CONFLUENCES 10

Dance, (e)merge, Theatre

Hosted by

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WELCOME & OPENING ADDRESS CONFLUENCES 10TH ANNIVERSARY

Good morning everyone. What a cause for celebration our 10th anniversary event is for the Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies, The Institute of Creative Arts, for all of you gathered here as our visiting keynoters, delegates, students, friends and associates of University of Cape Town and for me as your Chair in 2019 of *Dance, (e)merge, Theatre!*

It bears recollection that the emergence of a dance conference such as ours has a proud heritage and genealogy and for me is testimony to the tenacity of Dance scholars that have come before me, some of whom like Sharon Friedman here, have remained; shaping, nudging and sometimes thrusting the burning questions of the time for consideration before small committees committed to a dialogue that is unashamedly focused on Dance and its discourses. I would like to suggest that *Confluences* has endeavoured to remain mindful of the shifting places and titling times (to borrow from our colleague Jay Pather's title of his dance work in the late 1990s) in the Southern African landscape.

Since 1997, *Confluences* has sought to articulate not only topical issues of dance, echoing in parallel the larger concerns of important, international sister organisations such as the *Congress of Research in Dance* and the *Society of Dance History Scholars* but to pay attention to our own geopolitical space, glaring economic differences and rich cultural diversity. When we look back, I noticed how Dance located its epistemological territory in terms of anthropology, ethnomusicology and not unsurprisingly frequently returned to questions of pedagogy, history and aesthetics. Naturally, we too wanted to explore the notion of choreography beyond dance making and investigated how the notion of voice and agency is manifest through dance. Interestingly, we seem to have avoided a conference that looked squarely at the subject of Ballet in South Africa given the dominance and privileged position which this art form had secured for itself in the 20th century. We were certainly courageous enough to explore social dance (as opposed to concert theatre dance forms) which led to a re-focus on mass culture and urban culture and question whose dance we are teaching. Cultural Studies and Music have been recurring spaces for our deepening enquiry and over the twenty years of our existence we have benefitted from the astute and enquiring minds of Keynotes such as Professor Brenda Dixon Gottschild, Professor Julia Buckroyd, Professor Sue Stinson and Professor Sherry Shapiro to name just a few. Sometimes our esteemed guests

have returned to us on more than one occasion, and here I refer to Vincent Mantsoe. Few will have forgotten his riveting performances and for some, the troubling of their comfort, as his out of body, deep spiritual calling reverberated in the studios of the former School of Dance. Yes, we have tackled awkward or uncomfortable themes such as Dance, Religion and Spirituality even when at times such notions may have little space in secular academia. In 2015, we devoted our energies to rethinking the negotiation of contemporary dance in Africa amidst the necessary upheavals of what became a full blown national student protest that later saw a shut-down of 23 Universities and ultimately the prize of #Feesmustfall campaign. In true democratic fashion we have begged to differ with one another even as we encouraged more diverse opinion and research.

Our intimate conference has acknowledged the challenges of gathering a dance community whether this was: offers of bursaries to post graduate students from other local universities and reduced rates for SADAC countries, transport for potential young dancers to attend our range of activities over the conference period, free performance and workshops, and we have enjoyed support and leverage from key arts institutions such as the National Arts Council of SA in previous years. All our many efforts have been consistently supported by the University of Cape Town and it is in no small measure that we owe a debt of gratitude to our alma mater. Over the past twenty years we have been able to consistently publish a peer reviewed conference Proceedings which we once again commit to for our 10th anniversary. Our work to date includes over 100 papers; over 20 performances, and workshops or masterclasses, shared biographic information and all the key note addresses even when there have been more than one per conference. This accomplishment warrants even more publication and perhaps a further book or sequel to *Post Apartheid dance: many bodies, many voices many stories* published in 2012 is warranted at this juncture?

I am particularly pleased that since 2008, we have been able to regularly host a biennial scholarly dance conference in the southern African region. The impact of our work should not be underestimated, and more work still needs to be done to determine more accurately the number of citations which we enjoy in other tertiary educational settings (academies, colleges, and universities). Who knows whether our work has followed our delegates return to Uganda, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Denmark, Sweden, The Netherlands, UK, The USA, India, Brazil, Peru.

As the evolution of the study of Dance gathers momentum, and even greater intersections emerge in fields such as Theatre and Performance Studies, it may be preemptive for me to definitively suggest what new territories may lie ahead. As the site for such discovery remains the body, and as a dance researcher, I continue to remain curious about the state of our becoming which I maintain dance elicits. What is it that Dance allows us to see that other modalities in performance obscures and/or erases? If dance is not different from theatre then how does theatre allow us to read dance and, similarly, in what manner does dance permit a particular knowing of theatre? What is the new knowledge that as performers we produce when our roots are entangled and suffocated by what I call a *terra (jn)firma*? The ground on which we tread is blood soaked but it is also as Balindile Ngcobo reminded me, dripping in mother's milk. How can we nourish the articulation of the next generation of performing artists as they become seen in so many unseen paradigms?

I am confident that our conference under the leadership of such critical voices such as Rolando Vazquez and Nadine George-Graves, and indeed so many of you, will begin to 'step over the line of control' as our most recent key note speaker Anita Ratnam in 2017 had admonished us to do. It is my wish that on this august occasion and 10th anniversary, each one of you will have the opportunity to pause for reflection, spit out your possibilities and action your dance-theatre of the 21st century for the many visible generations of Confluence(r)s to come.

I wish you an enriching, mind boggling, energising *Confluences 10*!

Thank you.

Dr Gerard M. Samuel

Chair: *Confluences 10*

PART I – KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Academic Bedfellows: Genres, Genealogies and Gestures

Dr Nadine George-Graves

The Ohio State University: Department of Theatre and the Department of Dance

Abstract

Although Dance and Theater are both embodied performing arts, although there are many genres that straddle the lines between the two forms, and despite the fact that there are many departments of "theater and dance," the scholarly fields too seldom communicate with each other. Most would acknowledge theater and dance as natural bedfellows, but work that examines the interstices is truly interdisciplinary. Taking corporeality, embodiment and theatricality as ideas that unite the work of dance and theater scholars, this talk advances a border-crossing paradigm shift toward the goal of examining genealogies, erasing many of the lines of demarcation between the two fields and encouraging less respect in the future for historical disciplinary boundaries. In foregrounding the politics and poetics of moving bodies, and by focusing on performative embodiment as a negotiation of power dynamics, this undertaking challenges the two disciplines to take a closer look at the histories, theories and practices of physical performance.

An academic performance in V acts, in which Dr Nadine George-Graves, aka Dr Nadine, aka Dr Nay (after Dr Jay), aka Nadine (just "Nadine" like Madonna or Cher), aka the notorious NGG, attempts to parse the genealogies of Theatre and Dance and subtly suggest the way forward in the wake and afterlife of history according to her.

Curtain Speech

(Nadine walks to the podium and turns on a presentation slide with the title of the talk in theatrical type against a red-curtained theater background with silhouettes of audience members at the bottom.)

Thank you for inviting me. This is my first time here and it's been a wonderful experience so far. I am honored. When I asked Gerard what he was looking for in my talk, he suggested that my research on US companies that work between theatre and dance and my experiences in the academy in theater and dance units in the US might be interesting given not only the recent move together of Theater and Dance here at UCT but also similar moves and conversations in the broader fields. I recognize that these can be complicated conversations

so you may want to silence your phones, unwrap your soothing lozenges and look for the nearest emergency exit!

Act I: Magnetic Fields

…in which Dr Nadine George-Graves talks about herself a lot as a metaphor for the noble work of professing performance

Not knowing how much theatre was going to be at this conference, I figured I needed to be extra dramatic. Reading the conference call, I began thinking about the roots of the settler colonial project that we are undoing that lie in theater and dance—embodied performance. I want us to look to places that might not be one of the usual suspects to think about that decolonizing work.

(Image of Nadine as a baby in an adorable sailor outfit displayed mainly to trigger nurturing endorphins and to start to subconsciously win the audience over to her arguments.)

When I was a little girl, one would find me singing and dancing down the aisle of the grocery store acting out all of the commercials for cereals, sodas, frozen tv dinners, etc. I knew ALL the slogans! I would pick up a cereal box and say: *(Breathlessly performing a mélange of childhood advertisement campaigns more or less as they did in the commercials while displaying images of many of the products.)*

Trix are for kids! Lucky Charms: they're magically delicious. They're A-B-C delicious. They're gr-r-reat! I'm coo coo for coco puffs. Snap Crackle and Pop. And once you pop you can't stop. I'm going to bring home the bacon. And fry it up in a pan. I'm going to make the doughnuts because it's time to make the doughnuts. I coulda had a V-8. And it's miller time. It takes a tough man to make a tender chicken. But, where's the beef? Two all-beef patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles, onions on a sesame seed bun. I tried it and liked it. I can't believe I ate the whole thing. Mama mia, that's'a spicy meatball. The incredible edible egg. Leggo my eggo. Uh oh, spaghettios. Melts in your mouth, not in your hand. I can't eat just one. With two scoops of raisins. The breakfast of champions. It's made from the best stuff on earth. It's shake and bake. And I helped. What would I do for a Klondike bar? How many licks does it take? Have I got milk? Have I had my break today? I deserve a break today. Gimme a break. Gimme a break. I'm going to double my pleasure and double my fun. I'm going to look for the golden arches. It tastes so good cats ask for it by name. Tastes great. Less filling. Tastes great. Less filling. With a name like Smuckers, it has to be good. They make people happy through food. They speak fish. He likes it, hey, Mikey. Kid tested, mother approved. Look, ma, no cavities! Behold, the power of cheese. I'm gonna think big. I'm gonna think small. I'm gonna think different. I'm going to let my fingers do the walking. I'm going to reach out and touch someone. I'm going to take a bite out of crime. I'm going to fly the friendly skies. Because I'm

worth it. By bologna has a first name. I'm going to never let them see me sweat. I'm going to answer to a higher authority. Watch me wiggle, see me jiggle. Pardon me, do you have any Grey Poupon? But, of course. Meow meow meow meow. Meow meow meow meow. Meow meow meow meow. Meow meow meow meow. Sometimes I feel like a nut. Sometimes I don't. But I care enough to send the very best. Takes a lickin and keeps on tickin. Good to the last drop. Built for the road ahead. I'm going to get a piece of the rock. I'm going to invest with confidence. I'm going to sell no wine before it's time. I'm going to away those troubles down the drain. I'm going to lift and separate. But I'm not going to squeeze the Charmin. Hey, your chocolate is in my peanut butter! No! Your peanut butter is in my chocolate! But it's not nice to fool mother nature. Get your own box. If you've got the time, we've got the beer. Calgon, take me away. When EF Hutton talks, people listen. I'm going to make money the old-fashioned way…Inherit it. Maybe she's born with it? Maybe its Maybelline? My wife, I think I'll keep her. Nothing comes between me and my Calvins. A little dab'll do ya. I've fallen and I can't get up. You could learn a lot from a dummy. This is your brain. This is your brain on drugs. Zoom zoom zoom. The mind is a terrible thing to waste. And so on and so on and so on.

(*Heaving a big sigh.*) I drove my mother *bananas* doing the bi-weekly grocery shopping at the Pathmark in Old Bridge, New Jersey. And everyone had an opinion about what to do with me.

(Acting out her opinionated family members.) "Too much energy!" some said.

"You gotta channel that!" said others.

"And it should be creative!"

"Put her in a dance class! She's chubby anyway. Maybe she'll lose some weight. But only ballet, obviously."

Only ballet, obviously. Ballet was the only suitable dance aesthetic for a proper young lady, according to my mother. Why? Well, mainly because it kept the hips in check. There would be no loose swinging of the hips for any daughter of hers (I was the only daughter of hers, by the way.), inevitably leading to the ruining of my morals and the demise of civilization as we know it. The world would become Sodom and Gomorrah and I would be the whore of Babylon (to mix my biblical metaphors) if I moved my hips and (I repeat because she repeated many times) no daughter of hers coming from a proper Jamaican family (she took tea, for crying out loud) would be showing all of her business like that! Ballet, on the other hand, was embodiment of grace, propriety, decorum and the profound disavowal of the hips and their evildoings.

Cut to High School where I went to a performing arts high school for a few years in conjunction with my regular Catholic school education and discovered not only tap, jazz and African dance but also theater. At this time in my life I realized that my mother was (*pausing for dramatic effect*) ….absolutely right! It was all downhill from there! All hopes of my becoming a doctor or lawyer or senator or some other respectable profession were lost.

Cut to college where I become a Theater and Philosophy major (there was no dance class for credit at my undergraduate institution). (*With tongue firmly planted in her cheek and an extra dose of sarcasm through in case there is something lost in cultural translation.***)** Statistically speaking, of course, these are the two most financially lucrative majors in the United States—theatre and philosophy! I don't know about South Africa but America pays its philosophers ridiculously well.

(*More sarcasm*.) My mother was thrilled! But in college, I discovered that I could actually understand and say more about the way the world works by examining and creating art than I ever could in law school.

Cut to grad school where I got a PhD in Theatre.

(*Channeling her mother's own loving sarcasm.*) "Well, at least you'll be a doctor," my mother said. "A doctor of theatre, but…I'll allow it."

When and where I enter the academy is at the nexus of theatre and dance. This has not always been a smooth navigation. A number of years ago a dance colleague approached me at a conference wanting me to settle a matter (perhaps a bet). She was talking about my work as a dance scholar with a colleague who is a theatre scholar who insisted that I was a theatre scholar. Who was right? Which was I?

"Both," I said.

She seemed quite dissatisfied with my answer

I know I have lost jobs when I was on the market because I was too theatre for dance and too dance for theatre. Explaining this to friends and family members outside of the academy is difficult—the idea that my work in theater studies and dance studies is "interdisciplinary." In my own research in African American performance, I've found that the work that interests

me the most blurs the lines between performative genres. For a people rooted in diasporic African traditions, historically denied written literacy, forced to dissemble and signify to preserve the archive *and* the repertoire of culture, there is little surprise that their aesthetics resist discrete boundaries. For example, I have written about Negro vaudeville as a discursive site where theater, dance, comedy, music, etc. came together to imagine a new black subjectivity. (*Image of her first book.*) In terms of race, class and gender, At the beginning of the twentieth century, The Whitman Sisters, a US black vaudeville company run by (what we in the US would call) black women, navigated race, class and gender in complicated and important ways by managing their own shows, de-segregating theaters, passing for white and cross-dressing among other transgressions while maintaining the highest paid act on the circuit.

(*Image of her second book.*) I have written about the contemporary dance theater company Urban Bush Women and the ways in which the choreography "works" elements like blended dance styles, narrative, and spirituality to work through social issues and engage communities. Again, looking at race, class and gender at the nexus of theatre and dance gave me the tools for critical inquiry to try say something important about the way the world works. Urban Bush Women as a company was also exciting for me because of the unapologetic ways in which they move their hips. With a nod and a wink to my mom! (*She plays a clip of UBW's "Batty Moves."*) I also want to point out the different paths of training of the dancers as well as the blending of styles in this and other works by Urban Bush Women.

My work on black performance theory and subjectivity is firmly rooted in and spidered out from the body. But for all the academy's talk of interdisciplinarity the persistent resistance to synergies between the fields of theater and dance are vexing. We should even trouble this conversation—is this interdisciplinarity or a discipline? Dance and theater are both embodied performing arts, natural bedfellows, with many genres that straddle the lines between the two forms. There are many academic programs and departments in Theater and Dance. Yet the academic fields too seldom communicate.

This led me to present on the topic, organize working groups, co-chair a joint conference and eventually edit *The Oxford Handbook of Dance and* Theater. (*Image of her third book.*) This volume collects a critical mass of border-crossing scholarship toward the goal of erasing many

of the lines of demarcation between the two fields and encouraging less respect in the future for historical disciplinary boundaries. In foregrounding the politics and poetics of moving bodies, and by focusing on performative embodiment as a negotiation of power dynamics, I'm hoping both to widen the horizons of scholarship in the performing arts and to move the fields of dance and theater closer together.

Like that volume, this talk hopes to challenge the two disciplines to take a closer look at the histories, theories and practices of physical performance.

End of Act I~You may politely applaud now as I take a modest bow…

Act II: Genealogies

…in which Dr Nadine senses some rising tension in the room and quickly points out that…

Of course, theater and dance in the academy are not the same and have different genealogies. And genealogies matter…

Unfortunately, for times' sake I needed to cut a discussion of the histories of theatre, dance and performance studies fields in the academy but I would point you towards Shannon Jackson's book *Professing Performance* and the work of Susan Manning and Susan Foster and the forthcoming *Futures of Dance Studies* from the University of Wisconsin Press.

We also need to pay attention to the practicalities of existing in the academy. There are turf wars over scarce resources and disrespect for different aesthetics and methodologies. I have many war stories that we can talk about during Q and A or over drinks later. As I said, Yale, my undergraduate institution had no dance class for credit and theater was only a program and not a department. Northwestern, where I went for grad school, had a department of Theater with dance offering practical classes but really only Susan Manning, who was in English, taught Dance Studies. There was also a Department of Performance Studies sharing space while I was there.

I went back to Yale to teach as an assistant professor for five years introducing the first dance class for credit (a history course in which I snuck in some practical exercises). But Yale would not offer a practical class for credit for some time. I then taught at The University of California San Diego in a department of Theater and Dance for 15 years where Theater dominated over

Dance. I now teach at The Ohio State University jointly appointed in the two separate Departments of Theatre and Dance.

All of the academic units of my career are rooted in different genealogies and bring with them different strengths and challenges as we all struggle to do good work. I won't rehearse all of the trials and tribulations of working in the arts in the academy and between theater and dance. I'm sure we all have our stories. Instead, I'll challenge us to interrogate the roots of our assumptions about what belongs in the academy. How might those assumptions be reworked in order to imagine a provocative, insightful, creative and empowering way forward?

Here is my hopeful note…

In the world according to Nadine (where no one lives but me) we would recognize that, in fact, what the embodied arts have to offer the academy (through traditional scholarship and creative research) is far more advanced than our colleagues in other disciplines (certainly in the sciences but also in the other arts, humanities and social sciences).

I'm a new faculty member at The Ohio State University and as part of the new faculty orientation I was required to go to sessions on new pedagogical tools for classroom instruction that included:

1. Having students work in groups
2. Get them on their feet
3. Have students take sides and perhaps act out a controversy
4. Stand up
5. Provide learning spaces that are not desks and chairs.

Wow! This is from the paradigm-shifting findings of new evidence-based teaching and learning methods. But these are *all* things we do (and have been doing) in theatre and dance. Ironically, the professor telling us all of this stood at a lectern with a PowerPoint presentation boring me to tears—but that is another story.

(*Ostensibly to herself…but soto voce so the audience can hear.*) "She said, standing at a lectern with a presentation (though Prezi, not PowerPoint because it moves!) hoping the audience

recognizes the talk as a more of a theatrical monologue—at least that's how it seemed when she practiced in her hotel room"

Our critical discourse also tends to be nimbler in conversation with other fields like, Critical Gender Studies, Critical Race Studies, Queer Theory, Affect Theory, etc. And our people (faculty and students) tend to allow for more diversity than many (not all) fields. (Although this is sometimes vexed with internal segregation. But my point is that the potential is there more than in some other fields.) In other words, the academy writ large has much to learn from Theater and Dance.

End of Act II—You may display your relief at the briefness of Act II and genuine interest and intrigue about what is to come in Act III with generous applause

now…

Act III: Confluences

…in which Dr Nay brings the discussion back to points of convergence by deftly tying her talk to the "Confluences" theme of the conference

But I'm more interested in places of convergence or "confluence," the place where two rivers flow together and become one larger river or a situation in which two things join or come together. At the turn of the last century, I began to notice a number of reviews by confused critics. There were several shows where it seems like the paper didn't know whether or not to call the drama critic or the dance critic. For example, In 2011, English theater company Punchdrunk's production of *Sleep No More* caused much sturm and drang over the genre to which this breathless performance belonged. I liked the performance well enough but was baffled by the heated debates and the continued interest in how to define this kind of performance. (*Images from similar productions.*) There have been a number of examples of immersive, embodied, theatrical dance/movement pieces since the late twentieth century (*De La Guarda's Learn to Fly*, *Fuerza Bruta*, *The Donkey Show* and *Here Lies Love* and more recently *Then She Fell* and *Ghost Light* to name a few). So why do we still marvel at genre/genus? Is it because we have yet to find a pithy label and we need classifications and categories to contain and comprehend? I want to point out how the need to label and classify is part of the colonial project that many of us are attempting to undo. The resistance to labels or embracing the messiness of some performances can be a decolonizing act.

The genre buzz around contemporary performance may lead one to believe that this was an historic moment of convergence between theater and dance. What I tried to argue in *The Oxford Handbook of Dance and Theatre* (by attending to corporeality, embodiment and theatricality) is that there have always been aesthetics that not only resist the separation between dance and theater, but never accepted it.

I also look to practical methodologies that I don't have time to get into here but I invite you to broach during Q and A if you like. Methodologies like, Practice As Research, Devising or Collective Creation and Dance Dramaturgy. Ultimately, though, we don't need to conflate genres or equalize them. Nor must we negate discreet genealogies. But we must recognize points of convergence (Confluences) and not just points of divergence.

End of Act III~With mounting anticipation for the deluge of theory promised at the end of act III you may gleefully applaud the theoretical onset of Act IV

Act IV: Theories and Genres

…in which Nadine tries not to bore the crowd with thick theory while emphasizing the importance of specialized language aimed at getting to deeper meanings in embodied performance

I'll spend a few minutes parsing through some of the arguments in my introduction to *The Oxford Handbook of Dance and* Theatre to help clarify. In this text, I focus on the moving body in performance and posit corporeality as an idea that unites the work of dance and theater scholars. I tried to define an emerging field with this work to highlight common ground between theater studies and dance studies. With the 40+ articles I tried to show that new insight is gained into theories of embodiment and theatricality by attending to performances (on and off stage, professional, personal, social or cultural) that are at the nexus of theater and dance. I begin by asking what it means to be embodied, to be "in your body," to be aware (or hyperaware) of your body's movement in time and space and to exert corporeal energy or power (work over time) for an aesthetic end? I go on to argue that different ways of being in our bodies and movement for reasons other than survival are important. Dance and theater serve as correctives to the Cartesian emphasis on "cogito" experience, advancing our understanding of embodied knowledge that is not easily explained in a Cartesian paradigm of disembodied reason.

Of course, not all ways of being in the world face this tension. Various ethics of humanist philosophy recognize the epistemological importance of embodiment especially in terms of social ontology and intersubjectivity (e.g. Ubuntu, Confucianism, meditation practices). And different intellectual fields recognize (or are beginning to recognize) not only the mind-body connection but also the importance of the body for intellectual inquiry (e.g. psychology, cognitive science, neuroscience, "traditional" medicine). Indeed, one gets the sense that those with a better sense of embodiment are better off medically, socially, intellectually and spiritually.

Why then are theater studies and dance studies (fields that directly engage embodiment) still so suspect in the academy in terms of the epistemological insight they have to offer? Why are dance and theater as humanities, social sciences as well as arts such a difficult sell? I believe it is because there is something dangerous and destabilizing in the work that happens here. Perhaps it revolves around the myth of certainty and absolute truths in the sciences and the acknowledgement of contingency and persuasion in the arts. The arts disrespect, trouble, shift and challenge absolute meaning—sometimes in serious ways and sometimes in playful, snarky or irreverent ways. Artists have the power to manipulate feeling, empathy, memory, happiness and pain—perhaps sincerely, perhaps as a ruse. And the bringing together of theater and dance is even more threatening to academic hegemonic knowledge structures (perhaps this is the root of the genre angst discussed as well as the difficult tenure paths for those who teach in theater or dance departments at Research 1 universities in the US).

But this coming together is also a unique and uniquely important lens through which we can analyze a host of subjects. Ultimately, theater and dance get at experience, perception and knowledge in significant bodily ways. The stakes are very high. Rooted in a Christian suspicion/fear of the body, anti-theatricalism as a sentiment is still quite pervasive in modern ideology. The paradox of the lies that get at truth (perhaps making the false seem true), the emptiness and fullness of the theatrical and the unruliness of the body that does not always adhere to the dictates of reason get at the source of the wariness as well as the epistemological wellspring. Aligned with a general suspicion of the embodied arts in the academy and a general anti-intellectualism in the performing arts (and sometimes in the academy, paradoxically), we still need to argue for these conversations to be taking seriously.

Ah! Ah! I'm beginning to see says the collective crowd. But how will she bring it all together in a conclusion in Act V? Like a mystery novel, you try to guess the ways in which the world according to Nadine Oprah-like solves all of our problems barely noticing the smiles growing on your beaming faces while applauding the end of Act IV.

Act V: Arms Akimbo

…in which the notorious NGG brings it all home under the magic of black joy, living in the wake and the afterlife of slavery while looking to the afro-future

Yes, Black Performance. Black Performance Theory. Black Arts and Aesthetics.

If we return, for a moment, to the slogans of my childhood and my path through a diverse array of performance aesthetics, it allows us to think about the ways in which we are conditioned to buy, think, do and believe. Hegemonic, neo-liberal agendas telling us to "be all we can be" or rather buy all we can buy; along with assumptions behind the belief that we must begin in ballet lest our hips run away with us; along with genre anxiety when performance styles do not fit into nice boxes we can check on a grant application; along with seemingly discreet fields in the academy that throw up barriers to building on synergies and respecting divergences are all part and parcel of each other. And the processes of recognizing and potentially undoing our beliefs about what is important is part of the ongoing work of what has most recently been name decoloniality.

If we are lucky, those of us living in the wake, to cite Christina Sharpe's work, have always known to be healthfully suspicious of what we are told is the proper way. We've been told the proper way to live, suffer and die as non-whites. This feeds the pathological pleasure of the settler colonial project. Looking through a performance studies lens…we are given our social scripts, we are choreographed through public life even as we attempt to choreograph the state. If our hands are up…don't shoot us. That seems simple enough. And yet… And yet…

We are always already in the afterlife of slavery. Walking/dancing/performing ourselves on ground that is "soaked" in blood as Gerard stated yesterday. We are already dead. But, to quote the soldier with a secret in George C. Wolff's *The Colored Museum*) "Hell, once you know you're dead, why keep on dyin', ya know?" And yet…We resist the obsessing over black obsessing over whiteness (which is, of course, obsessed with us). We reject erasure. We queer

our readings by tilting our heads sideways. We stand with our arms akimbo. We make manifest the afro-future. Because the mothership is docked and waiting for us to get on board! We speak (sometimes as keynote speakers, she says sheepishly) because, as Audre Lorde told us plainly, "We were never meant to survive. Not as human beings. And neither were most of you here today, Black or not. And that visibility which makes us most vulnerable is that which also is the source of our greatest strength. Because the machine will try to grind you into dust anyway, whether or not we speak."

In order to decolonize our fields/and the academy, we must first decolonize our minds. It is not about when *you* agree to get on board the project of decolonizing the academy. So, if you haven't decolonized your mind yet, look to others who have and have your students read their work and talk amongst themselves while you go get a cup of coffee. Often our students are ahead of us in this regard and the challenge for us is to be open to change. I want to echo Dr Vázquez who spoke yesterday about the powerful ways in which hegemony operates especially in co-opting terms to work against the original progressive agenda. We saw this with "identity politics." And "the politically correct." And "Intersectionality." And now, perhaps, "decoloniality."

But the work continues…Double consciousness is not a racial paranoia aimed at pleasing or appeasing the oppressor. Rather, it is an advantageous position of critical inquiry. Let me move to an example…from the 70s and remind you of the slogans of my childhood. (*Play two different versions of Burger King commercials that markedly differ in style and message according to race.*)

Did you notice what I noticed?!

Now, how might something like this get negotiated through creative critical research. I've been a dance dramaturg for the company Brother(hood) Dance! for a few years now. One of our topics of creative research is food justice, big agra, Monsanto and the like and the ways in which race, class, gender are navigated in places of food insecurity and the state control of our bodies. We thought about how these two burger king commercials are part and parcel of the plantation economy, modernity and the long colonial project. In addition to doing the work of fixing race, class and gender through what we put in our bodies. Here is an example of the possibilities. (*Play clip of Orlando.*) This might *seem* a benign example, but it is

important to recognize the insidious, pervasive nature of the colonial project that disciplines bodies and writes our scripts. Against this we stand with our arms akimbo, affirming black girl and boy magic

Black joy: part of the colored contradictions in the afterlife of slavery.

And with that, our border-crossing, disciplinary/interdisciplinary, theory/practice, academic/creative keynote ends to your thunderous applause, perhaps even rising to your feet probably to stretch, no doubt, but Nadine will take it as unequivocal confirmation of her wisdom.

THANK YOU!

CODA

…in which…just when you thought it was over… As a short Coda, while she moves to the table…She gets a message from the mothership y'all telling us that we need to get funked up.

Come join me on the mothership!

(*P-Funk's Mothership Connection plays as the notorious NGG boogies her way to the table for Q and A.*)

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Decoloniality, Dance and the End of the Contemporary

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Abstract

A central thesis of decolonial thought is that there is no modernity without coloniality. We will begin to address the question of decolonizing contemporary dance by asking how contemporary dance functions as modernity and how it functions as coloniality. Its function as modernity is the way in which it affirms itself as an aesthetic territory, as the framework of representation, recognition and validity. Its function as coloniality is the way in which it functions to exclude, invalidate, disdain, erase and silence all that does not fit into its domain. In particular, the normativity of contemporaneity has functioned to normalize the empty present of modernity as the field of recognition while exercising forms of temporal discrimination that exclude the plurality of temporalities denied by the colonial difference. The combined movements of modernity/coloniality constitute the vortex of the colonial difference. A vortex with concentric and eccentric forces that at one and the same time incorporate into its hollow center while expelling and laying waste the plurality of other worlds.

Decoloniality calls for the end of the contemporary as a way of undoing the colonial difference. It challenges the dominance of abstraction in western aesthetics and its temporal regime. In their practice, decolonial dancers are exceeding the temporality of contemporaneity by re-membering the silenced bodies, by bringing to the forth vernaculars bodies, by reclaiming earth-bodies, communal bodies, ancestral-bodies that lie silenced under the oblivion of coloniality. Decolonial dance, is a dance that disobeys the performativity of the dancing body and its realm of abstraction and representation, a dance that refuses to forget, that re-covers the plurality of who we are. Decolonial dance challenges the regime of oblivion of contemporary dance and disobeys the colonial difference. It helps us to re-member who we are, to recover the freedom of being earth, and to receive back the pluralities that we have been.

Decolonizing the University, Epistemology and Aesthetics

These lines aim to create a South-South bridge offering thoughts related to the 'Modernity, Coloniality / Decoloniality' network initiated by Latin American scholars for a conversation with the currents of thought for liberation that exist in South Africa. We will here present the broad strokes that in our opinion configure the debate around decolonial aesthesis[1]. This text is written in the *we* voice as a gesture towards a communal thinking, a thinking beyond individual ownership. The *we* recognizes that what is thought is a weave that threads us together. The communal *we*, the decolonial *we* is the antithesis of the royal-we and the condescending *we*. It expresses a position of enunciation that recognizes that it is always

[1] Walter Mignolo and Rolando Vázquez. 2013. Decolonial AestheSis: Colonial Wounds/Decolonial Healings. in: *Social Text-Periscope*. Available: https://socialtextjournal.org/periscope_article/decolonial-aesthesis-colonial-woundsdecolonial-healings/.

already speaking in relation with others. Let us start first by introducing the context of the debate around the decolonization of the university, this will lead us to the conversation about decolonial thought and in particular decolonizing aesthetics.

In the introduction to the conference, Gerard Samuel brought forward a key question for all of us: "whose dance?" In a similar way, we need to keep on asking at the university: who is speaking? In the research we conducted at the Diversity Commission of the University of Amsterdam under the chair of Prof Gloria Wekker, we looked at three important issues: *who* is at the university and in which capacities, *what* is being taught and researched at the university and *how* are these topics taught.[2] In other words, we looked at the demographics, the epistemologies and the pedagogies at the university. In all three areas, the enduring colonial legacy is undeniable.

The University of Amsterdam diversity report asks: 'who' is at the university and in which roles? 'what' is being taught at the university? and 'what' is being researched? In the context of our conference we may mirror these questions, asking 'whose dance is being taught'? Whose ideas are being taught and researched? These simple questions reveal the colonial structure of epistemology and aesthetics. When the curriculum is made mostly by white male scholars, there is a problem. It means that we have a reduced scholarship, one that is limited to euro-centred perspectives and thus completely insufficient for a broad and meaningful education, for an education that enables students and teachers to recognize each-other, to ground their learning and their practices.

Next to 'who' and 'what' we need to ask 'how'? How is all that partial knowledge being taught as a universal, as a norm, as a canon. What is happening inside the classroom? How can we decolonize these pedagogies that make us complicit with the modern/colonial divide? Because we can change the 'what' and the 'who' and still reproduce the politics of discrimination and coloniality. We could be teaching black thought in a racist way, or feminism in a hetero-normative way, for example. Changing the content and changing the people doesn't necessarily change the political and ethical orientation of the university. The historical and political task of decolonizing the university sets the context of our thinking

[2] Gloria Wekker et al. 2016. *Let's do Diversity: Report of the University of Amsterdam Diversity Commission*, University of Amsterdam 2016. See: www.uva.nl/uva/1.-diversity-commission-report-2016-12-10.pdf.

today. In a way decolonial thought has been at work to advance a non-western critique of modernity and to craft a conceptual landscape where the voices that have been excluded can be heard.

Because of this, it is an honour for us to be in South Africa. We are aware that the debates around decolonization and decoloniality carry here other important insights that are connected to the intellectual roots of Africa and its particular history of colonization. What we offer for our conversation is the decolonial position that has been developed from Abya Yala (Latin America). While we have distinct contextual understandings of what coloniality means and what decoloniality is all about, we do believe that decoloniality in its coalitional politics, offers possibilities for intercultural conversations. Although we are all imbedded in particular contextual histories, we all share the experience of living under coloniality and of being crossed by the colonial difference. We will proceed by laying down the major propositions of decolonial thought, then we will continue by explaining the decolonial path, our ways of doing, our method. Finally, we will move to speak about the movement of decoloniality, about what decoloniality means.

Today decolonial talk is almost everywhere. It is becoming a hot conversation in academia. It has been a very hard work, of almost 30 years of scholarship to bring decolonial terms to be recognized in the academia. But now that they are *in*, they are being appropriated and mobilized for non-decolonial ethics and politics. Decoloniality is being skinned. Experts are dressing with decolonial skins while leaving the organs to rot. What we want to highlight is precisely the function of these decolonial organs that lay under its conceptual skin. Decoloniality is first and foremost an ethics and a politics committed to undo coloniality, to heal the colonial wound and to re-exist beyond the modern/colonial order. Decoloniality is not just about which terms we use. Why are we speaking? Who is speaking? Who is being heard? Our main concern is not the vocabulary but rather the ethics, the politics, the content and the doing of our conversations.

We will also offer some reflections for the field of Dance. During the last ten years we have been having important conversations with dancers, particularly Fabian Barba[3] and Amanda

[3] Fabian Barba. 2016. The Local Prejudice of Contemporary Dance. *Documenta* 34(2): 46-63.

Piña.[4] These conversations have been crucial for the unfolding of our thoughts around decolonial aesthesis. In a way, the questions around decolonial aesthesis have reached a vivid form in the mirror of dance, particularly in connection to the body and the possibility of overcoming the western way of being in the world, of overcoming the condition of enclosure and oblivion of the modern subject.[5]

Modernity/Coloniality, Decoloniality

One of the central propositions of decolonial thought, is as stated by Anibal Quijano,[6] that there is no modernity without coloniality. For us this is a fundamental statement. By affirming that there is no modernity without coloniality, we are saying that we cannot think in terms of western civilization, progress, development without accounting for coloniality. Historically speaking, we know that there is no western progress, that there is no western civilization without destitution and enslavement, that there is no capitalism without the plantation. Closely connected to this historical awareness is the thesis of Enrique Dussel[7] that does not locate the birth of modernity, of the western model of civilization, in the Reformation, the French Revolution nor the Industrial Revolution. Rather, his thesis places the birth of modernity in 1492. Hence for decoloniality western modernity is coextensive with the colonial enterprise. The conquest of Abya Yala (the Americas) is the historical starting point that marks the possibility of modernity as the western model of civilization. Without the conquest of Abya Yala, Europe could never represent itself as the centre of the world.

The world map with Europe at its centre, the euro-centred world-map, is unthinkable without western colonialism. The western-centred world map is a powerful metaphor to understand how the conquest of the America's enabled Europe to represent itself as the centre of the world. In fact, in the context of its colonial enterprise Europe will come to project itself as the

[4]Piña, V. & Gillinger-Correa, V. Eds. 2019. *The School of the Jaguar – Endangered Human Movements* Vol. 3. Vienna, nadaproductions.

[5] Quijano, A. Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America. 2000. In: *Nepantla: Views from South* 1(3):533-580.

[7] Dussel, E. 1994. 1492 El encubrimiento del Otro, Hacia el origen del "mito de la Modernidad.' *La Paz: Plural Editores.*

centre of geography, the now of history and the centre of epistemology and aesthetics, of knowledge and the arts, the west became thus the bearer of truth and beauty.

The thought of modernity and coloniality as co-constitutive, gave form to the binomial: modernity/coloniality with a slash '/' in-between. The binomial readily expresses the awareness that there is no modernity without coloniality. The fact that they constitute each other does not mean that they are the same. Each term of the binomial designates a distinct movement towards the real. On the one hand, modernity designates the movement towards the dominion of historically reality through the control of form and representation. It is the way in which modernity establishes itself as the dominant historical order. It encompasses the appropriation and the representation of world historical reality. It brings the life of Earth and the life of others into its hold, it appropriates the real. And its appropriation will be accompanied by the control over representation, something that is very important for decolonial aesthesis. The operation of appropriation is accompanied by that of representation. The control of representation creates an epistemic and aesthetic territory that will uphold modernity as world historical reality. This control over the representation of world historical reality will have the function of erasing coloniality. Modernity is upheld through the double erasure of coloniality, that is by denying the denial of other worlds of meaning. Coloniality is precisely a concept that undoes the double erasure by naming the destruction of worlds that have been denied.

The second movement within the binomial modernity/coloniality, is precisely coloniality. Coloniality does not refer to the movement of modernity, that is to the control of the real, of appropriation and representation, but rather it names the movement of erasure of other world historical realities, other earth-worlds. Coloniality signals the movements of dispossession, discrimination, subjugation that continue to be enforced through the modern/colonial order. In this double movement, we have, on the one hand, modernity taking hold and representing world historical reality, and on the other, coloniality erasing, dispossessing, displacing other worlds, other knowledges, other aesthesis outside of world historical reality. Coloniality severs out of history-reality those worlds of meaning that are dispossessed and not sanctioned by modernity. Decoloniality is hence a struggle to undo coloniality and overcome modernity, it is a struggle for the possibility of the earth-worlds that have been erased to regain the dignity of unfolding as world-historical realities. Decoloniality

is against oblivion, against the violent displacement of worlds out of historical reality. Decoloniality marks a movement from the repression out of history, to the full expression as historical reality of other earth-worlds.

Towards a decolonial path

When we ask the question of modernity, we are asking the question of "What is there?" For this we can use traditional positivist, phenomenological methodologies that are concerned with the description of what has taken place historically? Coloniality however requires other methodologies, coloniality raises the question of "what has been lost" of what has been displaced out of historical reality. The question of "what has been erased" is essentially a decolonial question.

The question of coloniality leads us to the awareness that the modern/colonial order is grounded on generalized conditions of loss, the loss of worlds and the loss of Earth. First this order is eurocentric in kind. Modernity is diverse inside itself, but it is mono-cultural in relation to the colonial difference. This mono-cultural order that is eurocentric in kind leads into the generalized condition that we call "worldlessness": the loss of worlds. Worldlessness designate: the loss of languages, the loss of cultural wealth, the loss of vernacular memories, the loss of worlds of meaning. We are losing the future not because we cannot be creative, but because we are losing the heritage of worlds and earth that hold the potentialities to transform our historical present. Coloniality severs the alternative paths into the future.

Secondly the modern/colonial order is anthropocentric in kind. It is Eurocentric and it is anthropocentric. Anthropocentrism means that it is an order that upholds the human as the centre of world-historical reality. The human is presented as the centre of epistemology, as the centre of aesthetics, as the centre of the relations to Earth. It is based on that Western monument: the dichotomic separation between human and nature, that puts the human above nature and that produces the Earth as an object of the human. Anthropocentrism is a hubris that is oblivious and destructive towards the life of Earth. The arrogance of anthropocentrism denotes a way to relate to the world that would be unthinkable for many other cultures. How can a human position itself above Earth when Earth is the very source of 'his' existence and sustenance? For most 'first nations' 'indigenous' thought this is just completely absurd, it is the sign of great ignorance and the immaturity of the west.

Anthropocentrism leads to the generalized condition of earthlessness, the loss of Earth. Under the question of coloniality, the historical realization of the modern project of civilization is revealed as worldlessness and earthlessness.[8]

The End of the Contemporary

To think modernity's mode of relation to historical reality we need to interrogate its temporality. Contemporaneity designates the temporal normativity of modernity in which the present, the empty present, is upheld as the totality of the real. The temporal condition of contemporaneity indicates the forgetting of time, the forgetting of the relations in time that are in excess of the present. We are not here speaking of transcendence or mysticism, we are speaking of those relations in time that sustain us, the relations that precede us, what many other philosophies call ancestrality. Contemporaneity creates the illusion of the subject living in the surface of the now. It produces a subject that has forgotten where she comes from in terms of relation to Earth, and relation to community. The modern subject has forgotten his precedence, he lives in the oblivion of continuously being projected forward into the artifice of the future. The subject with no ground of contemporaneity is the amnesic subject of modernity. His historicity is but an epistemic device that replaces his living memory, with a representation of a fixed and gone past. Contemporaneity sustains the oblivion necessary to live under conditions of worldlessness and earthlessness, under conditions of separation, uprootedness, groundlessness.

The canon of western art, including dance, has largely been driven by this emphasis on representation, that is, on the control and transformation of what appears in the present. We can say that western aesthetics has been to a large extent driven towards enunciation and the power of representation. The canon of western dance, it seems to us, is not the exception in its emphasis on enunciation and appearance. In this way aesthetics has an important role in controlling the order and the experience of the present. Decolonizing aesthetics is a call to challenge the order of representation and the temporality of contemporaneity. Decolonial *aesthesis* delinks from the will of enunciation and its power over representation, it seeks to

[8] Vazquez, R. 2017. Precedence. Earth and the Anthropocene:Decolonizing Design. *Design Philosophy Papers*. 1-15.

re-member, to weave back the relations to earth, worlds and time that have been severed under the conditions of worldlessness, earthlessness and contemporaneity.

The empty now of contemporaneity, is contrary to the radical re-membrance of decoloniality. The re-membrance of decoloniality is not a call to go back to a monumental past, to pastness as reified in canons and museums. Re-membrance means to religate the present to what precedes. For example, in a place such as South Africa, it seems to us that it is not possible to address the notion of justice as a matter confined to the present. Justice requires remembrance, requires not forgetting. The call for justice of the colonial wound, is in time, the wound is not confined to the materiality of an archive. It has a deeper ground. And the response to the colonial wound calls for a healing and a principle of hope that exceeds the surface of the present. This healing, this justice, this hope are not projections into the future, they are engagements with what has been lived. For decoloniality the precedence of the colonial wound has a different temporality than the monumental history of the state. The colonial wound is no monument, its call for justice, does not lend itself to the economy of historicism.

The Vortex

Can we live an ethical life in a world in which our well-being, our sense of self, is dependent on the suffering of others and the destruction of Earth? Is it possible to live an ethical life when to become 'someone' under this system requires that we consume the life of others in our everyday life practices, like in the ways we dress, or the things we eat. It requires that we consume Earth in everything we use and waste. Is it possible to live an ethical life? There is no easy answer. This is a question that we need to face. We need to dare to look at ourselves in its mirror. Who are we? What have we become?

How is it that we have to engage in the consumption, the overconsumption of earth and other worlds to derive our sense of self? How is it that what has become pleasurable for us is deeply implicated in the suffering of others? When thinking the conditions of modernity through the question of coloniality, we see its perversity.

The conjunction between pleasure and suffering is one of the most difficult questions for decoloniality. This question has been addressed in black scholarship, especially black

feminism, that has shown how racism is such a disjunction between pleasure and suffering.[9] This perversity is a way in which the colonial difference manifested itself. The colonial difference is the articulation, the disjunction between modernity and coloniality, between the pleasure and sovereignty, and subjugation and suffering.

When we look at dance or performance we need to ask who holds the sovereignty over the contemporary? Can we locate/position the sovereign self that has the privilege of representation, can we ask how is he implicated in the colonial difference, in the suffering of others? What is their politics, their ethics? One possible decolonial path is to start by looking at who holds and reproduces the power of affirmation of modernity, by asking what is being affirmed, who is represented or representing, who is validating? How is the aesthetic territory being constituted and enforced? Whose suffering, whose silences underpin this epistemic and aesthetic territoriality?

Next to bringing to question the function of modernity and its sovereignty over representation, we need to address a second level of enquiry that is concerned with coloniality, with understanding the forms of negation, with asking what is what has been excluded, evicted from history? What is being disdained? What is being extricated, repressed out of presence? What is being called not contemporary? What is not being validated? The moment of coloniality, is the negation, the repression.

A third stage is to think modernity and coloniality in conjunction. Here we come back to the question of the decolonial difference that we were addressing above: the question of this (Dis)junction between pleasure and suffering, between sovereignty and suffering. This junction or disjunction is very complex because it does not function as a simple dialectic. In our thought it does not correspond to a straightforward dialectic between affirmation and negation. It is much more complex in its movement. Because of the temporalities at play we suggest to picture the colonial difference as a vortex.

The vortex that is not a thing but a movement is composed of two forces, two movements. One that is concentric and another that is eccentric. It has a contracting movement towards

[9] Toni Morrison, Toni Morrison Takes White Supremacy to Task, Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6S7zGgL6Suw.(2017, June). Hartman, Saidiya V. 1997. *Scenes of Subjection, Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

the inside and an expelling movement towards the outside. The concentric movement is that of the production, of the formation, the taking place of historical modernity. It is a movement that is incorporating the material, the life of worlds, of Earth, into its hollow centre, into its artifice. The hollow centre of the vortex, the empty time of modernity is sucking-in, extracting the plurality, the living wealth of the life of Earth-worlds. While its eccentric and expansive forces are expunging, laying waste to these worlds, evicting out of the historical present the life of others, of earth and Earth-beings.[10]

The vortex, the movement of the colonial difference, the (dis)junction of modernity/coloniality, is then not a dialectic but the disjuncture between the concentric and eccentric movements that produce at its centre the empty time, the artifice of modernity and in its outside the oblivion of coloniality, the wasting of earth-worlds. The colonial wound spells the yawning gap of this disjuncture, it is the injustice, the pain that remains. The cry of the colonial wound is the coming into awareness, the coming forth of a reality that cannot be sundered nor contained by modern rationality, the colonial wound exceeds modernity's epistemology and aesthetics.

There are two temporalities in the vortex. The empty time of modernity at the centre of the vortex, the now of superficiality, of consumption is different in kind from the temporality at its outside. The temporality of coloniality is the temporality of the worlds that have been destroyed, the memories, the lives, the suffering, the pain. The pain of living under coloniality has the temporality of the wound, of the memory that remains. While modernity is lived in the temporality of the surface of the now. Coloniality is lived in the enduring temporality of the wound. The pleasures of modernity belong to instant time of desire and superficiality, whereas the suffering of coloniality that comes with the wasting of the life of others and the life of Earth, is an enduring time, is a time that remains, that calls for healing and justice. The vortex is this disjunction between the empty time of modernity, its contemporaneity, and the enduring time of coloniality its ancestral suffering and hope for justice. Decoloniality is not seeking the now of contemporaneity, decoloniality is oriented towards the enduring time of coloniality, it seeks to listen and harbour that which endures and survives. The temporality of

[10] For a discussion on pluriversality see: Arthur Escobar. 2017.*Designs for the Pluriverse*, Durham: Duke University Press. For a discussion on Earth-beings see: Marisol de la Cadena. 2015. *Earth Beings*, Duke University Press.

decolonial hope is not that of an artifice of futurity, it is grounded in the voices that call to be heard, in the precedence of the wounds that should be cared for, it is the hope for the peace and dignity that comes through healing.

Decoloniality

The normalization of the contemporary is such that the empty present of modernity becomes a place of certainty, the place of what can be represented and acknowledged. However, it implies the real suffering of the world of others and of Earth. That is why we have been calling for the end of contemporary, not for the post-contemporary and falling again into this notion of the latest. Decoloniality is not about seeking for novelty, for the latest. Decoloniality brings to question the normativity of the contemporary, in order to humble modernity and allow for the recognition of other voices and other temporalities.

Decoloniality is a movement against erasure, it is oriented towards what is being consumed by coloniality. The term 'coloniality', which is not colonialism, is a term that is not coming from the west. It is not a term from western epistemology. Coloniality is a term that in its naming, speaks of the lived experiences under coloniality. Naming ourselves is to disobey the confines of the epistemic territory of modernity, it is to enable an understanding of the modern/colonial system that is grounded in the lived experiences of coloniality. Coloniality brings forth questions that can't be addressed by western epistemology. No matter how important western thinkers are they don't have the question of coloniality, because they have never lived the experience outside of modernity. For the tradition of western critical thought, there is no outside of modernity. However, for those whose life-worlds have been endangered by the western project of civilization, they live through the experience of coloniality as an exterior force to their worlds of meaning. They see and experience the project of modernity from its outside, as an external force.

Decoloniality is also a 'coming to voice'. This process of coming to voice is crucially discussed by decolonial, chicana and black feminist scholarship.[11] They think and write from an

[11] M. Jacqui Alexander. 2005. *Pedagogies of Crossing*.Duke London &Durham: Duke University Press. Gloria Anzaldua. 1987. *Borderlands*. San Francisco : Spinsters/Aunt Lute. Maria-Lugones. 2003.

embodied awareness of the colonial wound. Maria Lugones and Gloria Wekker had an intense conversation about this in the 2019 Middelburg Decolonial Summer School.[12] They were asking how can we enter into conversation with a vocabulary in which we do not exist, where we do not have a voice. Within all the sanctioned scholarship of the west, they, as women of color, could not find a voice, could not find a place to meet, to talk to each other, to express themselves.

To use the conceptual framework of modernity becomes a form of continuing the erasure, the silencing, of becoming complicit with its coloniality. The task of coming to voice is to challenge the silencing of coloniality to find one's own narration, to struggle for the possibility of telling our own story. The epistemic struggle is a struggle against erasure, is a coming to voice. For decoloniality it is essential to re-encounter one's own voice, not to invent it, but to come to it by undoing the erasure and the silencing of coloniality. Finding one's own narration means also that the liberation from coloniality is not to take over the dominant narrative of modernity. We are not fighting for modernity, to become contemporary. When you're living in your own terms, you don't need to ask for permission. Modernity and contemporaneity belong to the history of western thought. And for us we say it should stay there. We are not fighting for acquiring those terms. Because getting into there is becoming complicit. That's not an ideal for us. In a similar way we are not fighting to become the subjects of modern life, the sovereign self, the 'human' of the state and capital. This 'being human' implies not being able to live an ethical life in relation to Earth and the worlds of others.

From representation to reception

Let us conclude by arriving at the question of dance, of bodies and movement. We have been in conversation with Fabian Barba, a contemporary dancer from Quito who has raised the question of decolonizing contemporary dance, and with Amanda Piña, a Mexican Chilean

Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: *Theorizing Coalition against Multiple Oppressions*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers. Gloria Wekker. 2016. White Innocence:*Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race. Durham: Duke University Press.* 130.

[12] María Lugones & Gloria Wekke. 2019. María Lugones & Gloria Wekker. 2019. Dialogue of Feminisms: The Challenges of Coalition Building Across Oppressions. Middelburg Decolonial Summer School Lectures, Thursday June 27th 2019.

dancer who is engaged with re-membering the movements that contemporary dance has erased. Both of them have had to overcome the violence and normativity of contemporaneity, its discrediting in order to engage in what we have called decolonial aesthesis. They have been re-membering, membering back other aesthesis. They have brought vocabularies and temporalities of the body that disobey the borders of the contemporary. We need to ask what is the body, which body is the body dancing in modern and contemporary dance?

The Marrons, the black communities that liberated themselves from the plantation system, have a very powerful thinking of liberation that has been fundamental for decolonial thought. Let us hear what Abuelo Zenon says about the body. 'The concept of the body, to understand it simply, is linked to the Earth and is nourished by what mother earth produces from the resources that are in her.'[13] This is a powerful non-western, non-anthropocentric notion of the body. It's a body that is an Earth-body. It's very unlike the body of the west, and the body in western dance. Where is the Earth in the concept of the body in modern and contemporary dance? We think that the body of most modern and contemporary dance is centered on representation, from figurative to abstract representation, and holds an anthrocentric idea of the body, an earthless idea of the body. It is a body separated from Earth. It is a body in space, in the space of representation. We think the western dance's body as a body in space but not on earth, a body without ground that moves in the abstract surface of representation. The surface of representation, be it in the black box or in the screen, is groundless, and timeless. In contrast, in non-western traditions of dance, especially first nations, and from what we can gather from African dance, dancing happens in relation to the ground and the community. It is a relation to Earth, to the place and the memory that carry us. The dancing body is an Earth-body, a communal-body, a mnemonic-body.

The move from modern aesthetics to decolonial aesthesis, is a move from the power of enunciation-representation to the capacity of reception. How would it be to dance, to think, to become in the mode of reception? The Tojolabales,[14] one of the Maya peoples, teach us the power of listening, the power of reception. Could we imagine an ethical life, a life in

[13] Abuelo Zenon in Garcia and Walsh. 2017. *Pensar sembrando/sembrar pensando con el Abuelo Zenón,* Quito: Abya Yala. 36.
[14] Lenkersdorf., C. 2008. *Aprender a escuchar, Enseñanzas maya-tojolabales,* Mexico: Plaza y Valdes.

plenitude that unfolds as reception, through becoming humble and capacious enough to receive the plurality of others? Instead of becoming the self, can we overcome the self. Can we become broader engaging in the enormous task of receiving the voices that come with the radical plurality of earth-worlds? And at the university, what would it mean to teach the power of reception? What would it mean to dance in the form of listening, in the form of reception?

PART II – SCHOLARLY PAPERS

Opening through ecology: conceptualising the role of open-platform, immersive performance experiences within the closedspaces of the university.

Alan Parker

Rhodes University: Drama Department

Gavin Krastin

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Abstract

This paper considers the role of immersive, interdisciplinary performance as a potential form through which the seemingly closed spaces of the university can become opened. This opening of space is conceived as a literal opening (of access to otherwise controlled spaces), a disciplinary opening (of boundaries between disciplines, departments and faculties) and an epistemic opening (of alternative and diverse thinkings within the academy). Using the newly established performance event Open House (2018 & 2019)—an annual, interdisciplinary, and immersive platform initiated by the Drama Department at Rhodes University—as a departure point, the paper considers the particular ways in which this initiative has sought to encourage and provoke diverse openings within the department and the university. The authors draw on Erin Manning's theorising of touch, in Politics of touch (2007) and The minor gesture (2016), as an inquisitive gesture toward knowing which establishes and creates "ecologies"—tactile and embodied environments of co-composing and co-becoming—occurring between bodies and between bodies and their surroundings. The particularities of these immersive ecologies are examined as a means to make explicit the efficacy of immersive performance and of interdisciplinary approaches to the making of theatrical experiences in the current university context.

This paper is both a reflection on current (and ongoing) creative practice concerning open-platform, immersive performance as well as a theoretical conceptualising of the possible role,

or potential values, this practice might have in the context of South African university spaces and the broader realm of teaching and learning in the creative arts in higher education. By 'open-platform, immersive performance' we refer to performance events that are collaborative, inter- and multidisciplinary, and which draw numerous artists together, whose works collectively constitute a single event (in time and space), but which maintain a sense of autonomy and individuality within the event itself. Similarly, 'immersive', in this instance, is understood quite broadly, as an atmosphere of inclusivity that positions collaborating artists, their works and their audiences within a common world or 'pluriverse' (Escobar, 2017) – where unique, intrinsically shared, space-time ecologies emerge, within which both performer and audience exist. Through this thinking-through of performance practice, this paper suggests a capacity within open-platform, immersive performance to open seemingly closed spaces, particularly within the university.

Following the Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall student protests in 2015, Achille Mbembe delivered a paper at Wits University entitled 'Decolonizing knowledge and the question of the archive'. In this paper, Mbembe articulates an urgent need for a greater degree of openness in South African universities and identifies two particular layers in which this needs to occur. The first of these concerns university architectures and the creation of public space. Mbembe suggests "decolonizing the university starts with … a redefinition of what is public, i.e. what pertains to the realm of *the common* and as such, does not belong to anyone in particular because it must be equally shared between equals" (2015:5). Mbembe clarifies that this opening of access needs to be more significant than merely opening the doors of the university - of making these institutions more accessible to a wider population – but more so concerned with "the creation of those conditions that will allow black staff and students to say of the university: this is my home. I am not an outsider here … I belong here" (2015:5). Mbembe thus suggests a re-defining not only of buildings and public spaces, but also their atmospheres, their environments and their ecologies. In this way, while it is important, as Mbembe notes, to redress the naming of buildings and institutions, it is equally important to re-think the experience and atmosphere of these spaces as well.

The second layer of openness within the university that Mbembe calls for, he describes as "classrooms without walls" (2015:6). Here Mbembe alludes to the epistemic opening vital to transforming the university. The classroom without walls is, for Mbembe, not a literal, un-

walled or outdoor space, but an approach to thinking, teaching and knowing that recognises multiplicity and difference. The concept of the university, Mbembe suggests, rests on an epistemic division between mind and world, thereby propagating western-oriented "traditions in which the knowing subject is enclosed in itself and peeks out at a world of objects" (2015:6). The modern university, Mbembe argues, kowtows to a hegemonic one-world view and thus encourages those who pass through its literal and metaphoric halls "to know the world without being a part of that world" (2015:6). Arturo Escobar (2017:86) similarly concurs that a singular conception of the real, the universe and the university "buttresses the idea of a single world that calls for one truth about it … The predominant idea in the West that we all live within a single world, made up of one underlying reality and many cultures." To counter this defuturing idea of a "One-World World" (Law, 2011). Escobar calls for designs for a pluriverse that are ontological, bottom-up and speculative in nature. Mbembe's 'classroom without walls' is therefore an imagined space which recognises and encourages epistemic diversity and which seeks seepages, connections, dialogues and transferrals between academic disciplinary divisions, traditions of thinking and diverse ontological conceptions, as a means to create a "pluriversity" (Mbembe, 2015:19) – an institution of learning founded on a principle of multiplicity which recognises the human in the world rather than its mast.

Towards conceptualising the role that open-platform, immersive performance practices might play in moving towards a pluriveristy, we draw from, reference and think-through two recent engagements with this strategy. The first of these is an event titled *Open House*. Established in 2018, at the Drama department of the University Currently Known as Rhodes (UCKAR), *Open House* is an annual performance platform comprised of a variety of different works created by students and staff of the university, which are installed into various spaces within the three-storey theatre building. For a few hours, on a particular day, the building is opened to the public, who are able to explore its many theatre and non-theatre spaces, during which they experience a range of performative, experiential, often participatory, encounters. In 2018, in its first manifestation, the event included nine installations in nine different spaces (ranging from the two Theatre spaces, several rehearsal rooms, the orchestra pit, staircases and corridors, and store rooms). In 2019, *Open House* was curated by Gavin Krastin and included eight performative installations, which ran simultaneously for a period of two hours.

The installations included durational performances by postgraduate choreography and physical performance students, an interactive and experiential scenic environment installed into the Rhodes Theatre by resident designer Illka Louw as well as several encounters created by postgraduate Creative Writing and Applied Theatre students. Importantly, audiences were not led from performance to performance but instead were given a map of the building and were asked to explore its activated spaces at their own pace and at their own discretion. They ultimately decided what to experience, when, for how long, and in what order – creating their own journeys through the various spaces and the different performance encounters.

This particular model for the 2019 iteration of *Open House* was based on another open-platform, immersive performance event, called *Arcade*, which was established by Krastin in 2018. Conceived as a nomadic platform, *Arcade* is an annual event which brings together young and emerging artists working in the marginal realms of Live Art and Performance Art, whose works are curated and mentored by Krastin and installed in various locations. In 2018, *Arcade* was installed into several spaces within the Theatre Arts Admin Collective in Cape Town. In 2019, a second iteration of *Arcade* was presented at the National Arts Festival in Makhanda (previously Grahamstown) and bore a significant connection with university spaces – specifically UCKAR and UCT. The event included eight performance installations, by nine young artists (seven of which were pursuing postgraduate degrees at either UCT or UCKAR) which were installed in the Old Power Station, a defunct power utility building on the outskirts of Makhanda. For two hours, audiences were welcomed into the venue, a two-storey industrial building comprising many large spaces and small crevices. Performances occupied both levels of the building and audience members could wander through the space at their own discretion and in their own time, over the two-hour duration.

Open House, in particular, was originally conceived as a way to re-think and experiment with the way in which the public, as well as our students, experience the Drama Department building. As a semi-public space, the Drama Department sits on the edge of the campus, as an unofficial border zone between the town and the university. The space is frequented more often by a wider public (extending beyond the university community) than other university buildings due to its restaurant and its two theatre spaces, which are open and accessible to the general public. In creating *Open House* there was, however, a desire to explore difference in how the experience of this semi-public space might be shifted. Generally, the public only

ever encounter quite specific spaces within the building (the theatres) through an encounter that positions the public (architecturally) as 'visitors' and 'outsiders'. In conceptualising *Open House* there was thus a desire to invite the public into other, less seen, spaces and for them to engage with the familiar theatre spaces through an encounter that queers or queries the spectatorship these spaces usually encourage. There was also a similar, connected desire to expose those aspects of our discipline (and our particular ways of thinking and knowing) which occur within the building, but which are less visible in the actual theatre (such as design and scenography, writing, and applied theatre) and to welcome the public into encounters with these other, intradisciplinary practices and experiences.

By inviting the public into the building as a re-imagined space and allowing them agency to explore, seek out and experience the environment at their own discretion, *Open House* becomes an attempt to reconsider the university and the department as closed, discipline-divided, highly controlled and regulated spaces. This is particularly vital in the specific context of Rhodes University where the space and signage of the institution continues to bear the name of the coloniser (despite loud calls to redress this taxonomy) and where a department of multidisciplinary performances forms and experimental approaches still describes itself (reductively) as 'Drama'. In this way, despite a resistance by the institution to change its nomenclature, *Open House* becomes an instance where the openness of the building can be sought and shared with the public irrespective of historical namings. For this reason, in the initial curatorial brief for open house the event is described as "an act of kindness and a practice of vulnerability."

In *Arcade* a similar queering of space occurs. As a historical site, the Old Power Station is a space that is generally not accessed or visited by the public. The building is on the periphery of the town and although abandoned and defunct (as a power station), has in recent years been used predominantly for commercial use (as a meadery and for storage). In *Arcade*, the public are welcomed into a re-imagined space and are invited to explore its strange, industrial architectures, which are rendered otherworldly through the careful installation of performances into its spaces. The private, access-controlled space of the power station thus becomes opened and, momentarily, is transformed into a public place – where individuals and groups of individuals are able to come and go as they please, and explore in a manner determined by their own agency and an autonomous expenditure of time. As all of the

performances occur simultaneously, audience members ultimately decide how long they experience each encounter, and which encounters they might desire to return to.

In both *Open House* and *Arcade*, there is also an attempt to encourage an opening of these spaces on a notably experiential level as a means to activate a sense of belonging. Beyond merely having access to otherwise closed spaces, both events reach towards an experiential, embodied sense of inclusion through the immersion of performers and audiences in a pluriverse of interconnected worlds. As noted earlier, Arturo Escobar, in his book, *Designs for the Pluriverse: Radical Interdependence, Autonomy, and the Making of Worlds* (2017), theorises the concept of the pluriverse as "a world where many worlds fit" (2017:xvi). For Escobar (2017:27), this is a movement away from the One-World World and the "expert-driven process focussed on objects and services within a taken-for-granted social and economic order" towards design practices that are "participatory, socially oriented, situated, and open ended and that challenge the business-as-usual mode of being, producing, and consuming". This potentially changes old rules about what counts for knowledge and who counts as the knower.

One can consider *Open House* and *Arcade* as pluriversal artistic biomes as they challenge the One-World World by bringing forth a world of worlds through processes of active worlding. As opposed to occupying pre-ordained and codified spaces (such as a conventional theatre space), in *Open House* and *Arcade* the artists dwell in places with particular activities in order to produce the place through action. A similar sense of worlding occurs for the audience. As Ingold (2011:129) suggests, to engage with worlding is to be more than observers meandering through a ready-formed world of structures and routes. Instead we are encouraged to participate and immerse ourselves as co-conspirators and co-producers in the "world-in-formation". This notion of 'to act in the world is to change the world' provides fertile ground for artists and audiences alike as worlds manifest through the spatial-performative encounters between artists and audience.

Through performatively dwelling in spaces, the artists birth worlds and construct place in space, alongside the audience who bring forth worlds of difference within their encounters. We conceptualise the audience as co-composing ambulatory participants, or what Walter Benjamin (2002) has called 'rag pickers', where cognition is inextricably linked to experience.

As the audience physically re-route themselves through the space, engaging in unique and autonomous compositions, they are able to experience a fundamental unity of being in the world. Each encounter with a performance world-within-a-world thus becomes something more akin to an ecology than the spectoral gazing at a separate, framed performance object. Within each world of the event a unique ecology emerges, between the bodies of the performers and the witnesses but also between the particular space and time elements within each encounter.

As Erin Manning describes, "ecology is more-than-human, composed as much of the force of atmosphere, of duration, of rhythm" (2016:127). For Manning, when performance encounters develop as ecologies, they become acts of co- and re-composition – that is, the moment of the encounter becomes itself through the changing, shifting intensities of the event as an environment or interval shared between a performing body and witnessing body. This is a spectatorship that is explicitly embodied and somatosensory and which privileges touch, tactility and visceral sense-making over the optical and cognitive processes of making-sense. These are encounters that situate the bodies of the audience within the world of the performance, alongside the performer, with whom they co-compose. Rather than watching from afar, as a detached knowing subject interpreting and decoding an external world of objects, the performance encounter as an ecology relocates the body into the world of the performance, where intimacy and proximity seek to initiate a shared experience of belonging as spacetime continually shapeshifts, changes, and becomes.

What emerges when surveying the autopoiesis of a pluriversal design as a curatorial approach for live art in pedagogical spaces are mechanics of simultaneity, autonomy and de-hierarchisation. In this world of many worlds (comprising different, yet seeping, temporal and spatial economies and relations), everything takes place simultaneously and due to the autonomy of the participating audience members who transition between and connect worlds at will, there is no top-down design in which one world is privileged over another. In *Open House* it was perhaps the first time that all subjects and spaces offered by Rhodes Drama Department were not only accessible but were accessible next to one another as opposed to on top of one another (it is difficult to deny that a hierarchy of spaces and subjects exist within academies of theatre and performance). Similarly, working relationships of those involved were intentionally destabilised in a productive and ontologically-designed way in that the

participating artists and team often had to work outside of their usual roles: postgraduate and undergraduate students collaborated on performances, academic staff members stage-managed students' work, or support staff members created or performed their own works.

For the ambulatory rag-picker and decoder, there is no single *Open House* (or *Arcade*) or structure of interpretation, but rather an infinite number of pathways and connections in which to co-create worlds. As Hans-Thies Lehmann Lehmann (2006:84) suggests, it is this ability for autonomy that operates from a place of desire when presented with choice that activates the spectator into creating new worlds through active connection-making, resulting in changed attitudes on the part of the spectator. With simultaneity and autonomy at play, coupled by our failed omnipresence and omniscience, in both *Open House* and *Arcade* one can never conceive of the event as a whole or as known, and in essence meaning remains in postponement (Lehmann, 2006:84).

Despite this inability to comprehend a whole, both events arguably succeed in initiating a sense of openness and belonging, spatially as well as epistemologically. After *Open House*, audience members were invited to share their thoughts and responses to the event in a 'guest book' placed in the theatre foyer. Many of these responses acknowledged a sense of feeling welcomed into unfamiliar spaces ("*Every performance felt like a conversation*", "*It's lovely to be welcomed into these spaces*", "*The rooms felt like pieces of home*") and described the experience as being moving or healing ("*I really needed this*", "*I am rejuvenated*", "*very therapeutic to the soul*"). From these statements it becomes clear that the event, although fleeting and momentary, does have the potential to activate and establish openness and an alternative, reimagined encounter with existing spaces. In this way, open-platform, immersive performance experiences, such as *Open House* and *Arcade*, can be seen as possible prototypes for exploring alternative ways of being and thinking within the university. While this openness and sense of belonging may not necessarily remain once the event is over, and the university and its spaces return to their conventional ways, we suggest that there is great value in these prototypical moments. As prototypes, these events become necessary rehearsals and experimentations for different encounters and ways of being that can be widely imagined but not easily manifested.

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Towards vocational training of the south African dancer: anxiety or agency?

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Abstract

The dance world is dominated by instilling technique and discipline in the dance training. Technique and discipline have been inculcated through training regimes that are dogmatically transferred through the generations – from teacher to dancer – and who in turn perpetuate technique and discipline in their teaching. Within a multicultural setting, dancers are required to start afresh and subscribe to a standardisation that is often unattainable due to gender, physique, and bias. The standardisation reinforces a coloniality of power. This article examines this phenomenon and serves to promote inclusive strategies towards training vocational dance. Theories of learning are explored that advocate towards a long-term transformatory strategy that takes the notions of deficit dancers and the coloniality of power within the dance education system into account. Consideration is also afforded Nakata's (1998) cultural interface theories; to incorporate these aspects towards a strategy on dance vocational training, the constructs a professional learning community (PLC) that may not be seamless in implementation. Through reflective and reflexive inquiry, Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) somatic training courses are case studies for a gap-analysis framing of such a strategy. By actively participating in co-creating new knowledge and futures, a sense of agency is afforded the individual student.

Introduction

It is widely accepted that vocational dance and physical theatre training is informed by history, beliefs, philosophy, culture, norms and standards, conventions, responsibilities, and attitude. Whether consciously or not, identity within teaching-and-learning is effected by these factors as it reciprocates through the teacher, the student, and the collective. However, dance pedagogy within education and practice is, more often than not, perpetuated through authoritarianism. The implication is that successive students enter the profession with very little more than the ability to "teach how I was taught".

Within the South African multicultural setting dancers are expected to subscribe to a standardisation that is often unattainable once entering vocational training. The effect on creative processes of dance-making, choreography, teaching, and production is often revealed in disrespectful borrowing of styles and steps, 'fusions' and misappropriations.

Training therefore emerges as a disembodied[15] vocational training for the performing dance artist. The benchmarking of dance training is technical proficiency and standards that offer a limited and prescriptive variety of dance forms and styles. This reinforces a coloniality of power and a loss of identity due to gender, physique and bias.

Therefore, within vocational dance and physical theatre training in South Africa the continuing perpetuation of coloniality of power in andragogic[16] practice has negatively affected the success of professional learning communities. Inherent somatics and identity is lost to conformity of industry requirements and performance norms and standards.

This article explores the current identity-crises of the South African dance practitioner within vocational training and education. It provides a gap analysis toward formulating a strategy that embraces agency as a key variant for multicultural learning through investigating metacognition, coloniality and perpetuation of power plays within dance and physical theatre vocational training.

The article further envisions this strategy towards training to incorporate individual contribution toward the collective learning experience that will translate anxiety to agency. By synthesizing Nakata's (1998) 'cultural interface theory' with the professional learning community concept (DuFour, 2013); this proposed strategy will serve to counteract deficit views of culture (Buxton, 2017) through the ability to implement critical reflective practices without losing individual cultural identity.

The South African dance student

The South African dance student has these two options for continuing studies at a tertiary level: dance programmes that include creative movement and narrative techniques; or theatre programmes (offered within drama courses as physical theatre) that incorporate movement studies but are teaching dance technique. Specifically, the Tshwane University of

[15] Disembodied dance training focusses on the 'for the body' concept that does not integrate the mind in a holistic embodied manner of learning/application.

[16] Andragogy is synonymous to adult education. According to Malcolm Knowles, andragogy is the art and science of adult learning, thus andragogy refers to any form of adult learning. For this article, the articulation towards andragogy is pertinent due to the specificity of vocational higher education training within a tertiary institution. These methods may be transferable back towards pedagogical practice. The use of pedagogy and andragogy is used interchangeably to denote that which is rooted in the teaching of children within the schooling developmental stages (pedagogy) and that which is acquired during/for adult education (andragogy).

Technology (TUT) Faculty of the Arts will be used as a case study analysis towards framing an alternative learning-centred strategy. The TUT faculty is unique as it is the only national higher education institution offering both a dance qualification, as well as physical theatre within a drama qualification. The dance programme offers both undergraduate and post-graduate opportunities in dance vocational training of styles, techniques, and affiliated practices. Also, the drama programme offers an elective specialisation course in Physical Theatre at the degree level that is fed by the undergraduate compulsory subjects of movement and embodiment training for actors.[17]

Most significant is the multicultural variety of student that is predominant within these courses. Such students possess inherent somatic skills and metacognitive dexterity yet are still prone to deficits. To determine a need for an altered strategy these elements need to be elaborated.

Inherent somatics

For the multicultural African dancer, the mind and body are traditionally conceived as one and the same. "The peculiarity of the African tradition (sic) is that it … gives primary importance to the body, the necessary intermediary without which spiritual life would be an abstraction" (Tièrou, 1992:12). African dance has always been a part of the oral and kinetic traditions that are inherent to the African traditions where these modes are manifested as oral 'text' presented as visual, kinetic, or sensory (Welsh-Asante, 2000:5). Chinyowa asserts, "African] dance should be regarded as an expression of desire to use the most immediate instrument, the physical body, to communicate needs and aspirations in ways that lie beyond ordinary speech" (2001:11).

Thomas (2003:82) states that the examination of dance from an ethnographic viewpoint involves "treating dance as a kind of cultural knowledge, a somatic mode of attention which incorporates mental and emotional aspects, elements of cultural history and belief systems".

[17] It is relevant to note that the physical theatre and movement courses offered within the drama qualification are unique compared to other similar national courses. These courses do not include dance technique as its foundation. The deviation from the norm came about specifically knowing that there is a dance qualification already offered in the faculty. Therefore, these movement and physical theatre courses are built around the body in space and time: physical storytelling, mimodrama, plastiques, masks and characterisation, composition and expressionism, as well as alternative physical performance spaces and modes.

Schipper (1982:155) affirms that within African dance there is a significance and continuity of tradition. Furthermore, Ajayi (1998:185) states that the nature of African dance is both a sign and a vehicle of communication. It can express an action and an idea, as well as an emotion. To this end, “traditionalists describe the dancing body in Africa as a worshipping and worshiped body. It is a medium that embodies experiences of life, pleasure, enjoyment, and sensuality” (Mans, 2004:79).

Only through the examination of ritual practice and cultural performance can African dance be adequately understood. The difference found in Western theatre and African dance performance is that its main appeal is ritualistic, abstract and physical, rather than verbal or textual. It could also be viewed in its power of the collaborative and collective because audience participation forms part of the performance. This then shows that African ritual dance performance is dynamic in nature and capable of uplifting the spirit of society – through an inherent somatic understanding and application.

Metacognition towards self-actualisation

To counter this continuation of disembodiment in the vocational training, Donald (2002:270) advocates that “the dancer needs a substantial metacognitive, or self-evaluative, capacity”. Eddy (2009:23) further encourages: “The dancer of the twenty-first century [should be] well poised to be creative, deeply conscious, and supportive of a creative, aware culture, and contribute generously to somatic scholarship.” These statements are highly compatible with a teaching-and-learning environment where pedagogical choice and practice supports holistic dance training and embodies transformation of the individual and the collective.

This drive towards self-actualisation (Maslow, 2000:2-5) is enabled through a sense of the realisation or fulfilment of one's talents and capabilities. For the vocational student, the development of attributes to knowledge is imperative. Towards this development, the somatic training philosophy should incorporate a sense of creativity linked with metacognitive qualities including self-reflection, self-efficacy and resilience for the teacher and the dancer within vocational training.

Metacognition, or thinking about one’s thinking, is key to facilitating lasting learning experiences and developing lifelong learning. Metacognitive knowledge (Flavell, 1979)

includes: person-knowledge or understanding one's own capabilities; task-knowledge which relies on how difficult the individual perceives the task to be, as well as their self-confidence; and conditional-knowledge or one's ability to use strategies to learn information. These metacognitive types are applicable within the training of dancers.

These qualities may be present in the vocational student when they register, however, are not necessarily acknowledged or positively developed. Particularly in the TUT arts environment, the students' sense of their creative abilities is prime, often in direct contrast to their sense of capabilities towards knowledge acquisition. The students have grown up 'being different' within the schooling environment – whether this means being labelled the 'difficult student' in the class for lack of concentration or interest in the subject matter, the 'weak learner' or 'learning challenged' as they do not conform to the prescriptive rigid cognitive learning styles. Instead the students find solace in creative outlets and immerse themselves in these activities towards improving their skills, or merely being acknowledged for being accomplished within these spheres. Their sense of knowledge acquisition is weakened or broken down to the extent that they believe that they cannot or should not apply theoretical competence.

Darling-Hammond, et al. (2008) define metacognition to include: reflection, or "thinking about what we know'", and self-regulation, or "managing how we go about learning" Most specifically the term self-regulation is delineated within academic self-regulation as the process through which "individuals become proactive seekers, generators, and processors of information, [and] is widely acknowledged as how students transform their mental abilities into academic skills" (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1998:1-2; 225).

These processes are applicable to both pedagogical and andragogical applications. Where research revealed that for a student to be successful, they displayed personal initiative and self-regulatory control regarding their sources of motivation; choice of learning methods; forms of behavioural performance; and use of social and physical environmental resources. Students can be described as self-regulated to the degree that they are metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviourally active participants in their own learning (Bandura, 1996; Zimmerman, 1989).

Within TUT students are found to display a strong sense of self-regulation towards their practical abilities and motivation towards improving these skills, especially within the discipline of somatics that feeds these inherent capabilities. This is directly proportional to their self-efficacy, which manifests as a “can do”-cognition that reflects a person’s sense of control over their environment and an optimistic belief of being able to alter challenging environmental demands by means of their own behaviour (Burch et al., 2016). Perceived self-efficacy exerts its influence through four major processes (cognitive, motivational, affective and selective processes) and operates at three different levels to contribute to academic development (student, teachers and faculty) (Burch et al., 2016).

The TUT creative student unconsciously forgoes the theoretical knowledge acquisition in favour of understanding the principles associated with the improvement of the practical skills and technique. This is still cognitive, where the self-efficacy manifests in motivation towards the selective process of cognitive development. The segregation is further reinforced by the teachers, and practically favoured within vocational education and training. However, the students and teachers should perhaps be made conscious of these epistemological choices and encouraged to consider developing their theoretical prowess for a holistic embodied approach. Innovation and development of creative somatic practice through self-efficacy will in turn give rise to agency.

Yet, students within the TUT environment are more prone to displaying a sense of resilience. Whilst self-efficacy influences decision-making throughout the course of one’s life, resilience is mainly defined by coping adaptively with traumatic stressors. Hence it is closely linked to the occurrence of demanding situations that one has to overcome (Schwarzer & Warner, 2012:140). Within the South African landscape, the reality remains that most citizens grow-up in adversity, experiencing this daily, either directly or indirectly. This adversity results in a manifestation as ‘resilience’ in coping mechanisms. Resilient persons bend without breaking, and they quickly rebound from adversity, and this is reflected in human adaptive systems (Masten, 2001). Understanding the dynamics of resilience becomes more important as the necessity increases for learning ways to overcome the effects of difficult life experiences.

As a university of technology, pragmatic and experiential training is favoured. TUT accepts students with a lower APS score[18] than that required for a 'traditional university.'[19] Therefore, there is an opportunity for students to further their education, although they may for all intents and purposes not have been afforded such at a university that favours philosophical research. There is also an influx of students who are from previously marginalised communities and who may still live in adverse conditions – such as child-headed households, or in impoverished districts. For these students, their sense of resilience is high.

Still this resilience is not acknowledged, especially within dance training. Instead the student is 'broken down' even further within the training regime that is paradoxically attributed towards building resilience in physical dexterity and capabilities of a professional dancer. This often results in a student dropping out, which in turn contributes to the attrition rates of the university.

The deficit student

Within the revised curriculum context of the South African education system, effort has been made to embrace the unique contribution of the individual to the teaching and learning environment by incorporating values of inclusivity, differentiation, and addressing barriers to teaching-and-learning within curriculum delivery and assessment practice (Pmg_Sa, 2017). The inclusivity relies on the expertise of the educator and the successful collaboration, mobilisation, and support of the community (Landsberg, Krüger & Swart, 2016). Accordingly, the 'ideal student' can be described as one who is supported and nurtured through the various phases of development, with valued demonstration of the characteristics and distinctions that make them unique, through contact with the 'ideal teacher' who is well-versed and adept at recognising and embracing the whole individual within a successful learning community that acknowledges and welcomes the individual's meaningful contribution to society.

[18] APS is an acronym for Admission Point Score that is used as a national benchmarking towards entrance level assessment to tertiary education.

[19] Public universities in South Africa are divided into three types: traditional universities, which offer theoretically-oriented university degrees; universities of technology (the revised "technikon" model), which offer vocational oriented diplomas and degrees; and comprehensive universities, which offer a combination of both types of qualification.

This is often achieved within the framework of competency in intelligence-biased testing or intelligence-biased teaching (Conti, 2015) which determine deviations from a/the norm. The reality of implementing such an inclusive education in formative dance training presents a less-than-ideal conflict: the learner is measured against a/the predisposed norm. Within various communities, these deviations have different value. In one instance, an individual may be isolated; in another, the same individual, integrated. The various communal values inform the perceived identity of the individual.

Ultimately, the student is filtered through a conscious or unconscious non-compliance to a/the norm, according to standardised biases in the dance community. In turn, increased expectation, not inherent to the contribution, drives efforts toward compliance. One such example taken from the historical gap in South African education between the privileged minority groups and the marginalised majority still leaves a majority of 'underperforming' schools in the previously marginalised communities (Legotlo, 2014). Labels such as 'underperforming' further contribute greatly to the individual and collective capacity toward resilience (Naicker, Pillay & Grant, 2016).

Education simultaneously bases high expectation on bias, and successful management of individual resilience. What becomes greatly evident in the biased analysis of the resilient student, is the reinforcement of identity around personal deficit. Neither the metacognitive contribution to the community, which is systemically negated, nor the contribution of an inherent cultural contribution toward transformation in a constantly changing world, is recognised. The resultant anxiety-driven student is further encumbered by an unattainable standard demanded in the vocational dance-training environment through authoritarian and universalised teaching practices. And further dictatorial instruction justified by exultations of media examples in select Western and Eurocentric cultural expressions. This is attributed to an accessible online or 'smart' world which the teacher aims to contribute to through student-success strategy (Aguaded-Ramírez, 2017), and the pedagogical choices made during instruction (Dragon & Bridgewater State, 2015). The student's personal deficit is continuously magnified often leading to resultant high attrition rates (Buxton, 2017).

Therefore, it can be concluded that within the hugely varying and diverse global professional-dance community, implicit norms, standards and stereotypes are reinforced through Western

and Eurocentric teaching and learning pedagogy void of metacognitive and self-actualisation mechanisms. It is upon presumed knowledge and awareness of these norms and standards into which a dance student enters a vocational training culture and is consequently measured accordingly. The student inevitably denounces inherent somatics to conform to this culture and succumbs to the boundaries imposed by the powers-that-be.

Coloniality of power and dance education

In accordance with Quijano's (2000; Mignolo, 2007) notion of 'subjectivity and knowledge', this definitive aspect in the colonial matrix of power aims to control epistemology, education, and formation of subjectivity. Furthermore, "implanting the colonial matrix of power implies to dismantle … existing forms of social organization and ways of life."

Within an African context this has bearing on Colonialisation across the continent (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). Ndluvo-Gatsheni further articulates that what should be analysed is how through the colonial matrix of power, colonialism has continued to wreak havoc on the mind of the ex-colonised after the end of direct colonialism: "One of the enduring legacies of colonialism was its ability to universalize Western particularism."[20] (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013:39). This has specific relevance to the South African context that was additionally marred by Apartheid (dismantled since 1994); yet, continues the Western and European globalised functions. The resistance of any other identities and cultures is then presented as an "all-embracing … struggle against the universality and particularisms – the notion that people without history expressing precisely their incapacity to represent the universal" (Laclau, 1996:24).

If we were to identify these notions of the coloniality of power on a more isolated condensed scale to that of the dance community, the resultant particularism and universality of the Western constructs would be as prolific: "Power relations … underwrite the ability of certain perceptual sensibilities to function as universal and impersonal … [Ballet] marks deeply not only the neuro-musculature, but also the perceptual disposition of the dancer" (Rothfield, 2010:314). The power matrix formation of subjectivity is aggravated with terms within the South African dance education such as 'inclusivity' and 'fusion' which are derogatory and

[20] Particularism refers to the exclusive attachment to one's own group, party or nation; it also has theological bearing on the doctrine that some but not all people are elected and redeemed.

further increase the lack of acknowledged identity. As is 'underprivileged' and 'underperforming' within the democratic society that has been liberated. Yet these myths of tradition are firmly entrenched in local discourse. Furthermore, they are further intensified by the exultation of idolised technique versus identity and indigeneity thereby ensuring that within the dance community in South Africa, most specifically, the notion of prescriptive subjectivity and knowledge is perpetuated through hegemony and the coloniality matrix of power.

Both the notions of a deficit student due to culture and identity, as well as continued bias and particularisation according to the accepted universal norms, is imposed. This matrix of power controlling epistemology and education is engrained in and through the teachers, therefore deficits of dance teaching also need to be exposed.

Power play perpetuated: the deficit teacher

> If we recognise that kinaesthetic values are inherent in the exercise of somatic attention, then the question arises regarding the attribution of value to one form of perception over and above another … not reducible to matters of individual perception (that is, mere taste), but concerns the authorisation of certain forms of perception to formulate critical judgements. Who gets to decide what is good work, and on what basis? What conditions the perceptions of 'expert' judges? (Rothfield, 2010: 314).

It is upon the examination of the power plays within teaching praxis that the extent of Western influence becomes evident. The domination of cultural influence on cognitive knowledge separated from embodied knowledge with resultant mind-body distrust has presented several challenges within a somatic approach (Kerka, 2002). According to Huddy and Stevens (2011) a divergence in cognition about body-learning has produced distinct and divergent training pathways for educators: the cognitive andragogy pathway employs knowledge for applied activity involving tacit 'learning about the body' as opposed to 'learning with the body'. The resultant individual learns as an apprentice of observation. Whereas the somatic andragogy pathway employs methods for knowledge construction, awareness of the body experience prepares the individual to question dominant knowledge sources. The resultant individual is open to diversity of experience. Based on these two paths, dance- and movement-teacher training and development takes place producing either the traditional dance teacher or the dance artist who teaches (Huddy & Stevens, 2011).

Many traditional dance teachers and the teaching dance artists are not trained in teaching or embodied learning. Rather, they focus their teaching effort on technical development, or in developing methods in achieving technical proficiency. Body-knowledge within an environment where the teacher is the one with the knowledge and the student a 'blank canvas is merely a neutral subject of learning. Therefore, dance teaching remains prescriptive and authoritarian even in its attempt to 'embrace the individual'. Swain (2013) advocates that dance teacher training programmes that critically investigate the context of their students within their broader environments are needed to challenge trends of training teachers in dance technique alone.

Currently, the South African dance educational policy landscape is characterised by method-centric teacher development, curriculum standardisation, and lack of accountability toward educational value (Risner & Barr, 2015). Additionally, dance pedagogy addressed in teacher training is viewed as understanding of the 'what', 'how', and 'when' in teaching dance, while attempting to address deficiencies in content knowledge, lesson-planning skills, teacher-student rapport and classroom management (Warburton, 2008). The path of embodied or transformative learning is often not addressed. Furthermore, in an attempt at addressing the issue of authoritarian teaching practice, arguments arise that dance is inherently somatic, but differs in output where dance is either - art or education.

Differing beliefs and practices in this regard present dualistic pedagogical paradigms of teaching and learning: student-centred and teacher-centred (Dragon & Bridgewater State, 2015). Student-centred pedagogy, rooted in progressive, holistic, humanistic education, and constructivism produces performing artists where the teacher is more of a catalyst or guide when directing curriculum problem-solving toward a self-directed and self-motivated community of learners. Teacher-centred pedagogy, rooted in behaviourism and cognitivism, produces students who can achieve teacher objectives within the scope of teacher-determined responses toward compliance of the expert's process. Further division of dance-teaching pedagogy is exacerbated by fragmentation within somatic education: teaching principles versus teaching techniques (Johnson, 1986).

Attempts at reconciling these pedagogical pathways in dance education has resulted in emergent themes in the various contexts of dance teaching. These themes indicate a

tendency in dance-teacher education toward the student-centred holistic model. In effect, the role of the teacher appears to be changing within the vocational environment. The teacher no longer approaches dance as a teaching of steps but becomes an agent of leadership into a world of possibility and constant change. Dialogue, openness, and integration of multi-disciplinarity of focus informs the training of reflective, active participants and the development of background skills and competencies required for the dance profession.

The challenge of the 21st century dance teacher and educator in South Africa is a fragmented and polarised resultant in curricula that offers dualistic paradigms. Although global trends are observed and present unique opportunity for dance education and teacher training, much of the South African landscape remains austere and rooted in traditional pragmatic forms. Tertiary teacher training for dance is obsolete – where pedagogy is omitted from the revised curriculum.

The conflict between research, policy, and practice affects the professional learning community profoundly (Yoo, Carter & Larkin, 2017). Accordingly, in the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa 2011-2025, the proposed goal is to set up:

> A long-term system that would provide accessible opportunities for practicing teachers, both individually and collectively via their participation in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), to assess their curriculum knowledge, competence, and professional practice, in order to identify their development needs related to their specific teaching specialization and other identified priorities that would be targeted over time (Education, 2011).

In as much as the deficit student enters tertiary training as anxious, uncertain and full of potential, the teacher enters with a pedagogical deficit reinforced by irrelevant teacher qualifications toward building and perpetuating the deficit. The South African dance teacher employed in education often becomes an agent of conformity to performative norms perpetuated by aesthetic aims and achievements, while struggling clumsily for understanding in these uncertain and changing pedagogical landscapes.

Strategy towards vocational training of the South African dancer

To counter all the deficit aspects culminating in anxiety and loss of identity (of both dance teacher and student), this article envisions a strategy towards adult dance vocational training that incorporates individual contributions to the collective learning experience. The strategy will be to synthesize Nakata's (1998) cultural interface theories with the professional-learning-community concept (DuFour, 2013).

The cultural interface

This article specifically focuses on Nakata's (1998) cultural interface theories, which emphasise the fact that "we cannot just 'do' Indigenous knowledge in the curriculum". Nakata explains that universities subscribe to the Western and scientific knowledge systems "mediated by the disciplinary organisation of knowledge and its discursive and textual practices" (Nakata, 2007:8). This contested space between the two knowledge systems – Indigenous and Western – is the space that Nakata defines as the cultural interface, where "things are not clearly black or white, Indigenous or Western" (Nakata, 2007:9).

> Negotiating between these is a transforming process of endless instances of learning and forgetting, of melding and keeping separate, of discarding and taking up, of continuity and discontinuity. We participate in these ways of viewing, being, and acting in the world, often in quite contradictory, ambiguous, or ambivalent ways. We subscribe with varying degrees of commitment, both in time and space, to various positions depending on the moment, depending on what experiences, capacities, resources, and discourses we have to draw on, according to what is at stake for us, or our family, or our community, and so on, and according to past experiences, current realities, aspirations, and imagined futures (Nakata, 2007:10).

Nakata's work provides a framework for teachers to understand their role (both their potential and limitations) within the power relations that comprise the cultural interface. The three principles for an Indigenous standpoint theory towards ensuring that the knowledge space remains open and contested at the cultural interface, are also relevant to the agency of a student. However, while this paper acknowledges the fact that Nakata's theory stems from the standpoint of indigenous studies taught by non-indigenous teachers; this work emerges from the experiential and conceptual, and from a commitment to a teaching and learning manner that may integrate the cultural interface into the notions of respectful teaching within a multicultural vocational context. It reflects on how dance teachers and academics can contribute to the development and application of the discipline whilst conscientising all within the dance community of their right to identity and agency.

With the understanding that "Indigenous people are entangled at a much-contested knowledge space at the cultural interface (Nakata, 2007:12); the three principles include:

6. an interested 'knower' should understand how they come to understand;
7. recognition of agency, through providing a means to see one's position in relation with others; to maintain the knowledge of such positioning; and to defend the position if needs be;
8. to inform and limit the diversity and range of responses through the physical experience and the memory of encounters in the everyday that inform the cultural-duality tensions; 'to factor this tension in helps us to get beyond notions of structuralist power and the resultant causal analyses'.

These three principles allow us to see and act on things in these ways all the time, to take ownership of the fact that:

> Although I have knowledge of my experience at the interface and can forge a critical standpoint, I am not out singularly to overturn the so-called dominant position through simplistic arguments of omission, exclusion or misrepresentation, but rather out there to make better arguments in relation to my position within knowledge, and in relation to other communities of 'knowers'. We see and act on things in these ways all the time (Nakata, 2007:12).

A successful learning community

A vital feature found within adult education (that informs andragogy) includes self-regulation or self-directed learning (Knowles, 1975), and is supportive of experiential and transformation learning as a catalyst towards co-creating new knowledge and improved futures (Burch et al., 2016). Further, to foster such an environment, student-centred teaching should be replaced with learning-centred teaching explorations and opportunities (Burch et al., 2016).

To incorporate these aspects towards a strategy on dance vocational training, the constructs of a professional learning community (PLC) by DuFour (2004) are proposed. PLC speaks both to a constructivist learning theory, as well as to non-Western preferences for communal learning. This view towards learning is echoed in African *ubuntu* that incorporates basic respect and compassion for others in society through spirituality, consensus building, and dialogue (Nafukho, 2006). Achieved by encouraging embodied experiential and co-operative learning environments.

The six essential characteristics of PLC include (DuFour, 2004:1-6):

1. shared mission, vision, values, and goals;
2. collaborative teams focused on learning;
3. collective enquiry, that builds on shared inherent and inherited knowledge and reflective practice;
4. action orientation and experimentation;
5. commitment to continuous improvement through achieving mutual goals and accomplishing a fundamental purpose of learning for all; and
6. as result-driven towards utilising the evidence of learning to inform and improve practice.

Implications of the strategy

South Africa is rife with diversity: where 11 official languages designate as many cultural identities, and due to such occurrences as migration of rural populations to cities for work and prosperity; the concepts of intercultural and multicultural education pose the opportunity for learning-centred teaching. This opportunity promotes development of the individual, as well as the educational community in a meaningful way through treatment of cultural diversity as a value for personal and collective enrichment.

Aguaded-Ramírez (2017) emphasises that learning-centred teaching goes beyond inclusivity and introduces intercultural relations as a means to eliminate prejudice and stereotypes, encouraging a just and tolerant society. “It is not the adapting of teaching toward inclusivity, but inclusivity of teaching toward transformation.”

In South Africa transformation of thinking and of educational culture is needed within vocational dance, physical theatre, and somatic training. Towards this intent, the strategy presented in this article asks to recognise the need for inclusion of the cultural interface within a successful PLC environment. By building a holistically-rounded, performing-arts-practitioner identity around respectful recognition of the various contributions of the music arts, theatre-making, and dance experience, promotes agency and cultivates a motivational

climate.[21] In this context, within a conscientised professional learning community, anxiety is diminished. Where identity of 'being' and 'becoming' is acknowledged, development of agency is enabled (Nakata, 1998). Agency replaces anxiety. Teachers, students, and the collective learning community can become active, life-long learners as agents of change and innovation.

Nakata's (2007:12) standpoint on 'who can know' rather than 'what can be known' specifically needs to be examined to address the anxiety of the dance teacher. This will support the perspective on containing of the politics surrounding identity and power that reinforce boundaries. The matrix of power and action should be contained to "recognition and location rather than redistribution and transformation" (Nakata, 2007:12). This strategy requires academic and professional discourse and grappling from both an academic and professional dance perspective. Focus on epistemological development is essential to the value of praxis for vocational performing arts training for the dancer. Furthering a development of multi-disciplinarity in dance curriculum will support the recognition of the uniqueness (through identity, metacognition, and agency) of the performing arts multidisciplinary contributions.

Conclusion

Within a learning-centred teaching approach, deficits have potential to be transformed to become agonists of innovation, moving from anxiety to agency.

Currently the vocational performing arts disciplines at TUT are presented independently, which isolate the micro-characteristics of each discipline and lead to further compartmentalisation. Various independent aspects within each discipline then fight for dominance and power in the knowledge application towards holistic learning.

South African policies and infrastructures within learning environments still pose a threat where conceptual and technical development dominate education. However, transference of vocational skills and competencies remain primary objectives. The enablement of reformed thinking about dance education, and implementation of curricular strategy and content itself,

[21] The TUT new re-curriculum addresses the need for a multi-disciplinary course in Performing Arts; where Dance, Music, and Theatre Arts and Design are featured.

does not occur. Recognition of the metacognitive, cultural, and deficit factors that influence dance educational dialogue, is also needed.

Therefore, this strategy for vocational training of the South African dance student requires obviating bias and standardisations, towards agency and change. By diminishing anxiety within vocational dance culture, agency can be inculcated – which addresses deficit fragmentation across categories of differences (bias, stereotypes, techniques, and innate competencies which are applicable to both gender and culture). Furthermore, this strategy aims to serve towards counteracting deficit views of culture and power though the ability to implement critical reflective practices without losing individual cultural identity – mutually-beneficial communal learning at the cultural interface.

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The Namasagali Experience: Performing Utopia

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Abstract

It has been almost twenty years since Namasagali College, a secondary school in Eastern Uganda, staged its last performance, yet the memory of these musical theater productions are recalled with the nostalgia of a lost renaissance. These transdisciplinary productions that utilized modern dance, acting and mimed songs transformed the education of students from the Freirian "banking system" into a liberating educational experience where students participated in the co-creation of these theatrical works. With Father Damien Grimes, Mill Hill Missionary from Wales, at the helm, more than 25 productions were staged during his years as headmaster (1971-2000). What Grimes never lost sight of was the performing arts pedagogy he initiated, which transformed the school into a self-made institution of hope despite the political instability that impacted the school throughout his tenure. This paper investigates the questions of agency, innovation and the role of performance in the self-fashioning of a liberated feminist self among the female students of Namasagali. Drawing on interviews from former students and teachers, the notion of solidarity among students within a modern dance world view as practised in a post-colonial education system will be discussed.

Introduction

It is March 2018 and I am attending a weekend 50-year reunion at Namasagali College, a secondary boarding school located in Eastern Uganda. Over the 15 years that I have lived and worked in Uganda, I have heard stories of this school, which is synonymous with the birth of Modern Dance in the country. I am riding on a 15 seater bus with former students from the 1970s to the 1990s. I have been granted permission to observe this event as a researcher. The excitement of returning to their former school is palpable and the conversations revolve around the remembrances of the former glory of Namasagali. Father Damien Grimes, the creative patriarch, and headmaster of the school from 1967 to 2000 is still revered by the former students attending the reunion. I am scribbling notes as I listen to the exchange of dialogue. "Bullying was outlawed, if you bullied you were expelled," "There were no phones, only radio calls," "Father taught people to solve problems," "If you were not creative you would always find yourself in trouble." "No school is revered in Uganda like Namasagali which gave children both education and exposure." "No one can talk down our school."

The main objective of the gathering is to revive Namasagali and bring it back to the sought after school that it once was before the government took over from the Mill Hill Missionaries in 2001. The physical structures are in varying states of disarray. As Grace Flavia Ibanda, a student from 1981-87 remembers, “When my father brought me to the school we stopped at a small building with wire mesh on the windows to check it and I thought to myself - how can this be a school? It looks like a place where we keep our chickens” (Interview, July 19, 2019).

When the bus arrives at the school we wait in line to check-in at the same building. The weekend is filled with activities including morning exercise, dance performances, a disco and a strategic planning meeting on the last day. The business meeting is highlighted by a Skype call with Grimes from the UK. His face is projected on a large screen inside a tent filled with former students. Grimes begins the conversation by apologizing for not being able to attend. He is now 86 years old and the Mill Hill Fathers have forbidden him from traveling back to Uganda. He addresses the crowd saying:

> Do you feel happy to be back at the old place? Everyone will have to imagine that I am looking at you in particular as there are so many of you. I am very proud of you. Everywhere I see and hear of all the wonderful things you are doing” (Skype call, March 31, 2018).

Despite his age, Grimes appears to have the full capacity of his memory and intellect. The crowd, in turn, is inspired by Grimes to take on the challenge and financial responsibility of refurbishing the entire school with new buildings and state of the art technology. Committees are formed and future meetings are scheduled to ensure that the momentum is not lost in the moment.

I am intrigued by the interplay of memory and place. The role of place is significant in the production, retention, and reinvigoration of memory (Donohoe, 2014). The site of Namasagali produces vivid memories of dance class and musical theatre productions from the former students who spontaneously become my guides as we tour the school. The buildings and grounds of this school identify the former students within a community that defines who they are and how they operate in the larger world. Although new buildings may be constructed at the site of Namasagali, the memories and traditions are embedded in both the individual and collective memories as well as the site where these students lived and studied. Elizabeth Jelin refers to memory as subjective yet anchored in the material and symbolic spheres (2003:26).

In addition, memory is made and remade over time. Perhaps the nostalgia of what the school once was has overtaken the reality of time, politics, and an East African identity. Can the refurbishing of the school rekindle the positive effects on identity/feminist consciousness that once defined female graduates?

Modern Dance Education - A Liberated Self

Namasagali College is located in a remote village approximately 100 miles from Kampala on the banks of the river Nile. Grimes became the headmaster of this secondary co-educational boarding school four years after Uganda gained independence from Great Britain. During these first four years of independence, the presidency would change three times. President Edward Mutesa the first president and King of the Buganda Kingdom was followed by Milton Obote educated at Makerere University and a member of the middle class. Obote was overthrown in a coup led by General Idi Amin, a common man from the countryside in 1971, the same year that Grimes moved to Namasagali. (Mazrui, 1974). This isolation from the capital city kept the school relatively safe during the tumultuous reign of Idi Amin (1971-1979). In fact the musical theatre productions would gain favor with President Amin giving Namasagali top booking at the National Theatre in Kampala and enabling Grimes to develop a pedagogical approach to education that included the study of Modern dance and annual musical theatre productions.

Sylvia Wynter argues that although post-colonial societies have gained independence, they remain deeply tied to the colonial structure of domination and exclusion, a framework that was initiated during colonial times (2003). The British education system was sought after by elite parents in both Uganda and neighboring counties, and Namasagali was known for educating culturally liberal and cosmopolitan graduates as well as creating a “European” culture within the school. As Chinua Achebe eloquently suggests in his novel *No Longer at Ease* (1960), the postcolonial African condition has produced a new kind of elite with its “strange” tongue. Grimes, an imposing and commanding figure, created a school culture that was both paternalistic and colonial, molding students into a type of modern Western-educated individual in the middle of rural Uganda. Oh, how I cried to join Namasagali College, Irene Kiza-Onyango writes:

> When I arrived at Namasagali, I realized that what made the school tick then was not the infrastructure; it was all in the culture. The moment I stepped out of the car I met this crop of beautiful girls, dressed like non-Ugandans and speaking all kinds of English accents (2011:37).

Namasagali's motto was "strive regardless" and students were encouraged to pursue their interests. The school day ended at 1 pm followed by lunch and extracurricular activities including sports, chess, dance classes and rehearsals for the annual productions. Grimes focused on the "whole student" in the Mill Hill Missionary tradition of progressive education through experiential learning. Students also had choices within the school day as described by Serugo in his article "When Namasagali ruled drama":

> Students had options to engage in chess duels, swap their school uniforms for leotards in creative dance class, tone their arm muscles paddling at boating regattas on the calmer sections of the River Nile or strip down to swimming trunks or bikinis to take a dip in a swimming pool (2015).

Modern Dance comes to Namasagali

The introduction of Modern dance or what came to be identified as Creative dance at Namasagali, aligned itself with the ethos of the early Modern dancers who found themselves outside of the mainstream and often on the edges of society. The early modern dancers were speaking a new dance language and this practice easily aligned with Grimes and his vision of emancipating the female students of Namasagali. As Julia Foulkes states in her writing on modern bodies in the world of Modern dance:

> Dance resides within that hope of recreation. It offers the possibility that our bodies are not always a prison of flesh and that we can change our physical presentation to the world and alter the way we see ourselves and others (2002, chapter 1).

The entire approach to school differed from boarding schools throughout Uganda, specifically in the ways in which the students presented themselves to the world. According to Grimes, community members could often identify a Namasagali student by her confidence, which he attributed in part to the study of modern dance (Interview, July 5, 2016). Grimes refers to the beginnings of modern dance at Namasagali as a search for a physical activity that would involve the entire co-educational school community. In addition, he wanted an activity that would promote equality among the students.

> Whilst facing this dilemma I was suddenly provided with a solution. We had regular student concerts and a member of the expatriate staff, Marguerite Smith, put on a

> performance of creative dance. She had done this kind of work in Britain and trained some of the girl students. Here was the solution for girls, but I was to discover that it was good for the boys too (Grimes, 2016:68).

After the departure of Smith, Grimes continued the dance program utilizing the students as mentors and reading books on Modern Dance tradition including *The Art of Making Dances* by Doris Humphrey. Grimes would often sit and give feedback to students as they danced. In 1977 he recruited a teacher from New Zealand, Angela Younger who had formal training in ballet and modern dance. In an interview, Younger recalls that she and her husband were in Uganda from 1977-79 and were "on the last plane out as the Tanzanians marched into Kampala" highlighting the tumultuous times of the Idi Amin regime" (Interview, July 31, 2019).

According to Grimes, the year after Younger began teaching she was joined by Sandra Jones (now Forbes-Bennett) from Wales. Forbes-Bennett was trained in Modern dance and Laban Movement education. Both Younger and Forbes-Bennett developed a curriculum that centered on holistic education, creating a non-competitive, student-centered dance environment. Younger described her classes saying:

> I believed very much in freedom of movement. I encouraged students to listen to various types of music and let their movements flow from what they felt. Sometimes we sat and chatted about what happened in their day and how they could express that through movement (Interview, July 31, 2019).

Although Forbes-Bennet created a non-competitive dance environment, she also believed that performance was an integral part of the dance experience. Grimes explains that soon after the arrival of Forbes-Bennett Creative dance competitions were added to the already existing Traditional dance competitions at the school (Grimes, 2016).

A turning point in the school was in 1977 when Grimes and Forbes-Bennett attended a performance of *Ipi Tombi*, at the Dominion Theatre in London. The show, written by white South African playwrights Bertha Egnos and Gail Lakier, tells the story of a young black man leaving his village and young wife to work in the mines of Johannesburg experiencing the conflicts between life in the city and his ancestral home. The play, which opened in 1973, ran for six years in London's West End. While the show was critically acclaimed in London, it was met with protests in New York by a group that called themselves the Emergency Committee to protest the South African Production of *Ipi Tomb*i. The group cited three critical issues: the theft of a black cultural heritage; exploitation of blacks by South Africans and America's

cooperation and support of the present South African Government (Fraser, 1976). These and other protests were outweighed by the success of the play both in South Africa and abroad. Horn describes *Ipi Tombi* as "Theater of Exploitation" or theatre that employs black performers to misrepresent the conditions in South Africa to mostly white and bourgeois audiences abroad (1986:211). However, even in Nigeria, the Federal Military Government invited the production to be part of the opening ceremonies for the newly built National Theatre in Lagos "misled by the ebullient backward-looking qualities of the play's argument which highlighted the problems of the African identity" (Horn, 1986:215).

Grimes described being "stunned" by the musical and purchased the albums to bring back to Uganda with a plan of restaging the show Namasagali style. Perhaps, as Anthony Sampson wrote in 1957 for the South African Drum magazine, "these types of prescripted plays that highlight the exuberant and rich African culture were a type of white man's folktale that resulted in a projected admiration for himself" (as cited in Horn, 1986:215).

Grimes was, in part, carrying on the Mill Hill missionary tradition of physical education. Before being transferred to Namasagali, Grimes taught at Namilyango (1959-1967), the first boarding school introduced in Uganda by the missionaries in 1902. Gale writes in his book *Uganda and the Mill Hill Fathers,* that "periods of study at Namilyango were followed by games" (1959:247). These games or physical activity were introduced because it was believed that unless periods of physical activity were incorporated into the day "it was impossible to interest a student in his books" (1959:247). The play *Ipi Tombi* is filled with lively dances and exotic costumes, reinforcing the colonial mindset and also posing the complex question of the African identity in a post-colonial world.

In the article 'Black South African Theatre: Text and Context' Tomaselli explains that although most white South Africans believed that they were seeing "indigenous" black theatre when they watched *Ipi Tombi*, the real black theatre existed within the community as a form of protest, without scripts, a stage, lights and a paying audience (1981:52). I believe that the interest in the production by Grimes was due to the mix of traditional dance with popular dance forms and the storyline, highlighting a young man's conflict between the tribal and city culture as well as the appeal to the white theatrical aesthetic. This seemed to be the plight of

any Namasagali student, the conflict between the liberal and progressive school culture and life in the rest of Uganda.

The show produced at Namasagali was titled *Song of Bantu* placing the performance in Sub-Saharan Africa. The songs used were from the original musical with performers miming the words. Dances were choreographed by Forbes-Bennett and students. The costumes were designed in the style of the original Zulu dress used in *Ipi Tombi.* The *Song of Bantu* premiered at the school hall in 1978 for students and a few guests. Included in the guest list was Mary Astles, the Minister of Culture and Community Development in Idi Amin's regime and wife of the notorious Bob Astles.[22] The show was so well received by the audience that Astles ordered the play be brought to the National Theatre in Kampala (Grimes, 2016). Grimes explains that if you were ordered by a high ranking official of the Amin regime to do something, you complied (2016). For the next twenty-three years, Namasagali would perform a new musical theatre work at the National Theatre and become famous for its modern dance creations.

After the success of *Song of Bantu* Grimes began to write an annual play that included up to 20 dance creations. As Moses Serungo, a prominent art critic in Uganda wrote:

> The Namasagali productions, most of them written by the school's Irish Catholic priest headmaster, Reverend Father Damian Grimes, offered an escape to theatre audiences looking for an outlandish experience" (2015).

The outlandish experience could in part be credited to what many in the community viewed as scandalous costumes as well as seeing men and women touching and lifting each other in Modern dance duets. I suggest that these were not just 'scandalous' costumes and 'daring' moves but ways in which the more radical ethos of Namasagali and the radical role played by modern dance are subtly expressed.

Leotards and Tights

Challenging the culturally acceptable dress codes, the college redefined gender roles in part, through the use of modern dance leotards, and tights. Studies on the gendered roles of

[22] Robert Astles (1924-2012) was a British soldier and colonial officer who lived in Uganda and became an associate of presidents Milton Obote and Idi Amin. During the Amin regime, he served as the Head of the Anti-Corruption squad.

secondary school students in Africa indicate that passive forms of identity are reinforced and inscribed as an ideal of femininity (Clarke 1997; Wolpe, Quinlan, & Martinez 1997; Shefer 1999). The formation of sexual identities reinforce women as objects of male sexual desire in Uganda (Muhanguzi, Bennett & Muhanguzi, 2011). Within this cultural climate Grimes encouraged equality between the sexes through dance classes, choreography, and performances, leading to emancipated female graduates, a quality I observed in the former graduates throughout my years of living and working in Uganda. Schools in Uganda are traditionally a site where gender roles are both taught and reinforced. Uganda is seen as a patriarchal society and one that upholds the ideal of male dominance in decision making within all social structures (Aspaas & Kwesiga, 2003). According to Tamale (2011), sex is a moral issue in the primarily Christian society where male dominance and female submission is highly regarded. In most parts of Africa, "especially within families, family compounds and communities, preference for male children over and above female children is common" (Rwangezi, Interview July 23, 2019).

In Buganda[23] culture, the largest tribe in Uganda's central region, from infancy, girls are trained to be good wives and mothers. Women kneel when greeting a man or elder and show self and community respect by keeping their legs together when sitting and dress conservatively.

Indigenous dances in Uganda are gender role-specific and reinforce the role of boys and girls within society. Kiyimba argues how gendered relationships among the Baganda are formed in early childhood through the use of proverbs (2005). "Anaaganji, asooka ddenzi", meaning "One who will become a favourite, begins by giving birth to a baby boy" is one of the many proverbs that supports a boy over a girl (Kiyimba, 2005:255). It is against this backdrop that Grimes introduced the leotard for dance class.

Debates regarding dress often surface with both government and university authorities. Amin declared mini skirts illegal in 1972 prohibiting the wearing of mini-skirts, hot pants and maxi-

[23] The Baganda occupy the Central region of Uganda. Baganda comes from the root word Ganda. Baganda is plural while the singular is Muganda. The language spoken is Luganda. The Baganda are the largest tribe in Uganda making up approximately one-fourth of the population.

dresses with a V-shaped split. According to Mugabe, police enforced the law by measuring dresses to ensure they were more than three inches above the knee line (2014). In 2004 Makerere University administrations threatened to take action against the rising indecent dressing of campus women. The only exception to the looming debate was Namasagali College where the uniform for girls were fashioned on the mini skirt. According to Ibanda, "the entire county was aware of the Namasagali uniform but somehow it was excused because the school was under the headship of a mzungu" (interview July 31, 2019).

Modernity versus indigenous culture and values in Uganda have been debated since independence. In his book *Song of Lawino,* Okot P'Biteck's main character Lawino accuses her husband Ocol and his new co-wife Clementine of copying the lifestyles of whites, while defending the Acholi customs. Her list of grievances include indecent behavior and dressing, and the loss of her husband's masculinity. In the poem, Lawino takes pride in her Acholi culture and argues that others should do the same. Imitation without deep understanding leads to a misrepresentation of the self. This loss of perceived masculinity is evidenced in the way in which both men and women performed the same dance warm-ups and dance moves in the annual productions at Namasagali, something that was not witnessed in the traditional dances in Uganda (Steven Rwangezi, Interview July 23, 2019).

Privileged or Feared Status

A common rumor among the Ugandan even today is that Grimes was known as the "crazy mzungu" or white person, often erupting into fits of yelling, both at students and government officials. Ibanda recalls traveling to Kampala on the school bus and encountering police roadblocks along the way. Grace Ibanda Flavia recalls, "Whenever we approached a roadblock we were waved through as the police said it is that crazy mzungu let him go" (Interview, July 30, 2019). Grace Ibanda Flavia remembers her introduction to Namasagali culture:

> Swimming was compulsory at school. We had a pool and I learned how to swim very quickly. Many times we wore the same costumes for swimming as we did for dance class. Father explained that it was to see the lines of the body and that made sense to me as a student. Once you become used to the dress code it was no longer an issue (Interview, July 30, 2019).

In Modern dance classes, both male and female students worked together as equals to create choreographic studies. Keza Otoa recalls that "sometimes women lifted men" (Interview, July

27, 2019). “Men and women were looked at as instruments of the choreography and not as potential sexual partners, this changed the way we related to each other” (Otoa Interview, July 27, 2019). Kaya Mukasa remembers how the study of Modern dance began to change her perceptions of self. “I learned how to carry myself and lengthen my spine, this, in turn, translated into my feeling and becoming more confident” (Interview, July 31, 2019). Block and Borland question why people adopt the cultural practices of others in their article “Exotic Identities: Dance, Difference, and Self-Fashioning” stating that “borrowed cultural practices can resist dominant ideologies of personhood and challenge dichotomous notions of cultural difference” (2011:3). In effect the students are existing in what Indian cultural theorist Homi Bhabba refers to as ‘The Third Space’ or a space of hybridity which lies in and between cultural binaries.[24]

Community

The construction of communities is subject to the interplay of power relations (Bharucha, 2006). With Grimes at the helm of power at Namasagali, he asserted his duty of educating the African child as a Mill Hill missionary. In addition, he believed that the empowerment of women at the school would combat the culturally accepted subordinate role of women within the larger Ugandan context. Tamale states that “It is popularly believed that women are not supposed to speak up or express their opinions in public, a view that is deeply embedded in African patriarchal values” (1999:1). The Namasagali female students were often perceived as problems in society. The local community surrounding the school has a saying that you could hear a Namasagali girl a mile away (Grimes, 2016:145). In her book entitled *When Hens Begin to Crow: Gender and Parliamentary Politics in Uganda,* author Sylvia Tamale begins the book with an explanation of the proverb:

> Female chickens normally do not crow. Hence, in many African cultures a crowing hen is considered a bad omen and must be slaughtered. During the 1996 general elections to Uganda’s national legislature, a male observer at a campaign reminded a woman candidate, “Have you ever heard a hen crow?” The message was clear. Women have no business standing for political office (1999:1).

[24] Homi Bhabha is a cultural theorist who seminal book “The Third Space” investigates the liminal space between two colliding cultures give space for new identities to be formed and reformed and in the state of continuous flux.

Currently both the speaker of Parliament, Rebecca Kadaga, and former State Minister for Ethics and Integrity Miria Matembe are both products of Namasagali embodying, Friere's critical pedagogy to act in the world through political and social action. Kadaga not only challenges the gender stereotype within Ugandan culture by actively participating in politics, but she is also a woman with no children. "It is a commonly held belief that if you are a woman without a child in Uganda you are considered a girl" (Moses Serwadda, personal communication, September 23, 2002).

Namasagali was a site where fragmentation, hybridity and crossovers between ideas and identities were commonplace. As postcolonial theorist Loomba observes:

> One of the most striking contradictions about colonialism is that it needs both to 'civilize' its 'others' and to fix them into perpetual otherness (2015:145).

However, despite the self-fashioning and the embodiment of the 'other' through the use of Modern dance, the Namasagali Modern dance tradition maintained a communal orientation to dance creating a Namasagali style in contrast to the early Modern dance pioneers who "almost all began their choreographic careers by creating solos for themselves, were using their own bodies rather than someone else's body as the raw material for their art" (Cohen & Copeland, 1983:139). According to Ibanda, "whoever came to the dance class first led the exercises" (Interview, July 30, 2019). I have also observed that the Namasagali Modern dancing body did not fit any ideal and the emphasis was placed more on the joy of movement rather than rigorous technical skill which can still be observed in the dancing bodies today.

Culture of Hope

Namsagali was a cloistered oasis in the midst of political turmoil in the country. Hope was essential in Namasagali as a radical social experiment in education commenced inside the walls. When I visited Namasagali college for the first time, despite its dilapidated buildings the physical space of the school on the banks of the river Nile is majestic. I imagine seeing dancing bodies throughout the landscape from my western modern dance perspective and tradition. I can imagine a Labaneque Ascona[25] I think the distinct school culture that was

[25] Ascona was a place founded by European intellectuals in the early 1900s as an escape from industrialism in a small fishing village in Switzerland. Rudolf von Laban developed his movement theories during his time at

generated through the teaching of modern dance, reinforced egalitarian gender roles and gave rise to many female students who went on to create political and social change within the country. The ideas expressed in Friere's final book, *Pedagogy of Freedom (*1996*)* states his belief that teachers need to do more than awaken students to the surrounding world, they also need to give them the strength, faith and hope that they can make a significant impact in their societies. Grimes gave students the agency to reinvent themselves and in doing so reinforced the colonial framework. The issues of the post-colonial body and its representation is too broad a topic to be explored in this paper, however the notion of the compulsory emancipation of the female students of Namasagali remains problematic.

Father Grimes and Idi Amin Dada

I conclude this paper with my musing on Grimes and Amin, both feared, loved and revered among many Ugandans today. As Grimes insisted on English, once described as the "political language" of Uganda by former president Obote, Amin and his soldiers spoke Swahili, a language that is now associated with the unification of the East. I am in no way dismissing the brutality of the Amin regime, but the causes of the lawlessness and violence have deeper origins that need further investigation. There is also a positive side to Amin who stood up to the British and ignited the imaginations of millions of oppressed people around the world (Mazuri, 1980). Grimes in turn stood up to the Amin regime refusing to allow his soldiers to enter the school and "having bullets shot at my feet" (Interview, Grimes, 2016). Grimes was one of the few whites who remained in the country during the Amin's rule, highlighting his tenacity.

Conclusion

The students of Namasagali are in part defined by their practice of an embodiment of the other or in this case Modern dance. The common dancing ground transmitted from Europe to Africa employed student agency through movement exploration, empowering female students along the journey. As said best by former student Grace Ibanda Flavia, "My

Ascona from 1012-1914 when the war broke out. The pursuit of artists at Ascona was to develop new art forms and live an idealistic alternative life surrounded by nature.

Namasagali education made me comfortable, confident and glad to be who I am" (Interview July 31, 2019). I have described some of the history of Namasagali College and the role modern dance played in both the identity of school and the challenging of the gender stereotypes. While Grimes is regarded by some as a controversial figure (championing a colonial art form, caning students and finding favour with Idi Amin), his introduction of modern dance training and performances, challenged particular societal norms. These challenges took place through dress codes, choice of music, choreography, and the interactions between male and female students in dance. Through the interviews that I have conducted, it has emerged that the interviewees who were part of this radical approach experienced these subtle challenges as liberating. As such I suggest that Grimes gave students the freedom to express themselves creatively, albeit through a colonial lens. Further research is needed to document this history of a Ugandan Modern dance form that emerged in a remote co-educational boarding school in rural Uganda.

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The precarious (yet persistent) existence of dance in Danish academia

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Abstract

The first independent program on dance in a Danish university was established 30 years ago as a subfield in the Humanities. Modelled on sister disciplines in the arts, the focus was initially on the history and aesthetics of theatre dance (read: ballet and modern dance). Looking to dance studies in the UK and USA as well as the ethnochoreological tradition championed in Eastern Europe, the study object was later widened to reach its most comprehensive scope in NoMAds (Nordic MA in Dance Studies). Pooling the resources of dance scholars in four different countries, the programme relied on research in complementary areas such as dance history, dance as/in performance, dance as popular culture, dance as cultural heritage and contemporary folk dance. In terms of its theoretical foundation, the comprehensive and still ongoing programme leans on disciplines such as musicology, post structural historiography and dance phenomenology. In 2017 the Danish participation in NoMAds was terminated with the implementation of austerity measures at University of Copenhagen, as a result of which academic disciplines with less than 20 students were closed. Today the study of is a part of theatre and performance studies, sports science as well as musicology. With the implementation of artistic research in the Danish National School of Performing Arts, however, new avenues for dance studies are currently being explored.

My paper examines the intra- and interdisciplinary challenges of the discipline's current position (including the problematic Eurocentric focus) on the one hand and its epistemological potentialities on the other hand.

Responding to the call for the 10th edition of Confluences to consider the disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity of dance scholarship, I have taken the opportunity to examine in more detail the effects of the shifting affiliations of the study of dance from a perspective in Danish academia.

In 1999 when I attended the Confluences conference for the first time, I had recently completed my MA-studies at Department of Theatre Studies at Copenhagen University with a thesis on Danish dance historiography from a feminist perspective. At the time I was working in dance educational programs and doing administrative work in the dance field – all project based and very much from an activist stance. Meeting South African dance artists including members of Jazzart, Soweto Dance Theatre, Moving into Dance, Flatfoot Dance Company and First Physical Dance Theatre – as well as dance educators from different university programs, who had already for years been engaged in outreach projects and were working in integrated

performance companies, I learnt with interest of their response to the imperative of the 1996 White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage to redress cultural values and their engagement in the work leading towards Curriculum 2005.

Framing my paper with this preamble is a way to situate my position vis a vis the Conference topic of the (e)mergence of dance in (or with) theatre studies. It also underlines the fact that while my approach to the topic is informed by the historic developments of the dance program at UCT, its p.o.v. is coloured by my history as a dance scholar in Danish academia. In this sense, I subscribe to the words of feminist philosopher Rosi Braidotti from her latest book *Posthuman Knowledge* (2019):

> All knowledge, being embedded, embodied and situated, is inevitably perspectival and hence limited. By extension, knowledge is flawed and contains errors and failures. Humans tend to be transported by passions and prejudices. This means that the quest for adequate understanding is both epistemological and ethical (Braidotti, 2019:132).

Having had the privilege to continue a level of involvement with South African dance artists and educators in the intermittent years, the structural and artistic developments in this country have informed my work in various ways both in- and outside academia. In particular I should mention the project 'dance in education' devised in collaboration with South African colleagues under the Nordic Shuttle 99 cultural exchange program, which with its visits from South African artist/educators to the North came to have impact on the thinking on dance education in both Denmark and Sweden.

Another trajectory running over the past two decades, which has had rather more structural bearings on the discipline of Dance Studies, concerns the eco-political pressures on tertiary education and especially the humanities, sometimes referred to as "a war against the humanities". As noted by André Lepecki in the Mellon initiated roundtable entitled Dance Studies in/and the Humanities (2013), there is an urgent need to consider how choreography/dance and dance studies can contribute to a conversation about politics (Clayton et al., 2013:8).

Taking inspiration from the 2013 Mellon roundtable as well as philosopher of science Isabelle Stenger's framing of scientific fields as ecologies of mutually dependent practices, I depart from the Deleuzian concept of thinking *par le milieu*. To think through the center *and*

alongside the environment implies that there is no identity of a practice independent of its environment. My analytically informed account will center on the context with which I am most familiar, namely Denmark, with a view to the dynamic processes taking place between the development of a disciplinary ethos and the institutional framing of the discipline. In the process of tracking the development of dance as a theoretically informed field of study through different disciplinary interdependencies, I hope to discern how they have informed the discipline. In addition to the title's suggestion that precarity and persistence go hand in hand, I will mention a few of the discipline's problems, first and foremost its Eurocentricity. Finally, in an attempt to identify its promises, I look to its potential for critical thinking as it is explored not least by performance artists.

Precarity

The precarious history of dance as an academic subject at University of Copenhagen begins in the early 1950s with the study of the repertoire of the Royal Danish Ballet as part of the newly established Department of Theatre Research. As a degree program shaped in the fashion of the Germanic humanist tradition, ballet was the personal research interest of Torben Krogh, the first professor of Theatre Research, and all but vanished from the discipline of theatre when he retired in 1969. It was only twenty years later, that the study of dance reappeared with the establishment of a one-year supplementary program entitled The History and Aesthetics of Dance. Its first home was the Department of Nordic Philology, where the program chair Erik Aschengreen, a prolific ballet critic, was already on the staff as assistant professor of Danish literature. Retrospectively Aschengreen has argued that it was only natural that dance found a home in Nordic Philology since the national romantic ideals of August Bournonville, a key figure in 19th century Danish ballet, were closely related to the ideals of the so-called Golden Age of Danish arts, a prominent topic in the study of the history of Nordic languages (Aschengreen, 1999 in Damsholt, 2014:34). I pose this as the first instance, which shows a reciprocal influence between dance scholarship and other disciplines.

As a member of the first cohort of students, I was presented with the history of ballet (with a strong weight on Danish ballet) as well as the history of modern dance (with a focus on its development in the US) and was also introduced to Laban-informed movement analysis, dance criticism and communication as well as dance technique classes in various techniques

of ballet and contemporary dance forms. With its entirely Eurocentric point of departure, the program at University at Copenhagen was inspired not least by British university programs at the time, such as the Dance Program at University of Surrey. When given the opportunity, my own studies were driven by a desire to see my experiences as a dancer/choreographer working in precarious structures and exploring topics that were relevant to my time, reflected in both the historiography and conceptual framing of the discipline. Had it been a possibility then, I would have preferred to study the theory of dance in a performing arts school. However, it was only in 2014 that the degree programs of performing arts training colleges in Denmark became research based – making them universities in their own right. I will address the implications of this shift towards the end of my paper.

Persistence and post structural critique

The dance program I entered in 1989 was autonomous to the extent that it had its own study plan at undergraduate level. The first revisions took place when the head of the program was succeeded by a scholar with a degree that combined Musicology with a year of Dance Studies at UCLA. Among several changes in the program, it was renamed Dance Studies to designate the potential breadth of the discipline stretching well beyond dance as a performing art form. In terms of content, a new component was added to the study plan to qualify MA-students for teaching posts in Danish high schools. Following a decision by Faculty, an important change was made at the structural and administrative level, whereby the dance program was merged with Theatre Research and Art History in a new entity named Department of Art History, Dance and Theatre Studies. This merger caused concern about potential loss of autonomy, the fear of which was most real in Dance Studies as the smallest of the three disciplines, the contents of which were steered towards performing arts.

An even larger merger followed in 2013, when, again in pursuit of what was thought to make administration more effective, the Faculty of Humanities pooled the Department of Art History, Dance and Theatre Research with the Departments of Literature and Musicology into one entity named Department of Arts and Cultural Studies. At the wish of chair of the program of Dance Studies, the affiliation of the program was shifted to the Musicology section. Taking influence from post structuralist thinking as seen not least in the Dance Studies program at UCLA, the new syllabus was informed by a more critical and reflexive approach. In addition to

approaching the history and aesthetics of dance as a performing art from the perspective of historiography, other changes included the introduction to the study of social dancing and of dance in popular culture together with semiotically informed dance theory and dance ethnography, an approach well known in musicology. The more comprehensive notion of Dance Studies was further consolidated in the development of a collaborative Nordic MA in Dance Studies (NoMAds), where we, as dance scholars at University of Copenhagen, collaborated with colleagues from the universities of Stockholm in Sweden; Trondheim in Norway; and Tampere in Finland to provide a graduate degree program with enhanced components of dance historiography and dance theory in the shape of courses in dance anthropology and dance and critical cultural theory (Damsholt, 2014:33). Drawing on postcolonial thinking as well as case studies from among other places, South Africa, the overwhelmingly Eurocentric focus of the program was also challenged.

On the grander scale, the advance of neo-liberalism towards end of the previous millennium had devastating effects on the educational system in many countries across Europe, including Denmark. In 2014 Dance Studies, together with other small disciplines in the humanities at University of Copenhagen, fell victim to a political rationale that put economic growth before education. As a result of austerity measures instigated by the state, the short and rather tumultuous existence of dance as an autonomous discipline in Danish academia, came to an end in 2015. Today the teaching of dance and dance related topics at University of Copenhagen takes place as components in the larger disciplines of Musicology, Theatre and Performance Studies and in the Department of Nutrition and Sports Science, where my colleague Charlotte Svendler Nielsen, who is also speaking in this conference, is on the staff.

After the many shifting environmental contexts of the discipline at Copenhagen University, it is noteworthy that its demise, which also brought an end to the university's participation in NoMAds, takes place at the same time as an increased interest in 'the body' is seen in academia across the disciplines.

Taking the lead from Stengers suggestion that scientific practices must not be defended as if they are weak, but rather should "foster their own force", and "make present what causes practitioners to think and feel and act" (Stengers 2013:195), I now turn to a few examples of the transdisciplinary artistic work.

New avenues for critical perspectives

Premiered in the Royal Danish Theatre, my first example was conceived in 2015 as a collaboration between the cutting-edge theatre named S/H and Corpus, the experimental company of The Royal Danish Ballet. Referencing the ongoing refugee crisis, *Uropa*, the title of the piece fused 'uro', the Danish term for unsettled or disturbance and 'Europa'. Performing alongside six professional ballet dancers were six asylum seekers, who had been auditioned by the creative team after having been identified by the Danish Red Cross based on their interests and skills. Following the dramaturgical concept, the artistic team set up structures were for the production that largely left the devising of the work in the hands of the asylum seekers for them to decide what was important and how they wanted their stories to be told. However, with their status in Denmark being unresolved, they were already under a lot of pressure. Furthermore, as non-professionals, who had not worked together before, the results were unsatisfactory. In the end, therefore, the artist team behind the production decided to step more actively into the shaping of the performance.

The photo I chose for the oral presentation of the paper, comes from a scene towards the end of *Uropa*. It is played out before the projection of the frothing sea, which runs for close to six minutes. Figuratively and metaphorically depicting an abyss, the water masses threaten to overflow the entire stage and wash away both the performers and the audience. Meanwhile, in front of the screen, an almost surreal scene of an 18th century masquerade is played out. According to the production's dramaturge, theatre scholar Solveig Gade, the elaborate 18th century attire of wigs and frocks was first picked out by one of the asylum seekers, a young man from Eritrea, in a workshop where the participants were invited to choose a piece of clothing in the theatre wardrobe. In this scene, the cast performs a series of 'tableaux vivants' opening with the formal moves of a court dance to the accompaniment of the musician on stage and ending with an almost apocalyptic turmoil lit by the sharp flickering of stroboscopic lights. The fact that *Uropa* was produced by The Royal Danish Theatre, an institution established in 1748, at the peak of the Danish involvement in the slave trade, which generated a considerable portion of the crown's riches on which Copenhagen was built, has been largely overlooked in the discussion of the piece.

Uropa's rococo frenzy-scene inscribes itself in an interesting row of works offering a critical perspective on the Enlightenment from an Africanist perspective. UK-based filmmaker John Akromfah's *Vertigo Sea* (2015) comes to mind with its repeated images of persons of African descent dressed in costumes of the aristocracy from the early days of the Enlightenment and striking emblematic poses from paintings of the time. Sometimes still, at other times moving, Akromfrah's images serve as a subtle reminder that the era of instrumental reason was also an era of slavery, colonialism and what has retrospectively proven to be a systematic destruction of the ecological system in which we live, all in the name of science. Other examples are seen in the works of Yinka Shonibare MBE, whose sculptures and film characters appropriate corporeal stances, masks and costumes from the 18th century in tableaux that center on the gaiety associated with the leisure cultures of European elites (Hobbs, 2008).

In contrast to *Uropa*'s understated references, my next example is loud and clear in its critique of Denmark's colonial past. *Whip it Good* is a piece by Danish-Caribbean visual artist and dancer/performer Jeanette Ehlers, one of a series of works in a long-time artistic exploration of Denmark's colonial history and involvement in the transatlantic slave trade. The performance has been discussed extensively by Mathias Danbolt in the context of other interventionist practices that enact performative gestures of what he calls 'decolonial aesthesis' (Danbolt, 2016). In this work Ehlers, in white-face and a white costume, whips a white screen with a black lash dipped in charcoal. A video version of the work was included in the exhibition *Blind Angles* in the Royal Danish Library on the occasion of the centenary of Denmark's sale of its possessions in the Virgin Islands to the US in 1917.

Provisional conclusion

My paper has provided a cursory overview of the position of dance in Danish academia over approximately 70 years. In this period, the context of the discipline has changed from being a

part of the canon of the Danish Golden Age to functioning within a poststructuralist and deconstructivist ethos looking to untold stories of dancing bodies – and ultimately to a more comprehensive understanding of the discipline that shares its theoretical and methodological frameworks with adjacent disciplines in arts and critical cultural studies. In the process it has been informed by the environments in which it was inscribed and has had a reciprocal impact on these disciplines.

Having suggested, in the first part of the paper, a critical look at the inherent Eurocentricity of Dance Studies, the second part of the paper looked to seminal works by Danish artists such as *Uropa* and *Whip it Good* for their opening up of discussions on decolonialism and migration. I propose, by way of conclusion, that the critical potential of dance is not given with merging at the level of academic disciplines. Rather, the promise inescapably intertwines academia, research and artistic practice.

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Decolonizing Choreographic Practices: Gender Dimensions

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Abstract

I analyze the commodification of male and female bodies in postcolonial societies that continue to be haunted by colonialism and its collusion with indigenous patriarchy. Dancer-choreographers with their pulse on their own socio-political environments create thoughtful works that intervene in redefining gender and queer identities as part of working towards social justice. They seek new paradigms of interdisciplinarity that express their conceptual content in performance. My discussion of choreographic practices is framed by concepts of decolonization and decoloniality by Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Jay Pather, and Walter Mignola. I analyze dancer-choreographers decolonizing the gendered body, delighting in subversive choreographic practices. Jay Pather's Body of Evidence that showcased the human body as a repository of history and memory--individual, psychic, social, and national--resonates in other geographies such as in Indian-Canadian choreographer-dancer Hari Krishnan's works such as Skin, and Uma, stree vesham, cross-dressing, part of a South Indian tradition, translocated in a contemporary queer context. In another performed historical excavation, female courtesans in 18th century India are linked to contemporary women enduring domestic violence in The Post-Natyam Collective's collaborative, multi-disciplinary work, Sunoh! [Listen] Tell me Sister! A hybrid layering of voice, movement, visual art, and media design conveys an evocative performance of courtesans as the female foremothers of Indian dance whose sexual services to patrons are linked to contemporary women. Decolonization today also involves the enemy within, namely neo-colonial regimes involved in surveillance, and punishment of "deviant" behavior. India's dancer-choreographer, Mandeep Raikhy's Queen-Size choreographs two males openly expressing desire and pleasure in defiance of the criminalization of homosexuality in India, based on a colonial era 1864 Law, Section 377, until last year. Decolonizing content and form from colonial and neo-colonial legacies is an ongoing endeavor via innovative choreographic practices that endorse hope for diverse people.

Decolonizing choreographic practices belong in the overall history of colonialism, imperialism and apartheid's legacies of racial bias and subjugation of indigenous languages and knowledges in the non-European world, often justified by Western ideologies. Similar to and different from verbal, visual, and auditory modes of expression that confront continuing neo-colonial and imperialist controls on ordinary peoples' lives, resistant choreography by selected dancer-choreographers whose work I discuss, intervene in decolonizing and redefining gender and queer identities as part of working towards social and sexual justice.

I argue that dancer-choreographers decolonize the gendered body via new paradigms of interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinarity that express their conceptual concerns--history,

memory, sexuality--in performance. I regard decolonizing as an active and ongoing process since flag-independences with patriotic slogans such as “India shining”, or in South Africa, “the rainbow nation”, while underneath the “freedom” celebrations, the Fanonian black-skin-white-masks continue to control economies and livelihoods of the majority. I explore, via decolonial choreography, how artists participate in dismantling “the Master’s tools” from within choreographic practices.

I provide a theoretical frame with Maori scholar, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, followed by writings on decoloniality by Walter Mignola, Catherine Walsh, and Rolando Vasquez (who delivered a resonant and useful Keynote address to this conference). I also include theoretical discussions on decolonization by Ngugi wa Thiong’o, and Jay Pather. Next, I discuss four choreographers who decolonize male and female bodies via innovative choreography: 1) Jay Pather’s landmark, interdisciplinary work, *Body of Evidence* with visual art, movement and unusual props. 2) The Post-Natyam Collective’s collaborative, multi-disciplinary work, *Sunoh! [Listen] Tell me Sister!* This Collective originated in the US and now has members across different geographies who work together via the internet in creating via what they describe as “long-distance choreography.” Like Pather who draws from South Africa’s 2008 post-apartheid history with many broken promises for the majority Blacks in *Body of Evidence*, this Collective performs a historical excavation of female courtesans in 19th century India who are linked to today’s South Asian American women in the US enduring domestic violence. 3) Two gay dancer-choreographers--India-based Mandeep Raikhy, whose choreographed work entitled *Queen-Size* challenges the enemy within, i.e. the neo-colonial Indian State that continues a colonial era law Section 377 criminalizing homosexuality (from 1864 until only last year, 2018), and Indian-Canadian Hari Krishnan’s subversive choreography in works such as *Skin* and *Uma*. The latter plays with cross-dressing (called *stree vesham*), part of a South Indian tradition, translocated in a contemporary queer context. Each of the innovative choreographic practices that I discuss, decolonize gender from dominant legacies and endorse hope for diverse people.

For these choreographers, research is part of the process of their innovative work. How do we conduct research to foster decolonization? Research requires an analysis of imperialism, and an understanding of what Linda Tuhiwai Smith describes as “the complex ways in which

the pursuit of knowledge is deeply embedded in the multiple layers of imperial and colonial practices."[26] In in her book entitled, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Smith remarks astutely:

> From the vantage point of the colonized, a position from which I write … the term 'research' is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism. The word itself, 'research' is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary. When mentioned in many indigenous contexts, it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful … The ways in which scientific research is implicated in the worst excesses of colonialism remain a powerful remembered history for many of the world's colonized peoples. It is a history that still offends the deepest sense of our humanity (Smith, 1999:1).

These powerful words raise the specter of decolonizing knowledge, ideas and institutions under the theoretically favored concept today, of the "decolonial" as proposed by Latin American thinkers such as Walter Mignola (from Argentina) and Catherine E. Walsh (from Ecuador) who focus on decolonizing ideas and institutions. As Professor Rolando Vasquez in his Keynote address at this conference (Confluences 2019 at the University of Cape Town), reminds us astutely, decoloniality has become "fashionable" in the academy today, and "is appropriated for wrong reasons" that in fact disrupt its political goals. In their joint volume entitled, *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*, Mignola and Walsh regard decoloniality as a concept that includes multiple, relational contexts for all who "struggle from and within modernity/coloniality's borders and cracks, to build a radically distinct world. Decoloniality is not a new paradigm or mode of critical thought. It is a way, option, standpoint, analytic, project, practice, and praxis … [It] was born in responses to the promises of modernity and the realities of coloniality" (Mignola & Walsh, 2018:4:5). However, as Vasquez also reminds us usefully, modernity does not begin with the Enlightenment but begins in 1492, at the beginning of the colonial enterprise.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o's 1978 book entitled, *Decolonizing the Mind* was concerned with what he describes in his 2012 collection of essays, entitled *Globalectics: Theory and the Politics of Knowing*, as "the decolonization of the cognitive process."[27.] Wa Thiong'o, echoing Linda Tuhiwai Smith, argues that the European "world of knowing" produced racist stereotypes

[26] Linda Tuhiwai Smith. 1999. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed Press. 2.

[27] Ngugi wa Thiong'o, 2012. *Globalectics: Theory and the Politics of Knowing*. New York: Columbia University Press,

about Africans that were propagated dubiously as “truth” (what we would characterize today as “fake news”). Such “knowledge” was produced by “diarists, log keepers, cartographers, and ethnographers”, notes Ngugi, “who brought back to Europe descriptions of new peoples, geographies, ecologies, plant life and customs” (wa Thiong’o, 2012:32). Distortions, not scientific knowledge, added shock value to material gathered by “inquisitive and acquisitive strangers” in Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s words. Such questionable information was “legitimated by research” and codified dangerously in fields such as anthropology.

Ngugi wa thiong’o asserts in *Globaletics* that such falsehoods “affected the history of ideas, including the Enlightenment” with philosophers like Kant (who did not travel far from his birth place) and Hegel who relied, as Ngugi argues persuasively, on the accounts of explorers and ethnographers especially

> of the African as being naturally inferior to whites. There being ‘no indigenous manufactures amongst them, no arts, no sciences’, or Hegel’s philosophical rhapsodies on the triumphant march of reason in history, somehow bypassing Africa, as well as his negative comments on African religions (that) were based on the same missionary and explorer narratives. Many of these philosophers used each other as sources and proofs of their own observations; prejudice thus reinforcing prejudice till it became an accepted truth, an authoritative norm” (wa Thiong’o, 2012:33).

Ngugi argues that the continuing power of Enlightenment era “knowledge” about black people was supported further by “the scientific and the popular (coming) together in mutual reinforcement in the displays and performance of the African in museums and zoological gardens” (2012:33) such as Sarah Baartman, the “Hottentot Venus”, or Congolese Ota Benga, displayed in a cage and forced to hold monkey babies in his hands. Ngugi then connects such displays in exhibitions and museums as becoming effective “performance spaces”, and further, as “the best example of organizing space to control ways of knowing, by ostensibly offering evidence and proof’ (2012:33).

Today, the task for scholars, activists, artists, and social justice workers is to undertake what Vasquez terms as “a double erasure”, namely, “erasing the erasure of coloniality” (Keynote address, 2019). Some of the “crimes of coloniality included “erasure of realities of languages, vernaculars, memories cultures, dispossession of land among other form of violence”. A “central question for decoloniality” remarks Vasquez is to excavate “what has been lost” that also includes “losing heritage”, and the connections, among indigenous people, between the

earth, humanity, and culture. The dangers of the Eurocentric thought include the anthropocentric, i.e. placing the human at the center, and creating a dichotomy between the human and nature. For the human to be sovereign over nature leads to much devastation of the earth.

Vasquez also asserts the need for "a different aesthetics" in order to face "the problem of justice," and the question of "whether we can have an ethical life" today since the powerful "are dependent on the suffering of others and on destroying the earth"? With the resources that are used, Vasquez asserts "the impossibility of an ethical life today." He connects this to temporality and the preoccupation of modernity with the now, the contemporary. However, decoloniality, he notes, "is not about the contemporary." Rather, it is "about coloniality and what is erased by the contemporary. Decoloniality is against erasure. It is about naming the violence of coloniality." This also involves the need "to produce a vocabulary to describe our own experience" and not rely on European thinkers since however important their contributions are, "their thinking is not concerned" argues Vasquez, "with coloniality." Decoloniality is concerned with the experience of coloniality, and in "not forgetting historical truth." In communally remembering "colonial wounds", the body and the realm of the senses need to be recognized.

Decolonizing knowledge via the use of the body, indeed, also bodily waste products was displayed starkly during the student-led actions at the University of Cape Town and others in South Africa. These acts are instructive for scholars to contend with, namely, with issues of what Jay Pather calls, "colonial symbology" (#RhodesMustFall), and economic hardships (#FeesMustFall) along with outdated curricula analyzed insightfully in Pather's essay, "Negotiating the Postcolonial Black Body as a Site of Paradox." Pather remarks,

> For those who claimed that the statue was just part of a dormant history, the efficacy of the response that followed the image of the hallowed statue swathed in excrement challenged these assumptions and claims to long-gone memory and dormant oppression. The symbol of 'people's shame' associated with the poor state of sanitation in South Africa's townships superimposed on one of the persisting bastions of colonial oppression occupying central space at the university seemed to expose the suppression of the pain of black people in the wake of the 'rainbow nation' ushered in by Nelson Mandela[28] (2017:139).

[28] Jay Pather 2017. Negotiating the Postcolonial Black Body as a Site of Paradox, *Theater Journal.* 47(1):139-161.

Pather is concerned with "the abnegation of the black body" and its reality "as a paradox" of colonial reductive stereotypes whose origins Ngugi traces in his effective critique of Hegel and other "Enlightenment" thinkers. Pather analyzes the "complexity of racial identity" even today as a "process constantly in the making, subject to the vagaries of material and economic policies," further reminding us that in discussing race, "we are of course talking of power, economics, access, and agency." In drawing from contemporary visual art such as white artist, Brett Murray's painting, *The Spear* (at the Goodman Gallery in Joburg) that exposed Jacob Zuma's genitals and the desecration of this painting, Pather cites Achille Mbembe's observation that the outrage against the painting indicated once again that "the black body is still a profane body. It still does not enjoy the immunity accorded to properly human bodies" (quoted in "Negotiating the Postcolonial Black Body). So, here we are in 2019 still struggling over what Pather calls elsewhere, "the persistent undercurrent of the colonial project." Pather also discusses the layers of meaning underneath this event as "a microcosm of forms of subjugation inscribed on the black body" that he places in the wider context of the Marikana massacre where 34 black miners, protesting for a living wage were killed, 25 years into South African democracy.

I propose a provocative connection between Pather's original theorizing of the body, of history and memory, and his argument in his essay, "Laws of Recall" that "memory in relation to apartheid becomes an active dialectic, a reflexive meditation", and Marx's concept of "dialectical materialism."[29] In "dialectical materialism" as in apartheid, social conditions, thoughts, and emotions are rooted in material reality--apartheid's physical, mental and psychic wounding is visible externally in realities of continuing poverty, and in invisible trauma in "the body itself" remarks Pather, "its flesh, skin and muscles." Pather regards the body symbolically as "a site on which to write meanings beyond the linguistic" to represent "complex and what appears as overpowering political contexts" (Pather 2015:317).

Pather's theory-praxis approach is realized in conceptual site works and curations that reveal the operations of colonial and apartheid power that still need decolonizing as in his intervention as choreographer/director of his landmark multimedia work, *Body of Evidence*.

[29] Jay Pather, Laws of Recall: Body, Memory and Site-Specific Performance in Contemporary South Africa, in Greg Homann and Marc Maufort, editors, *New Territories: Theatre, Drama, and Performance in Post-apartheid South Africa*, Berlin, New York: P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2015:317-344.

This multi-layered performance creates a new paradigm of inter and multi-disciplinarity necessitated by its conceptual content of the body giving evidence (as in a law court), of the body itself as evidence of survival under apartheid, of the body (not only the mind) as the repository of memory. A provocative *tour de force*, *Body of Evidence*'s interdisciplinarity deploys visual art, movement, and human sounds in the use of larger than life video projections of human body parts, based on "the drawings of Henry Vandyke Carter who illustrated the anatomical guide for students of Henry Gray in his book *Gray's Anatomy* [this iconic 1918 text has its 40th edition in 2008]." These drawing were hardly accurate as teaching tools for medical students; rather, they "communicate a deceptive order and symmetry" remarks Pather. In *Body of Evidence*, "sections of the anatomy [were selected] to form a kind of architecture within which the choreography would take place" (Pather 2015:334).

In these drawings, human body parts are deconstructed, literally separated such as a foot, or the spine projected as backdrop, or on the floor for dancer-actors to trample on and symbolically brutalize. Dancers weave in and out of the tapestry of muscle and bone of their own live bodies, at times, silhouetted or positioned as a small human frame dwarfed by a backdrop of a huge, inanimate rib-cage. "Memory and trauma bleed inevitably" notes Pather, "into the present of broken promises."

Video clip of Body of Evidence available at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rNDVDNLJmUI

Body of Evidence, that decolonizes the human body from colonial and apartheid legacies--individual, psychic, social, and national--resonates in other geographies such as in the Post-Natyam Collective dancer-choreographers in *Sunoh! Tell me Sister* that unearths women's voices, hidden from history.[30] This collaborative, multi-disciplinary performance is a hybrid layering of voice, movement, visual art, and media design that evocatively excavates female courtesans in 19th century India who were connoisseurs of the arts of music and dance, and also expected to provide sexual services to patrons. The Collective recuperates courtesans as the female foremothers of Indian dance; they link the use of the courtesans' female bodies to contemporary South Asian American women enduring domestic violence and other abuses—exotification, sex trafficking--where the female body is on the line.

[30] For more information on the Post Natyam Collective's collaborations and process, see www.postnatyam.net

Video clip: I see but … [31]

"We are interested" remarks Cynthia, a Collective member, "in how the stories of the courtesans' lived realities might explode the poetic surface of what we've learned as classical dancers."

The Collective's unique combination of creativity with scholarly research challenges the lines dividing "art-making and academic scholarship." They are concerned particularly with "historical erasures and aesthetic constructs embedded within our traditions" (www.postnatyam.net). Like other Contemporary Indian Dancers, they decolonize traditional stereotypes in their interdisciplinary innovative performances about gender and sexuality.

In the final section of this essay, I discuss two male dancer-choreographers' decolonizing artistry that subverts and deconstructs stereotypes of tradition, nation, gender, sexuality and LGBTQ issues. Mandeep Raikhy, based in India, and his work called *Queen Size* (2015), and Hari Krishnan, born in Singapore of Indian parents who now lives and works in Canada, and his works entitled *Uma*, and *Skin*. Whereas Raikhy's decolonizing target is the neo-colonial Indian State that continued to uphold an 1864 colonial era law criminalizing homosexuality until only last year, 2018, Krishnan's bold choreography is welcomed in Toronto's open-minded and tolerant society, very different from the repressive sexual scene in India

Mandeep Raikhy's *Queen-Size* (2015) with two men openly expressing desire and pleasure, defying the ban on homosexuality was inspired by late film-maker Nishit Saran's piece, "Why My Bedroom Habits Are Your Business" (first published in *The Indian Express* in 2000). 20-year old Raiky was Saran's partner at the time. After Saran's tragic death in an accident in 2002, Raikhy left India to study dance theater at London's Laban Dance Centre. Upon returning to India, he found a fraught climate for the LGBTQ community. "I felt it was important' comments Raikhy, "for me to respond to the growing right-wing intolerance that was sweeping our county. I wanted to make a piece that would speak to the world we're in. I had to respond at a personal level (for Nishit). But there are other triggers too" (*Livemint*, January

[31] From *Sunoh! Tell Me Sister*" DVD. Katrak's copy

13, 2017). “Making *Queen-Size* was both a political gesture and an act of personal courage.” “The name of the piece is itself a tongue-in-cheek play with the words ‘queen’ and ‘size.”[32]

Saran’s newspaper article inspired Raikhy to look at intimacy in a choreographic language to resist an archaic law. He wanted to transform the usual attitude to dance in India where it “was locked up with institutions and with the State” rooted in State patronage of the arts (interview with Anisha Tiwary). Further, in India, “dance by itself is linked very much to the national identity. At independence, dance became this sort of image of what India is, and its rich history, and it got locked up there, and the State kept it that way … I felt this desire for dance to be used to speak up. And that was my response with *Queen Size*.”[33]

The piece forthrightly portrays two men in love, expressing desire, anger, companionship, and pain conveyed “through tautly choreographed movements.” *Queen Size* looks at “a fundamental, human, animalistic way of connecting” remarks Raikhy, showing “two bodies coming together in a physical way, way beyond cultural codes or habits.”

Video Clip available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GGGHgH6hTIg

The audience is in the round hence they can see one another in the dimly lit performance area. Raikhy noticed some shifting their gaze away from the bodies, looking up at the lights. Raiky comments: “The audience’s gaze is part of the work. One can look at others watch the work … It’s in the looking that questions around morality, privacy, dissent and viewership get asked.”[34](*The Hindu* article by Neeraja Murthy, Feb. 3, 2017).

The style is bold, especially in implicating the audience as voyeurs. Raikhy struggled with **what the audience would take** from such a work, whether it would simply be “‘outrageously provocative’ and little else” (*Livemint*). He remarks:

> the biggest challenge for me was to look beyond provocation and protest and tune into what the craft available to me, i.e. choreography, had to offer. How does the body in performance protest differently than say a protest march or a newspaper article? When can dance become the language of resistance? How does art transcend the literal and

[32] https://www.thequint.com/voices/lgbt/this-powerful-play-featuring-two-men-and-a-charpoy-is-a-bold-initiative-in-the-lgbtq-space-in-india
[33] http://ears.asia/interview-with-mandeep-raikhy/
[34] HTTP://WWW.THEHINDU.COM/SOCIETY/OF-SPECTATORSHIP-PRIVACY-AND-DISSENT/ARTICLE17175355.ECE

> make a familiar image unfamiliar again? What is the relationship between the political and the aesthetic? These were some of the questions I dealt with whilst constructing the work (*The Hindu*, 2017. February 3).

The reviewer of *The Hindu* admits that watching *Queen-size* makes some audiences uncomfortable not only because of homosexuals but since it depicts "a subject that Indian society finds uncomfortable regardless of gender: physical intimacy" (The Hindu reviewer). This show enables us "to question our own perception of sex, sexuality and gender." With *Queen-size*, Raikhy was "asserting his identity as a queer artist", representing male sexuality publicly to express dissent against an archaic law controlling privacy and sexual relationships.

Whereas there is a harsh, gritty expression of desire in *Queen Size* that is dead serious, Hari Krishnan's choreographic style is playful even as it defies stereotypes. The stakes are different since Krishnan lives in Toronto and is Artistic Director of the multiethnic InDance Company well-known for challenging stereotypes in virtuosic performances.

Krishnan recognizes the burdens and legacies of tradition even as he disrupts and investigates post-modern possibilities in serious and playful choreography. His artistry and sensibility are tuned to demystification, deconstruction and decolonizing hegemonic and narrow notions of ethnicity, sexuality and nation. His work is bold, sensual, and virtuosic. Krishnan is described as a "maverick gadfly who is aggressively iconoclastic and a Very Naughty Boy who scoffs at tradition, turns things upside down and shakes out all the cobweb … (his) interdisciplinary choreography operates with a powerful queer, socio-political subtext in subversive works that transgress the boundaries of culture, race, gender and sexuality."[35]

Krishnan showcases gay sexuality in *Uma*, a contemporary tribute to the tradition of *stree vesham* (female impersonation) in South India, that portrays a male dancer cross-dressing and playing a female role. Krishnan translocates this tradition into a contemporary queer context. In *Uma,* with his signature playful seriousness, his choreography subtly dramatizes the many dimensions of "the diva and the Devi" rendered exquisitely by the male dancer Srikanth (I saw this performance in Chennai at the Symposium entitled, "PURUSH: The Global Dancing Male" where Jay Pather was an invited speaker). Srikanth's aura and expression convincingly conveyed a delicate yet strong, coy yet defiant female, playing with a long braid.

[35] https://www.dance.nyc/for-audiences/community-calendar/view/SKIN-Mea-Culpa-Uma-and-Holy-Cows/2019-05-11/

The words *stree vesham* that specifically indicate the wearing of female costumes and accoutrements in dance such as elaborate jewelry, raise questions about the external vestments and decorations that indicate a man or woman in society, distinct from the male and female energies that we all have and that can be accessed and performed.

Krishnan's choreography in *Skin* decolonizes narrow and normative definitions of gender and sexuality. Two male dancers enter the stage in their underwear, sharing private rapture displayed in bare thighs and legs, chests and arms, sensual and subtle love-play. In a masterful play of light and shadow, characteristic of Krishnan's choreography over the past nearly twenty years, one's gaze is drawn to a spotlight on a third dancer, naked, showing his back and bare buttocks. The further peeling away becomes a necessity as this naked man enters a shower stall, a space where all humans bare their full bodies. The dancer moves inside the shower stall not to tantalize, but in the natural process of washing himself, he turns around to reveal his full-frontal nakedness. The sight is evocative and empathetic. Reviewer Michael Crann notes that *Skin* showcases "the difference between nudity and nakedness, the one touching on display and voyeurism, and the other on transparency and human vulnerability" (*thestar.com* 2014. May 19). (This work reminds me of Gavin Krastin's "*Yet to be Determined*" featured at the Live Art Festival in 2018 curated by Jay Pather.)

Video clip available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RZ4O6E4c3s

Krishnan's research into queerness from a global perspective inspired *Skin*. He was working with dancers, he remarks, who "emphatically identified as gay … and that dominated their intention."[36] Krishnan and his dancers discovered and deployed common gay "rites of passage" in the creation process. "*Skin* started to emerge as a tactile story," he says, "experienced by 'gay-Greek-gods' indulging their five senses" In the same piece, Krishnan remarks: "My sexuality is a blessing which organically informs . . . my work—particularly in *Skin.*" (Charlebois, 2014:2)

Skin is a culmination of Krishnan's gradual peeling away of external accoutrements in his choreography, from ornate colors and jewelry, commonly used even for male dancers in classical Bharatanatyam, to his own solo performances in different, non-traditional stage

[36] Gaetan L. Charlebois. 2014. "The Blessing of Sexuality", May 14. http://charpo-canada.blogspot.com/2014/05/in-word-choreographer-hari-krishnan-on.html

costumes such as in one bharatanatyam performance, where he wears a black dhoti up to the knees (like shorts) with a leather (rather than the usual gold-plated) belt, to another where he performs Bharatanatyam with street shoes, or walking with dance-bells on city streets instead of only on stage.

In conclusion, decolonizing gender from colonial and neo-colonial, from imperialist and apartheid legacies is an ongoing endeavor via resistant choreographies that excavate historical realities, that connect them to the present, and that challenge antiquated laws and stereotypes of nation, sexuality, and tradition. The inter-and multi-disciplinary forms and socially relevant issues represented by Pather, The Post-Natyam Collective, Mandeep Raikhy and Hari Krishnan demonstrate the power of art to question, to speak up with moral courage, and to participate in ongoing struggles for social justice.

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Before Naming: Immediacy as a compositional tool to exercise the movement of the present

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Abstract

Before Naming' is a dance performance by Kristina Johnstone and Thalia Laric that investigates the operations of time in composition and what it could mean to challenge representationalism in search of a decolonial artistic practice. This paper discusses some of the concepts and research materials that emerged from our performance 'Before Naming' and the related masterclass presented at Confluences 10.

Introduction

We first created and performed *Before Naming* in September 2019 at the Theatre Arts Admin Collective in Cape Town and The Nunnery at Wits University, Johannesburg. It is a 30-minute dance work in which we both perform, with lighting designed by Andi Colombo. The work uses our solo investigations of the mechanics of the body to develop movement material. With a score guiding our attention, *Before Naming* uses an approach to composition that allows a performance to evolve in real-time. The work houses a number of conceptual concerns that have been underlying our practice together for a number of years and that have found their way into our thinking about performance, and choreographic/compositional and teaching methodologies. *Before Naming* refers to a particular perceptual focus: a space where movement research is made possible before the logocentric mind steps in. Our aim has been to create a situation in which new concepts are discovered through an embodied practice – where movement research becomes a philosophical exercise. *Before Naming* represents a thought exercise around composition, time, perception and what it could mean to challenge representationalism in search of a decolonial artistic practice. Our offering for this conference, consisted of a performance at the UCT Hiddingh campus Arena Theatre, and a

masterclass for conference delegates with music accompaniment by Vintani Nafassi, in which we shared some practice-research that led to the creation of the performance.

The title *Before Naming* came out of many post-rehearsal discussions and our anxiety about firstly, naming a work without knowing what the work is 'about' (in a representational sense) or how it works (what its internal logic is) and secondly, that once it is named it is unchangeable (its research may not continue transforming it) and we are doomed to performing ever-fading and multiplying representations of the thing. How could we stay in the mind-space of 'just before something is named'? How could we keep the composition moving forward without stopping to name things? Our practice together is centred on creating dance compositions in real-time. The rehearsal process consists of clarifying our movement research and developing a score that can hold the research in a performative and theatrical setting. The score is a framework to keep researching and approaching thought with space for real-time discoveries shared with the public and with the aim to begin the conversation afresh with each new audience.

Our movement research proposes a practice that trains the senses to guide compositional choices. A focus on sensory information lets us access, sharpen, heighten and even distort perception. We proposed that to stay in a space before naming takes place, we needed to stay in a perceptual realm. *Before Naming* became an investigation into the operations of time and its functions in dance and performance. Out of the practice, 'immediacy' emerged as a concept of importance. Immediacy gained compositional value: by not fixing the composition to predetermined plans, time is freed from the confines of things we have already thought of before. Immediacy as a concept also underscored its political significance. As part of our methodological approach to performance-making, immediacy opens up questions of performer agency and responsibility and unsettles theatre's habitual representational regime, by resisting the (super)imposition of predetermined stories and narratives. Immediacy also gains importance within our larger socio-political and economic context of working in the performing arts in South Africa. The marginalized status of dance performance, and especially dance performance that is considered outside the mainstream, necessitates 'immediacy' as a way of working and as a way of survival for experimental dance performance. Bhekizizwe Peterson notes how the South African arts field is characterised by "the tensions between the sociocultural and commercial imperatives that inform the

production, distribution and consumption of the arts" (Peterson, 2016:32). He adds that "this is further compounded by the flip-flopping between whether the arts should be supported in and for themselves or whether they should, in the language of the current government, be regarded as 'cultural industries' – burdened with the imperatives of creating jobs, social cohesion and nation building" (Peterson, 2016:32-33). As much as immediacy produces an internal logic compositionally, immediacy also signals a mode of survival in a context where time, space, funding and other resources for the performing arts are constrained. Finally, immediacy as a concept embodies a political ethics/aesthetics that resists representationalist branding to promote a cultural industries agenda and instead updates itself with time – a conversation already faster moving than the updates of government policy. The political move is expressed and embodied in the methodological approach to dance-making rather than in the choice of image or story. The research starts afresh and continues its transformation. What follows in this paper is a reflection on some of the threads of thought that make up *Before Naming* and an incomplete and incomplete-able record (in the sense that it can never be fully captured in writing) of our research materials from both the performance as well as the masterclass.

Movement of the present

As we conducted our movement research, *Before Naming* became an investigation into the operations of time. Time, as described by Merleau-Ponty and Mbembe, is "that which one inevitably encounters on the path to subjectivity" (in Mbembe, 2017:120). Quoting Mbembe further, he writes that "time is born out of the contingent, ambiguous, and contradictory relationship we maintain with things, with the world, or with the body and its doubles (ibid.:121). By focusing on a sensory realm, we aimed to exercise a present state of attention, which implies a particular kind of subjectivity. Rosi Braidotti speaks of nomadic or vital materialism, which conceives of all human and non-human entities as nomadic subjects-in-process (Braidotti, 2018:6). Drawing from Deleuze and Guattari (1994), Braidotti links the idea of nomadic subjects-in-process with their conception of the present. "The force of the present", Braidotti writes, "and the core of its intelligibility is that it does not coincide completely with the here and now. Such synchronisation is never complete, because in a neo-materialist vital system, all human and non-human entities are nomadic subjects-in-process, in perpetual motion, immanent to the vitality of self-ordering matter" (Braidotti, 2018:6). Our

starting point was not a fixed story, but a commitment to engage with the emergent – a practice of oscillating between the near future, the present and the near past.[37] *Before Naming* enacts an approach to the present that includes "an awareness of what we are ceasing to be (the end of the actual)' and 'the perception – in different degrees of clarity – of what we are in the process of becoming (the actualisation of virtual)" (Braidotti, 2018:6-7). The dance tries to linger in the movement of the present, the occurrence of 'ceasing to be' and 'becoming', both of which take place, as Braidotti notes, in a non-linear time-continuum.

Story-ness as emergent, patient and unassuming suggestions of story

In his work *Critique of Black Reason* (2017), Achille Mbembe maps the histories and narratives of Blackness and discusses the intellectual consequences of decentring western knowledge systems. He offers new possibilities for making sense of knowledge and story-ness.[38] In what he calls a ghostly paradigm, an intertwining of dead and living, he writes:

> time is neither reversible or irreversible. There is only an unfolding of experience. Things and events roll out on top of each other. If stories and events have a beginning, they do not necessarily have a proper end. They can certainly be interrupted. But a story or an event might continue on in another story or event without there necessarily being a filiation between the two. Conflicts and struggles might be resumed from the points at which they stopped. But they can also be followed upstream, or begun again, without a sensed need for continuity, even if the shadow of the old stories and events always lurks behind the present […] everything functions according to a principle of incompletion. As a result, there is no ordered continuity between the present, the past, and the future. And there is no genealogy – only an unfurling of temporal series that are practically disjointed, linked by a multiplicity of slender threads (Mbembe, 2017:148).

Dramaturgically, paying attention to a moving present, both that which is ceasing to be and becoming opens up all compositional possibilities in the dance. The linearity of time is ruptured through shifting archetypes and dropped narratives. Exercising a present state of attention called for resisting our inner dramaturgical drive and the desire/need to become attached and name events, actions and stories. By practising to avoid predetermined, imposed stories and narratives, space is left for story-ness to emerge as a result of time passing.

[37] Artist and composition teacher Julyen Hamilton introduced this practice of oscillating between near past, present and future in his workshop on time (Amsterdam, January 2019).
[38] We first heard the term story-ness used by artist and composition teacher Julyen Hamilton in an intensive workshop in Amsterdam in January 2019.

Witnessing and clarity

In the rehearsals we watched each other for clarity – cleaning up our movement and leaving out excess or overproduction of gesture or action. We called each other out on this, and held each other in this research through the action of our observation, our witnessing of the other at work. This led us to work more with pause,[39] to move and create dance in a considered way, to tighten our awareness and become conscious to the point of being able to witness ourselves being witnessed by the other.[40] Pausing offered the possibility for clarity - of shape, of direction, quality, tone. Slowing down offered the possibility for perceptual reading and self-awareness. Attention to actions in time, in space, our habits, preferences, compositional and movement research choices. Our temporal choices. Rhythm became clearly revealed and more complex with the influence of recorded music. Our musicality became evident and we challenged each other to nuance and develop it. Patience was a concern that came up often - patience to trust the experiential and the awareness process of movement research. Patience with ourselves and with time passing. Patience is a temporal concern. Pausing is not easily done. Especially when you know you are being watched by others - adrenaline, emotions and other heightened states cause things to speed up, and unnecessary movements to rush in. We worked to calm down, to mean more by doing less. Time passes very differently for the dancer and audience. We aimed for a situation in which spectators could be invited to be witnesses who are mutually implicated in the performance and become co-present with us the performers. We experimented the effect of witnessing and how to create a state of co-presence. Hans-Thies Lehmann describes co-presence as a state in which "it is no longer clear whether the presence is given to us, or whether we, the spectators produce it in the first place" (Lehmann, 2006:142). We extended this idea of the witness to giving ourselves the opportunity to witness the other during the performance. The audience is witnessing us witnessing each other. We are being watched in how we watch. We are observing ourselves being observed while observing. We are observing ourselves being observed by the one other (co-performer) and by many others (audience).

[39] Pause is a central theme practised and taught by artist and composition teacher Katie Duck.
[40] Witnessing and the responsibility of the witness is an important theme in the work of artist-psychologist Tossie van Tonder.

Research materials

We start with the tactile. Find a partner. One person offers pressure through the hands to different parts of the other's body. Receiving pressure from your partner's hands, press back into it. Move from press to press, expanding into the resistance. Find new places to press from and press into. Explore density and tone.[41] Expand three-dimensionally. The hands-on partner now starts to use other parts of their body to offer the pressing towards. Press towards each other's mass to transform your shape. Use resistance to power movement and open pathways. Allow a dance to develop through this tonal dialogue. What is the nature of this dance, this touch, the possibilities of your curiosity,[42] the movement research, the character, the quality? What is the nature of this pressing, pushing dance? Allow its particular expression to develop and transform … Find end. Bring it to stillness. Switch roles and start again.

Walk through the space. Notice yourself, your posture, how you are holding the body, shoulders, breath, spine … neck, head, eyes. Are you seeing[43]? What are you seeing? Notice your feet making contact with the ground receiving pressure, holding you upright. Feet and eyes - how do they connect? Come to a pause. Where is your attention? Are you more conscious when walking or pausing? What can you see? As you walk forwards, what are you moving towards? What are you moving away from? What is in your future? What is in your past? Choose to see and move towards or away. Notice time passing and how this can be experienced spatially in the time it takes to move towards or away - future or past. Come to stillness - come to present.

Walk and pause. Notice the walk and pause of others in the room. Where do you put your pause in relation to theirs? Can you notice a rhythm beginning to develop? What is the duration of your pause, of your walk? Find variation. Notice your preferences, your habits. What is the music doing? How does it affect you? How do you walk and pause in relation to what you see and what you hear? How do you walk and pause in relation to other people and

[41] We use density and tone as explained and practised in the work of artists and composition teachers Nancy Stark Smith and Lucia Walker.
[42] Curiosity is a through-line in the teaching of Lucia Walker.
[43] 'The work of the eyes' is a central topic in Katie Duck's teaching of composition.

the emotional chemistry of being near and far, synchronous or rhythmical in time and spatial organisation?[44]

Find a partner. Dance close to them using your eyes as a camera lens that can only see at close range. Let your eyes lead your movement, let your movement serve your eyes. Moving around each other's bodies to different parts of each other at close range. Where do you put your pause? How does moving fast or slow affect what your eyes can see? Explore upside down, scanning, blurring, focusing. Try the same at mid-range - at far range. How does the work of the eyes change the way the body moves - how does movement change the visual experience?

As a solo exploration we keep connected to the work of the eyes and the work of pausing. We extend our movement research to exploring places in the body that are able to fold. Like origami. When a part of the body folds or extends, what is being revealed and what is being concealed?[45] Where is your awareness? Pause, see, fold, don't let there be any activity in your body that you are not aware of. See yourself. What is exposed, what is concealed. What can you see? Where do you put your pause? Are you more conscious while moving or pausing? What is the rhythm of your folding and pausing? How is the music affecting this? What happens when rhythm comes through environmental sound - sonic information. Are you aware of your rhythm/ time choices? See, fold, pause. Be attentive, perceive.

Find a partner. One will dance, one will witness. Continue the movement research of folding and exposing. How does this experience change when you are being witnessed? As you witness, commit completely to holding your partner in this movement research experience. Observe the finest of detail - time, choice, shape, tone, pause - Observe generously, witness with the greatest sense of responsibility. Offer your wisdom and understanding. Switch roles.

Now we dance together - can we bring all this movement research into our dance? Seeing, pausing, folding, being clear and aware. Witnessing self and other. Observing with responsibility and generosity. Pause patiently. Let yourself be aware of time and rhythm, choices in space. The effect/affect of the other. What is the nature of the dance? Which

[44] Rhythm of pause and musicality are central topics in the practice and teaching of artist Manuela Lucia Tessi.
[45] This activity is borrowed from artist and teacher Manuela Lucia Tessi.

stories emerge, can you allow them to swim in and out, start midway, disappear, come in and out of being before naming…

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Dance education as agent of social cohesion: A critical approach

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Abstract

In South Africa, we dance! We dance to build community, to establish identity, to show solidarity and to enable collective healing. In contemporary South African society, dance has communal, cultural, public and political connotation; hence my decision to explore the potential of dance to promote social cohesion in a culturally and politically diverse post-apartheid South Africa, as my doctoral dissertation. This presentation regarded some critical issues surrounding my investigation of dance education as an agent of social cohesion in a culturally and politically diverse (post-) conflict classroom. Issues such as decolonising notions of speaking, writing and teaching about dance and dance aesthetics, alongside potential consequences of these in the dance education classroom and beyond, were discussed. The potential of dance to indeed become an agent of hegemony and separation were considered. The dangers of un-mindful dance teaching practices in a culturally diverse environment could resort in the paralyses of dance as a symbol of ethno-cultural identity and as a potential agent of social cohesion, in a country that promotes "unity in diversity".

Key words: dance education, peace education, cultural diversity, cultural exchange, aesthetics, habitus.

At Confluences 10, dance papers with a clear focus on education were scheduled for the last day of conference. At this point during the conference, it was clear that some delegates questioned the value and viability of dance education (and arts education) in a South African classroom. Subsequently, I decided to start my presentation by creating a physical experience of dance education for delegates. Delegates were instructed to pair up with the person sitting next to them, summarize their research interest in a short phrase, and find 4 movements that would symbolize their research interests to the room. Delegates had 3 minutes to prepare their movements. The 3 minutes started with slightly confused and awkward moments and then swiftly developed into an exciting, creative collaborative flow. This is dance education. Dance education focuses on the holistic development of participants as they engage with movement exploration, which in the above case, involved collaborative dance-making. I teach dance education to generalist pre-service student teachers, and have been doing so at a Faculty of Education at a tertiary institution in the Eastern Cape, since 2005. My students have been encouraged to implement dance education at South African schools as part of the

compulsory Creative Arts component, stipulated in both Foundation Phase (Grades R-3) and Intermediate Phase (Grades 4-6) national primary school curricula (DBE, 2011a; DBE, 2011b).

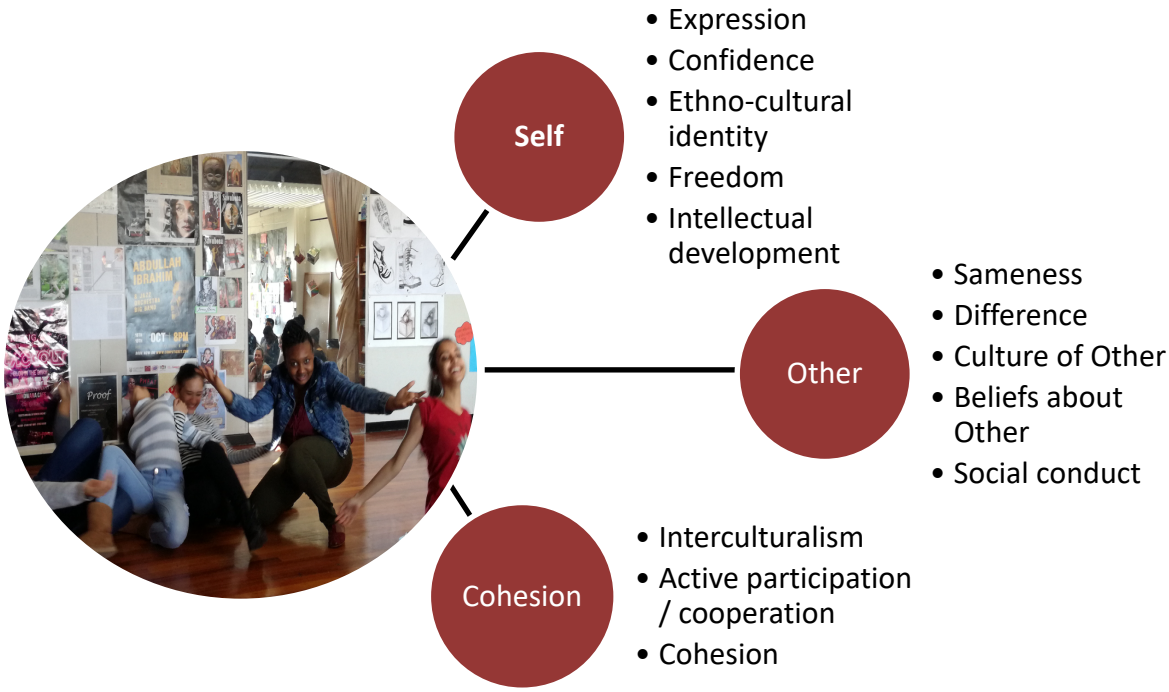
At Confluences 10 I wanted to raise awareness of the critical challenges that emerged from my PhD research as I investigated dance education as a potential vehicle to promote social cohesion in a culturally and politically diverse (post-) conflict society. The research question was: *What was the impact of this first year dance education course on a culturally and politically diverse group of students in post-apartheid South Africa?* This was a qualitative case study to investigate the experiences of the first year Bachelors in Education students as they participated in 7 x 70 minute sessions of dance education as part of their compulsory Arts and Culture / Creative Arts module. Participants were mostly so-called "non-dancers"[46] who would be facilitating dance education as part of the Creative Arts/Life Skills learning area in their future Foundation or Intermediate Phase classrooms. For this study, I taught a total of 240 students.

This particular dance education course consisted of a combination of creative movement activities (90% of the course) and the learning of ethno-cultural dances (10% of the course). The dance education course aimed to isolate the dance experience for the purpose of the research project. Hence, each lesson regarded the exploration of topics such as animals, space, shapes, emotions, sport and action words, through movement, in order to prepare students to become Primary School teachers. A conscious effort was made to not mention or explore topics such as diversity, difference, tolerance, social cohesion, racism, discrimination, division, social justice or other related topics, during these contact sessions. Reflective journals (with prompts of *Today I thought/Today I felt)*, open-ended questionnaires and focus group interviews (with prompts such as *Describe a meaningful experience you had* and *Why was it meaningful?)* were used as data generation strategies. In total, 80 participants volunteered to participate in the research.

Symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1912; 1913; Blumer, 1969; 1980; Denzin, 1969; 2009; David, 2010) served as theoretical framework for this study. Symbolic interactionism promotes interactions as a platform for the adjustment of meaning of the Self, the Other and society

[46] I find the classification between a "dancer" and "non-dancer" slightly problematic, since I am of the opinion that all persons have dance experience, from mimicking a mother's movements as a baby, to rolling around on the floor as a toddler.

(Plummer, 2004). Responses indicated that involvement in this particular programme raised awareness of the Self and the Other, engendering perspective and personal transformation, important requisites for social transformation and subsequently social cohesion in a divided society such as South Africa. This particular dance education programme indeed promoted social cohesion as it raised awareness of Self, Self in relation to Other and Self as a part of a culturally and politically diverse community. The table below indicates the categories and sub-categories of findings of participants' dance education experience as these emerged from the data. Further information with regard to the voices of students, evidence of students' experiences, data analysis, validity and trustworthiness of research can be found in '*A little kind of community': South African Students Dance for Self, Other and Society* (Marx, 2019).



Discussion

It is necessary to state the lens through which I view social cohesion as it specifically pertains to South Africa. South African society (and University classrooms) is divided and diverse in terms of race, culture (values and norms/meaning-making systems), language, religion, environment, socio-economic standing, class, history (also of trauma), political views, quality of prior education and privilege, to name but a few. The South African Bill of Rights (1996) promotes dignity, equality, non-discrimination and freedom as pre-requisites to a socially just

society. It promotes a national identity of "unity in diversity" where each person has the right "to enjoy" their culture (RSA, 1996), whilst respecting the rights of others. The South African Constitution (1996) also promotes and promises equal education for all citizens of South Africa, which inter alia encompasses ideas of equal access, equal opportunity, equal curricula for all and equal standards of learning and teaching. More recently, during the student uprising known as the #fees must fall (2015/2016) campaign, students called for decolonizing knowledge and praxis in tertiary institutions in a manner that will recognise the value of indigenous knowledge systems, in order to reduce hegemonic teaching practices and make teaching and learning more relatable to the African learner and the South African environment. The call came to design curricula that are Afro-centric (that is, placing Africa and the African at the centre of curricula), to raise awareness and provide recognition for the value and contribution of for example African forms of knowledge and also African authors, scholars, philosophers, historians, entrepreneurs, business owners and artists, rather than merely focusing on what is done and what is relevant in the West.

It is through this lens that it becomes necessary to take a critical stance when considering dance education teaching praxis in a culturally and politically diverse (post-) conflict South African classroom and its potential role in transforming society.

The mere concept of dance is understood differently between different individuals. Insider and outsider perspectives on what constitutes a 'dance' may differ from culture to culture[47] (Royce, 1977; Hanna, 1979; Williams, 2000; Rowe, 2008; Glasser, 2000; Kringelbach & Skinner, 2012; Khoury, Martin & Rowe, 2013). A certain group of people for example may view Ballet as 'proper dance' and as being somehow more 'cultural' or 'artistic' than 'traditional dances'. If one deconstructs the origins of these perceptions, it becomes clear that so-called 'traditional' dance practices have been around since the beginning of man, many centuries before the existence of the Ballet / Modern dance of the West. This begs the question: *How can dance forms that survived the full existence of man, not be seen as proper?* The notion of proper should always be demystified by asking the question: *to whom?* It is further critical to ask: *Which bodies of power decided that certain dance styles are 'proper', 'civilized' or 'high culture'?,* and, *What kind of power (i.e. political, societal, popularity, oppressive) did they gain*

[47] Culture in this context refers to dance cultures and ethno-cultures.

by declaring these dance style as such? Views such as these stem from Western hegemonic conceptualisations of dance, and it is sad to say that 'dance training' and 'dance education' teachers often continue this hegemony in their classrooms.

Hegemony is also evident in terminology that is used to distinguish between dance practises. Large group categories that distinguish between 'dance as performance art' and 'traditional dance' inherently imply that 'traditional dances' are not considered a form of art, have no artistic or creative flair and do not engage in being a performance – which off course is not correct. One could also argue that it implies that a dance form such as Ballet holds no value in its traditions, which Kealihnihimoko (2001) argues, is also false. Conflicting terminology in the differentiation between diverse dance styles and practices has received a lot of attention from a variety of dance scholars (Royce, 1977, Glasser, 2000; Williams, 2004; Rowe, 2008, 2015; Khoury *et al*, 2013, Ashley, 2014).

In the context of social cohesion and the South African classroom however, my biggest conundrum regarded the following question: *How can I distinguish between dance practices in a manner that recognizes, values and respects all notions of dance equally?* In other words, *how can I eliminate the divide between 'so called' elitist and traditional dance practices?*

I stumbled upon the term 'aesthetic paradigm' as it was used by Guattari (1996) and Rowe (2008), and decided to re-define and re-purpose it to assist me to solve my problem. An "aesthetic paradigm", according to Marx (2015:93, 105), represents a movement vocabulary, a way of moving and a set of aesthetic criteria that constitutes good dance practice. If one views diverse dance styles and practices as separate aesthetic paradigms, one can talk of these in a manner that promotes equal recognition, and recognition of equal worth.

The next challenge was to answer the question: 'Whose aesthetic paradigm do I teach in my culturally and politically diverse university classroom?' I was originally trained as a modern dance teacher, so what I considered to be good dance practice stemmed from aesthetic criteria associated with modern dance. Upon clarifying the answer to this question in my thoughts, it occurred to me that insisting on aesthetic criteria that stem from modern dance, could also be viewed as hegemonic, since modern dance stem from the West, and differ vastly from the African dance aesthetic paradigms that my students and their learners will be accustomed to. For example, in African dance forms the external physical appearance of a

dance is of lesser importance than the inner emotional journey of the dancer (Amegago, 2009; Mans, 2012). This stands in contrast to the aesthetic paradigm of modern dance I was promoting in my classroom. In an African dance aesthetic paradigm, movements are often repeated in a cyclic manner in order to provide space for the community to comfortably join in and participate in the performance (Amegago, 2009; Adinku, 2004). In my classroom I advised students to not repeat a movement more than twice in order to keep the surprise element and the audience's interest. In African dance a dance is considered successful and well performed, if the audience/community participates in the dance, be it through clapping, shouting, making comments, whistling, ululating and joining in with the dance (Amegago, 2009; Adinku, 2004). Whereas, I requested that my students be silent during their dance performances (literally silencing the voice of my students!).

These realisations led me to further questions: *What are the consequences of teaching one aesthetic paradigm in a culturally diverse classroom?* Whilst making sense of my teaching practice, I read a few articles by Nicholas Rowe (2008; 2015) with regard to dance interventions in traumatized societies, which raised awareness of how hegemonic dance practices have the potential to devalue the cultural dance artefacts and practices of a community, in manner that may ultimately disrupt intra-cultural cohesion within that particular community (Rowe, 2008; 2015). Although this article spoke of 'foreign' dance interventions potentially disrupting 'local' dance cultures and communities, one has to consider that the same may hold true for teaching dance in multicultural classrooms. Teaching one aesthetic paradigm to a multicultural classroom, and claiming that particular paradigm as the only way to dance 'properly', may be problematic. If a student/learner believes that one aesthetic paradigm is more elite, 'proper' or grand than another paradigm (for example, the paradigms they are accustomed to); students/learners may start to question the merit and value of their own community dance practices. Students/learners may for example return to their community dance practices and attempt to alter movements or specific criteria within the aesthetic paradigm, with intention of 'improving' their community dances. These suggestions may disrupt cohesion amongst dance groups, elders and community members since these suggestions inherently devalue the indigenous knowledge, skills and practises of the community, which may cause a rift within the community and in so doing, deeply disrupt intra-cultural cohesion. Proposed alterations to dance practices could also promote serious

hegemonic praxis with regard to a coerced (or friendly) assimilation of cultural dances into Western aesthetic paradigms, ultimately resulting in de-culturing specific dance practices and a loss of important cultural artefacts and heritage that speaks to an identity of a people. Thus, the mindless teaching of a preferred aesthetic paradigm when teaching dance to a multicultural group, may ultimately result in the teacher being complicit in taking away the dignity of a people.

Hence, in the context of my own teaching practice, teaching one aesthetic paradigm as a preferred paradigm in a multicultural classroom required a critical re-thinking. The possibility however of incorporating more than one aesthetic paradigm into a dance education programme that lasts 7 sessions is problematic and impractical. I considered the possibility of perhaps designing a dance education programme that does not conform to a particular aesthetic paradigm. However, after a short deliberation it was clear that this too was not possible, since all attempts at creative development require specific parameters (objectives of the task) and a set of criteria as to what is considered good/excellent practice, in order to actually develop a person's specific skills towards attaining the qualities of creativity, beauty and excellence, according to a particular formulation or idea of what these words actually mean. In other words, one cannot possibly teach an art form, without specifications of what is considered good practice.

My conclusion was that an extended dance education programme would potentially be the first step towards finding the answer to this question. From next year, my programme will be extended to 14 x 60 minute sessions. This is however still not enough time to venture into teaching and exploring more than one aesthetic paradigm as I train future dance education facilitators of Foundation and Intermediate Phase learners. This then, amongst some other things, I view as a limitation in my current dance education programme as I prepare the future teachers for their task of dealing with dignity and equality as they teach a culturally and politically diverse group of learners in a (post-) conflict society. Currently, my strategy is to raise awareness of the existence of diverse aesthetic paradigms (in my classroom and at conferences such as this one), in order to promote equal recognition amongst diverse dance practices and styles. When I teach I am also transparent with regard to my preference of aesthetic paradigm, and remind my students throughout their sessions that the aesthetic criteria belong to one way of thinking, and that other ways of thinking exist. I also encourage

my students to challenge themselves to implement the aesthetic paradigms they are accustomed to, alongside aesthetic paradigms of the other, as they explore facilitating dance education in their own multicultural classrooms.

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Butoh, Arousal, and Outdoor Dance Training: Ecological Dance as a Method of Decolonization

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Abstract

At its foundation, colonization is a process of acquiring ownership of space. Colonization claims local ecologies—networks of land, people, flora, fauna, practices, etc.—and through various means of force and discourse extracts (and justifies the extraction of) "useful" components—crops, labor, mineral wealth—for profit elsewhere. The (at best) climate change and (at worst) environmental devastation facing the world today, and the resultant wars and migrations, are inextricable from practices and discourses of colonialism and neocolonialism. Decolonization, it would then follow, must engage practices aimed at interrupting and unraveling these now deeply-entrenched systems. This paper argues that what I am calling ecological dance can double as training for developing an alternative relationship between humans and the vast and varied nonhuman world, thereby working a method of decolonization. By calling this dance "ecological," rather than the more common "environmental dance," I emphasize the inherently interrelational qualities of "ecology," what Bottoms et al. refer to as "networks of interdependence" (2012) or what Morton refers to as "the mesh" in which all beings, constructions, and objects are entangled (2012). Moving through theoretical and ethnographic pathways, this paper outlines the potentialities of ecological dance to alter our collective understanding of the body, and to train people to shift out of habitual patterns and into new ecological orientations.

Decolonization, Butoh, Ecology

At its foundation, colonization is a process of acquiring ownership of space. Colonization claims local ecologies—networks of land, people, flora, fauna, practices, etc.—and through various means of force and discourse extracts (and justifies the extraction of) "useful" components—crops, labor, mineral wealth—for profit elsewhere. The (at best) climate change and (at worst) environmental devastation facing the world today, and the resultant wars and migrations, are inextricable from practices and discourses of colonialism and neocolonialism, and cannot be addressed without decolonization. Decolonization, it would then follow, must engage practices aimed at interrupting and unraveling these now deeply-entrenched systems and proposing alternatives. Colonization is something that was done over time with specific actions; it must then be countered with ongoing actions that rehearse new ways of being in the world. Decolonization is, in other words, a movement in

many senses of the word. Today I want to talk about dance, and particularly butoh workshops, as a kind of decolonial methodology.

Revolt of the body. The body in crisis. Expanding and erasing. Becoming an empty vessel. A corpse trying to stand up. Butoh dance processes, as represented by these shorthand descriptors, are frequently focused on the impossible. Seeking transformation, they acknowledge what is, even as they insist on reaching towards the unknown as their goal, even if it is entirely unworkable. As such, butoh practices are full of potential for developing processes for remembering, and creating anew relationships that challenge the entrenched systems of what Rolando Vazquez calls modernity/coloniality. For much of butoh's history it has been associated with darkness, suffering, exhaustion, disease, and scarcity. When butoh was being developed during its heady first decade of experimentation in the 1960s, these were the very things that were being hidden away behind a veneer of sanitary perfection by a Japanese society newly integrated into global capital, and thus were the things that Hijikata Tatsumi and his compatriots sought to foreground, arousing in their audiences disgust, disturbance, and disorientation (see for example, Baird, 2012; Eckersall, 2013; Marotti, 2013). Though the frequently repeated association between butoh and the atomic bomb is entirely a Western fabrication (see for example, Candelario, 2016; Pagés, 2018), the linkage between butoh and apocalyptic events is nonetheless strong in the public imaginary. In this sense, butoh methods are appropriate for addressing coloniality and its political and ecological crises, and collective despair and mourning in the face of such crises.

This paper argues that what I am calling ecological dance—more on that soon—acts as training for developing (or remembering) alternative relationships between humans and the vast and varied other-than-human world, thereby working as a method of decolonization. By calling this dance "ecological," rather than the more common "environmental dance," I emphasize the inherently interrelational qualities of "ecology," what Bottoms et al refer to as "networks of interdependence" (2012) or what Timothy Morton refers to as "the mesh" in which all beings, constructions, and objects are entangled (2012). This paper offers exploratory notes towards a historiography and praxis of ecological dance that offers possibilities to alter our collective understanding of bodies and the earth, and to train people to shift out of habitual patterns and into new ecological and decolonial ways of being.

More specifically, I look at particular outdoor butoh workshops for the ways they train dancers and nondancers to open their bodies—a process I describe as arousal, more on that in a minute—to be in relation to the earth; past, present, and future. Butoh is certainly not the only dance form that does this. I focus on butoh here, first and foremost, because that is my background as a performer and my expertise as a scholar. However, there are two other reasons why butoh practices offer such a rich field in which to investigate ecological dance as decolonial method. As I have written in *The Routledge Companion to Dance Studies*, "First, although there is an active debate about what constitutes contemporary butoh, the one thing people agree on is that butoh and butoh-related dance is fundamentally about the transformation of the dancing body into something else [see, e.g., Baird & Candelario, 2018; Fraleigh, 2010]" (Candelario, 2019:13). This to me is a key skill. "Second, many training workshops not only situate themselves in nature but also explicitly present the workshop as a way to understand or form a relationship with a particular landscape [and its associated histories]. I want to take the claims of these practices seriously as potential modes for transforming humans" (ibid) and forming or remembering relations with the other than human world. I want to be clear that although my focus is on butoh training, my

> central point is not dance pedagogy or how the dance is taught, but on what the training produces. Whereas performance is often about spectatorship and representation, training is about participation and learning how to do something. Attention to training rather than performance, I propose, opens up a focus on learning and repeating behaviors that require us to act differently, not only in the specific locales of the trainings, but potentially also on a larger scale in relation our global climate (ibid),

which is itself an outcome of what Rolando Vazquez calls modernity/coloniality. These training programs, I suggest, "neither engage the environment as a backdrop for dance, such as in site-specific dance, nor as an aesthetic object in its own right, as in land art, nor as a theme about which to dance" (ibid). Instead, they develop in their participants' skills and processes, which I discuss here as "arousal," aimed at developing a set of complex interconnections between humans and earth.

On arousal

WAKE UP!

Wakefulness. Alertness. Becoming awakened to. Arousal focuses our attention. It asks us to notice in a particular way, to pay attention here and now, to hone our perception (and to perhaps learn to perceive what is beyond just here and now). Arousal is at once a sensual and cognitive process – involving all parts of the body: skin, eyes, ears, nose, neurons. Psychology and physiology. Body and brain. Body as brain. Stimuli cue these complex bodybrain processes in order to MOTIVATE us. Arousal gives us a motive, it makes us (to go back to the late Latin) move. Accordingly, arousal is considered essential to processes fundamental to human survival: traditionally this has meant fight or flight, seeking food, reproduction. But today to consider survival, we cannot limit ourselves to the level of the individual or the species, but must focus at the planetary level. Our arousals then must shift accordingly.

...yawn…

My mouth opens wide, stays open a little too long. Openness. I dilate. Pupils, pores, blood cells. Ohhhhhhh... OH! Arousal suggests a state of receptivity and openness – a coming into the fullness of what is immanent, or what Rolando Vazquez calls "precedent" (2017). It is a precondition of desire. Desire itself is/as a particular kind of motivation. A strong want to move, but towards what? Audre Lorde proffers the erotic as a way of understanding all of the above aspects of arousal—the openness, the motivation, the movement, along with our bodies, all that surrounds us, and all that connects us. She says, "I speak of the erotic as the deepest life force, a force which moves us toward living in a fundamental way. And when I say living I mean it as that force which moves us toward what will accomplish real positive change." (Lorde quoted in Tate, 1983:115). For Lorde, the erotic is nothing less than motivation for and towards transformation. It is this kind of audacious arousal that I seek and that I sense the potential for in butoh, one that could awaken an openness to understanding ourselves in a different kind of relationship with earth.

Butoh, Arousal, Earth: A History

Arousal has been part of butoh's history since before there was such a thing called butoh. Legend has it (though it is not likely fact) that Hijikata's choreographic debut in 1959 aroused such disgust in the audience with its taboo theme of male homosexuality and staging of animal sacrifice that members of the audience actually threw up. WOW. That is a powerful performance. Even if it did not actually happen, the fact that such a legend formed up around

the performance is significant in itself. Like the Japanese avant-garde of which they were part, the early butoh dancers, Hijikata and his collaborators--including Kazuo and Yoshito Ohno, Kasai Akira, Ishii Mitsutaka, Nakajima Natsu--were interested in arousing intense reactions in their audiences that could unsettle the sanitized Japanese society being constructed and promoted in the 1960s. Scandal, shock, "evil," randomness: the more bizarre the better. Thumbing their noses at societal expectations. Lickable programs featuring a hand, a pair of lips, and a phallus. "Gonorrheal costumes" (Baird, 2012:67). Vulvas drawn on men's backs. These early butoh experiments, often called "DANCE EXPERIENCES," played with arousing in the audience confusion and feelings of being overwhelmed with stimulus.

It was not until Hijikata's project with photographer Eikoh Hosoe in Tohoku from 1965-68, (exhibited in 1968 and then published as Kamaitachi) and then crucially Bishop Yamada's move to Tohoku in 1973 to start Hoppo Butoh-ha ("northern butoh school") that butoh's arousals were specifically aimed at or staged in a landscape other than the nooks and crannies of Tokyo's underbelly haunted by the avant-garde. Hijikata himself grew up in Tohoku, northeast Japan, and moved to Tokyo as an adult. Hosoe, who as a child had been sent to stay with relatives in Tohoku during the bombing of Tokyo, invited Hijikata to do a photographic project. The trip was not nostalgic for either man—both had complicated feelings for and memories of the region. The photographs they produced for the exhibition and book are mythic and wicked; Hijikata frolics in rice fields, pulls half-naked women into small alleys, and leaps like a demon amongst a clutch of laughing children. At one point Hijikata himself seems to embody the sickle-weasel of the book's title, running pell-mell across a fallow rice field, an apparently abducted child clutched to his open chest. The setting of the photos, the bitter cold northern rural region of traditional rice cultivation, quickly came to symbolize for viewers and audiences of his subsequent dances a "return to Tohoku," one he mined for new choreographic ideas and movement vocabulary until his early death in 1986. Indeed for the last decade or so of his life, Hijikata spoke of his work as "Tohoku Kabuki," saying,

> I am cramming in all that is part of the *image* of Tohoku: rice paddies, the sky, the wind, and salty foods. If classical ballet stands for an extension upwards towards heaven, I cling to the land and return to the inside of my own body (quoted in Jansen, 2018:103, emphasis in original).

As Kosuge Hayato observes, "Since then, butoh has been discussed in the context of this northern area; in other words, Hijikata has been regarded by critics as rediscovering the

indigenous bodily movements of northern rural Tohoku as part of his anti-authoritarian practice" (2018:217).

> Although Hijikata was far more interested in the idea of Tohoku than the material landscape, the strong association that ensued between butoh and site has since inspired butoh dancers to develop companies and practices in relation to their own local native or adopted landscapes. The form is now often taught and performed outdoors, in addition to being performed on stages, and has been adapted to many different landscapes all over the world (Candelario, 2019:2012).

Ecological Dance Training as Decolonization Praxis

Now I would like to give you two brief examples from my research of these ideas in practice. The first, Diego Piñon's Body Ritual Movement, is an example of other people's trainings that I attend. The second, based on my own work with South African artist and seed sovereignty activist Claire Rousell, offers a glimpse into my own practice research.

Diego Piñon, influenced by his butoh studies in Mexico with Natsu Nakajima and in Japan with Kazuo and Yoshito Ohno, developed his own practice related to his culture and ancestral lands in Michoacán, Mexico. Originally called Butoh Ritual Mexicano and now known as Body Ritual Movement, Piñon's dance draws on shamanism; indigenous practices like the temescal; and connections to the land via fruits, vegetables, stones, flowers, and even a disused mine shaft. In his workshops, participants dance with ancestors, parents, even past lovers, as a way to confront and resolve ruptures. The work is not psychological in the sense of the individual, but rather is broad and deep healing work. Piñon is careful to insist that the dance is not just work on or for ourselves, but is a step towards changing the world. This tactile, sensual, also exhausting training is meant to take dancers to the limit of the individual and arouse connections to the past, the ancestors, and the earth. This work is then shared as ritual performance with invited guests, usually followed by an offering of a meal. The point of performance for Piñon is to use the training to open a ritual space for witnesses to enter, a space to dance alternative relations, to mourn, and to celebrate our communion.

I traveled to Johannesburg for three weeks in winter 2016 to work with Claire Rousell, who I had met at a butoh workshop in Sweden the previous year. At that time, we were struck by the parallel histories between Johannesburg and where I live in Denton, Texas; both are economies and geographies developed on histories and practices of racism, colonialism, and

mineral extraction. In 2016 I traveled to Johannesburg for 3 weeks to work with the Grrr Collective, of which Rousell was a member. I conducted an outdoor butoh workshop to help the Collective prepare for a performance at the opening of their exhibition that engaged folk tales at the Johannesburg City Library, and participated in the performance. Subsequently Claire and I offered four public workshops drawing on butoh practices and the writings of Joanna Macy: one at the City Library alongside the exhibition, two at the Wits School of Arts, and one at the Rainbow Crèche that sits on the edge of a field near the Skills Village that community members were hoping to develop into a more active community sharing space. Although most of our workshops were indoors, they nonetheless were deeply grounded in the space and history of the city. Exercises in the workshops were designed to arouse participants' attention to their connections to one another, the earth, ancestors, and the past and future of Johannesburg.

For example, we developed an exercise around the simple act of breathing. Quoting Macy, we encouraged participants to "Draw in the air that connects you with all being, for there is not one alive in this world now who is not breathing like you, in and out in a vast exchange of energy with the living body of our planet, seas and plants" (2014). We also drew on activities such as Macy's "Harvesting the Gifts of the Ancestors" (2014:175-181) to create dances that sought connections between our personal, collective, and planetary pasts and our choices about how to move into the future.

In both cases, the dance practice develops a set of tools and skills aimed at transforming our relationships to one another and the world around us that groups of dancers can rehearse together.

Moving on from Here

It is not possible to conclude this paper, as the research is very much ongoing and I am still working through how to articulate it. So rather than give a conclusion, I prefer to offer some words by which to continue. I tell my students that they should never give someone else the last word in their writing, but I am going to break my own rule today and end with the words of Rolando Vazquez from his article "Precedence, Earth, and the Anthropocene: Decolonizing Design." Partially because his brilliant keynote has resonated so powerfully through this

conference, and partially because he has stated so clearly what I have been sensing in butoh, but had not yet been able to describe so succinctly. He writes:

> The decolonial task is to understand and face the loss of relational worlds and, with them, the loss of earth. It is about the restitution of hope in the possibility of enacting relational ways of inhabiting earth, of being with human and nonhuman others, and of relating to ourselves (2017:79).

That is, I think, our most basic and most challenging task as humans, and one in which I think butoh, and dance and performance more broadly, have a significant role to play.

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Walking and Stumbling: The Aesthetic as Agitator for Change Preamble

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Abstract

This paper interrogates the efficacy of site responsive performance art and its contribution towards embodied activism. It proposes performance art that by its aesthetic nature is provocative; where the aesthetic of the performance is the agitator for activism, where the location or site of the performance intersects with the content of the work so as to create an additional layer of meaning. The paper examines two works created by The Mothertongue Project, a collective I co-founded 19 years ago. The first work, Walk, was created in 2014 and has had various iterations since then. The paper focuses on the most recent version that was performed at the NAF in Grahamstown this year. Walk consists of eight performance installations that respond to rape culture and gender violence. The second work, #StumblingBlocks, was made with The Mothertongue Youth Theatre Company, based in McGregor, a rural village in the Langeberg region of the Western Cape. It was performed in the 'bushes' on the outskirts of McGregor. The provocation for the performance installations was for the performers to conceptualise a ten-minute piece that spoke to the systemic challenges young people in rural South African contexts in the Western Cape face on a daily basis.

My presentation today interrogates the efficacy of site-responsive performance art and its contribution to embodied activism. It examines two works created by The Mothertongue Project, a collective I co-founded 19 years ago. The first work is *Walk*. *Walk* is a performance piece created by a company of performance makers in response to Indian Artist Maya Krishna Rao's The *Walk*. Rao crafted *The Walk* as a response to the gang rape and murder of 23-year-old Jyoti Pandey who was repeatedly raped and bludgeoned with an iron rod by 6 men on a bus in Delhi on December 2012. We decided, with Rao's permission, to create *Walk*, as a response to the gang rape and murder of Anene Booysen. Both women were disembowelled and left for dead at the side of the road, and both died in hospital, Jyoti Pandey 13 days later, and Anene Booysen six hours later. The process allowed for the emergence of a series of performed installations, which involves the audience and the performers walking through the pieces. The performed responses combine live and recorded performance and sound. Although in both South Africa and India there were similarities in public reaction, India's civil response seemed of much greater magnitude compared to that of South Africa. Despite South Africa celebrating 20 plus years of democracy coupled with a constitution that is a shining

example in other countries, violence against bodies who identify as women is still prevalent. One ponders whether as a nation South Africans have become numb to the violence imposed on women daily. Have we gone so far as to normalise it? These are questions that urge us as performance makers to create work that stirs, that questions, that galvanises people into action. Our vision for *Walk* is centred around a sparse aesthetic that foregrounds the figure of the woman. Its focus is very much on the seven women identified performers and considers the unavoidable, physical fact of their bodies – a fact which we understand rape culture seeks to obfuscate or erase.

The second piece I will focus on today is *#StumblingBlocks*, which was made with The Mothertongue Youth Theatre Company, based in McGregor, a rural village in the Langeberg region of the Western Cape. It was performed in the 'bushes' on the outskirts of McGregor. The provocation for the performance installations was for the performers to conceptualise a ten-minute piece that spoke to the systemic challenges young people in rural South African contexts in the Western Cape face daily. The site, i.e. the 'bushes' on the outskirts of the village is a site frequented by crystal meth users. It has over the years become a very dangerous space. Our choice to use that particular site was in part a way of reclaiming the site and by so doing, we were saying to the crystal meth users that "yes, we know you are here, but so too are we". Both *Walk* and *#StumblingBlocks* involved the audience walking from one performance intervention to the next. Before I expand on ideas around the aesthetic being the provocateur in live performance as activism, I would like to introduce The Mothertongue Project to you.

Mothertongue

Formed 19 years ago, The Mothertongue Project is a registered non-profit organisation that is managed by women artists, facilitators and educators committed to transformation through the employment of theatre and performance approaches that integrate arts methodologies. Work with The Mothertongue Project derives from a particular ideological position in the world informed by the context in which we locate. South Africa has some of the highest rates of rape and sexualised violence against women in the world. The result is a society in which women's bodies, in particular, are constantly under threat of violation. Post-2011 the trajectory of the organisation has led to the creation of a youth theatre company,

who are permanently employed by Mothertongue. The company is comprised of young women and men, living in the rural Langeberg region. They come from McGregor, Nqkubela, a township in Robertson, and surrounding farms.

In summary, The Mothertongue Project has two pillars: the first being a professional women focussed theatre company and the second, a community-based theatre company that focuses on young people. Our vision is a society where women and young people have safety in their bodies and in their communities and where they have agency over their lives. We thus aspire towards a society where self-recognition, self-honouring and self-celebration of young people and women are commonplace.

Embodied Activism

I have become increasingly interested in exploring the idea of embodied activism through performance. I am not putting forward performance as activism in its didactic form, as evidenced by public performance events that engage participatory forms, where the performance more often than not, has a preconceived message. I am rather suggesting a public performance that is non-didactic, that by its aesthetic nature is provocative; where the aesthetic of the performance is the agitator for activism, where the location or site of the performance intersects with the content of the work to create an additional layer of meaning. The embodiedness of the experience, I argue, is what creates a sustained sense of purpose and action in the world for both performers and audiences. Live performance can inspire a sense of deep reflection; perhaps what I would term embodied reflection, where the bodies of those experiencing the performance (both performers and audience) are affected. Here, corporeal feminist Grosz' (2008:1-2) readings of Deleuze and Gauttari's writings around the relationship between art, sensation and affect are pertinent. Grosz maintains that "[a]rt … produces sensations, affects, intensities as its mode of addressing problems, which sometimes align with and link to concepts, the object of philosophical production, which are how philosophy deals with or addresses problems." Deleuze and Gauttari maintain that. "[w]hether through words, colors, sounds, or stone, art is the language of sensations" (1994:176), and that "[s]ensation is pure contemplation, for it is through contemplation that one contracts, contemplating oneself to the extent that one contemplates the elements from which one originates" (1994:212). Grosz further elucidates that "the arts produce and

generate intensity, that which directly impacts the nervous system and intensifies sensation. Art is the art of affect more than representation … ” (2008:3).

Live performance as activism does not necessarily provoke the kind of mass rally activism that comes to mind when one thinks of activist or protest action globally, but rather it inspires civic conversations/discussions/dialogues/debates that move people to cogitate on their role in the situation and how they are able to shift it from a point of personal reflection that potentially leads to personal action. Each iteration of a live performance is shaped by the varied responses from audience members as well as the varied spaces in which it is performed. This references UK based performer and researcher, Emma Meehan’s idea that the process of co-creating actively facilitates/includes the audience’s *own* experiences in a collaborative act of meaning-making (2013:38). The idea of collaborative meaning-making is fundamental to performance activism that endeavours to inspire a sense of embodied reflection or contemplation that will potentially lead to personal action or activism in the bodies of those who experience it. To illustrate this, I would like to reference two examples from one of the many iterations of *Walk.* One of the first performances of the work that formed part of The Drama for Life Sex Actually Festival in 2014, involved the audience moving from the foyer of the Wits Theatre through the back door into the workshop and backstage area, through the loading bay into the Downstairs theatre, back up to the theatre foyer and finally ending up with the performers exiting the building and walking off in different directions. Scantily clad in a silk nighty, I walked down a dark alley into an empty enclosed parking lot. As performers, we had no idea how the audience would react. What transpired was a group of audience members following me down into the parking lot with the clear intention of bringing me back into the safety of the Wits Theatre building.

The second experience was in Cape Town where the work was performed as part of the Cape Town Fringe Festival in 2014. We performed in the Dragon Room, a dingy somewhat gothic-inspired nightclub in Harrington Street. This time we decided to end the piece by walking out of the club building and into the streets of Cape Town. This elicited various responses from audience members. Some "hung" around the entrance to the club waiting for us to "return" to the "safety" of the club building. Others, like the Wits audience, followed us with the intent of "bringing" us back to "safety", while others silently got into the safety of their cars to drive off into the streets. To me, these responses, or lack thereof, illustrate the potential of how

location can intersect with the content of the work and serves to layer the process of co-meaning making with audience members.

Aesthetic as provocation

At this point, I'd like to speak more to the idea of the aesthetic as agitator or provocateur in live performance. I start by turning to Ideas around conceptual blending and how it associates with processes of meaning-making in theatre and performances. According to Fauconnier and Turner, "[c]onceptual blending involves invent[ing] a scenario that draws from … two analogues but ends up containing more" (2002:20). Placing images in relation to one another suggests that the performer can invent scenarios that draw from two or more images. Fauconnier and Turner additionally assert that "[t]he blend ends up making possible a set of 'matches' that seem obvious to us, even though we might never previously have matched [them, and that] … the creation of meaning is in the blend" (2002:20).

Meaning emerges at the level of "conceptual structure" (2002:22). Fauconnier and Turner maintain that language involves the integration of conceptual structures (2002:143); how we structurally arrange words in relation to one another gives rise to different concepts and meanings. They warn against accepting the "general view that conceptual structure is 'encoded' by the speaker into a linguistic structure, and that the linguistic structure is 'decoded' by the hearer back into a conceptual structure" (2002:360). They suggest that the challenge lies in "find[ing] the relations between formally integrated linguistic structure on the one hand and conceptually integrated structures built by the speaker or retrieved by the hearer on the other" (2002:360). I suggest that the ability to find these relations lies in the blend between bodily actions or responses and linguistic structures. The conceptual structure lies in this blend and can be found in the feedback loop that forms the basis of communication processes. I include somatic responses, in the form of bodily actions or reactions to words that have been linguistically structured, in the feedback loop. The sender engages the body in conveying a message comprised of sounds, words and emotions and the receiver engages the body in the process of receiving these before feeding back to the sender via sounds, words, and emotions. The body, in this instance, is also engaged in the process of feeding back. The blend between what the words say, how they are linguistically structured, and bodily actions, thus adds further meaning to that which is being sent and received. How the

body responds plays an integral role in what is being conveyed or received through words, and ultimately adds to the conceptual structure of what is being communicated.

Vittorio Gallese considers that “Humans tend to accompany their understanding of sentences or their imaginative activities with body reactions that simulate real experiences. The triggering stimulus, regardless of its external or internal nature, induces a congruent embodied simulation as a default automatic reaction (2003:525). According to Gallese and George Lakoff, “First-generation cognitive science was strongly influenced by the analytic tradition of philosophy of language, from which it inherited the propensity to analyse concepts on the basis of formal abstract models, totally unrelated to the life of the body, and of the brain regions governing the body’s functioning in the world” (2005:1).

This bears a familiar resonance with the Cartesian view that privileges the analytical thinking processes of the mind over the body’s role in conceptual processes. Gallese and Lakoff provide a counter in that they argue that, “conceptual knowledge is embodied, that is, it is mapped within our sensory-motor system” and “[i]magining and doing use a shared neural substrate" (2005:2). Additionally, they maintain that "imagination, like perceiving and doing, is embodied, that is, structured by our constant encounter and interaction with the world via our bodies and brains. The result is an interactionist theory of meaning" (2005:2).

Fauconnier and Turner observe that "[the] activation [and binding of different elements] is the work of the imagination striving to find appropriate integrations [and blends]" (2002:22). Rhonda Blair maintains that "Blending is a fundamental part of the actor's and director's manipulation of language and imagery in order to engage the material on which they are working in as fully felt and specific a way as possible. Living and playing ‘in the blend' is at the root of originality and creativity" (2009:94).

You put certain things together in relation to one another to create something. This is the building block of how we create an aesthetic. So, conceptual blending can be viewed as the building blocks and the aesthetic as the outcome/the thing that is created or made. The aesthetic is what we imagine the experience to be for the performers and the audience. It is about how we create a specific kind of space, a specific kind of atmosphere or feeling in our audiences and in the performers. As for performance makers, it is the foundation upon which we build for the ideas of what we want to achieve with an aesthetic. The idea of constructing

space for a very particular outcome is a very potent understanding and skill. The ways that we need to be aware of creating, provoking and stimulating change is through a visceral experience of an audience. It's not didactic, it's not messaging, it is not behaviour change. It is the visceral experience of what we are trying to convey. It may be, as in the case of *Walk*, based on some of the critiques we have received, that it is re-traumatising. That is the risk we have to take as practitioners around the balance of how much that experience completely immerses itself in the bodies of the audience and then resurfaces as a question or as a reflection. The fundamental understanding of curating space for a particular effect is central to the idea of the aesthetic as a provocation and not necessarily content as a provocation.

A message feels fixed as opposed to working with the aesthetic, which feels more fluid and malleable enough to honour and embrace individuals as opposed to contextual experience. That is why it has the potential to touch individuals differently. That is why it is called a provocation. By naming it as such we acknowledge a diversity of experiences.

Back to the question around the role of provocation. An important question is the role of provocation concerning agency and in what sense should/does performance leave one with a sense of agency. The idea of provocation is an interesting one because provocation in itself does not lead to a particular outcome. What people choose to take from the provocation is an entirely different story. What kind of agency do you allow the audience within the experience of provocation? Is it, I feel 'shook', traumatised, inspired, angry, angry enough to do something? As a maker, curator, performer, you are not always sure how the provocation lands, especially if it is through an aesthetic, which is a much more unreliable indicator of an outcome, because the aesthetic relies on the integrity of someone else's experiences, it relies on the interpretation of someone else's experience. It does not rely on the performers' or curator's understanding of what they are presenting, which I think may be in general what performance is about. But more so when one engages the aesthetic as provocateur. It leaves a much broader scope for experience and interpretation. The question remains, is one left with generally a more traumatised version of events that could be disempowering or debilitating or with a sense of agency?

In *#StumblingBlocks* the choice of site, the bushes, could be seen as being forced by us as the company. An audience that goes to see a site-specific work is different from an audience that

goes to a traditional theatre space, especially when it is a threatened community asset. In hindsight, it was a very provocative thing to do. Therein the aesthetic as provocation is heightened because it speaks against and to all of the associations the audience has about that site, and as a company, we knew this. We ambushed them to a certain extent. All they knew was that they were to meet at the gate of The Mothertongue Project premises. The work immersed an unassuming audience in an experience that they were not necessarily expecting or that they consented to. We told them to wear comfortable shoes and to dress warmly. Those were the only clues. However, the audience consented to the performance at every next step. They did not have to, but they did. Perhaps due to pressure to stay with the group, pressure not to be seen leaving, safety etc. and we depended on this. It evolved a very powerful sense of journey and curatorship. But, is it ethical? We invited 30 people – 15 from McGregor and 15 from Nqkubela. The audience members, in the main, knew one another, because of the smallness of the town and the smallness of the audience. I would never have done this in Cape Town. The geography and size of McGregor allowed for this. There is a sense of commons of land, of experience, of race that assisted the risk-taking in curation.

I was inspired by the NAF performance of *Walk* to make this work so that the Youth company could start to understand other forms of agitation, to understand what it means to engage the aesthetic as agitator or provocateur for activism rather than the message/content. A lot of the company's work in the past has focused on the message. The company's response to the process and the work was extraordinary – firstly in terms of what they produced as well as their verbal responses. My role as artistic director is to disrupt - to get people out of their comfort zones.

The site we performed in means something, and it means something to different people and it means something to all people. The space where we performed is a ‘coloured’ space within a white space not inhabited by black people, and a dangerous space- for everyone. The invitation to the audience and their relationships to the performers formed interesting complexities. The performance wouldn’t have had meaning without the curation of the audience or its meaning got exponentially richer or textured because of the curation of the audience. It also got me thinking about how the inquiry into provocation and aesthetic shifts when your audience is considerately curated.

The performance of *Walk* at the National Arts Festival was different in that there was more consent on the part of the audience members. People knew it was happening in the Botanical Gardens. The venue/site is known for site-specific work. They knew they were most likely going to have to walk and be in the dark. It was also on the performance art platform of the festival. There were many clues.

The aesthetic is the nature, the texture, the register of where we invite our audience in - how we touch them, provoke them. The visceral nature of the creation/construction is the most potent provocation in this enquiry and it can be used for multiple subjects and to multiple effects. It is potentially the most impactful/powerful potential for moving, shifting, shocking people – It puts them into some sort of hiatus because it is experienced in the body.

My particular performance intervention for *Walk* deliberately engages the theory and practice of the Sanskrit performance system of *rasa* as taught to me by one of my mentors, the late Veenapani Chawla, founder of Adishakti Laboratory for Theatre Art Research. In Sanskrit performance traditions, *rasa* is the experience of emotions aroused in the audience by the performer. My understanding of *rasa* in the context of performance is that it can be translated into a sensation experienced in the body of the performer and ultimately in the bodies of the audience. The *rasa* breath patterns which I learnt while at Adishakti, involved an approach to generating emotions that engaged a triadic relationship between breath, posture and facial expressions. According to 10th and 11th Century Indian philosopher, theologian and mystic, Abhinavagupta, *rasa* is the audience's aesthetic experience of the emotion portrayed. The means of accessing, generating, and expressing the emotion, which is first experienced in the body as felt sensation, is through the breath. The breath here is arguably a physical action that gives rise to an experience of *rasa* in both the performer and the audience. If one closely observes one's breathing during particular emotional states, very specific physiological patterns or structures connected to the breathing pattern may be noticed. I argue that audience members mirror the breath patterns, and thus feel the *rasa* in their bodies, which in turn gives rise to a visceral and embodied experience of emotion. Chawla refers to this as a contagion of energy between performers and audience. The body receives and feels the performance as opposed to the mind cognitively receiving and making sense of it. Breath in this instance is the transmitter of feeling. As a curator, how you choose to place things in relation to one another, in other words, how one curates moments, creates

a blend in the meeting point between the two things. It is what is evoked in the blend that gives rise to meaning. And here, I am not referring to meaning that is based on a message, but rather meaning that is made through the contagion of energy.

Conclusion

I conclude with an invitation, which is a proposition and invitation to myself. As I continue making this kind of work, I am drawn to the idea of Sacred Activism, which to me speaks to structural and systemic change. It is an invitation or a call for each of us to dedicate our entire beings to the liberation of every living thing on this earth. I believe, that as creatives who engage performance as our tool, we can do this. By leaving our audiences inspired, yet frustrated means that we cannot have a predetermined outcome. I understand that this dichotomy and uncertainty has the potential to make audiences aware of how systemic problems live. The job of the aesthetic is not to direct, it is to provoke. It does not propose a way of living differently. What it hopes to do is to encourage audiences to enquire into the human condition through their experience of a being a human within a much broader system of life.

The idea of provocation speaks very intimately to who we are in the world because the idea is a big idea that can land very specifically in individual people because it is not tailored to a message to what needs to be done but is tailored to the experience of selves in the world. This makes space for the realisation of limitation and loss. In sacred activism, there must be a space for grieving. It could make us adversaries and/or allies to the things we are agitating against or for. This requires that we take account of the whole picture. It requires us to be accountable. The aesthetic as provocation provides a space for audience members to be viscerally moved /touched by the aesthetic in as much as they feel they need to act on it /to do something. This aligns itself with sacred activism where we agitate and provoke change not necessarily through what we do but who we are. Sacred activism has an awareness of limitation, loss or unachievability and that it is not in the doing but in the being where meaningful change happens. In the way, you engage people and not what you engage them in. *Walk* and *#StumblingBlocks* begin to evoke these ideas, however, how do I, as a curator, work more consciously with these principles. Perhaps it would be something like #menaretrash AND … And does not provide space for exclusivity. So, the challenge for me as

a maker, curator and performer is to consider the AND in pursuit of sacred activism through performance.

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What is born of the sun fire cannot destroy

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Abstract

Although I feel that the traditional dance form of Bharathanatyam should be preserved for future generations of South Africans because it is a part of history and culture, I do not want to see a regression from the traditional form to meaningless movements. Research for my BA Hons degree indicated a lowering of the standard of Bharathanatyam in South Africa – possibly because the dance form is not institutionalised. My paper will analyse the changes that have taken place in the teaching, learning and performing of the dance form in South Africa today as compared to India. I will also look at the future of Bharathanatyam in South Africa. To demonstrate how proper teaching of Bharatanatyam may be revived, I will relate my experiences of incorporating South Asian dance into a South African dance pedagogy. I took on a creative twist when teaching the basics of Bharathanatyam to a group of mixed-race, young, disadvantaged children in Durban in 2018 creating six community-based teaching classes which accessed the ideas of creative movement in an enjoyable way. Bharathanatyam has a long history of adaptation, modification and transformation. From being only a form of worshipping the Gods, Bharatanatyam can also help heal those who are hurt and bring joy to the unhappy. It is food for the soul.

Bharathanatyam has a long history of adaptation, modification and transformation:

Initially only a form of worshipping the Gods, Bharatanatyam can also help heal those who are hurt and bring joy to the unhappy. To me, it is food for the soul. But I fear that unless efforts are made to institutionalise Bharathanatyam in South Africa, there will be a regression from the traditional form to meaningless movements. More about that later. First let me give you some background on Bharathanatyam, especially for those who are not familiar with this classical dance form.

Sage Bharata Muni who is reputedly the father of Indian theatrical art forms and the author of the theoretical treatise on ancient Indian dramaturgy and histrionics, the Natya Shastra, regarded dance as sacred and a form of devotion rather than a recreational past-time. He taught that drama was intended to promote right-living through the telling of religious stories which informed correct behaviour. When dance was presented as worship, it was believed to invoke spiritual blessings.

The Devadasis

The Maratha rulers of South India called a classical dance form *Sadir Nautch* in the 17th century when it was presented in the courts. A more exalted role of the dance is evoked by the name *Dasi Attam*, the dance of the *devadasis* as a part of temple worship. A *devadasi*, whose name means servant (*dasi*) of divinity (*deva*), was an artist dedicated to the services of

a temple. The collapse of patronage at courts such as Tanjore (annexed by the British) plunged many of these women into the very depths of poverty. Some descended into prostitution, their stigma tarnishing the community as a whole, as well as its creative pursuits. In the 1940s, the dance was removed from temples and it was condemned as a social evil. By the first quarter of the 20th century, the classical dance of South India was almost wiped out, even in Tamil Nadu.

Revival of Bharathanatyam

Then there emerged a personality who can be credited with almost single-handedly reviving and reforming Bharathanatyam. Rukmini Devi who was born in Madurai in 1904 into an upper-class Brahmin family, grew up in an environment where she was exposed to dance, music and culture. She was greatly inspired by theosophist Annie Besant. Eventually her interest in theosophy led her to marry a fellow theosophist, the British Dr George Sydney Arundale, and together they travelled all around the world. Devi had an interest in music, but it was her meeting with the famous Russian ballerina Anna Pavlova in London in 1924 which kindled in her a profound interest in the art form and a desire to dance. She came across Sadir in 1932 presented by the Pandanallur sisters. This was what kindled the urge in Devi to learn Sadir.

After long sessions of learning, Devi performed at the open air Adyar Theatre in 1935. She had not only shattered Bharathanatyam's bondages of caste and community, but she had moved the dance from the sanctum sanctorum of temples for the first time and presented the dance programme as a stage performance. Devi was determined to, in her words, "disseminate this beautiful and profound art that had been restricted to a few specialists" (Kalakshetra, 2019). She believed that a cultural renaissance would be meaningful in a country which was losing its identity. She wanted a revival of the traditional arts. (Kalakshetra, 2019)

Rukmini Devi's fiery spirit and determination to create a school for the traditional arts, especially dance, song and music, paid dividends when Kalakshetra was born in 1936. While Kalakshetra began attaining international fame, on the other side of the world, between the 1950s and 1960s, South Africa was in the grips of apartheid and was cut off from the rest of the world due to a cultural boycott and the anti-apartheid movement. It was during this era

that Bharathanatyam began taking root in South Africa - the first group of dancers left for India towards the end of the 1950s.

With the outcry from world nations against apartheid in South Africa, India led the global movement for sanctions to be imposed against South Africa in 1948 and this included a cultural boycott. Thus, South Africa did not enjoy any cultural exchange with artists from India. A handful of teachers during the sanctions era ran small Indian dance schools/studios with a limited number of pupils attending in, for example, Pietermaritzburg, Verulam, Tongaat, Stanger, Merebank , Umzinto, Chatsworth and other areas where Indians were settled under the Group Areas Act.

Bharathanatyam in South Africa

As the racist Group Areas Act[48] which segregated residential and business zones for various race groups was still in force, dance schools were situated in communities for Indians only, reinforcing an isolation from India itself. Dance concerts based on stories from the Hindu epics Ramayana, Mahabharatha and Bhagavad Gita were attended by Indian audiences only. The bigger and better performance venues in the cities were reserved for white performers and audiences only during the height of apartheid. Thus we see that Indian culture was marginalised under apartheid.

Then, when the cultural blockade against South Africa was lifted by India towards the end of the 1980s and early 1990s, many local aspirant dancers went for tuition to India and returned and opened their own schools. This was essentially the first time that there was a globalisation of classical Indian dance on a large scale with dozens of young women (and 1 or 2 men) going abroad to learn different dance forms such as Bharathanatyam and Kathak. Bharathanatyam became a rising dance form for many Indians to learn and the first group of South African girls left to study in Chennai. These were the likes of Salochana Naidoo, sisters Rani and Prema Nydoo, Ambigay Swamivel Pillay, and Jayalakshmi Naidoo. The next group comprised my guru Yogambal Singaram (nee Thambiran), Vasugi Singh (nee Devar) and Suria Govender (nee

[48] The Group Areas Act was the title of three acts enacted by the South African parliament in the apartheid government of South Africa. The acts assigned racial groups to different residential and business sections in urban areas in a system of urban apartheid.

Naidoo). They all returned and opened their own schools. Over the ensuing years, it was a challenge for girls to go to India in any large numbers to study dance. Only a relatively small number managed to make the trip abroad through self-funding.

The wheels come off

For a few years, all seemed to be going well and serious critics would have given the teaching - and learning - of Bharathanatyam in South Africa, a clean bill of health. More and more dance schools opened with mostly scores of young girls, but also some boys, learning Bharathanatyam. And then *adavu* by *adavu*, and *mudra* by *mudra*, the wheels began coming off. What then has led to Bharathanatyam again breaking the rules of moral theology and modesty in South Africa? An analysis of several facts points to the disregarding of the holiness associated with the dance; paying no attention to the sacred relationship between the Guru and Shishya (teacher and student) as it is in India and becoming enmeshed in globalisation and its attendant commercialism as all jointly contributing to the dilution of the purity of Bharathanatyam in South Africa.

I can clearly recall how I was admonished by a dance guru in India for not displaying the correct posture of my arms during a dance sequence. “I do not want to criticise your teacher back home. Perhaps you were taught correctly but learnt wrong. However, what you are doing is all nonsense,” the widely-respected teacher opinioned, while other pupils in the class began giggling. I felt ashamed. I was embarrassed.

I began taking Bharathanatyam lessons in Durban, South Africa 19 years ago (in 2000) when I was five years old. My keen interest in this dance form led me to attend numerous dance performances in Durban. During the same period, I would also attend the annual South Indian Dance Season in Chennai In Tamilnadu in India where leading artists performed from both India and around the world. What struck me was the vast difference in the standard of Bharathanatyam in India and South Africa and this led to my interest in wanting to investigate how Bharathanatyam in South Africa had changed from the traditional form to meaningless movements.

Lack of standards

During my research, what stood out as a reason for the lower standards in South Africa is that Bharathanatyam is not institutionalised in South Africa. In India, Rukmini Devi's Kalakshetra guides dance standards with curriculum, syllabi and accreditation. Unfortunately, no such institution or body exists in South Africa. Another contributory factor to the lowering of the South African standard of Bharathanatyam dance performance is the effect of globalisation. Children who are often not ready for the stage are decked out in beautiful costumes and jewellery for the visual consumption of their families and friends. Praise is lavished a little too freely and the epidemic of standing ovations for mediocrity is spreading. Teachers, too, have an eye on the profits to be made from teaching large classes. These days, any dancer who has learnt dance for two to four years has an instant *arangetram* or graduation ceremony and then becomes a teacher - even at the tender age of 15 or 16. Can such a child realistically call herself/himself a "guru"?

Teachers in other countries, including South Africa, have latched on to the idea that *arangetrams* must be used as a cash cow. Parents of students pay huge sums of money to teachers. *Gurudakshina* (the tradition of repaying one's teacher or guru after a period of study) both in India and South Africa has taken on a monetary vanguard. An *arangetram* has become extremely expensive, to the point that financially-challenged students drop out from learning the dance form. Thus, we see that Bharathanatyam now has a price-tag attached to it, resulting in the tradition undergoing a decrease in interest.

I can clearly recall how, dressed in a white Punjabi (an Indian dress that has a long top that comes to your knee paired with a loose pants), at the age of five when I was able to count to at least 10, I was taught to leave my shoes outside the dance venue before entering class. I later learnt that this was to pay respect to the space we were to dance in and that would be transformed into a holy area. I then greeted my Guru, Yogambal Singaram, by saying "*Vanakkam*", a Tamil salutation I was taught by my parents. My Guru warmly welcomed me to my first Bharathanatyam class. I was then taught the dance prayer - known as the *Dhayana Shlokam* – which is in praise of the Hindu God of Dance, Lord Nataraja.

A Bharathanatyam dancer will start and end every dance session with this prayer. The dancer pays respect to Lord Nataraja, the teacher and the audience and then touches Mother Earth and asks her permission to stamp on her during the dance. Then, followed tuition of

the *Aramandi* posture, the half-sitting position, known in the western world as a *plié*. My young body had to adjust to the position which was quite painful and it took me a long time to get used to it. But it was important that this posture is perfected because it is prominent in Bharathanatyam. For two years I had to practise *adavus* (the steps) before moving onto learning the *Alaripu*, the first full dance that you learn as a Bharathanatyam dancer.

Having had the opportunity to study Bharathanatyam in both South Africa and Chennai, it pains me that within a short space of time, important rituals connected with the dance are being disregarded in the land of my birth. There is no compromising the *namaskar* prayer dance in Chennai. Yet in South Africa, I have witnessed so many dancers ignoring this important ritual and commencing and ending a dance performance without paying obeisance to the Gods. Even worse is that teachers place so little emphasis on ensuring their pupils get the half-sitting posture - the *Aramandi* - correct. Yet this is such an important aspect of Bharathanatyam and defines its visual character. How is it possible that the basics that I was taught - and which are not negotiable - could have been lost within less than two decades? My Guru would teach dance by keeping *Thalam* (time) with a stick beating on a wooden block. This traditional way of teaching dance is fast disappearing. How will pupils learn to keep to the beat with their limb movements?

Today we are struggling to retain the laid down rules. Experimentation and cross-cultural fusion have eroded the tradition style. “What is reprehensible is change for the sake of change, with the sole purpose of attracting the masses, unmindful of the vulgarity that might creep in under the guise of newness.” So says Master Dhananjayan, an internationally-renowned dance master in his book: *Dhananjayan on Indian Classical Dance* (2004)

With the advent of democracy in SA, the Indian performing arts are sadly being neglected. Anything Indian is viewed as being anti-African. Indians have been subtly conscientised to stop regarding India as their motherland. Thus, their culture and traditions have been largely ditched. A sad tale should drive home my point: In July 2019, one of the world’s leading exponents of Bharathanatyam today, Rama Vaidya of India, was in Durban for just one performance. I cringed when the curtains opened with just 50 people in the auditorium. The worst insult one can inflict on an A-grade internationally-renowned artist is to open the curtains to an almost empty auditorium. In India tickets are sold out weeks in advance for

Vaidya's performances. Is this the respect we show for Bharathanatyam in SA? What is the future of Bharathanatyam in South Africa? How the dance form goes forward is in the hands of its teachers and performers. If performers choose to highlight its athleticism like acrobats, and lose its core in the process, then only they are to blame. Bharatanatyam will always be about transcending the physicality of movement and instead celebrating the dance within.

An experiment in teaching

To gauge how best to teach Bharathanatyam with meaning for its continuance as a traditional dance form, I conducted six community-based teaching classes which access the ideas of 'creative movement' rather than technique training. I set out to teach young children living at the Aryan Benevolent Home for Disadvantaged Children, in Chatsworth, Durban the basics of Bharathanatyam. Community is said to be, "a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common" (Oxford Dictionaries | English, 2018). I chose to conduct this project in the Chatsworth community because I believe in giving back to one's own community where a group of people are living or working together in the same area.

Chatsworth is one large sub-economic housing scheme that was developed by the Durban municipality more than five decades ago when Indians who had been settled in all parts of Durban were forcibly uprooted and dumped in the ghetto township. It is easier to work within a community because people generally have similar likes and dislikes, value systems and know each other. They all usually work towards a common goal. People in communities also help each other and solve problems together.

The Home houses approximately 80 vulnerable/orphaned children with the youngest being just 18 months old. Vulnerable children come from homes where their parents abuse them, have some substance addiction or are financially insecure and where their parents cannot take proper care of the children. The children at ABH come from disadvantaged families in the Chatsworth community. Their lives lack enrichment, especially in terms of extra-curricular activities and cultural education. Six girls aged 7-9 chose to be part of the project. However, one dropped out as she was unwell for two lessons and did not want to take part any longer. I worked with Fatima (9), Aphiwe (9), Deandre (9), Asanda (8) and Angel (7). The ABH allowed me to spend one hour a week with the girls. I had set a goal for myself that after five weeks of teaching these girls, they would know the prayer, how to conduct warm-up exercises

(which are being ignored), 12 *hastas* or hand gestures and the first group of *adavus*, which are the foundation steps called *Tatta Adavu* - and which focus on striking the floor with the sole. There are eight.

At our first class, I paid special attention to the importance of the prayer before starting and at the end of class. These girls surprised me with the discipline that they gave when conducting the prayer. Often, I have witnessed the prayer being ignored and not being done before commencing class. This reflects badly on the teacher for not ensuring students respect the art by first conducting prayer. Before each class I would prepare a lesson plan and break up my time accordingly. I started each class with warm-up exercises which often are being ignored in dance classes. In recent years dance teachers choose to go straight into the lessons without ensuring the body is ready. The warm-up session prepares the body for the intensity of the *adavus* that are to follow. It should be seen as absolutely necessary.

The children of ABH, standing with their hands in *Kathakamukaha* pose and feet in *Samapada* pose, ready to begin the prayer

I planned to teach the girls three *hastas* in each a class. I would sit with them on the ground and demonstrate how to perform the gesture and give the meaning behind it. For example, *Kathakamukha* which depicts plucking of flowers or *Pattaka*, which represents a flag. After

four weeks of teaching the girls the *mudras,* in my fifth and final class, they knew them all perfectly.

The children of ABH showing their knowledge of the *hastas.*

Now, the *adavus,* which is something that I am really focusing on in my MA studies, is the foundation of a Bharathanatyam dancer. If you don't know your *adavu*s, you will not be able to perform effectively. *Adavus* are like the words which make up the sentence. When you are being taught the *Adavus*, it is important to also be taught the feet positions such as *sama* which refer to the feet being in a natural position with the knees stretched straight and the toes facing the front or *Swastika* when the feet are crossed. In teaching the girls *Tatta Adavu,* I made sure they knew what the word *Aramandi* meant. They understood this remarkably well and would place extra emphasis on their *plie.* They knew how to vary the steps in three different speeds.

With their hands behind their backs and sitting in *Aramandi* the girls perform *Tatta Adavu*

The basics are critical

By relating my experiences, I am describing an alternative way to teaching dance in South Africa. We have moved away from spending sufficient time to perfect the child. By teaching them the basics of Bharatanatyam, I was able to inculcate in them a yearning to learn more. They displayed keen enthusiasm during the teaching sessions. When the classes came to an end, the girls expressed keenness to learn more.

It is also possible that these less-fortunate children are exposed to variety concerts at the ABH children's home where Indian dancing is featured. It has been mentioned that dance is seen, "as a vehicle for healing and transformation" (Van Papendorp and Friedman, 1997). They can associate what they have been learning with the dances they have witnessed and long to become good dancers one day. A traditional form lends itself to transition and there is transition because the form is rooted in tradition.

Thus, so long as Bharatanatyam is treated with religious conviction, it will survive and continue to be performed. Man cannot make Bharatanatyam take its last breath since it is deemed to have been conceived by God. Just as what is born of the sun, fire cannot destroy.

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Gatekeepers of Knowledges and Practices: artists, academics, publishers, producers

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Abstract

In exploring this question of the role of gatekeeping in the performing arts, I employ an autoethnographic, self-reflexive theorised analysis of aspects of my experiences as co-editor of the African Theatre series (2009-2019), and my work on the African Women Playwrights' Network (AWPN, 2015-19) to trace factors impacting on whose theatre and dance knowledges are being (re)produced and consumed from both an African and global northern perspective. In particular, I will analyse how the ways in which artists interact with one another; academics engage with artists; publishers, producers and theatre programmers engage with artists and diverse publics define cultural perceptions, knowledges and practices of the past, present and future. In reflecting on the launch events surrounding Contemporary Plays by African Women (2019), I will analyse the responses the plays staged in whole or part received by programmers and audiences in the UK and SA; and consider how AWPN's work with the Royal African Society's Africa Writes Program is attempting to decolonise curricula in primary and secondary schools in the context of UK austerity. I end by tracking some best practices and innovative approaches to engaging theatre and dance forms and practices not readily available through mainstream published or programmed resources.

This paper is responding to the questions: What role should a theatre and dance archive play in the development of post-colonial curriculum? And, 'Whose dance/theatre knowledge is being produced' (and consumed)? In exploring the role of gatekeeping in the performing arts, I employ an autoethnographic, self-reflexive theorised analysis of aspects of my experiences as co-editor of the *African Theatre* series (2009-2019), and my work on the African Women Playwrights' Network (AWPN, 2015-19) to trace factors impacting on whose theatre and dance knowledges are being (re)produced and consumed from both an African and global northern perspective. In particular, I will analyse how the ways in which artists interact with one another; academics engage with artists; publishers, producers and theatre programmers engage with artists and diverse publics define cultural perceptions, knowledges and practices of the past, present and future.

Philosophers have long debated the relationship between ontology, our viewpoint on who we are, with epistemologies, how we know this. Both are dependent on what we are taught

by our parents and various cultural systems including education, religion, mass media overtly, and as Judith Butler has extensively argued, covertly. Recently students all over the world have stridently called for educational institutions to 'decolonise' curricula and knowledge practices,[49] and as Sruti Bala has argued, this in turn 'demands new paradigms for the discipline – what Gayatri Spivak calls "the task of epistemological engagement" (2012:9), new habits of thinking the discipline and not just an addition of new things to think about' (Bala, 2017:335). Decolonising an education system is a complex undertaking because, as M. Jacqui Alexander argues, although empire may be gone, 'the epistemologies, systems and knowledges it created continue to define and haunt us (2005:1). These epistemologies continue to be affected by how research is undertaken and disseminated and by whom; which artists' work is seen, published and taught. These decisions profoundly define what can or cannot be known, discussed and practised now and in the future.

Archives and cannons are key in these processes, as they 'deem worthy' what is officially remembered and documented. So, it is important to analyse how and why certain performances, texts, analytic perspectives and methodological approaches are recorded, published, set on curricula and taught. In considering the relationship between memory and the archive, writing for the Archival Platform, South African editor Jo-Ann Duggan suggested that:

> The act of exteriorising, or sharing, shifts memory from the private realm of the individual into the public domain. But, this does not necessarily mean that it enters the archive. As with records, memory enters the archive when it is both exteriorised and deemed to be of archival value. Deemed memories enter the archive because they are considered to be potentially valuable to us when we think about the past. As valued resources, they demand preservation so that they can be accessible to others, in the present and in the future (2011).

The processes involved in archiving are complex. As Diana Taylor has aptly argued, managing both a physical archive and embodied repertoire, involves hegemonic processes of mediation, of 'selection, memorization or internalization, and transmission' (Taylor, 2007:21). I would like to inflect her analysis to consider how the processes involved in publishing, prescribing

[49] For an analysis of various student protests related to curricula: on the #Rhodesmustfall movement in South Africa see Anthea Garman, 2018; on Oxford in UK in 2015 see Joanna Williams, 2017; on the University of Amsterdam's student occupation in 2015 and other engagements with decolonising curricula, see de Jong, Icaza, Vázquez and Withaeckx, 2017.

and programming theatre and dance, or indeed any work, are also involved in archiving and canonising certain ideas, and thus in creating and supporting specific epistemologies. The activities involved in publishing, prescribing and programming work involve value judgements that affect whether or not certain ideas are made widely accessible to others or not, and impact beyond the present to the future. Perhaps, most visibly, educators at schools and universities curate curricula: the books or plays to be read, works to be staged, approaches to performance they teach; and as such are the most visible gatekeepers of knowledges for young people. However, publishers and academics that advise on book series, individual plays or texts that get published, or those who referee articles for journals; and those who decide what will be presented in theatres are gatekeepers of knowledges and practices; and so define what we know, engage with and emulate.

Here I want to step back and acknowledge the enormous impact colonialism has had on the ways in which theatre and dance studies and practices have been created, disseminated and 'produced'. Via missionaries (Peterson, 2000), schools and cultural programs colonial powers censored particular indigenous forms that were considered pagan or promiscuous, and promoted particular western forms and approaches to theatre. A powerful example is the impact of BBC Radio on British Colonial Africa, which Charles Armour (1984) and MR J.F. Wilkinson (1972) have tracked, and which is still profound today. I think particularly about the BBC 'African Theatre' series competition, begun in 1962. The BBC proclaimed that it wanted on no account 'to set itself up as an arbiter of African radio drama' (Cordeaux, 1970:148). However, the British selectors pronounced the best of the plays broadcast from London as being those which best reflected 'the contemporary African scene' (Ibid.:150) or a 'universal' theme, accessible to a wider audience, as defined by the judges. A similar pattern is evident when considering the BBC's Francophone counterpart, the *Concours théâtral interafricain*,[50] with its competition for Francophone African radio plays (Scherer, 1992:6), set up by the

[50] See Rogo-Koffi Fiangor's documenting of the concours between 1969-1993, where he notes its effect was double-edged: while offering a platform for French African theatre, it became indispensable to any playwright, '*faire acte d'allégeance à la France, dont seules les institutions pouvaient les consacrer dramaturges*'. This paralleled the *Grand prix littéraire de l'Afrique noire,* awarded by the *Association d'écrivains de langue française*, which ensured France's central position in the evaluation of African culture (see Bush & Ducournau, 2015:219). After 1993 the competition was opened up to Francophone writers across the world.

Office de coopération radiophonique in 1968 and later run by *Radio France Internationale* (RFI); and the *Festival des Francophonies en Limousin.*

Despite oral and physical performances being central to performance forms in Africa, publishing written texts and commentaries has largely defined how we receive and conceive of theatre in Africa. Anglophone African drama was strongly influenced by Oxford University Press (OUP), which in tandem with institutions like the British Council, began to reposition itself in the education market after World War 2. Until the 1960s it acted mostly as a distribution agent for OUP titles published in the UK, but then it began to publish local authors, for general readers, schools and universities in SA, marketing to Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Namibia and South Africa; and it is currently one of the three biggest educational publishers in South Africa. Ngugi wa Thiongo commented critically on the impacts of this influence in *Moving the Centre* (1993:34).

However, James Currey created a model of publishing which challenged modes that had dominated from the global north. After having worked in Cape Town at Oxford University Press, and in exile in London on Heinemann's very impactful Educational Book series with Chinua Achebe, in 1984 he established his own publishing house. Speaking at a Royal African Society symposium on the state of publishing in Africa in 1986, Currey drew attention to what he called "an academic book famine", which he ascribed in part to the profit-driven reaction of the head offices of the big publishing houses, such as Heinemann and Longman, to negative economic developments on the continent during previous years. He spoke with pride of how small publishers like the James Currey imprint had not only picked up the slack (Currey, 1986:609–11), but also found ways to ensure high quality and global reach, while maintaining accessibility for African students. He argued that

> The aim should be to build up a sufficient international print run in three continents so that the book can be available at the correct price for the African market in paper covers and, if possible, in a paper covered edition in Britain and the US so that it can get on the reading lists of students in the rich countries as well. […] Second, publishers can share the printing costs, split the print runs, use local paper, and save foreign exchange. This means that the international print total can be substantial for an academic text (Ibid.:611).

James Currey achieved a long-running three-continent effort shared between itself, Heinemann Kenya, and Ohio University Press, with co-publishing until it became an imprint of Boydell & Brewer in 2008.

And it is here I pick up my part in this story, as in 2009 I joined the editorial team of *African Theatre*, the only series that has published exclusively on African theatre. The series had been established by James Currey, Martin Banham, James Gibbs and Femi Osofisan, with Lynn Taylor at the press and Jane Taylor as reviews editor. Its first publication in 2002 set out the model: the publication of a collection of peer-reviewed articles, book reviews and the text of a previously unpublished play by an African playwright. What is remarkable was its extraordinary associate editors, consisting of leaders in African studies: Eckhard Breitinger, John Conteh-Morgan, Frances Harding, Masitha Hoeane, David Kerr, Amandina Lihamba, Olu Obafemi, Ian Steadman and Michael Etherton. They were drawn from the USA, UK and Europe as well as Lesotho, Botswana, Nigeria, South Africa and Tanzania. Martin Banham suggested to me (interview 07/19) that it was this weight of expertise and engagement with the series that gave it the impetus at the start, and kept it going against often large odds. It exemplifies the paradoxes we still face: the academic passion and commitment of time and editorial skills needed to engage closely with the continent's theatre and dance on its own terms; while battling the economic challenges facing publishers and buyers. African studies in the global north is a niche research area, which literally subsidises access to research and material in the global south. Lynn Taylor (Interview, 31/07/19) has noted how co-publication by James Currey alongside USA and South African publishers sustained the series, but how new collaborations had to be brokered every year or two, and this became more difficult after Boydell & Brewer took over James Currey imprint in 2008, as thereafter they would only co-publish with African publishers, who experience significant financial constraints.

Regarding content, African Theatre has pushed expectations on what is being/should be researched or taught. I draw on some examples I was directly involved with while editing specific issues, which illustrate the approach to the series as a whole. African Theatre Histories 1850-1950 (2010) engaged with the fact that there is very little research on theatre in Africa during the colonial period. It consciously challenged the binary between textual archives and embodied repertoires, suggesting ways in which these intersected and complicate how we look back at colonialism, indigenous culture and resistance. African Theatre Contemporary Dance (2018) sought ways to include the body, asking how we can 'write dance' in more appropriate and innovative ways, as exemplified by Chukwuma Okoye's photo essay. African Theatre Contemporary Women (2015) mixed refereed articles

with artists' own accounts of their work in ways that sat outside dominant academic modalities of research both in the ways that contributors wrote and in the way the submissions were evaluated and refereed. Toward the end of her Introduction to the collection, Emeritus Professor of African American Studies, Sandra Richards says:

> […] like a boorish guest who, having heartily consumed a rich meal, looks around for more, I have many more questions. Do these artists want to speak beyond their local or national communities, and if so, to what purpose? What are the circuits of funding which determine the kinds of work that get made and circulate locally, regionally or globally? How might knowledge of their work and that of other women theatre artists be expanded and brought into classrooms on the African continent itself? As an academic in the North, what are my responsibilities; how do I teach their work in a non-touristic, meaningful way? How might we all, in both the North and the South, lay claim to this identity of citizen and artist, labouring to help usher in a world of greater possibilities for more of its inhabitants? (2015:5).

These comments suggest just how complex questions of local and global knowledges engaging one another are, how entangled the global north and south, and how central economics is in defining what we may or may not know about our own and other cultures. The pressures of economies are apparent in the open section that appeared in 2018 and the open issue in 2019; as well as the issues specifically targeted at prescription; on *Soyinka and Ngugi wa Thiong'o* (2014), and *Six Plays from East and West Africa* (2017), with critical essays, emulating Biodun Jeyifo's *Modern African Drama* (2002).

However, the economic challenges are particular when the target market for works like these are African (or Asian) schools or universities where personal and institutional budgets are limited, and further challenged by exchange rates that push prices beyond their reach. You will note that there was always a paperback and cloth, later hardback version of *African Theatre* with differentiated pricing. To a large extent the series has continued because the Morel Charitable Trust (https://www.gibbstrust.org.uk/), set up by the Gibbs family, which supports the arts, and in particular drama, has long subsidised books to African universities, including *African Theatre*. But economic pressures have meant that from 2018 *African Theatre* paperback is exclusively available in Africa, which will reduce access to individuals in the north at £60 a copy. And since sales are low, the challenges have been unsustainable and

African Theatre Opera in Africa (2020) will be the last in the series, despite Boydell & Brewer's desire to keep the series going.

This is my segue into considering the role of producers and programmers as gatekeepers. I use as my context my work on the African Women's Playwright Network (AWPN), set up to address the proportional invisibility and inaccessibility of African women artists. When editing *African Theatre: Contemporary Women* (2015), I was surprised at how difficult it was to access women artists across the continent, despite how rich their work is. Surveying available plays by African women, we were shocked to find only one published anthology (Perkins, 2009) by African women and one about Black South African women (Perkins, 1998) at all. So our first call was for new plays, which we pitched as an anthology to Methuen. The 344-page anthology, *Plays by Contemporary African Women*, from 7 African countries was published in January 2019, some translated from local African languages by their authors, with introductions and contextualisations of each play by the author. The collection was launched in different parts of Africa, with all seven plays staged as full productions or readings at the Theatre Arts Admin Collective in Cape Town in March 2019, alongside a weekend of playwriting workshops by some of the women published in the collection, and others from the network to further the collaborative knowledge and skills sharing begun at AWPN's first symposium in 2017. Again, issues of cost have arisen in its distribution – although Methuen can offer up to 70% discount to their distribution agents (email 11/06/2019), we found that with import duties, VAT and local distributors' and book chains' mark ups, the anthology costs 1/3 more in South Africa than it does in the UK or USA; and I continue to battle with this issue.

However, I want to focus on the challenges of programming, getting these plays staged in part or whole. Carolyn Calburn, Director of the Theatre Arts Admin Collective in Cape Town, suggested a festival to launch the collection, and the authors waived performance rights to make it viable for local drama schools or groups to stage the plays. Thus, students from the University of Cape-Town, AFDA – The School for Creative Economy, and City Varsity staged three of the plays, with 3 independent productions and an exhibition of one play from Edinburgh's Youth Festival as a festival of new work by African women playwrights from 25-31 March 2019. Calburn commented on the importance of challenging canons and cultural dominances, and the need for programmers to make space for new voices from across the continent to be heard:

> I think South Africa is still experiencing the hangover of the cultural boycott where we were excluded from the rest of Africa, so we've got a huge amount to learn from watching work from Africa because there are stories that resonate with us but are so different, different in language, in form, in character, in structure, which makes you look at the situation differently, with fresh eyes
>
> I think African women playwrights have something massive to say, their experience is completely different from men. They write from a different perspective, from different experiences, and all too often we don't hear their voices. Their voices get channelled through male playwrights (Recorded for AWPN film, March 2019).

The impact of the plays was sharp. Some comments from the audience included that they would go on thinking about: 'The issues about dreams – continuing to believe in yourself/not giving up', 'I loved the strong women who just don't lament their situation but take action', 'The silence around domestic violence', 'My role as a male in dismantling gender based violence. My own socialisation into perpetuating toxic masculinity'. And on form, as one play was a dance drama, with poetic text, 'How to have more positioned (?) dance drama', to think about, 'What element that you associate each movement with? Different textures for different movements', 'Creating more images/abstract' (AWPN Feedback, March 2019). It is clear that the work opened up conversations about the place and appropriateness for women to be angry, active, even vengeful, and for considering new, more indigenous, embodied forms of theatre.

In the UK, extracts from three of the plays, Adong Judith's *Silent Voices*, Koleka Putuma's *Mbuzeni* and Sara Shaarawi's *Niqabi Ninja* were performed by the Belgrade Black Youth group in Coventry and at the Oxford Playhouse in February 2019. These events engaged wider audiences with important social issues such as gender-based violence, child soldiers/gangs, whilst making space for the voices of African women from across the continent in spaces where they have historically been excluded. Ugandan playwright, Judith Adong, said, 'in a world where men have dominated for so long, it is very important to have a space that provides room for women to be who they are, to tell the stories they want to tell without fear' (AWPN film).

Practitioners and audiences discussed how pan-African plays can break silences and become a road map for difficult conversations, a space for sharing stories and identifying shared experiences. Audience members noted: 'I was hugely struck by the diversity of the voices, experiences and heritage represented by the collection – but also the points of

commonality/connection/shared experiences' (Oxford feedback, 5e); 'how powerful theatre is in raising difficult issues and making people talk about them', and highlighted 'how women are treated in society and that it really needs to change' (Belgrade feedback, 5e). UK audience repeatedly called for theatres to programme more of this kind of work, as they recognised that they plays had enabled contextualised cross-cultural conversations and connections in societies that are increasingly fragmented, providing a space for people to think about how they themselves can continue the conversations begun at the events.

However, it was a real struggle to convince programmers to give us space to stage the extracts: The Royal Court first agreed to launch the series, but after a long conversation and the key person passing away unexpectedly, the event fell through, despite the Royal Court's International Playwrights' Programme, which seems to replicate the earlier BBC model. The Bush in Shepherd's Bush area of London, a champion of 'exciting new voices that tell contemporary stories', was also very interested in our showcase; but nothing materialised. We began to realise that the assumption that the work may not be of a professional standard, and reservations regarding audience interest, i.e. bums on seats, were huge factors in programming. Although the Oxford Playhouse agreed to host a launch event, it was in a small upstairs rehearsal room, and the artistic manager was fairly nervous and sceptical about the event, and surprised when it sold out in advance, and was over-subscribed on the day. Even the Belgrade theatre manager, who supported us magnificently and who leads in programming diverse new work, was surprised at audience reactions to the work and event. So again, the pattern re-emerges: what we already know and trust defines what we will continue to know and engage with.

But let's change this, with the help of young people who are powerful and energised. An example of how we are trying to shift knowledge bases is AWPN's work with the Royal African Society's Africa Writes programme. We are using new plays and creating toolkits to enable teachers to feel confident that they have the material and skills to support children in exploring and expressing their own cultures, identities and histories in their diverse communities. A school in NE London reported that a parent commented, 'it's so nice to see her child be picked for a school performance for once and that she really felt like her culture was being represented' (Afra Cory, Stoke-Newington school, 22 May 2019 email).

Another positive example of publishing that challenges limited economic models is the African Books Collective (www.africanbookscollective.com) based in Oxford as a non-profit worldwide marketing and distribution outlet for over 3,000 print titles from Africa, covering scholarly, literature and children's books, of which 900 are also eBooks, in English, African languages and translations into and from African languages into a diverse range of languages including Japanese. It was founded and is owned and governed by a group of African publishers, with 182 independent and autonomous African publishers from 22 countries participating. Their collaborative, network model is the key to maintaining and possibly expanding cultural diversity in the artistic knowledge and practises we share and hope to pass on in the current economic climate.

As individual academics, artists or as students, we use tasters in whatever spaces we can access: a small room in a building, or on the edges of or outside a dominant space. I was at a recent *Black Dance: A Contemporary Voice* conference in Leicester where dancers were being advised to teach online, make videos of themselves and their work and so circumvent prohibitive systems that make funding hard to access or visibility a challenge. So look for alternative and rehearsal spaces and performance spaces – like shop-fronts. It is also worth exploring the potential of new media. It is clear that internet access in Africa is limited, but that this is growing rapidly: in 2015, GSM reported that, 'The mobile industry in Sub-Saharan Africa continues to scale rapidly, reaching 367 million subscribers in mid-2015' (2018), and by 2017 there were 455m subscribers in the region representing a 43% penetration (2018a). And, although online design is not necessarily supportive of those on the margins, the platforms can be co-opted and subverted – Twitter is a powerful medium where one can gain attention for an idea or performance.

Ultimately as artists and academics, we have some control over the gatekeeping; and we need to be mindful of our own roles in the creation and curation of archives as we referee, edit, prescribe, publish and teach work; considering how the linguistic and embodied languages, forms, texts, materials we draw on is defining and hopefully challenging theatre and dance for the future.

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(e)merging through *Wreckage:* activating, agitating and archiving a performative proxemics through/as ruin

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Abstract

In 2011, an unexpected performance collaboration between two Eastern Cape based performance companies, UBOM and First Physical, took place at the National Arts Festival. *Wreckage* excited in its possibility and expectation and from its first reviews the work provoked controversy. A fractious online dialogue ensued which was something that both companies took delight in, given that the work intended, from the outset, (and as its title *Wreckage* suggests), to invoke the difficulty of its subject matter (shipwrecked histories of the Eastern Cape, South Africa) and the challenges of its form (the aesthetic collision of the two companies very different dramaturgical approaches). In his review of the work, Mike van Graan stated that "*Wreckage* is one of the finest, most revolutionary pieces of collaborative art to ever be presented at this South African National Arts Festival" (Mike van Graan, Artsblog, 3 July 2011). In response to this claim, this research considers the political significance and performance consequence of this collaborative collision. Discussion explores the ways that the production activates, agitates and archives alternate embodiments/narratives of identity that position themselves against official versions of institutionalised power and traditional performance forms. The search for the particularity of its vision and production to perform its own choreopolitical stance will be investigated.

PAPER NOT AVAILABLE AT TIME OF PUBLICATION

Laughter as an ethical choice' in the Second Chance Theatre Project

Dr Veronica Baxter

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Abstract

Thematic strand: How do the transdisciplinary approaches in performance make visible new pedagogies of hope in Freirian terms?

The paper will discuss the impact of laughter and comedy as artistic and dramaturgical choices in creating theatre with offenders in Pollsmoor Prison and in a parole theatre company, both part of the Second Chance Theatre Project. To this end the paper will examine Charlotte Wood's (The Guardian, 9 August, 2018) provocation that laughter brings about "a lightness, of joy, the sense of possibility". Arguably in this context, laughter also offers resistance to the socially-constructed scripts that dehumanise and stigmatise people. The making of performances, *Mission I('m)Possible* (2018) and *Being Young* (2019), will be discussed in relation to development of the performances, style, audience responses and the post-performance evaluation. The work of Paulo Freire, specifically Pedagogy of Hope, will be discussed in relation to the Second Chance Theatre Project. The Second Chance Theatre Project is a collaboration between UCT's Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies and Dept. of Social Development.

PAPER NOT AVAILABLE AT TIME OF PUBLICATION

PART III - PANEL DISCUSSION

Paper towards the development of the Panel Discussion

Dance Pedagogy and arts Integration: access and inclusion

Dr Charlotte Svendler Nielsen

University of Copenhagen, Department of Nutrition, Exercise, Sports, research cluster

Dr Gerard M. Samuel:

UCT: Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies

Abstract

This paper brings together the 'lived spaces' (Van Manen, 1990) from the dance classroom into the academic cauldron to examine some of the navigations of an integrated arts research-based project undertaken by dance teachers, artist-teachers, choreographers and researchers from Copenhagen, Denmark and Cape Town, South Africa since 2016. Dr Gerard M. Samuel and Dr Charlotte Svendler Nielsen consider their roles in re-evaluating arts integration, addressing challenges to access and dismantling barriers to inclusive education. Samuel suggests 'silent pedagogies' whilst Svendler Nielsen advocates 'videographic participation' as new and hopeful (Freirean) pathways to their immersive praxis.

Keywords

Integrated-arts pedagogies, South Africa-Denmark, collaboration

Introduction

Charlotte: The form of this paper is purposeful. Its dialogical approach is central to the way we work in all processes of the arts-integrated research-based project[51] entitled 'Red Apples - Green Apples' which began in 2016/2017 and which has continued since then. Hence, this form has also begun to feel natural to us when we develop and share our thoughts about this project, and it may be the best way to convey how our ideas form, adapt and shift as we thus

[51] The Red Apples, Green Apples integrated arts research-based project based at the twin Universities of Cape Town and Copenhagen has enjoyed support from the Danish Ministry of Research and Innovation and the Danish Ministry of Culture and Palaces. It began in 2016/2017 and was located in Primary schools in both countries.

embody the thoughts that are guiding the project in all aspects of it. Gerard will start this dialogue.

Gerard: When asked to introduce my research focus, I am often confused as to whether to adhere to the domain that is all things contemporary dance, or embrace my role as a dance pedagogue. Interestingly, I had first come across that term whilst teaching in schools for children with disabilities in Denmark and noticed the marking for some who teach and what for me was those who in addition, counsel. So, what is the calling of the teacher - as counsellor? Is she a mediator, facilitator, confidant or in the South African, isiZulu setting as I understand, the word for priest and teacher is the same-*umfundisi*. What is the role of the teacher – in our case 'artist-teachers' - who come to schools as 'foreigners' with a practice and aims that are different from those that already exist in the school? For this paper, we would like to unpack what we see as access to arts education and speak to some of the challenges.

Charlotte: Through our projects in schools we strive to give access to arts education to children who otherwise do not have much of that in their schools or anywhere else, but also, we aim to develop teaching strategies that teachers could use to provide more arts education even within their limitations e.g. in terms of resources and curriculum. We also question why such approaches are important – what is the value of this kind of work to these specific children? Part of the answer to this is about inclusion; meaning to use the arts to facilitate acknowledgement of all our differences and from this to develop better social relationships within the school class. A bi-product might be that it also helps the children to feel good, have more fun and therefore they might also learn more of the subject matter. To more deeply explore this, we examine what happens when we begin to combine dance with other creative arts like visual arts and design in our approaches and methods to teaching children. This work comes of the long tradition in creative dance of other pedagogues such as in South Africa, Jennifer Van Papendorp and Sharon Friedman (1997), and in Britain Jacqueline Smith-Autard (1994) who introduced the 'midway model' illustrating how process and product are equally important when we teach dance for education.

Gerard: I will begin with a very brief overview of what we have called 'the Red Apples - Green Apples' project and its iterations in 2017 in South Africa, and in Denmark later in 2017 which

we will refer to as Phase 1. The team who initiated this project comprised a diverse group: researchers, dance choreographers, visual arts specialist educators and students. We focused strongly on collaborative methods and much time was spent in consultation and redesign as the artist-educators consulted with researchers and interrogated the artists' methods - theoretical insights were as such, inspiring the floor of the class room. What I recall most was an openness to co-teach towards the larger goals of not only what we wanted to share with the learners, but also how or what kinds of experiences we desired to impart. This became a primary objective. It is, however, correct to observe that we enjoyed the ultimate luxury of teaching a class of 20 learners managed by two artist-educators (co-leaders), as well as often one adult recording the process, and a younger student acting as an additional facilitator.

In combining the rudiments of Nature and its primary elements: Water, Air, Earth and Fire for our lessons/experiments we strove to integrate these 'facts' with the more social concerns of the planet and the current topic of climate change. Cape Town at the height of that summer was experiencing a severe drought and some water restrictions were already in place. The form of the workshops shifted from an exploration of objects associated with the elements in Nature to e.g. an experience of Air/Wind. We had great fun swirling about a very large sheet of assembled plastic which began its life as a symbol for the oceans and quickly morphed into billowing clouds and great gusts of the 'Cape Doctor' (South easterly winds). Finger tappings and greater, more noisy thudding evoked thunder storms and hail and were experimented through both fine and large motor control in the body. These so-called separate dance and creative movement exercises were reinforced in skilled craft making workshops during which the children fashioned their own windsocks with wildly imaginative figureheads. The '*mannetjies'* (the little men) as they became quickly known, grew into an integrated parade that cavorted in the garden on the final day where a few parents and others from the staff of the Peter Clarke Arts Centre, in the suburb of Newlands where the week was hosted, gathered to learn what the children had been exploring.

A very similar pattern of experimentation anchored in interdisciplinarity, co-operation and creativity took place in the school in Copenhagen. After the first day, the teaching group immediately reflected on the bi-lingualism of Danish and English, and the distinction that created for the non-Danish speaking artist-educators. Each challenge, in this case to be understood even at a fundamental level, presented an opportunity for reflection on 'taken

for granted' pedagogic tools which had to rapidly be understood and addressed. Once more we were supported by co-educators and the relatively small classroom sizes. In Copenhagen, we also explored the school site more widely working in the playground, along pathways, stairwells and in open and closed spaces. Several other classes watched as eager audiences on the final day when classroom spaces were festooned with artworks of proteas, Table Mountain and the recognisable skyline of Copenhagen.

Charlotte: Since those first weeks in 2017, we have been able to go back to the school in Cape Town twice a year for some days. At these bi-annual workshops we explore ways to integrate the art forms for the children to learn to use embodied and visual methods as means of expression.


Picture 1 and 2: Copy, contrasting and complementing using bodies and colour (photographer: Author's own collection)

The workshops have so far been centered around ideas of 'relationships between cultures' – 'cultures' referring to the children's homes and school as spaces in their everyday lives, and we have further elaborated this to focusing on 'crossing borders' in a broad sense; for example of our educational cultures, usual practice of the different art forms, but also of culture and nature. All the previous themes have been elaborated further in a workshop based on the topic of 'patterns' including tasks in which the children had to find patterns at

home and in the school environment. We talked about the concept of patterns - which patterns do we know? Family patterns, movement patterns, eating patterns, patterns in nature and so forth. We also explored movement patterns as pathways in space, both doing and drawing experiences of own and observation of others' pathways.

Gerard: I return to Phase 1 of the project to explore further what we see happening in the processes we initiate, and what might be important from a pedagogical viewpoint to be successful in achieving our aims. With reference to the Dutch educator Max van Manen (1990) we can do this by describing what we experience to be "significant pedagogic moments."

Charlotte: I, for example, observed such a moment during one of Gerard's lessons in which he momentarily became mute and which I termed to be a moment of 'silent pedagogy'.

Gerard: My teaching experience in Copenhagen and Cape Town took strength from having worked with children who are deaf or hard of hearing, so I entered into this 'silent pedagogy' in which the visual cues are paramount. Instead of a reliance on English to Danish translation, and (worse) 'instruction', the children's urge to explore and extend movements was mostly encouraged. Working in a kind of 'sign language for the creative movement class' which I acknowledge as culturally specific given the various sign languages in the world e.g. British Sign Language and American sign language and the even more complex issues of dialects (consider that in the People's Republic of China there are at least two sign languages in operation). I was able to work through my need to anchor the Laban notion of 'pathways in space' and still see a fruitful outcome. In that pedagogic moment we were able to achieve not only important, jointly agreed structural goals, but also the children's various attempts at a range of qualities of movement. This rejection of the deficit model as if children need to be fixed and are intrinsically incomplete is perhaps one of the cornerstones of our approach when working with and for the children in their encounter with unfamiliar aspects of knowledge. We become joint knowledge producers and partners with varying roles.

Charlotte: I would like to expand a bit further on the child centered approach to our work and illustrate how the use of photographing and recording of video are methods we use for the research dimension of the project in order to catch the bodily actions and expressions in a visual mode.

Picture 3: Children filming (Photographer: Authors' own collection)

In a phenomenologically inspired videographic research process which in some articles I have called 'videographic participation' (e.g. Svendler Nielsen, 2012), it is essential that the media both assists in documentation and 'note-taking', as well as in creating new insights to, and giving room for, the participant's first-person perspectives communicating both the verbal and the nonverbal dimensions of their experiences. We can 'observe' what they find interesting through 'their eyes' so to speak.

Gerard: I found the children videoing to be a particularly affirming method which I observed that Charlotte was using most comfortably. She is not afraid of the children doing something 'wrong' or breaking the camera equipment. I think this trust in the children is what has yielded so many personal insights from their viewpoints.

Picture 4: Children filming (Photographer: Authors' own collection)

Now, as these children get older - how do we plan to continue to experiment, explore, and have fun? What we propose via our 'alternate' methods embracing drawings, video clips by the children themselves, songs and dances that they choose to sing and dance, is a proposal and a possibility for teaching and learning which might be especially relevant for children to feel included in environments of cultural diversity and in contexts of migration. Our interest in the coming phases of the project is also a role of advocacy of e.g. UNESCO goals, daCi goals and a burning Human Rights passion from the South African role players many of whom come from a history of apartheid and discrimination. Whilst we may appear to strive for a utopia for children everywhere, we are aware that our apples need many 'suns' in which to ripen.

Charlotte: A last, and more overall issue, is to come back to the notion of access itself. In UNESCO terms (UNESCO, 2010) access to arts education is about giving access or possibility to participate in arts educational activities at all. In our project, 'access' is more about *how* our developed arts-integrated pedagogy allows different ways of being part of the activities which might open the activities to become more 'inclusive'. This happens in two ways: 1) By undertaking activities with a fairly open approach which means that there are no specific end results and room is given for the learners' own solutions, and 2) By giving the learners opportunities to observe others through photographing and filming thereby indirectly inspiring them to reflect as they make choices of what and who to focus on.

Gerard: The children were given a homework task and from a list of ten words (including: frame, border, threshold) invited to choose a few words and then capture what for them was an articulation of its meaning. Supplied with disposable cameras, they set off and surprised me and perhaps others in their class. This invited a further dance.

Picture 5. A photograph taken with a disposable camera by Onako. How does this image illustrate what she understands of the concept of 'threshold'? How can we dance this border?

Conclusion

Charlotte: Referring to UNESCO goals - giving access to the arts or even the possibility to participate in the arts at all, we still ask here in our project, was 'the Red Apples – Green Apples' project more about how our arts-integrated pedagogy unfolded or how we could allow different ways of being part of an integrated arts-based research activity?

Gerard: Another question we could discuss is how can we convince mathematics or language teachers among others to come and explore with us? What can we say about the integrated arts classroom? What is it or how should it be?

Charlotte and *Gerard*: And, how is that 'lived space' we have created a re-enforcement of shared knowledges from all our cognate disciplines that allows us, learners and teachers, to arrive at multiple points of understanding from all of these various pathways?

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PART IV - WORKSHOPS

Before Naming: Immediacy as a compositional tool to exercise the movement of the present

Kristina Johnstone and Thalia Laric

The 'post-' and 'de-' in post-colonial and de-colonising cues us to the critical operations of time in any artistic practice that aims to be post- and de-. Time, as described by Merleau-Ponty and Mbembe, is 'that which one inevitably encounters on the path to subjectivity' (in Mbembe, 2017: 120). Quoting Mbembe further, he writes that 'time is born out of the contingent, ambiguous, and contradictory relationship we maintain with things, with the world, or with the body and its doubles' (ibid:121). Time, in other words, has the ability to be conjured. Its closest place of experience is in the body where the senses (seeing, hearing, touching, feeling, smelling, tasting) are attended to. Through our shared artistic work, we propose a practice that trains the senses to guide compositional choices. A focus on sensory information lets us access, sharpen, heighten and even distort perception. By staying in a perceptual realm, in a space before naming takes place, immediacy emerges as a compositional tool. By not fixing composition to predetermined plans, time is freed from the confines of things we've already thought of before, making it possible for new powers to be unleashed as it falls to the hands of the players and the public. Our masterclass, with live music, focuses on composing through the senses with special attention to the workings of time.

(See also Paper above)

Dinki-mini Workshop Notes

Lisa Wilson

UCT: Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies

Cultural context

Dinki-mini originates from the Congolese word *ndingi* which means lamentation or funeral song (Cultural Information Systems of the Americas, 2011). Dinki-mini is a group dance and song ritual in the cultural practices of Jamaica, held to cheer the family of a deceased person. Dinki-mini, an African-derived wake tradition, was an integral part of the mourning process in rural communities. Dinkis are celebratory occasions (Jamaica Cultural Development Commission, 2016). Although associated with death, the music is lively, joyous, and exciting, intending to cheer the family and friends of the dear person. Dinki-mini was practised openly throughout slavery but is now done mainly during our annual festival celebration and at cultural stage shows. In a decolonial sense, the dinki-mini practice is part of the Diaspora's re-membering and archiving of Africa.

Aesthetics

In defiance of the death that has occurred, the performance of the dinki-mini dance focuses on the pelvic region, a symbol of life and fertility. The dancers, male and female together, make suggestive rotations with the pelvis in an attempt to prove that they are stronger than death, and to lay claim to reproduction. During the performance, the male dancer bends one leg inwardly at the knee and makes high leaps on the other foot (Jamaica information Service [JIS] n.d.]. The unique leg movement (resembling a knock-knee) is accompanied by sinuous upper body movements.

Instrumentation & Song

An integral aspect of this dance is the use of the instrument called a *benta*. The *benta* is an ancient stringed instrument made of bamboo and a gourd resonator ("What is dinki mini…", n.d.). Other instruments associated with the dinki mini are *shakas, katta* sticks, condensed milk tins, grater and the *tamboo (*cylindrical shaped drum) and the *benta*. Dinki-mini songs

are characterised by the African musical arrangement of call and response arrangement. See two examples below:

Call: Yengeh mama gimme yengeh o

Yengeh mama gimme yengehResponse: Wai wai yengeh mama gimme yengeh

Call: Yengeh mama gimme yengeh o

Yengeh mama gimme yengeh

Response: Wai wai yengeh mama gimme yengeh

_____

Call: Tell mi which month di donkey can born

Response: Tell mi which month di donkey can born

Call: Tell mi which month di donkey can born

Response: Tell mi which month di donkey can born

All: January, February March April May June July Hahaha

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Beyond the museum-approach to the teaching of African Dance

Maxwell Xolani Rani.

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The notion of teaching "African" dance begs the questions: "what is African dance" and "what does it express culturally and socially?" Within the African dance community there remains on-going debate around the question of whether or not "African Dance" should be allowed to be taught outside of the areas of origin of the dances and whether these may be codified. Some believe, that teaching African dance beyond the borders of the African continent and in formalised settings, places may result in the tainting of the distinctive dance forms as they converge with western dance styles. This argument endorses a standpoint that seeks to separate an African cultural identity as opposed to one that allows for a universal type of dance meant to be learned and studied by the global community. We have seen that ballet, hip-hop, jazz, and tap dances, which all have unique cultural roots, have been disseminated internationally and therefore there is no reason why African dance cannot be taught, expressed, studied and internationally recognised as a performing art and the decolonisation of African dance teaching in the 21st century is vital. This class experience focuse on Pan Africanism teaching pedagogy to demonstrate that socio-traditional dances, providing that the teacher is informed about nuance, can be taught in a studio based arena.

PART V - PERFORMANCES

AND THEN…

Choreographed and performed by Jacki Job

And then is all about desire that lies beneath the surface and thus, often kept secret. Desire vibrates, agitates and encounters what seems strange and different to convention n. This production awakens and reveals what is secret and takes audiences on an insatiable journey of yearning that simultaneously palpates with compassion. And then… uncovers salacious appetites, cravings, and wants of something or someone that is not immediately available and remains out of reach. And then … is an original new work conceived, directed and performed in the signature innovative dance language of Jacki Job in close collaboration with pianist, José Dias. In addition, opera singer, Bukelwa Velem, and performers Ciaran Heywood and Tafara Nyatsanza expand the scope of the work. The nuanced stratums of desire are also evoked in the costumes, set and light designs, giving this production an "other-worldly", immersive atmosphere. And then … will fluster and inflame, tug at the heart and expand how we imagine and play ourselves in everyday life.

BEFORE NAMING

Choreographed and performed by Kristina Johnstone and Thalia Laric
Lighting by Andi Colombo

The performance of 'Before Naming' is a 30-minute dance work that exposes immediacy as a movement of the present in real time composition. *Before Naming* comes from the ongoing practice and the shared research interests of dancers Kristina Johnstone and Thalia Laric. The work uses the dancers' solo investigations of the mechanics of the body to develop movement material. With a score loosely guiding the dancers' attention, *Before Naming* uses an approach to composition that allows a performance to evolve in real time. Resisting narrative and the improvising artist's inner dramaturgical drive, the work arises from the interplay of dance, music, light and space, and the telepathic exchange of bodies attempting to share the same thinking place. ***(See also paper and workshop above)***

CONTACT

Choreographer: Janine Booysens
Performed by Michail Labans (male) & Carla Scholtz (female)

Song/Track title: Inner Quiet. Musician & Song Writer: Riley Lee. Record Label:Narada

A choreographic work exploring the bodily sensation and movement between two individuals in contact. The bond between male and female is the art of connecting on a deeper level. This bond is characterised by emotions such as affection and trust. The power when souls collide is felt by the sense of touch that transfers energy through movement. This energy produces a strong bond that connects for life. Sharing your soul is the ultimate connection, silence is one of the ways we connect spiritually.

Programme A: ENCOUNTERING "I":
A Mixed Bill

LIMITLESS SELF

Choreographer: Shaun Oelf
Performed by: Darion Adams, Gabriella Dirkse, Keenun Wales, Siphosethu Gojo, Tanzely Jooste, Vuyolwethu Nompetsheni (Jazzart Dance Theatre)
Music: Olafur Arnalds – Brim Nils/Anne Muller, Ludovico Einaudi-My Let
Lighting Design: Faheem Bardien
Costume Designer: Lee Kotze

Limitless Self is a new work that explores the pinnacles of discovering oneself. As an artist one constantly sharpens and deepens one's understanding of who we are as performers by being vulnerable and open; our joy, sorrow, pain and pleasure, juxtaposed with the discipline and self-reflection is necessary to create an artist and embrace the landscape of our lives.

BHAVASAAGARAM

Choreographed and performed: K Sarveshan
Music: Lilavan Gangen & Bronwen Clacherty

Bhavasaagaram literally translates into the Ocean of Existence. In South-East Asian philosophies, it is believed that you are born and re-born until you fulfil your purpose. This work seeks to move our collective focus on the physical to the metaphysical by sharing an alternative perspective on life and consciousness. Universal concepts and truths are woven into the narrative of this piece making it dynamic rather than linear. "Bhavasaagaram" begins with the portrayal of Brahman or Apeiron desiring to manifest himself as a living being and his journey into and through the human form. As he wades through the waters of

life, his consciousness develops as he is subjected to the various temperaments of the ocean. All is well until the 6 enemies: Kama (lust), Krodha (anger), Lobha (greed), Moha (attachment), Mada (pride) and Matsarya (jealousy), set in to toss and turn the tide against him. Realising and understanding the lessons imbedded in each experience, he detaches himself from his mortal coil and re-unites with his cosmic form.

MAHARENG: THE PASSAGE OF A BIRD

Written by Pule Welch
Based on a story by Samantha Nell
Directed by Sara Matchett
Assisted by Jackie Manyaapelo and Alfred Kunutsor
Choreography: Jackie Manyaapelo
Percussion: Alfred Kunutsor
Vocal Coach: Morné Steyn

Based on a myth by Pule Welch and Samantha Nell, has been collaboratively made by the CTDPS 3rd year Acting students. The production considers migration and its associated challenges through tracing the passage of a bird that was born to a human King and Queen. The bird is forced to take on human qualities. When the nation realise that the boy-child is in actual fact a bird, they cast the King, Queen and their bird-child out. Their only hope is for their child to remember how to fly. They take him into the Land of the Dead to drink from the River of Remembrance. He remembers how to fly and carves a path of stars through the sky for his parents to follow. However, after the King, Queen and Bird have been cast out, power struggles over who should lead the nation erupt, resulting in civil war. The land burns and everyone is forced to flee. Their only hope is to follow the path of stars carved by the bird in the sky. The production traces the many trials and tribulations they have to face on this journey to 'freedom'.

Various sites on Hiddingh Campus were utilised. The audience will journey from site to site.

PART VI - VIDEO PERFORMANCE

MOHAMAANA- IN LOVE

Freedom means the opportunity to create without confinement and the openness to encounter new revelation. Until mid 19th Century the Indian Classical Dance – Bharatanatyam (formerly "Sadir") was practiced exclusively by a community of female dancers called Devadasi-s. After India's independence from the British rule, many students were encouraged to learn Sadir. The dance was renamed as Bharatanatyam and was "revived" through middle-class appropriation. This made it bereft of its kernel- "sensuality". Yet, the puritanical view allowed even men to learn Bharatanatyam. Using myself, a male dancer as the canvas, I explore sensuality through "Mohamaana- in love", a choreographic work on Indian love poems penned in Tamil and Telugu languages. Penned by male poets who assumed the identity of the male deity's/ hero's female beloved through poetry, the metaphorical lyrical passages in this presentation communicate stories of love, lust, jealousy and agony through Bharatanatyam.

Performed by Giridhar Raghunathan

PART VII - IN CONVERSATION WITH…

And then...: A Conversation on Choreographic Praxis"

Butoh performance as an aesthetic lens from which to probe questions of liminality, identity and body will be part of this witnessed discussion that is led by Prof. Mark Fleishman and unpacked by published Butoh authors: Dr Rosemary Candelario (University of Texas) and Jackï Job (UCT). Candelario will focus on job's latest work And then ... in relation to her PhD research, as well as reflect on performance theorisation and a situatedness of theatre-dance research in southern Africa.

Jay Pather and Catherine Boulle: *Counting eights in monotone while we re-arrange the deckchairs:* Clinging to the conservatoire in the face of catastrophe

UCT's Curriculum Working Group document published in 2018 states that: "*In the arts curriculum … African genres and art forms occupied a fringe status in the curriculum, while the Global North was reflected powerfully in how texts, scripts and bodies of knowledge were selected and enacted. "*What do findings like these mean for the conservatoire-driven creative art department that originates in the global North with its emphasis on replication and mastery of technique over original thought and invention? In this conversation Pather begins with assembling a series of fragments to create the turbulent background to these questions: the state of urgency that marks contemporary South Africa, the black body and the groundswell of abjection. Pather and Boulle will then converse with the audience around the value of closer readings of public spheres, interdisciplinarity and live art.

Dr Mark Fleishman: **A conversation centred around an idea of 'Distributed Choreographic Labour' as manifest in seven collaborations between Magnet Theatre and Jazzart Dance Theatre between 1994 and 2007**.

Award winning, Cape Town based Magnet Theatre company has collaboration and interdisciplinarity as cornerstones of its performance practice. What happens when choreographers, musicians, dancers and theatre directors meet? How do diverse practitioners negotiate their individual expertise and also achieve artistic goals when multimodal approaches are at play? How does a research centered approach impact on creative works? What were some of these artists' success stories and challenges? What is erased in these artistic and research exchanges and what emerges? Dance, (e)merge, Theatre. Participants include **Alfred Hinkel, Jackie Manyaapelo** and **Neo Muyanga.**

PART VIII - BIOGRAPHIES

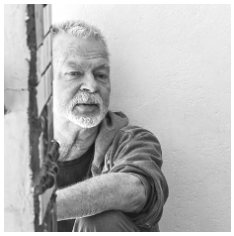
KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Dr Nadine George-Graves (BA, Yale; PhD, Northwestern) is a professor jointly appointed in the Department of Theatre and the Department of Dance at The Ohio State University. Prior to joining the faculty at OSU she taught for over 20 years at UCSD and Yale. Her work is situated at the intersections of African American studies, critical gender studies, performance studies, theatre history, and dance history. She is the author of *The Royalty of Negro Vaudeville: The Whitman Sisters and the Negotiation of Race, Gender, and Class in African American Theater, 1900-1940* and *Urban Bush Women: Twenty Years of Dance Theater, Community Engagement and Working it Out* as well as numerous articles on African American performance. She is the editor of *The Oxford Handbook of Dance and Theater*, a collection of border-crossing scholarship on embodiment and theatricality. She has also written on primitivity, ragtime dance, tap dance legend Jeni LeGon, identity politics and performance, competition, social change, early African American theater and the future of performance in the academy. She has given talks, led community engagement projects, and has served on many boards and committees. She is a past-president of the Congress on Research in Dance (CORD) and a founding member of The Collegium for African Diaspora Dance (CADD). Dr. George-Graves is also an artist and her creative work is part and parcel of her research. She is an adapter, director and dance theater maker. Her recent creative projects include *Architectura*, a dance theater piece about the ways we build our lives; Suzan-Lori Parks' *Fucking A* and *Topdog/Underdog*; *Anansi The Story King,* an original adaptation of *Anansi* stories using college students, professionals, and 4th graders; and *Sugar*, a digital humanities project at the nexus of creativity and scholarship.

Dr Rolando Vázquez is Associate Professor of Sociology and Diversity Fellow at University College Roosevelt. He coordinates since 2009 the Middelburg Decolonial Summer School together with Walter Mignolo. He co-authored the report of the Diversity Commission of the University of Amsterdam in 2016 under the direction of Gloria Wekker. Through his work he seeks to develop practices of thinking and learning that transgress the dominant frameworks of contemporaneity, heteronormativity and coloniality. His research on the question of precedence and relational temporalities seeks to overcome the western critique of modernity and contribute to the ongoing efforts to decolonize knowledge, aesthetics and subjectivity.

PRESENTERS

Alan Parker is a Physical Performance Lecturer at the Rhodes University Drama department in Makhanda, South Africa. He holds a Masters degree in Drama, specialising in choreography, from Rhodes University and is currently completing his PhD through the University of Cape Town in Live Art, Interdisciplinary and Public Art. In 2016 Alan was a Live Art Fellow at the Institute for Creative Arts, and in 2017, served as a Writing Fellow. As a choreographer he has presented numerous works at the National Arts Festival in Makhanda (2006-2019), the Dance Umbrella in Johannesburg (2007-2018), the Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees in Oudtshoorn (2008/2010), the Cape Town Fringe (2015/2016) and the Live Art Festival in Cape Town (2017 and 2018).



Alfred Hinkel established his first dance company, Die Namakwalandse Dans Geselskap, inNababeep and Okiep in the Northern Cape in 1976 which was also the start of his working relationship with Dawn Langdown and John Linden. In 1986 he bought the Jazzart Dance Studio and the next two decades saw him transform this studio into one of South Africa's premiere performing arts training and performance institutions— the renamed *Jazzart Dance Theatre*. In the early 1990s he was instrumental in establishing two dance companies in Durban: *Phenduka dance theatre*, later to be revived by Sibonakaliso Ndaba and Sifiso Kweyama and *Siwela Sonke*, today under the direction of Jay Pather. During his tenure as artistic director of *Jazzart* (June 1986 – Feb 2010) the impact of the company's work resonated within the South African dance industry both in the realm of training as well as performance. Alfred has received numerous awards for choreography, service to the community and commitment and contribution to dance in SA.

Catherine Boulle is a writer and researcher based at the Institute for Creative Arts (ICA), University of Cape Town. Since completing her Master's in English Literature at the University of Oxford, focusing on feminism in African-American theatre, her work at the ICA has included curating the Institute's lecture series and symposiums, and initiating new research on live art in South Africa. She co-edited Acts of Transgression: Contemporary Live Art in South Africa (2019) with ICA Director, Jay Pather.

Dr Charlotte Svendler Nielsen is Associate Professor, Head of Studies at the Department of Nutrition, Exercise and Sports, research cluster "Embodiment, Learning and Social Change," at the University of Copenhagen (DK). She is currently conducting a research project with an educational perspective in dance and visual arts in Cape Town and Copenhagen and is a Collaborator of the Finnish strategic research project "The Arts as Public Service: Strategic Steps towards Equality" (ArtsEqual) 2015-2020. Since 2019 she has been Chair of the European Network of Observatories in the Field of Arts and Cultural Education linked to UNESCO (ENO). She is Co-editor of the Routledge book series "*Dance, Young people and Change*" (2015, 2018 and 2020) and has been an Executive Board member of Dance and the Child International since 2009.

Gavin Krastin is an award-winning multidisciplinary artist and curator working predominantly in live art performance. He lectures at Rhodes University Dept of Drama while also fulfilling the role of Project Manager for First Physical Theatre Company. Rather than using performance as a means of escaping the politics of the body or transcending abjection, Gavin inhabits time-based art to occupy and subvert notions of presentation and representation, often resulting in artworks that are

full of beauty, but not always easy to stomach. His multifaceted practice aims to nurture & inspire an inventive & imaginative ethos in the realisation of artistic production, education & curation that feeds the performance industry and our communities. He has showcased his work across South Africa & in countries such as USA, Canada, England, Wales, Scotland, Czech Republic, Germany, Netherlands, Brazil & Switzerland. In 2017/2018 Gavin founded "Arcade", a nomadic platform & 'invisible curriculum' for young multidisciplinary artists with interests in experimental durational & site-based performance. See www.gavinkrastin.com for more.

Dr Gerard M. Samuel is Associate Professor and Head of Dance at the University of Cape Town Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies, the Convener of Post Graduate studies in Dance, Editor of the *South African Dance Journal*, and Chair of this *Confluences* international dance conference. He is an advocate of disability arts in South Africa and in Copenhagen. He was awarded his PhD for a thesis: Dancing the Other in South Africa (UCT 2016) which earned the comment that "Gerard Samuel's thesis makes a highly significant intervention in Dance and Performance Studies in terms of its original argument about how the category of 'age' is used [as] part of 'othering' process … coining the term 'body-space' as a theoretical tool to observe bodies and dancing as states of becoming." His latest publication is co-authored with Charlotte Svendler Nielsen in *The International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*.

Giridhar Raghunathan is a Bharatanatyam dancer trained by his Guru Mrs. Supriya Ravikumar, in India. He has been learning Bharatanatyam for 22 years. He graduated with a Master of Fine Arts in Bharatanatyam from Bharathidasan University, India and also holds a Master of Technology degree in Medical Nanotechnology from India. He has been actively involved in dance as a performer, young choreographer and teacher. He is the founder and director of Shri Chakram School of Bharatanatyam. Giridhar has received several accolades both in national and international levels. He has performed Bharatanatyam in notable venues in India, Canada and USA. Giridhar has presented his artistic work in the form of talks and performative experiences in national and international dance conferences. In his performances, Giridhar primarily works on the theme of gender inclusion and queer implication through bodily expression. He addresses gender, sensuality and alternative sexual orientations through his dance performances and research using "gender-inclusive" Bharatanatyam dance as the medium.

jackï job is an academic researcher and lecturer at the CTDPS, UCT as well as an active theatre-maker and director, dancer, choreographer and producer. Her career has been eclectic, with performances ranging from experimental solo theatre work, to choreographing classical operas, as well as hosting a South African television show. Since the start of her independent solo career in 1994, she has created more than 65 full-length theatre works, with performances in Africa, Asia and Europe. job has engaged in dynamic interdisciplinary collaborations with an array of artists and lectured at universities across Japan. Her awards include the David and Elaine Potter Fellowship, the Bunkacho Cultural Fellowship, and the National Research Foundation's Thuthuka Grant. job is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Cape Town. Her practice as research methodology develops a performance philosophy that interrogates liminality to contribute to the meaning of personhood and transformation in South Africa.

Janine Booysens hails from Cape Town and is a Contemporary Dance Choreographer and Teacher. Trained initially in Classical Ballet, her exposure to Modern Jazz, Hip Hop, African and Contemporary Dance influenced her to further pursue dance professionally. In 2006 she was accepted into the Jazzart Dance Theatre Young Adult and Job Creation Programme and in 2009 into the UCT

School of Dance where she graduated in 2011 with a Dance Teacher's Diploma with majors in contemporary dance and Pedagogy with Distinction in African Dance. Currently Janine freelances as a choreographer, teacher and guest workshop facilitator at Government Organisations and tertiary and secondary institutions including the UCT CTDPS, D.F. Malan High School, and Jazzart Dance Theatre. Other highlights include choreographing for festivals and productions including the Baxter Dance Festival, Dancers Love Dogs, Grahamstown National Arts Festival, UCT annual showcase and presenting workshops at the Panpapanpalya Dance Congress 2018 in Adelaide, Australia.

Dr Janine Lewis (TAU Fellow, HERSA graduate; Woman Researcher of the year (2017) and twice Teaching Excellence award recipient at TUT), is Professor and Head of Department of Entertainment Technology at the Tshwane University of Technology, South Africa. She has experience in curricula transformation and programme design; and inter-disciplinary learning-centred teaching. Her direct fields of specialisation include theatre for empowerment, physical theatre, acting, and directing/devising public performances. Lewis has taught internationally at the Ohio State University USA (2007), the Hunter Gates Physical Theatre Academy in Edmonton, Canada (2007) and the 6th Annual International Festival of Making Theatre in Athens, Greece (2010); and has presented papers at various conferences in countries across the world and South Africa. Lewis has devised, directed and performed more than 46 productions, and continues to use her extensive knowledge of the theatre for design and management purposes.

Jay Pather is a choreographer, curator and academic. He is a Professor at the University of Cape Town where he directs the Institute for Creative Arts. He was a Fulbright Scholar in Dance Theatre at New York University and since then his work has travelled widely, both locally and internationally, extending across discipline, site and culture. His research and artistic work deploys site-specific, interdisciplinary, intercultural and decolonial strategies to frame matters of social justice. Recent publications include articles in *New Territories: Theatre, Drama, and Performance in Post-apartheid South Africa* (M. Meaufort, Ed.) and *Acts of Transgression*, which he edited with Catherine Boulle. He curates the *Infecting the City* Public Art Festival; the ICA *Live Art Festival*, the *Afrovibes Festival* in The Netherlands, the *Biennale for Body, Image and Movement* in Madrid and the Spielart Festival in Munich. He has been appointed adjunct curator for Zeitz MOCAA, and recently, co-curator for Live Art for Season Africa 2020 throughout France.

Jeannette Ziady holds a Btech degree in dance teaching and is a certified RAD Ballet Teacher since 1999. She is currently appointed at Tshwane University of Technology as Dance Lecturer while completing a Masters Degree in dance fitness. She has enjoyed a professional career in theatre, performance, teaching, and choreography; and essentially integrated this experience in her work within dance education. Within the arena of dance education, she has been appointed as Senior Education Specialist for FET Art subjects, Gauteng Subject Advisor for Dance Studies. Further she was appointed Chief Marker for Practical and Theory Dance Grade 12, and served as Gauteng provincial moderator for the subject and on the marking panel of the Western Cape. Additionally, she worked with the CAPS National Training Team and was lead teacher for Gauteng training. She continues to work with the Department of Basic Education on an ad hoc basis. She integrates this experience into her work at TUT in developing course material.

Jill Pribyl has been creating dance theater works for over twenty years. She is a former Fulbright Scholar at Makerere University, Uganda, where she taught for more than ten years in the Department of Performing Arts and Film. In 2003, together with the first dance graduates of Makerere University, Pribyl formed Okulamba Dance Theater. Since its inception, Okulamba Dance Theater has

performed in the Harare International Festival of the Arts in the Nairobi Peace Festival and throughout Uganda. Her work address the demands of human relationships, the absurdity of daily life, issues of identity, gender, culture and age, and the cyclical nature of life. She created a study abroad program for New York University in Uganda that has been running for the past thirteen years. The program that she co-directs focuses on cross-cultural collaborations and community building through the arts. Pribyl holds a Master's Degree (University of New Mexico), and a CMA from the Laban/Barteniff Institute of Movement Studies, NYC. She is currently a PhD. candidate at UCT.

Juanita Finestone-Praeg is an Associate Professor in Performance Studies and Choreography at Rhodes University. She has worked within the academy, professional theatre and community contexts for over 30 years. As the longest standing member of First Physical Theatre Company, Juanita has contributed to the company's vision and been actively involved in all its research, educational, community, performance and choreographic programmes. She has been Artistic Director for the company 2010-2018 and has an active practice-as-research profile. In 2011, she was recipient of the Vice Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award at Rhodes University and was appointed Head of the Drama Department at Rhodes University from 2013-2015. Juanita has recently contributed to a book on playwright, Reza de Wet (2018) and is currently in the final throes of completing her PhD entitled: *The political promise of choreography and/as research: First Physical Theatre Company's manifesto and repertory, 1993-2015.*

K Sarveshan is a Bharatanatyam dancer trained at Bharata Kalanjali, Chennai under the tutelage of the renowned Naatyacharya VP Dhananjayan and Shanta Dhananjayan. Born and raised in Cape Town, he has explored various genres of movement, which include Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Traditional folk dances of India, Yoga, African Dance, Flamenco and Contemporary Dance at Savitri Naidoo's Vadhini Indian Arts Academy. Currently, Sarveshan is an active member of Leela Samson's Spanda Dance Company and has been cast in "Conference of the Birds," a work of Anikaya Dance Company (Boston, USA) directed by Wendy Jehlen**.**

Dr Karen Vedel is Associate Professor in the Section of Theatre and Performance Studies, Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen. She completed her PhD thesis in 2005 with a focus on Danish dance historiography 1900-1975 and the structural and discursive mechanisms of exclusion. Her more recent research interests include site specific performance in contested spaces, collaborAative methodologies in intercultural research and the productive tensions between different systems of knowledge. Since 1997 Karen has been engaged in conversations and practical collaborations with South African colleagues relating to dance, theatre and performance in educational frameworks.

Dr Ketu H. Katrak is Professor of Drama at the University of California, Irvine and the author of *Contemporary Indian Dance: New Creative Choreography in India and the Diaspora* as well as *Politics of the Female Body: Postcolonial Women Writers*, among other publications on African and Postcolonial Writers, Performance and Feminist Theory. Katrak grew up in Bombay, India.

Kristina Johnstone is a Belgian South African performer, teacher and choreographer. Born in Belgium into a multiracial family, questions of culture and identity have always found their way into life and work. Kristina completed a Bachelors and Masters degree in Dance at the University of Cape Town, where she has also been a regular guest lecturer. From 2007-2008 and 2013-2016, Kristina was based in Kampala, Uganda, where she managed the Dance Transmissions Festival, taught and created works in various dance communities and lectured at the Makerere University Department of Performing Arts and Film. She is currently working on an artistic PhD research project through the Wits School of Arts, which deals with questions of representation, contemporary dance and choreographic practices in postcolonial African contexts. She is a co-author of the book 'Post-Apartheid Dance: Many Bodies, Many Voices, Many Stories' published in 2012. kristina.helenajohnstone@gmail.com

Lisa Wilson is a Senior lecturer in the CTDPS, UCT. She is an artist academic whose creative and research output is mainly situated in the areas of dance pedagogy and dance education in African/Caribbean sites. She is the convenor of dance pedagogy undergraduate courses as well as the Post graduate Certificate of Education in dance. She has authored publications in leading education journals: the Caribbean Journal of Education; Journal of Dance Education; and Research in Dance Education and has published book chapters in volumes 8 and 9 of Dance Current Selected Research. She is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Cape Town.

Dr Marelize Marx van Heerden lectures Dance education, Music education and Philosophy of Education at the Faculty of Education, Nelson Mandela University, South Africa. She holds a Masters Degree in Music and a Doctorate in Education. Her doctorate regarded the potential of dance education to promote social cohesion in South Africa. She participated in a European Union mobility programme where she studied Cultural Sociology in Czech Republic. Her research interests include dance education, African philosophy, diverse meanings of community, ethno-cultural identity, ideas of self in relation to the other, becoming 'fully human', inter-cultural communication, nation building, peace education and national healing. Marelize is also a professional musician, cabaret artist and choreographer. She ran her own modern dance studio (AIDT), and was the official choreographer of the internationally acclaimed Nelson Mandela University choir (2005-2017), which won the traditional section of a World Choir competition in Austria with her choreography.

Dr Mark Fleishman is Professor of Theatre and Director of the Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies at the University of Cape Town. He is also a co-artistic director of Magnet Theatre, an independent theatre company established in 1987. He has created and directed many performance works for the company that have been performed nationally and internationally over the past 32 years and is involved in development projects in urban townships and rural communities using theatre as a tool for social justice and transformation**.** His articles have appeared in the *South African Theatre Journal, Contemporary Theatre Review* and *Theatre Research International* as well as in numerous edited collections, most recently in *The Routledge Companion to Theatre and Politics* (2019), *International Performance Research: The Unconditional Discipline?* (2017), and *Magnet Theatre: Three Decades of Making Space* (2016). He is editor of *Performing Migrancy and Mobility in Africa: Cape of Flows* in the Studies in International Performance series at Palgrave (2015).

Maxwell Xolani Rani is a lecturer at the CTDPS, UCT. He holds a MMus (Dance) degree. He is the founder and creator of the African dance technique called *Intsika* meaning the "pillar" or the "strengthener" and is experienced in teaching and choreographing most levels of African dance technique and its contemporary works and is convener for the courses which encompass practical and theoretical studies in African dance. Rani has produced, choreographed works and taught in South Africa, as well as in a variety of African countries, London, Brazil, Germany, US, China, Jamaica, France and Canada. He has presented papers at international conferences and is a published scholar. Rani has choreographed for movies including "Last Face" directed by Sean Penn (USA), Opera works such as "Porgy and Bess", and various Interdisciplinary theatrical works, most recently "Decolonising the African Dancing Body" at the Baxter Theatre.

Neo Muyanga is a composer, sound artist and librettist. His work traverses new opera, jazz improv and Zulu and Sesotho idiomatic song. He sang in township choirs before assimilating into the madrigal tradition while living in Italy in the 1990s. In 1996 he co-founded (with Masauko Chipembere) the duo, Blk Sonshine, and in 2008, co-founded (with Ntone Edjabe) the Pan African Space Station - a platform for cutting-edge Pan African music and sound art on the internet. His records include: *Blk Sonshine* (1999), *the Listening Room* (2003), *Fire, Famine Plague and Earthquake* (2007), *Good Life* (2009), *Dipalo* (2011), *Toro tse Sekete* (2015) and *Second-hand Reading* (2016). His stage productions include *A Memory of how it feels* (2010), *The Flower of Shembe* (2012), *The Heart of Redness* (2015) and *MAKEdbA* (2018). An alumnus of the Berliner Künstlerprogramm des DAAD (2016), he was also Composer-in-residence of the Johannesburg International Mozart Festival (2017), the National Arts Festival (2017) and the Stellenbosch International Chamber Music Festival (2018). He tours widely as a solo performer, bandleader and choral conductor.

Dr Rosemary Candelario is Associate Professor of Dance, Texas Woman's University. She writes about and makes dances engaged with butoh, ecology, and site-specific performance. Recent premieres include *aqueous* (2019, Kyoto Butoh Festival, Kyoto, Japan) and *100 Ways to Kiss the Trees* (2018, Denton, Texas). She is the recipient of the Oscar G. Brockett Book Prize for Dance Research for her book *Flowers Cracking Concrete: Eiko & Koma's Asian/American Choreographies* (Wesleyan University Press 2016). Rosemary is also the co-editor with Bruce Baird of *The Routledge Companion to Butoh Performance* (Routledge 2018) and the author of numerous journal articles. She holds a PhD in Culture and Performance from UCLA. www.rosemarycandelario.net

Dr Sara Matchett is Head of Theatre and Senior Lecturer in the CTDPDS, UCT. She is also an Associate Teacher of Fitzmaurice Voicework® and the Regional Director of the Fitzmaurice Institute for Africa and India. Her teaching profile centres around practical and academic courses that include, voice, acting, performance-making, applied theatre, and performance analysis. She is especially interested in transdisciplinary modes of creating. Her research explores the body as a site for generating images for the purpose of performance making and specifically focuses on investigating the relationship between breath and emotion, and breath and image, in an attempt to make performance that is inspired by a biography of the body. As co-founder and Artistic Director of The Mothertongue Project women's arts collective, Sara has experience in the field of theatre & performance nationally and internationally as a performance-maker, performer, director and facilitator.

Saranya Devan was born and raised in Durban, South Africa, contemporary and Bharathanatyam dancer, dance enthusiast, choreographer, researcher and theatre maker, Saranya is a Drama & Performance Studies honours graduate from the University of KwaZulu-Natal currently enrolled for an MMus (Dance) at the University of Cape Town and MA in Bharatanatyam at the University of Madras. Her interest in Indian classical dance inspired her to expand her knowledge by experimenting with a fusion of contemporary dance and Bharathanatyam to create pieces of work that offer an emotive message. Saranya aims to dance and create work 'with a purpose'.She is currently interrogating the impact of globalisation on the teaching and learning of Bharata Natyam in South Africa with special emphasis on issues ofinstitutionalisation, education, training and professionalism. Saranya recognises that dance centres around the body and that its role in the present time is as a political instrument of expression which writes a text in the heads and hearts of the spectators in the public space.

Sifiso Kweyama Director Jazzart Dance Theatre**.** Born and bred in KwaZulu-Natal, Sifiso has established himself as one of South Africa's leading teachers and choreographers. Sifiso started training in 1989 at Phenduka Dance Theatre in Durban and in 1993, he joined Jazzart Dance Theatre where he trained in Contemporary African Dance with Alfred Hinkel and was later employed as a company dancer. His accolades extend to the 2013 Choreographer of the Year Award at the KwaZulu-Natal Dance Link Awards in honour of his work Ngichaze, (Flatfoot Dance Company). In 2011, he was voted one of the top ten South African choreographers by the Mail & Guardian.

Thalia Laric is an independent dance-artist, choreographer and teacher from South Africa. Her area of interest is real-time composition and dance improvisation. She holds a Master's degree in Choreography from Rhodes University and a BA(Hons) degree in Dance from the University of Cape Town. She presents work independently in South Africa and The Netherlands and has performed professionally with First Physical Theatre Company, FTH:K Theatre Company and Underground Dance Theatre. She has taught at Rhodes University, University of Cape Town and AFDA School for Live Performance. She is also a leading teacher of Contact Improvisation. In 2016 she was awarded a Live Art Fellowship from the Institute for Creative Arts for her research in dance improvisation. In 2017 She completed an Artistic Residency with the Forgotten Angle Theatre Collaborative in Mpumalanga, and in 2018 she was awarded a Peter Hayes Award for Commitment and Excellence. thaliastella@gmail.com

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