challenge to wake up and run. I changed from junk food to healthy food"* (Personal interview 2016). It is to be noted that she was munching on sweet biscuits as we did the interview. Her lunch that day consisted of sweet biscuits and *maheu (*a traditional drink made from maize). So in essence, it was carbohydrates on top of carbohydrates. It is far from the recommended 'healthy' ballet meal. Instead it was what she could afford at that moment.

Thus though it is Glory's wish to lose weight, one cannot help but wonder if her economic situation plays a role in her 'inability' to lose weight. One of the ballet teachers we interviewed confirmed the fact that most families work to get food on their tables, which mostly comprises

of *sadza* (maize meal) and vegetables; there is no room for choice. At the risk of sounding stereotypical, we found that this is another point of resistance for the African body in ballet because generally, most black Zimbabweans have never put up much fuss over having 'small' bodies. On the contrary, they celebrate 'big bodies' (see Matereke & Mangwini 2010). When there is little money for food, black Africans stick to *sadza* and various versions of relish. Since weight is a big issue in ballet, we find Glory's situation as a huge concession on the part of the APDT ballet teachers. Though they are always pushing her to lose weight, they are trying to work around her body and this has given her some form of agency.

Resistance and Male Sexuality

The general opinion is that ballet is a feminine endeavor. Ferdin in Ridley (2009) states that dance/ballet is usually associated with feminine qualities. We randomly picked men and asked them what they thought about male ballet dancers and they all stated that male ballet dancers are gay. Most male students in the APDT see ballet as a stepping stone to another dance form, namely Afro-contemporary. Though they are required to participate in ballet class every day, enthusiasm is limited. We asked a series of questions and got this explanation for the lack of enthusiasm from one of the school graduates,

Q) Do you think your upbringing and the environment you grow up in can have an impact on your ballet training?

A)if you are an African and a ballet dancer, most people say you are gay (Personal interview 2016).

The idea of having their sexuality questioned proved to be too much for some. In ballet class the male students sometimes lag behind or lack concentration because to them, ballet is something to be endured and not enjoyed. Subjugation of the body is achieved by organic conditioning which is acquired through the temporary activity regiments a body is required to go through, that is, movements and schedule. (Foucault 1977). And if a student does not follow schedule, then he derails his subjugation by slacking on his work. This is what most of these male students do. Lutgen-Sandvik (2006:418) on forms of resistance in work places reports that, "Four participants reported withholding labor and doing 'only enough to get by' […]". This

is the basic principle one of the male students told us he employed. He only does what he needs to in order to remain a part of the program and does not go beyond that. The graduate we mentioned above stated that, "[…] for me, I decided to understand the basic principles." His reason for learning ballet was so that he could break it down, destroy the fundamental movements to form his own style. "You have to learn something first before you can break it down" he said. We posit that the foregoing is a form of agency that Markula and Pingle in Thorpe (2008:210) refer to, stating that, "the early (Foucauldian) discourse on the technology of the self is 'still relevant to those individuals who seek to recreate an identity within the … 'apparatus domination'." Ballet operates under this 'apparatus domination.' Hence, the idea of learning ballet to break it down is also what Thompson (2003), on Foucault's power resistance theories, called tactical reversal, it is an open and agentive defiance. He says "[…] a specific configuration of power and knowledge can be thwarted by reversing the mechanisms whereby this relation is sustained" (Thompson 2003:113. Thus, this graduate's agency takes on an aggressive form where he does not wish to merely survive in the discourse but to turn the tables on which ballet rules and techniques are founded.

The Robot Syndrome

We had time to analyze this phenomena we termed the Robot syndrome and we realized that, while it might symbolize docility in the ballet performers, for the APDT students, being robotic in movement is a form of conscious resistance. It is a coping mechanism that comes from lacking understanding in ballet and resorting to a, 'let me just do it, it will be over soon' attitude. This defiance is a form of resistance that the students demonstrate in class. One of the ballet teachers acknowledged this coping mechanism in an interview with the first author and confirmed this a indicated below,

Q) What challenges do you face training students who begin ballet at an advanced age?

A) What I realized is that it starts in the brain … before they start … they say ballet is for white people and when you teach them they become like robots because there is always a little resistance. Mostly, they have no understanding of ballet (Personal interview 2016).

We argue that it is the embodiment of African bodies which gives rise to this resistance because ballet is totally outside the realm of their culture. Hence when the students learn it, they 'lack' the relevant knowledge and bodily configuration, and consequently, they 'refuse' to conform. We had the opportunity to interview a DFC graduate, now a professional dancer, who went through the same training as the APDT students. He related his journey through ballet training. The teacher mentioned above had her own version of the manifestation of the robot syndrome in ballet. This DFC graduate had a different opinion and explained his 'aversion' to ballet. Firstly, he told us how he woke up every morning, wore his dance costume, with a tuck in, and walked to school, to learn the same steps, listen to the same music, with the same set up. He considered himself a robot in this manner and explicitly explained how he hated this arrangement. He also gave an example to express his point,

Q) "Did you find anything difficult when you started training ballet?"

A) "[…] it was also difficult for me because I am black, the mechanics and technique that is required … I feel that it's designed for white people … the good example (for ballet rules) is like a robot, when you want to cross the road, and its red, you say ok I have to stop and I am giving way to the car. For me, that's not interesting" (Personal interview 2016).

He wants to have the ability to make choices, make his own mistakes and learn from them. His views seem to resonate with Thompson's (2003:123-124) views on agency when he proposes that whatever the new types of agency might be, they must be such that they enable us to govern ourselves and so form ourselves in ever new and different ways.

Conclusion

Based on the above theorization and the results from the case study, we realized that factors such as cultural upbringing and intellectual capacity make it possible to negotiate spaces of agency in ballet-training for African bodies. This means that, notwithstanding the rigorous subjugation imbedded in ballet discourses, the African dancer can deploy his/her relative agency and autonomy to suite his/her own African bodily configuration and socialisation. Thus it becomes clear that the African body in ballet is not docile but resisting and opening channels

to a redefined ballet structure and body. To this degree, ballet-training in Africa more broadly, and Zimbabwe specifically, is a strategic site to study body politics.

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alinazhuwawo@gmail.com

nehemiachivandikwa@yahoo.com

A DIGITAL DANCE

Dr Anusharani Sewchurran

University of KwaZulu-Natal: School of Arts

Abstract

This paper theorises connections between dance pedagogy and digital technology as a means of advancing critical thinking among dance students who may then reconceptualise themselves as artists, theorists and digital producers. The link between dance and technology was ever present however, the earlier thrust was more towards enhancing performance or adding a new dimension to performance. The focus of this paper is dance pedagogy and the digital space about which subject literature remains scant. The paper considers more recent institutional imperatives as regards teaching and technology, grappling with the question of what use of technology serves a dance classroom best, and what technology institutions can afford. The UKZN context is offered as an example of a deterministic approach to technology in teaching, which is not always conducive to developing critical thinking in the teaching space. The paper presents the Digital Humanities as an interdisciplinary space offering ways of developing theory and practice around dance pedagogy and digital technology. Open education resources (OER's), digital storytelling (DST), digital dance literacy (DDL), and open context or contextual digital archiving are explored as possible extensions and enhancers of dance pedagogy. The digital archiving example from the National University of Singapore is discussed, where digital archives were developed as a means of adding to the national cultural repository and addressing gaps in the historiography of performance culture in Singapore. The paper finally outlines the framework of how such a contextual archival project may be conceptualised in an interdisciplinary way, a signature pedagogy of the digital humanities.

Introduction

The #feesmustfall 2015-2016 student protests brought sharply to the fore issues of access impacted by tuition costs and contestations around higher education curriculum. The earlier #rhodesmustfall campaign leading up to the #feesmustfall campaign resulted in reinvigoration of the debate around decolonising the higher education curriculum in South Africa. Both these protests percolated individual and collective reflections on the curriculum, and reflected an urgent desire for a transformative curriculum which perhaps is yet to be realised.

The Digital humanities refers to a global movement that has been advocating the concerted review of how digital technology may intersect with and enhance various disciplines within the humanities. This paper theorises how a digital humanities approach to dance pedagogy may be developed and offers a preliminary working model that may address concerns raised

in the #feesmustfall protest movement. The paper does not consider technological affordances for the singular purpose of enhancing choreography and performance as this has been the more dominant thrust of technological adoption in the discipline of dance and consequently literature thus far.

The paper reflects briefly on the current affordances of technology at one institution (UKZN). Here some emerging concerns are raised as deterministic usage of technology could deactivate even a good and responsive curriculum. Thereafter the paper theorises a digital humanities approach to curriculum transformation. This will include open education resources (OER's), digital storytelling (DST), digital dance literacy (DDL), and open context or contextual digital archiving, looking at how these may intersect usefully for the context of advancing dance pedagogy. Here I argue for developing 'not a dance pedagogy' but a signature pedagogy for digital humanities which is inclusive of dance and her sister disciplines. Some examples are explored entry points into thinking about modelling digital pedagogies and finally some consideration will be given to the investment side of such an endeavour. The paper concludes arguing for a transformative dance pedagogy to be inclusive:

- Digitally
- At the disciplinary level
- At the student production level
- At the regional and national levels

"In this way it could begin to grapple with counter balancing existing hegemonies in dance production and hopefully consumption."

Dance and technology

Literature around dance and dance education features a shift over time from what Green (2007) refers to as "somatic dance research" which focused on the individual, to critical pedagogy research which located the body in a nexus of race, class and gender strongly emphasising social justice. Finally post-positivist research and cultural studies later emerged emphasising a multiplicity of perspectives. (Green, 2007) While the third category accommodates a multiplicity of perspectives it still remains important in developing contexts to consider, "how colonial legacies conditioned the social, political, and material

practices of a given society,"(Cruz Banks, 2007:36) and hence engage meaningfully in post-colonial or the decolonisation discourses around dance and dance education. Theorists within these perspectives have advanced the idea that dancers are themselves theorists, activists, social commentators embodied with social power. (Cruz Banks, 2007:41)

However potent this idea is, Cruz Banks (2007:46) argues that dance literacy and pedagogy is "still embedded in a colonial legacy", part of which "over-emphasizes the linguistic text for learning and teaching". (ibid) Consequently cultural texts are undervalued. Thus part of engaging with decolonisation of dance and dance education would be to transcend academic literature associated with dance and add other means of engagement onto the higher education agenda. Digital technology could be useful as it affords much that includes yet is apart from the literary, linguistic referents. However, with regard to dance pedagogy and digital technology literature is very scant.

Some theorists like Anderson (2012) focus on how technology may better enable teaching across a larger and more diffuse cohort of students. This is in the framework of massive open online courses (mooc's) which seek to reach a large student body dispersed across a geographical radius through podcasts, live streaming of lectures and online support for literature and assessments. While this method has been effective in reaching a larger number of students, it does not extend teaching of dance into a digital pedagogical space. Rather it tends to remain as silicon coating, using traditional methods and paradigms of teaching (transference) with new technologies.

In contrast, Risner and Anderson (2008), Whatley and Varney (2009) and Alvarez (2013) offer ways into using digital technology that would substantively extend dance pedagogy. Whatley and Varney (2009) explored how convergence of dance and digital technology could create a digital archive, in this case the Siobhan Davies Dance Archive (see Figure 1 below). For our purpose, the limitation of Whatley and Varney's account is that authorship of the archive resided exclusively in the hands of a team of discipline specialists and digital experts (2009:51). In the context of transformative dance curricula, disintermediation (or death of the author) would be embraced as a means of adding a multiplicity of voices and creative producers. While this iteration of the archive may be useful to the artist, serving to develop a "new esthetic" (2009:52), it requires some reshaping in order to be fit for a transformative dance curriculum.

Figure 1

PAST EVENTS BY YEAR

2016   2015   2014   2013

2012   2011   2010   2009

http://www.siobhandavies.com/archive/
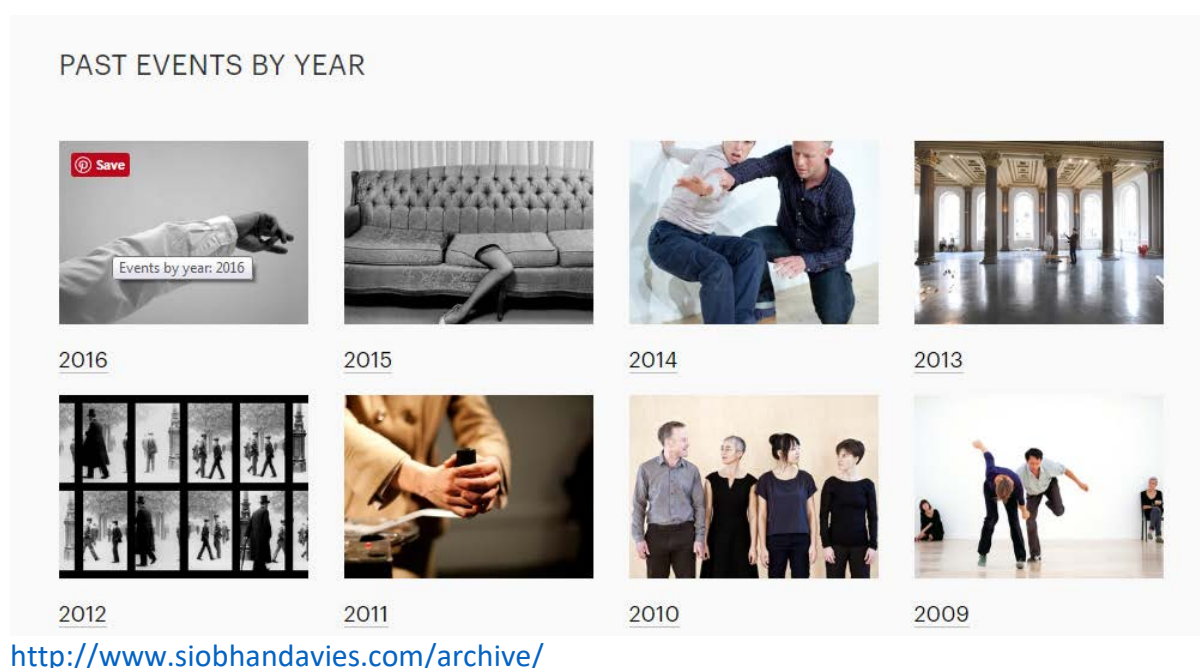
Alvarez (2013) reported on a project run at the Dance Department at the University of Surrey. The key idea behind this project was to shift student identity from print and digital consumers to digital producers (2013:1). Alvarez highlights the tremendous potential of open education resource production:

> It focuses in particular on the challenges and opportunities that arise from aiming at encouraging students to become producers of digital objects by engaging with digital resources. The idea of the 'student' has been highlighted by Mike Neary based on Walter Benjamin's concept of the author as producer. Neary argues that we need to reinvent the relationship between teacher and student, so that the student is not simply consuming knowledge that is transmitted to them but becomes actively engaged in the production of knowledge with academic content value. Neary's proposal is that we should facilitate research or research like experiences on our undergraduate programmers in order to transform them into productive collaborators (Alvarez 2013:2).

This approach reflects the kind of step change that could activate a transformative dance curriculum as it disrupts the place of the 'expert' placing knowledge production in the hands of students.

Finally Risner and Anderson indicate that though there has been increased integration across technology and dance in the US, it has not been followed by an inclusion of technology education in dance curricula. "Like most issues surrounding technology use and implementation, the pedagogy of technology drags slowly behind the technology itself"

(2008:8). While reflecting on the successes and challenges of attempting such an integrated curriculum they also offer valuable insight into how one may conceive of digital pedagogy holistically, which will be explored later in the paper.

Given the prolific use of social media and other online platforms by students, universities have created online portals (e-learning sites) as a means of adapting to new technologies. Course content is available via a range of smart devices and more learning activities are transferred to the online space. Blewett has argued that while institutions of higher learning have tried to embrace new technologies in teaching, they have remained in a 'skeumorphic space', simply importing old, familiar ways of doing to new forms (2015). As an example uploading lectures in the form of word documents or power point presentations to online platforms. In the UKZN context, the standard university wide digital platform is Moodle. While Moodle affords a range of possibilities in the support of teaching, it has its limitations when it comes to disciplines in the Arts. The Moodle platform provides for uploading of readings and notes, discussion threads, online tests however, due to the large student body there is a limitation on size of files. This severely limits multimedia files which are typically large which are key to disciplines like Dance, Music and Media Studies. Moodle is also not conducive to digital production as advanced by Alvarez (2013) and Risner and Anderson (2008).

Towards a digital humanities approach

The term 'digital humanities' originated post the digital revolution as a means of reclaiming the concerns of the humanities which appeared to be steadily eroding due to an overwhelmingly marketised use of digital technology. Alongside this movement, scholars have been focussing on how higher education is transforming against the backdrop of a global recession and digital advancement. In addition global and local marketplaces have rendered the job market complex, diverse and mutable. It has resulted in the transformation of many traditional workspaces. In the modern workplace, jobs are conflated as a result of dematerialisation and old technological knowledge is rapidly rendered obsolete with traditional jobs being eroded from the work-scape (Glenn, 2010:254-255). This climate has raised many pertinent questions around tertiary education, some of which have been precipitated by the #feesmustfall and #rhodesmustfall student protest movements. How does one develop a curriculum which is at once responsive to a

fickle and changing marketplace and also address decolonisation while fostering active and responsible citizenship? Could there be digital solutions to this complex set of challenges?

One attempt to address this set of challenges could be to consider how critical thinking may be fostered in a digital environment. In this instance a review of critical thinking is a necessary precursor to digital considerations.

Critical thinking, digital thinking?

In preparing graduates for a changing workplace one needs to consider both critical thinking and engaged citizenry as necessary conditions to survival of the individual and the larger democratic order however fragile. Bozalek and Watters (2014:1070) state that, "graduate attributes … should allow graduates to learn 'for an unknown future'". Dunne argues for criticality as a *raison d'etre* of higher education (2015:86). He states that criticality must be differentiated from critical thinking as it encompasses, "critical thinking, analytical reasoning, critical self-reflection and critical action" (2015:87). This is a fundamental aspect to preparing graduates for new workplaces and employers lament the lack of critical thinking, writing and problem-solving skills (Dunne, 2015:87). Dunne while referring to the former President of Harvard University argues further that there are"yawning chasms between the rhetoric of educational policy and the verifiable actuality of student learning" (ibid). This means that while critical thinking is highlighted at the policy level, it is not necessarily realised in teaching even though it may be the vital key to unlocking student potential. Bozelak and Watters (2014:1070) indicate that while this discourse around graduate attributes and criticality is important, "one of the problems of looking solely at curriculum alignment to achieve graduate attributes is that many of the attributes are process driven." They offer an alternative approach to achieving graduate attributes which is a shifted focus to 'authentic learning' and 'authentic learning environments' (ibid).

Bozelak and Watters (2014:1071) offer two tiers of graduate attributes, the first of which are generic and the second refers to overarching skills and abilities. Tier one attributes are listed as, "Scholarship: a critical attitude towards knowledge, critical citizenship and the social good: a relationship and interaction with global communities, and lifelong learning: an attitude or stance towards themselves" (1071-1072). They go on to describe the tier two attributes as, "inquiry-focused and knowledgeable; critically and relevantly literate;

autonomous and collaborative; ethically, environmentally and socially aware and active; skilled communicators; interpersonal flexibility and confidence to engage across difference" (1073-1074). In order to embed such a list of tier one and two graduate attributes, Bozelak and Watters advocate the cultivation of authentic texting contexts. Herrington quoted by Bozelak and Watters indicates with regard to authentic contexts that the curriculum should not be simplified and broken up into step-by-step processes, but should rather mirror real-world situations. An authentic context leads to an intense feeling of engagement with the learning, where the leaner experiences as the 'willing suspension of disbelief (2014:1073) An authentic task then:

> should be ill-defined, complex, comprehensive, and completed over an extended period of time, mirroring activities that are relevant to the kinds of problems which knowledge is applied in the real world. Tasks which merely lead to enculturation to the classroom rather than acquiring knowledge and skills for practise in the real world, such as multiple choice tests, are discouraged as they are not considered to be authentic (ibid.

Bozelak and Watters go further to list as key determinants to creating authentic contexts:

> access to expert thinking and modelling of processes, provide multiple roles and perspectives, support collaborative construction of knowledge, promote reflection to enable abstractions to be formed, promote articulation to enable tacit knowledge to be made explicit, provide coaching and scaffolding by the teacher at critical times, provide for authentic assessment of learning within the tasks (2014:1074).

Having reviewed some accounts of embedding graduate attributes which are designed to develop criticality, the question then arises as to how digital technology may support or advance authentic contexts and authentic tasks. To that end, a few digital methods will be explored. However, Davies cautions that archival material though rich is historic, while "dance and choreography's principal elements deal with movement and change, and to support how the dance arts can evolve and be appreciated, we must stay true to its transformational nature" (Davies, 2014).

Dance deals in movement and change, archives in memory - can a live performance and its audience help create a record?

ⓘ Table of Contents by Siobhan Davies Dance, which seeks to explore the notion of archiving. Photograph: Pari Naderi

https://www.theguardian.com/culture-professionals-network/culture-professionals-blog/2014/jan/09/siobhan-davies-dance-archives-ica

Open education resources

Alvarez (2013:1-8) describes the process of developing e-learning resources for a range of undergraduate dance modules at the University of Surrey. Staff worked with students developing online discussion forums, pod casts, collaborative digital walls, mind maps which were routinely assessed in terms of student and staff engagement. The exercises required students to search for information, summarise this, make links with works of others and share their work. Alvarez reports (2013:8), "those students who got involved in the project were clearly motivated learners who expressed a high level of satisfaction completing digital tasks. An important aspect reported among those students, was the links they were able to make between theory and practice with the support of technology". What follows is a diagram indicating a student-centred approach to dance studies using the support of digital technology.

Figure 1. A student-centred approach to dance studies (with roles and activities supported by technology)
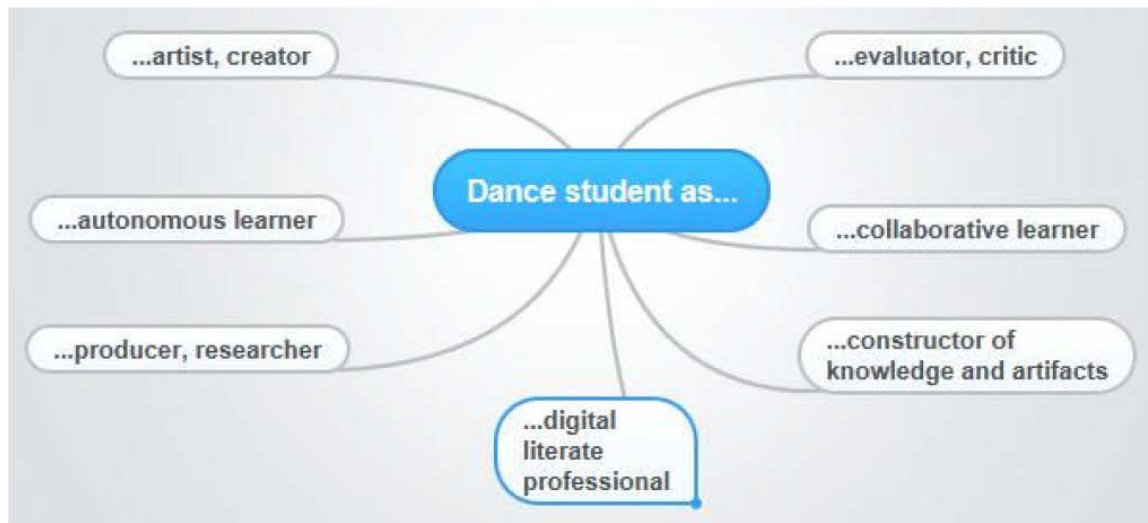
The ideal depicted in the diagram if achieved, tips the balance of skills onto the dance student not just as a practitioner but a practitioner embedded in a community of practise. Another interesting example from Alvarez's reflections was the digital collaborative wall (see below).

Figure 3. An example of a digital wall on street art for the Arts and Society module http://padlet.com/wall/BanksyWorks

This is a good example of incorporating some of the authentic learning contexts highlighted by Bozalek and Watters. The exercise promotes collaborative construction of knowledge while also promoting reflection to enable abstractions to be formed. It appears that the teaching has providing scaffolding in that the brief is clear and she also participated in the exercise, setting the conversation in motion as it were. Finally Alvarez indicates that dissemination was an important part of the project where the project website was shared with dance institutes across UK.

Digital dance literacy

Risner and Anderson's (2008) report on the process of designing and implementing a Digital Dance Literacy programme (Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan) indicated a strong student focus. The DDL pilot programme aimed to provide students with skills that would cultivate lifelong learning, develop research and reflective skills for the future rather than the past. Students worked with software dance design programmes through in-class tutorials and experimentation. Once comfortable, students had to submit an e-portfolio which demanded:

> digital graphics editing, page layout and design, digital audio editing, and digital video manipulation (within a dance context). Researchers identified core skills as: sound applications (musical composition and sound design); digital imaging applications (DVD video production, editing and design); production/publicity applications (theatrical production and media related design); creative applications: technology-mediated choreographic design; and finally Digital portfolio application (comprehensive synthesis and documentation of creative research endeavours, including website production) (2008:7).

Without being deterministic, one can well imagine how the powerful combination of these skills could enhance local production of dance and the dancer. Risner and Anderson argue that, "it is crucially important that undergraduate dance students possess and maintain technological skills … moreover, pedagogical innovations that utilise computer-mediated resources such as video-editing, graphic design and web site development software not only advance students' professional career opportunities, but also spark student and faculty creativity" (2008:13).

Digital storytelling

The next technique referred to as digital story telling (DST) emerged from a Berkeley lab and Benmayor argues strongly for DST to be a signature pedagogy for the Humanities as she asserts that through this pedagogy, "the invisible becomes visible, creating a space for empathic listening, learning and understanding" (2012:524). Essentially a digital story is a two to four minute movie wherein an individual crafts a story in her own voice with the addition of graphics and/or images and/or sound. Benmayor indicates that the process could include free-writes and memory writes as a starting point where previous stories are viewed. One could then share individual stories or starting points in a story circle. Thereafter stories may be defined and developed in one's own time where a script or story board may be outlined. The final script is performed in a digital recording booth and editing is subsequently done where voice tracks and music may be overlaid onto the video. The first screening would typically occur in a class where students collectively theorise the various contexts and meanings emerging. The students would then write a theory paper after which there would be a public screening. A powerful transformation occurs as Benmayor reflects that the in-class readings, "authorize students, probably for the very first time, to bring their lives into the classroom and to begin to think about them as more than just 'my personal story'" (2012:512).

The contextual digital archive

The final additive to digital methods is the digital archive. Since the inception of the digital, archiving has been a contested terrain. For our purpose the open-context or contextual digital archiving is relevant for dance pedagogy as it allows for the integration across a range of digital data such as photographs, videos, analyses, maps etc. One example is the Contemporary Wayang Archive of Singapore which seeks to address a singular gap in the historiography of dance, Java's ancient performance tradition, Wayang Kulit. It is featured with performance data, translations and notes by editors and translators (see below). All underlined text serve as pop-ups with some explanatory text featured.

Kalimataya [Kalimataya] (2009)
Dalang: Nanang Hape
Story: Mahabharata
Puppets: Wayang Kulit Puppets
Language: Indonesian

Bungkusan Hati Di Dalam Kulkas [A Heart
Wrapped inside the Refrigerator] (2008)
Director: Eko Nugroho
Dalang: Catur Kuncoro
Story: Contemporary Situation
Puppets: Modified Traditional
Language: Indonesian

Lara Tanpa Liru [Sick Beyond Repair]
(2006)
Dalang: Nanang Hape
Story: Mahabharata
Puppets: Wayang Kulit Puppets
Language: Javanese

http://cwa-web.org/en/recordings

Rewriting the present

The Party said that Oceania had never been in alliance with Eurasia. He, Winston Smith, knew that Oceania had been in alliance with Eurasia as short a time as four years ago. But where did that knowledge exist? Only in his own consciousness, which in any case must soon be annihilated. And if all other accepted the lie which the Party imposed – if all records told the same tale – then the lie passed into history and became truth. 'Who controls the past,' ran the Party slogan, 'controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.' (Orwell, 1984)

A key factor in the decolonisation debate is the inclusion of local and regional voice to the higher education curriculum. One way to synthesise digital methods and dance pedagogy could be to create a living archive, a way of rewriting the present as it were.

This will require the investment of a digital studio and designated technicians or web masters to manage the sites and administer training. Exercises could range from collecting memorabilia around dance from a particular age to a digital story collaboration board that is thematised. In addition one could encompass digital storytelling and an inexpensive way to start that would be the one minute cell film. Here it would be good to take the cue from Bozalek and Watters authentic contexts and keep the direction open so as to yield the widest range of results. The digital technology training however must be more systematic and specific.

My own dabbling in these methods have yielded some fascinating results. A student decided to delve into the regional Maskandi music tradition as a means of reconnecting with his traditional heritage as he saw himself as fully enculturated with urban ways of doing and being. His journey has taken him to view Maskandi as having been consistently framed in

the news as a violent, old school Zulu practice. He also encountered a fascinating fandom nostalgic for a very traditional form of Maskandi clashing with a new form of Maskandi which has been catapulted into the world of social media and Facebook fandom. This has created some interesting tensions over the Maskandi artists as nostalgic for a traditional past with Maskandi artists as celebrities working in a very postmodern way to generate an expansive fandom.

https://www.google.ie/search?q=Phuzekhemisi&espv=210&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUK
EwjznY-qpq_UAhVjDsAKHTHxD-AQiR4IhgE&biw=1366&bih=638

UMGQUMENI

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fpfxoAx2OZE

Another student who also focussed on Maskandi music unearthed a travesty of intellectual property rights being perpetrated by music companies and lawyers involved. The lack of ethical legal counsel to put wills and fair contracts in place has revealed a tragic side of the continued abuse of artists in this popular regional genre. This has led to the irony emerging of the genre being perpetrated as violent, yet the intellectual property rights infringements and legal maltreatment of the very same artists do not feature much in the public domain. The findings from these two students have been developed into two full theoretical papers. However, this topic lends itself to being portrayed in very interesting and different ways if on a multimedia digital format that utilises contextual digital archiving.

This method could be utilised in a dance curriculum in a multitude of ways. An excellent way to a starting point at first year level could be a prompt, "the dance I see". This could be scaffolded by digital activities such as online discussions, interactive mapping, collaborative story boards, digital storytelling, screenings and theoretical face to face discussions etc. From a pedagogical perspective, this could be archived with contextual detail for future reuse and analysis.

The tremendous excitement that digital dance ignites is momentarily doused by financial considerations in an ever increasingly fiscally austere higher education institution. As Benmayor argued for DST as a signature methodology for humanities, I would argue that collaboration ought to be the signature mode with theorist-artists of the humanities which would include collaborative funding efforts across disciplines and even institutions. In this way, a digital studio shared across disciplines is a digital studio afforded, likewise a designated technician or webmaster shared across disciplines, is one who can be afforded.

Conclusion

This paper theorised the connections across dance pedagogy and digital technology as a means of adding substantively to a decolonised curriculum that is also reflexive to a changing job market. Achieving this however, means investing in digital infrastructures other than Moodle, which in its current usage appears to enculturate students into the classroom as opposed to cultivating authentic learning contexts. In order to accommodate contextual digital archiving, websites and a host of other digital software relevant to pedagogical innovations that utilise computer-mediated resources such as video-editing, graphic design and web site development, software needs to seen as key investments. The human investment of a designated technician and/or web master is also vital to the success of such an endeavour. The paper argued for a more holistic and interdisciplinary approach to digital methods in order to activate its potential for supporting the development of critical thinking. The paper concludes by reiterating that the hallmark of the digital humanities is collaboration.

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sewchurrana@ukzn.ac.za

THE POLITICS OF SPACE:

A PRACTICE-LED EXPLORATION OF THE MOVING BODY

Coralie Valentyn

Plymouth University, UK

Department of Theatre and Performance

Abstract

Collini (2004:67) defines politics as 'the important, inescapable and difficult attempt to determine relations of power in a given space'. Thinking about spaces developed into an interest in the bodies which occupy them – bodies which, rather than being neutral, are embedded in social systems which shape experiences and, in turn, the ways we inhabit the world. As a South African woman, questions about the ways in which bodies occupy space, which spaces are being occupied by which bodies and who has the power to make these decisions have always been significant. This paper is thus concerned with the politics of space and the ways in which bodies politicise space. My experiences with integrated dance shaped my current concerns about the ways in which bodies politicise space. Drawing on my experiences of integrated dance, with a focus on the practice of improvisation, I grapple with the complexities of identity, and suggest that its implications are not limited to dance scholarship. Rather, there is much to be gained for broader social and political consideration.

Background

Critical dance theorist Østern (2009) in her thesis entitled *Meaning-making in the Dance Laboratory*, describes how it was curiosity that led to a process of questioning which eventually resulted in her research project. Similarly, I have been curious about the complexities of identity for a long time. It is something that I have felt in a very embodied way all my life. As a South African woman, I have been confronted with questions around race, class, privilege, power and myriad other social constructs. This is of course not unique to South Africans, but there is something interesting about searching for answers in a landscape that remains unsteady and uncertain more than twenty years into democracy. Similarly, it was interesting living in England during 2015-2016 at a time when rapid political and cultural shifts were taking place within the UK. The concerns around race, power and privilege that have become so etched on my South African body were there being foregrounded, played out, on the national and international stage. The EU referendum[1] signals the ways in which citizenship and belonging remain key within the popular imagination. Moreover, borders, boundaries and place are reinforced as ways of regulating

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[1] The vote to decide whether the United Kingdom should leave or remain in the European Union.

access which in turn feeds into ideas around identity both on a national and personal level. The concerns of home were consequently not limited to home; rather, I was finding it necessary to negotiate my body in that particular space[2] at that particular moment. As an international student for instance, I was monitored by UKVI[3] and needed to prove my continued engagement with my course and supervisor in order to legally stay in the country; this reinforced my otherness both as a South African and a person of colour. Questions around the ways in which bodies occupy space, which spaces are being occupied by which bodies and who has the power to make these decisions are thus of significance and are further explored throughout this paper.

Slopes and Slippages

My thinking around the politics of space is informed by my personal interrogation around identity as well as my involvement[4] with *differently bodied* dancers over the past few years. I came across the term *differently bodied* in Østern's (2009) work. She suggests that we all have bodies which are inherently different and result in different ways of being in the world. It is not an attempt to gloss over disability but rather the focus is on people as body-subjects. For the longest time I have been using the term *differently abled*, a term I first heard from a previous research participant. I preferred this to 'disabled' but have since started thinking about the neo-liberal connotations associated with ability and wonder if referring to dancers with disabilities as 'differently abled' perpetuates existing ablist discourses (such as some people being more 'able' than others). *Differently bodied* however foregrounds the body and the ways in which we can all – with our bodies – contribute, create and share, not just within an artistic context but also more generally in society and life. Going back to Collini's (2004) definition of politics however, I am mindful of the power inherent in language because of its constructed nature. Who has the power (or the right) to determine what terminology is used within this context? What are the implications for someone without a disability asking these questions and furthermore, through language, contributing to existing discourse? What are my responsibilities as a scholar engaged in a bodily practice regarding representation? These questions are complex and although I do not know all the answers my sense is that integrity is key. That said I will be using Østern's

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[2] Whilst living in England
[3] UK Visa and Immigration
[4] Through ethnographic research and more recently my growing improvisation practice

term *differently bodied*, although with a consciousness of the complexities inherent in language and the power associated with the production of knowledge. I was similarly grappling with the terms 'integrated' and 'inclusive' and tended to use them interchangeably. Benjamin (2002) and Østern (2009) both believe that to integrate a group meaningfully requires integrity. Østern thus advocates that we re-create the meaning of integration:

> Through mere "inclusion" you often end up re-establishing or even worsening culturally established narratives about the body, teaching and in this case dance. Integration goes deeper and demands a conscious effort to find new ways of working (Østern, 2009:25).

Benjamin similarly argues, "we are all implicated in integration which is closely related to the word integrity – the quality of having no part missing or left out." (2002:14). Within a discussion of the politics of space, rather than merely considering the ways in which power can be more evenly distributed within a group, perhaps we should begin conversations around how individuals can be empowered through everyone being treated with integrity. Even within groups where power is more equally dispersed there are still those whose voices are lost, there are those whose stories are silenced. Integrity implies that 'every individual has an essential and unique contribution to make" (Benjamin, 2002:14). When I use the word integrate, it will thus be with the knowledge that as a practitioner and person, my responsibility is to seek and treat others with integrity. This being said, I understand it, not as a reified ideal or destination, but rather as a process which requires openness and honesty with oneself and others.

The body in becoming

My exploration of the moving body spans four years and four countries.[5] Although the respective contexts in which my inquiries have taken place are inextricably linked to the experiences of myself and my participants, what remains universal is a sense of identity politics – the ways in which we, despite geographic and cultural difference, continue to grapple with the human condition. Østern (2002) uses the phrase body "in becoming" when drawing on Engelsrud's (2006) argument that representations of the body are not fixed or static. Rather, the ways we use our bodies and express ourselves can shape what the body

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[5] I conducted ethnographic research in South Africa, the United States, England and Wales between 2012 and 2016

can become, in turn challenging existing limited cultural narratives about the body and identity. More specific to her own integrated practice, Østern (2002) suggests that varied perceptions of the body, with different persons (different bodies) involved, informs conversation around what the body can be. She goes on to say:

> This dialogue is ripe with pedagogical possibilities and it has political implications, which can change the sense of community between different people (Østern, 2002:110).

Like Østern (2002), I acknowledge the difficulties inherent in a project which seeks to transform existing cultural narratives, however, I similarly believe that movement, and integrated work in particular, has much to offer and as Petra Kuppers suggests, "can make us curious anew about what it means to move embodied in space and culture" (2006:26).

What emerged through the Practice as Research MA I undertook at Plymouth University, the creation of various installations during the course of the year as well as my growing improvisation practice, was my interest in exploring democracy within improvisational spaces – what democracy means to respective individuals, the ways in which democracy is realised in particular spaces and how improvisation can offer, amongst other things, moments of freedom amidst a landscape of restraint. The notion of space thus took on particular significance from the start of my project; it invited me to think about spaces as offerings, as possibilities. This understanding became invaluable in my practice and has offered me new ways of engaging with space. Thinking about spaces developed into an interest in the bodies which occupy them – bodies which, rather than being neutral, are embedded in social systems which shape experiences and the ways we inhabit the world. Concerns about the geo-politics of identity and the situatedness of the body began to slowly surface. With particular reference to the lived nature of improvisation, Østern regards her body as a body-subject-of-culture and similarly argues that "culture is embedded in the body" (2002:116). More specific to South Africa, the significance of understanding the relationship between improvisational practices and democracy for local dance artists as well as whether there was potential for these understandings to bleed into other social spaces felt important. How is culture embedded in the moving body? What is the significance of grappling with notions of democracy and freedom within the studio and beyond? During an

interview I conducted with Unmute[6] dancer Zama Sonjica, he spoke about the need to critically engage with these concepts:

> Freedom is something you do and the way you feel – even if people don't agree with your opinions, it's what you believe and it becomes freedom for you. But democracy is something that people must be equally in agreement about. In South Africa democracy was supposed to be an agreement for everyone but people are not happy about democracy because they are still living in squatter camps and using the bucket system while there are people from different classes, higher class and lower class but the world calls this democracy (Zama Sonjica, 2016).

Sonjica articulates the ways in which democracy can be challenged in South Africa and alludes to the need to distinguish between democracy and freedom. He suggests it possible to experience freedom whilst living in an undemocratic society – you can thus be free or "feel free" within certain contexts whilst simultaneously being constrained by undemocratic living conditions, institutions and ideologies within the broader society. What Sonjica is referring to can be described as experiencing political freedom without economic freedom. I was thus interested in those moments of freedom that practices such as improvisation offer – how can they further inform our understandings of the spaces in which we consider ourselves free and how can those understandings manifest outside the studio? I consequently started questioning the ways in which my body was implicated in these questions as well as the broader project within which these concerns were located. What became apparent was the need to contextualise my project and pay attention to my use of language, or what Goldman refers to as the importance of context when analysing the "political significance of any physical practice" (2012:12). Before I can begin exploring the encounters and exchanges that take place within a space, I need to account for the various processes which regulate my access into spaces. With this consciousness, questions around the cultural significance of my engagement with a practice, like improvisation which requires sometimes intimate interaction with other bodies, become more meaningful and seemingly innocent categories like *mine* and *yours* or *us* and *them* begin to demand interrogation.

In relation to the moving body, Cooper Albright argues that contemporary dance "foregrounds a responsive dancing body, one that engages with and also challenges static

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[6] Currently South Africa's only professional integrated dance company

representations of gender, race, sexuality and physical ability all the while acknowledging how deeply these ideologies shape our daily experience" (1997:xiii). With specific reference to integrated work, Østern similarly described an improvised dance she witnessed as "a discussion, not only about aesthetics, but also about body and the cultural meaning that different bodies hold" (2002:96). Through the making of work, I thus became interested in this responsive, contextually situated body, this body capable of holding different cultural meanings. I started exploring what it means for my body to occupy different spaces and places. Moreover, how I engaged and/or challenged representations of my body and the bodies of others were called into question and offered interesting insights with regards to post-colonial identity construction, an area extensively written about by critical theorist and philosopher Frantz Fanon (Fanon, 1952; 1961).

Who moves and who doesn't?

In her book *I want to be ready: Improvised Dance as a Practice of Freedom*, Goldman (2010), uses the phrase who moves and who doesn't? when discussing the materiality of dancing bodies. The question is taken from *Turning South Again: Rethinking Modernism/Re-reading Booker T* in which author Houston Baker (2001) explores the struggle for black modernism in the United States. It is not my intention to conflate race[7] and disability although an argument could be made for the ways in which race (and racism, sexism and other forms of prejudice) disable people. Rather, in this instance, my interest is around the correlation between movement and race. In South Africa, during apartheid, Pass Laws governed who moved and who did not. The black body was monitored and heavy surveillance regulated access to space. Apartheid as a space led project based on racial constructs, physically and spatially separated people. I argue that this aspect of apartheid continues in the post-apartheid context through maintained economic and social exclusion for the black majority of the country. Access to particular spaces remain limited similar to the ways in which access to spaces are restricted for differently bodied individuals. My concern is thus not necessarily around the conflation between race and disability but rather the ways in which access to space and space itself is politicised and in turn how bodies politicise space. The question who moves and who doesn't consequently holds significance not just for dance scholarship but also for broader discussions pertaining to exclusion, othering and

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[7] Not understood in essentialist ways but rather as a social construct

discrimination. Within integrated work these conversations become particularly important as attempts are made to make movement more accessible. When writing specifically about different perspectives on space in dance, Østern states that her use of the word space, as opposed to aspect or dimension, is intentional due to space, dance and body being inseparable. Moreover, through the use of the concept space, she alludes to the possibilities in which spaces are open to re-negotiation and suggests that "a space can always be redefined and filled with new meaning" (2009:131).

Renegotiating narratives

> When I am working with someone who is disabled, I am interested in not only the character that person is representing but also what that process allows the dancer to experience. We therefore have the possibilities in dance to shift mind-sets. When you see someone who is an amputee or born without legs, some very profound things go on in your head about what you perceive to be your own body and other peoples bodies in general.
> (Gerard M. Samuel, May 2015).

In the above quote, Samuel echoes Østern's ideas concerning re-negotiation, particularly with regards to the ways in which integrated dance can shift mind-sets. As discussed in other parts of this paper, the ability to challenge normative ideas around movement and identity through disability motivated my research endeavour. I was, like Samuel, interested in the "very profound things that go on in your head about what you perceive to be your own body and other peoples bodies in general" (Gerard Samuel, May 2015). Tied up in understandings of our bodies and the bodies of others are constructed notions of ability which are intrinsically linked to understandings of identity. Disability thus destabilises, or deconstructs these understandings. Integrated dance consequently allows for radical moments of deconstruction as well as invaluable opportunities to reconstruct:

> I think this idea to destabilise and deconstruct is an important exercise. When you are looking at how masculinity has been constructed in dance and what sort of representation we present of that so called ideal, it's important to deconstruct and destabilise and say is this actually what we want for how men or man is presented? What are the multifaceted ways that man can be shown? So what's the norm and what's the deviation from the norm and why do you think that deviation exists? The presence of the disabled man is already showing us it is possible to be these things, so the questions might be even more layered in, so even for him, what are his confines as a disabled man? In those instances maybe it's his strength;

ideas about fatherhood, how do you place that on stage? Unless we have the courage to place that body on the stage we unconsciously push the person to the margins. We need to be insightful about the ways in which we can expose the normative behaviour that goes on in the society about people that are disabled. And I think that's where dance and the arts provide that possibility – we are in that space (Gerard M. Samuel, May 2015).

This "space" which Samuel refers to is one in which we can grapple with notions of identity, sexuality, ability, disability, gender, ideas regarding race as well as power and control. These, among others, are of vital importance when discussing the democratisation of space. Similarly, Goldman (in her introductory chapter entitled *The land of the Free)* uses the phrase "tight places" as a way to discuss how "one's shifting social and historical positions in the world affects one's mobility" (2010:6). Drawing on the work of Bakers (2001), tight places for Goldman represents a variety of constraints that involve 'race, class, gender, sexuality, time and even artistic convention' (2010:6). Although the idea of space might be contradictory to notions of tight places, I suggest that both offer glimpses into the complexities of the body and the ways in which bodies occupy contested spaces, spaces in constant need of negotiation. For Baker, tight places are described as "the always ambivalent cultural compromises of occupancy and vacancy, differentially affected by contexts of situations" (2010:8). Baker's description foregrounds the ways in which my body, depending on my context of situations can be both present and invisible, can occupy space as well as be rendered absent. One's context of situations thus has the ability to include or exclude. A part of my practice was therefore to find ways of creating more inclusive workshop spaces, accounting for the context of situations of myself and my participants. In doing so, I strived for what Goldman refers to as an "intimate knowing of habitual ways of moving as well as the shifting social norms that give those movements meaning" (2010:10). Similarly, in *Critical Moves: Dance Studies in Theory and Politics*; Martin (1998) articulates the ways in which the spaces bodies occupy shape and give meaning to a broader body politic in which movement is fundamental:

> Politics concerns the forces that devise the social world. The collision and mutual displacement of forces – their motional flows – is what makes for difference, and difference can be summed up, organised and contextualised in myriad ways that produce a given society and structure its divisions along lines of class, gender, sexuality, race and much more. Theories of politics are full of ideas but, they have

been least successful in articulating how the concrete labour of participation necessary to execute those ideas is gathered through the movement of bodies in social time and space (Martin, 1998:3).

He goes on to argue that a critical understanding of the movement of bodies is necessary to reconceptualise politics, an idea which is further discussed below.

Practices of Freedom

One's social and historical positions in the world affect one's ability to move, both literally and figuratively (Goldman, 2010:5).

Drawing on the work of Foucault, Goldman (2010) articulates the need to reconceptualise notions of liberation and makes use of his term practices of freedom. She foregrounds the value of this exploration within improvisation, particularly movement improvisation. As stated in earlier discussions, our social and historical positions, albeit not fixed, shape our mobility in the world. The idea of practices of freedom similarly speaks to notions of mobility or movement. More specifically, Goldman employs the phrase as a means to resist what she refers to as the "hardened stance that comes with the reification of freedom" (2010:4). Rather, the shifting constraints which inform our mobility, or at times immobility, in the world are foregrounded. Echoing this sentiment, Martin (in his introductory chapter Iterations of Dance and Politics) argues that "politics goes nowhere without movement" (1998:3). He goes on to say that:

[Politics] is not simply an idea, decision or choice taken at a moment but a transfigurative process that makes and occupies space. When politics is treated merely as an idea or ideology, it occurs in stillness, awaiting something that will bring people to action or mobilise them. But this presumed gap between a thinking mind and an acting body makes it impossible to understand how people move from a passive to an active state. The presumption of bodies already in motion, what dance takes at its normative condition, could bridge the various splits between mind and body, subject and object and process and structure that have been so difficult for understandings of social life to negotiate (Martin, 1998:3)

Østern, when discussing the lived context of improvisation and the ways in which meaning-making is an ongoing process within the Dance Laboratory, similarly reiterates the notion of movement when she states "meaning is always on the move" (2009:116). She goes on to argue that the political space explicates the "cultural-historical heritage which has contributed to segregation in society as well as in dance" (Østern, 2009:161-162). Against

the backdrop of an inquiry regarding the politics of space I consider it crucial to grapple with what Østern terms embodied political issues (2009:165):

> The political space which is part of constituting dance pleads for an awareness of power issues. Embodied political issues like dominance, activity, passivity, possibility to make own choices and possibility to be seen as creative are at play in the dance improvisation class with differently-bodied dancers
> (Østern, 2009:165)

The understanding of political issues as embodied, the awareness that I carry on my body, through my body a body politic, allows for deeper engagement with my somatic and cultural identities. This understanding and awareness requires an open mind in order to firstly perceive and secondly challenge existing cultural narratives which are often deeply entrenched. Cooper Albright, when writing about the ways in which improvisation allows for the development of skills to deal with the "social and aesthetic issues" of today (2003:260), similarly suggests the importance of this awareness:

> Although this practice begins with an attentiveness to corporeal experience, it also develops a mental flexibility that can provide a sort of intellectual map with which to chart new pathways for negotiating awkward or difficult cultural crossings
> (Cooper Albright, 2003:260).

Human movement is thus necessary to both enact and reinvigorate the body politic. Within the South African context, the notion of human movement as a means to mobilise and politicise is an important part of the country's history, with specific reference to anti-apartheid movements which relied heavily on protests and other means of violent and non-violent physical en" (Martin, 1998:3) was apparent and served to both challenge and reinvigorate, bringing to existence a new body politic. The post-apartheid dispensation invites similar explorations of ideological structures which, within dance companies like Unmute, are premised on the moving body, bringing to attention an ever-changing and engaged body politic. This being said, Unmute, which grew out of Remix (a company founded by two white practitioners), now only has dancers of colour, once more raising the question: who moves and who doesn't? Upon reflection of my involvement with integrated dance over the past four years, within an improvisation setting, I recall only meeting four dancers of colour outside of the South African context, three of which were participants in

the Axis Summer Intensive in the United States. Similarly, images of black improvisers are scarce. In *Taken by Surprise* for example, the only images of black people are in a chapter titled *Improvisation as Participatory Performance* with reference to traditional West African dance - there is not a single black improviser featured. Moreover, there is a big gap in scholarship on dance improvisation with reference to the black dancing body written by black scholars and practitioners. Questions could therefore be similarly asked regarding who is invited to chart new pathways and who isn't? Furthermore, what are the implications of these decisions?

What's the matter?

During my final improvisation workshop at Plymouth University, workshop leader Adam Benjamin asked us to think about the matter during our improvisations. He invited us to remain curious in the space to allow discovery of what the matter is and *why* it matters. Ultimately, he posed the question "what's the matter?" My understanding of this question was that there were concerns that mattered to us, in the space, because there were bodies in the space. The matters arose out of our engagement with the space and one another in the space. Our embodied ontologies, our somatic and cultural identities, our narratives, our bodies constituted the matter and became meaningful because we mutually cared about each other's matter, in one word described as *Ubuntu.*[8] It was this matter, my matter, which lay at the heart of my final performance[9].

The performance constituted stories from my childhood as well as my more recent experiences living in England. The politics of my body in time and place were foregrounded as were notions of borders and boundaries, intimately tied into ideas around otherness. I explored the ways in which my body's access to space had been regulated. I played with the subtle and sometimes explicit negotiation of power and privilege, suggesting through the work of Baker (2001), that my body can be both present and invisible, it can occupy space as well as be rendered absent, depending on my *context of situations*. I thus offered my body, as matter, and invited a re-reading of the ways in which I occupy space.

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[8] A term used in South Africa meaning 'I am because you are'
[9] My final research project at Plymouth University constituted a written thesis and site-specific performance

I began by recalling memories of growing up in different parts of South Africa at a time when the country was still in the process of transitioning into democracy. I shared some of my experiences of being coloured in a country where being either white or black dominates discussion. I shared some of my experiences as a young dancer in a body not traditionally associated with ballet and I explored the ways in which my body continued to be regulated while living in the UK. The performance constituted a beginning rather than an ending. It served to articulate the questions that had for so long dwelled within me, been etched on my skin, embodied. The performance was an offering, an invitation for me to explore, engage and discover. It was not an outcome, but a process. It was through this ongoing process that I sought to deepen my understanding of what it means to integrate parts of myself with integrity so that even after the ballet shoes have been tied and the bun has been made, there will be a perpetual unravelling, untying, undoing which keeps me engaged with and curious about the matter at hand. My intent was thus that the performance be the beginning of questioning, allowing the space for me to continue asking what's the matter? In the current socio-political milieu, I suggest that an understanding of the body politic can further enhance engagement with embodied practices, such as improvisation, and further illuminate some of these complexities.

Final Site-specific performance (The Cost of Privilege), 2016, The House: Plymouth University

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coraliepearlvalentyn@gmail.com

HONOURING THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE COLLECTIVE: FOSTERING EMPATHY

Estelle Olivier

University of Stellenbosch: Drama Department

Abstract

How do bodies learn? How do bodies exchange information? What knowledge is stored inside the body and what knowledge should be shared and/or taught? These are constantly developing questions in the field of education. How do we, as arts educators, stay in tune with the development of these questions while simultaneously finding viable strategies to enable learning? I propose using facilitation as the cornerstone for exchange. Offering those involved in the process the opportunity to cut to the individual while honouring the collective. I propose that when facilitation is used as a pedagogical approach, it creates conditions to foster clear and meaningful communication. These conditions open up the possibility to have shared experiences, cutting across differences and creating opportunity for shared learning; witnessing and being witnessed; intimacy; knowledge encompassing multiple perspectives and fostering empathy. In this paper, I will focus on my own context as educator. I will share my experience and strategies using the approach of choreographer-facilitator to elicit embodied shared knowledge in the context of somatic learning. This discussion will be underpinned by theories from John Britton, Jonathan Jansen & Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela.

The tertiary educational environment is a landscape in constant flux, or at least that is how I experience it. Apart from broader conditions (environmental/social/political/structural) that may change, it is also rare for individual students to respond in the same or similar way to a task, challenge or learning opportunity. I have come to understand that the task of an educator involves about fifty percent skill transference and development, while the other fifty percent is about navigating the personal and environmental. What do I mean by 'the personal'? When working with humans in an educational setting there are personal circumstance and responses, thus individuals captured in a collective. What most often has the greatest impact in my teaching and learning space (of performance) is the diversity of individuals involved.

There are three main areas of diversity in individuals that continue to be prominent in my teaching and learning space:

- Firstly, background and up-bringing which include aspects such as: culture, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, previous education and ideology or value system.

- Secondly, socio-economic circumstances that enable or disable access to, for example, food, transport and learning resources and prior experience/exposure.
- And thirdly, but perhaps most noticeably, (dis)abilities, physiological structure and physical vernaculars.[1]

There are various challenges and questions that arise for me as educator related to these points: How do I allow for multiple viewpoints without discrimination or favouritism? How do I navigate the complications brought forward when socio-economic circumstances affect the student's ability to learn or reduce the possibilities in the learning environment? How do I navigate differences in physical capability? Given such diversity, w*hat* is appropriate to teach, and *how* is it appropriate to teach?

The individual body remains the most significant factor as it is the primary instrument of teaching and learning in my field of theatre and performance training. Also because I believe we hold in our body memory all of the experiences and nuances of the first two points of diversity mentioned above. The question then of *what* to teach is impacted by this belief. Performer's bodies are not homogenous and therefore skills imparted cannot cater for only one way of doing, thinking or feeling. This of course also impacts the question of *how* to teach. When considering the processes often associated with the 'act' of teaching, it is hard to ignore that even while an activity may be imparting or developing a technical skill, it also requires navigating the perspectives of these diversities. This then calls forth a more holistic approach where the teacher or educator is required to rather take on the role of a pedagogue. Researcher and educator Smith argues that "Pedagogy needs to be explored through the thinking and practice of those educators who look to accompany learners; care for and about them; and bring learning to life. Teaching is just one aspect of their practice" (2012:1).

The student's strategy and experience of gaining knowledge is most often reliant on: the educator's methodological choice of imparting knowledge; the rules or prescriptions of the

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[1] "When suggesting that a performer possesses a physical vernacular I am arguing that an individual has a characteristic physical language or vocabulary that is a convergence of their inherent, habitual, cultural, personal and formalized movement patterns-a physical slang if you will. In performance contexts where non-verbal expressive modes are significant, a performer may refine such a language into a sophisticated physical vernacular vocabulary through which they can express meaning" (Olivier, 2015:88).

educational institution and/or governing bodies (i.e. the Department of Higher Education); as well as, according to educator and musician Gershon (2006), the student's creative ways of undermining and improvising around the strategies and rules set up by the educator or educational environment.

One of the challenges this presents is that the educator is often one person - a single voice, while the students are many -plural voices. Often when taught in a collective situation the learners' plural voices are treated as a single voice. A second challenge is that the traditional power dynamic is usually set in favour of the educator (the singular voice) who seemingly holds the keys to knowledge. It is therefore easy to assume that the educator should impart knowledge and the learners should absorb this knowledge. Smith argues that the danger of teaching in this manner is that the exchange "[…] can quickly descend into treating learners like objects, things to be acted upon rather than people to be related to. In contrast, to call ourselves 'educators' we need to look at acting *with* people rather than on them" (2012:2).

I believe that a teaching method that is orientated towards embodied knowledge should accommodate the learner's existing know-how;[2] to offer the student an opportunity to actively form part of the teaching and learning process and in essence take ownership thereof. An overly autocratic teaching style could inhibit tacit knowledges from emerging, in much the same way that a mass mentality, lack of focus or lack of interest in group or individual student could diminish the learning opportunities.

Gershon argues that "[…] often, we as adult educators limit our vision of what goes on in classrooms to categories of our own construction like 'class work' and 'playing around'" (2006:132). I have found that it is often in this 'playing around' that the learning takes place, because it is most often where the curiosity or interest of individual learners is located.

Gershon continues to argue that:

> The lens of collective improvisation seems to provide a means for more democratically observing the many layers and complexities of classroom interactions. By representing as many voices as possible, the metaphor of collective improvisation gives students more of an active voice in their world and

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[2] According to Nelson (2013:37), specialist in practice-based research methodologies, *Know-How* knowledge is 'insider' close-up knowing, that includes experiential 'haptic' knowing; performative knowing; tacit knowledge and embodied knowledge.

demonstrates the ways in which student's interactions directly contribute to the overall classroom process and activities (2006:132).

Gershon's argument that 'collective improvisation' already takes place in the learning space is a useful perspective to include as educator when considering *how* we teach. If one considers that each individual body holds tacit knowledge or know-how within, the role of the educator may shift from that of imparting or transferring knowledge, towards that of unlocking or coaxing knowledge. For example, if there are 10 students in a group, each body may hold a different set of know-hows that could lead to the fulfilment of a proposed learning opportunity, task or exercise. So the possibility exists for there to be 10 or more approaches, perspectives or methods to accomplish the same task. Such an approach would directly support the idea of including multiple perspectives, which in turn is an integral aspect of the creative arts where collaboration is key.

On inclusivity, Gobodo-Madikizela, clinical psychologist and researcher in trauma, memory and forgiveness argues that:

> The test of progress in our academic institutions will be measured by our ability to learn to talk to one another and really listen to others who may be different from us. Diversity in our institutions is even more vital now than it has been in the past (2014:76).

When I think of ways in which we gain and share embodied knowledge, Gobodo-Madikizela's reference to 'listening' reaches further than the observation of the spoken communication but can also be interpreted as listening with the body - gaining insight of the self and other through sensory observation, attention and presence, strategies that are instinctive but perhaps unrealized in each human being.

This also goes hand in hand with the understanding that the educator does not hold all the answers. Educational researcher Jansen stresses the necessary realisation for those in authority that "your strength as a leader lies in your weakness, acknowledgment of your vulnerability and a recognition of the limits of your own authority" (2016:127). From my perspective, the term 'leader' can be exchanged with that of facilitator, educator, teacher and pedagogue; and the term 'authority' can also refer to knowledge. This points to the different attitudes towards the use of power dynamics present in these learning spaces. Jansen further argues that to act in this manner, to understand that you do not hold all the answers, is a counter-intuitive action (2016:127).

Jansen's approach to the teaching and learning experience foregrounds a space where guidance is used to assist the individual to come to *their own* conclusions by engaging *their own* critical processes. This is, in my view, a process of facilitation in which the answer(s) are withheld at first, but the conditions are created within which the student can arrive at the answer(s) through their own and/or a shared sense-making process, the facilitator's guidance and cyclical processes of critical reflection.

But how do I, as the educator, successfully create or nurture these conditions (with reference to the questions I posed earlier): whilst allowing the emergence of multiple viewpoints without discrimination or favouritism; and, navigating the differences in physical capability for the student performer; and, without dominating the learning space by trying to hold authority through a belief of superior knowledge in all instances?

This counter-intuitive way may very well result in momentary failure. However, if the belief that life-long embodied learning occurs through failure holds true, then even the failed efforts will not be in vain. It is important to stress that mistakes as learning opportunities for both educator and student only hold value through reflection, and as much as the learner needs a process of reflection to develop critical thinking, so too should educators critically evaluate their processes and methods constantly. Educational Researchers Toni & Makura argue that "Through reflexivity, the teacher and the student are able to understand the pedagogic processes in order to fulfil their cherished objectives" (2015:45).

Toni & Makura discuss Brew's notion of deep learning and teaching in which diverse approaches are used, such as reflections on what has gone wrong or right, engaging in peer and self-assessments as well as reflection methods that are in-sync with the development of lifelong learners (2015:48).

Through reflective practice, on my own as well as with colleagues, I have come to realise that allowing the student to feel liberated to gain knowledge within the shared conditions – in other words, in a process of facilitation, often allows both educator and student to navigate potential barriers of prejudice, misunderstanding and preconceived ideas that arise from diversity. Shared experiences become a powerful tool for extending the learning experience, again for both educator and student. Britton, Founder and Director of DUENDE School of Ensemble Physical Theatre argues that the nature of learning is "neither linear nor

smooth" but rather like a spiral. He refers to the spiral as a process of revisiting previous experiences or know-hows, and with each repetition new insights may come about (2013:319). I believe that each student and educator will encounter different sets of information at various times but all will not learn the same thing at the same moment or at the same pace. The moment of learning only takes place when the newly accessed information becomes significant within the framework of existing knowledge. Britton explains that "We spiral *inwards* to deeper knowledge of self and *outwards* towards mastery of a wider range of skills and competencies" (2013:319). I cannot emphasise enough that this needs to happen for both educator and student otherwise the process of teaching and learning will stagnate.

In this process, each experience with others of a diverse nature may offer new and/or multiple perspectives on the existing knowledge. Psychologist Allport's hypothesis of contact theory[3] offers four useful practical strategies that can be implemented in situations of diversity, which often give rise to prejudice/bias, to create conditions in which understanding and even empathy may be fostered. These are "equal status in the contact situation, intergroup cooperation, shared goals and the support of authorities" (Jansen 2016:140).

In an educational space I interpret these as conditions that should be introduced and implemented by the facilitator to foster peer-to-peer learning, and to create a space in which critique can grow and bloom. It also offers individuals an opportunity to broaden their contextual framework of one another when interacting that in turn may develop and deepen their understanding of others. I will offer an example of this approach by referring to my recent work with first year students in which emphasis is placed on building a contextual frame for embodied and social knowledge, self-reflection, critical thinking and fostering empathy. In a practical teaching context I unknowingly use these conditions as follows:

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[3] According to Everett (2013:1) Allport (1954) proposed that when creating four specific conditions for an intergroup contact situation it would yield positive effects. He proposed "equal status, intergroup cooperation, common goals and support by social and institutional authorities" to be the factors that appear do reduce prejudice.

1. Students in a class context need to complete a practical assessment task. As the facilitator, I use class time to introduce improvisations and offer skill training exercises to build towards the fulfilment of this task. The entire group, as well as smaller working groups in the class, *share a goal*. This sets up the conditions for a shared experience.

2. This task requires both *intergroup* and *intragroup cooperation.* As the facilitator, my responsibility is to guide the students, if and/or when problems occur that the group itself feels incapable of navigating. The facilitator offers suggestions or tasks to bridge these issues, in conjunction with processes of self-reflection, group reflection and guidance. For example, improvisation may be used to further extend knowledge of a skill that was imparted; at the same time it creates the conditions for raising awareness about the individuals in the group. The process therefore includes building peer-to-peer evaluation and processes of witnessing and being witnessed into preparatory tasks.

3. The task is designed such that *each student is equal* to the other in the situation. Equal responsibility is required to successfully fulfil the task. For example, a group sequence must be developed from shared vocabulary which is generated through improvisations and exercises proposed by either the facilitator or the group members themselves. Within this context, understanding and empathy amongst group members is fostered by offering tasks that encourage shifting roles, (for example being the choreographic eye, the improviser, the scribe, the director and/or editor/refiner) as well as the use of discussion and reflective practice to address themes such as: doubt, taking charge, not speaking up, making assumptions, holding preconceived ideas, prejudice, and listening.

4. The facilitator *supports* the above mentioned three conditions by supporting and offering appropriate guidance to the groups.

In this process each student is given the opportunity to stand in another's shoes while maintaining their integrity as an individual. Should the educator facilitate such an experience with care the possibility exists for increased empathy. Aron, Mashek and Norton describe this process of empathy as follows:

> If I am concerned about your outcomes, I am evaluating the world as would you, I am holding your perspectives. Similarly, if the material, knowledge, and social impact of events that happen to you are happening to me, then your place in the material and social world is my place in the material and social world, I am holding your identities (cited in Jansen, 2016:142).

In her own support of this search for empathy, Gobodo-Madikizela observes:

> The dignity and worth of all individuals and groups impose an obligation on all of us to practice care and compassion towards others. This requires that we 'see' ourselves in the Other, that is, a reciprocal mutual recognition – recognising the humanity of the Other as much as we would like them to recognise ours (2014:150).

In conclusion, when allowing learners the opportunities to participate actively and with presence in a shared learning space–where they are given permission to express themselves whilst finding ways to respect and honour one another - I believe that individual contributions can more easily and fairly be navigated through positive peer-to-peer critical reflection. Such a teaching and learning process offers the potential for organically including more than one perspective, simultaneously building a wider range of physical, intellectual and emotional skills. This broadened contextual framework offers the possibility for an increased sense of compassion for an educator and enables the learner to navigate the challenges of diversity with autonomy within a safe environment.

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estelleb@sun.ac.za

WHY KNOWING THE CODES WILL LEAD THE DANCE(R).

Dr Gerard M. Samuel

University of Cape Town: School of Dance

Abstract

This paper questions the role dance curricula has in leading pathways for dancers, choreographers and dance writers. It investigates the explicit and implicit codes, and praxis in dance curricula in South Africa and the manner in which complex navigations of these issues impact on Dance pedagogy. The themes of the additive, inclusive and social justice impulse in curricula extend Prof. Michael Samuel (2017) and Prof Jonathan Jansen's (2017) Africanising curriculum debates. The paper will further problematise the notion of a decolonial curriculum arguing that the inclusion and validity of postmodernist choreographer such as Trisha Brown's nonconformist performance space, is antithetical to Western aesthetics and/or decolonial pedagogic strategies.

Key words: Codes, Curricula, Dance in SA

Introducing 'Lovers walk in 3 mins'

A handful of dance students and I conducted an experiment in Post-modern choreography: deciphering notions of the performance space entitled "Lovers walk in 3 mins". Typically, it explored pedestrian movement, over the 200m distance that is the access road to the UCT School of Dance. Whilst autumn leaves fell softly all around us, snippets of traffic noises became our music. Our postmodern dance comprised a kind of marked walking, skipping, hugs and holding hands. A veiled face, may have expressed shyness from one of the dancers in this small group of young women, and an interrupted cuddle in a parked student's car blurred the lines between the dancers and their unsuspecting audience. One of dancers, wore a sweater emblazoned with an "I love …" sign. This final heart image was an apt punctuation mark for our untried dance that was recorded on a mobile phone.

In this paper, I will consider in what ways this exploration is an exemplar of the complex layering that is the decolonising project and how this quest relates to my dance pedagogy at UCT. How can such a seemingly naïve activity address the loud calls for decolonisation of curricula at South African universities that reached a tipping point in late 2016? I begin by commenting on the nature of the explicit and hidden curriculum (Risner, 2002) to show how subtle shifts can develop into profound ways of re-valuing cultural diversity and give cause for a celebration of creativity and innovation through dance. A short list of Dance curriculum developers located at South African universities and colleges over the past 30 years could include: Lliane Loots, Debbie Lutge, Paul Datlen, Jay Pather, Gerard Samuel in the Durban region; Elizabeth Triegaardt, Sharon Friedman, Alfred Hinkel in Cape Town; and Vicki Karras, Susan Botha, Fred Hagemann, Jill Waterman, Sylvia Glasser in Johannesburg. These illustrious dance teachers would however also reveal a genealogy of particular voices and traditions in

dance. This is compounded by the situatedness of the tertiary education's geo-political spaces and the placement and absence of Dance studies departments in which their work unfolded. Whilst many attempts were made, and continue to be made by these and the next generation of equally passionate dance teachers, a review of such curricula has the potential to act as a maintenance plan–examining means from which certain standards could be emboldened. These re-searche(r)s also responded to a rapidly shifting socio-political context in South Africa and the notion of a diverse professional Dance fraternity. Glasser (1993) had cautioned an earlier/pre-Millennial generation of dance teachers and choreographers that distinction needs to be made between appreciation and appropriation of the dances that were positioned as Other amidst the diverse cultural landscape. Her admonition remains useful as respect for difference and the juggling act of postmodern approaches with a seemingly 'anything goes' mantra remain a challenge for many of South Africa's dance artists. South African conferences have examined the earlier debates around 'what constitutes contemporary dance in the region?' and 'how to label this form and approach to dance making?' These enquiries have settled into a somewhat quiet acceptance of loose terms such as 'Afro-contemporary dance' and 'South African Contemporary dance,' which are evidenced in such labels as current tags. Lurking in the shadows, are nagging questions of re-presentivity, and moving the sacred practices of some to the blinding centre stage of others. Such contested terrain has elicited various responses from death threats to lengthy queues as can be evidenced in Brett Bailey's controversial, *Exhibit A B C* in 2014. (https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2014/sep/05/exhibit-b-is-the-human-zoo-racist-the-performers-respond).

But, as South Africa in 2017 remains a deeply divided nation increasingly categorised through class structures and other hierarchies, terms such as 'diversity' and 'inclusion' in Dance take on new meanings beyond the earlier human rights issues of race, gender and perhaps even differently abled bodies. Why is it then important that in 2017 we investigate the codes or not so secret frames of curricula in dance? What questions of privilege and hegemony arise when such sleuthing begins? Doug Risner's (2007) quest to challenge what he termed the 'boy code' operating within dance class and rehearsal studios remains pertinent as he reminded us of discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation that continues to feature prominently in public discourse in America. He had also written earlier on that:

> While I have little doubt that the field of dance education is generally more accepting of homosexuality, I believe this study (of sexual orientation and male experience/participation in dance education) illustrates the ways in which this kind of quiet internal "acceptance" obscures larger social issues that males in dance repeatedly encounter (Risner, 2002:90).

What are the larger social issues at play in which the clarion call to decolonise in South Africa has emerged? Who have been the most passionate advocates of these changes? When broaching my paper within the enormity of the Confluences 9 theme, I could not help

wondering how would one frame a paper that needs to cover so much ground: 17th century South African colonial history followed by 47 years of apartheid brutality, new research suggesting rife slave practices and subjugation in pre-colonial Africa in the 12th century (Raftopoulos & Mlambo, 2009), the exploits of child labour and gold in Mali (Dougnon, 2011), the anthropological evidence of Chinese porcelain and beads in East Africa (Wood, 2012) or the presence of African slaves in Asia and China as early as the 13th and 14th century (Kusimba, 2004). Perhaps I could formulate this paper, if I were to trick myself that I was at some other conference entitled "deciphering patriarchy in dance pedagogy"? Would my questions be: what is the *evidence* of patriarchy in a curriculum? What are some of the *attitudes*, from a range of persons (students, scholars, the general public), towards this notion? What *nurtures* patriarchy's centralised position? As a South African based Dance scholar keenly interested in genealogies and alterity and the manner in which these social constructs relate to Dance, it occurred to me that our conference theme in 2017 could be split in any number of ways: deciphering … Homophobia/Gender based violence/Virtual bodies in Dance pedagogy as so many of these critical lenses intersect with colonialism; post-colonialism, and thus de-colonialism. The colonial enterprise, especially by western powers has blazoned a trail of gluttony in Africa reminding us of the episteme of the word colonisation itself, and an apt corporeal association with colon that chews up and excretes a putrid mess for over 800 years. But, within Africa itself colonialist histories also abound and reports of internal marauding and grasping of land, resources and peoples in a fervent desire for greater power and wealth thrived (Ranger, 1997). When rose coloured lenses of pre-colonial Africa can be removed it becomes clearer to see pre-colonial southern Africa as a part of a continent of great civilizations and kingdoms, massive cities housing over 10000 people as in the example of the Bantu civilisation of the Shona people in the 11th century–the Great Zimbabwe National Monument bears testimony to some of the region's sophisticated architecture and trade in art (http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/364).

Thus a call for decolonialism is not a simple rejection of the European values and aesthetics nor is it a harkening to some bygone, romanticised era of mud huts, and a bare chested populace in rural and pastoral settings. Could the fresh trumpet be a plea for an Ubuntu[1] recognition of the Other? For me, such navigation will need to seek a departure from colonial influences which we already know will be profoundly difficult? What can we learn from spaces such as Ghana[2] and

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[1] I use the term which references an Africanist thinking ' I am because you are' in its widest sense here, linking the notion of a recognition of the self in the other as was also espoused by the 20th century philosopher, Martin Buber (1970).

[2] In 1957 Ghana was amongst the first African countries to gain its independence from colonial rule which gave rise to many cultural and educational reforms including the birth of what is today the Department of Dance at the University of Ghana in Legon. Their curriculum explores links between Dance and technology, and videography and places a greater emphasis on indigenous Ghanaian dances and songs than Eurocentric performing arts and traditions. (http://www.ug.edu.gh/dance/courses?field_department_tid=5).

further afield such as Trinidad and Jamaica[3] that have thrown off a colonial mantle? How do we undertake this colossal task to decolonise dance pedagogy in a South African university such as UCT? Our theme invites us to decode decolonisation itself. Embedded in the evocative gerund 'deciphering' is the notion of puzzlement. Perhaps this inexactitude is the key to understanding the complexity of the subject matter that will allow multiple decolonialisms to surface. For decolonisation appears to mean a range of things to an equally bewildering range of people in South Africa – students, academics, government, business. For some, it may have meant a silencing henceforth of Shakespeare from any lessons on English literature; or similarly in Dance Studies, a rejection of classical ballet as a dance training method at any tertiary institution located in Africa. And, to others the call to decolonise referenced a deliberate inclusion of Sol Plaatjie and Antjie Krog's works or, in Dance terms, a welcomed compulsory course such as 'An introduction to Umfundalai' for all liberal arts students. This multiplicity, or healthy confusion, as I see it, reflects the extent to which the term decolonisation should be read as multiple codes and not only a call to Africanise curricula in the context of existing academic programmes currently located in South African universities (Jansen, 2017). It seems to me that more clarity is required around complex notions such as Africanisation, indigeneity and non-racialism. Founder of the Black Consciousness Movement and former UCT VC, Mamphela Ramphele suggests:

> We have failed to set the tone of what a non-racial African society should be like – a society in which all matters African are the mainstream in teaching and learning and in cultural endeavours, be they philosophy, language or artistic expressions (Ramphele, 2017).

To conflate these conundrums, colleagues and I reflected earlier this year on how our Dance department should respond to a call for the celebration of Africa Month by the University of Cape Town. Almost immediately further questions arose such as: whose Africa is being acknowledged? What could be construed as celebration in an African style? Why is what we already do not enough given that within the Faculty of Humanities at UCT, the School of Dance holds several course titles with the word African; for example, African Dance Practice and African Dance History. Other course examples include African Music, and 'The roots of Recent African Identities'. To what extent do these prefixes, names and/or qualifiers of what may be found in such vessels of curricula, re-signify Africa as an excluded space? Are we not complicit in our own framing as the Other?

What is the cultural inscription for all who live and are born in Africa when some spaces are defined as 'Advanced civilisations' and First World and Africa is labeled as the Dark Continent, disadvantaged and still developing? To which I would ask: towards what imagined goal or

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[3]The Caribbean region offers many examples of radical departures from European conservatoire models for dance pedagogy and has been pioneered in such spaces as The University of the West Indies. Key figures in the dance transformation would include first lady of Caribbean dance, Beryl McBurnie and Rex Nettleford whose influence extends to Katherine Dunham and Pearl Primus. Jamaican born, senior dance lecturer at UCT, Lisa Wilson confirmed McBurnie was also known as 'La Belle Rosette' (Wilson, personal communication 2017, May 5).

norm? If, we are to appreciate and recognise the celebrated academics and writers from Africa, such as Ngugi wa Thiongo, Chinua Achebe, Wally Serote for their decolonial agency, can we not also see who and what has been framed in terms of colonial Dance Studies curricula? Which dancing bodies and what styles of dance, not to mention what constitutes the dance performance space? Under these conditions we may begin to empathise with those who ask – does ballet belong in a South African university's dance curriculum in the 21st century? By questioning the ways in which curricula remain static or indifferent toward the shifting dynamics in society we can begin to arrive at fresh processes of re-curriculation. For me, one of the key mechanisms required to address this process is to examine the privileging of certain aesthetics and partial Dance histories that have been told in academia.

Ask not what shall we teach rather what we can learn together

By extending the long held hopeful pedagogic tradition of Freire (1996) to enter into facilitatory as opposed to didactic roles, my own approach to dance pedagogy asks not what shall we teach but how can we learn together. Before I veer too far into a pedagogic–activism, Friedman (mentioned earlier) had recently reminded me "Freire also insisted that teaching is a transitive verb" (personal communication March 2017) therefore at some level there remains a specific transfer of my knowledge as teacher to a (un)willing learner or victim.

To further clarify, my dance teaching context at present is largely in three areas of an academic programme at UCT: the first and last years of the undergraduate student body and all postgraduate teaching which includes supervision and a weekly seminar series. In this next section, I will draw on these specific experiences to reflect on my own learning tools (at the micro level), and comment briefly (at a macro level) on the ways in which as a School of Dance strategic planning articulated a notion of decolonisation in terms of Dance pedagogy.

One of the sticky challenges that have emerged during the final round of discussions regarding the merger of the Drama and Dance departments at UCT in the last year has been the issue of the audition. Admission criteria at present clearly outline requirements for any prospective student which quickly establishes for whom the old curriculum was designed. What this habitual practice raises is the important question of 'who should have access to Dance studies?' or, in other words, which bodies will be welcomed here. Given a past that has been so horribly divisive, and the embodied exclusion for a vast majority of black South Africans, the core issue of greater access to Higher Education becomes conflated with experiences of privilege and prejudice. Part of the call to decolonise of all edifices is the call for systemic change. Such change should extend beyond principles of inclusion where the addition of new content also re-imagines the former static structural frame. In my view many of these demands are also located in social justice concerns that are aligned with constitutional mandates and become evidenced in the ways in which some curricula have zoned in on issues such as race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age and disability (to name but a few). Moreover, transformation of a Dance curriculum needs to consider how systemic patterns are entrenched and where

necessary how these can be erased, to reflect the broad concerns of students, staff and the general public.

Part of a strategic repositioning by the UCT School of Dance was to relook at the twin processes of strengthening a welcoming and guiding space. Thus, Open days, public symposia, guest lecture series, masterclasses, conferences and particularly experimental and works-in-progress performances, became critical mechanisms to advance these goals. Some challenges are not easily met as walls are adorned with partial histories and revisiting certain 80 year old ghosts can be costly. Students, particularly postgraduates were encouraged to use narrative research methods and hermeneutic approaches in their work which then supported a more vivid and nuanced account of absent lives. Risner had said "Narrative research reveals the plurality of our human experience as evidenced by the singularity of individual existence" (Risner, 2002:85), which I concur had relevance here as traumatised lives erupted in what became the student protests of 2016.

But, one might ask, how does a 21st century Dance academic curriculum give presence to absent voices scarred by colonialism? Why is it necessary to seek the connections between violence and vulnerability in Dance Pedagogy concerned with decolonisation, and I would add, an investigation that is located in South Africa? An earlier dance curriculum had privileged the training of the body that was supported by a repertoire from a particular dance canon. It was augmented by a need to underscore such training with specific views of musicology, historiography, choreographic study and the archive. Within these paradigms was a further articulation of methodologies and pedagogies of Dance. This evolving curriculum separated its investigation of aesthetics and histories into its current shape that of Western Dance History, and African Dance History based largely on tracks which were Classical Ballet and African Dance calibrated in the late 1990s. These changed dramatically in the first decade of the 2000s to reflect new streams but, the former history courses remain. For example, in 2017 Western Dance History at a 3rd year level one will encounter Merce Cunningham and Postmodern choreography, given that the curriculum approach of chronology would have seen 2nd year students examine American Modern dance pioneers and their feminist impulses. The question remains how should latest content and approaches be introduced to unpack anti-colonial pathways?

The experimental task of creating a postmodern choreography entitled "Dr Samuel's car in 3 minutes" whose performance space was confined to the insides of my motor vehicle reflected not only an unusual and perhaps a different teaching approach but constitute deliberate attempts at deciphering decolonisation in dance pedagogy–one in which habitual patterns of lectures become disrupted. The South African constitutional mandate for social justice in terms of race, gender, age and ability becomes embodied practice as the head of the School of Dance plays[4] with all his students. Changes are announced through these experiments which become

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[4] The notion of playing here is to be understood as a specifically active learning activity in which cooperation, /

unconventional teaching strategies and new architectures of teaching viz. the car as classroom and not the chalkboard. Many factors therefore become complicit in this distemper of Dance curriculum: its design, delivery and assessment all of which are key aspects of pedagogic fundamentals. Such potent signals remind teachers of the need to decipher and revisit the secret codes that exist in their Dance pedagogy in order that our dance learners can begin to address many pressing social concerns. Future generations will no doubt celebrate Dance's power as narrator and the (extra)ordinariness of Body as an agentic semiotician that has become more readable.

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Gerard.samuel@uct.ac.za

DECIPHERING DECOLONISATION IN DANCE PEDAGOGY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

SUBVERT THE DOMINANT PARADIGM: HOW TO THROW A PIEKNIEK.

Ilona Frege

UCT School of Dance

Abstract

In this paper I identify and discuss two aspects of South Africa's theatre and literary history from the apartheid era that have, in my opinion, influenced, both directly and indirectly, the development of the performing arts. The one aspect is the role that censorship has played in setting the various agendas for the kind of works that emerged during this time of institutionalised censorship laws located in the context of a socio-political climate of unrest and an absence of freedom of expression. The second aspect is the element of subversion that arose as a foil to the status quo; the many dissident voices that shaped the arts from within this externally rigid landscape of restriction. I propose that we may currently be experiencing a form of (self) censorship as we grapple with decolonising dance education. Drawing on the insights and findings of various academics and practitioners, I suggest that we refrain from the perceived pressure of finding immediate solutions to our pedagogical and curriculum questions; that we consider critically the reframing of our questions and that we subvert the notion that an instant solution needs to be found. I propose instead, that we immerse ourselves in this unknown landscape together. In due course, we may be in a position to establish a decolonised paradigm for dance education that allows for different knowledges to support and enhance one other simultaneously in a paradigm of equality.

More than two decades after the birth of democracy in South Africa, we are witnessing and experiencing daily the crumbling of what is now regarded to have been a myth, namely that of our so-called rainbow nation. The countrywide Fees Must Fall protests of the past two years, are an outer manifestation of the anger, desperation and disillusionment experienced by many of the "born frees," in a socio-economic climate that appears to be failing dismally at offering the present generation economic empowerment. The demand for access to free education as well as the call for a decolonisation of the same education, is a call to all educators and artists working in this country, in all spheres of education, to examine critically the educational and artistic choices that were made over the past decades (since 1994) and to be prepared to shift and transform existing paradigms if, and where, deemed necessary. Perhaps one could say that never before has the personal been as intensely political than at present, as Njoki Wane recounts her own journey in 2013 towards reclaiming Indigenous knowledge systems within a Western institution, and Dilip Menon's

thoughts in 2015 about a decolonised imagination situated firmly in Africa opens up intellectual inquiry. Whilst we certainly need to address these issues within formal institutional and even government structures, I would like to suggest that as dance educators we need to be engaging daily in an immediate and accessible manner, in the classroom, in the studio, in any and in all of the spaces where teaching and learning happens with these very issues.

Historically in South Africa, the development of a contemporary aesthetic in the arts, including in literature, invariably explored an alternative agenda to the status quo, which consisted largely of censorship approved, government sanctioned "high art", centred firmly in the Western canon of primarily ballet, opera, classical music and Western drama genres. But running parallel to these formal, often rather sterile, performance structures, which were generally performed in the theatres housing the arts councils in each of the then four provinces, can be traced a vibrant thread of so-called alternative theatrical and pedagogical agendas, particularly with regard to the content, but in time also with regard to investigation of form.

With reference to our current interrogation and examination of decolonising education specifically in dance education, I would like to suggest that we reflect on the effects of two aspects: namely that of censorship on the one hand, and, on the other, an attitude of subversiveness, (a kind of revolt against the status quo) prevalent in the arts; that we consider how each of these have, historically, helped to shape and mould the development of the arts in South Africa and how these may have relevance in our current discussions around decolonisation in the arts and education. The extent to which a subversive quality emerged in the arts and literature deserves further mention, as it influenced and informed much of contemporary theatre and performance practices, particularly as it remains a dominant feature of an emerging South African aesthetic. The following are only a few examples of some of these alternative subversive creative and artistic expressions that influenced the trajectory of the arts and should by no means be regarded as all encompassing.

The popular music and dancing styles to emerge from places like Sophiatown and District Six (from the 1940s to their demise as a result of the forced removals by the apartheid government)) shaped the cultural politics of the time and forged community identity within

a landscape of working class struggle and appalling living conditions, in what David Coplan[1] describes as the "backyard shebeens and dance parties that gave expression to this new proletarian identity" (1985:152). As an indigenous South African jazz music developed, so too did various dance styles, amongst them the working class dance called the *Tsaba-Tsaba*, the music for which Coplan describes as combining African melody and rhythm with that of American swing, jitterbug and South American conga and rumba (1985:152). The production of the musical play *King Kong* in 1959 was an important moment in South African indigenous theatre, taking themes based on township life, but in a manner that fused African and western song and dance. It became "an immediate, overwhelming success with Johannesburg people of all races" (Coplan, 1985:174).

In literature in the 1960s, the influence of the writings and public utterances of a group of dissident Afrikaans poets and writers who came to be known as the *Sestigers,*[2] offered an alternative voice from within the ranks of the white Afrikaans speaking population, a literary revolt against the narrow, blinkered and separatist mindset of the ruling hegemony. The *Sestigers* comprised of writers and poets like Andre Brink, Breyten Breytenbach, Jan Rabie, Elsa Joubert, Etienne Leroux, Chris Barnard, Barto Smit, Adam Small and Ingrid Jonker, the latter whose poem *Die Kind wat doodgeskiet is deur soldate by Nyanga* [3] published in 1963, was read by Nelson Mandela at the opening of the first democratic Parliament in 1994. The *Sestigers* stated that "their goal was not only political revolution – it was the reclamation of language and a people, from an oppressive and monolithic system through literary revolution" (Introduction to the Sestigers, 2015).

The year 1988 saw a controversial production, a protest cabaret called *Piekniek by Dingaan,*[4] hit the stage at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown. There are several factors that make this a seminal work for its time. It was written and performed by young Afrikaans performers who unleashed a deeply satirical attack on the conservative norms of

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[1] David Coplan is the Professor and Chair of the Department of Social Anthropology at Wits University. His 1985 book *In Township Tonight* documents the history, from the 1800s, of black South African urban performing arts.
[2] The Sixties People
[3] The Child who was shot dead by police in Nyanga
[4] Picnic by Dingaan. Dingaan was the half-brother of King Shaka. Together with another half-brother Umhlangana, he assassinated Shaka in 1828 and reigned over the Zulu kingdom until 1840. In 1837, he led the Zulus in a bloody battle against the Voortrekkers who were led by Piet Retief, which culminated in the defeat of the Zulus in what came to be called the Battle of Blood River.

their Afrikaans culture and the Nationalist apartheid government. What makes this production particularly significant is that it gave a cultural and theatrical voice to a young generation of Afrikaners who were determined to sever their familial and cultural ties and to align themselves with an anti-establishment movement. *Piekniek* subverted what were several so-called holy cows for the Afrikaners, poked fun at politicians and the Calvinist religion of the Afrikaner. The lyrics of the well-known Christian song *What a friend we have in Jesus* were replaced with *Wat n vriend het ons in PW,*[5] (referring to the President at the time) unleashing scathing commentary on the security situation in the country. Even sexual taboos were exposed by changing the lyrics to popular Afrikaans folk songs. They made fun of popular, largely sentimental and conservative Afrikaans music, in one instance by replacing the lyrics of a love song with commentary on violence and unrest. Many of the songs in *Piekniek* were composed by *Johannes Kerkorrel* and Andre Letoit (who later became known as *Koos Kombuis).*[6] What contributed to the controversy of this production, was that it was produced and performed by CAPAB, the arts council of the Cape Province at the time, but was banned from being performed by the Chairman of the Board, resulting in the firing of the head of Drama, Johan Esterhuizen, who spoke out against the banning in the press. The cast and members of the production defied the ban and travelled to perform it in Grahamstown where it won awards. Upon its return to Cape Town, it had a run at the Baxter Theatre.

The late 1980s furthermore, saw the emergence of a group of young Afrikaans poets and musicians in what came to be regarded as the start of an alternative Afrikaans music movement, their lyrics and music challenging the cultural, religious and political identity of their heritage. What came to be known as the *Voelvry*[7] tour, though short-lived, performed across South Africa, often deliberately choosing to perform in conservative Afrikaans towns. They were banned from performing on various (Afrikaans) university campuses and had

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[5] What a friend we have in P.W. Also referred to as Die Groot Krokodil (The Big Crocodile), P.W. Botha was the Prime Minister, and later President, of South Africa from 1978-1989. He forcibly upheld the rule of apartheid despite growing political crisis and violence within the country.

[6] Ralph Rabie and Andre Letoit, aka Johannes Kerkorrel and Koos Kombuis chose for themselves stage names which referenced vivid cultural images in Afrikanerdom, namely that of the church organ *(kerkorrel)* and the kitchen *(kombuis),* as a symbol as the heart of the home (*kombuis*).

[7] To be as free as a bird

names like the *Gereformeerde Blues Band,*[8] the *Swart Gevaar*[9] and also included Johannes Kerkorrel and Koos Kombuis.

Athol Fugard remains one of the best known and most globally recognised South African playwrights, although the form he uses in his plays follows a conventional Western structure of realism in drama. The content, though, is provocative with a highly sensitive socio-political consciousness, steeped in anti-apartheid themes, with the result that it often fell outside of the stringent censorship laws[10] of the time. The protest theatre of the 1980s further assisted in forging a powerful message of resistance and solidarity against apartheid. One of the best -known plays to emerge from this time was *Woza Albert,* created by Percy Mtwa, Mbongeni Ngema and Barney Simon, which went on to become an international success. Andre Brink, in an article from the early 1990s, states that "a culture of struggle against oppression bought a valuable corrective, since it activated, not individual artists only, but the masses, the whole of an oppressed people" (1992:44).

In dance, what came to be known as fusion dance works dominated much of the work in the 1980s. Although the degree of artistic success of these dance works varied greatly, with some achieving a degree of successful cross-cultural fusion of dance styles whilst many were "thematically in danger of becoming both prescriptive and dogmatic" (Frege,2004:72), they nevertheless made powerful statements of defiance. Perhaps the biggest contribution to the cultural struggle at the time was not so much the level of artistry achieved, but that they offered sites of resistance insofar as they challenged notions of who was permitted to dance (together), who was permitted to watch the dance (together at the same time and place) and where the performances took place (often non- conventional theatre spaces). Possibly the best- known work from this era, still regarded today as a seminal work in the contemporary dance canon, is *Bolero*, choreographed by Alfred Hinkel and performed by Jazzart Dance Theatre. Bolero was an example of protest dance at its best. The theatrical statement made by the use of an easily recognisable piece of western classical music (Ravel's Bolero), with a fusion of dance styles, such as contemporary, African traditional,

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[8] The Reformed Blues Band, referencing the Dutch Reformed Church which is the dominant church for the Afrikaner.

[9] The Black Danger

[10] It is useful to ask oneself to what extent the many years of institutionalised censorship in South Africa may have developed a culture of self-censorship, in a Foucaultian sense of self- surveillance, which, for certain artists, may colour their artistic choices with a degree of restraint.

Indian and pantsula created potent moving images, danced by a multiracial cast wearing gumboots as a symbol of oppression but also of group cohesion. Various elements worked together in juxtaposition to establish *Bolero* as a statement of subversity. It was one of the works performed at the inauguration of Nelson Mandela at the Union Buildings in 1994. Over the years following its early performances, between 1976-1989, it has continued to be performed, most recently at the Baxter Dance Festival in 2016. *Bolero* has undergone several adaptations over the years, as social and artistic conditions have changed, thereby keeping it from becoming a museum piece..

It becomes apparent that the subversive elements employed by the various artists briefly outlined above, functioned as a direct and effective foil to the censorship laws (The Publications Act of 1974) of the time, offering an alternative to the absence of freedom of expression that was the norm in apartheid South Africa.

In 1994 I attended a festival of contemporary dance in Vienna, called *Tanzwochen Wien.*[11] Upon my return I wrote a report on my experiences for the South African Theatre Journal (Frege, 1994:150-154). In this report, I mentioned that one of the things that stood out for me most strongly was how many of the works performed at the festival, displayed a level of artistic maturity I felt to be rooted in the fact that they were created in environments conducive to experimentation and where the absence of institutionalised censorship fostered individual freedom of expression.

I would like to suggest that, in the light of our present decolonisation debate, we consider critically the role that censorship (albeit it no longer overtly enforced or institutionalised) continues to play with regard to our decisions regarding the techniques we teach, the styles we teach and the works we create. This extends still further to incorporate the decisions around who we teach, what kind of bodies we decide may inhabit that of the (ideal) dancing body, including race, gender and age (to name only a few distinctions), where we dance and for whom we dance. I would further like to posit that we need to include a discussion of who we think may do the teaching. Ultimately, we need to interrogate where the power resides with regard to making the decisions pertaining to these matters. It may also be

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[11] Known also as ImPulsTanz (Impulse Dance): Vienna International Dance Festival, held annually in Vienna since 1984. It is the largest festival of contemporary dance in Europe, including performances and workshops by leading international artists.

useful to grapple with these issues by employing what Schechner terms an intercultural approach, rather than considering them only with lenses relating to topics of decolonisation, multiculturalism and fusion. Schechner states:

> Interculturalists refuse utopian schemes, refuse to cloak power arrangements and struggles. Instead, interculturalists probe the confrontations, ambivalences, disruptions, fears, disturbances and difficulties when and where cultures collide, overlap or pull away from each other. Interculturalists explore misunderstandings, broken messages and failed translations – what is not pure and what cannot successfully fuse (1991:30).

Perhaps herein lies a valuable clue towards a possible way forward for us as dance educators and artists, if we were to consider the forging of a new curriculum in dance as a site of resistance that may, potentially reside in a collective refusal to be externally dictated to with regard to both the form and the content of what is taught. Perhaps by focusing our attention on what Schechner calls the "arena of struggle" (1991:136) we may be able to linger courageously in this uncertain, often murky landscape, rather than attempt to seek out instant, formulaic solutions that may, ultimately, not succeed. As stated succinctly by Njoki Wane in her article on how one can reclaim Indigenous knowledge within the context of Western knowledge systems, that it is about being able to recognise that "different forms of knowledge can co-exist; more particularly, different knowledges can co-exist in conflict at the same time (2013:102). She elaborates further that the courses she teaches and the research she conducts at a Western university (the University of Toronto), comprise a form of resistance by "reminding scholars of colour (that) our theorizing is informed by our practice and our practice by our theory" (2013:102).

Andre Brink, in the same article mentioned earlier in this paper, warns against the danger of perceiving of the usefulness of culture in a narrow way, one "that conceives of culture only in function of its political usefulness" (1992:45). He goes on to argue that what is needed in our democratic society, is that we need to be "liberated as much from the mentality of 'victim' as that of the 'oppressor'" (1992:47). However, there are grave inequalities and serious socio-economic conditions at present, with the unemployment rate estimated to be around 30%. These conditions make it extremely hard to cast off the identity of either victim or oppressor. The majority of people living in South Africa have an annual income that is

below the international comfort level. When compared to Maslow's hierarchy of needs,[12] a vast number of people currently do not have even their most basic physiological needs of clothing, food and shelter met, let alone safety and a sense of social belonging. It is within the context of such an intense psychological societal fragmentation and disconnection that the arts can play a vital role, making it increasingly important that educators interrogate why we teach what we teach, to commit wholeheartedly to a holistic approach to dance education, that of engaging with the whole person and not merely focusing on the training of a dancer.

Before we even start to zone in on discussing which dance techniques we should be teaching or which dance histories we should be prioritising, we may benefit by recognising that as educators and artists we are all immersed in a new culture of struggle, and that we need to consider carefully how we frame our questions and resist the urge to find slick immediate solutions. An understanding that the inevitable power struggles around any discussion of decolonisation needs to be located at its very centre, where our own history has taught us to value the individual as an autonomous complex entity, functioning within the continuous ebb and flow of the greater collective.

In her article on Dance and Critical Debate, Janet Adshead-Lansdale (1993/4:22-24;33) discusses the effect of postmodern, poststructuralist and feminist thinking on existing canons. She says that:

> It may in part be an explanation of the low status of dance that its canon is so fragmentary, uncertain, unclear. And yet it is not fashionable talk of a canon at all but shards and fragments. Dance is already, perhaps always was, post-structuralist and inherently unstable (1993/4:33).

Perhaps it is to our benefit that dance is so unstable because it opens up an enormous potential for deconstruction and renewal. Adshead-Lansdale goes on to argue against the notion of a polarised attitude towards dance with regards to theory and practice, pleading for the development of the dancer that should incorporate "an intellectual tradition for dance in harmony with a choreographic tradition" (1993/4:33). As we make the necessary decisions and choices going forward in shaping our decolonised future, it may be somewhat encouraging to acknowledge that within the very nature of dance resides the potential to

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[12] In 1943 Maslow introduced a theory around what he determined to be human needs in a hierarchical pyramid consisting of five tiers.

help us articulate clearly, through our bodies and our minds, with our imaginations and sense of playfulness, a new African paradigm in the arts.

In his article on Decolonising Languages at SA Universities, Dilip Menon asks

> What would it mean in South Africa's universities to think of intellectual inquiry within Africa rather than just a notion of *ubuntu* that is little more than a Reader's Digest version of everyone getting along fine with each other? A decolonised imagination would be daring enough to draw upon Islam, Confucianism or the different radical modernities of the Caribbean and Latin America (2015).

Our narrative as a country may not be about a rainbow, but it is a narrative over which we all have a certain degree of ownership as we craft and workshop our collective future both in the arts and society as a whole. As stated by Peter Ukpokodu "an inclusivist, multicultural theatrical canon in Africa must necessarily explore the Mozambican slogan, 'Black is Beautiful, Brown is Beautiful, White is Beautiful'" (1995:22).

I would like to suggest that, whilst we focus on decolonising dance education, we also incorporate an attitude of re-building, re-newing, re-educating and re-plenishing relationships as a bold statement towards a positive future for dance in education. This would involve a powerful act of subverting the dominant paradigm of inequality, towards a more inclusive and just paradigm in the arts for all citizens.

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icj@mweb.co.za

BUTOH: DECOLONISING OPERA
Jacki Job
University of Cape Town: School of Dance

Abstract

This paper draws on Spivak's Aesthetic Education: Towards an era of Globalisation, to analyse the performance-making process of an opera concert, African Angels. Reflective and reflexive analyses show how re-thinking classical opera through a physical engagement with instrumentality can shift stereotypical representations of race and power. Indigenous methodologies of Tuhiwai-Smith provide the basis for incorporating personal narratives to build new epistimologies in performance. Simultaneously, the concept of decolonisation is problematised. Issues of power relations and censorship within the performance arts that perpetuate singular descriptions of communities and race groups in South Africa, and effectively impede imaginative attempts at decolonisation are interrogated. Overall, this paper argues for the importance of interrogating the unknown and incorporating elements of darkness into contemporary theatre practice. It engages butoh principles to reappropriate a colonial art form in a contemporary South African context.

Keywords: butoh, aesthetic education, indigeneity, decolonisation, performance

Underpinning this writing is the subjective premise that in all fields of performance, albeit dance, drama or music, dominant traditions need to be contested, and the embedded values contributing to its hegemonic power, interrogated. Firstly, this paper acknowledges how box-like, reductive structures remain embedded in the social, political and economic fabric of South Africa. Secondly, with regard to my viewpoint of decolonising processes, there is a recognition of how counter-intuitive formulaic practices and worldviews are to my dance methodologies and theatre-making processes. Applying butoh principles, as well as its abstract, non-western and meta-physical aesthetics, builds what I describe as, a thinking performer who through the body challenges the status quo. My philosophies around dance and performance making are framed in indigenous theory discourses (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999) that encourage a consideration of how personal experiences are highly significant in building alternative and additional knowledge systems. The realisation of how we enable hegemonic power to play out its control of our minds and bodies, manifests when we begin to see how, without force, we have internalised concepts and ideas. Changing what may have been fait accompli then requires deliberate actions, as well as specialised tools to shift the mind and body into another realm. In this paper, I borrow

from Spivak's book, *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization* (2012), to articulate my deliberate challenge of idealogic perceptions or what we may hold as sacred in the performance arts. To support my arguments, I relate my practical experiences as director and choreographer of *African Angels,*[1] performed by Cape Town Opera in December 2016. I will interact with Spivak's theoretical approach to make visible how butoh enabled a rendering of classical opera that had relevance to the everyday lives of the singers. However, I will also point to an aesthetic of decolonisation in South Africa that is stuck in binary tropes and resistant to challenge and critical reflection.

Theorising dance in linguistic terms has proven helpful in my arguing for butoh as a tool to embody difference in decolonising processes. Thinking of dance as a language, which in Noam Chomsky's (2006) terms imply a way of thinking, supports my stance that an engagement with the body can provoke a re-thinking of agendas that remain uncontested in the Arts, and by extension, life. Spoken language is not complete and comprehensive in itself, and therefore, body language adds dimensions and nuances to communication styles that cannot be fulfilled through speech alone. For me, dance becomes a meta-language when it shifts certitudes in speech and gesture by proposing alternative realisations of what we assume to know and understand. Butoh has helped me to embody an interrogation of patriarchal, Christian worldviews that are largely held within performance structures that perpetuate Western hegemony. Against the multiple languages in South African society, extending the idea of using language to create an affinity with other languages, requires acts of translation. With relation to dance, I am not limiting my translation to conveying a particular narrative through different performance genres, such as African, contemporary, ballet, or butoh. However, I am using butoh to toggle with the thinking embedded within a narrative, and then re-imagine the telling of that narrative. I have used butoh to generate new thinking, as opposed to replicating how things have already been arranged and imagined. As has been my experience, translating or relooking at notions held as sacred and incontestable in the performance arts has proven to be, to quote Spivak, "an active site of conflict, and not an irreducible guarantee" (Spivak, 2012:270).

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[1] The contentious Afro-centric and Christian references in the production's title are noted but will not be expanded on in this body of writing.

Butoh has become a provocative tool in nurturing "an epistemological performance through a rearrangement of desires" (Spivak, 2012:125) and shifting the conventionally undisputed authority of what we hold as ideal. Spivak explains that aesthetic education requires going beyond agendas set by established centres of learning. I apply butoh in an aesthetic training that engages the imagination to not only see what is there, but also what is not, and in the process, aim towards destabilising power structures. According to Spivak, one of the elements of aesthetic education is understanding the notion of inhabiting the double bind. This refers to contradictory situations where one may feel the need to choose one particular thing above the other. Generally, a decision of this kind usually leaves one with a sense of anxiety because of an inability to step out of the situation completely. However, claiming the double-bind and inhabiting that contradictory, difficult space, is a way to shift hard-wired perceptions into another realm. In the context of *African Angels*, I have recognised this notion of the double bind in the tension between who the singers were in their everyday lives, and how they were represented in performance. Of the eighteen singers, seventeen were Black[2] and familiar with negotiating social, economic and educational disparities in their everyday lives. On the other hand, their identities were simultaneously stuck in productions that stereotype Black bodies against subtexts of social reform ideologies by attaching images of prestige and privilege to them. This, which I would describe as a faux construct of the 'new' (Black inclusive) South Africa, seems to be validated by their extensive travels with classical opera productions around the world. The singers were caught in a double bind when they, on the one hand, wanted to make classical opera performances relevant, by for example, integrating their everyday struggles, joys and even way of dress, in to the opera, but on the other hand, were fearful of being seen as saboteurs of the integrity and classicism of their work. The musical director and accompanying pianist in *African Angels,* José Dias, also felt this double bind. In addition, I include myself in this dichotomy. With towing the line completely linked to job security, the less stressful option is conventionally taken, personal tropes are removed from the artistic rendering, and formulations of a hierarchical artistic system, adhered to. Within opera, a heightened theatrical, yet impersonal approach generally remains uncontested and is perceived as normal within the making of productions. *African Angels* is essentially an opera

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[2] In terms of racial difference, the one White singer was at a marked economic and educational advantage. (Tube, 2016)

concert, including classical, gospel, traditional African tunes, as well as jazz. Since my engagement in 2014, the subtext had always been to thread an embodiment of humanity through the production by referencing everyday concerns, as well as broader philosophical concepts in the way the songs were performed. To accomplish this, the singers, as well as myself, would be forced to engage with and retain the tension of our double bind. This tension, I believe, pulls the attention of the performers, as well as the audience. Both Dias and myself wanted to move away from the stereotypes of the happy, never questioning African, or the ever-reflective, nostalgic, victim of a colonised past, or even the liberated, post-colonial African. The challenge would be how to deliberately imagine a personal, political, philosophically driven narrative, in order to reimagine a classical aria, and hopefully retain one's job? The opportunity arrived within one scene of *African Angels* - an aria, the *Sextet*, of the opera, *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Fassie, 1997), by Gaetano Donizetti (1835).

On August 16th, 2016, four women boldly interrupted the president of South Africa, Jacob Zuma's, televised nationwide address. Referring to a rape that the president was acquitted from in 2006, they lined up directly in front of his podium holding handwritten papers that read, "I am 1 in 3. 10 years on. Kanga.[3] Remember Khwezi" (YouTube, 2016). The President, seemingly unaware of the protest playing out in front of him, continued with his speech. Eventually, male and female bodyguards aggressively removed the four women from the scene. In spite of the forceful stop to their protest, the women were briefly able to

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[3] In 2016, before President Jacob Zuma took official office as President of South Africa, Khwezi (a pseudonym, her real name being Fezeka Khuzwayo) accused him of raping her. At the time of the incident, she was wearing a kanga, a traditional African garment that symbolises respect for womanhood in traditional African dress. President Zuma stated that he interpreted it as a sexual invitation. In response to the backlash of her accusation, Khwezi wrote and performed a poem entitled, *I am Khanga*. It reads in part:
"I am Khanga
I wrap myself around the curvaceous bodies of women all over Africa
I am the perfect nightdress on those hot African nights
The ideal attire for household chores
I secure babies happily on their mother's backs
Am the perfect gift for new bride and new mother alike
Armed with proverbs, I am vehicle for communication between women
I exist for the comfort and convenience of a woman
But no no no make no mistake …
I am not here to please a man
And I certainly am not a seductress
Please don't use me as an excuse to rape
Don't hide behind me when you choose to abuse […]"

represent many survivors of rape and stand strong in their vulnerability. This scene became the subtext of the *Sextet,* conventionally one of the highlights of the traditional opera, *Lucia.* The aria shows off the vocal skill of six performers simultaneously singing different texts and tunes. This feat requires a great amount of concentration and due to its difficult nature, in the opera, this scene is conventionally staged with the singers remaining static, standing in line and facing the front. Theatre makers might argue that the conventional rendition works best. That the performance is, after all, about the music.

I found the story behind the *Sextet* quite evocative. The protagonist, Lucia, has her love affair with Edgardo abruptly ended by her brother, Enrico, who then forces her to marry a rich man, whom she does not love, but has to marry, in order to rescue the family from financial ruin. Her protests are ignored as she is overpowered by dominant males and the powers they represent. Patriarchy, in the form of her brother, Enrico, religion, through a complicit chaplain, Raimondo, and economic power, in the form of her future husband, Lord Arturo. In addition, she feels abandoned by the only other woman in this scene, her handmaiden Alisa, who subjugated by patriarchy, or Enrico, remains complicitly silent in order to retain her position in the family. Overwhelmed with the strength of the opposing forces, Lucia goes mad, and in keeping with the dramatic, chauvinistic nature of most classics, ultimately dies. In the *African Angels* embodied rendition of the *Sextet,* Lucia, much like Khwezi, was rendered helpless by the sheer power of the forces against her. In the context of rape in South Africa, both state and religion can be included in the patriarchal forces that subjugate women to silence. In the rehearsals*,* the singers were directed to imagine elements of the Khwezi protest, relate that to the opera's narrative and then reflect that back into the larger picture of institutional violence against women in the country. One physical embodiment required Lord Arturo to imagine that he was led by his penis, thus creating the basis for a cocky, arrogant walk, and a deliberate focus on the object of his sexual desire, Lucia. His selfish sexual intent remains obvious as he ignores her protests. Another physical interpretation required Lucia to literally lose the support of her legs and sing the entire aria on her knees, making her all the more aware of the absence of her power. And like the audience at the Khwezi protest, the twelve additional cast members remain passive and silent, perhaps ashamedly watching, and unable to respond to the vulnerable women before them. The *Sextet* ends with an electrifying soprano scream, which

generates a huge applause. Through the clapping comes a deep, rich mezzo-soprano voice, who in acapella sings, "*Bangitholile abangana xolo*", which directly translates, "those who don't have mercy caught me". This isi-Xhosa song, *Memeza,* by Brenda Fassie (1997), is much like the undertones of Lucia. *Memeza ma*, I cry and shout, *Akusizi lutho,* but it did not help, they showed no mercy. *Yimi nabo, yimi nabo nkosi yam.* It was just me and them. Dear Lord, it was just me and them. Whilst singing, she walks from the crowd of onlookers towards Lucia, pulls her up from her knees and directs her to centre stage. Gradually all the women gather, followed by the men, and everyone stands in solidarity, remembering Khwezi, Lucia, and too many others like them.

If aesthetic education requires destabilising what and who we hold as sacred, and in the process rearrange our desires, I believe that *Lucia* and *Memeza* made this proposition. However, it was not only imagination, which I loosely define as mental images that stimulate an action, but also the inclusion of indigeneity that made the difference. Something derived and produced naturally, or born from the region, enabled imagination to shift what was held as sacred. *African Angels* is performed in the biggest opera houses and concert halls in Germany and Holland. The cast always feels a huge responsibility to live up to the ideal or what could be held as sacred in the way classical opera repertoires are delivered and established in those prestigious venues. However, I agree with Antoine Vitez who claims that performance work has to be "both the preserver of ancient forms of expression and the adversary of traditions" (Vitez in Pavis, 1996:127). I acknowledge that Black South Africans singing Italian, German and French arias in Europe exoticised the singers, and it could be argued that the inclusion of African traditional tunes sung in *isi-Xhosa* authenticated them as 'African'. This combination of exotification and authenticity contributed to the success of *African Angles.* However, in the rehearsal processes I considered how to ignite what has been submerged and internalised, in order for the performers as well as the audiences to listen, recognise the familiar in the unfamiliar, and at subliminal and visceral levels, establish a different connection to their traditions (Bharucha in Pavis, 1996). Introspective butoh exercises, such as imagining eyes under the feet, as well as specialised physical exercises that strengthened the body to support what was imagined, created further intention and dynamic to the performance.

This is perhaps better illustrated in a different scene in *African Angels,* where another audience favourite, *Ol Man River*, from the Jerome Kern (1927) musical, *Showboat*, moved into a more controversial classical jazz tune, *Strange Fruit,* by Nina Simone (1965). To find the humanity of *Ol Man River*, in other words, what I understand as deciphering what informs why we are as we are, and then using that knowledge to effect a deeper understanding of ourselves and others, I felt it important to become aware of the phenomenology of *Showboat.* Therefore, beyond representing the musical's themes which include racial prejudice and love, it became necessary to examine *Showboat's* social and political environment and see how that might have impacted the work. *Showboat* was first performed in America in 1927 by a large racially integrated cast of forty members. As exciting as this may have been at the time (as it is in South Africa post 1994), the racial stereotypes remained the same. The two protagonists, a White girl, Magnolia, and Brown girl, Julie, both suffer broken romances. However, the White girl gets back on her feet, reconciles with her husband and lives happily ever after, while the Brown girl embarks on a road of moral decline and ends up as a drunk, working in a saloon, and alone. These stereotypes are not hidden in the narrative. What may be less visible, however, is the consideration of who the narrative is played to, and how those stereotypes perpetuate and validate hierarchical formulas and worldviews. Intercultural theorists have often criticised how the choice of productions at festivals or on prestige tours are based on what is very close to the home-grown production style, and even when different cultures are present, othering is reinforced as the dominant culture and remains the centre through combinations of performance location, narratives, roleplays and genre (Bharucha, 2000; Holledge & Tompkins, 2000). Artists are often caught in a double bind when they have to decide between taking on a role and doing what they love in order to pay the bills, or uphold a personal, politicised philosophy, refuse the role, forego doing what they love, and lose potential income. How is it possible for performers to reimagine representation and re-construct controversial roles with personal, politicised philosophies or narratives to potentially generate new performances? Is it possible that a deliberate engagement with the tension of the double bind could not only reinforce the pathos of the narrative for the performers, but also provoke the audience at a visceral level to move beyond the accepting of stereotypes as normative? Could the acceptance that virtually renders the normative invisible, shift to a realisation that what has been normalised and become unseen, is

abnormal and needs to be exposed and questioned? In discussing South African theatre, Mark Fleishman claims the physical body "has its own intellectualism which opens up new meaning, presents alternatives and possibilities rather than fixed certainties and demands active, imaginative, individual choices from the audience" (Fleishman, 1997:213). In bringing meaning back to the popular tunes of *Showboat,* the individuals of *African Angels* would need to look at how their personal agendas could contribute to the embodiment of characters. In the process, there could be a reimagining and re-determining of the ideal from the position of self-agency.

Showboat was born in the 1920s, a period described as the time of transformation in America, when people were forced into new sets of social, regional, cultural and political relationships. However, the racist, subjugative legacy of slavery, which started in 1619 and was officially abolished in 1863, has continued to hound American society well into the 21st century. As a case in point I refer to several demonstrations against police killings of African-American men in 2016. Here, it may be useful to make a brief comparison with South Africa, currently in a period of transformation. Colonised in 1652 and officially emancipated from one of its offshoots, apartheid, in 1994, human injustices associated with perceptions of race are ongoing across South Africa. For example, in August 2016, two White men, Willem Oosthuizen and Theo Martins Jackson, threatened to kill a Black man, Victor Mlotshwa, for trespassing on their farm. They put him in a coffin, threatened to douse him with petrol and bury him, all the while filming their sport. Fortunately, they did not follow through on their threats. Three months later, however, they posted this sickening incident on social media. It went viral, thus giving Mlotshwa the proof he needed for their arrest. In the wake of this, the cast of *African Angels* felt obliged to reference the ongoing racial disparities and hatred that continue to govern our actions in the country. Nina Simone's song, *Strange Fruit*, a metaphor for Black bodies hanging from trees, would be the perfect conduit for their emotions. However, at various degrees, everyone, including the local employers, felt strong undertones of resistance, fearing that any cultural or political provocation be interpreted as a threat to the production's success and popularity. It thus became important to re-imagine a rendering that could retain the popularity and appeal of *African Angels*. Could their bodies sing and provoke audiences to listen differently? I employed a butoh exercise to help them see the importance of the unseen. A different consciousness of the body was stimulated by

shifting sight from their literal eyes, to imagining eyes under their feet. Immediately, the entire cast became aware of how they walked. They were then guided to imagine eyes on their backs and feet. This caused everyone to walk with a careful resistance. Finally, eyes were added to their fingertips, so that when they touched, or felt, it was initiated by what they saw with their hands. Everyone continued to walk with the consciousness of seeing with their feet, back and hands. Their breath changed as they became less concerned with the physical eyes and more aware of being guided by metaphysical sight. The air felt thick with a curious tension that became the catalyst for re-imagining a singing, speaking body, which without voice, could deepen the import and impact of the music.

Strange Fruit followed a fairly standard rendering of *Ol Man River* that portrayed images of physical labour. The staging was simple. Supported by Dias sensitively playing the original version on piano, a male singer stood upstage left, quietly intoning the song's cadences. At the same time, seventeen men and women, with hands either covering their mouth, eyes or ears, silently walked to the lip of the stage, close to the audience, and stood. The atmosphere intensified as the last line was sung, "Here is a strange and bitter crop". Gradually, the seventeen singers dropped their arms, held hands, and boldly looked into the distance. The song held a palpable tension, confirmed by the cast's unanimous agreement of feeling transformed, yet simultaneously fearful after its performance. Even though the lyrics of both *Memeza* and *Strange Fruit* evoked images of human injustice and brutality, it could be argued that *Memeza* was more evocative for the performers than the audience because they understood the actual spoken language, *isi-Xhosa*. *Strange Fruit*, on the other hand, was sung in English, thereby making the context readily understood, and heightened their vulnerability for exposing racial injustice. I employed a butoh-esque aesthetic that might be considered disturbing in conventional opera, by positioning the lead singer off-centre and rearward. This forced the audience to employ their imagination in interpreting the scene. They were firstly compelled to negotiate meaning between themselves and the silent, up close bodies, and then connect that to what they heard from a distance. I believe that just as the cast were required to sing differently and use their bodies, the scene provoked the audience to listen differently, and become conscious of bodies – both theirs and the performers. In Spivakian terms, this might be described as "affirmative sabotage". The cast of *African Angels,* however, were used to being adulated for the quality of their

sound and accurate rendition of the classics. They were therefore fearful that the provocative nature of this scene would result in criticism. In the end, they were criticised, but not by the audience.

In *African Angels,* the transition from *Ol Man River* into the embodied performance of *Strange Fruit* proposed a revealing of what remained hidden in the formulaic rendering of *Showboat.* If one follows a standard formula in opera, the audiences behave accordingly and offer appropriate and expected responses. When one allows imagination to play in spaces usually designated for formulaic translations, the proposed aesthetic is limited, imperfect, and what Spivak calls an intended mistake, as a particular outcome or positive response cannot be guaranteed. The acknowledgement of fallibility, however, should not be seen as a defeatist approach. Spivak refers to Nietsche saying that "truth is a kind of error, without which a certain kind of living being could not live" (Spivak, 2012:17). Therefore, an 'as if' approach to developing aesthetics, Spivak continues, is as much error as truth. I believe that the butoh-esque ways of seeing and walking in this scene proposed an endarkened epistemology that enabled the singers to imagine a different approach to their performance. In the process, the singers were afforded with an opportunity to reference indigeneity, and on their own terms, re-appropriate meaning to an established standard. The enactment of this scene could be described as a wager for everyone to stand in solidarity against injustice. According to Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2014), only those who are not satisfied with the world, will wager on a different world. Those who benefit from the current status quo, will wager on the impossibility of a better world.

In the end, *Strange Fruit* was censored and removed from the final staging of *African Angels*. I believe that the inclusion of this English song, would have implied that integration in South Africa, and by extension, the African diaspora, may not be as romantic and problem free as an integrated cast may seem to suggest. Further, the censors might argue that my insistence on referencing horrific images would be insensitive to the audience and jeopardise the success of the production. Therefore, they might add, instead of employing imagination and creating something imperfect, or intending a mistake, it would be easier and more profitable to apply the formula and be guaranteed of a positive outcome. In response, I refer to Spivak's notion of ignorance, and her description of it as sanctioned ignorance that prefers broad, general knowledge and remains oblivious to details. For just a brief moment,

Strange Fruit aimed to provoke audiences to notice details by listening and looking differently. Perhaps this could be one way for performers as well as the audience, to re-establish visceral connections with traditions and re-imagine their assumptions of knowledge. For the singers, butoh was a legitimate tool for placing their bodies in research and triggering their desire to look into darkness. This provoked the questioning of a kind of performance that merely replicated narratives without any personal reflexivity. Spivak describes imagination as "thinking absent things" (Spivak, 2012:16). By imagining eyes under their feet, back and hands, the singers could access an endarkened aesthetic that was not determined by Western rationale, but informed by inhabiting a metaphysical, phenomenological sense of themselves and their environment. According to my perspective, *Strange Fruit* proposed an aesthetic for integration to feel holistic and realistic, by translating a universal narrative from a personal, indigenous perspective, and then reflecting that back in to the world of performance. However, to safeguard hegemonic interests, which in this context translates to economic and cultural power, the personal was best kept hidden. Fearing the unknown, binary aesthetics and reductive values of performers and performance were replicated and validated. The double bind was pulled into a tension-free single bind. The potential failure in creating an imperfect performance, or a mistake, was avoided. Imagination was replaced with artistic formulae that preserve sacred traditions. The illusion of cultural homogeny was sustained, and money making outcomes, were guaranteed. These kinds of decisions are continuously made by those who hold sufficient economic power to dictate a singular artistic vision and image of an integrated, problem free, new South Africa. Following this, I wonder whether it might be wiser to accept Rustom Bharucha's notions that theatre cannot change the world, but "that it is possible to change our own lives through theatre" (Bharucha, 1993:10). Based on conversations with Dias and the cast, I do believe that the rehearsal process, as well as performances of *African Angels* reinforced the value of finding imaginative interconnections between the personal, political and artistic.

Creative processes of decolonisation are diverse, complex and ongoing. From my point of view, butoh affords the individual the opportunity to navigate this difficult terrain of decolonisation through introspection, reflexivity and an altered body consciousness that makes it possible to embody discomfort and difficulty with imagination. Indeed, our bodies

can teach us more than we know, and performance allows us to share that knowledge. Experiences in Holland with *African Angels* demonstrated how issues of decolonisation extend beyond South Africa. In November 2016, several Dutch people participated in protests against the 'blackface' performances of *Swarte Piet* (Black Pete).[4] In response, a Dutch man showed his contempt for the protestors by creating a picture that showed one leader of the movement, Sylvana Simons (Media Courant, 2016), hanging from a tree. I find it ironic how the very next month, *African Angels* rendition of *Strange Fruit* may have held deeply personal resonance with Dutch audiences. Imagine an ovation that stands for our joint solidarity against injustice, and this in organic concert with one of our colonisers? My experiences within *African Angels,* however, begs me to wonder, who ultimately controls our bodies and determines the quantities, content and presentation of that knowledge? Can endarkened knowledge direct us to finding alternate paths to decolonisation? How is it possible for those paths to find points of confluence within and across longstanding artistic structures? And how can my "thinking body and dancing mind" (Huang & Lynch, 1992) provoke those structures to look and listen differently? For me, answering these questions remains a work in progress, an intended mistake, requiring several irresolute acts of imagination and collaboration, to ignite new avenues and embody potentialities in our collective research for decolonisation.

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[4] *Swarte Piet* is a problematic Dutch tradition of blackfacing that happens around Christmastime in Holland. Many people of African descent feel that it reflects negative stereotypes and is experienced as a vestige of slavery.

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Jacki.job@uct.ac.za

"BUT THIS IS WHITE"
DECOLONIAL DIGRESSIONS, AS NAVIGATING (OR REFRAMING) THE 'AFRICANISATION' OF CHRISTIAN ICONOGRAPHY IN APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

James Macdonald

Visual Identities in Art and Design Research Centre (VIAD), University of Johannesburg. +++

Abstract

In this paper I look to varying responses by black South African artists in the late 1950s and early 1960s to a church-commissioned 'Africanisation' of Christian iconography, and the extent to which these individual and often contradictory responses might be understood as localised enactments of decolonial agency; in challenging, unsettling and critically extending the 'decolonising' imperative of an institutionalised project of cultural adaptation. In so doing, I refer in particular to the refusals, assertions and conscious appropriations that attended the respective treatments of Christ's body by artists Bernard Gcwensa, Ruben Xulu and Sydney Kumalo, as well as in the 'counter example' of Azaria Mbatha. Made apparent (and to some extent transformed) in the divergent responses of these artists was, as I argue, the normative but also paradoxical framework of an ostensibly decolonising project – as one rooted in a western iconographic genealogy, and as perpetuating in the presumed universality of its application a certain colonial logic. Revisiting these historical disruptions is helpful, I propose, in approaching present dialogues around decolonisation and arts pedagogy in South Africa. In this regard, and with reference to the openings and options associated with Walter Mignolo's decolonial aestheSis, and Anthony Bogues' conception of freedom as a set of practices, I suggest as necessary to this decolonial impulse, a pedagogy released from the institutionalised fixity of an envisioned, 'decolonised' curriculum (the notion of which simply perpetuates the closure and scripting of colonial logic), and responsive rather to the unsettling, unpredictable, often contradictory workings of creative decolonial human practices.

When commissioned in the mid-1950s by the American patrons of the Servite Mission at Hlabisa to sculpt an 'African Christ', resident artist Bernard Gcwensa flatly refused. Pointing to a traditionally western representation of Christ, placed in the local mission chapel, he reportedly said, "but that is white, it is not African" (Cormick, 1993:8). In lieu of this rather incriminating observation, Father Edwin Kinch installed in the church at Ingwavuma a black Christ and Madonna – carved, however, by a Dutch artist. Tellingly, he was obliged before long to remove it, the congregation objecting on the basis that it was a white rather than black Christ they had been taught to revere (Cormick, 1993:8).

In this paper I look to varying responses by black South African artists in the late 1950s and early 1960s to a church-commissioned 'Africanisation' of Christian iconography, and the

extent to which these individual and often contradictory responses might be understood as localised enactments of decolonial agency; in challenging, unsettling and critically extending the 'decolonising' imperative of an institutionalised project of cultural adaptation. In doing so, I refer in particular to the refusals, assertions and conscious appropriations that attended the respective treatments of Christ's body by artists Bernard Gcwensa, Ruben Xulu and Sydney Kumalo – as well as in the 'counter example' of Azaria Mbatha. In the case of each, I point to a critical disjuncture between the institutionalised redress embodied in church commissioned projects – as ecclesial responses to the historic conflation of Christianity and European culture in colonialism – and the individual responses and creative decisions of the contracted artists.

Whilst this institutionally prescribed revision and localisation of Christian visuality – as characterised by a vocabulary of 'Africanisation', 'adaptation', 'indigenisation', 'inculturation' – was framed as a decolonising project, it was, I propose, in this disjunctive space of resistances and negotiations that certain alternative practices of decolonial agency and subjectivity were enacted. Significant here is a certain and not unproblematic transaction around the suffering black body – in how that body, incarnated as Christ, was imaged, framed, deified, and by whom and for whom. As opposed to engaging in extensive visual analysis of the artworks themselves (which is somewhat beyond the scope of this paper), I focus instead on the artists' individual attitudes and responses to the liberal, white and largely ethnographic agenda of this church-commissioned 'Africanisation' of Christian iconography. Made apparent and to some degree transformed in their various deviations was, I argue, the normative but also paradoxical framework of an ostensibly decolonising project – as one rooted in a western iconographic genealogy, and as perpetuating in the presumed universality of its application a certain colonial logic.

Revisiting such histories – wherein a self-proclaimed programme of decolonisation is troubled by variegated decolonial practices – is helpful, I propose, in approaching present dialogues around decolonisation and pedagogy, be it in art or related disciplines like theatre and dance. With reference to the openings and options associated with Walter Mignolo's *decolonial aesthesis,* and Anthony Bogues' conception of *freedom as a set of practices*, I propose that a properly decolonial approach to pedagogy in these fields implies a space and

'structure' not *re*-fixed in a supposedly decolonised canon or curriculum, but one responsive to the unsettling, unpredictable, often contradictory work of creative decolonial human practices.

In framing these reflections, it goes without saying that in general the history of Christian missionary activity in Africa is inseparable from that of colonialism – or *colonial modernity* – the 'civilising' conquests (and commercial gains) of which were premised on the supposed need of 'primitive' Africans for cultural and spiritual regeneration (Mudimbe, 1988:49). In this regard, Ntongela Masilela observes:

> The violent entrance of European modernity into African history through imperialism, capitalism and colonialism made the question of modernity an unavoidable historical issue … whereas the making of modernity in European history was a violent process of secularisation … in African history it was a violent process of proselytising and conversion into Christianity: in one experience, modernity is a secular eventuation, in the other, it is inseparable from acculturation and religiosity (2006:31).

Responding to David Livingston's call for the 'three C's' – *Christianity, commerce* and *civilisation* – early missionaries to Sub-Saharan Africa embodied and perpetuated this religio-cultural conflation, holding Christianity and western civilisation as synonymous. Jon Kirby explains: "Proper European civilization *was* Christianity, and the only way to bring about conversion was to establish this [European] cultural framework … Indeed anything else was unthinkable" (cited in Bridger, 2012:17, my emphasis). Adjoined then to Christian conversion was a requisite process of acculturation, whereby was fostered the social ideal of a Christian colonial subject – a 'Christian black', "modelled in part on an imaginary Victorian male respectability" (Bogues, 2010:82).[1] Of importance here, as Mignolo and Vasquez (2013:4) insist, is the centrality of the aesthetic to the social paradigm of colonial modernity, in both producing and regulating sensibilities. Confirming this, Paul Taylor (2016:59) explains how white hegemonic power was (and still is) constituted through a persistent colonisation of public meaning – which is to say, in the formulation and perpetuation of a certain modern/colonial visuality, through which 'whitely' ways of seeing

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[1] With reference to a specifically South African colonial context, Timothy Keegan explains this socialised 'Christian subject', as, "practiced in the ways of European culture, straddling in various measures the divide between Black and White worlds, but recognisably 'western' in orientation and lifestyle" (Keegan, 2004).

and being are established as social norms. This colonial logic was enacted in the aesthetic programme of the 19th century missionary movement – especially in Catholic mission contexts, which saw the introduction and dissemination of a highly romanticised and distinctly European Christian iconography (Bridger, 2012:5). In this way, co-opted into the 'civilising' imperative and associated aesthetic regime of colonialism was the meditative tradition of *imitatio,* whereby in conforming to an envisioned model of Christ or the saints, viewers effectively 'become' the image (Bennett, 2005:39). However, insinuated in the racialised exclusivism of this divine cultural model, was at best a form of aspirant mimicry, rather than the possibility of any genuine 'becoming'. Speaking to the cultural politics of this colonial Christian aesthetic, Cormick (1993:8) notes:

> The European missionaries who brought the gospel into Africa also brought in their own crucifixes. They told the newly baptized African Christians that the European-featured Christ on the Cross and the alabaster-complexioned Madonna in the chapel represented the Saviour of the world and his mother. To the black people of Africa it was clear that the Christian God was a white man.[2]

If the conflation of Christianity and western culture inscribed in this iconographic model burdened conversion with a mandatory acculturation, it did so (transaction that it was) by way of a corresponding and culturally devastating *de*culturation. Of missionary iconoclasm, directed against the cultural traditions and art forms of indigenous communities, Olu Oguibe (2004:49) reflects:

> Art practice in traditional idioms was condemned as idolatory and violently combatted, with tons of art objects seized and destroyed in bonfires. Converts were warned in damning language of the harsh and irrevocable consequences of either creating or keeping indigenous art forms.[3]

Conversion to Christianity (in the theo-political context of colonialism and missions) demanded in this sense a radical cultural and ontological transformation, as in relinquishing these visual traditions and practices, internalised rather was the image of the 'blonde and

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[2] Similarly, Richard Bridger notes how in the socio-political context of colonialism, the commonly represented figure of a blonde and blue-eyed Christ, "could easily be (mis)interpreted as a partner in the imperial power system". (Bridger, 2012).

[3] Bridger notes: "In general, and especially before World War II, nearly all mission-related churches required their neophytes to renounce almost all contact with their traditional systems of worship and related practices, including their art" (2012:17).

blue-eyed' Christian God – and modelled, the correspondingly Eurocentric (or 'civilised') lifestyle advocated by his emissaries.[4]

From at least the 1920s, however, the cultural bias associated with this modern colonial Christianity underwent a process of theoretical and practical revision, marking for Valentin Mudimbe a critical epistemological shift (1988:194). The Catholic Church in particular began to re-evaluate the iconoclasm and ethnocentrism of its missionary activities – and, correspondingly, the imposed Eurocentrism of its material culture (Bridger, 2012:17). Tracing this reflexive shift, Adrian Hastings (1989:25) notes how missionaries informed by new anthropological perspectives became increasingly open to non-western cultural forms, often collecting indigenous works of art and craft – objects their nineteenth-century forebears would most certainly have denounced.[5] It was only in the 1940s and 1950s, however, that a more distinct theological and sociological response to the Christianity-culture problematic in Africa and elsewhere was initiated within official Catholic circles – ratified in a series of official pronouncements by Pope Pius XII. Variously termed *Adaptation, Indigenisation, Contextualisation, Inculturation* – central to this theological turn was the idea that Christian faith ought to be encouraged and find expression within the context of local (non-western) cultures, rather than at their expense.[6] Understood as a project of ecclesial and missiological decolonisation, Mudimbe (1988:170) explains how, "The aim at the time was to search for sources of confusion between colonialism and Christianity and work for the implementation of an African Christianity".

In South Africa, these developments saw in the late 1950s and early 1960s a select commissioning of black artists, who (with varying degrees of autonomy) were entrusted with the task of formulating an indigenous and 'authentically' African sacred art (Leeb-du

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[4] For South African poet Es'kia Mphahlele, achieved in this religio-cultural transaction was, at once, the profane reification of European 'civilisation' and the "conquest of the black mind" (Comaroff, 1991:4).
[5] In South Africa for example, Leeb-du Toit recalls how, "despite their attitude to some Zulu cultural practices, the missionaries [of Mariannhill] became avid collectors of Zulu material culture, particularly in the early twentieth-century when interest in ethnography and anthropology escalated" (Leeb-du Toit, 1993:9)..
[6] This critical shift is outlined in Father Pedro Arupe's 1978 reflection on *Inculturation* as, "The incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question (this alone would be no more than a superficial adaptation) but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming it and remaking it so as to bring about a 'new creation'" (Secretariat, 1993).

Toit, 2003:95). At the Good Shepherd Mission at Hlabisa, for example, Father Kinch actively recruited local artists, most well-known of which were Bernard Gcwensa and Ruben Xulu. His envisioned project of indigenisation (or Africanisation) was, however, complicated in practice by the diverse and at times contradictory responses of the artists themselves. His encounter with Gcwensa is a case in point. Although happy to situate biblical narratives like the Exodus and Passion within a localised cultural situation, and to represent characters like Simon of Cyrene or Saint Stephen as black, Gcwensa consistently rendered the figure of Christ with aquiline features, straight hair and a beard – softly disrupting the neat iconographic turn-around commissioned by Father Kinch and his contemporaries (Cormick, 1993:8). [7] One might argue, of course, that for a devout congregation member like Gcwensa, the notion of a black Christ was simply incompatible with the already internalised ideal of his religious experience – that being, the European-featured Christ introduced by the nineteenth century missionaries, and celebrated in traditional Catholic iconography. Such a position, however, seems out of keeping with the self-assertion and criticality expressed in Gcwensa's response to Father Kinch, as a senior church authority. In this respect, his persistent refusal may well reflect the kind of scepticism expressed not long after by Manas Buthelezi, for whom the nativist (or ethnological) conception of Africanness implied in this programmed 'indigenisation', played conveniently into the racialised categorisations of apartheid, as supported by a theo-political ideology of separate development (Motlhabi, 2008:8). One might argue then, that refused by Gcwensa was not so much the idea or possibility of a black Christ per se, but rather the immediate political implications of registering his application – as "Saviour of the world" (1 John 4:14) – in terms of ethnic or racial affinity.

Unlike his senior and mentor Gcwensa, Xulu regularly visualised Christ as black – amongst numerous examples one might look to the 'African' processional crucifix and ascended Christ he carved in the mid-1970s for the Catholic Church of Ukwenyuka Kwenkosi, in Njengabantu. His own complication of this narrative (of *indigenisation, contextualisation, Africanisation*) is revealed, however, in the clarification he demanded of Father Kinch and others – as, when commissioned to sculpt ecclesial works, he routinely asked whether

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[7] For a detailed account of Father Kinch's interaction with Gcwensa and Xulu, as well as the various sacred art projects undertaken by both, see Cormick, 1993.

Christ, the Madonna, or whichever other biblical figure was to be represented, should be done as an *umlungu* (white) or *muntu* (black) (Cormick, 1993:8). Demystifying the ideal of an indigenous sacred iconography – as a spontaneous cultural response to Christianity – Xulu spelled out (or rather, had father Kinch spell out) the social, political and indeed economic terms of his commissioning. Made explicit in this way was both a normative racial binarism (reflecting the black/white dichotomy of mission and settler churches at the time),[8] as well as the paradoxical nature of this 'Africanising' project, as a brokered undertaking driven by the sociological and theological agendas of liberal, white and for the most part foreign missionaries.

Resisting what might be described in this context as a vehicular use of blackness (as servicing a kind of 'well-intentioned' whiteness) (Taylor, 2016:55), opened in the individual responses of Gcwensa and Xulu were, I propose, disjunctive spaces for decolonial agency and subjectivity. And by this I mean, with reference to Mignolo's thinking around decolonial aesthesis (Mignolo & Vazquez, 2013), that disrupted and to some extent transformed in their respective (and by no means congruous) positions was the presumed universality of an institutionalised aesthetic framework. As one historically located and, despite its revisionary objectives, still deeply imbricated within a modern colonial discourse. In this respect, revealed in the commissioning of an 'Africanised' Christian iconography – which is to say, in an 'African' crucifix, 'African' Madonna, and an 'Africanised' Stations of the Cross – was a reinforced programme of *adaptation from* and *adaptation to*. And one in which, as Aylward Shorter observes, the very concept of adaptation, "contained within itself the seeds of perpetual western superiority and domination" (cited in Mudimbe, 1988:57).[9] Put another way, made obvious in the decolonial ruptures of Gcwensa's refusal and the conditional nature of Xulu's compliance, were the governing conditions and power-plays of this institutionalised religio-cultural transaction. One consequently revealed – despite its decolonising claims – as a nominal and largely facile undertaking of aesthetic integrationism (to borrow Taylor's phrase), in which surface enactments of desegregation left largely

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[8] See Bate, S. 1999.
[9] The theo-cultural project of adaptation was subsequently critiqued by African theologians for whom the disentanglement of Christianity from the western cultural frame of colonial modernity demanded a more fundamental cultural and theological engagement. (See Sarpong, 2003).

untouched (or paradoxically entrenched) the underlying raciogenic structures of apartheid (Taylor, 2016:122-123).

Similarly commissioned in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Sydney Kumalo's response to the projected ideal of an Africanised Christian iconography unsettled the logic of this engrained colonial framework in ways quite different to those enacted by Gcwensa and Xulu. Firstly, for Kumalo, the possibility of a black Christ was of specifically political significance; in addressing not only the normative model of a European-styled Christianity, but also symbolically the third-class citizenry of black South Africans at the time.[10] In addition to this, the conscious synthesis of international modernism and classical African sculptural forms initiated by Kumalo, in response to a sequence of church-commissioned projects, unsettled the otherwise homogenising trope of Africanisation, as well as the ethnographic presumptions of an imagined, 'authentically' indigenous sacred art. Speaking to this context, Lize van Robbroek (2011:85) observes the essentialist tendencies of white patrons and culture-brokers of the period, whereby black artists were understood as 'belonging to Africa', and their works as embodying a certain intrinsic quality – a "mysterious and elusive Africanness". Pushing against this 'discourse of authenticity' – described by Olu Oguibe (2004:54) as a kind of late colonial preoccupation with constructing and preserving the 'authentic native' – Kumalo laid claim, I propose, to a certain cross-cultural contemporaneity.[11] As such, the 'Africanised' Christ and Mary he sculpted in 1958 for the Church of St Martin de Porres in Orlando, Soweto, reflect in their formal abstraction as much the sculptural traditions of Central and West Africa as they do those of European cubism and expressionism. Co-opted in this way, and asserted by Kumalo as an alternative mode of 'Africanisation', was something of the inter-cultural/cross-racial borrowing upon which European modernism was to a large extent founded (Lemke, 1998:28).

What measure of independence Kumalo asserted in this Africanist/modernist formulation is of course open to debate – given the neo-primitivist agenda of the Polly Street Art Centre in

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[10] According to gallerist Adeline Pohl, Kumalo adamantly refused to acknowledge the validity of any church wherein Christ could not be seen as black too. (See Miles, 2004:64).

[11] In this respect Ivor Powell observes the manner in which Kumalo, "succeeded in finding formulas and registers which, while they drew strongly on African sculptural tradition, nevertheless articulately spoke the languages of international modernism, and demanded to be taken seriously as such" (Powell, 2006:144).

Johannesburg at the time, where Kumalo was studying (Nettleton, 2011:153), as well as the significant role played in his early creative and professional development by established white artists like Cecil Skotnes and Edoardo Villa (Miles, 2004; Nettleton, 2011). That being said, to discredit the individual artistic (not to mention political) agency exercised in his response to the challenge of Africanisation, on account of such 'external influences', would only reinvent an equally unhelpful discourse of authenticity, and undermine the cross-cultural contemporaneity he sought to assert. Rather, worth noting in this regard is a certain decolonial impulse (or opening), registered in the subaltern claim of Kumalo's proactive engagement within this broader 'neo-primitivist' moment. And that, as a contextually subversive claim to *the modern* – reflecting, I believe, what Taylor (2016:15) observes as a critical disjuncture between the modernist pursuits of black artists at the time, and the predominant thrust of mainstream modernism, "which often used an image of the primitive, uncorrupted black person as an inspiration for rejecting the bourgeois, industrial society that many blacks sought to repair and join".[12]

Marking a certain shift in this decolonial genealogy of refusals, concessions and re-appropriations, is the counter-example of Azaria Mbatha, who in the early 1960s initiated a self-proclaimed project of 'Africanising the Bible'. Working largely in linocut, he variously adapted episodes from the Bible to culturally specific South African situations – syncretising in the process a range of social and religious influences; from Zulu cosmogony to the syncretic adaptations of separatist churches, and the Christian cultural context of his *Kholwa*[13] background (Danilowitz, 1998:176; Leeb-du Toit, 2003). Works from this period include his *David and Goliath* (1963), a telling image wherein a victorious David is presented as black and the decapitated Goliath as white; as well as *Jesus in front of Pilate* (1964), wherein the cypheric figure of a half-black/half-white Christ stands bound before (but in a

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[12] Similarly, in tracking historical formations of decolonial aesthesis (*aestheSis*) – as contrasting the overarching western narrative of modern/colonial aesthetics (*aestheTics*) – Mignolo observes the radically different ways in which black (rather than white) artists dealt with western aesthetic traditions, as for them, "the question became whether to accept, assimilate, reject, integrate, or appropriate European art and philosophical aestheTics into their own histories, ways of living, and sensing" (Mignolo & Vazquez, 2013:11-12).

[13] *Kholwa* (or *amakholwa*) translates as *believer in God*, and refers to Zulu converts to Christianity. Brenda Danilowitz describes the *Kholwa* social and cultural context as that of: "a new class of Christian African intelligentsia made up of more prosperous landowners and peasants as well as clergy, clerks, interpreters and teachers" (Danilowitz, 1998:25). For Mbatha's own reflections on *Kholwa* history and experience, see Mbatha, 2005:136.

sense also arbitrates between) two oppositional and racially polarised groups. Of his objectives at the time, Mbatha (1998:59) reflects:

> My aim was to *Africanise* the whole Bible because I discovered that there were many black Christian people who did not question Jesus of Jerusalem being white. It takes time to change one's inner perception and to start seeing in a different way. I read the Bible and I could interpret it as I wished. I found that the Bible was an interesting book to read not only because of the truths it contained, but also because it could be used like cement with which to bind societies together.

This sociological imperative, as demanding a here-and-now application of Christianity to the social conditions and experiences of black people in apartheid South Africa, pre-empted in many respects the situational and politically engaged application of faith emphasised some years later within the context of Black Theology (Leeb-du Toit, 1998:39). Significant in this regard was the dialogue Mbatha sustained in the early 1960s with black seminarians studying at the Lutheran Theological College at Mapumulo. Disenchanted with the abstract spiritualism and structural inequality they observed in mainstream 'white' Christianity, these early radicals agitated for a more material, socially engaged understanding, as one responsive to the everyday social, cultural and political realities of black experience (Mbatha, 2005:293). Making visual this new imperative, the reimagined Biblical idiom of Mbatha's prints thus differed in significant ways from the kinds of aesthetic integrationism promulgated by Father Kinch and his contemporaries. Reflected in Mbatha's alternative project of Africanisation was in this sense, a fundamental 'displacement of responsibility' – an altering of terms, observed by Mudimbe in the critical appropriation of European missionary discourses by black African theologians, who in doing so redeployed, "what [had] paradoxically founded the power and the knowledge of the colonial system" (1988:62).

The agency implied in this 'displaced responsibility' is evidenced in the formative (and vulnerable) context of Mbatha's early years as an artist studying at the ELC Art and Craft Centre at Rorke's Drift, where his insistent reworking of Biblical themes faced resistance from liberal (and supposedly 'non-interventionist') teachers like Peder Gowenius, who discouraged what he felt to be naive and overtly moralising religious references (Hobbs & Rankin, 2003:47&173). Despite this, Mbatha complains that his religious preoccupations have been too often associated with the presumed religiosity of Rorke's Drift itself, as a

mission-based institution. By contrast, he insists that in his self-motivated revision of biblical material, it was *he* who influenced the secular pedagogical framework of the Centre, making way for the diverse re-interpretations of Christian thematics later undertaken by such students as John Muafangejo, Vuminkosi Zulu and Sokhaya Charles Nkosi (Leeb-du Toit, 98:39). Of his own experience at *Sandlwane* (as he prefers to call Rorke's Drift),[14] he reflects:

> I could get no help from my art teachers, as they had no idea what was fermenting inside me … I wonder if they knew or even read the Bible. The kinds of ideas I had were very deep and they could not have been discussed with others or solved by other people. I, alone, was the only person who could do this. Such ideas were part of my soul (Mbatha, 1998:58).

Helpful in thinking about the kind of space – for subjectivity and agency – reflected in this statement, is Bogues' conception of freedom as a critical human practice. Rather than the normative ideal of western political philosophy, the idea here is that in contexts of social and political domination, freedom is worked out, played out – is "rooted and routed through a set of human experiences" (Bogues, 2012:30&43). In this sense, I would like to suggest that exercised in Mbatha's iconographic revisions was something more than the categorical conversion of a European religio-cultural framework to a suitably 'Africanised' alternative. Rather, the emancipatory narrative implied in such a transition – wherein freedom is fixed in idealised and teleological terms (as an envisioned end-goal) – was complicated and to some extent transformed in the working-through and playing-out of alternative, decolonial human practices. The same might be said of Gwensa, Xulu and Kumalo, whose divergent responses altered the conditions and material outcomes of an institutionalised project of iconographic 'decolonisation'. And it is here – in the disjuncture of these spaces, and the plurality of such practices – that, for Mignolo and Vasquez (2013:8-9), the decolonial registers as, "an opening of alternatives and not as the closure of norms".

Reflecting on these disjunctive openings – as practices of freedom, enacted in relation to an historical (and purportedly decolonial) narrative of *Africanisation, adaptation, indigenisation* – is useful, I believe, in approaching present dialogues around decolonisation and arts

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[14] *Sandlwane* refers to the battlefield of Isandlwana (22 January 1879), which is near to Rorke's Drift. Whilst in the Battle of Rorke's Drift the Zulus were routed by the British, Isandlwana marked a decisive Zulu victory. For Mbatha's reflections on the Centre see Mbatha, 2005:37–8, 291–2, 304–10.

pedagogy in South Africa. In this respect, I would like to propose that implied in these examples, as necessary to this contemporary, decolonising impulse, is an openness to practice – or practices – and the productivity of their disruptive potential. A pedagogy, that is released from the institutionalised fixity of an envisioned, 'decolonised' curriculum (the notion of which simply perpetuates the closure and scripting of colonial logic), and responsive rather to the unsettling, unpredictable, often contradictory workings of creative decolonial human practices.

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jamesmacdonald@gmail.com

SOME NOTES ON *ASSEMBLY*: CHOREOGRAPHY AS A MATERIALISING PRACTICE OF THINKING AND DECOLONIAL OPTIONS FOR CONTEMPORARY DANCE

Kristina Johnstone

Wits University: School of Arts

Abstract

The contemporary dance performance Assembly is part of a larger artistic research project that investigates how dramaturgical modes of looking can be employed in the choreographic process to challenge representational modes of meaning-making in a postcolonial South African dance context. As an artistic research project, the research is founded on the notion that choreography is a materialising practice of thinking. This paper offers some notes on key concepts that drive this artistic research, including Mignolo's concept of decolonial aestheSis, representation and representationalism, dance dramaturgy and creative practice as a rigorous process of not knowing.

Introduction

The contemporary dance performance *Assembly* is part of a larger artistic research project that investigates how dramaturgical modes of looking can be employed in the choreographic process to challenge representational modes of meaning-making in a postcolonial South African dance context. As an *artistic* research project, this research is founded on the understanding that creative practice is a form of research and that creative practice can reveal particular kinds of knowledge and understandings that may not become apparent through other research methods (Barrett & Bolt, 2007). "not in terms of what they represent but how they enact ideas formulated in performative practice" (Bleeker, 2015:69). In other words, choreography is a materialising practice of thinking and the creation of *Assembly* is part of imagining and making sense of new modes of dance performance that speak to South Africa's current socio-political and cultural context. Because this paper was written before *Assembly* was created, it does not offer an analysis of the work, but rather, as the research is still unknown and unknowable, it offers some notes on the key concepts that drive the research, including Mignolo's notion of decolonial aestheSis and decolonial options for dance, representation and representationalism, dance dramaturgy as a strategy to think outside of representationalism, and creative practice as a process of not knowing (Lepecki, 2015).

Decolonial aestheSis and decolonial options for dance

Semiotician and decolonial thinker Walter Mignolo describes decoloniality as an 'option', distinct from the civilising 'mission' that characterised the cultural project of colonialism (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2014:197). How might decoloniality be understood in relation to contemporary dance in South Africa? How could choreographic strategies offer decolonial options for contemporary dance? Mignolo suggests that a decolonial artist does not aim to 'succeed' in the art world, which operates within particular constructs of 'the arts' that are often grounded in capitalist and neoliberal conceptions (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2014). Instead, success for the decolonial artist means to delink from this art world.

Following Mignolo's reasoning, one could say that a decolonial option for contemporary South African dance is one that challenges particular, established constructs of dance that are, because of South Africa's history of colonialism and apartheid, located firmly within Western epistemic vocabulary and Western philosophical traditions (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2014:202). The challenge of dislodging these conceptual frames is closely connected to the fact that "the 'conversation' has been established within Western epistemology" (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2014:203). Challenging this conversation, according to Mignolo, then involves 'delinking' from the legacy of modern aesthetics and conceptions of art formed in Greek and Roman philosophical thought (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2014). He coins the term 'decolonial aestheSis' (distinct from 'aesthetics') to give a name to any practice, thinking or doing, that dismantles the sensibility of the colonised subject in such a way that it might be reconstituted as a different sense understanding–a perceptual perspective unlike the ones we have come to know through our inheritance of a colonial sensibility. In other words, Mignolo's decolonial aestheSis challenges an entrenched colonial sensibility and requires "a critical intervention within the world of the contemporary arts" (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2014:201-202). I like to imagine that this means to delink from an art world where the parameters are known, in favour of art that is non-commercial, unsellable, unfinished, un-definable, unknown and unknowable.

Representation and representationalism

A starting point for this choreographic research is the notion that issues of colonial power and representation are deeply entrenched in South African performance and dance-making,

to the extent that choreographers both consciously and unconsciously participate in perpetuating colonially scripted representations of dance and dancing bodies. More particularly, through my current research, I argue that these colonial scripts are perpetuated through firmly established representationalist modes of meaning-making in the creation, presentation and reading of dance. The research will thus try to imagine a theoretical framework that seeks alternative conceptualisations of contemporary dance in South Africa–outside of representationalism–and that may open up ways of seeing an 'aesthetic logic' in the many experiments undertaken by contemporary dance choreographers in South Africa.

Succinctly explained, representation refers to the notion that language, or in this case dance, makes use of a system of signs that represent or stand in for material things. Representationalism then, according to feminist theorist Karen Barad, is "the belief in the ontological distinction between representations and that which they purport to represent … that is, there are assumed to be two distinct and independent kinds of entities–representations and entities to be represented" (Barad, 2003:804). Observing that representationalism has received "significant challenge from feminists, poststructuralists, postcolonial critics, and queer theories," Barad problematises representation as an over-reliance on language and other forms of cultural representation (in this case dance) as an accurate mirror of what is being represented (Barad, 2003:804). She further argues that representationalism is "so deeply entrenched within Western culture that it takes on a commonsense appeal" (Barad, 2003:806). Representational modes of meaning-making are similarly entrenched in South African culture, and consequently in dance practices and readings of South African contemporary dance. An evocative image to explain the 'problem' of representationalism is Barad's description of the "representationalist trap of geometrical optics" (Barad, 2003:802). She describes this trap as "infinite play of images between two facing mirrors [where] the epistemological gets bounced back and forth, but nothing more is seen" (Barad, 2003:803). This image of a problematic space that is created between two facing mirrors resonates, with the particular challenges of contemporary dance-making in the South African postcolonial and post-apartheid context, where the politics of representation are critical concerns in contemporary dance scholarship. Sharon Friedman, for example, writes that:

From the late 1990s, discussions in the South African dance community intensified around issues of identity and heralded work in which identity was the main focus. What is African, what is a South African, what should South African dance look like? (Friedman, 2012:89).

These are relevant questions, particularly since certain dancing bodies and cultural expressions had been deliberately excluded from theatre or concert dance. There is however, as Friedman also notes, a danger that what is considered South African dance may, in responding to political requirements and ideological concerns, become prescriptive (Friedman, 2012:10) -or in other words, become trapped in the space between Barad's two facing mirrors, bouncing signs back and forth endlessly without questioning the presence of the mirrors in the first place.

Dance dramaturgy as a strategy to think outside a representationalist frame

To find a way of thinking about choreographic practice outside a representationalist frame, I propose that Barad and Mignolo's challenges to representationalism and the performative alternatives they each suggest, can be connected to current theories around dance dramaturgy, and particularly the idea of 'dramaturgical consciousness', 'dramaturgical awareness' or 'dramaturgical modes of looking' within the choreographic process.

The term dramaturgy has its lineage in theatre, but is increasingly used in dance with new and expanding meanings. Dramaturgy in dance is connected to the notion of meaning-making, as in 'how does a dance or a movement come to mean within the totality of theatrical elements?' Dramaturgy in dance is part of a developing field of enquiry around new approaches, methods and techniques in choreographic and performance practices in the twenty-first century that are often "fluid, mediated, interdisciplinary, collaborative and interactive" (Hansen & Callison, 2015:ix). Maaike Bleeker expands this notion by explaining dramaturgical work as:

> searching for connections between elements of the creation and the multi-dimensional network of synchronic and diachronic relationships against which these elements of the performance may appear to an audience; thus, a dramaturgical mode of looking entails a commitment to investigating the ways in which elements of the performance may be seen and interpreted (Bleeker, 2015:68-69).

Bleeker further describes dramaturgy as a mode of looking, a consciousness that is characterised by two points of awareness (Bleeker, 2015:68). The first is "an awareness of

the emerging potential of that which is being created" and the second awareness "arises from the dramaturg's insight into how the material triggers associations and invites modes of looking and interpreting; insight into how these modes may be put to use, played with, or disrupted [...]" (Bleeker, 2015:68).

Bleeker explains that current practices of creating dance and performance, including dramaturgy in dance, are closely connected to developments in the theory and philosophy of perception, cognitive science, neuroscience, and the philosophy of mind, as fields that are "invested in attempts at conceptualising thinking beyond representationalism and in terms of a material practice that proceeds through enactment" (Bleeker, 2015:69). In dance, thinking beyond representationalism then means a conscious engagement with the material dancing body and its very corporeality. This research project thus proposes that thinking through choreography and artistic practice may lead to alternative conceptualisations of contemporary dance, conceptualisations beyond established modes of meaning-making and possibly decolonial options for dance and performance. In imagining an expansion of the prevailing conceptual frame for the performing arts, and specifically contemporary dance in South Africa, I propose that dance dramaturgy as a practice that is linked to the notion of meaning-making may offer decolonial options for artistic practices. Performances and dance texts are the not sum of pre-existing theatrical elements selected from a shopping trolley in a postmodern sense. Rather, as the theories of Karen Barad and Maaike Bleeker argue, they are active processes of thinking that materialise in and through creative practice (Bleeker, 2015). Returning to Barad's image of two facing mirrors and Friedman's earlier mentioned questions, this means considering whether the questions 'what is African? What is a South African? What should South African dance look like?' can be asked outside the space between the mirrors. Does this involve looking under or over the mirror, inverting or eliminating it? In dance creation, this means that a dramaturgy that considers corporeality and embodied knowledge may be able to discover meaning beyond the closed circuit of two facing mirrors, where signs are endlessly bounced back and forth, and all that is seen are representations of representations of representations.

Not knowing

One of the characteristics and difficulties of artistic research is that "innovation is derived from methods that cannot always be pre-determined, and 'outcomes' of artistic research are necessarily unpredictable" (Barrett, 2007:3). In many ways, this means that the challenges of creative practice as research run parallel to the challenges of the dramaturgical process in creating dance. André Lepecki, who describes dance dramaturgy as a rigorous practice of 'erring' or 'not knowing', points out that "what fuels dramaturgy as a practice *for* dance and *in* dance is the tension established between multiple *non-written, diffuse and errant processes of thought* and multiple *corporeal processes of actualising these thoughts*" (Lepecki, 2015:51-52). He adds that the problem of dramaturgy is deeply connected to the question of 'knowing' and "more specifically, of claiming knowledge over the process of composing a work that from the start presents itself as oddly unscripted" (Lepecki, 2015:52). Dramaturg Marianne Van Kerkhoven describes this kind of choreographic process accurately when she says:

> During this process the director or choreographer start off with various 'collected materials' [and], in the course of the rehearsal process he/she observes how the materials behave and develop; only at the end of this entire process do we gradually distinguish a concept, a structure, a more or less clearly outlined form; this structure is by no means known at the start and is by no means definable at the end (Van Kerkhoven in Mokotow, 2014:8).

Gilles Deleuze offers a valuable framework for this kind of project. In his work on Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation, he explains that:

> it is a mistake to think that the painter works on a white surface. ... The painter has many things in his head, or around him, or in his studio. Now everything he has in his head or around him is already in the canvas, more or less virtually, more or less actually, before he begins his work. They are all present in the canvas as so many images, actual or virtual, so that the painter does not have to cover a blank surface, but rather would have to empty it out, clear it, clean it (Deleuze, 2003:86).

According to Deleuze, the canvas, or the art work that has not yet been made, is in fact pre-filled with images and information. A dramaturgical mode of looking thus implies an awareness of the fact that an empty space (the blank surface) is not empty, but rather, serving as "a support for representation" (Lepecki, 2015:63) is "actually overflowing with innumerable clichés which have first to be removed before something else may take place"

(Lepecki, 2015:63). But, as Lepecki also points out, the paradox of not knowing leads to knowledge and enables a new work to be made. Citing Deleuze he writes, "[The painter] enters into [the canvas] precisely because he knows what he wants to do, but what saves him is the fact that he does not know how to get there" (Deleuze in Lepecki, 2015:63). Similarly, this research project suggests that thinking through choreography may lead to alternative conceptualisations of contemporary dance, conceptualisations beyond representationalism. The challenge of the choreographic project then is to work against, or in Mignolo's words 'delink' from established aesthetic values that may or may not lead to decolonial options and new modes of performance. Borrowing from Lepecki (2015): Creative practice is a rigorous process of not knowing.

Assembly

Assembly is a choreographic experiment that at the time of writing this paper, was unknown and unknowable. *Assembly* is a gathering. It traces a thematic thread through various national and global protest movements. In an age where protest movements can spread like wildfire with the help of social media, *Assembly* asks: what are the psycho-social dynamics of an uprising? How does this manifest physically, sonically and spatially? At what moment does a gathering of people and ideas become reactionary?

As a creative research project, *Assembly* is part of a larger body of research that aims to understand how dramaturgical modes of looking can be used in the choreographic process to challenge colonially scripted representations of dance, how dramaturgical modes of looking can be used to challenge representational gazing, and how the dancers' physicality can be utilised to emphasise presence rather than representation. How can a choreographic process allow the body to exist, not in terms of what it represents, but in between being and becoming, both in the space and in the moment of performance?

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Kristina.helenajohnstone@gmail.com

ARTICULATING A DECOLONIAL DANCE PEDAGOGY THROUGH TEACHING THE CARIBBEAN *BELE*

Lisa Wilson
University of Cape Town: School of Dance

Abstract

Historically, the trans-Atlantic slave trade which brought Africans and their cultures across the Atlantic Ocean to the Caribbean, established an indissoluble relationship between Africa and its Diaspora in the New World. Much of the extant dance education research in relation to Africa and its Diaspora (Mabingo, 2015; 2014; Bellinger 2013; Dei, 2012; Green, 2011; Cruz-Banks, 2010; Kerr-Berry, 1994) has been located primarily within the context of post-secondary dance students in the Diaspora experiencing and learning traditional dances of Africa. Almost non-existent are reverse studies focused on the experiences of students in Africa learning dances from the Diaspora. This qualitative study addresses this imbalance through investigating the experiences of eleven South African post-secondary dance students, at the University of Cape Town, learning the Trinidadian Bele within their African dance course. The findings reveal that the racially diverse dance participants derived much value from learning the Bele. They found the pedagogical experience to be a decolonising one that left them feeling empowered and more deeply connected to the Diaspora, Africa, each other, and themselves as gendered, social and expressive beings. This paper aims to provide insights into African students' engagement with African Diaspora dance and culture through the lens of the Bele, and to articulate how such engagement might contribute knowledge towards deciphering a decolonised dance pedagogy in post-secondary dance education in South Africa.
Keywords: Post-secondary dance; decolonising pedagogy; Caribbean Bele

The trans-Atlantic slave trade which historically brought West Africans and their cultures across the Atlantic Ocean to the Caribbean established an indissoluble relationship between Africa and its Diaspora in the Americas. Archived in their bodies and memories, my ancestors brought with them their songs, dances and cultural philosophies; some of which were forcibly silenced and lost by the colonial onslaught and others of which have survived and or syncretized into newer forms of Diasporic expressions. The remnant of African based dances and heritages in the Anglophone Caribbean nations such as Jamaica, Barbados, and Trinidad are celebrated nationally and annually in schools, including post-secondary dance education, as symbols of national pride and self-determination, and cultural archives of our historical and ancestral ties to Africa.

From my current position as a Caribbean dance educator who re-crossed the Atlantic to teach dance, albeit contemporary dance, at a Southern African university, I was curious to ascertain how dance students in post-secondary dance studies in Africa would engage with

dances of the Caribbean. Of the limited dance education literature related to Africa and its Diaspora, the context is primarily of students in North America experiencing and learning traditional dances of Africa. Almost non-existent was the reverse context of students in Africa learning dances from the Diaspora. Further situated in South Africa at a time of active student movement protests calling for the decolonisation of higher education, I desired also to understand how the engagement of African students with Diaspora dances might contribute knowledge and understanding towards decolonising dance pedagogy in post-secondary dance in South Africa.

This paper presents some of the findings of a qualitative study that sought to examine the experiences of 11 South African dance students at the University of Cape Town (UCT) learning and performing the Trinidadian *Bele.* It begins with an overview of the research methodology and procedures. A description of the *Bele* and a brief review of the literature on decolonising pedagogies then follow. The paper culminates with discussion of the findings, specifically in relation to how the *Bele's* teaching and learning experience served as a decolonising pedagogy.

Research Methodology

Participants

The study was conducted with a group of 11 third and fourth year undergraduate dance students taking African dance technique as a major. This sample group was purposively chosen for the study on the bases of racial and gender composition as well as the students' advance knowledge and skill level in African dance. The gender demography of the class was 10 females and 1 male which made it suitable for learning the *Bele*, a dance largely performed by women. In this study, the female students danced the *Bele* while the one male student assumed the role of drummer, alongside the regular class drummer. The racial demography of the group, using South Africa's racial classifications, was 3 black students, 3 white students, and 5 coloured students (the latter referring to individuals who are a mixture of Asian, African and European ethnicities). This racial diversity I felt, was valuable to bringing multiple perspectives to bear on the teaching and learning experience of the *Bele* in South Africa.

Participants in the study had already completed between two and three African dance technique courses at UCT that exposed them to South African dances (e.g. gumboot, Zulu and pantsula), *Instika*, an innovative fusion of African and Western contemporary dance

forms created by South African dance artist-educator Maxwell Xolani Rani, and Pan-African dances from across Africa; but limited exposure to Caribbean dances.

Design and Procedure

The study was conducted over a period of four weeks, 5 dance lessons per week with an average class time of seventy-five minutes. Informed consent was obtained from participants and ethical approval was granted by the UCT Ethics review board. A qualitative research design was used to generate rich, meaningful (in-depth) descriptions of students' experiences with the *Bele* (Wellington, 2010).

The first teaching week comprised a series of lectures that contextualised the *Bele* dance within its Caribbean culture and history. As cultural dances are microcosmic of a larger societal culture (Visicarro, 2004) these lectures, one of which included a visit to the Iziko Museum Slave Lodge in Cape Town, were vital to helping students understand the historical connection between Africa and its Diaspora and the ecological connection between cultural dances, the people who perform them, and their historical and contemporary functions of within local communities (Mabingo, 2015; Visicarro, 2004).

Over the next three weeks I taught the dancers various performance aspects of the Bele–its songs; movements; instrumentations; spatial patterns; and formations. Classes entailed a consistent structure of sixty minutes of learning and practising the Bele, with the final fifteen minutes of the lesson given to participants to reflect in writing on the lesson experience. The learning experience culminated with a final in-class performance presentation to a group of students.

Data Collection and Credibility.

Data was collected by means of student journals, participant observation, video documentation of the training process, open-ended assignments, and structured questionnaires. The data collection process was cyclical rather than linear allowing for earlier stages of data collection to shape subsequent phases as well as the overall research design (Wellington, 2010). Data was collected from multiple data sources for triangulation

purposes and analysed inductively, allowing themes to emerge from the data. Emergent themes were then coded into categories that were continually revised and refined to eliminate overlap and redundancy (Creswell, 2003). Analysis was shared with participants, and the feedback used to cross check the interpretation of the data (Wellington 2010; Creswell 2003), thereby enhancing credibility. Credibility was further enhanced by my emic position as a dancer whose lived experiences and social realities are primarily Caribbean.

Trinidadian Bele

The Trinidadian *Bele* is a *contredanse* derived social dance form danced by women, which fuses the rhythm, form and style of the African with the flair and coquetry of the French (Franco, 2010). According to Caribbean dance scholar Yvonne Daniel (2014), typical of *contredans*e derived performances in the Caribbean, the Trinidadian *Bele* demonstrates French court-related practices of processions, parades, and movements in elaborate dance patterns or figures (usually circles, squares and lines). The *Bele* shows the beauty and grace of the female dancer and, depending on the variation, subtly or radically accentuates the sensuality of the female African body in French court-inspired costumes. The women wear full-length, plaid or floral print dresses with frilled sleeves over a white frilled petticoat and a brightly coloured necktie (Franco, 2010). Heads are covered with intriguingly wrapped head ties and live drumming and singing accompany the dance pageantry.

The architecture of colonialism was built on the subjugation and destruction of the culture of the colonised. During slavery, various means were used by European colonisers to silence and eradicate the cultural traditions and expressions of the enslaved Africans. My ancestors were coerced into adapting on their African constructed bodies, European dance styles (Daniel, 2014), such as the *contredanse* forms which were forcibly taught to them by their European masters. This resulted in what Yvonne Daniel calls "an interplay and contestation of several ethnic heritages inside the dancing body" (Daniel, 2014:150). Such hybrid interplay is visible in the *Bele* where European body orientation and dance figures, communicating a colonial sense of "proper" behaviour and elite social status, collide with African values of contestation and agency, expressed through fluid hips, loose torso, and the cool control with which the French dance figures are performed (Daniel, 2011).

Cultural historians posit that the enslaved Africans practised the exceedingly erect postures and codified dance movements of the contredanse as a finessed form of resistance to their subjugated chattel identity and the aspersions of indecency assigned to their drum dances. The African aspects of the Bele became a performative currency for "resisting total incorporation or seasoning into European identities, signs, and modes of representation" (Irobi, 2007:901). Today the Bele is performed out of respect for our ancestors "to honour what our New World ancestors danced" (Daniel, 2014:157) and has developed beyond the coercive performances during slavery to reflect and celebrate contemporary Caribbean identities over previous colonial ones, Caribbean sovereignty over colonial domination.

Perspectives on Decolonising education:

 Decolonisation is a concept which takes on different meanings across different contexts. A review of both the limited dance and the more expansive education literature focused on decolonising discourse revealed several dominant themes and perspectives. The first is that a decolonising pedagogy aims to unmask and undo the perverse logic and working effects of colonial domination, oppression and exploitation of the mind and body in contemporary contexts (Cruz-Banks, 2010; Fensham, 2008; Tejada & Espinoza 2003; Fanon, 1967; hooks, 1994). In dance, such pedagogical praxis would demand that teachers and students critically examine and actively challenge the structures and assumptions in their dance education contexts that continue to reproduce colonial hegemonies (Fensham 2008; Gatimu 2009), perpetuate the unjust and biased values of Western capitalist ontology (Battiste, 2004; Bear Nicholas, 2001; Fensham 2008; Nettleford, 2003), and deny historically marginalised bodies the power to kinesthetically communicate from their own cultural frames of reference and interests (Chilisa 2012; Wilson 2013). Bhaba, ongoing process of reclaiming, affirming, and advancing the legitimacy, centrality and sovereignty of indigenous knowledges and practices Bhab (Dei, 2012; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012; wa Thiong'o, 1986). Cruz-Banks (2015:2009) draws on this assertion to suggest that in dance this means including, validating and centering indigenous dance forms, embodied processes and philosophical understandings of the body, which in the past and present have been negated, misrepresented, excluded from or marginalised in Western dance education. Dance literacy post-secondary dance education has generally meant thorough knowledge of Western dance techniques and history and general knowledge of jazz, folk, tap and other dance forms (Welsh-Asante, 1993). This

notion of de-centering or de-territorialising Western canons in dance education is critical and necessary for dancers from cultures oppressed and exploited by Western powers to experience healing and transformation, self-actualisation, freedom, and a sense of authority and belonging in the post-secondary dance learning environment. The literature highlights also that the process of decolonising is ongoing as the systems of colonialism and imperialism are reforming constantly, a process that Latin scholars Cervante and Saldana (2015) refer to as "multiple colonialisms".

A third theme which is linked to critical pedagogy discourse is that a decolonising pedagogical praxis is not a set of teaching strategies, methods or techniques (Giroux, 2011) but rather a political and moral project to assert and claim agency (Freire, 1970), self-determination (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012), self-clarity (wa Thiong'o, 1986), humanity, equity, and justice (social, epistemological, embodied, economical, ecological) (Tejada & Espinoza, 2003; Cervantes & Saldana, 2015) for the "wrongs' of colonialism. It is a project that is context dependent and which is likely to be fraught with tensions or discomforts or paradoxes and contradictions but also unknown possibilities.

Finally, a decolonising pedagogy does not mean a total rejection of all western knowledges and practices (Le Grange, 2016; Helveta, 2016; Mbembe, 2015; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012; Battiste, 2004; Tejada & Espinoza, 2003). Latin scholars Tejada and Espinoza (2003) contend that a decolonising pedagogy should be oriented towards a conceptually dynamic worldview and set of values that make it anti-racist, anti-capitalist, anti-sexist and anti-homophobic. It ought to be a counter-hegemonic pedagogy that resists the silencing of difference and rather creates anti-hierarchical spaces for dialogue among different epistemic traditions (Mbembe, 2015). Such pedagogy creates pluralistic spaces where indigenous and Eurocentric knowledges can harmonise or collide to bear new possibilities and is more likely to prepare students capable of functioning in the complex, global, and connected world while moving the African continent forward (Helveta, 2016).

Findings and Discussion

The findings revealed that the South African dance students in the study responded positively to learning and performing the *Bele* and felt that it was very important for students studying African dance to experience African Diaspora dances. They found engaging with the socio-historical context and multi-dimensional performance elements

(music and instrumentation, stylistic movement, spatial patterns, costumes, instrumentation and relationships) of the *Bele,* to be a valuable, empowering and deeply connective experience. Descriptions such as "rich", "fun", "enjoyable", "fresh", "fascinating", "meaningful", even "challenging" and "a privilege" emerged frequently in the student reflections and writings on their Diaspora dance experience. While the data collected explicitly suggest that the participants had a positive experience with the *Bele,* of greater significance to this paper is the more implicit suggestions that the experience for many was a decolonising one in the sense of: 1) reclaiming, affirming and validating their African cultural knowledge systems and ways of moving; 2) resisting and subverting colonial and Western capitalist ontological codes of hierarchy, separation, individualism and alienation and; 3) restoring pride and respect for African peoples and their cultural contributions to the world.

Empowering

The majority of the participants indicated that the experiential, historical and cultural knowledge gained from the creolized Bele empowered their minds and bodies in ways that transformed how they saw themselves, African dance and Africa's contribution to global dance history. Students expressed experiencing increased appreciation for, and pride in, African dance and culture as they came to understand, through theoretical and embodied discourses, the resilience, inventive revitalisations and expansive reach and influence of African cultural traditions across the Atlantic and the West. The following responses provide evidence of this:

Respondent A

A highlight for me in this experience was understanding how far the African roots have spread and broadly appreciating Africa's contribution to the world and global dance history.

Respondent B:

After reading the articles and answering the questions I have been able to understand where, how, what Bele dancing is. Actually doing it [the Bele] makes you realise how amazing it is that the people were able to really combine the colonialist form of dancing with the "African-ness" of the people. Doing it makes me seriously appreciate how much traditions and cultures have adapted to make a whole new form of traditions and cultures.

Respondent C:

It was refreshing and empowering to be reminded that pieces of Africa extend beyond the Continent, and to lay claim to that. It is extremely important for African dance students to broaden their knowledge and learn about many different forms of African and African Diaspora dances…

For some dancers, experiencing this Caribbean extension of Africa, through the *Bele,* seemingly initiated a powerful paradigm shift that enlarged their view of Africa and ultimately their perception and positioning of themselves as Africans within the larger contemporary world. Part of the subjugated logic and mission of coloniality always was and continues to represent colonised peoples using negative and deficit-laden narratives that offend and distort their sense of who and what they are (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012:26). in the minds of the participants, as "creators of dynamic and consequential civilizations, not just The *Bele* in reclaiming African Diaspora stories of agency, creative ingenuity, and powerful resistance against total European subjugation enabled participants to "see" and resituate enslaved Africans in the New World as "creators of dynamic and consequential civilizations, not just victims of slavery and subsequent oppression" (Demerson, 2013:9).

To re-write and re-right (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012) the negative, deficit-laden narratives and representations of peoples of Africa by the West is a goal of a decolonising pedagogy. Such a pedagogy helps to achieve this goal through engaging students with the cultural histories and wider socio-cultural and political contextual backgrounds of the African dances they learn. This may occur as separate lectures or more effectively integrated in the practical experience to help students "reflectively locate links between the contextual, historical, oral, aesthetic, pedagogic, and corporeal experiences of the dance" (Mabingo, 2015:137-138). The widely prevalent practice in formal dance education to teach African based dances as just movement entities without history, context, or connection to distinct communities is to be complicit with imperialist myths of African dances as monolithic expressions of primitive, non-literate people and lacking artistic traditions.

The findings also suggested that the *Bele* dance experience was empowering and decolonial through suspending Eurocentric cultural hegemony and genuinely and profoundly affirming multiple embodied identities and subjectivities. Three racially diverse participants,

expressed that they felt a liberating sense of empowerment as their female bodies with their respective African and European sensibilities were equally validated and affirmed within the dance experience:

Respondent D (white student):

I felt happy. Performing the Bele made me feel proud and honourable. I felt like a woman who was 100% comfortable in her own skin.

Respondent E (coloured student):

I did what felt beautiful. My legs spread wide but I did not feel vulgar for it. What my body did [she repeatedly rotated her hips in a circular motion on various levels] and felt came natural, and how I looked was not of much importance as all I wanted to do was to feel and be a woman.

Respondent F (black student):

I felt elegant, beautiful and feminine. I loved the fact that the dance embraces the female body and highlights the elegant side of a woman, but also her sensuality.

The Bele pedagogical experience gave access and somatogenic power to the historically marginalised African female body in Western dance studies through celebrating, legitimating and not censoring its gyrations, or its lower movement centers. The embodied experience allowed participants to defy and mock colonial definitions of the African body and its dance phenomena as "savage", "hypersexual" or "unrefined". In 2017 in South Africa, even as the UCT dance department serves as a model of transformation to its American counterparts in diversifying its curriculum to establish African Dance as equitable studies beside ballet and contemporary dance (McCarthy-Brown, 2014), the need to acknowledge, legitimise and ground the Black dancing body and its indigenous and contemporary African movement canons in post-secondary dance education and dance theatre as art and 'high' art remains pertinent. A decolonising dance pedagogy in South Africa empowers non-European bodies to dance their dances, and not only the dances of others. To do otherwise is to perpetuate the unacceptable silencing or "whitening-out" of their existence and worth in Africa in the 21st century.

One student further expressed that she truly enjoyed the *Bele* experience as "the dance celebrates Africa with influences from Europe … highlighting the fusion of cultures which is vital to learn in a Western institution." The *Bele* in acknowledging and validating both Eurocentric and Africanist sensibilities in one dancing body enabled the dancers to flexibly adjust their identities to a heterogenous social reality (Fensham, 2008). As such the colonial dominance of European corporeality becomes differentiated and thus less hegemonic, even distanced in the Bele dance experience.

Connective

The most prevalent theme emerging from the data was that participation in the *Bele* was a deeply connecting experience. The participants expressed experiencing multiple threads of connectivity that made the learning experience holistic. One such connectivity was experiencing the integration of song and dance which connected them more to African ways of knowing and the people of the Diaspora.

Integration of song and dance

It is an Afrocentric pedagogical paradigm to teach the music, sounds, songs along with the dance. Prior to learning the dance steps, the students were first taught the songs and the duple rhythm of the *Bele*. Then as they became more confident with the movements they combined singing the *Bele* songs and moving. The participants being students of African dance studies theoretically understood this integrated relationship between African music and dance prior to learning the *Bele*, but experiencing it enabled them to make sense of this central Afrocentric pedagogical paradigm that made learning the Diaspora dance richer, deeper, more authentic and more communal.

Several dancers highlighted the integration of song and dance as the most memorable aesthetic aspect of their *Bele* experience for various reasons as expressed below:

Respondent M:

It was a nice feeling to do the dance while singing because it connects you more with the people you are dancing with and whose culture you are dancing. It is a nice sense of community.

Respondent N:

Learning the actual song made the experience feel more real. It was also nice to sing and dance as we hardly get to sing when dancing.

Respondent O:

I also found that learning to sing the song while dancing was fantastic because it inspired me to embrace the Bele even more and the culture of the people.

The students' responses confirm assertions by African scholars like Niangoran-Bouah (1980) and Caribbean ethnomusicologists (Lewin 2000; Wylie 2005) that engaging with the music and songs of African people creates a totality of experience that provides insights into the sociocultural life of a people. These voices assert that African music is a repository of genealogies, histories, languages, social practices, religions and politics. In African cultural philosophy music, meaning, the instrumentation, songs, rhythms, and vocalizations, do not merely function as accompaniments to dance but rather are aspects "that invoke the body's agency in understanding movement action" (Mabingo, 2015:8). Therefore, meaningfully engaging dance students with the music of the African-based dances makes learning richer, deeper and more authentic to indigenous ways. Too often in academic contexts, students are taught African based dances as movement entities divorced from their tight and sacred relationship with their music and songs (Green, 2011; Mabingo, 2015).

Teaching African and or Diaspora dances focusing on the physicality of the movements, or as mere objects in the abstract, disconnected from their music and songs, as well as their cultural contexts reinforces colonial fragmentation and robs students of the connective power and meanings of African dance performance. Such pedagogical approach reifies the dualism typical of European worldviews as opposed to the Africanist holistic sense of being. I therefore contend with Tejada and Espinoza (2003) that a decolonising dance pedagogy engages in the process of re-membering or re-connecting fragments of the indigenous self, carved up and separated by the imposition of colonial and imperialist epistemology and ontology on African lives.

Yet even as I argue for this re-membering of the indigenous self in the teaching of African dance in academia, I must highlight the irony and contradiction of doing so within the reality

of African dance being uprooted and disconnected from its indigenous communities and taught in an enclosed square box subjected to and regulated by a colonial education system. This disconnect undoubtedly creates tensions in its teaching as functions, meanings and inherent pedagogical paradigms become displaced, even lost (Green, 2011). Such reality echoes Tuck and Yang's perspective that decolonisation in a settler context is fraught with "contradictory decolonial desires" (2012:7).

Another thread of connectivity that the participants highly valued was the social interactions provided by the dance form that connected them more deeply with each other as dancers, South Africans, and as humans.

Social Connections

The following journal responses indicate that the *Bele* performance heightened students' awareness of the each other and gave them a powerful sense of dance learning as a relational versus an individualized space:

Respondent J:

I felt connected to each and every dancer participating. It was nice to connect with my classmates in a different way and more than usual. At times we were up close, other times we were at a distance but I still felt in touch with the whole at all times. That was amazing.

Respondent A:

The Bele helped me to understand the idea of community and feeding off one another's energy in a positive way. Sometimes I struggled to let go because I am usually very focused on the technical aspects of dance rather than the enjoyment of it. And this is why I have loved the experience because it reminded me about the fun part of dance, which is vital!

Respondent D:

I found that learning a dance that is based on community and embracing each other was very refreshing and wonderful to be a part of. It brought back my memories of my childhood days when we learned to play games together and share the joy of working as a team.

As student D points out, the *Bele* performance requires teamwork. Its emphasis on visual and spatial design created through crisp and clear group formations, floor patterns and the motions of the skirts mean that each dancer is important to its overall structure and success. It demanded a heightened sense of community, cooperation and inter-dependency; values important to many non-Western cultures. Students came to understand these

principles very well when their peers were absent from class as they encountered much difficulty and confusion trying to maintain the counts, patterns, and formations of the dance. Through the Bele, the dancers re-discovered the power of community as the successful group performance of the Bele was inextricably bound up in the performance of each dancer and the performance of each dancer was inextricably bound up in the performance of the group. Such social consciousness and connectivity is significant in this interrogation of decolonisation in dance in South African post-secondary context for two reasons. First, the social aspect of learning and development can be given little attention in post-secondary dance settings, where in keeping with Western capitalist ontology, competition and individualism are upheld over cooperation and community. Second, in a South African post-secondary education context where psychological and structural wounds from a violent apartheid past remain open, small acts of social cohesion can be large acts of healing and hopeful reconciliation.

The research participants found personal value in being reminded through the *Bele* that in addition to being dancers, they were social beings, with social needs and social responsibilities.

Fig. 1 Two dancers interacting with each other in the Bele

Several students expressed how valuable and significant it was for them as South Africans to embody the *Bele's* fusion of European and African cultures in the African dance class. One white student opined that given that the South African dancing body was still scarred by its apartheid history of cultural separation and racial divisiveness, it was "refreshing" and "therapeutic" to integrate, embrace, and validate Europe and Africa in one bodily, kinaesthetic experience than as separate entities. Another Black student echoed a similar thought:

Respondent Y:

I like how the cultures are fused to create new forms. I really like the fusion. Here in South Africa dancing cultures and bodies are separate from each other, perhaps dance creolization is a way for us to move forward.

It was evident that the participants appreciated how both Europe and Africa embraced, cohabited and were validated in the *Bele* experience. In an exciting kind of South African rewriting or re-interpretation of the *Bele*, the South African dance students positively embraced the creolized dance form as an embodied and pertinent "cultural intercourse" (Radhakrishnan, 2003:530) of South Africa's diverse heritage, which challenged deeply-rooted and fixed apartheid racial identities in the body. Drawing from the students' response to the creolized or 'third space' (Bhaba, 1996) nature of the *Bele,* it could be interpreted that decolonising dance pedagogies in South Africa create pluralistic, inter-cultural, and horizontal spaces where black, brown and even white South African bodies and their cultural movement practices can be propelled from a colonial and apartheid past of cultural separation and hierarchy, and into the embodiments of dialogic and collective subjectivities (Cruz 2001). Adopting Giroux's (2011) description of critical pedagogy, I contend that a decolonising dance pedagogy seeks to build democratic social bonds in the dance studio versus commodities or individuals free from any social obligation to each other.

Conclusion

At the onset of this paper I set out to investigate how post-secondary dance students in Africa would respond to dances of the African Diaspora through the lens of the Bele and to articulate how such engagement might contribute knowledge towards deciphering a decolonised dance pedagogy. The study at UCT revealed that crossing the Atlantic with the *Bele,* was more than just extending its performance boundaries and location. It revealed that post-secondary dance students in Africa can gain much from engaging with cultural dances of the Diaspora as students in the Diaspora have historically gained much from experiencing and learning traditional dances of Africa (Kerr-Berry, 1994; Banks, 2010; Green, 2011; Bellinger, 2013; Mabingo, 2014). The Bele dance in re-affirming and validating Black and Brown female bodies, centering Africanist cultural expressions, memories and experiences, rupturing Western capitalist ethos of hierarchy, separation and individualism, and rejecting deficit notions and assumptions of Africa and its descendants, shaped the dance pedagogy and experience as decolonising. The outcomes of which was that participants connected to themselves as social and expressive beings, beautiful and sensual

Black, Coloured and White women, entangled South Africans and proud Africans in meaningful, empowering and liberating ways.

The findings support existing views in the decolonisation educational literature such as McGregor (2012) that diverse students, regardless of their heritage can benefit from decolonising pedagogies. In contrast, simultaneously the findings fall significantly short from more radical views of decolonisation such as Tuck and Yang (2012) who punctuate that decolonisation in a settler context is unequivocally about repatriation of indigenous lands and life, and should not be distracted or diverted by educational advocacy and scholarship calling to "decolonize our schools," or use "decolonizing methods," or, "decolonize student thinking". They argue that decolonisation is not a metaphor for social justice, critical methodologies or inclusion for as important as their goals and benefits may be, pedagogical approaches that de-center settler perspectives have objectives that may be incommensurable with decolonisation.

Within the context of higher education, the decolonising pedagogy articulated through the Bele experience and mobilised through personal and departmental transformation is considered a soft-reform response to the violence of modern coloniality in academia. Even though at UCT, establishing an African dance course of study has reclaimed African knowledges, cultural histories and experiences from the margins of post-secondary dance education it has not displaced the educational empire of European knowledges. Moving towards decolonisation in South African higher education requires extensive transformation as pedagogy is interconnected with educational and institutional policy, curriculum, teacher preparation, and community involvement. Rewriting rather than rehearsing colonial and apartheid scripts in post-secondary dance in South Africa demands extensive efforts, requiring as many teachers of dance as possible, regardless of their dance genre and racial classification, to be aware of their colonial complicities and decolonise themselves, their identities, and the ways they view dance education and its outcomes. This mammoth challenge becomes even greater when dance teachers are blindly ignorant or dismissive of their colonial complicities. The process of decolonisation in dance also requires new pedagogical tools that can create "anti-hierarchical" learning spaces where everyone learns, engages, debates and critically reflects together" (Rouhani 2012:1731), and which strips the

discipline of its Eurocentric civilisational, cognitive and psychomotor conceits (Zeleza, 2009). This study suggests that Diaspora dances, such as the *Bele*, are potentially valuable pedagogical tools in the struggle to decolonise dance education in South Africa so that the discipline serves the interests of Africa and not Europe in the 21st century and beyond.

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Lisa.wilson@uct.ac.za

NEW DANCE LAB: CREATING A SPACE FOR RISK, IMMEDIACY AND NEW RESEARCH IN DANCE AND PERFORMANCE
Thalia Laric and Kristina Johnstone

Abstract and Introduction

NEW DANCE LAB is a platform for movement research and experimental performance. Launched in April 2017, the project developed out of a continuous conversation between artists, researchers and curators Kristina Johnstone and Thalia Laric. The project's aim is to create a space for new research related to movement, dance and choreographic practices in South Africa, by engaging with risk, immediacy and experimentalism. In creating a platform that preferences research *in*, *of* and *about* the body, the vision is to develop an ongoing space for movement research and embodied knowledge that could lead to new research insights for, not only the creation and presentation of dance performance, but also new dance pedagogies and teaching practices. The platform invites research that engages with questions around how dance might be able to destabilise established aesthetic structures and open ways for new aesthetic sensibilities/sense understandings, or what decolonial thinker Walter Mignolo refers to as a 'decolonial aestheSis'. This presentation briefly offers an overview of some key thoughts that led to the development of NEW DANCE LAB, and presents some archival material from the first NEW DANCE LAB evening performances.

Key thoughts

The unsellable artwork

Semiotician and decolonial thinker Walter Mignolo suggests that a decolonial artist does not aim to 'succeed' in the art world, which operates within particular constructs of 'the arts' that are often grounded in capitalist and neoliberal conceptions (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2014). Rather, success for the decolonial artist means to delink from this art world where the parameters are known, in favour of art that is non-commercial, unsellable, unfinished, un-definable, unknown and unknowable. What would it mean for choreographers and artists engaging with dance if they did not have to conform to the expectations of audiences, theatres, festivals, or other established structures for presenting dance? What if the contract between the audience and the performance could be re-written? What if a dance could be staged in the moment before its becoming a dance, a dance that exists before it becomes a 'finished', 'ready', 'sellable' or 'repeatable' art object? What kind of structure could offer support for this kind of art? Mignolo coins the term 'decolonial aestheSis' (distinct from 'aesthetics') to give a name to any practice, thinking or doing, that dismantles the sensibility of the colonised subject in such a way that it might be reconstituted as a different sense understanding–a perceptual perspective unlike the ones we have come to know through our inheritance of a colonial sensibility. In other words, Mignolo's decolonial aestheSis challenges an entrenched colonial sensibility and requires 'a critical intervention within the world of the contemporary arts' (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2014:201-202). How can we create a performance and movement research space that challenges established conversations and opens avenues for new conversations? How might we imagine new sense understandings of contemporary dance, performance and pedagogy in South Africa?

The Body

Current practices of creating dance and performance are closely connected to developments in the theory and philosophy of perception, cognitive science, neuroscience, and the philosophy of mind, as fields that are 'invested in attempts at conceptualising thinking in terms of a material practice that proceeds through enactment (Bleeker, 2015:69). In dance, this means a conscious engagement with the material dancing body and its very corporeality. As researching practitioners, we acknowledge that the place of research for dance is located in the body. Specifically, this kind of research is motivated by a search, not for a body that has been disciplined into one aesthetic form, but rather for 'an underlying body – a naked body of raw reflex, without layers of conditioning' (Buckwalter, 2012:37): A body that resists aesthetic conditioning in order to be a body of research. This is a body that holds material knowledge related to a plethora of themes including, agency, somatic and sensory awareness and performer presence. How can a subjective approach to the body inform new dance pedagogies, where teaching happens by developing experiential anatomical and sensory awareness? How can such pedagogies inform performance practices?

The NEW DANCE LAB pilot performance

The pilot performances of NEW DANCE LAB took place on 28 and 29 April 2017 at the Theatre Arts Admin Collective in Observatory, Cape Town. A call was sent out inviting artists to present maximum five minutes of work engaging with risk, immediacy, experimentation and their most current movement research. The call also invited responses to choreographer Mette Ingvartsen's 2005 Yes Manifesto:

YES MANIFESTO

Yes to redefining virtuosity
Yes to conceptualising experience, affects, sensation
Yes to materiality/body practice
Yes to investment of performer and spectator
Yes to expression
Yes to excess
Yes to 'invention' (however impossible)
Yes to un-naming, decoding and recoding expression
Yes to non-recognition, non-resemblance
Yes to non-sense/illogic
Yes to organising principles rather than fixed logic systems
Yes to moving the 'clear concept' behind the actual performance of
Yes to methodology and procedures
Yes to editing and animation
Yes to style as a result of procedure and specificity of a proposal
Yes to multiplicity and difference

Mette Ingvartsen, 'Yes Manifesto' (2005)

A sharing and feedback session was held for all participants a few days prior to the performances on Monday 24 April. This first meeting proved particularly valuable, and one of the main research findings of NEW DANCE LAB was that there is the need to develop a community of research and practice among artist working in experimental dance and performance. Other questions arising from the process included questions aroud curatorship and dance presenting. These are all focus areas that we aim to develop further in future projects.

Presenting documents from the NEW DANCE LAB pilot performances

The aim of this photo and video presentation is to offer an overview of the exciting experiments local choreographers in Cape Town are undertaking in and through the body, using the archival material from the NEW DANCE LAB pilot performances and rehearsals.

Participating artists included: Gavin Krastin, Alan Parker, Kopano Maroga, Zee Hartman, Keanu Bergman, Julia de Rosenwerth, Nicola Visser, Hannah Loewenthal, Tania Vosgatter, Leilah Kirsten, Kristina Johnstone and Thalia Laric. The performances were well received by the audience and the feeling among the participating artists was one of great generosity and integrity. We would like to use this opportunity to thank these artists for sharing their research with us.

The next NEW DANCE LAB is scheduled for November/December 2017.

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Kopano Maroga performing 'Falling out' -photographer Lindsey Appolis

Sad Bambi performing 'Burlesque' - photographer Lindsey Appolis

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN DANCE EDUCATION: PREPARING AMERICA'S FUTURE

Rainy Demerson

University of California, Riverside

Abstract

This essay looks at evolving diversity and inclusion practices in U.S. college and university dance programs. I argue that the lenses through which we view dance, the modes of instruction, and the goals of dance education must adapt to suit the dance forms that institutions embrace, rather than squeezing them into outdated and biased structures. Further consideration is given to the complexity of preparing faculty members and students to be educators, performers, choreographers, and critical thinkers who are able to create an inclusive future for dance in the academy. Drawing from critical pedagogy, queer theory and dance studies, I examine the learning environment as a culture in itself, where we can question the history and development of its aesthetics, norms, modes of transmission, and visions for a just and dynamic future.

Since Margaret H'Doubler founded the first American dance degree program in 1926 at University of Wisconsin in Madison on the premise that dance is "an expression of the society it represents" (H'Doubler & Brennan, 1957:34), our society has undergone great changes. Certainly the concept of diversity and even of what constitutes dance has broadened, and shifted. We are faced with the abstract, artistic, affective, and embodied realities of a nation built on consumption and driven by the principle of freedom as measured by exclusivity. Within this framework, the underlying expectation that you can have it all drives us towards innovation in all fields as well as an ever-growing vision of what is to be taken up in academia and who should have access to it.

Describing aspects of how middle-class White women established Modern dance in university dance programs, Susan Foster writes, "These artists sought to overhaul body and soul in order to liberate individual creative impulses from the stranglehold of societal norms and aesthetic values. Their choreographic accomplishments, congruent with experimental philosophies of education during that period, provided the rationale for the entrance of dance into higher education" (Foster, 1998:6). In many ways, the values of Modern dance and modernism have for nearly one hundred years, formed and fueled our college dance education programs. Over

time, the concepts of a diverse student body and diverse curricula were pushed wider to make room for marginalized populations. The standard curriculum of ballet and modern dance is being challenged increasingly by university dance departments.

In moving through the different laboratories and libraries our bodies hold, we are at a difficult crossroads in academia right now. On the one hand, more and more higher education programs are recruiting and including dance forms not previously considered in a Western canon, on the other hand, the increasing corporatization of the university means practitioners have to continuously justify our presence to the powers that be and, question it ourselves.

Can we be neighbors as dance scholar Marta Savigliano suggests, or will embodied gentrification force out those deemed not – virtuosic, innovative, or contemporary enough - off the dance floor? Is this even the party we want to attend? In the Unites States, visibility comes with a price. I wonder if putting marginalized dances into the university structure could actually chip away at their foundational intentions of creating community, facilitating healing, and nurturing cultural identities. In Savigliano's words, "There are gains and losses, enmeshed in material, ideological, and affective dynamics, wrapping up dancing bodies, and forcing them into new connections and unmoorings, at stake in World Dance" (Savigliano, 2009:166). If a dance that was formerly taught over time, through family members, from birth to old age is now taught by one expert in one semester, is it even the same dance? If dance is culture how can we even begin to respect or understand it when we extract and re-package it for universal university consumption? I keep replaying the words of Dominic Thomas in my mind: "The center is not transformed when the margins are mainstreamed" (Thomas, 2013:221). While the aim of inclusivity is indeed noble, it behooves us to ask: How are traditionally underrepresented dance cultures treated in academia, and what, if anything, is lost when we attempt to gain everything? I am in no way arguing to turn back to more conservative curricula, but rather to amplify awareness and support for the needs and values of genres and worldviews that are increasingly enriching our institutions.

Conversely, in doing the dance, are we in fact becoming the culture? Cristina Rosa describes

"bodies as producers and media of their own production;" Stating, "bodies and environments are constantly exchanging data – shaping and being shaped by one another." (Rosa, 2015:5). We do not have pre-determined identities. We are all in motion, being and becoming. We try to preserve the essence of the traditions without essentializing cultures. We recycle and repurpose, revive and reform, always under construction.

Now more than ever before, college dance departments are offering a wider range of dance technique courses and examining global perspectives in theory courses as well. Many times a university program will offer a core of required ballet and modern dance classes and other forms such as jazz, hip-hop, or traditional African diasporic dance classes can be pursued as electives. Raquel Monroe, Ph.D., is a professor of dance at Columbia College Chicago. Her article, "I Don't Want to do African – What About My Technique?" (Monroe, 2011) illustrates two frequent challenges with bringing non-Western forms into higher education. On the one hand there is the misconception that traditional or social dance forms do not have a technique. There is a common misconception that practitioners of these forms have it 'in their blood'[i] as national citizens or descendants of a particular ethnicity; or that the form is simple and easily learned by anyone. Though it is true that some dance forms that were designed to be danced by everyone, from children to elders, can be relatively simple and repetitive, they are often highly nuanced and not easily learned in a formal session, but more often mastered informally over time through observation and years of practice. Monroe's essay, offers an important look at how adding a course in traditional African dances as an elective can add to misunderstandings of the form and a misplaced hierarchy of dances and their respective cultures. Further, offering one level of non-Western technique classes gives the impression that anyone can master them quickly and easily, the form does not demonstrate highly specialized skills, and therefore it is not beneficial to a student aiming to work as a professional dancer.

Early exposure to a dance community can inspire the passion, dedication to training, and life-long commitment that a performer needs to succeed. Despite the shifts in higher education, most students drawn to our programs are coming from early exposure to Ballet, and sometimes

Jazz and Tap. The reality is that most American students pursuing degrees in dance have already had at least eight years of training that has forged their career goals and do not want to abandon that training for something entirely new. They want to hone the skills they have already spent time, money, and hard work on. Spending time on one thing means you are not spending time on another, and for a student dedicated to cultivating advanced skills, studying a variety of forms can potentially detract from a necessary focus. We must consider the fact that if one wants to be prepared to dance professionally in any genre, a considerable amount of training is necessary, so even four years of a certain genre at a university might not be sufficient if that is the only time spent in training that form. Nonetheless, as a multi-genre practitioner myself, I can attest that training in multiple genres can in fact, inform and strengthen one's practice and allow dancers to experience their own multifaceted potentials while encouraging a sense of global engagement and compassion. As more dance students come to us with diverse goals from dance writer to performance artist, we meet the challenge of honing prior knowledge while exposing them to previously unimaginable potentiality.

Describing the growing trend for dancers to be expected to train in multiple genres, Susan Foster writes of the "hired body," stating, "It does not display its skills as a collage of discrete styles but, rather, homogenizes all styles and vocabularies beneath a sleek, impenetrable surface. Uncommitted to any specific aesthetic vision, it is a body for hire: it trains in order to make a living at dancing"(Foster, 1997:255) Perhaps contrary to Foster's idea of the hired body is the un-hirable body – the one that can do a bit of everything, but nothing quite well enough to succeed within a particular dance culture. A balance of deep rigor and open-minded exploration does serve the young dancer to cultivate a well-rounded educational experience. When broadening curricula, dance departments take on the challenge of developing technique, artistry and critical thinking. A multifarious result requires a multifarious strategy.

In her book *Dancing Wisdom: Embodied Knowledge in Haitian Vodoo, Cuban Yorubá and Bahian Candomblé,* Yvonne Daniel writes about the significance of the circle and the spiral to understanding the interplay between ancestors, divinities, and people in ceremonial dances.

(Daniel, 2005) With a polycentric curricula, planning in circles and spirals, we can be more conscientious about making connections across the genres being offered by faculty members and engaged in by students in and outside our classes (such as extra-curricular dance clubs). Interconnecting circles of association and knowledge form a basis for negotiating reality that disrupts the model of linear space and time that we have inherited from Western European colonization. The pedagogy most closely aligned with linear time is what Paolo Freire termed the "banking system" (Freire, 1996) of learning where a teacher views students as empty containers to be filled with the teacher's knowledge to be ingested and regurgitated. In this system, one must train under an all-knowing master teacher before being considered a true dancer. Alternatively, polyrhythmic time, as embodied in many indigenous communities, recognizes multiple time frames in action at any given moment. We can draw upon Native American concepts of time, which acknowledge the wisdom of the elders, and a vision for the future based on the actions of the present. This worldview offers a way of revising pedagogy. As educators we can bring our wonderfully rich sets of knowledge into the studio while creating opportunities to invite students' prior knowledge and contemporary issues, framing our overall experience with a vision towards wild dreams and attainable objectives that serve the interests and needs of the next generation of dance makers.

Africanist scholars in many disciplines have put forth polyrhythm as a defining characteristic of its music and dance. Francesca Castaldi furthers the notion by scribing polyrhythm as a way of theorizing:

> Polyrhythms define not only a musical and choreographic strategy but also a theoretical model that articulates relationships of parts to a whole within a hierarchical structure … A polyrhythmic model presents us with differentiated layers (non-homologous relationships) within which different rules of improvisation apply, (degrees of freedom) as well as with a circular (nonlinear) mode of connections that refer to each other without claiming an absolute point of origin … Time is not externally given, it is created by the connection between players … (2006:8).

Using this collaborative model to organize a department, folks with various specialties come together with a common interest but perhaps very different approaches that work better when

complementing one another, rather than being tagged on to a pre-formed hierarchy. Even within one class, we can consider the multitude of rhythms at play: the beginner next to the more experienced, the student who ate breakfast partnering one who skipped it, the dancer who always has new leotards next to the one who wears the same sweats every week. Polyrhythmic pedagogy encourages us to honor each rhythm in the groove rather than getting everyone to play the same beat and allowing some to simply fail at it, or throw off the entire rhythm. In the arts, we have the privilege and responsibility to be visionaries. If we simply repeat traditions for their own sake, we may repeat archaic exclusionary practices as well.

Although it is common for teachers of non-Western dance forms to explain the traditions that inform their dance practices, it is not so common for the same expectation to be held of dances in the Western canon. One aspect of a culturally inclusive dance program is the understanding that all dances are formed and informed by culture. As Joann Kealiinohomoku's often cited article, "An Anthropologist Looks at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance" (2001) reminds us, acknowledging when a specific set of cultural values is informing a wide-spread practice can be a powerful step towards making prejudices visible. We should be careful not to assume a set of politics or values are present in our students or should be administered identically across genres. Addressing the diversity of aesthetics and goals our students have is also ambitious.

For example, college choreography courses often require students to create solos and to work without music. These values come from a post-modern tradition developed largely by White middle-class Americans with prior training in ballet or modern dance. While requirements like these are not without merit, they do not adequately attend to the needs of every genre, nor are they universally effective strategies for generating ideas or movements. Feedback methods and audience structures are also culturally informed and can be redesigned to be more broadly adaptable or shift according to students' needs. Rather than centering modern/post-modern cultural values and attaching others to them, the central aim and strategies can shift in relation to the genre's needs. Again, a polycentric framing of choreography and assessment allows for dialogue and modifications across genres that better serve an intercultural dance program and student body.

Let us look at salsa for one example of a social dance form that entered private dance studios as early as the 1950s and is now studied (usually in a ballroom dance style) in studio and lecture courses in few universities. Gender roles are sometimes mobilized differently in dominant and oppressed communities. A practice that one person sees as 'backwards' may be a place of empowerment for someone who sees the practice as a way of affirming a culture under attack. Feminism does not dance the same across the globe. Making judgments on dance forms that do not appear to be queer friendly or feminist can alienate students who relate dancing to familial and cultural bonds, as well as political agency. Priscilla Renta writes, "Within the scheme of inequality, Latino/a cultural affirmation vis-à-vis salsa dance possesses a kind of counterhegemonic potential that involves the body and accompanies the same, often-stated potential in the music. Making this connection explicit is a necessary part of bringing the dancing body into Latino/a studies and salsa scholarship" (Renta, 2004:142). Returning again to the logic of the spiral, a salsa course can address the effects of the transatlantic slave trade, gender conformity, *Latinidad*, and still nourish students whose college experience might otherwise be dominated by Eurocentric curricula that obscure their histories and present reality.

Although one could certainly argue the traditional expectation of male/female partnering in salsa is hetero-normative and alienates students who do not conform to that gender binary or wish to be confined by it, one could also argue that male-female partnering provides a beautiful opportunity for young men and women to experience respectful and responsible engagement with one another. As my colleague Denise Machin teaches, the opportunity to *practice* respectful social relationships between men and women in a safe and playful environment is rare; but dance offers this much needed expression that can actually teach people to elicit consent, respond with sensitivity to their partners' needs, and utilize creative problem solving that is also cooperative. One could also argue that this sociality has long been in short supply in college dance programs, as we tend to spend hours on end focusing on our own individual bodies' shapes, successes, and failures in isolation in ballet and modern dance classes. What is more, we can embrace the gendered dynamics of salsa *and* queer its tradition by offering same

gender pairing as an option. I have to say I was surprised to see how easily my male students agreed to dance together during the salsa unit in an Introduction to Dance course this year. The class was already working as an ensemble so it really did not matter who you were partnering with at the moment since we were all essentially dancing and learning together.

If we see our field as constantly in motion, spiraling back before moving forward, always in a state of what Cristina Rosa calls "relaxed awareness" (Rosa, 2015:104) like a *capoeirista*, we might better address our ever-changing needs. The "*ginga* aesthetic" that she denotes to include polycentrism, relaxed awareness, oscillations in space and through the body, serious play, and kinesthetic dissonance, can in offer a physicalized model of being in flux but not in chaos. A polycentric education can foster dancers equipped to enter their professions with reflective awareness and active listening skills. Polyrhythmic curricula can push for a politics of liberation that encompasses intercultural manifestations of freedom.

One way to resist the corporatization of American universities is to insist on bringing the margins to the center on their own terms and simultaneously preparing students to be employable. Dance scholar and educator Takiyah Nur Amin writes, "a practice-based (as opposed to a performance-based) approach to the development of higher-education dance curricula creates space for African diaspora dance and similarly marginalized movement vocabularies to be amplified within the academy, and in undergraduate dance education specifically" (Amin, 2016:15). With our very bodies as our blueprints, tools, and monuments, Dance is the perfect discipline to embody and enact values of inclusivity and ingenuity. When decentered and decolonized, the transformative power of intercultural collaboration encourages the exchange of ideas and movements across perceived borders and dismantles their power. Perhaps one way to escape these confines is to first acknowledge that we all see them.

A color-blind or gender-blind approach to admissions, hiring, and teaching practices, although well-intentioned, does not address the problems of the White heteronormative hegemony. Too

often, students of color are excluded and LGBT dancers are expected to perform heterosexuality without question. Meanwhile, in this historically and currently predominantly female field, management positions such as choreographer and artistic director, are disproportionately occupied by males. As we attempt to make dancing more accessible to men, we must also make directing more accessible to women.

Claiming a neutral, apolitical, unbiased stance on questions of inclusion whitewashes the real dynamics of cultural conditioning we have all experienced. Being transparent about our aesthetic values and political agenda can help students choose the best program for their personal/professional goals, and help faculty establish programs that address the needs of their real (not ideal) student body as well as mold the program towards a more equitable and successful model for inclusivity that pushes the field in all directions. Being clear about what we want our programs to grow will nurture them. If diversity and inclusivity is in fact the aim, we must be prepared to question everything, and then be prepared to find some answers. A successful critical dance pedagogy does not stop at critique. It engages holistic understanding to unpack layers of meaning, investigates that which is unspoken, and *practices* new ways of being in the world. A university's decolonial dance practice will be effective when it has affected hiring teachers, admitting students, creating curriculum and teaching traditionally underrepresented dances in ways that honor them.

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rainydemerson@yahoo.com

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MEMORY AND ANDEAN THEATRICALITY IN PERU:
THE CARNIVAL OF THE CHILDREN OF ACCOMARCA.

Rodrigo Benza

Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú: Performing Arts Department

Abstract

In 1985, during the internal armed conflict in Peru (1980 and 2000), a military patrol murdered more than 60 peasants including the elderly and children in the community of Accomarca, located in the southern Andes (Ayacucho/Peru). Many of the inhabitants of this community-and Ayacucho in general-migrated to the city of Lima. For more than 20 years now, Ayacucho carnival contests are held in Lima. Since 2011, the Association of the Children of Accomarca (AHIDA) includes in its choreography a performance on the massacre suffered by their people. Last year (2016), they did not perform the massacre but a representation of the judicial process by which they seek justice including a proper penalty for the soldiers who perpetrated the killing. This text attempts to explore the carnival of the Children of Accomarca, on one hand, as a manifestation of Andean theatricality, with features such as avoiding frontal representation, theater - dance - music as inseparable expressions, play, party, ritual and the presence of memory and political resistance; as well as having a hybrid character of prehispanic and European Performing expressions. On the other hand, at the carnival the representation of the massacre is included within a set of traditional manifestations which represent the memory of the internal armed conflict. The Carnival of the Children of Accomarca thus creates a space of political memory, identity among displaced by violence and struggle to achieve justice for their people.

Keywords: Andean theatricality, Accomarca, memory, carnival.

We are attending the contest of Ayacucho carnivals in the city of Lima, Peru. It is the turn of the Accomarca comparsa. The music begins. Guitars, quenas, mandolin and the voice of the singers in Quechua are heard through the speakers. The scenic space is wide, circular and with dirt floors. On one side there is a stage with the musicians. The audience is sitting around. The actors-dancers[1] carry the banner of the district of Accomarca and Peruvian flags, they occupy the space with their cheerful and colorful dance. On one side of the circular stage a small house is placed. One of the actors-dancers cuts the space waving a white flag. Parallel to the dance, scenes of daily life like the harvest of tuna[2] and the planting of corn are represented. Even on the side of the stage they set a campfire for cooking. Suddenly, everyone stops. The music stops.

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[1] Eugenio Barba (2010) raises the term actor-dancer mainly from the study of the Asian scenic manifestations. Miguel Rubio (2016) also uses it to refer to the members of the comparsas at the Feast of the Virgen del Carmen in Paucartambo.

[2] Tuna is a Peruvian fruit.

Announcer: Now we will stage the slaughter of Accomarca where two military patrols entered. (Everyone falls to the ground and the military arrive. The actors that represent them perform the actions while the text is interpreted from the microphone).

Lieutenant: Soldiers, stand! Gather all the people there, in the house with roof tiles. (The audience starts to boo)*. It's an order. Did you understand?*

Military: Yes, Lieutenant Telmo Hurtado. (The military dispersed to take the villagers to the house).

Lieutenant: Old man, come with me to the meeting. (The soldier takes the old man by force. The old man speaks to him in Quechua).

Lieutenant: What did you say? Old terruco,[3] die. (He shoots and kills him. A woman complains).

Lieutenant: You too, old terruca. (He kills her).

The soldiers have gathered a group of villagers near the house where they kill them, burn the house and retire. A sad song in Quechua begins to be heard. The settlers gather to mourn their dead. They demand justice for Accomarca. Afterwards, everyone gets up and the carnival takes over again. Everyone participates in the party, including the actors who represented the military. Some get drunk and fall on the floor or fight. Young people make the *ceqollo* or whipping.[4] There is a climate of celebration and joy. They retire dancing and the presentation ends.[5]

Photo 1. Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qAfno9xAtwM

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[3] *Terruco* is a common name for terrorist in Peru.
[4] In the ceqollo, two young men stand face to face and lash the other's leg many times, until they bleed.
[5] This narration is made from the video made by Karen Bernedo and Diego Fernández Stoll during the Quena de Oro 2015 contest held on 03/15/2015. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=obavTkWdsKk.

Photo 2. Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gHfvn8QY-ec

Accomarca is a town located in the region of Ayacucho at the south of the Peruvian Andes. In Ayacucho emerged the PCP - Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path), a terrorist group that started an armed struggle against the Peruvian state that lasted around 20 years (1980-2000). Ayacucho was also one of the regions most affected by this armed struggle and the majority of victims were Quechua-speaking peasants who were caught between two fires: Sendero Luminoso and the armed forces.

In Accomarca, in 1985, a military patrol raided the town. After torturing several villagers and, according to some testimonies, sexually abusing women, the patrol killed more than 60 villagers including elders and Children. According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CVR).[6]

On August 14, 1985, an army patrol, belonging to the company "Lince" of Huamanga, under the command of SubTeniente Telmo Ricardo Hurtado Hurtado, murdered 62 community members, women, elders and Children, inhabitants of the district of Accomarca, Province of Vilcashuamán, Ayacucho. The massacre was carried out as part of the "Huancayoc Operational Plan", an anti-subversive action planned by the military organization of the Sub-Zone of National Security No. 5, with contempt for the lives of innocent civilians (Truth and Reconciliation Commission [CVR], 2003:55).

This fact, however, was not exceptional, it was common practice on the part of the military. As happened in several communities, many of the survivors of this massacre migrated to the coastal

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[6] Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación

cities, mainly to Lima. After some time, these migrants met and decided to replicate in the capital the carnival contests of their region.

Andean theatricality and the Ayacucho carnival

Along the Andean territory there are scenic manifestations that share a series of characteristics that allows us to group them under the category of Andean theatricality. In general, these manifestations are products of the encounter between prehispanic scenic forms and rituals, and those forms and rituals brought by the Spaniards. According to Miguel Rubio, in the colony "there were levels of mixture and syncretism with which we still live today, and constitute the encounter of pre-Hispanic and Christian elements in a conjunction of rites of different origins" (2016:7).

For Rubio (2016) manifestations of Andean theatricality are mainly present in the context of religious festivals in which various levels of performativity are developed and in which the masked actor-dancer is almost an obligatory presence. Another characteristic element of these manifestations presented by Rubio is the game or *pukllay*. In it, the scenic presences establish a game convention with the "spectators" generating diverse situations of simulation, like the one given during the celebration of the Lord of Q'ollurity at the foot of the Ausangate snow covered mountain in Cusco. In that fiesta "cattle, arable land, animals, vehicles, etc. are bought and sold virtually, symbolized in payments and objects offered with small stones. Even marriages, divorces and professional titles, among others, are held in that way" (Rubio, 2016:15). Another very important element for Rubio is the *taqui* which means both dancing and singing. Representation is not conceived outside dance and song or music.

In a similar vein, for Chalena Vásquez and Abilio Vergara, referring specifically to the comparsas of the Ayacucho carnival, these constitute the proper socio-artistic medium for the realization of total art: music, dance, poetry, theater. Each area presents itself by developing specific languages in interrelation and inter-dependence with each other.

> This characteristic, present in the Andean culture in many festivities of the year, implies that each artistic area cannot be explained in itself; each one explains the other and vice versa. Therefore, the concept of "total art" must be understood as "integral art", by which the simultaneous presence of artistic areas acquires a more complex and profound aesthetic significance (Vásquez & Vergara, 1988:69).

In this line of "total art", we could affirm that the manifestations of Andean theatricality present the following common characteristics: Presence of theater, dance and music. They are found,

mainly, in festive ritual contexts. Use of masks (the masked dancer)[7] and the game (pukllay). Generally, the "audience" has knowledge and understanding of the representation and play codes, and is an active part of the stage manifestation.

The space in which expressions of Andean theatricality are manifested are the festivals of towns and cities, many with a religious character (Catholic) but others not. It is important to emphasize that although in certain contexts dances are presented as shows, they are not conceived for the spectacle, but are developed in the context of a ritual festival as a form of expression to achieve something beyond the aesthetic pleasure. In the case of dances performed in religious contexts, faith, love for the saint, devotion, are the engines for the dancers to invest their time and money to dance at the celebration. For the dancers, it is an honor and a necessity to express their faith through dance. However, if the celebration does not have a religious motivation, the ritual effectiveness[8] does not disappear, since there is still a spiritual reward for the dancers that does not consist of an economic retribution.

Moreover, these festivities in which theatricality develops are a very important part of the Andean culture and not mere spaces for entertainment, as the anthropologist Rodrigo Montoya tells us, "The fiesta is a pillar of Andean culture. My mother, profoundly Andean in her thinking, says: 'I didn't have a good year because I did not attend any carnival fiesta'"(cited in Vásquez & Vergara, 1988:24). In this sense, the stage manifestation is not conceived as something outside of life, but as an important part of it. Participating or not in these events can directly affect the normal course of other activities or, at least, that is the belief of dancers and settlers.

The Ayacucho carnival is one of these manifestations of Andean theatricality. Although the concept of carnival was originated in Europe, the way it is developed in the Andes -particularly in Ayacucho, is very special. According to Víctor Navarro del Aguila (cited in Vásquez & Vergara, 1088:41), only the date is "imported", because what happens in these carnivals seems to have pre-Hispanic origins. It could be said that the protagonists of the carnivals are the actors-dancers comparsas that, according to Vásquez and Vergara could be understood as a group that is "representing" situations and/or characters, in an integral event of dance, music, poetry, color,

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[7] "The use of the masks in Ayacucho has been restricted by 'security measures' imposed by the anti-subversive forces, which, they say, 'behind a mask can hide a terrorist'" (Vásquez & Vergara, 1988:258).
[8] According to Richard Schechner, "for a specific performance to be called 'ritual' or 'theater' depends above all on context and function. [...] No performance is pure efficacy or pure entertainment (2000:36).

verbal and non-verbal languages" (1988:255). This representation is part of an oral tradition (an important feature of the Andean cultural transmission) that renews itself and constitutes the source for the "theatrical scripts" of the comparsas.

Besides, carnival spaces -especially in the rural areas, promoted physical competence and artistic talent which has stimulated singing contests and comparsas during the carnival period since the decades of the 1970s and 1980s. Carnival itself is a space for subversion, a space for the flourishing of love and sex, for catharsis, in which what is forbidden during the rest of the year is allowed (Vásquez & Vergara, 1988; Aroni, 2015). But it is also "a univocal space, where you can express social criticism, where you can say things that are often not said. It is a permissible space. It channels feelings of protest and different states of mind" (Aroni, 2014). Therefore, it is also a space conducive to social criticism and mockery of the authorities. Social criticism in the Ayacucho carnivals was directed specially to satirize characters of the ruling class. As in many other places and events of the Andean culture, criticism is made through mockery, irony. The characters (such as priests, politicians, military, civil authorities, merchants, etc.) are "uncovered" in their true intentions, caricaturing their functions (Vásquez & Vergara, 1988:257).

Andean art and political memory

In the 1980s, the context of political violence led to the inclusion of more explicit political content into the lyrics of carnival songs. On this, Jonathan Ritter's research on the *pumpin* songs[9] of the Fajardo carnival, and in the province of Ayacucho, is very important. According to Ritter (2013), Sendero Luminoso used *pumpin* contests to radiate its ideology even before the armed conflict erupted. However, after the conflict,

> the songs that [previously] called for the revolution were replaced by testimonial songs that protested against the brutality of the army and the contests became the main space for the commemoration and social memory of the fajardinos during and after the end of the years of violence (Ritter, 2013).

We can see, from this example of the *pumpin* songs, that there is an openness to modify the traditional manifestations according to the needs of the social context. Centuries ago, these manifestations were also a form of political resistance, an aspect inherited by the present representations.

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[9] "Testimonial and carnival music that comes from the Ayacucho province of Fajardo" (Aroni, 2015:131).

Since colonial times, the Andean dances and festivities have exhibited a strong character of political resistance mainly against the catholic church; which had prohibited the realization of the festivities linked to the traditional religious cult. According to Gisela Cánepa, "the political contents of pre-Hispanic dances would have been camouflaged in two ways: in the form of clandestine representations (Poole, 1990; Ares Queija, 1984) or participating in Catholic holidays contexts through dances." This is relevant because the scenic expressions of the Andean people are not naive, but possess a deep ritual and political content (1998:94).

For example, in the celebration of Corpus Christi in the city of Cusco, the 15 saints and virgins of the different churches of the city walk around the city and round the square. This tradition is related to the walk of the mummies of the Inca nobility that took place before the arrival of the Spaniards.[10] This is how camouflaging the traditional cult within the Catholic ritual is expressed. Another interesting example is the scissors dance that arises as a way of fighting against the Catholic religion. That is why priests used to say that the dancers had a pact with the devil. An example not connected to religious resistance but to social resistance, is the dance of *la chonguinada* in the region of Junín, which is a parody of the Spanish ballroom dances in colonial times.

Therefore it is clear that these Andean scenic manifestations comprise and present the memory of the people and serve as forms of denunciation and struggle against injustices. I would like to mention two examples of visual arts symbolic production related to leaving testimony of political violence which, it seems to me, are very much in dialogue with the characteristics of the Andean theatricality manifestations and, specifically with the representation of the massacre in the carnival of the Children of Accomarca.

The first example is the ceramic of Rosalía Tineo who was born into a family of several generations of renowned Ayacucho potters, and she uses her family's technique to show the atrocities of the internal armed conflict.

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[10] This was told to me during the Corpus Christi party in Cusco in May 2016.

Photo 3: Familia Benza Collection

In this image, Rosalía represents the moment in which her father is tortured by a *rondero*[11] because he was accused of being a terrorist. Beside him is Rosalia herself and her father's wife pleading for his release.

Another example of this type of art is provided by the Ayacucho Retablos made by different members of the Jimenez family. The Retablos are boxes within which various situations of daily life or religious scenes are represented with small sculptures. As Maria Eugenia Ulfe says, retablos are like visual narratives of "different types of memories (historical, of mourning and regrets, of social restauration, popular" and therefore can be transformed "into a vehicle for communication of views that question situations of violence, discrimination and injustice" (2006:206). In that sense, the Jimenez family used this technique as a form of denunciation and political testimony.

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[11] The peasant patrols (rondas) are a system of self-defense of peasant communities and played an important role during the internal armed conflict.

Photo 4: Source https://ojo-publico.com/65/poeticas-del-duelo-el-arte-contra-el-olvido

This retablo by Edilberto Jimenez, for example, represents a mass grave in the district of Chungui, Ayacucho (Vich, 2015). The criticism in relation to the abuse by the military and the intention to leave a testimony of the violence suffered by the people of Ayacucho are evident.

According to Victor Vich: (2015:14).

> Artistic objects must be understood as cultural devices that serve to transform the existing common senses, because thanks to the representations they disseminate and the impact they cause (at conscious or unconscious levels), open significant spaces of citizen awareness and political memory (2015:14).

Vich then asserts that art such as we are presenting here, does not only have an impact on the lives of those who produce it and those who receive it, but is an art that reveals meanings and has a political end in itself. Based on this principle, I would like to discuss for a while the case of the Accomarca massacre, the search for justice on the part of the survivors and relatives of the victims and the representation of the carnage in the context of the carnival contests.

The Carnival of the the Children of Accomarca

As I mentioned, in 1985 a military patrol carried out a massacre in the town of Accomarca in Ayacucho leaving a balance of more than 60 dead among which there were Children and old people. The chief of the operation was then Lieutenant of the Peruvian Army, Telmo Hurtado. After the massacre, several investigations were carried out; even a commission of parliament went to the place, nevertheless those implicated were exonerated of all criminal responsibility:

> The first sentence of the War Room of the Second Judicial Zone of the Army, on October 15, 1987, two years after the massacre, acquitted all those charged with the most serious accusations of qualified homicide, and only condemned Telmo Hurtado for the misdemeanor of "abuse of authority" to four years in prison and the payment of 50,000 intis as civil reparation [the equivalent of US $ 830 at the exchange rate of the time] (CVR, 2003:166).

This ruling even justified the facts as part of the practice to capture the terrorists. Attempts were made to reopen the case several times during the decade of the 1990s, without results. Actually, Telmo Hurtado continued in normal military activity and reached the rank of Commander. It was only in 2002 that a sentence of "the Inter-American Court of Human Rights [...] declared void the amnesty laws. Consequently, the Supreme Council of Military Justice declared the resolution in favor of Hurtado to be null and void, thereby reopening the possibility of doing justice" (CVR, 2003:168).

After this, Hurtado fled to the United States and it was not until 2011 that his extradition to Peru in order to face the Peruvian laws was approved. It does not seem a coincidence that it was that same year that the Accomarquinos presented for the first time the representation of the massacre in the carnival contest, described at the beginning of this text. According to Renzo Aroni, "in that year the performance was well received by the audience and repeated in later years, with the massive participation of migrant survivors and their Children born in Lima during and after the period of political violence" (2015:122).

Parallel to the trial and the search for justice, the representation of the slaughter in the Carnival of the Children of Accomarca is a way of keeping alive the memory as posed by Vich for whom "remembering always implies disturbing a hegemony, producing a set of disruptive elements that interrupt the dominant fantasy" (Vich, 2015:235). In this case, remembering involves keeping alive an event and a struggle, since the struggle for justice for the massacre was not concluded.

This space of representation became an identity element for the Accomarquinos settled in the capital since, as Aroni affirms, in the case of carnivals held in Lima, the generation of identity bonds is very important: Through the Ayacucho carnival comparsas contest, migrants not only built spaces for socialization, strengthening the bonds of solidarity and reciprocity in a context of violence and displacement, but also reconfigured their memories and identities" (Aroni, 2015:132).

Finally, it is also a way of mourning, of paying homage to their dead; of a grieving in the sense posed by Vich that is not limited to a therapeutic area, but a mourning that aims, on the one hand "to bring to light all that is still repressed by the official discourse and, on the other, to ritualize the memory by means of a set of symbols loaded with a remarkable critical power" (Vich, 2015:291). Starting from the fact that the narrative of the Andean people used to be primarily oral (Quechua, its native language, did not have an alphabet), it is necessary to understand the oral in a broad sense of the word, as expressed by Ulfe, "Andean society privileged oral communication as can be seen in rituals, objects, music, theater, oral narratives and the land itself" (2006:213). The carnival of the Children of Accomarca reflects this extended orality in which dance, music, representation and lyrics of the songs are the guardians of that shared and combative memory. In the carnival of the Children of Accomarca, according to Aroni "there are several songs of different genres and thematic purposes, but they are mostly testimonials, like the song" 'Matanza in Accomarca', in genre of carnival"[12] (2015:134).

Taytamamallay wañukunkimá Llaqtamasinllay chinkarqunkimá	Father-mother of mine you had died Neighbour of mine you had disappeared
¿Imataq quchayki qampaqa karqa?	What fault have you had?
Bala puntampi wañullanaykipaq	For you to die at the tip of the bullet
Inocentekunam wañurqunkichik	Innocent people died
Mana quchayuqmi chinkarqunkichik ¿Imataq quchayki qampaqa karqa?]	Without guilt they disappeared What guilt have you had?
Rauraq ninapi rupallanaykipaq	To die in the middle of the fire

In this way, the presentation of the carnival of the Children of Accomarca in the contests of Ayacucho carnivals becomes a political act that uses the representation of the massacre to keep

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[12] Transcript extracted from Aroni (2015:134).

alive the memory of the pain suffered by the community and at the same time as a symbolic act of the struggle for justice that was also being fought in court. The use of different scenic languages: dance, theater and music, including the texts of both representation and songs, naturally occur within the ritual that is directly linked to the celebration. In this case, the ritual aspect is not only related to the carnival tradition, but is also in homage to the memory of those killed in the massacre; and the struggle for justice.

In 2016, however, the performance was different. The trial against the military that ordered or carried out the killing continued and the relatives were receiving constant mistreatment by the judiciary. Thus, the 2016 representation was no longer about the massacre, but about the judicial process. More specifically, it was the representation of what they felt would happen at the time the judges gave their final judgment, which was scheduled for that year.

The entrance of the actors-dancers to the large space of representation is very similar to the presentation narrated at the beginning of this text. However, there is a significant difference: the characters of the military enter with the table and the chairs that, later, will constitute the scenery of the representation of the judgment. At a certain time the music stops and everyone sings a chorus in Spanish that is more or less like this:

<div align="center">

The town of Accomarca

Is present

Because your Children

are fighting

For a sentence for Accomarca

</div>

This chorus is sung in Spanish and is not a minor fact. In the depiction of the massacre, the Hispanic language was reserved for the military. On this occasion, it is the commoners, the peasants, who decide to take the official language of the country, the language of the judges of the judiciary, to demand a sentence. In addition, they decide that this demand is performed through the voice of all, to the best style of Fuenteovejuna, and not only of the singers at the microphone. However, the pain and frustration over the mistreatment by the state system does not prevent both the dances and the intonation of this chorus from being flooded with joy and with an atmosphere of celebration.

At one end of the stage space are located the characters representing the judiciary, judges and lawyers with suit. At the other end are the military. At one point, both groups approach, crossing the dance, in the middle of the stage where the table and chairs are located. Music and dance stop. It is heard by the speaker:

Announcer: Now we will play the hearing of the trial of the Accomarca case that takes place in the Castro Castro prison. (The actors in the space make the gestures, while the texts are interpreted by the singers on the stage).

Judge: Lieutenant Telmo Hurtado and Juan Rivera Rondón, do you swear to God to tell the truth?

Telmo Hurtado: Yes, I swear.

Judge: You Hurtado, tell how many did you kill in Accomarca

Telmo Hurtado: I am innocent, I only carried out higher orders which were to kill everyone in Accomarca. I only killed 30. (audience laughter)

Judge: You, Rivera Rondón, how many did you kill and why?

Rivera Rondón: I did not kill anyone, I fell asleep. Or we killed them, but it was following higher orders. (During this last text, Telmo Hurtado approaches the table and leaves a wad of bills).

Judge: (taking the wad of bills) *I'm going to check the files.* (The judge sits down and sleeps on the table. Everyone boo).

Announcer: Doctor, do not fall asleep. (Judge gets up)

judge: Well, well, going over all the files, you soldiers only obeyed orders from your superiors. Therefore, you are innocent. You are acquitted of the Accomarca case.

Audience and dancers protest the judge's ruling. The military celebrates. The announcer at the microphone returns to Quechua requesting justice for Accomarca, Justice, fuck! Dancing and music begin again with the same joy. Military and judicial officials also dance.[13]

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[13] Description made from the video made by Karen Bernedo and Diego Fernández Stoll. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qAfno9xAtwM.

Photo 5: Source: https://imagenespaganas.lamula.pe/2016/06/23/el-alma-del-verdugo/kbernedo/

We see then that in 2016, in the carnival of the Children of Accomarca, that instead of presenting a fact of the past, a parody was made about the future, about what they think could happen in this trial and making a complaint of corruption in the judiciary.

The carnival of the Children of Accomarca is, on one hand, the expression of the community's use of a traditional scenic manifestation as a political tool of denunciation for the purpose of keeping alive the memory of a trauma and, on the other hand, a parody of the future from its own experience in the present, which is the way the case is taken in the judicial power. In the words of Florián Palacios, son of victims of the massacre, (apud Aroni 2015:137) "That is why we are protesting, we are fighting for more than twenty-nine years. And we do it with our music, songs and choreography in the carnival comparsa. Carnival is play and protest for us" (cited in Aroni 2015:137).

Finally, in the carnival of the Children of Accomarca, the actors-dancers do not receive a payment in money to participate. The reward is of another nature. It is a space of expression, a space of encounter with those who suffer the same pain of loss and frustration of a justice that does not arrive. It is a space of catharsis, of reprocessing, of trying to find a meaning. It is a space for

strengthening the identity of a community that was displaced from its territory. It is a space for young people to know the history and culture of their parents and grandparents, it is a space for struggle to obtain justice.

Coda

On August 31, 2016, 31 years after the massacre in Accomarca and more than five years after the beginning of the trial of the military that perpetrated it, the national criminal chamber ruled the historic sentence: "The court condemned as mediators of the attack the ex-lieutenant Telmo Hurtado, who was sentenced to 23 years in prison; Juan Rivera Rondón, who was given 24 years; and General Wilfredo Mori, who received 25 years" (Páez, 2016). This is a historic sentence because, on the one hand, it "is the first time that an entire military command line is condemned" (La Mula, 2016) and, on the other, "the ruling of the Accomarca case recognizes the responsibility and deficiency of the State in the delay in investigating the crime and in judging those responsible" (La Mula, 2016). Although relatives are not completely satisfied with the sentence, there is a sense of victory. besi

The Accomarca's comparsa did not participate in the 2017 Carnival contest of Ayacucho.

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rodrigobenzaguerra@gmail.com
Site: www.rodrigobenza.blogspot.com
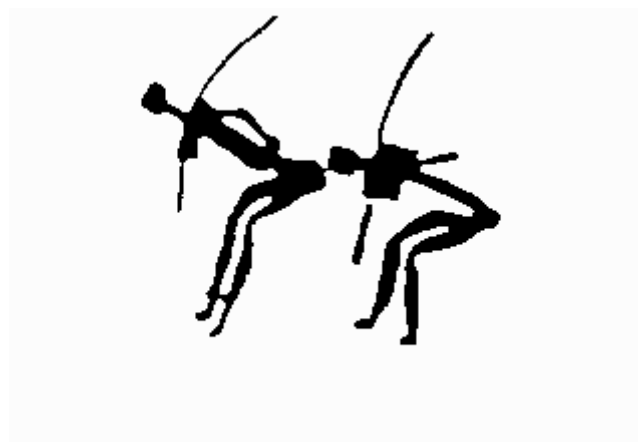
**Part III – Poster Presentation**

Danielle-Marie Jones

Movements have been spatially arranged and encoded to convey the meaning of colonialism in juxtaposition to decolonisation. Each of these elements contributes immensely to the total concept of dance and its meaning such that the concept of colonialism is no longer an accepted movement but an art form seeking to communicate the truth.

Jamie-Lee Jansen

Red Apples Green Apples: This poster explores the themes and ideas of the Red Apples Green Apples project and comments on climate change.

Jenna Merrington

This poster presentation/exhibition and research project is concerned with human behaviour and Dance. It deals with the difference in social classes particularly in South Africa as well as the inequities that exist between the rich and the poor. Extending the notion of French philosopher, Simone Weil (1950) and, popular author, Alan Cohen, author of Dare to be Yourself: how to be yourself and quit being an extra in other people's movies and become a star in your own (1994), I am investigating how dance could change viewers' opinions and increase people's generosity towards those begging for money.
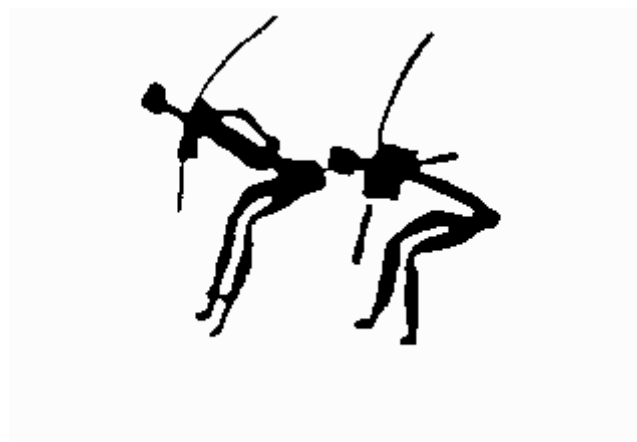
Part IV – Presentations

Adriana Miranda da Cunha: Challenging Performances of Hegemony in Gender Representation In Tango: Liberation Through Pedagogy

The aim of this paper is to explore ideas of liberation in relation to the present tendencies of gender representation in Tango, mainly focusing on the pedagogic model observed in Johannesburg, which tends to perpetuate hegemonic discourses through terminology, codes and subjectivities in which gender binaries are normalized. Such representations reduce, or even reject, plurality and diversity by sustaining specific power dynamics, necessarily related to the roles of men and women. I argue that the dances for couples are embedded in historically and socially constructed stereotypes; thus, the dynamics observed in ballrooms, so called social meetings, are not capable of reflecting present gender complexities and identities. Also, there are very few black representatives in the Tango community in Johannesburg. I engaged with different methods during dance meetings based on investigative approaches, such as body mapping, micro-performance, group discussions and questionnaires to collect data together with a group of 9 participants, who had different gender identities themselves. This dynamic helped to envision an array of pedagogical processes to develop a more embracing and inclusive Tango dance. I made sense of all the information collected during fieldwork, by correlating theories of performance, critical pedagogy, gender and queer studies. We found that the experience facilitated a dynamic based on the "enticement" and the "accurate listening" between partners, keeping the form of Tango and its techniques, but breaking the gender structure of usual pedagogic methods. These methods created a collaborative pedagogy with the purpose of inclusive pathways of dance embodiment.

Alan Cliff: Assessment as Social Practice: Design Principles

This presentation looks at the complex issue of 'doing' student assessment work. Located in social constructivist and cognitivist models of how students learn, the presentation is focused on what it means to put students at the centre of academics' assessment design. Research on student learning over the past 30 – 40 years has drawn Higher Education lecturers' attention to the need to think centrally about how we design assessment to facilitate learning, collect assessment 'evidence' that enables us to make claims about that student learning, and deal with the difficult challenge of how we know that learning has occurred. The presentation will deal with assessment issues such as validity and reliability as social and contextualised phenomena, issues of assessment subjectivity and objectivity, formative and summative assessment, informal and formal assessment and the affordances and challenges of different forms of assessment practice (written, oral, group, self-assessment, and so on). In the context of teaching and learning in the discipline of Dance, participants will be encouraged to reflect on the issues raised in the presentation in relation to their own practices and will be invited to engage with the presenter on the challenges and nuances of these assessment contexts. The presentation will conclude with a focus on the central argument that the discourses of assessment practices are as much a fundamental component of teaching as are the discourses of the discipline Dance and its sub-disciplines.

Hilke Diemer: Observing Changes in Dance in Sudan after 2006

When we Look at dance in Sudan, we need to realise the traditional or ritual background , that a Western outsider cannot interprete, without realising that we tend to look for familiar steps or units when we are confronted with another culture.

The dance situation in Sudan was influenced by:

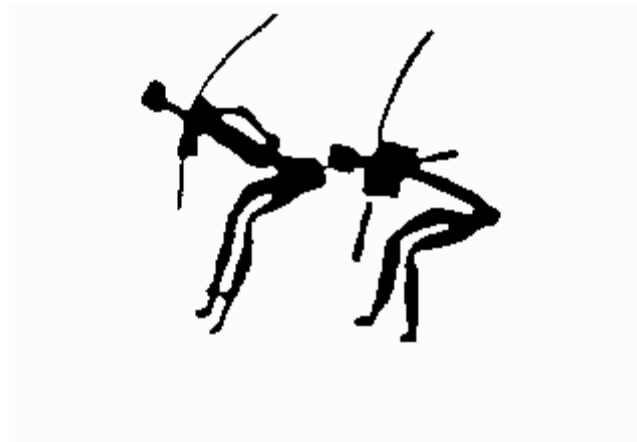– Colonialism (Sudan was a British colony until 1956)

- The war in South Sudan (from 1962) causing migration to the North, from a rural environment to an urban context, with access to new media and internet.

- The Sharia in North Sudan (since 1958).

- Western Aid

- The referendum (2011), South Sudan as the youngest African country, remigration.

In my presentation I would like to open the discussion on observing dance, Western help and intercultural exchange.

What do we actually exchange?

Thalia Laric and Kristina Johnstone: NEW DANCE LAB: a space for risk, immediacy and new research in dance and perform

NEW DANCE LAB is a platform for movement research and experimental performance. Launched in April 2017, the project developed out of a continuous conversation between artists, researchers and curators Kristina Johnstone and Thalia Laric. The project's aim is to create a space for new research related to movement, dance and choreographic practices in South Africa, by engaging with risk, immediacy and experimentalism. In creating a platform that preferences research *in*, *of* and *about* the body, the vision is to develop an ongoing space for movement research and embodied knowledge that could lead to new research insights for, not only the creation and presentation of dance performance, but also new dance pedagogies and teaching practices. The platform invites research that engages with questions around how dance might be able to destabilise established aesthetic structures and open ways for new aesthetic sensibilities/sense understandings, or what decolonial thinker Walter Mignolo refers to as a 'decolonial aestheSis'. This presentation briefly offers an overview of some key thoughts that led to the development of NEW DANCE LAB, and presents some archival material from the first NEW DANCE LAB evening performances.

Part V – Workshops

Dr Anita Ratnam: Exploring South Asian dance as an integer and not global decolonial tool

South Asian dance is frequently placed outside of the academy when it comes to Dance Studies. Why is it situated as a 'nice to have' in a dance curriculum when it could be seen as complete and valuable in and of itself. Why does Bharatanatyam have a strangehold on Indian diasporic communities? Remote, aloof and almost alien, this interactive workshop explores these associations and the long tentacles of South Asian dance forms arguing that the form imagines a past that is mostly invented.

Keanu Bergman: Krump: da decolonial battle continua

Krump grew out of clowning in Los Angeles in the early 2000s. Similar to hip hop, krump is a form of street dancing. However, unlike hip hop and breakdancing, krumping is not acrobatic. It is danced upright and is distinctive in its aggressive, upbeat, fast-paced style. Krump is highly improvisational and danced in battles where dancers feed off and return each other's energy.

Maxwell Xolani Rani: Codification of African contemporary dance: responses to Intsika and Umfundalai

In this workshop Maxwell Xolani Rani will trace his methodological approach to African dance discussing and demonstrating the multiple strands which he weaves including Umfundalai, the Germaine Acogny traditions and his own experiences with Ballet and Modern/Contemporary dance. The contextual frame of Southern African social traditional dances is also unpacked to reveal Rani's complex interwoven central tenets.

Mpotseng Shuping: Disability arts: challenges to vestiges in dance - Unmute Dance Company

The advent of disability arts in South Africa since the 1990s could be seen as part of the subversive activity undertaken by some dancers, choreographers and other performing arts activists eager to erase colonial trappings associated with concert theatre Dance. These norms included implicit white and ablest dancing bodies. In this frank conversation with the Chair and members of Unmute Dance Company, these champions of integrated arts and disability dance (terms that will be unpacked) will share their unique history and artistic goals. Participants will learn more about some of the daily challenges of the Unmute (dancers with disabilities and their enabling dancer counterparts) to experience their rich choreographic processes. The presenters will narrate some of their iconic and award winning dance works created since 2010.

Thalia Laric: Developing Performer Presence through a Focus on Somatic Attention

The workshop I offer is based on my continued research around developing a performance and pedagogic practice that prioritises performer presence over representationalism. My theory is that through developing somatic awareness and personal agency a performer is able to become more present to the experience of performance. I use the term somatic awareness to describe the subjective experience that a person has of their own body-mind and physical existence. This includes agency over what we choose to do, as well how we can develop our awareness of the sensory experience of what we are doing through paying attention to it.

> My performance practice and pedagogic style is thus improvisational in nature – giving suggestions of movement patterns and inviting dancers/performers to direct their attention toward specific sense experiences. Specific areas I focus on are:
>
> - Visual Attention - the experience of seeing – exploring the visual field and how movement can create opportunities for different visual experiences.

- Audio attention- the experience of hearing - paying attention to sounds and how movement can offer different experiences for hearing.

- Tactile Attention - a focus on giving and receiving different kinds of tactile information – explored both individually and with others bodies.

- Kineasthetic Attention – seeking movement experiences that disorient the vertical axis and relationship to gravity.

- Spacial Attention– our experience of proximity and distance to other bodies/objects.

- Social Consciousness – what kind of affect do engagements with others have on my physical and emotional experience.

- Observational Attention – what is the experience of observing and of being observed.

- Compositional Awareness – what do you notice about the organisation of bodies and movements in space.

- Dramaturgical Consciousness – how does the compositional development over time begin to create meaning, and how does this relate to the current (social) context.

Along with this, I have an interest in developing attention towards a Collective Authorship based on Compositional Awareness that can lead to the development of an 'Instant Composition Performance'. This kind of performance considers the development of a collective social agreement as the basis for creating improvised performance. Prioritising collaboration and immediacy, the research positions improvisation as a sophisticated form of composition.

The aim of my workshop is to develop a common-ground between performers through accessing both attention and spontaneity to create support for collective authorship and performer presence. Individual clarity is developed through a focus on somatic attention, and is in service of a community of common interest. Erasing representationalism and developing somatic attention and social participation in support of creative immediacy.

Through developing skills of listening, paying sensory attention, participating and observing our place within an emergent composition, the practice/research questions established hegemonic structures of creating choreography and performance.

Zethu Mtatiti: Mpantsula meets Flamenco

What do mpantsula and flamenco share as common threads? Come and experience a lively interaction. Dancers are strongly encouraged to bring their own mpantsula/kwaito or flamenco music to this class. Leave your inhibitions at the door. You can also participate by cheering to fan the flames of *duende.*
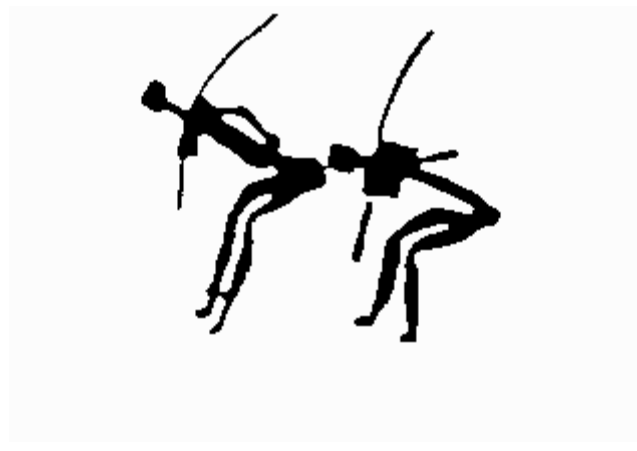
Part VI – Pane Discussion

How has the artistic director in South Africa responded to calls for decolonialism?

Many artistic directors located in South Africa simultaneously run their professional dance companies and offer training programmes. What are some of the challenges and highlights they face when producing dance works that seem to require a response to the loud calls to decolonise. From Oxford to the University of Cape Town, such a clarion has stirred in the hearts of an already vulnerable Dance community. In what ways do artistic directors see their responses: rupture, erasure and or replacement. Any or all of these? What are some of the expectations of their audience and Members of the Board in terms of these contexts? How are these scenarios being dealt with?

This round table discussion will offer perspectives of the diverse panelists who have been selected mostly from the Contemporary Dance sector. The Chair - Louise Coetzer of Darkroom Contemporary, a Cape Town based dance company founded in 2010, will pose these and other related questions as the lines between dance pedagogues and those who employ graduate dancers become more intersected.

Panellists include: Sifiso Kweyama (Jazzart Dance Theatre), Debbie Turner (CAPA Dance Co.), Lliane Loots (Flatfoot dance co), Ebrahim Medell (Eoan Group Dance Theatre), Emile Jansen aka Emile YX (Black Noise).

Part VII – Perf mances: Programme Notes

Anita Ratnam: Extract from A Million Sitas

Choreography: Anita Ratnam

A Million Sitas can be described as a provocative and full length work that explores the re-emergence of Bharatanatyam post British colonial rule and the situatedness of contemporary India as a complex and contested terrain. The journey of charming devotee to feminist dance advocates and 'warriors' in this context is navigated within many present day social (in)justices. Many of my stories of Contemporary Indian Dance argue notions of a pre-colonial, virginal 'India', patriarchy and territory. These may rupture some fixed notions in the diaspora too. Perhaps thoughts on South Asian dance across the globe (incl. London, UK, USA, Australia and South Africa) share similar concerns as African Dance has also been afflicted with certain categorizations used by some institutions? I remain an 'intersectionist' who asks via multiple modalities further questions such as: Who has custodial roles of "Indian Dance"? How do artists in India and South Africa feel about this? To whose tune are we dancing? This short performance develops the feminist tone of the choreography and includes spoken word sections. I look forward to our Q and A afterwards.

Assembly

Choreography: Kristina Johnstone

Music: Johann Sebastian Bach, Mass in B Minor; Anna Thorvaldsdottir, Ró

Dramaturgical assistant and movement facilitator: Thalia Laric/Voice-body facilitator: Ilona Frege/Performers: Julia de Rosenwerth, Kopano Maroga, Ciara Barron, Vathiswa Nodlayiya, Cilna Katzke:

With thanks to: Lucia Walker, Danie Fourie, Alan Parker, Tania Vosgatter, Steven van Wyk, Fred Hagemann and David Andrew

What are the psycho-social dynamics of a gathering? How does this manifest physically, sonically and spatially? At what moment does a gathering of people and ideas become reactionary? Assembly is a choreographic study that investigates ways in which choreography can be used to emphasise presence over representation. How can a choreographic process allow the body to exist, not in terms of what it represents, but in between being and becoming, both in the space and in the moment of performance?
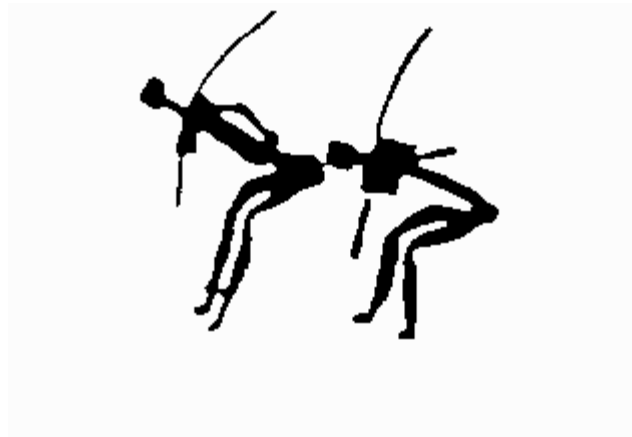
The Argument

Choreography: Marlin Zoutman

Performers: 3rd and 4th year students of the UCT School of Dance.

*Piece presented at Artscape Theatre*

Part VIII – Biographies

Keynote Speaker

Lliane Loots currently holds the positions of Dance Lecturer in the Drama and Performance Studies Programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Howard College Campus). She holds a Master's degree in Gender Studies and is presently completing her PhD looking at contemporary dance histories on the African continent. She is delighted to hold the founding position of Artistic Director for the Centre for Creative Arts's annual *JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience*. She has also recently been invited onto the Grahamstown National Arts Festival's Artistic Committee. Loots founded *FLATFOOT DANCE COMPANY* as a professional dance company in 2003 when it grew out of a dance training programme that originally began in 1995. As the Artistic Director and resident choreographer for *FLATFOOT DANCE*, Loots has won numerous national choreographic awards and commissions and has travelled extensively in Europe, America and the African continent with her dance work. In April 2017 she was awarded the *Chevalier de L'ordre des Arts et des Lettres* by the French government.
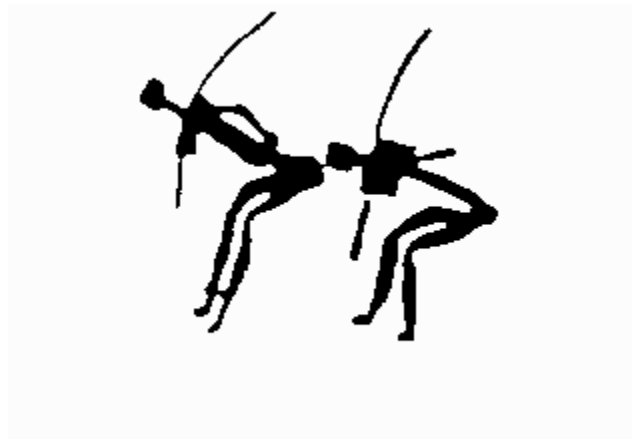
Part VIII – Biographies

Scholarly Papers

Adriana Miranda da Cunha is Brazilian currently a Ph.D. candidate at University of State of Santa Catarina (UDESC) – Brazil. She holds an MA in Applied Theatre from Witwatersrand University, South Africa (2015); and graduated in Performing Arts at the Universidade do Estado de Santa Catarina (UDESC) (2011). She also participated in the Movement Analysis Laban-Bartenieff System at the Centre Nacional de la Danse (CND) - France (2013). Cunha has experience as an art-educator, facilitator and researcher with emphasis on gender and body politics; diversity and human rights; and performance. As a facilitator, she uses multiple methodologies (dance, drama, theater, movement theories) as pathways to enhance expressivity (see www.dancaorganica.org). As an art producer, she coordinates the South African Documentary Film Festival (http://sadocsfestival.wixsite.com/south-african-docs - Brazil and Germany) which aims at the cultural and political exchange on topics related to social justice and development where which she is responsible for curation, production and translation films presented in Brazil, South Africa and Germany. Her writing and photography are available on the website www.indigomungo.org. Cunha received the Pieter-Dirk Uys Theatre for Social Change at Faculty of Humanities at Wits University in 2014.

Alina Zhuwawo is a young and upcoming researcher who is pursuing her M.Phil studies in dance and body politics at the University of Zimbabwe. Alina is a versatile dancer in contemporary dance and traditional Zimbabwean dance. She has been involved in several dance and theatre projects as a director, actor and dancer. In the past few months, Alina has begun writing very incisive theatre reviews on blogs and newspapers on Zimbabwean dance and performance politics.

Dr Anusharani Sewchurran is currently a lecturer at the Department of Media and Cultural Studies - University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Her research interests range from the regulation of media to the digital humanities, curriculum development, religion and the mediation of religious identity via the new and social media. She enjoys cooking most though.

Coralie Valentyn recently completed her second MA in Performance Studies at Plymouth University in England as a Chevening scholar. Prior to that, she read for her MA in Anthropology at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) as a Mandela Rhodes Scholar in the Class of 2014. Her Honours degree in Anthropology was also completed at UWC as a Mellon Mays Fellow. Her research interest is in integrated dance practice and she advocates making dance and other spaces more accessible. Coralie has conducted ethnographic research in South Africa, the United States and the United Kingdom as well as presented at local and international conferences, most notably the Congress of Research in Dance/Society of Dance History Scholars Dance Advocacy conference in Athens, Greece. She is currently completing an Anatomy module with Deborah McFadden through the Northern Dance Academy in order to deepen her understanding of the body.

Estelle Olivier is currently a fulltime lecturer in Movement and Physical Theatre at Stellenbosch University Drama Department, South Africa. She holds a BMus(Dance) degree from UCT and a Masters in Drama focussing on Physical Theatre(US). She also works as a freelance performer and choreographer and has choreographic experience in various genres ranging from Children, Musical, Community, Dramatic and Physical Theatre. Her latest choreographic works include award winning *macbeth.slapeloos* (Aardklop 2013, KKNK & Grahamstown Festival 2014 & Baxter Theatre 2015) directed by Marthinus Basson and *Ontwrig* (Woordfees & Cape Town Fringe 2015) with Petrus du Preez. Her primary research focus is on investigating the role of the choreographer-facilitator working with diverse performing bodies, and she is interested in developing methods and mechanisms of choreographing performers without formal dance training.

Dr Gerard M. Samuel holds a PhD from the University of Cape Town entitled *Dancing the Other in South Africa* (2016). His thesis draws on the ontologies of marginalisation for older dancers suggesting the term 'body-space' as a theoretical tool to observe bodies and dancing as states of becoming. Gerard is part of an international research project Knowledge Production, Archives and Artistic Research supported by the University of Copenhagen; Danish Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation; and Danish Cultural Institute. He is currently researching a co-authored book with leading scholars in Brazil, Peru, India, Denmark and Namibia which he hopes to publish as '*south-south dialogues in Dance: performance and pedagogy*' (working title) shortly. Gerard developed LeftfeetFIRST dance theatre – a youth dance company with dancers with disabilities in his home province, KwaZulu-Natal. His publications including *"Shampoo dancing and scars ..." (2011),* and *"(dis)graceful dancing bodies…"(2015*) are integral to the UCT Dance curriculum. His interest in yoga and knowledge of bonsai and roses continues to bloom. Gerard is Director of the School of Dance at the University of Cape Town (UCT) since May 2008. He also holds a Diploma in Ballet (1984) and enjoyed a career as ballet dancer and choreographer. Gerard obtained a Master of Arts degree from the Drama and Performance Studies Programme at the University of Natal in 2002.

Ilona Frege has many years of experience working professionally as an educator, performer and theatre-maker. Her main areas of specialisation are in physical theatre, contemporary dance, choreography and acting. Her background in both dance and drama informs her creative choices.

She was a founding member of Gary Gordon's *First Physical Theatre Company* and has taught at various tertiary institutions over the years, including the University of Stellenbosch Drama Department, Wits University and at UCT School of Dance. Ilona also teaches physical theatre and acting at various schools in Cape Town. She has, over the years, written the Grade 8 and Grade 12 dance unit for text books for schools, a Grade 12 Handbook for Physical Theatre (Drama) for WCED as well as various teacher training manuals for an NGO. She is currently reading for a Masters at UCT School of Dance and continues to create and perform new work.

Jacki Job's independent, professional dance career began in 1994. Since then she has conceived more than 60 original works, with performances in Africa, Asia and Europe. Job lived in Tokyo from 2003-2011. During this time she engaged in dynamic collaborations with an array of eclectic artists and served as a guest teacher at a few universities across Japan. Job received her MA in dance research from the University of Cape Town in 2014. Since 2016, her Ph.D. research interrogates the meaning of liminality and its impact on the perception of personhood and transformation in South Africa. She is currently engaged as a lecturer across the Dance and Drama Departments at the University of Cape Town, and intends to still be spiritedly engaged with the Arts beyond 90.

James Macdonald is a curator and researcher at the Visual Identities in Art and Design Research Centre (VIAD), University of Johannesburg. He completed his MAFA in 2016 at the University of Cape Town (*cum laude*), and most recently co-curated the ICA Live Art Festival in Cape Town.

Kristina Johnstone is currently working towards her PhD at the Wits School of Arts. She has published numerous articles about dance and performance and is a co-author of the book *Post-Apartheid Dance: Many Bodies Many Voices Many Stories* (2012). She has worked as a performer, choreographer and teacher in Cape Town and Kampala, Uganda. She holds a Master's degree in Dance Studies from UCT and has lectured at UCT School of Dance and Makerere University. She is co-director of Underground Dance Theatre and has directed the Dance Transmissions Festival in Kampala, Uganda. She is co-curator of the New Dance Lab - platform for movement research and experimental dance.

Lisa Wilson MEd, BFA, BSc is a senior lecturer at the University of Cape Town School of Dance where she facilitates learning in contemporary dance, western dance history and dance teaching methods. She earned her Master of Education (with distinction) from University of Exeter, England, and has been actively involved in initial dance teacher training for the past 11 years. She is also an active dance performer and choreographer with recently staged works in the United States, Ghana, Jamaica, and South Africa. Her scholarly research interests are dance pedagogy, dance teacher training and African Diaspora dance studies. She has published in several scholarly journals: the Caribbean Journal of Education; South African Dance Journal; Journal of Dance Education; Research in Dance Education; Dance Current Selected Research; and NDEO, DaCi and CORD Conference proceedings.

Dr Nehemiah Chivandikwa is a full time senior lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe. He teaches theatre and development communication and playmaking. His research interests are in performance and body politics, gender, disability, applied theatre performances and media. He has published several articles in both regional and international journals in these areas. Dr. Chivandikwa has been involved in several projects in applied theatre on gender, political violence, disability and rural and urban development.

Thalia Laric holds a Master's degree in Choreography from Rhodes University and an Honours degree in Dance from the University of Cape Town. She has performed with the First Physical Theatre Company and FTH:K and is co-director of Underground Dance Theatre. She has taught at Rhodes University, UCT and AFDA. Thalia is the leading teacher of Contact Improvisation in Cape Town. In 2016 she was awarded a Live Art Fellowship from the Institute for Creative Arts for her research in dance improvisation. She is co-curator of the New Dance Lab - platform for movement research and experimental dance.

Rainy Demerson is a second year Ph.D. student in Critical Dance Studies at the University of California, Riverside. Rainy holds an MFA in Dance from Hollins University, an MA in Dance Education from New York University, and a BA in World Arts and Cultures/Dance from the University of California, Los Angeles. She has trained in Indonesia, Cuba, Brazil, Barbados, Belize, Germany and Senegal. A nationally certified Yoga Instructor and New York state-certified K-12 dance educator, Rainy taught Dance and Yoga throughout New York City public schools for eight years. She also taught at Lindenwood University, Crafton Hills College and Scripps College, and was an Assistant Professor at El Paso Community College. She has articles published in the Journal of Dance Education and the Journal of Emerging Dance Scholarship. Rainy has performed her choreography at festivals across the U.S. and produced her work in New York, California and Senegal.

Rodrigo **Benza** is a professor at the Performing Arts Department of Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (PUCP) and holds a Masters Degree in Theatre from Universidade do Estado de Santa Catarina (Brazil). His artistic work in community contexts and in the artistic circuit is focused in intercultural creation processes. In 2009 he won the dramaturgical creation category award of the IBERESCENA fund with the documentary theatre piece "Proyecto EMPLEADAS" that reflected Peruvian society from the perspective of and about the domestic workers. His most recent theater piece called Ausentes - proyecto escénico (Absents - scenic project) dealt with social conflicts in Peru. He has written articles mainly on intercultural and documentary theatre for journals and books in Peru, Brazil, Cuba, England and Argentina.
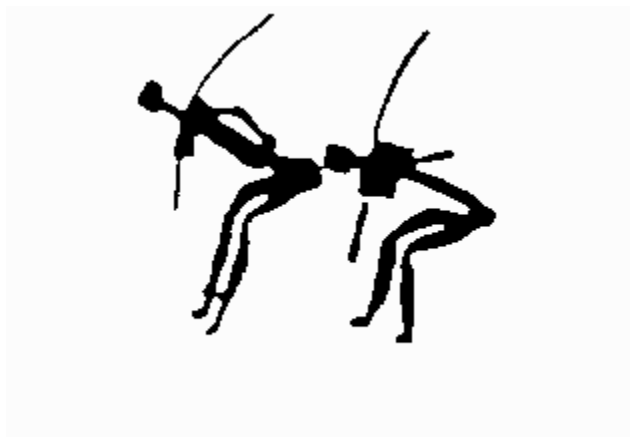
Part VIII – Biographies

Presentations

Adriana Miranda da Cunha - see above - Scholarly Papers

Alan Cliff is an Associate Professor and co-ordinator of the Staff Development cluster at CILT. He teaches courses in educational psychology, educational assessment and adult education to mostly postgraduate education students and convenes courses in educational assessment and evaluation for students at certificate, diploma and master's levels. Alan has supervised Master's and Ph.D. students in areas such as the development of literacies practices in disciplinary contexts; the validation of standardised admissions tests; the use of alternate admissions tests for admission and placement purposes; and factors that facilitate the development of electronic systems literacy in the workplace. As co-ordinator, Alan contributes to work on alignment between curriculum and student assessment – including e-assessment practices – with new and established academics and professional staff. Regionally, Alan teaches courses on assessment design and academic literacy. His current research interests are in the use of theories and principles of Dynamic Assessment to facilitate student learning; and in the processes of staff development as 'literacies practice' and induction into professional learning communities. Alan contributes to the development of educational assessment policy in the further and higher education sectors nationally. He is also a collaborator on an international online staff development project with inter alia colleagues from the University of Stockholm.

Hilke Diemer is a Dutch choreographer and lecturer in teaching methods, improvisation/composition and choreology. She lives and works in Rotterdam, teaching and choreographing free lance abroad. She is an initiator of workshops and curricula for young choreographers, resulting in the BA and MA programs at the Rotterdamse Dansacademie (CODARTS). Her publications include teaching creative dance (Codarts 1990), Can choreography be taught? The Greenhouse Effect, ELIA conference at the University of Leeds, also published in Volgograd 1999, Hoedt U voor namaak, research on the new choreographers in STT (UVA 2005), "Every movement has its blessing, about integration of dance in the drama studies in Sudan (UVA 2007) and How is dance embedded in the Sudanese Culture, Jiri Kylian Lectoraat(Codarts 2010).

Kristina Johnstone: see Scholarly Papers

Thalia Laric*: see Scholarly Paperss
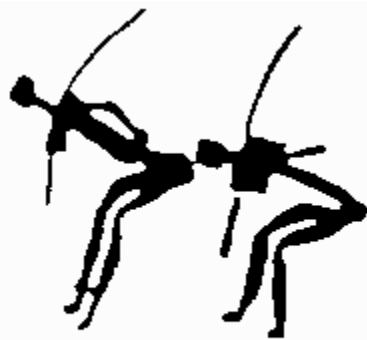
Part VIII – Biographies

Poster Presentations

Danielle-Marie Jones holds a BMus(Dance) Degree from the University of Cape Town (UCT) where she was the recipient of a meritorious achievement in the Performing and Creative Arts. Danny's dance career started with Dance Studies at Wynberg Girls High School, Waterfront Theatre College and the Afrika Ablaze Dance Company, where she has progressed from dancer to choreographer. Her recent productions as co-choreographer at the Baxter Theatre in Cape Town include Cinnamon(2015), Unchained (2016) and Raw Silk (2017). Her current research interest is in discovering the dynamics of movement, untapped potential, instinctual response and decoding the natural pathway of the untrained body. Her work also investigates the evaluation of dance as true criticism that liberates the artist or as a form of artistic colonialism.

Jamie-Lee Jansen holds a BMus (Dance) Degree from the University of Cape Town. She is currently a post-graduate student and is a guest teacher at the School of Dance. She was the South African dance facilitator on the CICLO Red Apples Green Apples project 2017 that took place between the University of Copenhagen and UCT. The theme of the project was climate change and the teaching mediums were visual art and dance. Jamie's current research interests are social dance within the "coloured" culture specifically relating to Cape Town.

Jenna Merrington holds a BMus degree (UCT) 2016, specialising in the Pedagogue stream. She is currently working towards graduating with a BMus Honours degree at the end of 2017. Her interests lie in dance and film as well as the role of social media in the dance industry. Merrington passionately believes that dance can enlighten and educate people all over the world about social issues. She participated in the Clanwilliam Arts Project in 2016 where dance, theatre and street theatre puppetry were explored to highlight underlying social issues. The project is centred around the poorest communities and children in that region of the Cape. Jenna believes that with the combination of dance and power of film as well as the use of social media, a maximum reach of teaching will be optimised.
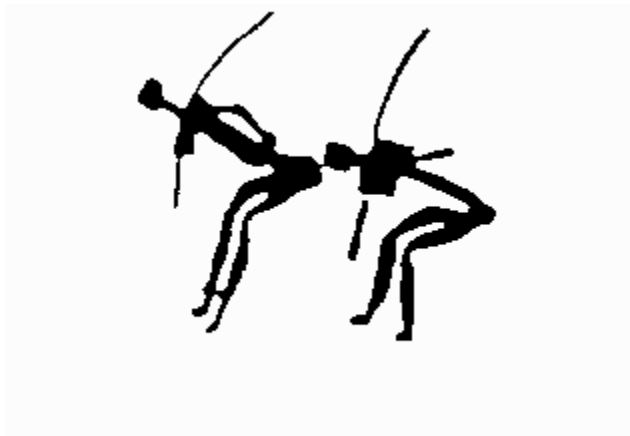
Part VIII – Biographies

Workshops

Dr Anita Ratnam is best described as an" intersectionist," whose work weaves the many disciplines of dance, theatre, spoken word, ritual, dramaturgy and women's issues. Her formal training in Bharatanatyam, Mohiniattam and Kathakali has given Dr Ratnam a distinctive movement vocabulary that she has named NEO BHARATAM - a contemporary Indian kinetic situated on a mature body. Anita Ratnam's acclaimed choreographies and thoughtfully curated dance conferences have been path breaking in establishing dialogue and global awareness of Indian traditions. The global portal www.narthaki.com is an example of Dr Ratnam's spirit of entrepreneurship in the performing arts. Recognizing her passionate commitment to broadening the discourse for the multiple voices of Indian dance, Dr Ratnam has been repeatedly honoured and has recently been selected for the 2017 Presidential Award for Contemporary Dance.

Keanu Bergman is a lead member of the Cape Town-based krump crew, Royal Family Kings. He choreographs, performs and is pro-active in developing dance program   s at schools and amongst contemporaries across several communities.

Maxwell Xolani Rani is a lecturer at the UCT School of Dance. He holds a BMus(Dance), and MMus(Dance) from the University of Cape Town. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate. He is the founder and creator of the African dance technique called *Intsika* meaning the "pillar" or the "strengthener". He is experienced in teaching every level of African dance technique as well contemporary work. He is convener of African Dance Practice and African Dance History courses. Rani has produced works and taught in South Africa, Senegal, London, Brazil, Germany, United States, China, Jamaica, France and Canada. He has presented papers at the daCi conference, (Bahia-Brazil) and Confluences Conferences (Cape Town, South Africa). Rani is a published scholar, he is a co-author of Post-Apartheid Dance – many bodies many voices many stories (2012) and currently on the board of the advisory committee for Dance of the Western Cape Department of Education.

Mpotseng Shuping is a company manager, intergrated dance teacher as well as sign language interpreter for Unmute Dance Theatre. She was professionally trained by Jazzart Dance Theatre from 1987 to 1991. In 1992 she continued with Jazzart working as a professional dancer there until 1997. Between 1998 and 2004 Shuping focused on her dance teaching career teaching dance and movement in schools, she has also taught pupils and dancers around Africa and USA. She joined Remix Dance Company in 2005 working as a performer and dance teacher. In 2014 she co-founded Unmute Dance Theatre together with Andile Vellem, Nadine Mckenzie and Themba Mbuli.

Thalia Laric – See above - **Scholarly Papers**

Zethu Mtati was born in Cape Town. She began dancing at the age of 10 at Dance For All in Gugulethu. After matric, she went onto study at UCT school of Dance and majored in Contemporary dance. She graduated in 2002 and started working for the late Carolyn Holden at La Rosa Spanish Dance Theatre. She acquired her junior and senior teachers' certificate in Flamenco. Zethu received a bursary from the NAC to study in Spain, Madrid, with various well known flamenco teachers and dancers like, La Truco, Imnaculada Ortega, La Tati, Angel Muñoz, Javier Cruz and many others.
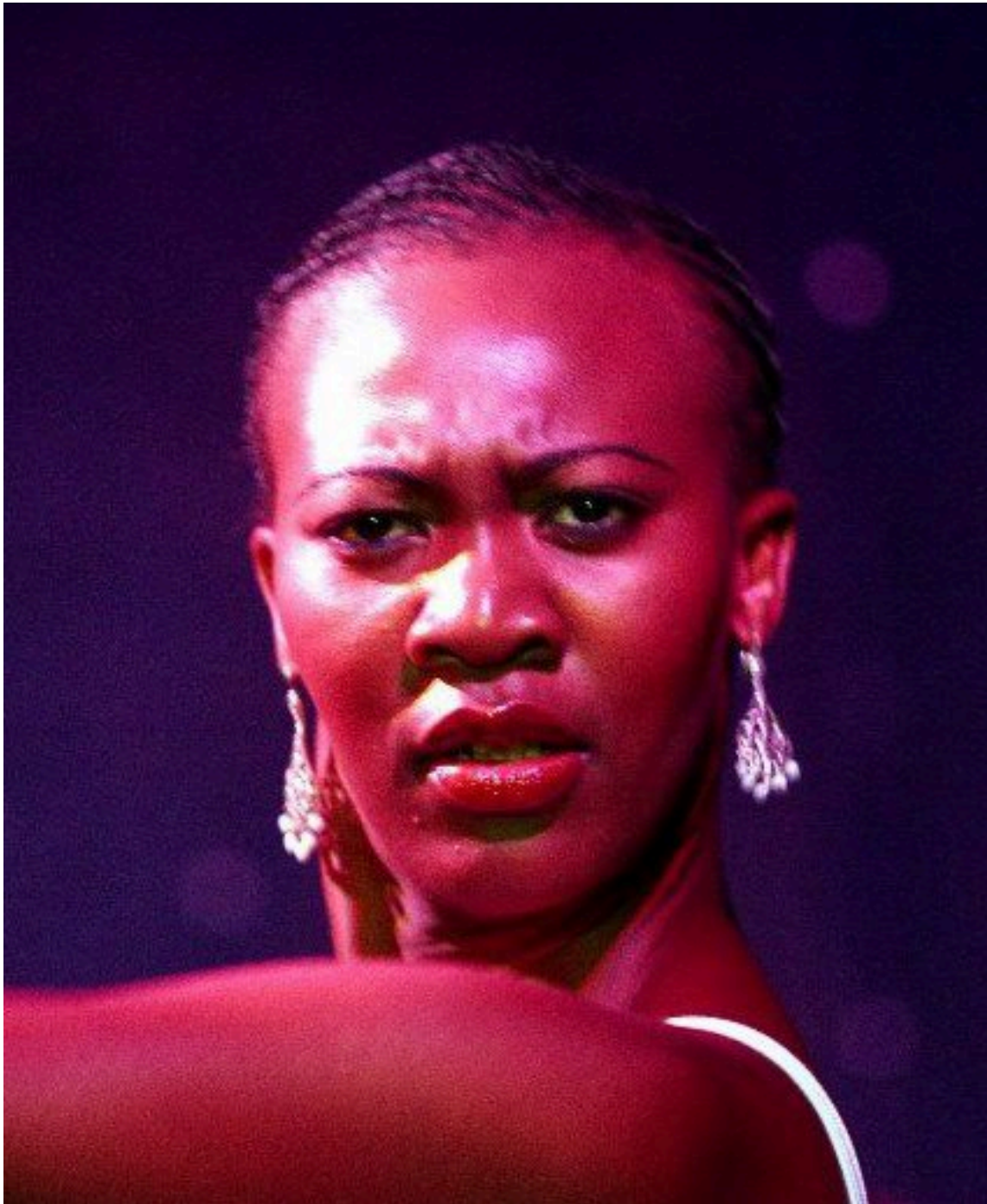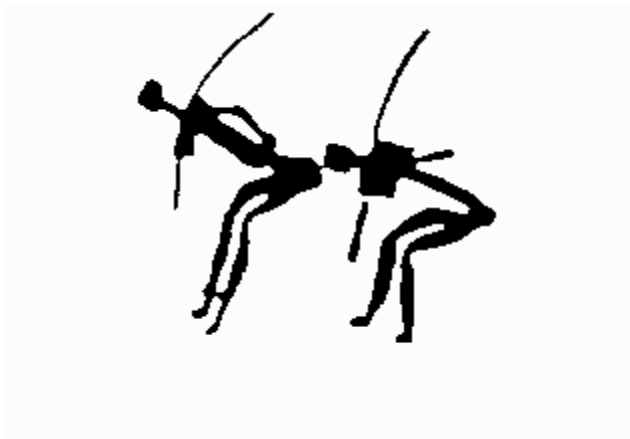
Part VIII – Biographies

Performances

Anita Ratnam: see above— ‡
Kristina Johnstone: see above—ccholarly hapers

Marlin Zoutman started dancing at the age of 13 at Wynberg Senior Secondary. He then joined the Jazzart training programme and later, the company, choreographing on platforms like Danscape, Jazzart's annual season, Baxter Dance festival (including being awarded the Commissioned piece) and Dance Joint. In 2009 he went on to work with Inspirations Dance Company, choreographers such as Ananda Fuchs, Adele Blank, Christopher Kindo, Sbonakaliso Ndaba, Gregory Maqoma, and performed in Dance Festivals such as the Darling Kamerkunste Fees, KKNK, Vredendal. Dorp to Dorp SABC 2 Tour around Gauteng and well as corporate events. International experience includes guest choreography at the Seychelles Dance Festival, performing with Cape Town Opera's production, Porgy and Bess, in Germany. He has also worked with director, Brian Johnson from Vancouver on a cinematic piece, Sidereal Time. His teaching experience spans across schools, workshops as well as running adult evening classes. Together with Celeste Botha he has started his own company, New World Dance Theatre.