



CONFLUENCES 5

HIGH CULTURE, MASS CULTURE, URBAN CULTURE- Whose Dance?

Proceedings of the Fifth South African Dance Conference

Hosted by the UCT School of Dance
Director – Gerard Samuel

University of Cape Town

16 – 19 July 2008

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Confluences 5
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Dear Delegates

It is with much pride that I have inherited the sterling efforts of my UCT colleagues with this **South African Dance Conference, Confluences 5** in 2008. A continual dialogue around the landscape of Dance and in particular of contemporary dance, provides a welcome anchor for what some may consider our rather ethereal art form.

The need to discover and explore the individual and collective thinking of dance scholars from a range of contexts with regard to 'High culture, Mass culture, Urban culture - whose dance?' is enriched by all our understandings.

The UCT School of Dance is very thankful for the generosity of our sponsors with whom we hope to forge strong relationships in the future. Our special thank you to :

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To all the **Confluences 5** keynote speakers, presenters and workshop facilitators, your insights will not only stimulate but provoke the necessary debate around Dance which we are delighted to referee over this historic period. As dance students, teachers, choreographers and dance directors **Confluences 5** allows us all to celebrate in the transformative power of Dance.

The UCT School of Dance extends its warm wishes to all our guests for a safe and invigorating experience whilst in Cape Town.

Yours sincerely

Gerard M. Samuel
Director: School of Dance

Part I – Keynote Speakers

Brenda Dixon Gottschild,

**RESEARCHING PERFORMANCE – THE (BLACK) DANCING BODY AS A
MEASURE OF CULTURE**

Guided by the premise that dance is a barometer of society, Prof. Dixon Gottschild measures the pulse of contemporary American cultural practice. By means of a slide lecture augmented with demonstrations on her own dancing body, she examines the pervasive Africanist presence in American culture and the sociopolitical implications of its invisibility. With dance as the focus and race the parameter, she reveals Africanisms in modern and post-modern dance and American ballet.

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[THIS MS. IS BASED ON THE AUTHOR'S ORAL PRESENTATION]

Acknowledging that we stand on the shoulders of our ancestors, I pour this libation and dedicate this presentation to two of my aesthetic ancestors—the two “Big B’s,” for whom the year 2004 was their centennial celebration and who are equals in greatness and in changing the climate of our cultural landscape from hot to cool: George Balanchine and William “Count” Basie.

And I pour this additional libation to honor the living legend of Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela, and the memory of Stephen Biko and the army of freedom fighters who made the ultimate sacrifice that allows me to stand here today in post-apartheid South Africa. Achè!

=====

“I’m trying to get close—make contact—with your warmth body, your aura body, your kirlean energy field body, your infra-red body. . .” Those lines are spoken to me by my husband, Hellmut Gottschild, in a movement theater work we created together titled *Tongue Smell Color*. As a German and an African American, we explore nationality, memory, guilt, gender, and race, sometimes zeroing in on the white male obsession with the black female body. In a scene titled “Touch-Skin Memories,” as he approaches and pursues me, Hellmut says, and let me repeat it for you: “I’m trying to get close—make contact—with your warmth body, your aura body,” and so on. I tell him he is trespassing, that those astral bodies he’s addressing are only a dancer’s imagery. He takes offense, saying that these bodies are real, exist, and can be sensed—that we all have many bodies that aren’t static but in constant flux. This statement sends me into a tailspin of body memories—black body memories, black female body memories, black enslaved female body memories and, as though in a trance, I slowly repeat the word “memories, memories, memories” until he cuts me off.

Yes, indeed: memories! The body remembers, the body re-members. The body speaks. The body tells us what is valued in the culture. Bodies are mirrors that absorb, remember and reflect society’s politics, art, religion, aesthetics, hopes, fears, strengths, failings—both the officially sanctioned versions and the sub-rosa, closeted taboos. Bodies are barometers measuring the pulse of society.

Let me begin by giving you a context. Probably all of you know that there are many kinds, many forms of dance and that dance is as old as humankind and has served many functions in different societies and in different eras. For example, in African and African American cultures—I use the term “Africanist” to embrace these two—so, in Africanist cultures, dance is an integral part of religious practice, and the deities present themselves to the community through the dancing bodies of the religious devotee, who dances when and as the spirit moves her. On the other hand, in many Protestant Christian sects, the dancing body is a “no-no” in religious practice and is regarded as the vehicle that leads to evil, rather than enlightenment. This is one example of what it means for us to think about dance as “a measure of culture” that points out what is valued or repressed in a given society.

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For the moment let us also think about dance as an embodied language. In a culture like ours that privileges words over movement—and, thus, reinforces the dichotomy between mind and body—there often exists a tension between the language of words and the language of movement. Often those people concerned with the language of words give short shrift to the language of movement. But the language of movement speaks to us as profoundly as words, although through different means and layers of experience. Now, inside each verbal language there are dialects, jargons,

neologisms, and so on. How does a language grow and change? Frequently by taking on elements of other languages. For example, in traveling back and forth between the United States and Germany, I find that I hear more and more American English words in German speech. Well, the same thing happens in movement, too. Like the spoken word, dance comes in many languages and they, too, receive impulses and infusions from other languages. A good example—and one of the focal points in my research—is the borrowing of Africanisms in so-called “white” dance forms. And, believe me, dance has been *enriched* by these imports—not corrupted.

Now, here’s where we enter the realm of the *politics* of dance and culture: Europeanist body languages and Africanist body languages have been speaking with each other ever since they first met and clashed over four centuries ago. But they are different languages! To illustrate this point, here is a quote from my book, *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance – Dance and Other Contexts*:

In traditional European dance aesthetics, the torso must be held upright for correct, classic form; the erect spine is the center—the hierarchical ruler—from which all movement is generated. It functions as a single unit. The straight, uninflected torso indicates elegance or royalty and acts as the absolute monarch, dominating the dancing body. This vertically aligned spine is the first principle of Europeanist dance, with arm and leg movements emanating from it and returning to it. The ballet canon is organized around this center. In fact, this structural principle is a microcosm of the post-Renaissance, colonialist world view. Like the straight, centered spine of its dancing body, Europe posited itself as the center of the world, with everything else controlled and defined by it.

Africanist dance idioms show a democratic equality of body parts. The spine is just one of many possible movement centers; it rarely remains static. The Africanist dancing body is polycentric: One part of the body is played against another, and movements may simultaneously originate from more than one focal point (the head and the pelvis, for example). It is also polyrhythmic (different body parts moving to two or more rhythms simultaneously), and privileges flexible, bent-legged postures that reaffirm contact with the earth (sometimes called a “get-down” stance). The component and auxiliary parts of the torso—shoulders, chest, rib cage, waist, pelvis—can be independently moved or articulated in different directions (forward, backward, sideward, or in circles) and in different rhythms. . . . As assessed by Africanist aesthetic criteria, the Europeanist dancing body is rigid, aloof, cold, and one dimensional. By Europeanist standards, the Africanist dancing body is vulgar, comic, uncontrolled, undisciplined, and, most of all, promiscuous.¹

Clearly, there is a “translation” problem going on here! Nevertheless, and despite different lexicons, the reason for dancing is like the reason for dreaming. Through dance or dreams we access thoughts, ideas, and metaphors that cannot be perceived in any

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other way. In fact, dance is a literature that is illegible in literal translation. Dance is dance, and words are words. Dancers know this to be true.

And who am I in all this, you might ask. I am a performing researcher who researches performance. The body is my medium, and I recognize that the body—the dancing body, the black dancing body—thinks, speaks, writes its signature across world history, whether we know it or not, whether we recognize it or not. There’s a language of the body and a language of the

word, and I simply do not intend to give the word the last word! The two are equal players—just as Africanist culture, Europeanist culture, and other world cultures are equals—none better than the other, just different. Writing is my *choreography for the page*ⁱⁱ—a dance in black and white interpolated in the medium of hard copy. My vocation is as much dependent on intuitive and affective actions and processes as it is on critical and cognitive skills and products—because I am both a thinking body and a feeling head. Sometimes I feel like a detective, sniffing out clues and acting on hunches. I follow cultural inklingsⁱⁱⁱ, like the somatic trail I blazed about Africanisms in the ballet choreography of George Balanchine, which I shall discuss in a moment.

I am an artist writing about art, writing into history two marginalized legacies that are my obsession and my passion: dance itself, and Africanisms in dance. As a cultural historian I use a creolized approach to interrogate dance as history, biography, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, religion. Sometimes my “library” is a street corner or a subway car. Frequently my “database” is found in a theater or loft. Yet, traditional, archival resources form the bedrock of my “performance-to-research” way of working. In doing my job I observe, listen, read, interpret, surmise, analyze, and compare—and too often find myself confronted by inequalities, if not injustices.

In *Digging the Africanist Presence*, I started out by asking questions of American ballet that, like all ballet, was/is regarded as a classically European—that means “white”—art form. But I was picking up a different scent. George Balanchine, a Russian choreographer who emigrated to the United States in the 1930s, joined up with entrepreneur Lincoln Kirstein to form the Ballet Society in 1946 which, in 1948, became the New York City Ballet. He has been credited with the Americanization of ballet. Well, if that is the case, I asked, what makes his ballets so especially “American”? I began to sniff an Africanist trail. In order to verify it, I had to step back and see what was behind the trees. What were the clues? Who were the players? I went back to what was right in front of my nose: namely, contemporary culture and lifestyles.

[Here follow a series of visual images from fashion, sports, the music industry, and other popular culture media showing the Europeanist “debt” to Africanist forms, ranging from the braided coiffure of Hollywood’s Bo Derek through white athletes hand-jiving on the basketball court and the intervention of hip hop culture into the white mainstream.]

With regard to language, just look at how much African American “signifyin’” has affected our speech and, consequently, our way of seeing the world. We all know that, in “hip” talk, “that’s bad” means “that’s good,” and “that’s cool” doesn’t mean you need a jacket. And when, on the dance floor, we let out a scream, it doesn’t mean we are in pain. Rather than the classical, Europeanist, linear logic of cause, effect, and resolution, we

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have irony, paradox, and double entendre—indeed, *radical juxtapositions*^{iv}—as basic premises of the Africanist aesthetic, and where do we find them? In our postmodern lifestyles.

Elsewhere in *Digging* I discuss subtle Africanist resonances in other areas that have been considered exclusively “white” terrain. For example, to illustrate the widespread, though *unconscious*, cultural adoption of deep structure Africanist attitudes—not content, but *attitudes*—I discuss a dance genre known as contact improvisation. Contactors invent movement by supporting each other’s weight in a vocabulary of rolling, suspending, lurching, balancing, and falling. They seldom work on proscenium stages but, rather, in lofts and site-specific venues. They improvise without music and generally “perform” in workout clothes.

[Here follow a series of contact improvisation visuals] Like African American movements as diverse as the early blues, jazz, and civil rights grassroots communities, the contact community began as a subculture that thrived in spite of establishment modern dance. In an example of perhaps inadvertent borrowing, even the contact improviser’s “jam” takes its name from the jazz musician’s word for group improvisation. Like an old-fashioned, African American revival meeting, these jams see contactors from far and wide converge to hold a marathon. And in contact, as in its jazz paradigm, participants improvise, allowing their creations to be inflected and modified by what the others are doing. Again, this reminds us of the way one “language” infiltrates another.

The Africanist presence was such a driving force in the foundations of modern dance that its pervasiveness may partly account for its neglect. [Here follow three modern dance visuals of Martha Graham and Iris Mabry, compared with Picasso paintings and an African sculpture from Gabon.]

And what about these Africanist references in ballet? Pelvic and chest articulation and displacement, instead of vertical alignment; leg kicks, instead of measured battements; angular arms, instead of the traditional, fluid, rounded port-de-bras of European classical ballet: all are Africanist motifs imported into ballets that stretch across George Balanchine’s career from ballets like *Apollo*, choreographed in 1928, through dances he made in the 1970s. But, even more significant than these motifs are the underlying speed, vitality, energy, coolness—the deep structure, or subtext—of a jazz aesthetic that made all the difference in giving ballet an American quality. But naming—and language—are of utmost importance: these qualities are not only American, they are African American.

Of course, many other choreographers have subsequently followed suit, and we barely notice that the works we label as ballet or modern are hyphenated forms: Euro-Afro-American forms! We need to pay closer attention to the language of words that we select to describe the language of movement.

[Here follow three slides of Balanchine: horsing around with the cast of *Cabin in the Sky*, with Katherine Dunham in the photo; and with Violette Verdy and Arthur Mitchell, in jazzy poses.]

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According to Arthur Mitchell, Balanchine described his ideal ballerina as possessing a short torso, long arms, and long legs—a designation that fit to a tee the censured profile of the black dancing body. By stating this preference and following it through with his artistic choices, Balanchine subtly, and perhaps, unconsciously, shifted the balance of the ideal ballet body toward the black side. [Here two visuals are shown: the modest, tutu-ed body of Margot Fonteyn, emphasizing torso length and shortening the legs; and a contemporary ballet company's ad from an issue of *Dance Magazine*, which fits Mitchell's description and is all arms and legs.]

By the way, the articulated Africanist torso has been the defining characteristic of American social dance, from the minstrel stage of the nineteenth century through today's disco, club, and house genres.

Indeed, beyond the Balanchine example and in a larger sense, my work aims to break down barriers between so-called art and so-called entertainment—between “high” and “low”—between black and white, if you will. Indeed, my work is concerned with dance, with research, and with effecting social change. That final area is the one that centers and grounds my thinking,

professionally and personally. I aim to perform corrective surgery on the historical record. As Dr. Mary Phipper has said, the duty of the writer is to help other people's moral imagination grow.^v

In my book, titled *Waltzing in the Dark*, I discuss the career of Margot Webb and Harold Norton, a black dancing couple who modeled their routines along white ballroom criteria, demonstrating that cultural exchange is a two-way street. The difference is that, like blacks doing ballet, their embracing of white forms was unwelcomed and demeaned in white American venues. In fact, they were treated as trespassers. Besides over sixty hours of oral interviews with Margot Webb and several of her performing peers over the course of two years, I accomplished a body of the core research at the Billy Rose Theater Collection and the Schomburg Collection of the New York Public Library. Furthermore, I had to research not only the artistic milieu but also the larger, sociopolitical context in which these events were played out.

[Visuals of Norton and Margot are shown during the course of the following comments.] Harold Norton and Margot Webb's career serves as the barometer of the times and is our tour guide on this excursion through African American vaudeville, swing-era lifestyles, and pre-Civil-Rights-Era discrimination. Webb's solo specialty was a ballet-inspired jazz number done on point, using the ballet vocabulary of bourrées and fast chaîné and pirouette turns. Norton's solo was a spear dance, not in an African style, but in the pseudo-ethnic style of Ted Shawn's modern dance ethos of the era. There was no torso articulation in this dance. Norton performed balletic pliés, lunges, arabesques, and leaps, demonstrating the prowess of his warrior characterization. Like their peers, Norton and Margot performed in segregated, cotton-club type venues, meaning all black entertainment for exclusively white audiences. And, like their peers, their career was defined and delimited by a racial “etiquette” that kept the lid on African American achievement.

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In other words, what was happening in African American vaudeville was a microcosm of what was happening in American Society—again, the dancing body as a measure of culture.

I don't think people realize how much of what we consider "modernist" depended on the Africanist quotient. Did you know that the exquisite trumpet artistry of Louis Armstrong actually changed the tenor, if you will, of trumpet playing in European *orchestral* music? On one recent trip to Germany I bought a recording of Haydn string quartets. Well, they were played with a speed, timing, and élan that revealed the musicians' jazz-inflected, modern, late-twentieth century sensibilities.^{vi} It would not have been possible to play Haydn that way in Haydn's time! Back in 1919, conductor Ernst Ansermet predicted that African American music would be "the highway the whole world will swing along tomorrow."^{vii} And how right he was! And though he is not discussed in this essay, today's celebrant, Count Basie, belongs right up there, in the same key and the same breath. How many people realize that George Balanchine's famous ballet, *The Four Temperaments*, is infused with Lindy Hop references?^{viii} To spotlight these achievements, I conclude *Waltzing in the Dark* with a chapter titled "Legacy," that examines the jazz aesthetic as a basic integer in the modernist equation. There I discuss the profound influence of the Lindy Hop and swing music on effecting sociocultural changes in the United States and Europe.

My most recent book is titled *The Black Dancing Body – A Geography from Coon to Cool*. It is a map of American history as told through the body—a map that predicates black history and dance history as central to the formation of American culture. It confirms and affirms the body, itself, and the fact that bodies speak a language we cannot ignore. My basic premise is that race—and body types—are not biological imperatives but social constructs and cultural stereotypes, or

conveniences, for the purpose of separation and categorization. I take a long, detailed look at the sometimes loved, sometimes hated attributes of black dancing bodies, with chapters named for and devoted to feet, buttocks, hair, skin color and, finally, soul-and-spirit, which I discuss as embodied, animate attributes—as American, African American, cultural components that belong to whites as much as Beethoven and ballet belong to blacks.

Here's a final research example that brings us to the Dance Division of the New York Public Library at Lincoln Center. In researching the chapter on the butt, I knew I would deal with the 1980s dance of the same name, as chronicled in Spike Lee's marvelous film, *School Daze*. But I needed to go further—follow the clues; keep sniffing. A 1970s disco dance called The Bump predated and foreshadowed the explicitness of The Butt. Sure enough, the Dance Collection had one clipping file on The Bump containing two newspaper entries: one, an advertisement and the other, a photo from the New York Daily News showing, of all people, the matronly Martha Mitchell (then former wife of the then former Attorney General) doing The Bump at a Museum of Modern Art party for high society. This newspaper photo was a little treasure, saying more than words, alone, about cultural expropriation in the postmodern era, and reinforcing my initial premises.

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For *The Black Dancing Body* I interviewed twenty-four dance practitioners—dancers, choreographers, writers, a dance librarian—black, white, and brown; male and female; young and old; working in tap, ballet, modern, postmodern, hip hop, Broadway, and African genres. The final section of the book is titled “From Coon to Cool.” In summing up what that phrase might mean, I say

From coon to cool: back in the day the black buttocks, feet, and attitude were minstrelized into the “coon” construct. But even then there was the contradiction: the coon body and spirit were also cool, which is why minstrelsy became a regular musical comedy form in America and Europe during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Even then, the same qualities that were demonized were lusted after: how can I, white Dan Emmett, white Thomas Rice, and an army of white male minstrels, be black, acquire “their” talent in movement, music and mime—their attitude, their spirit—and still make it clear to audiences (and to myself) that I really am white, but that I have the innate, superior power to master and manipulate the culture of this inferior people? From coon to cool: in another sense this phrase indicates the larger cultural movement of whites toward black culture and blacks toward white.^{ix}

In this regard, here is a statement made by Meredith Monk, postmodern composer, vocalist, and choreographer and creator of innovative movement-music-theater works. At the end of our interview I asked her if there was anything that she’d like to add. Here’s what she said:

Well, my gratitude, that somehow I’ve been allowed to have this [African American experience] as part of my life and my culture. I start really becoming aware of it when I’m in Europe, and Europeans are trying to rock-and-roll dance, and it’s kind of pathetic. And then you realize how much of America is black culture, that we’ve had the privilege of having this as part of what we’ve grown up with. I feel that so much when I’m away, out of America—and how, actually, the dominant culture has been the black culture, on a certain, level, in terms of what’s going out to the world. What people are getting from America is black culture! Even though I’m white I feel like I have that in my body, I have that loose thing in my body. But then I have to say [this] with total gratitude and awareness—not that I take this for granted, that I take this with great gratitude^x.

Now I am beginning work on a new book. Titled *Joan Myers Brown and the Philadelphia Dance Complex – A Biohistory of Art and Race*, this work places the life and dancing times of Ms. Brown at the center of an analysis and inquiry into the broad reach of Philadelphia dance culture from the 1920s through the present. Ms. Brown was born in 1931, began studying dance as a youngster, and has led a life in dance consistently since childhood. She founded the Philadelphia School of dance Arts in 1960—at a time when racial discrimination kept African Americans out of white dance classes—in order to give black dancers quality training. Ten years later she formed the Philadelphia Dance Company, Philadanco (familarly known as “Danco”) in order to give black dancers decent performing opportunities. Her life and career serve as the spearhead for examining African American concert dance culture—its issues, problems, triumphs—and its relationship to mainstream dance culture in Philadelphia and beyond. Beginning with the 1920s and using a decade-by-decade approach, Philadelphia’s black and white

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dance history (because these are overlapping spheres, in spite of discrimination and segregation), the overall climate of American cultural endeavor, and the inherently elite character of the concert dance stage are interrogated in analyzing Brown's career. This study is an important history chronicling American cultural formation or, more precisely, the interface between cultural formation and race politics. Although it focuses on Philadelphia, it is from this specific regional example that we may draw more general conclusions. Philadelphia's dance history is exceptionally rich and speaks to larger issues in American life—issues of aesthetics, identity, and community—allowing us to truly understand that dance is a measure of culture and a barometer of society.

There is a Buddhist saying, “What the mind doesn't know, the eye cannot see,” that helps explain white America's blind spot about its Africanist heritage. I continue in my work to seek to open minds and acknowledge bodies in order to see, to really see, what is—and to imagine, to dream of what might be.

ⁱ Westport CT and London: Greenwood Press, 1996 and 1998, pp. 8-9.

ⁱⁱ A term I've coined to describe my subjunctive, integrative approach to writing about dance.

ⁱⁱⁱ This is the process so beautifully described by Malcolm Gladwell in *Blink – The Power of Thinking Without Thinking* (NY, NY: Back Bay Books, 2005)

^{iv} For more on Africanist aesthetic principles, see Robert Farris Thompson, *African Art in Motion* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1974). Thompson has condensed and systematized them into his “Ten Canons of Fine Form.”

^v Clinical psychologist and author of *Reviving Ophelia* who, in 2007, rejected her American Psychological Association award due to the organization's endorsement of psychologists' involvement in government-sponsored interrogations (such as those at Guantanamo)

^{vi} The Quartetti per Archi, opus 64, nons. 4-6, played by the Quartetto Caspar da Salo.

^{vii} Quoted in Gary Giddins, *Visions of Jazz* (NY, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.84.

^{viii} For an in-depth analysis, see *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance*, Chapter Three (“Stripping the Emperor,” pp.59-79)

^{ix} NY, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003 and 2005, p.283.

^x Interview with Meredith Monk, New York, NY, spring 2001.

What's Emile YX?

Understanding or Overstanding Hip Hop and Urban Culture touches on the return to the humanity of all dances and its common history. **Revolution is nothing but change** is about the inevitability of change and how that influences music that influences movement to the music. **Hip Hop is all about change** explains that hip hop is created out of the need for change. **Don't believe the global lie** is about media control of perception of hip hop. **Creating is about the power of hip hop** to encourage Godly action of making real the word and creating your own steps.

EMILE YX?

OVERstanding Hip Hop Culture

I must start by immediately pointing out that the very existence of urbanization implies that people have moved from various other communities and thus it goes without saying that they bring with them the accumulation of all their experiences, cultures and daily expressions. This brings the opportunity for many of these forms of expression to be influenced by everything this new environment allows. Music and dance from the dominant culture often overshadows other cultural expressions. In the same way that colonialism and Apartheid enforced their version of culture, song and dance onto the mentalities of the locals, these very same institutions now feel threatened by the new version of the same colonial forces (Capitalism and Globalization) that threaten the stranglehold they had on the minds of the masses, and even their own perception of what “high art” is. People always fear relinquishing the reigns of control.

The usage of terminology like “high art”, “new territories” and “buy in”, all exposes the status quos resistance to change. It also reflects the current norms and control of dance in South Africa. “High art”, almost automatically implies Eurocentric art forms and so-called pure cultural African art forms. Hip Hop and other township creations like b-boying/break-dancing, popping, locking, freestyle, krumping, clowning, kwassa-kwassa, pantsula, kwaito and many others, are often seen as the bastardization of what is pure. Ironically, these dance styles are just the modernization of older dance forms to evolve in the same way that cultures evolve. To “OVERstand” this development we have to look at how people migrate or are forced into different environments. With slavery, immigration and the ongoing movement of people, various dance styles and music fuse. Irrespective of the process, it is inevitable that artists are inspired by everything that they come into contact with. The enslavement of Africans brought about not only the blending of their many dance styles and music in the new lands that they were held captive, but also the influence of the local sounds and dance. When educational institutions speak of “High Art”, they are often referring to the so-called original form of expression, which is thereafter replaced by a hybrid version of that art-form. It is only when we research the origins of these new dance styles that we see the innovation and revolutionary mentality of its creators.

The irony of it all is that if Africa is the cradle of civilization, then all forms of expression sprung from this very continent and spread via human migration globally. We spend so much time looking at the few differences that exist in our expression, that we overlook the many similarities that exist in all cultures. It is this very same fear of change and what is new that brought about the recent xenophobic attacks in South Africa. Many dance forms have similar movements that can be connected to tribal dances. Instead of urban culture being perceived as a bastardization of a “pure” dance forms, it can be embraced and be seen as an opportunity to rediscover the humanity of our expression. As dancers and artists, we have the perfect opportunity to share our beloved form of expression with others and at the same time learn from them. This is how we really curb the fear of the unknown and embrace the inevitability of change.

Revolution is nothing but change and change is inevitable.

There is absolutely no culture on this planet that is pure and unadulterated by other so-called outside influences. In fact, many of the “purists” forget that at some stage their form of expression was considered to be too contemporary and too edgy.

The most obvious fear of change of music and new dance styles, (due to control of the media by the global rich white minority), was seen when white people were exposed to Rock n Roll music. Originally created by African Americans like Chuck Berry and Little Richard, the dominant racist regime in the United States of America (USA) made it appear to be created by people like Buddy Holly and Elvis Presley. At first it was labeled as “nigger music”, but as soon as its financial potential became obvious, the capitalist owned media came on board and bowed down to payola. In the same way that our parents accuse us of listening to noise and not music, we can be sure that their parents thought the same of what they were listening to and we in turn will think the same of our children’s musical preference.

Many parents pass on their musical and dance skill to their kids, and this is considered a very ancient way that skills would benefit the family, and therefore preserve the family tradition of musicians and dancers etc. Many kids are scolded by parents for experimenting with the classical styles and sounds that they are taught. In that same way you will find that the early classical and jazz musicians would experiment with their own version of playing various chords and rhythms. The Schilder Family is a prime example of this local jazz style legacy. Cape Town Jazz is a good example of creating a sound that is influenced by the carnival flavour that is synonymous with the Cape. At the same time, the Cape Jazz dance style is original in appearance to other jazz styles around the world. It can easily be seen that the sound was interpreted by the dancers to create an original style, from existing styles of ballroom and club innovation.

Another example of the musical influence from the African drum beat is Ska, Reggae and Dance-hall music in Jamaica and the West Indies. These styles of music required different dance movements to evolve from the sounds that were being created. It is also this very same dance-hall chants and rhythms that influenced hip hop. A Jamaican born DJ, by the name of DJ Kool Herc, brought the sound-system to the South Bronx of New York, USA and created what is now known as Hip Hop Culture.

Hip Hop is all about CHANGE ...

The term Hip Hop is credited to an ex-gang member Afrika Bambaata and The Universal Zulu Nation. The term Hip Hop actually applies to the collective elements that make up this art-form's various expressions. The main elements brought together by Afrika Bambaata and the Universal Zulu Nation were DJing, MCing (known to most people as rapping), Writing (known to most people as graffiti), B-boying (known to most people as break-dancing) and Knowledge of Self (which is the ongoing and infinite search for knowledge and thus finding yourself). Other sub-elements grew out of these like music production, event creation, flyer creation, clothing design and creation, publishing of books, CD, DVD, movies, etc.

It is obvious from the above name Afrika Bambaata and The Universal Zulu Nation, that Africa influenced the very creation of hip hop culture. The DJ created sounds from existing music. The usage of the turntable first as a means to play music and then as an instrument to extend simple music breaks or loops for the MC to rhyme over. It is this change or revolution that brought about the creation of the mixer with the cross-fader and later transformer switch. The manipulation of sounds by using the mixer and movement of the record or vinyl to and fro brought about a new sound called scratching. This changed the face of music and DJ'ing forever. DJ Grandwizard Theodore is credited with creating this sound when he held onto the record while listening to what his mom wanted when she entered the room. It was these early pioneers of Hip Hop culture that created drum machines from simple electronics and changed how music is made today. The dance that was born out of it was developed as a mixture of the person "breaking or losing him/herself to the breaks (the instrumental sections of music known as breaks in the song). Hence the terms B-Boy or B-Girl. The "B" stands for break.

Hip Hop is all about CHANGE, and changing perception of what is considered as normal by society. The more original the artist can be, the more respect such an artist would earn from his peers. This was the original intention of all elements of hip hop culture. The DJ wanted to play songs that were not played by others and often mixed obscure sounds into the popular mix of music he selected for the evening. This would also give the DJ his signature and popularity with his patrons or fans. The original MCs (masters of the ceremony)/ rappers would rhyme on music supplied by their DJ and be an added attraction for the DJ to bring along to his performance at a club or street jam or block party. MCs would also try to come up with their own style and content of rapping that separated them from everyone else doing the same thing. The writers or graffiti artists also created characters and letters that would be their own signature.

The dancers created their own moves from what they saw around them. Many of the moves come from gymnastics, tribal dances, mime, kung-fu and any other influences that young dancers could be innovative with. In fact, HIP HOP is all about experimentation with the intent of creating what is your own.

Don't believe the GLOBAL LIE

Hip Hop has been around in South Africa since 1982. I have been involved in the scene since back then and OVERstand the reason for the capitalist system to market this version of hip hop. I hate the way Hip Hop is portrayed in the media, but OVERstand the control that is intended. While many see this explosion of hip hop into the mainstream media as being a coming of age of hip hop culture, we see it as the manipulation of their version of what hip hop is and its true intention. The truth of the global lie is that hip hop scares them. It is the voice of the youth and as you know, the youth were the biggest threat to Apartheid South Africa. The youth had no mortgages, no debt, no cell phone contracts, no student loans to pay, no house bonds, no Edgars' accounts ... Hip Hop was our vent to say what we thought about Apartheid and we used it in that manner. They controlled those words from getting onto Apartheid controlled radio and media. But it spread like wildfire in the townships. So they know its true power, and fear unleashing that vehicle of expression against themselves. It is thus imperative for capitalism to own the media in order to control perception and defuse the masses revolution. You see, it is not knowledge that is power; it is the control of information that creates perspective. That is the real power. In saying that, it thus becomes more obvious that they market senseless rap about trivial dance steps or selling rims or gold chains or cars or clothes or black on black violence or selling death through gangs or anything that creates a negative perception of hip hop.

Hip Hop dance in theatre is inevitable, as it draws interest from a younger audience and theatre is thus able to compete with other entertainment centers. I still feel that theatre companies approach working with hip hop dancers as if they are doing us a favour. This relationship is based on the perception of hip hop and its ranking on the "high art" scale that has been determined by years of one-sided information and a preconceived sense of being better than the uncultured street dancer. We also have to realise that the relationship works both ways, in that the street dancer also grows up in a world where the perception is that ballet is more cultured than their dance form. That is an unfair advantage that the status quo has enforced globally. This often also determines the roles that hip hop dancers get in theatre pieces. Another thing that I have learnt is the assumption that hip hop dancers will have to learn to fit into their very professional world, and become cultured like them.

Creating your own and respecting originality will set the dancer free from the global lie of copying what is fed via movies and music videos. The lack of documentation and credible hip hop dancers in South Africa or even globally, is connected to the theft of this dance style by studios and the creation of a local and international dance network that endorses dancers with qualification based on their own version of what hip hop dance is. It is ironic that they would take what does not belong to them or even feel entitled to something that they had no role in developing. In actual fact, they are probably the very people that oppressed these communities that created what they now use to make their living from. These teachers teach dance moves without knowing its name or origin, and are not questioned at all. Bill Gates will never allow the theft of his intellectual property, but this theft is allowed globally because the originators of this dance did not write down what they created. In South Africa some networks have only middle-class kids that can afford to dance as part of their company, while the poor are excluded from competition and the possibility of representing South Africa at the world champs. Ironically, these wealthy teachers are descendents of the very people who oppressed the creators of this dance.

Think global, act local. I have taught using hip hop as a means to get a variety of messages across to our youth in Cape Town. Thinking about the global issues and its impact on our reality has made many schools and communities ask us to return again and again to implement these projects that create outcomes for the youth. I have even been approached by local and national government to do anti-drug campaigns in schools, using hip hop dance as the form of expression that keeps learners attention. At the same time, it has given economic empowerment to the members in Heal the Hood and Black Noise. I have also found that thinking globally has opened my eyes to many new possibilities. It has also opened my eyes to how things are done globally that I can implement here in Cape Town, South Africa. This also includes economic opportunities. Thinking global has also allowed us to take young people out of their comfort zones to tour and compete on international stages. This experience has given us access to new dance techniques and skills that we were able to pass on to the rest of our communities. International exchanges has brought about the Heal the Hood Project and brought a sense of self sustainability with countries like Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Germany and the USA.

Bakare Babatunde Allen – *Hip Hop and its growth into theatre dance: Drums of Freedom*, a dance Project of a Final Year Student of Dramatic Arts Department, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile- Ife, Osun State, Nigeria, as a Case Study

The Nigerian society borrowed a lot from the United Kingdom and the United State of America in terms of music, dance and other artistic forms. This has its extension in the popular culture of hip hop music and dance which has spread like wild fire across Nigerian society. In The University environment for instance, hip-hop music and dance attracts a greater audience than other theatrical performances held at the same time, no matter how expensive the gate fee might be. Through a fusion with local dance steps such as 'Bata', 'Atilogun', and 'Ekonbi', all of which are well known ethnic dances of the people of Nigeria, artistic innovation has also been brought to hip-hop dance.-- This paper will discuss the new artistic fusion trends, making use of the performance of Drums of Freedom as a point of reference. Drums of Freedom is a highly crafted local dance step with a beautifully blended Africanised hip-hop. For the benefit of detailed analyses, I will present a recorded version of the dance with permission of the choreographer, a fresh graduate of the Dramatic Arts Department, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria.

Joan van der Mast**Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) as a connection between different dance-styles, dance-codes and cultures in Dance**

In this lecture Joan deals with the history, the content and the relationship between Western Modern Theatre Dance and movement styles that originate from different cultures for example; Indian Dance, African Dance and classical Ballet. While searching for a new identity in a constant changing multicultural environment, the young contemporary artist needs to fully embody and understand the different styles and influences in order to enable the individual dance artist to approach dance with an open attitude and to communicate and create dance within a multicultural context while still striving for an individual artistic identity. In her work as a choreographer, dance coach and dance teacher, Joan is increasingly influenced by the principles of Laban Movement Analysis in the process of sensible meaning making in connecting different dance-styles, techniques, codes and cultures. Joan will describe how she has been applying this knowledge in working with Daniel Renner (creating the Round Corner style), in her work with academic trained dancers and teachers (Codarts Rotterdam, Royal Conservatory The Hague), Tallin University of the Arts, Ana Maletic School in Zagreb (Estonia) as well as with a traditional African Company Walo (6Cotonou) Benin, and in creating a choreography with 9 Indian trained dancers.

LMA as a connector between different styles, codes and cultures in Dance

By: Joan van der Mast

"We should be able to do every imaginable movement and then select those which seem to be the most suitable and desirable for our own nature. Only each individual himself can find these. For this reason, practice of the free use of kinetic and dynamic possibilities is of the greatest advantage. We should be acquainted both with the general movement capacities of a healthy body and mind and with the specific restrictions and capacities resulting from the individual structure of our own bodies and minds."

Political agendas and social cohesion more and more dominate and justify the existence of the Arts. Globalisation in a multicultural society facilitates the exchange of the enormous variety of different dance styles and codes that the world provides, whether it is western theaterdance, worlddance, urbandance, show-and musical or video-clipdance or any other type of dance.

More and more dance-makers and choreographers feel the necessity to deal with, confront, emerge, fuse, synergise or at least juxtapose with this rich scope of multicultural influences. This process provides us challenges, possibilities, and a multicoloured palette of versatility, but also misleads us and often leads into the temptation of what I call "cut and paste-method" where dance-form and dance-content are split apart and where the essence and the magic of the Art of Dance are "in danger". Suddenly the Arts have become the food for social cohesion and is becoming more and more a political issue. According to my opinion the art of dance should always reflect an inner motivation of the artist and therefore the magic of dance is an expression of the singing of the heart of each individual dancer.

Composer Elmer Schonberger is convinced that music should not stoop down to the level of the listener, but that the listener should be kept on his toes. Music should perk up the ears and sharpen the senses. Schonberger feels that real music has the right to a devoted listener, an open ear prepared to be touched by the fullness of sounds. Passionate surrender makes it possible to cross the borders of the regulating consciousness. Elmer Schonberger said: "As for me, reaching for Music has left me with the best memories. It has taught me that the Great Listening of Music could liberate you at any desired moment from the stranglehold of generation and class: for a change it did not treat you with a universe you never knew existed, exotic territories which were at the same time infinite felt far away and infinitely close by".

And this is exactly what I am pleading for. The art of dance should not be brought back to the level of copying and imitating outer forms and shapes of exotic origin. Art should always be a mirror of life, a confrontation of any kind and something to long for while reaching for it and craning one's neck.

The art of nowadays dance in a multicultural context cannot be diminished to a cut and paste patchwork form of different ways of moving. But when we look at dance we have to look and celebrate dance from different cultures. We severely have to study and invest in the mastery the technical skills of the different worlds before we even can start to try to fuse them in order to create synergy, fusion or an adequate juxtaposition. Dealing with the arts is dealing with yourself, understanding yourself and relating the experience to yourself. Only curiosity and an open mind can enter you into a deep understanding and existential experience of Art of different cultures and with different codes.

It becomes more and more difficult for us to see, hear, feel and truly understand each other in authentic ways that are unmediated by the need for profit or social or political purpose. The danger is that Art has become a commodity, something we buy, something outside of us, and not a process we participate in. For many the arts are a "frill". They see the Arts as an "extra" rather than

as an utterly necessary. The Arts are in the health & well being and justice agendas of some government departments, what an achievement. Community Arts also has the danger to focus more on the creative process than on the artistic creation/product and then it becomes more and more a social work producing mediocre art.

But the striving for extraordinary and outstanding quality of the Arts and the aim for the highest artistic standard, knowing that good outcomes, of any kind, cannot come from poor quality art or a weak process. If we strive for quality of execution we constantly have to question ourselves: How is the work done and what is the standard of the process itself? If we strive for quality of the experience we constantly have to deal with the question: How do the people respond to the work they are involved in? If we strive for quality of the out-come of the work, we severely have to confront ourselves with the question: What is the short or longer impact on the participants or the community? And if we strive for artistic quality we certainly have deal with the question: What can be considered in relation to ideas such as technique, originality, ambition, resonance and magic? But.....Who's movement are we dancing? What is authentic movement nowadays? What is natural? What is basic? How are we dealing with the differences in aesthetics of urban black dance versus the aesthetics of white contemporary dance??

Choreography is a complex creative process of constant choice making, whether based on conscious choices or more intuitive processes. Communication between dancer(s), dramaturge, musicians, designers, production team and the choreographer are of important value. In a traditional choreographic process-setting the choreographer is the regisseur (initiator and the leader) in the making process. In a more contemporary or innovative setting the choreographer can be an equal participant in the artistic team. Self awareness, personal, artistic and cultural style analysis, choice making, movement analysis, reflection and communication are crucial skills during the whole creative process. From the point of departure in developing ideas and concepts, choosing the dancers and artistic participants, exploring possibilities, challenging and guiding the team until the final choice making, these skills determine the flow of progress and the final result of the creative process.

And then we have to deal with the viewpoint of the audience: How to establish an unprejudiced, open attitude towards watching and experiencing a dance event???

In my work in training and coaching western dancers, teachers and choreographers, I have, for many years, relied on Laban Movement Analysis (LMA). Gradually my working practice is shifting from a western modern academic theater based environment to a multi- and cross-cultural or style based environment and to style-confronting projects all over the world (Hungary, Estonia, Croatia, Africa, and Curacao).

LMA provides a rich overview of the scope of movement possibilities in any situation. The basic elements of the system are Body, Effort, Shape and Space. These basic elements can be used to generate or to analyse movement. They provide an inroad to understanding movement for developing movement efficiency and expressiveness. Each dancer and choreographer combines these factors in his/her own unique way and organises them to create phrases and relationships which reveal personal, artistic and cultural style.

During my lecture I'd like to present and clarify how I've been using LMA over the past 12 years as a tool in coaching creative processes with

- Western trained contemporary dancers working with choreographers from a different cultural background
- Western choreographers working with dancers with a different cultural background
- Western choreographers with a mixed cultural background working with different dancers with different cultural backgrounds

Here I found out that;

- LMA provides an original contribution to the arts, especially to the world of the art of dance
- LMA helps to generate new ideas within the individual artist or in working with other artists, especially when they are working in an international context.
- Applies knowledge, skills and insight in a methodological way so that craft-related problems can be solved efficiently.
- Can help artists to gain professional mastery in a certain discipline.
- Helps to develop skills to co-operate with artist from any other disciplines, to work and function in interdisciplinary teams, to lead a creative interactive process, and motivate and communicate with others.
- Enables and facilitates the artist to communicate verbally and non-verbally about the results of movement research and artistic processes.

What is Laban Movement Analysis?

LMA is a system for observing, describing, notating, and delving deeply into movement. It looks at movement through the primary lenses of *Body, Effort, Shape, and Space*.

First developed by Rudolf Laban in the early 1900s, and best known for its notation system, LMA is continually expanded by the people who use it. These people include anthropologists, choreographers, yoga teachers, martial artists, actors, physical therapists, psychologists, dancers and political consultants. Choreographers Mary Wigman, Kurt Jooss, Hanya Holm, Pina Bausch, and William Forsythe descend from Laban's work.

A holistic system, LMA recognises that the way we move both reflects and influences the way we live our lives. LMA strengthens and clarifies the work of professional movers and offers insight and movement choices to people in their daily lives.

LMA continues to be used in fields traditionally associated with the physical body, such as dance choreography, physical therapy and drama. It has also been applied in anthropology and industrial design. It can be used for analysis and choreography of all forms of human movements.

Labanotation gave us a language and vocabulary for describing, or talking, about human movement, with the moving body as the central focus. It provided us with a systematic approach for observing and describing the moving body in space and time. Some of the value of using such a system of movement analysis and notation lies in the doing, in the work of transcribing, as it forced us to perform rigorous observation of bodily movements and to understand how these movements related to the context of interaction. In this context LMA can also help us to understand style, style differences and similarities, and provide us with a clear universal communication- and analysis system. LMA is an important tool for a dance research because it guides you during the process of creating new movement material, in analysing movement material, in creating awareness of movement behaviour in terms of Body, Effort, Shape and Space-elements, in increasing communication skills based on verbal & non-verbal language, whilst recognising movement styles and choreographic styles, and allowing self-reflection.

LMA is a development of Laban's theories. It includes studies in 4 inter-related categories: Body/Effort/Shape/Space. LMA/BF is the integrated study of Laban and Irmgard Bartenieff's embodiment of his theories.

LMA provides a rich overview of the scope of movement possibilities. The basic elements of the system are Body, Effort, and Shape & Space. These basic elements can be used to generate movement or to analyse movement. They provide an inroad to understanding movement for developing movement efficiency and expressiveness.

Each dancer, dance style, and choreographer combine these factors in his/her own unique way and organises them to create phrases and relationships which reveal personal, artistic and cultural style. By understanding these elements one can:

- understand movement as a whole
- determine and analyse the different parameters of movement
- understand the relation between the four movement factors Body, Effort, Shape and Space.
- clarify movement affinities and (personal) style
- embodying and mastering of the theory
- understand the expressive meaning of movement
- communicate by means of a clear language
- motivate choreographic choices
- explore a wide range of movement possibilities & skills

- create a wide range of versatility
- create (new) movement phrases
- to receive and give feedback.

In cross cultural dance situations LMA enables us to define style, clarify similarities and differences in style, and codes, which is very important when we want to identify the essence of style or when we want emerge and change or fuse different styles.

The four movement factors of LMA are:

- 1. Body**
 - How is the whole body organised and connected?
 - What is constantly maintained in the body?
 - Where in the body does movement initiate?
 - How does movement spread through the body?
- 2. Effort**
 - What is the dynamic quality of the movement?
 - What is the feeling tone?
 - What is the texture?
- 3. Shape**
 - What forms does the body make?
 - Is the shape changing in relation to oneself or in relation to the environment?
 - How is the shape changing?
 - What is the major quality or element which is influencing its process of change?
- 4. Space**
 - How large is the movers' kinesphere?
 - How is the kinesphere approached/revealed?
 - Where is the movement going?
 - What are the active spatial pulls?
 - What crystalline form is being revealed?

LMA was developed after Laban's death by his students. LMA has four main categories:

Body

The body category describes structural and physical characteristics of the human body while moving. This category is responsible for describing which body parts are moving, which parts are connected, which parts are influenced by others, and general statements about body organization. The majority of this category's work was not conducted and developed by Laban himself, but developed by his student/collaborator Irmgard Bartenieff, the founder of the Laban/Bartenieff Institute in NYC, through the "Bartenieff Fundamentals"(sm) The Body category, as well as the other categories, continue to be further developed through the work of numerous CMAS, and applied to ever extending fields, such as: fitness, somatic therapies, rehabilitation, dance technique, and more.

Several subcategories of Body are:

- **Initiation** of movement starting from specific body parts.
- **Connection** of different body parts to each other.
- **Sequencing** of movement between parts of the body.
- Patterns of body organization and connectivity, called **Patterns of Total Body Connectivity, Developmental Movement Patterns, or Neuromuscular Patterns**

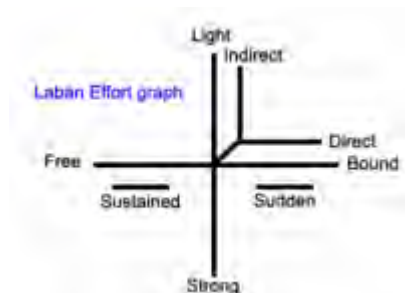
Effort

Effort, or what Laban sometimes described as dynamics, is a system for understanding the more subtle characteristics about the way a movement is done with respect to inner intention. Effort change is generally associated with change of mood or emotion and is an inroad for expressivity. Effort coordinates the entire being in a dynamic way. Engaging the mover his/her own inner Effort intent enlivens movement.

The difference between punching someone in anger and reaching for a glass is slight in terms of body organization - both rely on extension of the arm. The attention to the strength of the movement, the control of the movement and the timing of the movement are very different. Effort has four subcategories, called Effort Qualities or Effort Elements. Effort has four subcategories, each of which has its polarities.

One can indicate combinations of two, three or four Effort Qualities, each with its own polarities.

Space: Direct / Indirect
Weight: Strong / Light
Time: Quick / Sustained
Flow: Bound / Free



Laban named the combination of the first three categories (Space, Weight, and Time) the Effort Actions, or Action Drive. The eight combinations are descriptively named Float, Punch, Glide, Slash, Dab, Wring, Flick, and Press. The Action Efforts have been used extensively in some acting schools to train the ability to change quickly between physical manifestations of emotion.

Flow, on the other hand, is responsible for the continuousness or ongoingness of motions. Without

any Flow Efforts, movements must be contained in a single initiation and action, which is why there are specific names for the Flow-less Action configurations of Effort. In general it is very difficult to remove Flow from much movement, and so a full analysis of Effort will typically need to go beyond the Efforts Actions.

Shape

While the Body category primarily develops connections within the body and the body/space intent, the way the body changes shape during movement is further experienced and analyzed through the Shape category. It is important to remember that all categories are related, and Shape is often an integrating factor for combining the categories into meaningful movement.

There are several subcategories in Shape:

1. **Shape Forms** describe static shapes that the body takes, such as Wall-like, Ball-like, and Pin-like, Spiral-like and Pyramid-like.

2. **Modes of Shape Change** describe the way the body is interacting with and the relationship the body has to the environment. There are three Modes of Shape Change:

1. Shape Flow: Representing a relationship of the body to itself. This could be amoebic movement or could be mundane habitual actions, like shrugging, shivering, rubbing an injured shoulder, etc.

2. Directional: Representing a relationship where the body is directed toward some part of the environment. It is divided further into Spoke-like (punching, pointing, etc.) and Arc-like (swinging a tennis racket, painting a fence).

3. Carving: Representing a relationship where the body is actively and three dimensionally interacting with the volume of the environment. Examples include kneading bread dough, wringing out a towel, or miming the shape of an imaginary object. In some cases, and historically, this is referred to as Shaping, though many practitioners feel that all three Modes of Shape Change are "shaping" in some way, and that the term is thus ambiguous and overloaded

3. **Shape Qualities** describe the way the body is changing (in an active way) toward some point in space. In the simplest form, this describes whether the body is currently Opening (growing larger with more extension) or Closing (growing smaller with more flexion). There are more specific terms - Rising, Sinking, Spreading, Enclosing, Advancing, and Retreating, which refer to specific dimensions of change.

4. **Shape Flow Support** describes the way the torso (primarily) can change in shape to support movements in the rest of the body. It is often referred to as something which is present or absent, though there are more refined descriptors.

The majority of the Shape system was not developed during Laban's life, and was added later by his students. Warren Lamb was instrumental in creating a significant amount of the theoretical structure for understanding.

Space

One of Laban's primary contributions to Laban Movement Analysis is his theories of Space. This category involves motion in connection with the environment, and with spatial patterns, pathways, and lines of spatial tension. Laban described a complex system of geometry based on crystalline

forms, Platonic solids, and the structure of the human body. He felt that there were ways of organising and moving in space that were specifically harmonious, in the same sense as music. Some combinations and organisations were more theoretically and aesthetically pleasing. Space Harmony is a system of harmonic relationships in the kinesphere, analogous to the organisation of pitch harmony in music. It encompasses both dissonant and consonant designs. Like with music, Space Harmony sometimes takes the form of set 'scales' of movement within geometric forms. These scales can be practiced in order to refine the range of movement and reveal individual movement preferences.

It is a system recognised in classical ballet, further developed in Choreutics by Laban and applied by many contemporary choreographers i.e. William Forsyth (9 point-system). Space aspects include information about the mover's own personal movement sphere, the kinesphere, as well as whether the approach to the kinesphere is Central, Peripheral or Transverse. Spatial aspects also include whether the movement is dimensional, planar, diagonal or transverse spiraling and which of the major crystalline forms is most operative.

The abstract and theoretical depth of this part of the system is often considered to be much greater than the rest of the system. In practical terms, there is much of the Space category that does not specifically contribute to the ideas of Space Harmony.

This category also describes and notates choices which refer specifically to space, paying attention to:

Kinesphere: the area that the body is moving within, and how the mover is paying attention to it.

Spatial Intention: the directions or points in space that the mover is identifying or using.

Geometrical observations of where the movement is being done, in terms of emphasis of directions, places in space, planar movement, etc.

The Space category is currently under continuing development, more so since exploration of non-Euclidian geometry and physics has evolved.

The applications of LMA/BF, originally directed toward the performing arts, have been spreading to many and new exciting fields, such as peace studies, anthropology, business consulting, leadership development, psychotherapy, health & wellness, and more.

Bartenieff Fundamentals

It is an approach to basic body training that deals with patterning connections in the body according to the principles of efficient movement functioning within a context which encourages personal expression and full psychological involvement. The goal of Bartenieff Fundamentals is to facilitate the lively interplay of inner connectivity and efficient body function with inner expressivity.

Bartenieff Fundamentals are an extension of LMA, originally developed by Irmgard Bartenieff who trained with Laban before becoming a physiotherapist. A set of concepts, principles and exercises, that apply Laban's movement theory to the physical/kinesiological functioning of the human body, include:

- Dynamic Alignment
- Breath Support
- Core Support
- Rotary Factor
- Initiation and Sequencing

- Spatial Intent
- Centre of Weight/Weight Transference
- Effort Intent
- Developmental Patterning and its Support for Level Change

Laban, a legend



Rudolf Laban (1872 - 1958)

Rudolf Laban was born in Austro-Hungary. Laban was a dancer, a choreographer and a dance/movement theoretician. One of the founders of European Modern Dance, his work was extended through his most celebrated collaborators, Mary Wigman, Kurt Jooss and Sigurd Leeder. Through his work, Laban raised the status of dance as an art form, and his explorations into the theory and practice of dance and movement transformed the nature of dance scholarship. He established choreology, the discipline of dance analysis, and invented a system of dance notation, now known as Labanotation or Kinetography Laban. Laban was the first person to develop community dance and he has set out to reform the role of dance education, emphasising his belief that dance should be made available to everyone.

In 1948, Laban established the Art of Movement Studio in Manchester, UK, and moved to Addlestone in Surrey in 1953 due to the expansion of the studio. Five years later Rudolf Laban died. In 1973, on the retirement of Lisa Ullman, Marion North became Head of School (Principal and Director), followed by Bonnie Bird, Artistic Director, who joined the Art of Movement Studio in 1974. The Art of Movement Studio was renamed Laban Centre for Movement and Dance in 1975, and moved to new premises in New Cross, South East London.

Rudolf (Jean-Baptiste Attila) Laban, also known as **Rudolf von Laban** (Born December 15, 1879, Pressburg, Austria-Hungary (today Bratislava, Slovakia) and died July 1, 1958, Weybridge, England) was a notable central European dancer and dance theorist. Laban's parents were Hungarian, but his father's family came from France, and his mother's family was from England. His father was a field marshal who served as governor of the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Laban initially studied architecture at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris and became interested in the relationship between the moving human form and the space which surrounds it. He moved to Munich at age 30 and under the influence of seminal dancer/choreographer Heidi Dzinkowska began to concentrate on *Bewegungskunst*, or the movement arts.

Laban established the Choreographic Institute in Zürich in 1915 and later founded branches in Italy, France, and central Europe. His greatest contribution to dance was his 1928 publication of *Kinetographie Laban*, a dance notation system that came to be called Labanotation and is still used as one of the primary movement notation systems in dance. His theories of choreography and movement served as one of the central foundations of modern central European dance.

In addition to the work on the analysis of dance, he was also a proponent of dance for the masses. Toward this end Laban developed the art of movement choir, wherein large numbers of people move together in some choreographed manner.

This aspect of his work was closely related to his personal spiritual beliefs, based on a combination of Victorian Theosophy, Sufism and popular fin-de-siecle Hermeticism. By 1914 he had joined the Ordo Templi Orientis and attended their 'non-national' conference in Monte Verita, Ascona in 1917, where he also set up workshops popularising his ideas.

From 1930 to 1934 he was director of the Allied State Theatres in Berlin, in 1937 he fled from by this time National Socialist Germany to Manchester.

In the UK, he re-directed his work to industry, studying the time taken to perform tasks in the workplace and the energy used. He tried to provide methods intended to help workers to eliminate "*shadow movements*" (which he believed wasted energy and time) and to focus instead on constructive movements necessary to the job in hand. After the war, he published a book related to his research entitled *Effort* (1947). He continued to teach and do research in the UK until his death.

Among Laban's pupils were Mary Wigman and Sophie Taeuber-Arp.

Laban Centers

There are two main institutions dedicated to Laban's work: The LABAN Centre for Movement and Dance in London (UK) and the Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies in New York (US).

The LABAN Center for Movement and Dance Studies (London), founded in 1948 as the Art of Movement Studio, is a leading accredited Performing Arts University, with Undergraduate (BA Honors), Graduate (MSc and MA) and Post Graduate (PhD) degree programs. Their library offers the largest and most varied open access specialist research collection on dance and related subjects in the UK. In addition, its archives contain the most complete records of Rudolf Laban's research, manuscripts and models entrusted to the institution in 1953.

The Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies - LIMS NYC was established by Irmgard Bartenieff in 1978 as an organization for Laban & Bartenieff movement studies in all walks of life and offers the title of CMA(Certified Movement Analyst) through graduate level Certification Programs.

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Part II – Scholarly Papers

Bakare Babatunde Allen – *Hip Hop and its growth into theatre dance: Drums of Freedom*, a dance Project of a Final Year Student of Dramatic Arts Department, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile- Ife, Osun State, Nigeria, as a Case Study

The Nigerian society borrowed a lot from the United Kingdom and the United States of America in terms of music, dance and other artistic forms. This has its extension in the popular culture of hip hop music and dance which has spread like wild fire across Nigerian society. In The University environment for instance, hip-hop music and dance attracts a greater audience than other theatrical performances held at the same time, no matter how expensive the gate fee might be. Through a fusion with local dance steps such as ‘Bata’, ‘Atilogun’, and ‘Ekonbi’, all of which are well known ethnic dances of the people of Nigeria, artistic innovation has also been brought to hip-hop dance.-- This paper will discuss the new artistic fusion trends, making use of the performance of Drums of Freedom as a point of reference. Drums of Freedom is a highly crafted local dance step with a beautifully blended Africanised hip-hop. For the benefit of detailed analyses, I will present a recorded version of the dance with permission of the choreographer, a fresh graduate of the Dramatic Arts Department, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria.

Bakare Babatunde Allen – *Hip Hop and its growth into theatre dance: Drums of Freedom*, a dance Project of a Final Year Student of the Dramatic Arts Department, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile- Ife, Osun State, Nigeria, as a Case Study

Introduction

In his essay titled Primary and Secondary Orality in Nigerian Dance Art: a study of Continuity and Change in Yoruba Traditional Dances, Segun Oyewo makes us to understand that there are as many dances as there are ethnic groups in Nigeria most with a ritual origin, which has now given way, in most instances, to the ceremonial aspects of traditional festivals. He went on to further explain that whether performed within, or outside its original context, most Nigerian dances still retain a lot of their traditional flavour and that the degree and level of continuity is dependent on such variables as the mode of performance, the professionalism of the performers, management of the performance troupe, occasion of performance and the purpose and financial status of the performance.

Oyewo stressed further, that dances have always been a very prominent feature of expression across the diverse groups in the Nigerian nation, and the performer has a large reservoir of creative resources to draw from within this rich traditional repertoire, and since traditional dance is an integral part of a community, it has been embedded in the tradition of that community, representing dances that are indigenous to the people exhibiting all the characteristics of those various traditions. It is in this same light in which traditional dances have been used as a form of expression, that hip-hop has become a tool for various purposes, to the extent that they are being used to campaign against social ills within the Nigerian society. A good number of well known companies, such as Tele-communication companies, energy drinks, to mention a few, make use of hip-hop dance to promote existing or brand new products, newly launched into the market.

Since little or no work has been written on this topic, I have relied on literatures on the Nigerian dance culture in presenting this paper.

Nigerian dance visually may be seen as complicated. In some cases, this appears to be true, depending on the geographical location the dance steps originated from. What is certain and practical about Nigerian dances however, is that they are flexible and accommodative of imported movements and steps, which are of foreign origins such as hip-pop. This assertion is also applied to the various genres of music, which invaded the entertainment world in the country in recent times.

Nigeria is acclaimed as the most populated African country with more than 250 ethnic groups, and has various and diverse languages and customs. The major languages spoken in Nigeria are the Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo languages. The country is blessed with a very unique cultural heritage in all the geo-political zones. One of the exceptional artistic practice and way of life of the people of Nigeria is Dance.

Dance transcends a mere artistic form to the populace of Nigeria. It is very special and sometimes, sacred to different tribes, ethnic groups, lineages, royals and dynasties, social classes and associations. People who belong to these range of the classes enumerated above hold dance in high esteem; be it in the Hausa land, Yoruba land, Igbo land and other minority ethnic groups that are present in the country.

In the Nigerian context, it is absolutely impossible to talk about hip-hop dance without hip-hop music. According to Omofolabo Ajayi in his book titled *Yoruba Dance: The Semiotics of Movement and Body Attitude in a Nigerian Culture*, Music is an integral part of Yoruba dances, there is no Yoruba dance that is not performed to some basic music, no matter how simple. It forms the rhythmical background essential to the form of the dances and, in conjunction with the actual dance content, it helps in giving form to the movements. (1998, 35).

This is so because they both happen to be integral parts of each other. Since the introduction of the hip-hop music and of course hip-hop dance into the Nigerian society, the present high level of its acceptance and attainment has never been previously witnessed. Before the inception of today's sophisticated and profitable trend of hip-hop in Nigeria, dancers and musicians enjoyed little or no support from the society. Encouragements however, do come from their immediate and extended the family members. Dancing, before now, be it traditional or modern, was believed not to be a credible career or profession in Nigeria, and it was more popularly so especially among the Yorubas. This claim was not only applied to the dancers and musicians alone, it extended to performing arts and theatre. In the fifties and sixties in Nigeria, parents were very keen at grooming their children to become lawyers, doctors and engineers. It was therefore an abomination for growing ups kids to conceive or say to the face of their parents, that their ultimate aspiration is to become a professional dancer! Hubert Ogunde, the founding father of modern theatre in Nigeria, was a victim of this popular belief that the only befitting careers and professions for a good future in life was to become a medical doctor, engineer or lawyer.

It is vital and important to know that in the history and tradition of the Nigerian society, there are lineages whose traditional and professional duties are based basically on entertainment. Some families are designated by their ancestral ties, to singing/chanting ancestral praises to the king. Some individuals also make it a part of their professional obligation to sing the praises of some important personalities such as kings, chiefs, and wealthy individuals to the excite them. Similarly, some are dancers in the palace of the king and at the door steps of other personalities mentioned earlier on. Some however, inherited the act of entertaining the society from their fore fathers. Not withstanding, the Nigerian society still looked down on such people, until more recently when artistes in Nigeria became important personalities and arts became a strong source of livelihood. Today in the country, dancers, especially hip-hop dancers now enjoy considerable acceptance by the society at large, even though the rigidity by some parents still remain intact and may not be changed easily.

Hubert Ogunde, a foremost Nigerian theatre artist, who turned theatre into a profitable profession in the country, thus making theatre more popular, married eight wives. The reason for this, going by the interview he granted Eburn Clark, was to enable him have a lot of females acting alongside with him, since parents would not allow their male children, talk less of the female ones, to venture into theatre.

According to Eburn Clark in *Hubert Ogunde: The Making of Nigerian Theatre*, ...Ogunde received no reply at all to this advertisement. Undeterred, he placed another advertisement one month later, this time asking for '10 CHARMING YOUNG GIRLS As Lady Clerks' and again he asked them to 'apply in person to HUBERT OGUNDE, 88 Cemetery Street, Ebute-Metta'. This time the response was overwhelming. With these advertisements, Ogunde made known to the public his intention of starting a professional theatre company.

One may ask what is unusual about this. In the Nigeria of 1945 his act was a courageous one. The actor or any person connected with the theatre was regarded as an *alarinjo*, a name which Prof. J.A. Adedeji says 'originated as an abuse and which more or less picks them out and labels them as "rogues, vagabonds and sturdy beggars"'. (Clark; 1979, 3-4)

This can be connected to my earlier explanation that parents will never accede to any of their children venturing into theatre. Since dance is artistically and directly related to theatre it can be deduced that if hip-hop had existed back then, it would have been looked down upon and parents would still have warned their children sternly against it. All these dislikes for theatre and dance as a profession by parents, as shown in this paper, have been directed towards children by their parents. The reason for this is that Nigerians strongly believe that giving stern warnings are potent and can only be productive when it is given early. By early, it implies that it is directed to children between the ages of ten to eighteen, going by the popular saying 'catch them young'. This parental bias, negative portrayal and caution against being theatre artistes or dancers affected the judgement of the children. In the African setting, and Nigeria in particular, parents have a huge and inexhaustible influence on the judgement and the decision-making of their wards, and in some cases, even till after marriage.

It was even unthinkable, a taboo and gross misconduct for a female child to nurse an idea of becoming a dancer or actress. It is a general assumption that all the parts of her body will become fringe benefit for the audience. In Nigeria, it has been heard of that parents disowned their son or daughter just because he/she started up a theatre career. Dance as a separate form of the arts would even disgust the 1950s and 1960s parents of Nigeria.

With over 250 ethnic groups and languages, Nigerians have distinct, and various dances for different purposes and occasions. Dance is an essential part of the people of Nigeria, it is important again to know that there is no such event(s) in which a form of dance is not witnessed. Dance in the Nigerian society automatically include special varieties of hybridized steps and movements.

The impact of foreign and imported music started gaining more prominence some years ago. Interestingly, one of the salient features of the Indian film is the Indian songs and its dances. Through these films in which the Indians showcased their culture of dance and movements, the Indian artistes have influenced their Nigerian counterparts. Although the two prominent influences came from the American and British music, the Indian influences on its own part cannot be underestimated. The Nigerian hip-hop has now cut across all boundaries and has developed to a level at which one cannot be precise about a definite origin.

Because marriage is an important phase in life, it is commonly celebrated with dance. In the Nigerian culture, marriage ceremonies involve a lot of dance steps. The dance aspect is always unique and involves special aesthetical display that the family members, relatives, friends, and well-wishers are always looking forward to during the D-day. In the culture of the Hausa/Fulani people of the northern part of Nigeria for instance, the marriage ceremony is a very colourful one with music provided courtesy of various horn instruments that have a semblance to those from Sudan, Niger and Chad. The dance aspect of their marriage is worth paying for. The same could be said about the Yoruba and Igbo people's elaborate way of giving their daughters' hands out in marriage. In the past, hip-hop dance was not in any way a part of the marriage celebration in Nigeria until a few years ago when well celebrated marriage ceremonies incorporated selected hip-hop songs which the well-wishers and the

celebrants danced to, to carry along the youths and elites of such communities in attendance.

The birth of a new born baby is talked about less than the naming ceremony that follows seven days later. According to the custom of the land, a celebration involving rigorous dance steps and songs, depending on the ethnic or tribe springs into life. The parents of the newborn are summoned to the dance floor for a 'special number', i.e. a selected song and dance, during the naming and thanksgiving ceremony. Interestingly, the modern parents not only dance strictly to the indigenous traditional folk-songs and religious songs during the naming ceremonies of their child, they also move their bodies to the popular hip-pop music of new Nigerians that have gained more acceptance and popularity. Teenagers and grown ups alike, who are familiar with the lyrics, sing along and dance to the melody, harmony and tune of their favourite hip-hop songs. Averagely, a child is expected to be independent of the parents after some level of education. Before the creation of private universities and polytechnics in Nigeria, a typical Nigerian adult finishes his or her first degree between twenty two and twenty eight years of age, during which, due to incessant strike actions embarked upon by the Academic and Non-academic Staff Union of the Universities, he or she must have gone home many times. It was during these periods in the country, that many students developed their interest in hip-hop dance and music, in order to be gainfully employed in productive activities. Because they always have plenty of time to relax, some of these students formed themselves into groups of dancers. They spend time choreographing, listening to music, rehearsing dance steps, and preparing themselves for campus shows, where they collect tokens at the gates from audiences that have come to watch their performances. At the Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife, here in Nigeria, two most popular Christian hip-hop dance groups are The Ambassage and the Spirit of David. The students utilize these periods of non-academic work, when fellow students are not on campus, to perfect their dance steps, choreography and create new steps. According to them, the goals and aims of these groups was for evangelism, through dance. While a number of students such as these channelled their energy onto dance and music. It is a pity that many Nigerian youth in some cases fell to the wrong side by embarking on unwholesome activities.

The inception of the television reality shows in Europe and America, viewed in Nigeria such as the American Idols, Next American movie star, Who wants to be the next Dance Star and so on, sprang up similar projects in Nigeria, modelled after them. In Nigeria, dance has become a form of arts to look out for. The majority of the people clamour for it, not for aesthetic purposes only, but also for its socio-political and economic functionalities. This should not sound totally strange because dance has always been a form of art, having a beautiful outcome when well rehearsed. Hip-hop dance has attained a top priority in the minds of teenagers and youths who have passion for it. It has cut across age boundaries within the Nigerian society. The whole household stays glued to the television set to enjoy a good number of hip-hop dance programmes, be it in the series format, movies, episode or live-shows. Examples of some Nigerian television programmes created around hip-hop dance are Celebrity Takes Two, sponsored by the Nigerian Breweries, Malta Guinness Street Dance Africa, sponsored by Guinness Breweries and Who Wants to Be The Next Nigerian Dance Star to mention a few. The inception of the satellite television channels have made it easy and convenient to see good numbers of quality hip-hop dance produced by American teenagers and youths by their Nigerian counterparts.

Presently, there are various blends of hip-hop music and dance in Nigeria. Some are classified as Gospel hip-hop music and dance, Rap-hip-hop, Blues hip-hop, Afro-hip-hop, Calypso hip-hop and of course Africanised hip-hop, with the fusions of Nigerian

dance steps such as Atilogun, Bata and Ekonbi. Nigeria can lay claim to numerous hip-hop stars and icons and they have given themselves various stage names such as 2-Face Idibia, Faze, D'banj, P-Square, and Olu Maintain.

In 1993, the Center for Media Resources, Abadina, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, engaged themselves in experimentation of dance steps and they called it Bata break-dance. They made use of Secondary School students in their experimentation, to see if Bata and Break dance could blend into each other and to see the similarities they both share, and hence, produce a new form of dance. The rudiments of Bata dance shares the same nature with that of Break-dance. The way the body is jerked in the dances as well as the arm and leg movements in both dances are similar. So, the experiment came as no real surprise. The students enjoyed the new steps and it came out as a successful experiment.

A good numbers of foreign and local companies such as HHI, a company based in the United State of America, The Nigerian Breweries, The Nigerian Bottling Company (Coca-cola) and host of others, have developed a special interest in promoting the growth of hip-hop dance among the Nigerian youths by sponsoring a series of hip-hop dance competition at the levels of secondary schools and tertiary institutions. The report of the Guardian News Paper (a popular daily news paper in Nigeria) on Sunday June 15, 2008 is a testimony to the new innovation and development of hip-hop dance in the cities and towns of the country:

HHI, a Los Angeles-based live event and television production company, which also organises the USA and World Hip Hop Dance Championships, has concluded plans for the Nigeria final, which holds on June 21 at the Studio 868 on Bishop Aboyade Cole, Victoria Island, Lagos. (The Guardian News Paper, 2008)

The HHI organised an audition for dancers (freestyle), a few months ago in Nigeria on Saturday, June 7 2008, in which three boys, three girls and eight crew dancers made it to the finals of the Hip-hop International competition. The implication of this is that some energetic youths from the country will journey to Las Vegas, United States of America, to represent Nigeria on the world stage. HHI, through its worldwide television broadcast to more than 170 countries on ESPN, Euro sport and other Networks, has been instrumental in the raising of the standard of dance practice in the United State of America. Currently HHI produces the Urban Dance Series, America's Best Dance Crew with Randy Jackson for MTV as an extension of the world hip-hop dance championships.

The competition exposes participants to a new world and level of dance. They also have the opportunity of meeting the big names in dance such as Wade Robson, Dave Scot, Shane Sparks and also networking with dancers from all over the world. Every year, different collaborations spins off from the event and people get the opportunity to join other international dance groups or schools. Aside from the MTV dance series, popular movies such as Step up, Honey, You got served and Stomp the yard from America have become known to Nigerian youths alike. These are the hit dance movies that have come out of America in the past six years and have been inspiration for loads of young people all around the world, Nigeria inclusive. The impact and roles played by these multinational companies who sponsor hip-hop, especially in Nigeria, is what could be described as 'getting them to dance and keeping them focused'. Going by the simple analysis by many scholars and even practical experiences, teenagers and youths are vulnerable to crimes and other social problems when their energy is not or allowed to be channeled towards meaningful and productive events such as hip-hop, football, singing and other forms of sports or artistic endeavours. America already has a very large population of

young people in hip-hop. Nigeria has suddenly caught this trend and it is burning very fast, penetrating all culture across the globe through appropriation and adaptation, so much so, that in the past two years, we have had about five different musical reality shows and competitions with teenagers and youth in attendance, all depending on the section of the audience targeted by the organizer(s) of the programme. Hip TV are the media partners to the project which also has Hip-hop, Nigeria International TV show, Chocolate city and Studio 868 involved.

After football, hip-hop dance and music is the next most common and lucrative occurrence that the Nigerian youth have developed an interest in practicing in. There are a lot of known names in the Nigerian hip-hop world today; some of them are stars and some are stars-in-the-making, some are good dancers, while some are not into dancing, concentrating mainly on singing, while they hire professional dancers to grace their live performances and video shows. There is a simple logic behind the common practices by the Nigerian musicians, especially hip-hop stars, hiring professionals who will dance to soothe the audience so as to make the show a more spectacular one. As a theatre director and dancer, I have learnt from the profession that the audience will always appreciate exciting performances rather than boring shows. New dance steps and movements are shared by the audience and they respond to the excitement with sounds of clapping and applauses, returning home, having it at the back of their minds to put to practice the new styles of dance, movements and sometimes stunts displayed in the last show they watched. These new acquired skills creates a self generated impression of ability to become a potential hip-hop dancer.

Analysis of Drums of Freedom by Boma Davies

Drums of Freedom is a final year dance drama practical project of the above named student. After the four years training both academically and practically at the Department of Dramatic Arts, Ile-Ife, it is compulsory that all the intending graduating students put up a theatrical production. There are a good numbers of special areas in which students can readily make their choices during the second semester in their third year. Such areas are theatre-directing, playwriting, technical theatre, body make-up and costuming, dance and choreography, dramatic criticism, stage management, media and theatre management, etc.

The purpose of analyzing the Drums of Freedom in this essay is to use it to buttress the discussion in this paper, and to show how the student choreographer has infused hip-hop dance with Nigerian indigenous dance steps, showing that the Nigerian dance accommodates new trends of various dance steps.

Mr. Davies specialized in dance and choreography in the Department of Drama and was supervised by an academic staff by the name Dr. Segun Oyewo, a dance scientist and Mr. Tunji Ojeyemi, a professional dancer and a non academic staff who is a member of the Awo-varsity Theatre Company, a unit under Drama Department which actually metamorphosed to what we today know as the Drama Department of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife founded by Late Ola Rotimi, the popular Nigerian playwright who studied at Yale School of Drama and University of Boston and wrote a number of plays such as The Gods Are Not to Blame, Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again.

Davies weaved the storyline of his dance performance around the popular history of the slave trade which swept away many in-habitants of the West African countries to other lands many years ago. He started the performance using a solo dance performance created by him to welcome the audience into the play proper. The performance proceeded to the beginning of the story itself. The story is centralized

on the betrayal of Nigerians by Nigerians, who sold out their brothers, sisters, family members and relatives to the white slave traders many years ago for money and little tokens of materials such as mirrors, umbrellas, tobacco, etc. He depicted and represented on stage, the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria through their costume and body-make ups. Since the characters in his dance drama did not voice out (no dialogue), the actors practically based the performance on non-verbal communication using their bodies, gestures and movements to tell the story. The story moved on to the introduction of the white men in their different costumes and make-ups, depicting them as colonial and imperialist representatives, whose mission was to conquer the people of the old Nigeria. Boma Davis went further to introducing the popular Nigerian social activities such as festivals, coronations and masculinity dances. The masculinity dances are those dances in which men engaged in, in other to attract the attention of the females, in particular that of a potential wife. All these are part and parcel of the everyday life of the people of Nigeria, and it is part of the custom and culture of some of the tribes displayed in the *Drums of Freedom*. All the group and individual dances in the production are a fusion of the local Ekonbi, Atilogun and Bata dances, with different hip-hop steps infused to produce a new blend of dance steps and movements. Nobody can however lay claim to these new trends of dance steps and movements which have been embraced by many of the choreographers, including Boma Davies, for doing so would be like laying claim to the numerous numbers of the traditional Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo folkloric songs. Ethnic groups are nevertheless, often associated with particular dance movements in Nigeria so much so, that dance movements and languages used in singing are used to determine where a dance originates from, in Nigeria. Bata for instance, is a very rigorous dance of the Yoruba people. It engages all parts of the body and it is also associated with Sango (the god of lightning, fire and thunder). Ekonbi is believed to have originated from the riverine areas, precisely Cross-rivers and Akwa Ibom States of Nigeria. The people of these two areas of Nigeria are predominantly fishermen and women. The nature and picture of their dance have a semblance to aquatic movements. Their women dance, mainly with their waist, twisting from waist down to the legs while their men are not any different, and add to the steps by mimicking the paddling of the canoe. The Hausa people of Nigeria dance in a galloping manner which can be likened to the movement of a horse rider on his horse or camel.

All these movements are observed in Boma's production of *Dance of Freedom*. The audience easily recognised the white slave traders dramatised on stage by the students of the department through their colonial clothing and decorations. The white men danced Michael Jackson's 'moon walk', purposely to show the black proposed slaves and the audiences alike that their own dance was more sophisticated than theirs. The concluding part of the performance showed that the indigenes embraced the hip-hop dance of the white men who came to enslave and colonize them.

The choreographer infused the traditional Nigerian dance steps with hip-hop dance and produced a master piece of dance drama. He proved that Nigerian dance has no boundaries, limitation and obstacles. It accommodates other dance steps from outside the Nigerian indigenous culture, not adulterating it nor deforming it in any way.

In conclusion, hip-hop dance has come a long way in terms of acceptance, development and growth and it has come to stay in Nigeria. It is becoming more and more popular than ever before, and hundreds of hip-hop stars (musicians and dancers) are emerging everyday in the country. The entertainment industry is growing at a very high rate, the people have accepted and imbibed hip-hop as a popular culture, and truly hip-hop has really come to stay.

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Catherine Botha - *Shaping the Dancing Body: Constructing Identities*

Scant attention has been given to the ways in which specific social worlds shape human bodies, possibly due to the strong contemporary emphasis on theatre dance as a discursive practice. This is most evident in the proliferation of writings on 'dance as texts'. Despite the importance and value of these texts, I assert that, as a result of this emphasis, the dancer becomes curiously 'disembodied'. For this reason, this paper will focus on the embodiment of the dancer by exploring the contrasting normative visions of body emergent in two dance forms (classical ballet and hip hop); attempting to understand the impact of these upon the dancer's sense of self; as well as briefly exploring how this understanding brings into sharp relief the relationship between high art/dance and urban dance forms.

Shaping the Dancing Body: Constructing Identities?

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Introduction

The contemporary proliferation of writings emphasizing an understanding of 'dance as text'¹ has yielded valuable and insightful ideas on the nature of dance. Despite this, however, the sometimes narrow focus of these works results in the dancer becoming, in a sense, curiously 'disembodied'².

As such, this paper returns to a focus on the embodiment of the dancer by exploring what I assert are contrasting 'normative' visions of the body emergent in two dance forms: classical ballet and hip hop³. In exploring these images of the body, the paper will attempt to understand the impact of these upon the dancers' sense of self, working from the assumption that specific social worlds shape bodies⁴, as well as a sense of self⁵. In addition, the paper will briefly attempt to explore how this understanding brings the relationship between high art and urban dance forms into sharp relief.

Dance reflects society / society reflects dance?

Dance historians often proceed from the premise that dance reflects society. Deborah Jowitt (2004), for example, claims that dancing and dancers do not produce culture, but rather are products of it. Similarly, in the mid-1980s, Banes (1994: 44) views the physical body as manifestation or reflection of the social or political body. However, Banes (*ibid.*) later comes to admit that even though dancing bodies may at times reflect the way things are, they also do have the potential to effect change.

In my view, Banes is correct in highlighting this reciprocity: rather than being a self-contained, closed entity, the body is an open and dynamic system of exchange,

¹ See for example Adshead-Lansdale (1999). For some theorists, '...dance cannot be imagined without writing, it does not exist outside writing's space...' (Lepecki, 2004: 124). We see the emergence of this view already in the works of earlier dance masters, such as Thoinot Arbeau. For Arbeau, dance's 'unfortunate ephemerality' can only be overcome by means of writing. For dance, writing transforms the dancer's body into a medium for temporal exchange; as well as alleviating '...dance's predicament of always losing itself as it performs itself' (*ibid.*). Arbeau's view of dance is echoed by Noverre's perception of dance as an 'art in self-erasure', but Noverre differs from Arbeau since he claims that there is always an 'excess-ive' aspect of dancing which *cannot* be captured or fixed fully by notation (*ibid.*). For Noverre, dance is always 'elusive presence' – the 'fleeting trace of an always irretrievable, never fully translatable motion – neither into notation, nor into writing' (*ibid.*).

² In fact, Mark Franko notes this absence of the body already in Renaissance dance manuals. See Franko, M. 1986. *The Dancing Body in Renaissance Choreography (c.1416-1589)*. Birmingham, Alabama: Summa Publications.

³ Studies including those by Adame et al. (1991), Radell et al. (1993) and Poretz (1982) compare the body images of dancers and non-dancers. As pointed out by Flores (2003) it is likely that aesthetic preferences may vary between dance forms, and so there is a need for studies that focus upon the variations in body aesthetics between different forms of dance.

⁴ See Turner (1996) for example.

⁵ There is a preponderance of literature signalling the link between body image and identity. Thomas (2003), for example, points out that different dance forms will produce and reproduce different bodies and so also *different identities*.

constantly constructing modes of subjection and control, but also of resistance and becoming. As such, classical ballet, as so-called 'high'-art form, and hip hop dance, as urban dance form, reflect very specific norms as to what the body should be. These norms are, in the case of hip hop dance, born out of the subversive political and social character of hip hop as subculture. On the other hand, as so-called 'high art', the institutionalised nature of classical ballet has not precluded it from also reflecting specific norms as to what the body should be, however different these norms may be from hip hop as urban dance form.

However, since both forms of dance have evolved over time and setting, as well as being subject to the influence of other dance styles, the intricacies of making such a claim are acknowledged. Most important in the context of this paper is the evolvment of hip hop dance into a form of theatre dance, which, I will assert, complicates the assertion of a specific body ideal for dancers in this genre.

In addition to both dance forms reflecting societal norms through their impact upon dancing bodies, I claim that both hip hop dance and classical ballet impact, albeit in different ways, upon societal norms regarding body ideals and body image. This will be elaborated on further in the paper.

Re-embodying the Dancer – How social worlds shape dancing bodies and dancing bodies shape social worlds

The changing body of Classical ballet

Dancer/choreographer Russell Dumas speaks of the regulatory mechanisms brought to bear upon the classical balletic body and its representations as follows:

The body and the dance images that are presented through the body are subject to immense social control. The control over the body which is apparent in particular areas of dance, for example the Royal Academy of Dance system of examination and accreditation in classical ballet, is one aspect of what is a much more pervasive system of surveillance and control over the body in our society. (Dumas in Dempster 1994: 24)

Indeed, from it's beginnings in the court of the Sun King, Louis XIV, ballet has prompted the emergence of the disciplined body. As Franko observes:

Anyone who has studied baroque dance in the studio under the teacher's watchful eye can testify that it allows little or no place for spontaneity. The royal body dancing was made to represent itself as if remachined in the service of an exacting co-ordination between upper and lower limbs dictated by a strict musical frame' (Franko 2000: 36)

As is familiar, classical ballet emerged in the courts of Europe during the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, not only as a symbolic enactment of royal power in a theatrical setting, but also as part of the physical and ethical discipline of the noble classes. Both *Swan Lake* and *The Sleeping Beauty*, for example, were created as cautionary tales for the nineteenth century Russian imperial court. These ballets did not '...merely reflect, but also actually formed –through ethical instruction – a class of courtiers in proper behaviour' (Jowitt in Banes 1998:45).

To this day, classical ballet endures as the upper-middle-class method for training daughters in proper carriage and deportment. But exactly how exactly does classical ballet form the body? In essence, the training focuses on lightness - defying gravity and disciplining muscles, bones, tendons and joints to push outwards and upwards from the ground. As dance scholars Susan Foster (1996) and Deborah Jowitt (1998) have argued, the premise of Romantic ballet was to present dance as continuous motion, a motion aiming upwards, animating the body lightly in the air. Such an ideology shaped styles, prescribed techniques and configured bodies – just as much as it shaped the critical standards for evaluating the dance form's aesthetic value.

The linear, lithe and proportioned form of the classical dancer's body evokes the concept of perfection, with the static positions, set vocabulary and mathematical virtuosity of the language augmenting a very specific ideal of beauty. Here, Susan Foster's feminist critique incisively summarises the way in which ballet covets this ideal:

The years of bodily disciplining have refigured fleshy curves and masses as lines and circles. Geometric perfection displays itself at both core and surface...via this geometry her movements turn mess into symbol (Foster 1996:14).

The Western classical aesthetics of beauty advocated by classical ballet therefore requires the transformation of undisciplined bodies into distinct, clear, rational ideals. As such, young bodies are regulated in order to conform to this aesthetic – becoming anatomically gender-less, muscular and straight. As Claid evocatively puts it:

Up, up and away: chin up, tits up, eyes lifted, bum clenched, knees pulled up, stomach lifted, hair scraped back – fight, fight, fight against the falling expanse of the flesh. (Claid 2006: 20).

The aspiration to a higher truth and beauty - the Enlightenment concept of aesthetic beauty⁶ - can only be perpetuated by this transformation.

With the foundational logic of ballet being pictorial, rather than affective, as in modern dance (Dempster 1994: 224), the classical ballet dancer attempts to create illusion with his/her body. The illusion is created by means of a complex combination of the constructed body, physical skill and balletic imagery. The ballerina⁷ engages the audience by creating an illusion of perfection – masking and concealing her real body by means of the discipline of the art form, in order to perpetuate the illusion.

The aesthetic of the modern ballerina is often attributed to the influence of Balanchine. Isabel Brown (in Kent, Camner and Camner 1984: 19) says, for example:

⁶ Of course, the aesthetic of the balletic body was not always this way. As pointed out by Jowitt (2004:213); we would probably not characterise the nineteenth century female dancer as looking ethereal in terms of body shape, considering her diet, childbearing, and the kind of muscles she had to develop. Fanny Elssler, for example, appears to have been a woman of medium height with a trim, but not tiny waist and a full, curving bust. In addition, the nineteenth century female dancer could sometimes be *too* ethereal to suit public taste. Jowitt (*ibid.*) notes that Gautier, for example, could not stand shoulder blades that stuck out and that Louise Fitzjames was constantly criticized for her thinness.

⁷ The focus on the female ballerina's body does not mean that male bodies are exempt from this aesthetic. Male bodies in ballet also evoke seductive relations between performers and audience. Nijinsky's masculine, yet feminised body is a striking testament to this spiritual airborne beauty that contributes to his legendary status. Androgyny, like beauty, upholds the traditions of classical Greek aesthetics where the masculine and feminine are harmonised in one body.

When I was in the American Ballet Theatre, most of the dancers were really quite chunky, and in those days it was considered okay not to be skinny-skinny. But about ten years after I left American Ballet Theatre it was actually Balanchine who started with 'the stick' – you know, the very thin dancers.

The classical dancers' thin look seems to have developed most significantly over the past thirty years or more⁸. Madame Alexandra Danilova, for example, views the contemporary obsession with thinness as an American trend:

In Russia, nobody told you, 'You must get thinner.' I wouldn't say the dancers were slender, but they were not fat – just normal.... But in the West, seeing ballet dancers in their leotards made one very conscious of the figure. And so people started to slim down. I find that a lot of youngsters have bare bones here, which I never saw before (Danilova in Kent et al 1984: 23-24)

Human bodies do not transcend naturally, and so the body itself must be incisively inscribed to signify ballet's meanings and values. The body must be trained incessantly, through years of practice to conform. According to Foucault:

The classical age discovered the body as object and target of power...it was a question not of freeing the body, en masse, 'wholesale', as if it were an indissociable unity, but of working it retail, individually, of exercising upon it a subtle coercion, of obtaining holds upon it at the level of the mechanism itself – movements, gestures, attitudes, rapidity: an infinitesimal power over the active body. (Foucault 1977:137)

In Foucault's theories, however, agency seems to be completely taken away from the dancer. As Elizabeth Grosz points out, for Foucault '...the body seems to be the passive raw data manipulated and utilized by various systems of social and self-construction, an object more or less at the mercy of non intentional or self-directed conscious production (Grosz 1994: 122).

As such, the Foucaultian understanding of the body seems to be rather one-sided. The body is most certainly a site of discipline, but it can also be celebrated as a site of resistance where persons may become empowered, (re)creating their social identities by manipulating and reworking the oppressive body images produced by the dominant ideology. The relationship between bodies and culture thereby may reveal an ongoing tension between discipline and creative expression.

This is tellingly illustrated in the history of dance, in the numerous instances where classical ballet and its aesthetic has been challenged. Performance tools such as parody and other feminist strategies were employed in dance performance practice from the 1970s onwards in order to deconstruct the conventional images of beauty and transcendence⁹. Works such as *Hoopla* (Anne Theresa de Keermaker, Rosas, 1983) reveal the muscular, down-to-earth female body in high heels and underwear or boots

⁸ Wainwright and Turner (2004:317) agree that within ballet '...there is a growing aesthetic for almost skeletal hyperflexible (ephemeral) bodies...'

⁹ Parody, functioning as a subversive tool for performance, does however require performers and spectators to have in some way inhabited the experiences to be subverted for its cathartic effect to take place.

and dresses. Emilyn Claid, Mary Presidge and Jacky Lansley of X6¹⁰ created works such as *Bleeding Fairies* (1977) – a dance that portrayed ballerinas as real, flesh and blood (and menstruating) women; not ethereal and romantic beings (Mackrell 1992: 30). In addition, a number of other dance companies that question the prevailing aesthetics of classical ballet have arisen. CandoCo's artistic director, Adam Benjamin, for example, claims that:

'The entry of disabled students into the most exclusive world of dance raises issues of aesthetics, politics, personality, sexuality...the lessons we learn, therefore will be more than academic, they will have an impact not only on dance as an art form, but on the way we perceive, treat and respect each other as human beings (Benjamin 1995: 47)

The birth of modern dance was therefore an element in the movement away from the strictures of classical ballet, and so became, in part, an attempt to release the body from ballet's aesthetic. However, the white elitist rejection of black body aesthetics has continued to perpetuate a denial of black dancers into ballet companies all over the world:

The origin of conflict here is the clash between Europeanist and African views regarding the relationship of the body/mind/spirit...From an Africanist perspective, a pulled-up, aligned stance and static carriage indicate sterility and inflexibility in the performer. In the classical Europeanist view, the movement exists to produce the (finished) work; in the Africanist view, the work exists to produce the movement. As assessed by Africanist aesthetic criteria, the Europeanist dancing body is rigid, aloof, cold and one-dimensional. By Europeanists standards, the Africanist dancing body is vulgar, comic, uncontrolled, undisciplined and most of all, promiscuous. (Gottschild 1996:9)

Western dance forms such as classical ballet continue to conceal their white elitism well, protecting their power against a number of '...dangerous intruders: black bodies, dark bodies, disabled bodies, sexual bodies, leaking bodies, fat bodies, wrong bodies'¹¹. (Claid 2006: 103).

Hip-hop bodies

Another challenge to the institutionalised aesthetics of classical ballet is hip hop dance. As urban dance form, hip hop does not, at first glance, seem to enforce canons of body shape and structure as rigorously as classical ballet¹². Originating in New York among young Hispanic and African-American men during the late 1960s as part of the hip-hop culture of rap, scratch music, and graffiti art, 'Hip Hop is rap music, graffiti art, urban

¹⁰ The New Dance movement of the 1970s was begun by a group of dancers calling themselves X6 after the name of the dance space in London's Docklands where they used to meet. The emphasis was on liberation, newness and radicalism.

¹¹ While white influences on black dance have been made visible, rarely have black influences on white dance been recognised. Gottschild (1996) and Foster (2002) are exceptions.

¹² Raucher (2000) interviewed ballet and modern dancers asking what type of physique they preferred to see in their respective dance forms. Both the ballet and modern dancers identified body shapes that conform to dominant ideals of thinness. As will be further elaborated Flores' (1993) study shows that hip hop dancers within various institutional settings in the US exhibited a resistance to a clearly defined body aesthetic.

dance styles, language and fashion. It is black and Hispanic youth at their finest, and to most African American youth, Hip Hop is a “way of life” (Gause, 2002: 29)

The dance form is never static, but does generally incorporate two styles - break dance and body popping. Break dance is an athletic solo where a performer enters the dance space, dives or breaks to the floor, and then spins around on his¹³ head, shoulders, or buttocks, ending with a freeze position. Body popping entails a series of rapid, sharp actions travelling through the body in an alternation of movement and freezing. Most importantly though:

The formal characteristic most obvious to dancers and viewers of hip-hop is the bounce. The bounce in hip-hop is a recoil, a triage before the next skip. Body power draws from the illusion of physical weightiness, of neediness, of the voracious consumption of space. Physical virtuosity is also a function of the hip-hop sound. For dancers, weightiness and aggressive physicality – unchecked virtuosity – lead us into the beat (DeFrantz 2004: 72).

The above quotation highlights the sharp differences in aesthetic that emerge between hip hop and classical ballet. Hip hop dance is characterised by angularity and asymmetry, and an aggressively layered, dynamic array of shapes assumed by the dancing body. To dance hip-hop, the body must be held ‘tight’ and focused, with strong weight. The explosive precision and use of physical tension or hardness in the movements performed is distinctive. Isolated body parts pop in and out in unexpected phrasing, echoing the complex array of interlocking rhythms characteristic of the music. As DeFrantz points out:

...it is the tightness of the body that speaks most to a hip-hop dance aesthetic (DeFrantz 2004: 72)

This dance aesthetic can be postulated as emergent from the beginnings of hip hop as a subculture. According to Dimitriadis, hip hop began as a situated cultural practice dependent on a whole set of artistic activities:

Dance, music and graffiti were all equally important in helping to sustain the event. Like many African music and popular dance music, early hip hop cannot be understood as aural text alone but must be approached and appreciated as a multitiered event, in particular contexts of consumption and production (Dimitriadis 2001:16)

In this way, rap, as dance music, also became a compelling form of cultural identity, as well as a potent vehicle for cultural and political expression¹⁴. The rap and hip hop artists of the 1980s and 1990s such as Puff Daddy (Sean Combs) and Ice Cube (O’Shea Jackson) became symbolic of the multifaceted social relations and cultural politics

¹³ The use of the masculine pronoun is deliberate here, since breakdancing was, in its early stages, reserved solely for the male dancer.

¹⁴ The Olive Dance Theatre, Inc., for example, defines its mission as to incite social change through creativity and the arts, and defines hip hop as a form of folk art.
<http://www.danceumbrella.com/OliveDanceComp.htm>

involved in the self-construction and representation of black masculinity in the public sphere¹⁵.

But what kind of aesthetic underlies hip hop dance? In recent years, hip hop culture's materialism and so-called 'bling-bling' excesses have dominated its reception in the public sphere. Ridiculous displays of wealth have become the aesthetic of choice. This aesthetic is for example evident in the work of Hype Williams (*Belly* 1999). Williams is one of the originators of the 'booty videos' that revel in gratuitous displays of gyrating female flesh. These videos have become exploitative in their depiction of women as mere bodies - just 'tits-and-ass' (Murray 2008: 2) - with no emotion or interiority.

Despite this, hip hop dance continues to innovate and inspire in its development of a host of regional forms, each with its own style. Hip hop is, however, now no longer a counter-hegemonic movement definitive of a subversive youth subculture, but has been commodified by the dominant culture. As Rose notes '...for many cultural critics, once a black cultural practice takes a prominent place inside the commodity system, it is no longer considered a black practice – it is instead a 'popular' practice' (Rose 1994:83). As such, hip hop dance is currently commonly presented as theatre dance¹⁶, on a stage, in the same way as classical ballet is commonly presented¹⁷.

This change has, in my view, affected the aesthetic to which hip hop appeals. According to Hazzard-Donald, for example: 'In its early stages, hip hop rejected the partnering ritual between men and women; at a party or dance, hip hop dance was performed between men or by a lone woman' (Hazzard-Donald 1996:227)

Thus, if early hip hop dancing in the social sphere aggressively asserted male dominance, its availability for women was signaled by its movement into the commercial region. Films such as *Flashdance* (1983) and *Breakin'* (1984) contributed to the movement of hip hop dance from an aggressive, masculinised realm into an integrated social space that accommodated dancing by both sexes.

But if both men and women are now included, has this affected the prevailing aesthetic in any way? Hip-hop's movement into popular culture has meant expansion beyond marginalized youth. Hip-hop now incorporates the experiences of a variety of individuals: young and old, black and not. As Flores (2003) notes in her study of body image and ideals amongst female hip hop dancers, hip hop dancers seem to exhibit a resistance to a clearly defined body aesthetic. While the majority of dancers identified some physical attribute in their description of the ideal dancing body, there was no obvious ideal shape. The ideal dancer described was both 'thin' and 'not skinny'; she has a 'curvy, hour-glass figure' though 'no body fat'.

¹⁵ Dimitriadis asserts that young people today are using these so-called 'texts' to construct locally validated selves and senses of community, linked to shared notions of what it means to be black and marginalised in the United States and around the world today (Dimitriadis 2001:2)

¹⁶ By Doug Elkins, amongst many others.

¹⁷ The role of the stage in keeping the performer always out of reach of the spectator in high institutionalised art such as ballet, versus street dance where the spectator and dancer are in close proximity, is one important aspect to consider. However, due to the rapid institutionalisation of hip-hop the distance between performer and audience is rapidly growing.

In contrast, dancers of dominant, traditional dance forms have been much more specific in their descriptions of body ideals (Raucher, 2000). As mentioned previously, modern and ballet dancers prefer thin dancer physiques for their respective activities. Yet unlike ballet and modern dance, hip-hop culture has yet to identify its preferred body shape¹⁸.

Though hip-hop dance may provide a site for resistance against stringent body aesthetics, the participants in the Flores (2003) study continued to apply strict ideals to their own bodies. As noted by Tomlinson (1998), this practice of containment and resistance is widespread in the power struggles of popular culture. Subversive subcultures infrequently engage in continual and complete resistance, with simultaneous contesting and enforcing of hegemonic values being more common (Beal, 1995).

Hip-hop dance, a product of black culture, was theorized as a potential site for the contesting of hegemonic body preferences. However, despite the fact that the subculture of hip-hop dance accommodates (or even celebrates) body shapes that counter hegemonic ideals, dominant body ideals have not been completely resisted. In my view, this is a result of the institutionalisation of the dance form.

Rethinking the subject in terms of the body.

How does the aesthetic of the body of the classical ballet dancer or the hip hop artist contribute to the formation of a sense of self? Laing's (1965:67) comments on the importance of the body for a sense of self are instructive:

The embodied person has a sense of being flesh and blood and bones, of being biologically alive and real: he knows himself to be substantial. To the extent that he is thoroughly 'in' his body, he is likely to have a sense of personal continuity in time. He will experience himself as subject to the dangers that threaten his body, the dangers of attack, mutilation, disease, decay, and death. He is implicated in bodily desire, and the gratifications and frustrations of the body. The individual thus has as his starting-point an experience of his body as a base from which he can be a person with other human beings.

When we compare the influence of the aesthetics of the body on both hip hop and classical ballet dancers, it seems that the effect is equally strong. DeFrantz (2004:69) argues in line with Cayou that the most important quality of black social dance is 'Functionalism – becoming what you dance – the art of real life'. In other words, dance movement is aligned to personal identity. Banes (1994: 145) also vividly highlights the connection between dance and identity:

The intensity of the dancer's physicality gives breaking a power and energy even beyond the vitality of graffiti and rapping. If graffiti is a way of 'publishing', of winning fame by spreading your tag all over the city, breaking is a way of claiming the streets with physical presence, using your body to publicly inscribe your identity on the surfaces of the city, to flaunt a unique personal style within a conventional format.

Similarly, Wainwright and Turner (2004: 316) in their study of injury, identity and the balletic body assert that for ballet dancers, their balletic body *is* their identity, i.e. since

¹⁸ Flores (2003) notes that it remains unclear whether this is due to a conscious effort to resist the thin dancer aesthetic prevalent in conventional dance or because there is simply no defined body type for hip-hop dance.

their physical being is the foundation of their vocation; the body is the very sum and substance of their self-identity.

High art vs. urban dance forms? An erosion of boundaries

Are hip-hop and high art antithetical? Perhaps when hip hop was in its nascent stages, they were. However, hip-hop has been domesticated and watered down in order to be palatable for art-world consumption¹⁹. Hip-hop is no longer a subculture – it has in many respects become normative despite trying to maintain its subversive status. It has also been under attack due to its overt violence, misogyny, homophobia and grotesque materialism. Its celebration of the hyper-masculine, black male body and brazen exploitation of women's bodies has been problematised by artists such as Susan Smith-Pinelo, who interrogates the misogyny of rap music in her video montage *Cake* (2001). For Pinelo as well as for Newkirk in his *Study for Hip hop from Home* (2001), hip hop has become a new form of racism and control, one that is often exercised from within the black community itself. For them, hip hop's blackness is counter-revolutionary and degrading – it has become the new locus of anti-racist directives – a kind of anti-black blackness.

Is it possible for hip hop culture to return to a political consciousness that is truly transgressive, when its dance and music have been absorbed into the mainstream? As shown by Lee's *The Hip Hop project* (2001), race can be subsumed and erased through the homogenizing gesture of taking on the identity of a given group – in other words, normativity *and* subversion can be achieved through taking on the hip hop aesthetic. The urban tongue, the walk, the dance style, and the enactment of blackness do not necessarily need the black, male body to achieve expression. Hip hop as trans-textuality provides an alternative whereby the insidious binarism (sic) of black and white, self and other can be undermined.

This points to the post-modern erosion of boundaries between high art and popular culture, where ideas can move between genres. The latter part of the twentieth century has seen the frequent absorption of popular cultural influences, not just into avant-garde dance works, but also into the mainstream. Conversely, values associated with high art have been incorporated into the more populist statements. We see this in the world of classical ballet where, in the 1990's, choreographers such as Matthew Bourne and Lea Anderson, for example, have attempted a reappraisal of ballet's past narratives. *Highland Fling* (1994) retells the story of *La Sylphide* in a punk-populated Glaswegian setting, while *Swan Lake* (1995) has a cast of male swans and features a male dancer in the Odette/Odile role. In this ballet, audiences are alerted to the possibilities of the genre incorporating new representations of the male dancer. In both dances, there is a sense of an honest reappraisal of the notion of the ideal which is the heart of ballet classicism, updated to a contemporary context (Grau and Jordan 2000: 195).

Conclusions

¹⁹ It is ironic that just as ballet as form of social control evolved into the birth of dance forms that question social control, hip hop began as a form of social subversion, and as it is being absorbed into theatre dance loses its political efficacy and power.

To summarise, I have asserted that classical ballet focuses the shaping of the body onto fitting the Enlightenment ideal of lightness and ethereality, whilst hip hop emphasises the weightiness and physical presence of the body. Classical ballet highlights conformity and precision, whilst hip hop dance, at least in its urban form, highlights subversion and individuality. Of course, as it has been absorbed into theatre dance, the aesthetic of hip hop dance is evolving and moving, in my view, closer to that of institutionalised, Western forms of dance such as classical ballet, but as is pointed out by Harris, this is not a uniform or predictable process:

Hip-hop is about being raw, never about being slick. People are missing the point in approaching it with a ballet aesthetic. Even though the show is heavily choreographed, there's improvisation. Everybody is not doing the movement the same way. It doesn't matter if the arms are lifted to the same height, or the weight distributed the same way, as long as they're moving together in synchronised timing." (Harris in Hutera, 2006).

Harris' comment clearly imparts the importance of the resistance of hip hop artists to the homogenising influences of the theatre dance scene, as well as reminding us that dance, can challenge, provoke, reinforce, as well as be appropriated in the pursuit of identity.

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Kyle de Boer - *Staging sexuality: an examination of choreographing a lesbian representation in dance with reference to Joni Barnard's, One Sideways Glance: II.*

The following presentation discusses the means of constructing a lesbian representation in dance through an examination of the 'gaze' as a choreographic device. I will contextualise the argument by highlighting the failure of formalised black urban dance forms and western dance forms to aptly construct a lesbian representation in dance or to deal with the subject matter whatsoever. In the examination of the use of the 'gaze' as a choreographic device toward lesbian representation, I wish to come to the conclusion that formalised urban dance forms (such as pantsula, kwasa and even ballet) gain greater relevance and move into a new territory in dance once the form interfaces with avant-garde dance - when the form becomes an aspect/element of the dance, not just the dance itself. Consequently suggesting that such urban dance forms can only work toward creating apt representations of complex feminised identities (which are largely more personalised) through such interfacing.

Eva Kosofsky Sedgwick's call was, 'to make the invisible possibilities and desire visible [and] to make the tacit things explicit'¹

Staging sexuality: an examination of choreographing a lesbian representation in dance with reference to Joni Barnard's, *One Sideways Glance: II*.

Eva Kosofsky Sedgwick's call for an acknowledgement of a 'queer' representation in dance is a more recent development in the writing of dance studies. The term 'queer' refers not only to 'homosexual' dance subject matter, but all forms of 'otherness' that work against normative structures and constructs of representation such as black urban dance forms. This essay aligns itself with a 'queer' subject matter: sexuality and the staging of this complex subject matter. Blunt argues that, 'dance provides a privileged arena for the body's enactment of sexual semiotics'². This is due to the view that the body is the site upon which society applies constructed ideals of sexuality and gender. Locating this study within a post-modern paradigm advocates the deconstruction of subject matter such as gender, sexuality, desire, and the cultural semiotics pertaining to such social constructions. The following essay will be written within a post-modern paradigm with specific references to the theories pertaining to such societal constructions. Reference to such theoretical discourses of deconstruction link directly to issues of representation as they work against culturally imposed stereotypes with regard to understanding sexuality, gender and desire. Therefore the following essay seeks, within a post-modern paradigm, to examine the means through which the choreographic inclusion of 'the gaze' works towards the construction of a lesbian representation in dance. This shall be contextualised with reference to choreographer Joni Barnard's Quartet entitled *One Sideways Glance: II*.

Homosexual identity and representation are directly linked to urban dance issues. Queer representation and the development of a queer representation in dance has up till now only been given voice within an urban setting and through urban dance forms (largely avant-garde and contemporary choreography – regarded as 'high art'). Queer narrative situates itself against the hetero-normative and its associated semiotics. The same can be said for many black urban dance forms such as Mapantsula, Hiphop, Crunk and Gumboot dancing. These dance forms emerge as a means to establish an oppositionary discourse/expression against an established institution (be it Whiteness, Capitalism or Western Imperialism). The emergence of the dance expression becomes a performed extension of the 'othered' urbanised identity marginalised by institution. Through the performing and recognition of the dance form the 'othered' identity becomes established as an oppositionary norm. However, such oppositionary discourses become bound by the same constraints and codifications as the established discourses they oppose (Ballet). The dance form originally working against institution becomes codified

¹ Desmond. C, Jane. *Dancing Desires: Choreographing sexualities on and off the stage*. Madison: University of Wisconsin, 2001. Pp4.

² *Ibid.* Pp5.

and formalised as it becomes established. Consequently the vocabulary can only come to represent a simple, generalised and typified feminine identity (wealthy urban black woman) rather than the expression of a layered and complex personal feminine identity (poor urban black Xhosa lesbian woman). Another issue arising with the codifying of dance is the type of choreographic approach that is associated with such formalised dance. The symmetrical, presentational, 'straight line' and commercially motivated choreography defeats the original purpose of such oppositionary discourses. The very choreography invites the audience to remain a safe spectator who penetrates the performer with a gaze of outside and dominant judgement. This does not function to question personal identity whatsoever and is aligned with western perceptions regarding the viewing of theatrical performance. I wish to argue that urban dance forms come into greater relevance when the form becomes an aspect of the dance, not just the dance itself. That a focus on choreography provides new possibilities for black urban dance forms if they interface with an Avant-garde approach to choreography.

A lesbian representation in dance is vastly more complicated than the representation of any other minority group. The homosexual subject exists in the realm of the feminine. Categorised and stigmatised as 'other' by patriarchal constructs. But the case of the female homosexual is vastly different. As a woman, the female homosexual is already a feminised subject and outside of the masculine libido. She becomes the double oppressed subject, who is denied representation by institutions of heterosexuality,

'Lesbians are oppressed by heterosexuality as a specific system to which they are more or less, outsiders'³.

The invisibility of a lesbian expression is alarmingly clear in all urban dance forms, the codifying of which, can be considered to be in cahoots with heterosexual institution. The means through which lesbians are oppressed by institutions of heterosexuality begins with their difference, which lies in how these individuals relate to women. The lesbian is oppressed by institutions of heterosexuality, which do not recognise a female-female social unit. This has largely to do with the institutions of heterosexuality being structured around the notion of reproduction. Thus heterosexuality can be regarded as a,

'method of socially organising a broad spectrum of reproductive activities, heterosexual systems, whether patriarchal or not, function to insure reproduction by making the male-female unit fundamental to social structure'⁴.

Due to the ability of the female body to biologically create a child, heterosexual institutions constitute the female-female unit as complete aberration, assuming it works against the 'natural' reproduction and offending the masculine libido (with his deluded notion that women should submit to the phallus). As a double oppressed subject, rejecting the status as a subcategory of women, the lesbian subject can be considered a 'third sex'⁵. She exists outside the binary gender systems, and thus finds difficulty in representation as a double oppressed feminised subject⁶. Being constructed already as a feminised subject (gender) makes the representation of another feminised identity

³ Chris J. Cuomo. *Thoughts on Lesbian Differences*. Hypatia > Vol. 13, No. 1 (Winter, 1998), pp. 198-205. Pp118.

⁴ *Ibid.* Pp198.

⁵ *Ibid.* Pp199.

⁶ Davey, Kate. *Constructing the spectator: Reception, context and address in Lesbian performance*. *Performing Arts Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 2. (1986), pp. 43-52.

difficult. The hetero-normative constructs imposed on the female gendered body works against the ability to represent the subjects other feminised identity (homosexuality),

‘It is therefore implicit the subject fight a double oppression, that of her femaleness and that of her homosexuality’⁷.

But how would one then go about choreographing a lesbian representation in dance? It is from this point of reference that one can begin to consider Baudrillard’s notion of ‘Seduction’ and the means through which this empowers the feminine and allows one to represent the double oppressed.

Baudrillard’s notion of ‘Seduction’ and the means through which it functions in empowering the feminine can be best understood by contextualising it with regard to *One Sideways Glance: II*. *One Sideways Glance: II* can be regarded as a contemporary avant-garde choreographic work and will function as an example for the possibilities (such as considering the, choreographic approach) could provide black urban dance forms. The notion of ‘Seduction’ is considered by psychoanalysts to be, ‘the liberation of desire’⁸. That is the liberation that occurs when desires are not confined to one unified consensus, as would happen within the masculine libido or codified dance practices. The notion of ‘desire’ links directly to post-modern theories of deconstruction surrounding issues of sexuality. It also links to ‘a cultural politics of movement’⁹, because ‘desire’ is directly related to ‘want’ and the means through which one conducts and accommodates this ‘want’, ‘Desire to is sustained by want’¹⁰. With regard to *One Sideways Glance: II*, the notion of ‘desire’ was explored through use of ‘the gaze’ in which a series of ambiguous power plays can take place. In western society, ‘the gaze’ is regarded as an empowering weapon, utilised to assert authority and intention and usually associated with the dominant masculine libido,

‘Theories of the ‘male gaze’ suggest that she enters the public (masculine) space as a potentially disruptive, transgressive body and it is her position as spectacle (making a spectacle of herself) under the view of the masculine eye, that disciplines her back into line’¹¹.

Barnard’s piece works to challenge this ‘disciplining’ and explored the ways in which, ‘women evade or subvert this disciplining’¹². The use of ‘Seduction’ is the means through which this is achieved. Due to the lesbian subject being a ‘third sex’ existing outside the hetero-normative binary, the subject comes to embody a ‘grey area’ of desire that works towards representing difference,

‘One should not try to produce ‘male’ and ‘female’ as complimentary entities, sure of each other and their own identity, but should expose the fantasy on which this rests’¹³.

⁷ Davey, Kate. *Constructing the spectator: Reception, context and address in Lesbian performance*. *Performing Arts Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 2. (1986), pp. 43-52. Pp50.

⁸ Baudrillard, Jean. *Seduction*. New York: St Martins Press, 1990. Pp5.

⁹ Desmond, C, Jane. *Dancing Desires: Choreographing sexualities on and off the stage*. Madison: University of Wisconsin, 2001. Pp7.

¹⁰ Baudrillard, Jean. *Seduction*. New York: St Martins Press, 1990. Pp5.

¹¹ Brook, B. *Feminine perspectives on the Body*. London: Longman, 1999. Pp112.

¹² Barnard, Joni. *One Sideways Glance: II Interview Answers*. Pp1.

¹³ Lacan, Jaqcues. *Feminine Sexuality and the ecole freudienne*. New York: Norton, 1985. Pp47.

How does an avant-garde approach to choreography allow the creating of a lesbian representation in dance if sexuality is approached as a fluid concept? The answer to this question has a large part to do with the choreographic choices made by Barnard. The dance vocabulary is considered as an extension of the expression, not the whole expression itself. Barnard approaches the movement vocabulary in a feminine manner rather than choosing to butch up her female dancers. The four female dancers were dressed provocatively and undeniably 'feminine' (three of them in bra's), one woman fully dressed in black, two in black skirts and bras and the last in black pants and a bra. The movement vocabulary was inspired by the ideals of minimalism. The phrases were constructed with a vocabulary consisting of thirteen movements. All of them materialising from everyday gestures, one could even call it a 'hetero-normative' vocabulary (a smoking gesture, touching the breasts). It is at this point that the choreographer would be able to utilise vocabulary from black urban dance forms in the creating of the work, making the vocabulary an aspect of the narrative, a reference to black urban identity and redirecting the movement's semiotic associations for the audience. The female subject is represented as 'female', and the vocabulary is shared as unified consensus by the quartet as though they are one consciousness. From this frame of reference one can begin to analyse *One Sideways Glance: II* and the means through which 'the gaze' functions as a device towards creating a lesbian representation.

The means through which 'the gaze' is enabled to employ 'Seduction', and the means through which this works towards creating a lesbian representation should be considered with reference to the spacing decisions utilised in *One Sideways Glance: II*. Barnard made very specific choreographic decisions with regard to this aspect of constructing the piece. Barnard considered the positions, in which she placed her performers to the audience in creating the space,

'In order to challenge the conventional relationship between audience and performer, I decided to make the performance space as intimate as possible. I marked out a square stage, approximately 5x5m, and on three sides of this square, the front, left and right sides I placed the audience...therefore, the majority of the audience would be sitting on the stage whilst the performance took place'¹⁴

Thus there is a breaking of the conventional 'fourth wall' in *One Sideways Glance: II*. The 'fourth wall' functions to separate the audiences 'reality' from that of the performers. It designates the audience as being empowered, enabling them to 'penetrate' and discipline the performer through the power that 'the gaze' affords them within the masculine libido.

'The gaze' works as a choreographic device to assist in working towards a lesbian representation when the performing bodies are all women. In the context of the intimate space that Barnard established as her performance space, 'the gaze' became examined further, and consequently worked towards fragmenting established spectator/performer power dynamics. The status of the lesbian subject as a 'third sex' who is thus (according to Judith Butler) rendered invisible due to her imposed double oppression changes when considering 'the gaze'. The audience is no longer allowed the privilege of spectator. With the audience in close proximity to the performers, Barnard choreographed her dancers to look and hold their 'gaze' directly back at the audience and one another as they performed,

¹⁴ Barnard, Joni. *One Sideways Glance: II Interview Answers*. Pp2.

'I opted for a more ambiguous gaze (as opposed to a sexy gaze) and told the performers that they should play with different aspects of 'want' within the gaze. Therefore within the piece we had a playful gaze, a curious gaze, an enticing gaze, a passionate gaze, an assertive gaze and aggressive gaze, all based on the notion of 'want' and sexual desire'¹⁵.

'The gaze' is thus seductive, desire is liberated, and this allows for, 'the transubstantiation of sex into signs that is the secret of all seduction'¹⁶. The seduction comes to be embodied through the feminine subject's use of artifice. The ability to manipulate these societal symbols thus renders notions of desire and consequently sexuality as non-gender specific thus creating empowerment,

'They do not know that seduction represents power over the symbolic universe, whilst power represents only mastery over the "real" universe'¹⁷.

Through deconstructing the spectator/performer relationship and challenging the conventions of traditional theatre the functioning of 'the gaze' can be further examined. As aforementioned, 'the gaze' embodies within it a 'battle for dominance', the individual employs 'the gaze' in order to assert their desire and acquire recognition. As the quartet of women danced within close proximity of the audience, Barnard encouraged them to 'gaze' directly at the audience members and one another. In breaking the 'fourth wall' in this manner, Barnard works towards creating a 'mutual dialogue'¹⁸. That has the ability to 'shift the dynamics of the traditional gaze'. Barnard feminises 'the gaze' allowing the addressing and subverting of that which Kristeva terms 'the socio-symbolic contract'¹⁹. The arising of a 'mutual dialogue' acts to empower the performer who becomes an assertive subject, blurring the imposed boundaries of performance. 'The gaze' is subverted and the feminine subject continually shifts between being 'desired object and the object of desire'²⁰,

'Therefore you as an audience member are watching the performer, watching you, watching them, watching each other, watching other audience members, watching you being watched...etc'²¹.

The means through which this creates a lesbian representation results in the implications occurring from feminising 'the gaze'. Within the context of this feminised gaze, the bodies of the quartet are female. In confronting the audience with their 'gaze' and employing seduction they are empowered subjects. This is due to that which Liepe-livenson terms 'mimetic jeopardy'²². In the 'reality' of the performance in which the performer breaks the 'fourth wall', the audience member becomes a part of the 'theatre reality'. The audience continues to behave in the expected manner, they watch. But

¹⁵ Barnard, Joni. *One Sideways Glance: II Interview Answers*. Pp3.

¹⁶ Baudrillard, Jean. *Seduction*. New York: St Martins Press, 1990. Pp8.

¹⁷ Baudrillard, Jean. *Seduction*. New York: St Martins Press, 1990. Pp8.

¹⁸ Albright, Ann Cooper. *Choreographing Difference: the body and identity in contemporary dance*. Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 1997. Pp978.

¹⁹ Davey, Kate. *Constructing the spectator: Reception, context and address in Lesbian performance*. *Performing Arts Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 2. (1986), pp. 43-52. Pp48.

²⁰ Desmond, C. Jane. *Dancing Desires: Choreographing sexualities on and off the stage*. Madison: University of Wisconsin, 2001. Pp21.

²¹ Barnard, Joni. *One Sideways Glance: II Interview Answers*. Pp2.

²² Desmond, C. Jane. *Dancing Desires: Choreographing sexualities on and off the stage*. Madison: University of Wisconsin, 2001. Pp21.

'the gazing' performer, who maintains the performance 'reality' threatens them. The audience member is thus forced to participate; there is a mimicked threat. Through utilising 'the gaze' to employ seduction the audience member fears possible exposure of their own sexuality. The gendered body of the dancer must be considered in conjunction with this 'mimetic jeopardy'. With sexuality and desire rendered ambiguous the gender and movement of the dancers becomes highlighted, they are four assertive women. They threaten to expose the audience member's sexuality through the use of 'mimetic jeopardy' and in conjunction with this they interact provocatively with one another,

'To intimately watch two or three women hold between them a gaze of sexual desire and sexual intrigue, where the male gaze does not play any part whatsoever, is not something the average theatre audience sees'²³.

This works with the vocabulary towards allowing a lesbian representation. The provocatively dressed women interacting within an undeniably feminine expression of sexual desire also interact physically on stage. The vocabulary had a sexual edge to it, with perhaps the most provocative moment being a gesture signifying an overt signal of a homosexual motif. Notably the dancers never lifted nor touched one another again in a similar manner within the piece, making the gesture immediately noticeable and sexual. The dancers ran their hands over their breasts and later repeated this gesture on one another. This one subtle moment amidst the liberation of desire employed by 'the gaze' created a lesbian representation. The empowered feminine subject is no longer complicit to the male gaze. This quartet of assertive women seduces and debilitates the masculine with an ambiguous sexual desire. Through this, they create a position of feminine power where the semiotics of female same-sex desire is physically expressed outside and against hetero-normative constructs. The following analysis of *One Sideways Glance: II* consequently suggests that if one reassesses the choreographic approach to black urban dance forms, the vocabulary and the form can be taken into new territories and allow a staging of more complex feminised identities.

²³ Barnard, Joni. *One Sideways Glance: II Interview Answers*. Pp2.

Reference:

Desmond, C. Jane. *Dancing Desires: choreographing sexualities on and off the stage*. Madison: University of Wisconsin, 2001.

Bunt, Ramsay. *Dissolving the pleasure: The threat of the queer male dancing body*. London: Routledge, 1995.

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Review: [Untitled]

Reviewed Work(s):

Choreographing Difference: The Body and Identity in Contemporary Dance by Ann Cooper Albright, *Meaning in Motion: New Cultural Studies of Dance* by Jane C. Desmond Valerie A. Briginshaw. *Signs*, Vol. 25, No. 3. (Spring, 2000), pp. 977-980.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0097-9740%28200021%2925%3A3%3C977%3ACDTBAI%3E2.0.CO%3B2-E>

Date Accessed: 28 March 2007.

Emily L. Sisley. *Notes on Lesbian Theatre - The Drama Review: TDR*, Vol. 25, No. 1, Sex and Performance Issue. (Mar., 1981), pp. 47-56.

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Davy, Kate. *Constructing the Spectator: Reception, Context, and Address in Lesbian Performance*. *Performing Arts Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 2. (1986), pp. 43-52.

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Date Accessed: 28 March 2007.

Author(s) of Review: [Randy Martin](#)

Reviewed Work(s): *Dance, Sex, and Gender: Signs of Identity, Dominance, Defiance, and Desire* by *Judith Lynne Hanna*

Journal of the History of Sexuality > Vol. 1, No. 4 (Apr., 1991), pp. 723-725

Stable URL: [http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=1043-](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=1043-4070%28199104%291%3A4%3C723%3ADSAGSO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-F)

[4070%28199104%291%3A4%3C723%3ADSAGSO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-F](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=1043-4070%28199104%291%3A4%3C723%3ADSAGSO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-F)

Thoughts on Lesbian Differences . [Chris J. Cuomo](#)

Hypatia > Vol. 13, No. 1 (Winter, 1998), pp. 198-205

Stable URL: [http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0887-](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0887-5367%28199824%2913%3A1%3C198%3ATOLD%3E2.0.CO%3B2-O)

[5367%28199824%2913%3A1%3C198%3ATOLD%3E2.0.CO%3B2-O](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0887-5367%28199824%2913%3A1%3C198%3ATOLD%3E2.0.CO%3B2-O)

Interview accounts from the choreographer (Joni Barnard) of One Sideways Glance: II.

Baudrillard, Jean. *Seduction*. New York: St Martins Press, 1990.

Brook, B. *Feminine perspectives on the Body*. London: Longman, 1999.

Lacan, Jacques. *Feminine Sexuality and the école freudienne*. New York: Norton, 1985.

Nicola Elliott - *Desire lines between codified dance forms*

Under the list of “Outcomes” for this conference is “The possibility of further developing innovative Contemporary choreography informed by urban culture”. Initially inspired by this idea, this paper seeks ways in which Contemporary choreography might interact with dance styles and forms. With this goal in mind, the paper draws on current ideas in city planning to create a metaphor for the world of codified dance forms. The aim, in doing so, is to shed light on how we might create new avenues within the field.

Nicola Elliott - Desire lines between codified dance forms

The subject for this conference concerns urban dance forms and I am reminded of how the Modern dancer-choreographer Doris Humphrey, in considering creative routes to dance language and theme, writes about the architecture of the Modern city as a notable aesthetic force in people's lives. She writes of how architectural images in the city are indicative of needs and values of the time:

From the point of view of visual influences, it seems to me that architecture, especially for those who live in the city, speaks to us and for us with the most insistent cry. And what is it saying? Consider the modern city. [...] The curve has all but vanished. [...] The right angle is possibly the prime symbol of our age, eloquent of conflict. Its parent, the straight line, is thought to be best and smartest when it is shiny and naked, pointed slightly like the end of a weapon. [...] All this suggests force, too much steel and sterility and that other prime symbol, the fact. The right angle and the fact are the voices of our time. [...] Underneath these shapes there must be a real need for and a belief in the hard, the practical and the violent, which has welled up from millions of demands of people. (1959, pp. 29-30)

Further on, she writes of the effect this may have on city dwellers:

All these streets and all these buildings are filled with people who are inoculated day after day with heavy visual doses of the right angle and massive amounts of fact, a delicious mixture, which makes them efficient and practical and sodden. (p.30)

Maybe the city is different in today's world with often stressful but nonetheless convivial cities, but it continues to fuel movement expression. Urban dance forms derive source and inspiration from this environment, and one of the "Outcomes" of this conference is "the possibility of further developing innovative Contemporary choreography informed by urban culture".¹ I propose that current developments in city conceptualisation can offer Contemporary choreographers exciting ways to navigate the world of codified dance forms.

Let me begin with a metaphor. Let us imagine that codified dance forms are buildings, making up a city, which we can call the dance city. The movements involved in each form or style make up the bricks, cement, windows, passageways, entrance halls and gateways. Every codified dance form has built a place for itself in this city. Most notable on the skyline is perhaps Ballet but it is joined by Hip Hop, Irish, Pantsula, Eurythmy, Ballroom, the different traditional Zulu dance forms, even perhaps Contact Improvisation and 'fusion' forms – indeed, every dance form, irrespective of country or location, is represented.

As mentioned, the dance city is constructed out of movements. Indeed, a fundamental premise of this paper is that dance language, like verbal language, plays a seminal role in constructing identity. In this way, who we are is built up through layers of how we represent ourselves in the world and how the world around us shapes us. In addition, the representations are not neutral or transparent. The signs and signifiers that make up our linguistic structures have limitations and carry connotations.² For example, in feminist theory, it is convincingly argued that the structures of language play a significant role in encoding a male worldview. A major endeavour of many feminist theorists is to create or reform structures of language in order to represent correctly, and allow for, a female worldview.³ The same can apply to dance language. In Ballet, a *plié* is not only a bending of the knee joint in line with the turned-out, weight-supporting leg. More importantly perhaps, it

¹ A list of outcomes can be found at < <http://web.uct.ac.za/depts/ballet/confluen/confluen.htm>>

² See Abrahms (1999) for an introductory discussion to these ideas.

³ See Saul (2007) for an analytical discussion of these ideas.

is an interconnected element in a training and aesthetic system known as Ballet; a system with which it identifies and helps to identify. As has been widely argued in dance criticism, these systems are not politically-neutral.⁴ As in verbal languages, a specific worldview constructs and is constructed by every form.⁵

In real cities, as Humphrey noted, the buildings, roads and infrastructure give the impression of rigidity. This may indeed partly be true but for the human bodies that inhabit it. Traditionally, city planning may have focused on how to develop and maintain the solid structures of the city. More recently, however, a growing need has been recognised to re-conceptualise the city in terms of the immediacy of its lived experience, prompting Rajchman (2000) to state, “rationally planned or not, the city is better understood in terms of how it deals with its *fuites* (leaks)”.⁶

Shepherd and Murray agree by suggesting the following

New entry points, cultural ‘jamming’, leakages, the world beneath, the figure of the migrant, the unfinished city, the salience of the imagination and desire; all of these imply the possibility of more open readings [to the concept of the city]. (2007, p.10)

For, as Miles states:

The project [for successful urban development] is not the construction of Utopia, for most Utopias are authoritarian in the brittleness of control they require to maintain their stasis... (1997, p18)

Thus, these critics are suggesting that it is of more interest to those involved in city development to examine what is happening in the cracks in the infrastructure than to ignore it and continue to reinforce the infrastructure.

Tangible manifestations of these cracks are desire lines, and I shall now look at these more closely. Shepherd and Murray offer the following definition:

desire line (di.ZYR lyn) n. An informal path that pedestrians prefer to take to get from one location to another rather than using a sidewalk or other official route. [...They] describe those well-worn ribbons of earth that you see cutting across a patch of grass, often with pavements nearby. (p.1)

According to Brown (2003),⁷ desire lines “indicate yearning”. Indeed, they assert that the structures of the city are always in a mutually-constructing relationship with the bodies that frequent it. Thus, pavements are laid to ease our pathways of travel, but also to herd us in a particular direction. When a different direction becomes popular, a desire line will reveal itself. Quite possibly, the desire line might soon be paved over to ease pathways of travel - and the cycle continues.

This idea of the body’s non-neutral relationship to space and place is certainly not a new one. Indeed, in Sanchez-Colberg’s words, Laban theorized that the body is key in defining space:

Before movement, there is the body in space – a body that has orientation, dimensions, inclination, that by virtue of just existing occupies and produces space. (1996, p.44)

⁴ For an extended argument of Ballet politics, see Foster’s essay “The Ballerina’s Phallic Pointe” (1996).

⁵ See Kealiinohomoku (1983) for a seminal discussion of the Ballet worldview.

⁶ Quoted in Shepherd and Murray (2007, p.9).

⁷ Quoted in Shepherd and Murray, p1.

In a more casual tone, Pienaar notes the reverse (how space affects us), “We all know the feeling of walking into a room and experiencing a sudden or dramatic shift in mood or thought” (1999, p.135).

So, in our real cities, desire lines can be seen to be manifestations of bodies asserting their effect on the space as it affects them.

As mentioned above, as the city develops, it is conceivable that desire lines may be paved over if they are popular enough. When it thus becomes official, does it lose the status and excitement of being ‘a crack in the infrastructure’, worthy of attention? For it is probable that many of our official routes first started as desire lines. In answer, I would like to mention a wonderful example of how the whole city itself can become conceptualised as desire lines.

The Situationists, a group of performer-theorists formed in 1957 and lasting about fifteen years, fought against what they saw as the increasing commodification of culture with two key tactics. One tactic is the *derive*, “a short meandering walk determined by one’s desires” (Thompson, 2004, p.16). In this walk, the individual “climbers up, hops over, crawls into, and slides past fences and walls designed to prevent one from entering particular spaces in the city” (*Ibid.*). Thompson states,

While at first such meanderings might seem fairly leisurely and not in the least bit political, they propose the radical idea that ways of being in particular space (particularly in cities) are political acts. (*Ibid.*)

Such an example offers us the idea that, as we navigate city life, we might prefer to see our paths as desire lines of our own making, even as we make use of main streets.

Returning to the metaphor of the dance city, I propose that the bodies inhabiting the city are choreographies. Their identity – layered as it is by their surrounding environment - is their content (be it narrative, formalist or spectacular). How are these works navigating the city? Are they mindlessly following established infrastructure? I argue that fixed roads lead to fixed ideas/identity/content. Is it not sometimes more interesting to step off the beaten track and discover in which direction our city-trained bodies (or our city-accustomed dance works) wish to go? My call is thus to choreographers, in looking at the vast array of forms and styles that are currently at our disposal, to be mindful when following paths and to be sure, no matter how popular the route, that the desire line - and not the establishment with its comfort of known, accepted signs - is always underfoot. After all, dance *is* expressing itself in signs – we have all these forms at our disposal - and those signs are not neutral. As Humphrey states, “If you are completely satisfied with the key shapes of our time, do not seek to compose. Human movements are not made of building blocks, nor with the right angle and the fact” (p.31).

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Kymerely Feltham - *The Portrayal of Contemporary Dance by Mass Media*

The rich history of contemporary dance has come to a cultural crossroads with current dance trends at odds with artistic development. The recent appropriation of contemporary dance by mass media outlets comes as a mixed blessing. While contemporary dance is gaining public acceptance and notoriety, the vehicle that is driving this movement forward is controlling its content. This paper sets out to explore the transition of modern dance into the current contemporary trends, with an assessment of the genre as it appears on the popular televised dance competition *So You Think You Can Dance* (USA). An examination of dance as it appears on the competition allows for a study of contemporary dance as a cultural commodity.

Kymerley Feltham is a Masters student in the Communications Studies Department at Wilfrid Laurier University. She has a background in dance and is focusing her research on how contemporary dance is packaged and presented for a mass audience, attributing the form of presentation to both a growth in dance audiences, while questioning the legitimacy of the choreography being presented.

This talk is extracted from a research paper that I am currently working on and I welcome your ideas and feedback on the topic. Within this presentation I will be discussing the production of contemporary dance to appeal to a mass audience and will be referencing the popular dance competition, Fox Network's *So You Think You Can Dance*. I have chosen to showcase this particular show because I believe it is both a product of and response to trends in popular dance. Versions of the competition air world wide including Australia, Turkey, and Poland. It is the American competition that I will be focusing on, currently airing auditions for their fourth season. For the first three seasons Canadian television viewers watched but did not have voting privileges. Despite the inability to affect the outcome of the competition, Canadians have become fans of the show and the dance community has taken notice. This month there are live auditions underway, nationwide, for Canada's first season of *So You Think You Can Dance*. The dance community waits to see who will be placed in the roles of judge and choreographer, and most importantly, how our dancers measure up.

Current North American dance education over emphasises established technique and standardised choreography, which provides little room for artistic development of the student. This method of teaching largely overlooks the development of creativity and personal expression through movement; both of these missing elements are the essence of dance artistry and a necessary part of dance development.

Popular dance education is often seduced by the competition circuit, with teachers, choreographers, and dancers putting together routines to earn points in set categories. Points are given for such elements as accuracy and difficulty of established steps and tricks – the point system leaves little room for innovation and originality.

Within this system, dance education is shaped by the competition system. A majority of dancers end their education with the completion of high school, and do not go on to be exposed to professional level training outside of the competition circuit. This causes the majority of dancers who have had some training to know dance to be only what they have learned, through the established competition point system, without out the opportunity to experience a deeper understanding of the artistry of dance.

The televised dance competition *So You Think You Can Dance* appeals to a teenage and young adult crowd with its choices of music, costuming, and lighting adding flash to the competition platform. The potential of influencing the audience to a deeper understanding of what dance is comes from both its mass popularity and the creativity of the choreographers. The potential of the show to create a new meaning for dance may also affect how dance is taught in the future, this shift in meaning and education has the potential to expand both the knowledge base of a national dance audience as well as influencing innovation within the art.

As a televised dance competition, certain criteria must be established so that a comparison can be made among the dancers. As the winner is determined by the outcome of votes being called in by a mass television viewing audience, emphasis must be placed on elements that a professional panel of judges may not consider in more traditional dance competition situations. Beyond establishing a standard in technical ability, difficulty of steps and stunts, the entertainment and thematic accessibility of the choreography is equally, if not more, important. If the choreographer does not pick music that the TV audience will enjoy and relate to, hip and flashy costumes, and a theme that will be easily understood; the competitors may be in danger of losing votes not because of their dancing ability or the choreography itself, but because it did not translate onto the televised format.

The whole package must have enough flash to keep the audience interested. Talented dancers have been sent home after having their costumes criticized by the judging panel. Although the competition is to earn the title of "Americas Favourite Dancer", the choreographer has as much pressure on them as the performers, to create work that will resonate and interest a mass audience, the consequences of not doing so costs two competitors each week their position in the competition. Though it is the choreography that is being showcased, it is the dancers that are fighting for the reward.

While contemporary dance is gaining public interest and popularity, perhaps due to it being showcased on *So You Think You Can Dance*; the vehicle that is driving this movement forward is also controlling its content. The "culture industry", as referred to by Theodore Adorno, is a metaphor comparing popular culture to a factory, creating standardised goods and "infecting everything with sameness". Applying this metaphor to the contemporary choreography on *So You Think You Can Dance*, I argue that as the genre gains mass appeal the content becomes bland and easily digestible; neither challenging accepted norms nor creating innovative work.

During this talk I will be relying heavily on Adorno's theories regarding the culture industry, as his theories exemplify the situation I see occurring within popular dance trends. Adorno writes that the "culture industry lowers the distance between the product and the spectator, and that this is economically pre-determined"(51), *So You Think You Can Dance* creates revenue through the fee charged to the voting audience who are calling or texting in their votes. Throughout season three, host Cat Deeley proclaimed each new episode to be record breaking in the amount of votes they had received, with one of the last episodes being supported by 14 billion votes. For that one episode alone the revenue created was more than expected, and proved the show to be lucrative. The show not only involves the spectator by inviting them to critique and support the performers, but also turns the performances into products to be bought and presented again the following week.

Adorno also writes of the collective unconscious, a Jungian term referring to the inherited cultural myths that reside in the unconscious of a society, allowing great works of art to resonate in common with many. In criticism of the culture industry Adorno further contends that TV has the ability to underwrite the collective unconscious, numbing society to a state of inability to recognize it, instead replacing the primal myths with manufactured ones. (Adorno 54). In terms of a national competition created to determine what is acceptable in an artistic field this gets into dangerous territory. *So You Think You Can Dance* choreography is full of stereotypical content, common themes and

images are used and reused and will be familiar to the audience, if a choreographer deviates from these themes the judges comment negatively on it.

I do not wish to say that as a viewing audience we do not have the ability to judge and critique the artistic merit of what we are being presented with; I do believe that we as a population are more media savvy than that. I do, however, feel that we should be concerned when what we are being presented with has the potential to influence the development of an art form.

Though the show is primarily a dance competition, it is also a platform for choreographers to have the opportunity to present and showcase their work to a wide mass audience. The opportunity may come at the cost of genuine artistry. The choreography has a choice between creating within social norms and thus merely re-creating what has been presented in the past, or to continue working outside the norms of the social realm and perhaps finding originality in creation, but having a much smaller audience to present. Taboo ideologies cannot be approached on the *So You Think You Can Dance* stage because the mass public does not want to be faced with the questions that suppressed themes potentially raise. Albeit the educational factor of the show, the reason the competition has seen such outstanding popularity is due to its role as entertainer. The images and ideas that the mass audience wants to associate with dance is that of excitement and entertainment, therefore the artist/creator/choreographer must keep in check of these taboos both to keep their job, but also to keep their popularity as a choreographer whose work resonates with a wide audience.

The application of Adorno's theories regarding the culture industry when applied to contemporary dance I find concerning, given the potential weakening of the art caused by its commoditization. The televised dance competition *So You Think You Can Dance* provides wide appeal as entertainment, and an opportunity for education regarding contemporary dance. However what is actually being presented is a safe and unobtrusive version of contemporary dance that does not speak of its rich innovative history. As the genre of contemporary dance becomes popularized in this commercial form, it weakens the potential dance has as an agent of cultural development.

The way *So You Think You Can Dance* packages contemporary dance for marketing purposes is not reflective of the genre, but instead presenting what is only a flashy veneer of the art form. The more overt packaging tools employed by the network include the changing of the name "lyrical dance" in the first season, to "contemporary dance" in subsequent seasons. The same choreographers have been employed and their style has remained the same despite the name change.

The competition is the first time that contemporary dance has been showcased to a mass audience through a media format, bringing awareness to this style of dance. Contemporary dance pushes the boundaries of accepted norms and the contemporary choreographers on *So You Think You Can Dance* attempt to as well, but are held within strict limits by the judging panel. The judges' comments regarding the contemporary choreography that has been challenging in content has ranged from "I didn't understand", "I can't judge that", to "that wasn't dance". Keeping in mind that the competition is for the dancers and not the choreographers, the freedom to create is monitored and strict boundaries have been placed around the choreographers.

The limitations on what is acceptable as dance being presented by the judging panel is as informational to the viewing audience as watching the varied dance styles themselves. As stated earlier the potential of influencing the audience to a deeper understanding of what dance is and can be comes from both its mass popularity and the creativity of the choreographers. The potential in creating a new meaning for dance may also shift the understanding and knowledge base of a national dance audience as well as influencing innovation within the art.

If the choreographers are not allowed free range in their creative development, what is being presented as contemporary choreography to a mass audience is not truly contemporary dance but only a watered down version.

So You Think You Can Dance is reflective of popular dance practices, both leading and responding to trends and advancements within popular dance culture. What is happening in art and performance is reflective of social trends and cultural advancements. The creation of a televised dance competition is in response to a receptive market interested in dance and dancers as entertainment and commodity. Further study on the topic will allow for more insight into the affects and influences that televised caller-in competitions have on the publics understanding and education of our art forms, in this case dance.

Anne Margrete Fiskvik - *From “folkloristic icon” to high culture: Norwegian folkdance as theatre art.*

Folkdance as “high art”, a project that I have been working with together with my colleague, Professor Egil Bakka at NTNU. We have been investigating representations of folkdance on stage and I am indebted to Professor Bakka for letting me present parts of our ongoing research at the “Confluences 5” Conference. In the first part of the paper I give an outline of Dance in Norway in a historical context, and in the second part I look more closely at the Norwegian folkdance material inserted into the ballet “Amor og Ballettmesterens luner” in 1786.

From “folkloristic icon” to high culture: Norwegian folkdance as theatre art
Anne Margrete Fiskvik

This paper presents an early example of Norwegian folkdance as “high art”. It is part of a project on which I have been working with my colleague, Professor Egil Bakka at NTNU where we are investigating representations of folkdance on stage. I am indebted to Professor Bakka for letting me present parts of our ongoing research at the Confluences Conference. In the first part of the paper I give an outline of Dance in Norway in a historical context, and in the second part I look more closely at Norwegian folkdance material inserted into the ballet “*Amor og Ballettmesterens luner*” (1786).

I was trained as a dancer, choreographer and teacher in Philadelphia and New York before entering academia. I have always been interested in both dance history and dance ethnography, and although my doctoral thesis focused on choreomusical relations and idealizations in theater dance, I am now back to working on historical as well as ethnological issues, with a focus on Norwegian theatre- and folk dance. In my research, I try to draw upon the totality of dance culture, including in the discussion both theater dance and traditional social dance, genres which have mostly been kept apart in dance historiography. Approaching dance history through the lens of traditional dance is not a wide-spread practice. For the project I present here, material and knowledge from different disciplines are brought together to shed light upon dance history. The Hungarian dance researcher György Martin has argued for and contributed to this approach, for example, in his article “Die Branles von Arbeau und die osteuropäischen Kettentänze”(1973). IN 2006, a volume edited by Theresa Buckland, *Dancing from past to present*, explored a combination of ethnographic and historic strategies. My approach here is quite traditionally based on sources and fieldwork. With postmodernism and deconstructive history, most researchers gave up the belief in uncovering one absolute and true version of a historical event. There is an understanding today that history consists of constructed accounts which depend on the researcher and his/her background, and not only on the historical sources (see for instance Munslow 2006). I reconcile myself with the idea that there can be many, even conflicting, but yet equally valid stories about the same historical event. I do not, however, think that this calls for less rigor in dealing with, criticizing, and even deconstructing my sources. Anyway, what I present here is a work in progress; one of many equally valid stories on folkdance in the ballet “*Amors og Ballettmesterens luner*”

Dance in Norway from a historical viewpoint

Let us move to the location of my story, the Nordic countries, and more specifically, Norway. Norwegian dance history is rich and complex, mostly because of our strong folkdance culture. Unlike our neighbors, Sweden and Denmark, we did not have a royal ballet company until well into the 20th century. This is partly because we were ruled by Denmark and Sweden for many centuries: At the end of the eighteenth century, Denmark and Norway had been united for about 400 years. The union ended with the Napoleonic wars in 1814. The political and intellectual power and the royal court were located in Copenhagen. And even if Norway was considered a separate nation, it was actually more like a distant, exotic province of the double monarchy. The lack of a royal court in Norway meant that our national opera-ballet was founded as late as 1958. In contrast, the respective opera-ballets in Sweden and Denmark were established during the eighteenth century. French and Italian dancing masters played a major role during the early periods of the professional dance companies in

Copenhagen and Stockholm.¹ Still, Norway did experience some professional dance in the latter part of the eighteenth century, mostly due to various foreign companies and individuals.²

The field of traditional and social dancing, however, was quite rich. Folkdances like “*Springdance*” and “*Halling*” constituted the dominant repertoire for many hundred years (Bakka 1978:25–27). *Springdance* and *Halling* are still important in our culture. The *Springdance* is a couple dance, mostly set, but with the possibility of some improvisation, especially for the man. The *Halling* is our “national dance”, a male solo dance, competitive and improvisational in nature. The *Halling* has traditionally been danced to live fiddle music in various social and competitive settings. Both the *Springdance* and the *Halling* have a long tradition; roots have been identified at least back to the 15th century, most likely the *Halling* was danced already in the middle ages and possibly also earlier. In the *Halling* the (male) dancer performs difficult leaps, kicks, and other acrobatic stunts to demonstrate vigor and virility. Even though it is a dance that traditionally has belonged to the “folk”, to farmers and mountain people in particular, it has traveled down to the more urban districts of Norway and become an icon of our cultural heritage. This journey has been especially visible in the last 5-10 years, as more popularized and “globalized” versions of the *Halling* have emerged, often integrating movements from break dance and capoeira. A new generation of performers, like *Hallgrim Hansegaard* and his professional dance ensemble “*Frikar*” has turned *Halling* into a high art “theatre dance practice”. *Hansegaard* has been featured on the Norwegian version of “So you think you can dance” and the company *Frikar* has been part of the series “young talents”. But today I will not talk about contemporary folkdance, but focus on a much earlier example, possibly the first example ever, of Norwegian folkdance on stage.

Vincenzo Galeotti’s “Springdands”

If we return to the latter part of 18th century, both the *Springdance* and *Halling* were important dances and part of everyday peasant life. They were, as described above, improvised couple or solo dances that were far removed from European fashion trends. And now we come to the point of this paper; The *Springdance* and the *Halling* show up in Copenhagen in 1786 as a part of a ballet by *Vincenzo Galeotti* (1733-1816) called “*Amors og Ballettmesterens luner*”.³ They were presented as a couples dance named “*Springdands*”, danced in $\frac{3}{4}$ time, and in the middle section the dance changed to a *Halling*, danced in $\frac{2}{4}$ time. *Galeotti*, who was the ballet master of the Royal Danish Theater in Copenhagen, premiered “*Amor*” on 31 October 1786. The program reads (in English translation): “The Whims of Cupid and the Ballet Master. A small allegorical ballet by Vincenzo Galeotti. The music, with exception of Mad[ame] Biørn’s solo, is by Mr. Jens Lolle.”

Galeotti’s ballet is interesting for many reasons; it has, for instance a reputation for being the oldest ballet surviving with “original” choreography. The *Springdance* and the *Halling* are especially interesting to me because they are the earliest known surviving examples of

¹ Both the Swedish and Danish companies were based on the French model; the first attempts in Sweden took place during the reign of Queen Christina in the early seventeenth Century. In 1771 a ballet school was founded in Copenhagen. See Hammergren 2004, Roempke 1994, and Aschengreen 2005.

² We see the first traces of professional theater dance starting around 1750. In 1771 the German dancing master Martin Nurembach was granted royal permission to perform ballets publicly in the capital Christiania. Nurembach imported professional dancers. Although this establishment did not survive long, its performances were among the earliest examples of theater dance in Norway. For more information on the traveling dancing masters in Norway, see Sven Hirn, “Martin Nürenbach – teaterpionjär?,” *Nordisk Tidskrift* 43 (1967): 261–68; *Letterstedtska foreningen* (Stockholm: Seeling & Co., 1971); and Liv Jensson, *Teater i Drammen inntil 1840* (Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk forlag, 1974).

³ Vincenzo Galeotti (1733–1816) played a crucial role in the establishment of the Danish royal opera. Italian by birth, he was originally named Vincenzo Tomasselli. According to Bournonville, Galeotti initially studied medicine, but gave this up to study dance and music with Gasparo Angiolini, and possibly also with Noverre. (Bournonville 1848: 27). Before coming to Copenhagen, he had been active in Venice and London.

Norwegian folkdance as high art. My colleague Egil Bakka, who is primarily an ethnologist, and I have been looking into the Norwegian material in this ballet, and attempting to follow its journey from Norwegian peasant life to the theatre stage of the Royal Danish ballet. We have worked with two sets of source material surviving from 1786, a ballet program⁴ and a set of musical scores⁵. Additionally we have worked with a performance transmitted on Danish TV in 1975. In the ballet program, *Galeotti* tells his audience how the ballet was created and lays out the plot and structure of the ballet. The ballet is made up by a series of couple dances, many of which represent different nations and folk, and *Galeotti* explains the plot in the following manner:

In order to make this allegory contribute to the goals I have yearned to achieve, the ballet starts with a sacrifice, performed in the temple by blindfolded priests with the doors closed. When this is over, the priest removes the blindfolds, and Amor (Cupid) withdraws after having demanded that the doors of the temple be opened. Two Germans enter, who, after finishing their dance, are brought by the priests to the place where they await their reunion. After this, two Quakers enter, and then the priests bring people from nine recognizable nations to their places, and where they remain standing until the moment of reunion. When everybody else has entered, Amor reveals himself and announces to the couples that those in his temple can only be united while blindfolded. All willingly obey, but when this requirement has been fulfilled, Amor, who is malicious, decides not to unite them as they entered, but in the strangest and most laughable way.
(Galeotti, 1786, translation by Fiskvik from Danish)

The scores are a hand-written repetiteur (violin) part and some orchestral parts. Notes and corrections dating from later use of the scores allow us to see some of the changes the music went through over time.⁶ The music is a suite of dances, composed by *Jens Lolle* (1751–1789).⁷ The TV recording that we have worked with shows how the ballet was performed in 1975, which of course is one performance point in a continuous performance practice tradition.⁸ According to *August Bournonville*, the ballet was kept alive by the dancers, even through periods when it was not performed very often. In 1895 an abbreviated piano version was published of the music. The Danish ballet master *Harald Landler's* staging at the Paris Opera in the 1950s introduced Amor to European audience. During the 1960s it was performed in England and the USA⁹

The ballet, as already mentioned, consists of a series of dances written in different styles. Most historians writing about it claim that the famous ballet master August Bournonville did not particularly like it – he found it too lightweight. But apparently, Bournonville did like the Norwegian *Springdance/Halling* because during the period from 1847–1867 the *Halling* was performed as an individual piece more than 200 times (Jürgensen 1998:12). On the one-

⁴ The Royal Library, Copenhagen: Sign.: Det Kongelige Teater nr. 0226.

⁵ The Royal Library, Copenhagen: Sign: MA ms 2951-52.

⁶ Some of the changes include the addition of the Greek Dance (Adagio) and the French Dance (Gigue) shortly after the premiere in 1786. The score used today was copied with some revisions during the early part of the 1880s by the professional scribe Fredrik Rung. Rung proudly stated on the last page of the score that he had improved the instrumentation in December 1884: "Instrumentationen forbedret af Fredrik Rung Decbr. 1884" (Lund, 1966: 84).

⁷ We know very little about Lolle. In 1786 Lolle was first repetiteur of the Ballet during the absence of the more experienced composer Claus Schall, who was Galeotti's usual ballet composer. He was never regarded as a great composer, and had it not been for the fame of *Amor*, he probably would have fallen into total oblivion. His date of birth is known, but not that of his death (most likely 1789, when he vanished from all records of the Royal Theater. (Lund, 1966: 83, 86, and 88).

⁸ Since 1786, Amor has been performed more than 540 times, it only disappeared from the stage for period under August Bournonville. In October 1823 it was performed for the one-hundredth time, and it was given frequently until 1841. Then, under Bournonville, it disappeared from the stage for twenty-two years, until February 1863, when it was restaged. After this, it was not given for a year, but then performed again in 1884–85. Since then it has been produced regularly to the present day.

⁹ See Lund, 1966: 83–84 and Aschengreen 2005.

hundredth-anniversary program of the Royal Ballet in 1848, Bournonville included the *Springdance/Halling*, explicitly attributing it to *Galeotti* (Jürgensen 1998:11–12). For this reason, it is possible that *Bournonville* did not rework it and that it remained fairly unchanged throughout this period. Why would *Bournonville* attribute this little piece to his predecessor if he himself had made major alterations? For the following discussion, let us therefore assume that the *Springdance/Halling* is *Galeotti's* work, and that the elements and the structure have not changed much. The music also testifies to this: There are a few changes and additions, some of them made in relation to the performances in 1863 (after the twenty-two-year pause). According to the musicologist *Sven Lund*, in 1863 the piece was provided with an introduction that was more “Norwegian” than the original one by *Lolle*, an emendation that is still in use today (Lund, 1966: 84)

Returning briefly to source material; The second set of source material used for our project are written sources from the eighteenth century, but first and foremost twentieth-century film documentation of the Norwegian *Springdance* and *Halling*. The *Springdance* and to some extent the *Halling* have been the dominant dance type in the traditional Norwegian dance repertoire. The dance is well documented in the eighteenth and even in the seventeenth century,¹⁰ but real descriptions are available only from the nineteenth century.¹¹ The *Springdance* and *Halling* were well known and performed throughout Norway until the beginning of the twentieth century in a colorful and broad range of local variants. At “The Norwegian Center for Traditional Dance and Music” in Trondheim, Norway, there are literally thousands of video recordings of *Springdances* and *Hallings*, most of which were collected among traditional dancers throughout the country since the 1960s by Professor Egil Bakka.

Galeotti and the “folk”

It is interesting to note that *Galeotti* considered *Amor* an experiment in which he tried to expand the contemporary conventions of ballet and theater and “to present a cheerful ballet and to recommend myself.”¹² Apparently *Galeotti* was happy with the result, because immediately after the description of the plot he sums up his work in the following manner:

I believe I have gotten closer to my desired goal: to have many pas de deux follow after one another and to let the figures remain motionless on the “skuepladsen” [performance space], and moreover, to have shown humorous elements without descending to crudity; if this attempt can thrill the audience, then I shall enjoy the flattering experience of having achieved what I desired. (Galeotti, 1786, translation by Fiskvik). This is interesting because the whole ballet is made up by short divertissements portraying different “folk dances”.

If one studies other works by *Galeotti* (some six programs for ballets from *Galeotti's* hand have survived and are kept at the Theater Museum in Copenhagen) one can note that almost all of them include roles for people of the “lower classes”, either in Denmark or in the country where the ballet takes place. This probably means that “the lower classes” were portrayed often in *Galeotti's* ballets, and probably through the use of folkdance material. This again must be seen in relation to the general taste of the public; the Nordic audience of the latter part of the 18th century wanted to be entertained. Also, around this time, the general audience's tastes and preferences start to have more influence on the ballet productions at the Scandinavian courts. We see this for instance in the writings of *Bournonville* who worked during the middle of the 19th century. When he is looking back he claims that the late eighteenth-century audience did not appreciate the grand dramatic spectacles à la *Noverre* and *Angiolini*. The audience wanted something to laugh at (just like today, *Bournonville* adds

¹⁰ See, for example, Hammer 2000:257.

¹¹ See, for example, Moe 1869 and Niels Hertsberg's painting from the 1820s (Norden i dans 2007:52)

¹² “At frembringe en munter Ballet var min Hensigt og mig anbefalet.” From the front page of the 1786 program. (Galeotti, 1786)

sarcastically), like small *divertissements*.¹³ We also see the same trend in Sweden under Gustav III.¹⁴

We are now getting close to the question of the transformation of folkdance material from low to high art: Would dance material attributed to rural people and people of other nations have been totally made up at the time around 1786? Many dance researchers think that folk material put on stage was more emblematic than realistic. The Swedish dance researcher Lena Hammergren claims that national dances performed on stage were not authentic in the true sense of the word, neither during the eighteenth, nor the nineteenth century. She also claims that by the middle of the nineteenth century distinctive conventions had been developed for how certain steps or movements could show the intended identity, and that these identity markers had an emblematic rather than a realistic function. This would have been most obvious during the eighteenth century when ethnically colored movement codes were still not as well developed. The costumes would bear most of the emblematic function. The idea that different kinds of dance could express nationality and ethnic character was however an established feature in the dance world (Hammergren 2004:36). In the same spirit, many scholars agree with dance researcher Joellen A. Meglin who, in an article about *Les Indes Galantes*, classifies the ethnic elements as "imagined entities or cultural constructs" (Meglin in Matluck, 2007: 228).

Hammergren and Meglin represent two twentieth-century interpretations of attitudes among eighteenth-century choreographers. But we can find many ideas and thoughts on this for instance in the writings of the famous *Jean-Georges Noverre*. He writes in one of his *Lettres*:

If one were too scrupulous in depicting the characters, manners and customs of certain nations, the pictures would often be poor and monotonous in composition ... When the characters are sustained so that those of the nation represented are never changed and nature is not concealed under embellishments which are foreign to and degrade it; when the expression of sentiment is faithful so that the coloring is true, the shading artistically contrived, the positions noble. The groups and masses ingenious and beautiful, and the design correct; then the picture is excellent and achieves its effect ... I think, Sir, that neither a Turkish nor a Chinese festival would appeal to our countryman, if we had not the art to embellish it, I am persuaded that the style of dancing common to those people would never be captivating. This kind of exactitude in costume and imitation will only present a very insipid spectacle, unworthy of a public which only applauds in proportion as artists possess the art of bringing delicacy and taste to the different productions which they offer to it. (Noverre, 1803/1966: 153–154, translated by Beaumont).

Noverre claimed that the portrayal of the lower classes or exotic nations on the stage should not be too realistic. Lena Hammergren and Meglin claimed that the folklore function was emblematic rather than realistic. Another way of looking at this would propose a reading that looks in the opposite direction, which Bakka and I have done when investigating the *Galeotti* ballet. Instead of stressing that there would obviously be differences, one could ask: What about the similarities? It would be quite simple for a ballet master to find dancers who could give both serious and parody versions of the dances of the people, certainly from their own country, but probably also from neighboring countries. *Bournonville* tells the story about how

¹³ Bournonville claims that Galeotti's public successes, where ballets that humored the audience, like *The Gypsy Camp*, *The Whims of Cupid*, *The Weavers*, and *The Washing Maids and the Tinkers* (Bournonville 1848/1979: 28).

¹⁴ Lena Hammergren claims that it was during King Gustav III's reign that the participatory court culture had been supplanted by a focus on the audience ("deltagandekulturen för alvar bytas ut mot ett fokus på åskådaren") (Hammergren 2004: 34).

he totally outdid a group of rural Italians in their own dance, so certainly many ballet masters might have known traditional folk dances. Members of a theater audience in those days would at least have had stereotypical ideas about the dancing of lower classes; and most of them, especially in Norway and Denmark may even have had personal experience. A ballet master could easily score a “hit” when using realistic parodies, but probably would find it inappropriate to simply reproduce such dances. Rather they preferred to give it a work over, but keep what they would find appropriate for their purpose.

A dancing master would also need to take into consideration the more or less concrete or reality-based, perhaps even stereotypical notions of his audience. In other words, what would *Galeotti's* audience think about Norwegian dance? Can we expect the upper-class Copenhagen audience of those days to have had any idea of what a *Springdance* and *Halling* looked like? Is there any reason to believe that the audience would have seen such folkdance, and if so, would a choreographer feel obliged to satisfy some of the stereotypical notions of his audience? Norway had no noticeable aristocracy in the eighteenth century, so the highest-ranking people were the bourgeoisie of the towns and the civil servants and bureaucrats. Many of these would be Danes, who moved back and forth between Denmark and Norway. A number of Norwegians also went to Copenhagen to study, and some made their career there.¹⁵ Therefore it is hard to believe that the Norwegian *Springdance* and *Halling* would be something unknown even to a Danish ballet audience. There are good reasons to believe that there would be a number of Norwegians in Copenhagen who knew the *Springdance* and *Halling*, and even had performed it on occasions. Egil Bakka and I propose that a ballet master could easily pick up and use ideas from rural dancing. In this way he could satisfy his audience's expectation to find something recognizable in, say, a Norwegian dance. Then he would polish and clean it up, applying an educated technique and a polite style that would make his building blocks acceptable.

Dissecting the Springdance and Halling

Galeotti's ballet includes a *Springdance* and a *Halling*, and Egil Bakka and I have studied them in a recording of a TV broadcast from 1975. The TV performance could of course be dismissed as “not in any way representative of the late eighteenth century.” But keeping the long history of the *Springdance/Halling* in mind, we assume that there is some original material left. We have extensive archival material on the traditional *Springdance* and *Halling* and many similarities in the various elements of the dance can be seen; most general in the step patterns, in the typical kneebends (*kruking*). A common element is when the couple dances forward along the circular path with crossed arms on the back, facing in the same direction. Then they make a clockwise turn. This element is known from the traditional context, although the way the couple hold each other is used more for turning than for dancing forward. Yet another interesting element is when the partners let go of the fastening and perform a motive in which they gesticulate to each other and change places; then the woman kneels and the man kicks above her head. This is an element unknown from Norwegian sources, but according to Egil Bakka it can be found in choreographies attributed to the mid nineteenth-century Swedish choreographer *Anders Selinder*, for example, in *Jössehäredspolska* and *Daldans* (See Norden i dans 2007: 210). Yet another motive is when the woman dances around the man and then turns under his arm. This is a well-known motive in the *Springdance*, but it is hardly ever done with deep knee bends (although knee bends per se are common). The traditional flow of the motive is interrupted by these bends,

¹⁵ There are also sources dating back to the early seventeenth century that tell of a bishop from Denmark who participated in the dancing at rural weddings and celebrations while serving in Norway. The Swedish admiral Carl von Tersmeden reported in his diary from 1741 about how he saw peasants dance, and how young people at a party joined in a dance with the servants in the kitchen (Tersmeden 1912–19). From the nineteenth century we have several sources describing how at least the sons of civil servants in rural areas knew the rural dances (see, for example, Østgaard 1852 and Søgaard 1868), and how actors at a theater in Bergen had learned during their childhood from servants and used it on stage in plays (Bull 1905).

which have the effect of poses, putting the dancers side by side in a line parallel to the front of the stage. This interruption would also not be used in a traditional *Springdance*.

In the midsection of the dance the music changes to 2/4 meter, and displays melodic elements of the *Halling*. First, the woman performs a strictly ballet-like solo that does not seem to allude to traditional dance at all. The man watches. Then the man performs his solo, which includes two well-known elements of the *Halling*: the kicking in the air (often at a target such as a hat, but not necessarily and not here) and then a somersault. The man's two motives are repeated, and the *Halling* concludes. Sections of the *Halling* would not be inserted in the middle of the *Springdance* in a traditional context, and a woman dancing a solo *Halling* would be an exception. We have however seen that even if a man and a woman have somewhat complimentary roles in the *Springdance*, they dance the same steps, which is not very usual in traditional dance.

The dance ends with a rapid "one measure couple turning," which is typical for many *Springdances* in regions around Oslo. It is a very distinctive pattern that seems to be a link between the old couple dances that came before rounddance¹⁶ genre

Folk dance or demi-charactère?

Summing up the structural elements of the dance, we have seen that many elements from the dance have clear parallels in traditional Norwegian Springdance - and *Halling* material. The exceptions are the staged versions of Swedish couple dances of a similar age and profile, and the woman's solo in the *Halling*. Some aspects of the manner in which the elements are put together and some details also clearly point to the Norwegian *Springdance* material. The music also has an obvious similarity to the basic melodic rhythm, and resembles the structure and melodic elements of a traditional *Springdance*. The brisk melody in 3/4 meter with numerous triplet motion and repeated short melodic motives, corresponds surprisingly well to conventional folkdance material, as, for example, we might imagine it to have been performed in the central-eastern part of Norway.

Now that we have identified some "true" Norwegian folkdance elements, we can also note that we can recognize the style of the 18th century demi-charactère in this dance. We must not forget that in *Amor*, the various dances were composed in the different dance styles common to the period: *Noble*, *demi-charactère*, *comique*, and *grotesque*. We can find many descriptions of the various character traits of the dancing styles in writings by *Gallini*, *Noverre*, and *Angiolini*. Characterizing the "half-serious style," *Gallini* explains:

In the half-serious stile we observe vigor, lightness, agility, brilliant springs with a steadiness and command of the body. It is the best kind of dancing for expressing the more general theatrical subjects. It also pleases more generally ... A pastoral dance, presented employing all aspects of the pantomimic art, will commonly be preferred to the more serious style ... For [the half-serious stile], it is impossible to have too much agility and briskness(Gallini, 1762: 77).

In my mind, the characteristics of the demi-charactère also shine through clearly in the *Springdance* and *Halling*. *Amor* is the only ballet that has survived as a continuous bodily transmission, and we can hope to see at least traces of eighteenth-century dancing styles in it, but mainly we have to rely on verbal descriptions of the dancing styles from *Galeotti's* contemporaries. Notice also how actively the dancers use their arms. I think this is another trait of what *Angiolini*, in his *Dissertation sur les ballets pantomimes des anciens* (1765), points out as being typical of the demi-charactère style, and that

¹⁶ A term used by 19th century dancing masters to refer to a genre of fashionable couple dances, among others waltz, polka etc.

Demands of its performers correctness, lightness, equilibrium, smoothness and grace. It is here that the arms (if I may be permitted this expression) make their first appearance in dance and are to be supple and graceful; in the previous two styles [the grotesque and the comic], they count for nothing, serving merely to allow the dancer to soar with greater ease. (Angiolini 1765; translated by, and quoted from Fairfax 2003: 105).

Summary

Egil Bakka and I are currently debating whether the *Springdance* and *Halling* are best described as demi-charactère style, folk dance, or something else entirely. On the other hand it is quite clear that *Galeotti* did not put “pure” traditional folkdance on the stage. It seems obvious that *Galeotti* picked out elements that he cleaned up and transformed into clear-cut isolated motives. Then he put them back together in a fixed, strictly fashioned order with symmetrical repetitions, strictly structured in accordance with the musical structure. This process, I would imagine, was just what was needed in those days to tailor traditional dance material into a piece in demi-charactère style. A traditional *Springdance* has a subtle tight-knit flow of motives, and this would probably not satisfy a dancing master of the eighteenth century. The elements are colored and tied together because they are repeated with small variations, rather than being identically or symmetrically repeated, and they do not correspond precisely to the musical motives. The aesthetic ideal was a complex, free-flowing, improvised, and unregulated form in contrast to the transparent structures of the ballet. The free and improvisational style of Norwegian folkdance revolts against regularity. *Galeotti* seems to have taken the tightly knit, complex material of the variations of the traditional dance apart and sorted out the dance in a display of isolated, repeated elements.

Concluding the paper, one can say that the *Springdance* and the *Halling* staged in *Amor* in 1785 are neither genuine folk dance nor traditional dance. It is not a pure demi-charactère piece either. The *Springdance* and *Halling* can be described as a transformation of a folkdance into a stylized theatre dance: Dances of the folk which have been transformed into “high art”. With *Galeotti’s Amor* we see Norwegian folkdance as high art for the first, but not the last time. During the more than 200 years that have passed since *Amor* premiered, there have been numerous other examples of Norwegian folkdance on stage. For instance, today, as mentioned in the beginning, the afore mentioned dancer Hallgrim Hansegaard has rapidly become an agent for transporting folkdance in general and *Halling* in particular onto the theatre stage, and in so doing, he is a major exponent of making folkdance into high art by transgressing boundaries. Opinions of this vary, some think it is great, others not. At least we know that in 1786, the Danish audiences were thrilled when they saw *Springdance* and *Halling*, and have continued to be pleased by not only the Norwegian dances, but all the other couple dances of *Amor*.

Finally I must again emphasize that this is a work-in-progress. There are a number of questions still open and unexplored, for instance pursuing the performance history of *Amor* —and particularly of the *Springdance* and *Halling* —in more detail. It would also be valuable to draw upon the knowledge passed on to dancers of the Royal ballet in order to analyze, for example, the learning processes and the oral and bodily knowledge that was passed on.

What is clear to both Egil Bakka and me, however, is that there is a clear need to see the whole dance culture of the past as a continuum rather than as isolated worlds. Comparisons help us to achieve this kind of broad view and make us realize that even the agents of the past moved between genres and social classes, probably far more than we imagine today.

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Ida Mara Freire - *Dance as a Journey: Alterity and authenticity in Education*

I am proposing a study of alterity and authenticity in dance education in Brazil. The main theoretical problems are to describe how the perception of the self and the other are manifest in dance education in Brazil. This issue comes from my teaching experience with non-sighted dancers. I am not looking for a precise answer to the question 'What is dance?' I will turn to phenomenology to define dance through an experiential description, asking other questions such as 'When does dance occur?' The notion of body that permeates this proposal to see dance as a Journey is described in the *Phenomenology of the Perception*. For Merleau-Ponty, the body is the place of the phenomenon of expression, in which visual experience and hearing experience are pregnant, one with the other. I present dance as a Journey in Dance Education that makes possible both a contact experience with the new, and the possibility for other experiences. This means that I "know", beforehand, that what I do can be done by an other, as well as that what the other does can be done by me. In the radical alterity in which non-sighted dance presents itself, it is not only a matter of noticing the difference, but, to the contrary, of identifying the co-existence. Therefore, what is treated here is the aesthetic experience that transforms both the dancer and the one who sees him or her. This is an important aspect of dance education: appreciation. I understand that by seeing Dance as a Journey the main element of connection with the audience is not a narrative or autobiography - although it is guided by the lived experience - but the perception of what is being expressed.

Dance as a Journey: Alterity and authenticity in Education

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Key words: dance education, phenomenology, alterity, authenticity, blindness.

The journey

Journey:

1. a) The act of traveling from one place to another; a trip.
- b) A distance to be traveled or the time required for a trip:
- 2.) A process or course likened to traveling; a passage: *the journey of life*
The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language. (2007).

There are elements in common between a dance and a journey; Both involve moving in time and in space. My participation in this “Confluences” required many journeys: an obvious one was the flight from Florianópolis in Brazil, to Cape Town in South Africa. However, there were others that are not so easy to see: the internal journeys, to become a dancer, to become a woman, and more recently to become a mother. In fact, all these are just a single journey, a journey to myself. In this journey I discovered that I am not alone. As Nelson Mandela wrote in his autobiography, after climbing a large hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb. So, I am not alone, I am a dancer on a journey to myself. From this perspective, I am proposing to study alterity and authenticity in dance education in Brazil.

Emmanuel Levinas' proposal of the “phenomenology of alterity” places the other at the centre of ethics. Against the egoism which all traditional ethics and philosophy as grounded, which understands my relation to myself as the primary relation, Levinas maintains that my responsibility to the other is the fundamental structure upon which all other social structures rest. To dance is an expression of freedom, but as Mandela also wrote, with freedom comes responsibilities. We always dance with or for another, in this sense, we never dance alone. Dance is not a solitary activity. To the contrary, it is a movement in solidarity. To dance is a possibility to become one with other.

This raises the theoretical problem of how the perception of the self and the other are manifest in dance education in Brazil. This issue is essential to my teaching experience with non-sighted dancers. Many aspects of dance are discussed during the project including: the importance of dance from the school to the stage, the sacred in dance, contemporary dance and non-sighted aesthetic, - what are non-sighted aesthetics in contemporary dance?; and how can we define authenticity in contemporary dance? Based on these issues, a consideration of the non-sighted dancer's body forces me to review my judgment of what is a body, dance and beauty.

A Phenomenology of Dance

The phenomenological perspective suggests that each time a spectator observes a body in scene, he or she sees it from different perspectives and distances, looks attentively, pays attention to the parts and to the whole and apprehends each detail. The phenomenology of dance according to Dilde Milne (1993) is the pre-reflexive search to describe ourselves and our world as we experience it. The phenomenology of dance describes therefore the immediate encounter of the dancer with the lived experience of the dance.

The notion of body that permeates this proposal to see dance as a Journey is described in the *Phenomenology of the Perception*. For Merleau-Ponty (1996, p. 271), the body is the place of the phenomenon of expression, in which visual experience and hearing experience are pregnant one with the other. My body, according to Ponty, is the common texture of all objects, and it is, at least in relation to the noticed world, the general instrument of my "understanding". It is the body that gives meaningful texture not just to the natural object, but also to cultural objects such as words. Milne (1993) examined the body not as an objective entity but as a lived totality. Merleau-Ponty's notion of "synesthesia" implies that the combination of seeing and hearing make it possible to *seesound* and *hearsight*. Stravinsky, who composed many works for George Balanchine, referred to this when he said: "To see Balanchine's choreography of movement is to hear the music with one's own eyes."

The concept of body in contemporary dance confronts us with a problem raised by Merleau-Ponty (2000) about our difficulty in understanding: how the movements of a body organized in gestures or behavior introduce us to somebody who is not us? How can we find, in those displays, something other than what we put in them? A possible answer may be found in the perception of the other and in the dialogue that takes place, at the time and space of the dance.

The issue approached in this paper concerns the concept of dance. Many studies have been carried out in this field, but we still need to clarify what dance is. I do not aim to find a specific answer to the question What is dance? I will turn to phenomenology to define dance through an experiential description, by asking another question such as 'When does dance occur (Sodra Fraleigh, 1998). I can examine this question descriptively from my own dance experience.

Becoming a dancer

In the introduction, I mentioned the journey to becoming a dancer., In her reading of Judith Butler's theory of gender, Ann Cooper Albright discussed Simone de Beauvoir's famous statement : "One is not born a woman, but rather becomes one." Albright argues that the present indicative of the verb "to be" not only destabilizes a continuous process of becoming, but the very notion of the "one" who can become anything at all is rendered a logical impossibility. In the same way, my proposal to see dance as a journey, inspired by Beauvoir, understands that one is not born a dancer, but rather becomes a dancer. It follows that "dancer" itself is a term in process, a becoming, a construction that cannot rightfully be said to originate or to end. The "becoming", in my use of the word dancer, is thus an enactment – a performance of sorts - and as such resists both a biological teleology and a cultural ontology. Butler also sees identity as a "becoming," a process that is continually in motion, one that can never begin or end. Her interests in this process is the way its ongoingness- the need to constantly reenact an identity- foregrounds that identity's instability. Albright (1997) concludes that in the experience of dance, cultural representations flicker in and out of somatic identity like a high-frequency vibration, dissolving the boundaries of categories such as self/other, nature/culture, body/mind, and private/public.

Based on phenomenological expression theory (Müller, 2000), I present dance as a Journey in Dance Education that allows both a contact experience with the new, and the possibility for other experiences. This means that I "know", beforehand, that what I do can be done by another, as well as that what the other does can be done by me. Thus, the other and the world exist beforehand for me as expressed reality. In other words, there are many other fields of presence expressed close to my own. In the radical alterity that the non-sighted dancer presents, it is not simply a matter of noticing difference, but, to the contrary, of identifying the co-existence.

Sodra Fraleigh (1998) argues that: "cultural context arises in phenomenology in terms of 'the other', or the ever present understanding that subjectivity is conditioned by our relations to others – intersubjectivity. The very notion of a self depends on the notion of an other separate and distinct self. The concept of culture further assumes that distinct individuals can build relationships and share meaning". I will examine the question When does dance occur?, descriptively, from the Journey of a dancer's experiential perspective. What kinds of intentions are involved? Is intentionality in dance education different from intentionality in contemporary dance? The experiential description invites me to pay attention to these aesthetic distinctions and see whether they apply to all forms and cultures.

Alterity and Authenticity in Dance Education

There are too many images, according to Evgen Bavcar (2000), philosopher and non-visual photographer. He argues that the abundance of cliché images in the modern world forms an abstract perception of things that frequently do not exist on their own, but only through images. Tactile proximity is the safest signal of a real existence. In his photographic work that composes light in an obscure space conceived as volume, Bavcar is aware of the separation of the world of the word from that of the image that he is seeking to reconcile.

"We create permanent dichotomies", writes Aduino Novaes (1997 p.13): "the awareness is the thing, the subject, and the object – brutal divisions that rigorously determine the spheres of the sensitive and of thinking, of what sees and what is seen." It is in the interval of meanings," the author continues "that, according to Merleau-Ponty, we can discover that

seeing is, in principle, to see more than what is seen, it is to yield to a hidden being. The invisible is the relief and the depth is the visible. Here, the look is not a natural support for the spirit, nor is the spirit the sublimation of vision. What Merleau-Ponty proposes is a retaking, based on the “forgotten” moment, when the thought of seeing substitutes the seeing and makes it its object. Speaking of chiasma or interlacing, he sought to corporally undo the classic distinction between subject and object, flesh and spirit. That is, to describe the carnal relationship of the subject and the object. There is a universality of feeling and it is upon this that our identification rests, the generalization of my body, the perception of the other (Novaes, 1997 p.14)

The memory of the lived body, an idea that Bavcar developed beyond that which common sense and idealism usually use, offers support to choreographic creation. Upon examining the work of this photographer, Aduino Novaes (2000) primarily emphasizes the notion of parallelism, that is the idea that impedes any superiority of the spirit over the body and of the body over the spirit, as we discussed above. Also note that Bavcar’s reflection passes through the body and the senses, and thus responds to Spinoza’s question: What can the body do? This is the question it induces, because it demonstrates that the body goes beyond the knowledge that it has of itself, the same way that thinking goes beyond the awareness that it has of itself. Therefore, it is perceived that the idea of memory of the sensations, which can be seen in Bavcar’s photos, coincides absolutely with the idea of memory expressed in Spinoza’s Ethics, memory is nothing but a certain interlinking of ideas, involving the nature of things outside of the human body. Finally, Novaes, describes this interlacing that takes paces in the spirit following the order and the interlacing of the affections of the human body: “Through touch, through the movement of air that designs the shape of that which it does not see with the eyes, through smell, through heat, Bavcar’s body is affected by exterior objects, creating the memory of sensations and forming figures.” (Novaes, 2000 p. 32)

Many question: Dance with blind dancers? The Blind?!! Dance?!! What kind of dance is that? What movements are they? What body is this? What feelings, sensations, directions? This dance, proposes an existential journey, because it questions a dance expressed in the interlacing between a dancer who does not see and the spectator who sees. The choreography seeks to weave relationships between the dancer and the spectator. It involves a ludic dynamic interplay, which is the creation of the recognition of

the other I: the “We”. This awakens a dance forged in the sensibility, in the temporality of the lived body, in the visible, and in the invisible, in alterity and in authenticity.

The Potlach Dance Group is a project that involves university research, teaching and extension for young people and adults who are blind or have poor vision. The current group includes 4 blind dancers and 3 seeing dancers, as well as students of the Center for Educational Sciences (CED) of the Federal University at Santa Catarina (UFSC). The work has been conducted in the Space of the Body room at CED/UFSC, and at the Santa Catarina Association for the Integration of the Blind (ACIC), in the Saco Grande neighborhood, in Florianópolis, SC. In addition to the rehearsals, the project offers dance workshops at a beginning and intermediary level for the members of ACIC.

Our work seeks to be an experience of teaching and appreciation of dance based on perceptive research about seeing and not seeing. During the dancers creation process, by means of interviews, they describe their daily experiences and corporal memories. The sequences composed are based on improvisation and corporal contact. The object of the project is to learn dance as an aesthetic experience. To do so it proposes to undertake activities that promote non-verbal communication, expansion of the vocabulary of movement and contact with the other. Through this work of perceptive and sensorial research, the purpose of Potlach is to awaken in the spectator an unusual and provocative aesthetic experience about the reception of difference.

“What do I know?” This is a question that Maurice Merleau-Ponty presents in his work *The Visible and the Invisible* (2000), and that inspires us to create a questioning choreography. This is the alternative response of the philosopher to the affirmation “I know that I know nothing” – which is mired in skepticism and provokes a doubt that destroys certainties. But the commonplace questions are there. For example, I want to know: where am I? What time is it? Questions that evoke a context, someone who asks. Questions that come from our experiences as a “being in the world”. “What do I know?” asks Merleau-Ponty (2000), not wanting to explain what is knowing. Neither who I am but what is? These questions probe our very existence. It was by reflecting on the very existence of blind dancers that we created a choreography that questions the self and the world.

What is of interest to us in dance is the perceptive experience of that which is being appreciated both by the dancer as well as the audience. The exercise of comprehensible

sensibility forged in space-time lived in dance. Unlike photography, within dance operates a synthesis that unifies different temporal moments at a single time. An example of this synthesis can be found in the choreographic composition of the work *What Do I Know?* interpreted by the Potlach Dance Group. When activities began for the year, we spoke with the dancers in the group about their vacations. One non-seeing dancer commented that she participated in another pilgrimage to Saint Madre Paulina. We asked what request she made to the Saint and she said: to be able to see obstacles. Her response sparked our interest and motivated us to create a choreography with gestures evoking the relationship with the Sacred. The conversation with the dancer revealed that “the future, in the experience of ‘spontaneous anticipation’ is like an involuntary recollection, but presents itself complete, coming from another point, like a synthesis that is made as “inactuality”, in this case, unprecedented. Husserl, in his reading of Müller-Granzotto (2007), recognizes that the forecasting of the future is also a passive synthesis of “inactual” profiles. But they are not necessarily empty. They are complete “inactualities”, or that which is the same thing, full of potential. It is this potential, moreover, that appears as a horizon of the future of our motricity. The latter, appears simply to pursue novelties.

The words of the dancer become dance. Their movements are orchestrated by the sound of Hail Mary by Gounod and Bach, and a transparent thread that covers the body. “There is a peculiarity there, which properly distinguishes the motricity from the spontaneous anticipation: for the motricity, everything takes place as if these novelties come ready-made, as if they had been formulated further beyond oneself, a bit before the searching gestures. This requires us to admit, in the case of motricity, a type of future that comes from the past, a complete “inactuality”, but which is inseparable from the other which is void, and from where the first is born that meaning: after understanding the meaning, one no longer sees the words by which it is manifest.” (Müller-Granzotto, 2007, p.61-62)

In a certain way, these episodes make explicit similar questions that are now found in contemporary dance. On one hand, they are very often incomprehensible because new signs are being constantly recreated, which can provoke bewilderment. What dance is this? What movements are these? On the other hand, it is worth raising the question: is dance a form of explanation or description? In this sense, the special perception of one who does not see proposes a dance that does not explain, but which is felt as born from a perceptive body. Or even, a dance conceived by non-visual people, questions more than

explains. This possible dancing interrogation demonstrates that the experience between the dancer and the audience can be that of interlocked bodies.

Upon reaching the conclusion of this essay we learn that the experience of an existential journey suggests that an atmosphere of miracle is unveiled in the living time of dance, where knowing is forged with being, incarnating the words of Merleau-Ponty: I and the world are one in the other.

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Sharon Friedman - *Who loaded the GPS? -- navigating the highways of dance education in South African schools*

The post-apartheid dance curriculum in South Africa is attempting to offer school learners both an education and training in dance as an art form. The question as to who is making the decisions about what dance genres should be taught and in what context these decisions are being made, needs to be constantly revisited. This paper will attempt, with reference to the brief of this conference, to raise some of the issues involved when we ask "Whose dance are we teaching in the classroom?"

WHO LOADED THE GPS? --- Navigating the Highways to dance education in South African schools.

In questioning the value of contemporary dance theatre engaging forms of urban culture, one of the questions posed by this conference is the relationship of high art/dance with urban culture and urban dance forms. An examination of the dance curricula taught in schools in South Africa and abroad, suggests that although urban dance forms are often introduced as short modules, it is the established theatrical dance forms that form the core of the dance programmes. For example, the South African Learning Programme Guidelines for Dance Studies (LPG:2007) does not include urban dance forms in the extensive list of major dance forms suggested for study.¹ It is time therefore to raise the question, 'Whose dance are we teaching in the classroom?'

Beyond creative dance², an educational dance form mainly introduced in junior schools, what are the considerations in the choices offered that might be considered appropriate to the outcomes of secondary school dance programmes? David Spurgeon, co-ordinator of the dance programme at the University of New South Wales, in a paper presented at the 1997 *Confluences* conference hosted by the UCT School of Dance, referring to dance education in Australia, observed that the New South Wales Department of Education schools, have based their dance curricula upon a modern dance³ technique as a "way of using the body that is anatomically sound, that allows maximum facility of use and that is as free as possible from externally imposed stylistic influences"(Spurgeon1997:159). Certainly modern/contemporary dance techniques have long been regarded as more accessible than classical ballet; however, although the principles remain, the specific style taught is informed by the training of the teacher.⁴

The relationship between popular culture, "high art", and all the myriad categories/groupings in between and the manner in which they interface with the creative and educational desire to journey into new territory, is a factor to be considered if in fact a desire to journey into new territory *is* to be one of the outcomes of dance in education. According to Janice LaPointe – Crump, Professor of Dance at Texas Women's University

For the last 20 years, arts educators have been preoccupied with the need to define dance as an art form separate from any other endeavor or interest. Recreation, physical and spiritual health and wellness, and cultural enactments were back spaced in favour of dance as a personal, individualised form of communication and expression. This was an important stage in constructing aesthetic and artistic principles, determining unique historiographic projects, and theorizing about our unique creative processes (2006:2).

In the process, the 'high' art forms became those desired in education with modern/contemporary dance the most privileged and dance that was considered 'mass' culture largely excluded. The rapid technical and choreographic changes in professional dance in all its forms have been slowly absorbed, but they lack an equal status, as yet, with forms based on a fifty -year old elitist view about what constitutes creativity in choreography(ibid:2). She suggests that dance curricula should make use of new and hybrid forms to "...respond meaningfully to popular expectations for joyful energy transformation and competitive drive"(ibid:3).--- that is, If we assume that at some point competitive drive is deemed desirable.

¹ The Arts and Culture programme for Grade 8 incorporates a module which explores dance from popular cultures.

² which is not technique specific but itself assumes a consensus about the nature of natural movement

³ Techniques based on the American modern dance heritage, referred to as contemporary dance in Europe and South Africa.

⁴ Contemporary Dance (Modern Dance to the Americans), is not simple to define, and despite general principles that have emerged since it was invented in the first decades of the 20th century, the term is not precise. It includes a huge variety of dancers, choreographers and movement styles and the common element is more of an approach than a single style. It is an art that changes rapidly as it was, and still is, developed by people whose perceptions were constantly altered by new ideas, new attitudes to the facility of the human body in movement, and new methods of perceiving the world.

At the daCi (Dance and the Child International) conference⁵ in 2006, Keynoter Sue Stinson⁶ asked similar questions: whose movement are we teaching? Although we (dance educators of a certain age, white and mostly female), have historically believed in a 'natural' movement language of childhood which we utilised in mostly Laban terms, she concludes that "...there is really no 'natural' movement language of childhood, and that those of us who have been in power positions in dance education have simply defined what we prefer as 'natural'" (2006:49) Maybe so, but the question still arises as to which dance forms we include now that we have spent so many years establishing dance as an 'art' form in education as distinct from physical education, fitness or recreation (not that dance does not, inter alia, provide all those things). Pugh McCutchen⁷ suggests that teachers study a variety of performance genres to uncover the infinite variety of World Dance, and that they (the teachers) "Distinguish between those that are art and those that are entertainmen" (Pugh McCutchen 2006:223). But this comment makes the assumption that there is a common consensus about what is 'art' dance.

This is precisely where the problem occurs. If we take an open ended view and work with dance forms to which the learners relate, which they patently enjoy and which reflect, as current urban dance forms do, the context in which young people live, what has become "a worldwide relevant expression of young, often marginalised, urban youth" (Marcuse 2006:6),⁸ then the myriad forms of street dance, the Bollywood extravaganzas and hard hitting hip hop poetry with its concomitant movement, need to be included in the curriculum. One of the essential expressions of a generation is its dance language. If it was not, then the term contemporary dance, certainly in the terms I have defined it above, (see footnote 4) is meaningless.

A realistic look at the current dominant factors in art tells us that "Resources and materials for all the performing arts ... are mediated by the electronic environment, and resources are provided by the market ... this affects dance as much as every other art' (Brinson1991:184). What Peter Brinson⁹, writing about dance as education in 1991, refers to as 'informal youth dance' helps young people to make more sense of their lives in ways not possible through traditional institutions ruled by established conceptions of the arts ...it is also a means to the empowerment of young people as intelligent contributors to the democratic process(ibid).

Yet in 2000, Thomas Hagood,¹⁰ addressing the question of what impact the popular arts and culture in everyday life have on the formal education of young people in America, maintained that he was afraid that

The tug of popular culture's gravity will continue to promote an educational 'popism' if you will—employing the commercial or technological icon as referent for considering the notion of dance, or that of education... [He is concerned about] ... a superimposed set of stereotyped movement patterns (2000:33).

What we see as youth dance today is a far more structured, more expert, more competitive 'urban youth dance' that claims an equal 'theatricality' with 'art dance'. In Den Hague in 2006, the daCi conference hosted an evening entitled 'Night of Young Dutch Talent', which featured dance from the top Dutch academies. Together with a programme of excellently performed ballet, contemporary dance and Dutch folk dance, we saw equally technically excellent Hip Hop, Break dance and a Bollywood item. In South Africa, Hip Hop workshops are offered weekly to large

⁵ At these conferences, up to 500 delegates, at least half of them children under the age of 18, meet for 6 days of scholarly papers, workshops and children's performance.

⁶ Sue Stinson is Professor of Dance at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro where she supervises beginning –level dance educators in public schools and teaches courses in teacher preparation, qualitative research and curriculum.

⁷ Brenda Pugh McCutchen is a dance education consultant for Dance Curriculum Designs in Columbia, South Carolina and teaches at the University of South Carolina department of theatre and dance.

⁸ Judith Marcuse, Director of Judith Marcuse Dance Projects combines artistic excellence with social relevance

⁹ The late Peter Brinson was a dance administrator, writer and lecturer in the UK.

¹⁰ Thomas Hagood is currently Assistant Professor of Dance at Mills College, California

groups of skilled as well as unskilled young people and reputable private dance studios travel abroad to take part in international competitions. The dance of urban black youths for example, pantsula and kwaito, is performed with much the same expertise. Is this as Hagood suggests, a 'superimposed set of stereotyped movement patterns'? Maybe, given the nature of the style, but as Lynda Tomko¹¹ points out

Most movement practices deploy some kind of lexicon, or movement vocabulary, and some kind of syntax or sequences as to what happens when. The identification of lexicon and the making of decisions about syntax may be conscious or unconscious, voiced, concealed, left silent; impelled by individuals, groups, collaboratively, through accumulation—or in other ways (2005:103)

It seems crucial, that even if we do decide that urban street dance is as viable an 'art dance' form as the dance styles currently taught in schools, that our youth is exposed not only to urban dance and its accompanying music, but also to a diverse range of global dance styles and a broad variety of music genres, so that, as Brazilian educationist Paulo Freire suggested, "respect for the local is not a rejection of the universal" (Freire 2004:73). If the intention of education is to push boundaries, to enlarge the world of the learner, then theoretically all should be included in the curriculum. However, timetabling such a vision would be impossible if equal time were to be given to all genres, and training teachers to be expert in all fields, would be difficult. My personal viewpoint, given my background, training and teaching experience,¹² is that training in techniques that develop the maximum strength, flexibility and mobility the body requires if it is to be used as an expressive tool, will result in bodies that more easily adapt to a wide variety of styles.

But the question 'whose dance?' is also a cultural question. Even if we accept a notion of an international dance language best served by a variety of contemporary dance techniques to build the strength, flexibility and mobility that has been mentioned, dance needs to be sensitive to the national and cultural issues which are part of the 'hidden curriculum'¹³ of education curricula. Peter Brinson has noted that

The UK today is a multi-cultural and multi-racial society within this world ...This means adjusting present educational provision to help all students understand the cultural diversity they will meet in life and the way diversity enriches British society (1991:181).

Graham McFee,¹⁴ warns against the failure in a multi ethnic society of ignoring the issue of racism. He suggests three distinctions: between *content* and *delivery* e.g. the presentation of culturally specific material in a non-specific way; between *multi-culturalist* and *anti-racist* i.e. the attempt to integrate across cultural differences set against a more strenuous attempt to avoid any form of racism; and between *personal racism* and *institutional racism* (McFee 1994:125). He concludes that it is difficult to do justice to dance viewed as a cultural vehicle as such a conception of dance, first, asks too much of our understanding, requiring us to enter deeply into the cultural forms from which the dance emanates; second, and more practically, it requires too much time on, say, the school curriculum to be plausible (ibid:134).

That may well be, but in South Africa the issue patently cannot be avoided and certainly not in arts education. The concepts of 'multi culturalism' and 'multi ethnicity' referred to by Brinson, McFee

¹¹ Lynda J Tomko is associate professor of dance at the University of California, Riverside where she teaches dance history, theory and methods of dance reconstruction

¹² With an initial school teaching qualification and seven years teaching experience in both primary and high schools as well as a training in classical ballet, contemporary and jazz dance, I moved into dance education where I have worked for forty years as a dance educator and choreographer in diverse fields from private sector to my current post as Senior Lecturer at the University of Cape Town School of Dance

¹³ In Freirian terms, the frame of reference for the selection and distribution of knowledge as well as in the use of pedagogical styles designed to transmit that knowledge (Giroux 1979:266)

¹⁴ Graham McFee is Professor of Philosophy at The Chelsea School, University of Brighton and Adjunct Professor at California State University Fullerton

and Hagood carry different implications in South Africa than in the UK or the USA; the South African challenge being

To build a South African culture and concomitant artistic endeavour, from a disparate heap of differently – valued ways of life and forms of expression (and remember the exceptional nature of our endeavour: we do not have a host population attempting to accommodate immigrants—our immigrants are already here, our indigenous population is looking for its place in the sun where the immigrants kept them until very recently in the shadows and the shade) (Maree 2004:89).

A brief look at the history of theatrical dance in South Africa provides the key to understanding why the post apartheid Dance Studies module of the South African National Curriculum Statement was an attempt to meet this challenge. This history is outlined in the paper *Dancing on the Ashes of Apartheid* by Sharon Friedman and Elizabeth Triegaardt¹⁵ delivered at the *Dancing in the Millennium* Conference in Washington DC in 2000 as follows:

The theatrical dance heritage in South Africa was dominated by classical (in the main British) ballet, and when modern dance exerted an influence, it was American. Traditional African dance was regarded as an ethnological curiosity, which reflects Freire's notion of the domination of the oppressed by the devaluing of their culture (Giroux 1979:265). Thus, when the apartheid government established regional performing arts councils (funded by public monies) from 1962, the money budgeted for the Arts was made available only to the Arts Councils' companies and projects and the dance budget was utilized solely for classical ballet. Although there were some attempts by the ballet companies to delve into indigenous culture by utilising myths or stories as a basis for choreographic works, the form in which this material was expressed was based on western aesthetic criteria and exhibited a profound disregard or understanding of the cultural capital (language and lifestyle) of the oppressed. It was not until the early 1990s that the first contemporary dance companies received any government funding. Outside of the Arts Councils, both small contemporary dance companies, many of which were attempting some redress of cultural bias, as well as numbers of Arts Education projects energetically promoted theatrical dance in the disadvantaged communities. In their work, both these elements sought to find a South African identity.

The years of the struggle for liberation saw an extended use of the Arts, including dance, as a protest medium, and within the dance community ideology played an increasingly influential part not only in choreography but also in teaching projects as debate raged around what to teach and how to teach it. A search for commonality was to be a major concern of the 1980s. Experiments were being made with "fusion" dance, for example, the deliberate combining of western dance forms with traditional African or township rhythms and dance dynamics. Much of the work produced was original and exciting and seemed for many to be part of the very energetic "melting pot" debate that was part of that era. Since 1994, dance makers have been increasingly challenged to re-appraise the manner in which dance has been traditionally composed and to review the relevance of the subject matter in the search for a South African voice, the problem of identity being a key issue (Friedman and Triegaardt 2000).

However, while this search for a 'South African' identity in the performing arts is both a necessary and desirable aspect of transformation in South Africa, there remains the danger that what is perceived as desirable and politically correct by both policy makers and funders, not only can lead to work that is made in a hodge podge of styles in attempts to please the perceived requirements of what is politically correct, but that so called 'South African' dance may become prescriptive and when that occurs, the freedom of the artist to articulate his or her personal creative expression in any meaningful way, is eroded. (Frege 2006:66) Currently there does appear to be a growing acknowledgment that the very cultural diversity and plurality of South African cultures means that artists should be free to express themselves in a wide variety of dance genres and styles.

¹⁵ From 1986 to 2007, Associate Professor Elizabeth Triegaardt was Director of The UCT School of Dance, where she still teaches classical ballet. She is currently Executive Director of Cape Town City Ballet.

The post-apartheid Dance Studies curriculum therefore was conceived in an attempt to serve the purpose of redress and provide a more balanced appreciation of our multicultural heritage in the context of the challenge suggested above by Maree¹⁶. With the shift in government, came the inevitable shift in the ideology underpinning the curriculum towards an increasingly Afrocentric approach and the need to “write an arts curriculum to accommodate all cultures, to satisfy conflicting demands for both a Western discipline specific and an African integrated approach” (van Papendorp 2003:197). Amidst all the ‘multi-culturalism’ was a serious attempt to move towards the developing of a unique South African cultural expression. In a heroic attempt to put into practice the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) intention to respect the multi-cultural context of our newly democratic society, in the Further Education and Training curriculum (grades 10 -12), a broad range of dance styles is offered from which to choose, but as mentioned above, urban popular dance is not listed as a major dance style.

According to the NCS, learners should be provided with ample opportunities to explore a diversity of dance forms and cultural practices, and to identify, acknowledge and understand their commonalities and differences. The intent and effect is to create learners who have a questioning spirit and are anti-discriminatory in their world view (LPG 2007:9). As van Papendorp¹⁷ comments, “... Learners will thus be exposed to cultural dances of the country and encouraged to contribute toward an emergent national culture.” (2003:200)

What is this ‘emergent national culture’? Where are we currently in the debate about a ‘South African arts aesthetic’? In 2001, Choreographer and dancer Gregory Maqoma, director of Vuyani Dance Theatre acknowledged the connection to, and his respect for, the norms, value systems and traditions of his tribal background.

... I am quite aware that I cannot be the sole representative of that indigenous tradition since it is different from what I regard as my current identity ... other cultural forms and traditions have in fact affected my outlook as much as that I consistently explore the aesthetic forms and ethical values in a personal and stylistic manner or approach. I also still refer to certain aesthetical traditions, community norms and societal issues. These complex explorations continue to develop my tradition just like everybody else. (Maqoma 2001:76)

Thus Maqoma echoes Frege’s concern about the erosion of personal artistic freedom mentioned above. Ilona Frege, a lecturer in creative movement, choreography and dance studies, quotes the South African poet and authoress Antjie Krog, who in Senegal in 2003, was asked to show a large crowd the South African Dance and struggled to understand what this could possibly mean. “Is there such a thing as the South African ... dance ? two-step? Toyi –toyi? Tiekiedraai? Or is it something she will have to invent? The toyikiedraai?” (Frege 2006:68). And as Maqoma continued, “... you cannot expect me or any other artist for that matter to represent a whole culture of one clearly defined community in our diverse human landscape” (Maqoma 2001:77).

So as we journey into the 21st century attempting to offer our school learners both an education and training in dance as an art form, we are left with more questions than answers and a school timetable in which we struggle to find sufficient time not only to provide, within a generalist timetable, a practical class of appropriate length, but to accommodate both the practical and theoretical components of the dance syllabi. South African post-apartheid education is set in the framework of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) which aims to encourage a cross-curricular approach in which students make critical connections between different learning areas and arguably, connections should be made between the myriad of dance forms that legitimately abound in our post modern society. To accommodate within the secondary school dance studies curriculum all the above is not practical and will indeed lead to a hodge podge or ‘toyikhiphoppdraai’. So hard questions will need to be asked.

¹⁶ Lynn Maree is an academic and dance activist in Kwazulu/Natal. She has worked in England in arts funding and arts education and policy and was involved in the broadening of dance policy and dance definitions in the 1980s

¹⁷ Jenny van Papendorp is Deputy Chief Education Specialist for the Western Cape Education Department as well as Senior Curriculum Planner for Dance Studies.

What dance is to be taught?

To what end is it to be taught?

When is a specific movement syllabus appropriate?

How should this syllabus be taught ?

Implicit in these questions are philosophical ones posed by Stinson: “What’s worth knowing? ”Who decides?” and “In whose interest?” (2007:144) Who makes the decisions about what dance genres, and what outcomes we expect, that will not only fulfil the educational ideals of dance education but allow learners to enter the employment market?

We might well echo Alice’s question of the Cheshire Cat in Lewis Carroll’s *Alice Adventures in Wonderland*:

Alice asks the Cheshire cat “Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?” “That depends a good deal on where you want to get to” answers the cat.

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Stephan Gericke - *Can Kwaito overcome racial barriers: A comparative study between Kwaito's development and other inter-racially accepted dance music genres*

This essay compares the development of a South African dance music genre, *namely kwaito*, with the development of other inter-racially accepted music styles, including jazz, rock 'n' roll, disco and hip-hop. It poses the question: "Will *kwaito* overcome racial barriers in the same way that these other music styles have done?"

Can *Kwaito* overcome racial barriers?

A comparative study between *Kwaito*'s development and other inter-racially accepted dance music genres

By

Jacobus Stephanus Gericke

Introduction

People from various cultural and racial backgrounds enjoy popular music styles to which they can dance. Some of these music styles, including jazz, rock 'n' roll, disco and hip-hop, were created by predominantly black artists in the USA and had to overcome racial prejudices to become inter-racial, internationally acclaimed music styles. *Kwaito* is a recent development in the South African music scene and originated in similar fashion to the music styles mentioned above. The question arises if *kwaito* will progress to the same international and inter-racial status that these other styles have achieved.

A selection of inter-racial dance music genres

A brief discussion on the origins of jazz, rock 'n' roll, disco and hip-hop serves the purpose of illuminating the development of these music styles. These styles progressed in a similar fashion towards international and inter-racial acceptance.

In the 19th and early 20th Centuries, jazz developed in the USA. Although scholarly consensus has not been reached, New Orleans is generally given as the place of origin for jazz (De Veaux 1991:525-531; Gridley 1984:45). In the Congo Square, New Orleans, slaves from African and Caribbean descent, and Creoles combined African music with European influences (Gennari 1991:451). The black community created this new form of dance music as a means of expression, and jazz soon rose as the music of choice for social events. A jazz band consisting of white members, the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, led by Nick La Rocca, claimed to be the inventors of jazz. They recorded the first jazz recording in 1917 and used this recording to substantiate their claim. This recording predated any jazz recording by black artists by about five years. The Original Dixieland Jazz Band helped to extend jazz's international influence with their tour to England in 1919. (Tanner, Megill & Gerow 2005:19-25; 96-97; Tucker 2001:903-906).

The origins of rock 'n' roll are obscure, but that it became one of the most significant dance music styles of the previous century, is undeniable. One of its precursors is the gospel singer, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, whose performances in the 1930s and 1940s included stomping and shouting. In 1938 Tharpe recorded *This Train* and *Rock me* in this style. Even the 1939 recording of *Roll 'em Pete* by Big Joe Turner contained elements similar to later rock 'n' roll hits. This is also true for the 1947 recording of *The Fat Man* by Fats Domino. Even though these songs were regarded as gospel, Rhythm and Blues (R&B) or blues, their characteristics were indistinguishable from later rock 'n' roll hits. (Larson 2004:11). Furthermore, these were all songs by black artists that received inter-racial acknowledgement after they were performed by white artists. Bill Haley's rendition of *Shake Rattle and Roll*, for example, achieved inter-racial success, even though the original recording was recorded by Turner in 1954. Sam Phillips from Sun Records also helped to popularise rock 'n' roll. Phillips owned an independent recording company that specialised in local country acts. Phillips searched for a white artist who could bring a collaboration of the blues, country and gospel music to a wider audience without racial prejudice. He found such persons in Elvis Presley and Jerry Lee Lewis (Du Noyer 2003:368). Another white artist who commercialised cover versions of songs by black R&B musicians was Pat Boone. In 1955 he crooned *Two Hearts* by Otis Williams and The Charms and *Ain't that a shame* by Fats Domino. He also sang songs that were originally by Little Richard, The Flamingos, Ivory Joe, The El Dorados and Hunter (Du Noyer 2003:12; Larson 2004:25-42; Walser 2001:486-487).

Disco originated as a dance music style in a black, Hispanic and gay environment in the 1970's, but soon became inter-racially accepted after its inclusion in the film, *Saturday Night Fever* (Du Noyer 2003:314). The Disco era was short-lived, but it paved the way for the development of other music styles that incorporate electronic instrumentation to be used in dance clubs. (Larson 2004:213-215). Originating in the late 1970s, in the Bronx, New York, Hip-hop emerged, for example, when club goers' interest grew in the breaks that occurred between separate tracks. In these breaks the percussive rhythms would continue, while the MC would address the audience. This developed into the spoken characteristics of rap. DJ Kool is especially credited with experimenting with such mixing techniques, because he started using two turntables with similar tracks in this process. It was these instrumental breaks that became associated with the terms 'break beats' and 'break dancing' (Du Noyer 2003:336). These tendencies grew into the music genre known as hip-hop. The rapping of the content started expressing the black youth's opinions on political and social events. Hip-hop developed into a genre that was inter-racially acceptable when white hip-hop artists like Eminem, Vanilla Ice and the Beastie Boys became famous. (Larson 2004:255-264; Toop 2001:542-543).

Thus, jazz, rock 'n' roll, disco and hip-hop developed in a similar fashion – these styles developed in a black culture that was subject to many forms of discrimination (racial, political and sexual) and would at a later stage be adopted by white musicians and audiences. The manner in which these styles progressed allowed them to be internationally and inter-racially acknowledged.

Kwaito

Kwaito music is a South African phenomenon that originated during the early 1990s, more specifically, *circa* 1994, at the end of apartheid. The history of *kwaito* cannot be separated from the political atmosphere in which it was created. *Kwaito's* origins and development is similar to the other music styles discussed above.

The origins and characteristics of *Kwaito*

During the 1980s, black South Africans found musical entertainment in the form of imported house music, R&B, disco, hip-hop and South African *bubblegum*, *raga*, *mbaqanga*, township jazz, Afro-pop, *'simanje-manje* and *mqhashiyo*. These were some of the primary influences in the creation of *kwaito*. (Boloka 2003:99; Coplan 2001:109). *Kwaito* is a dance music style that incorporates singers/rappers, electronic instruments, synthesisers, studio-manufactured tracks and a strict beat. Arthur Mafokate, one of the first *kwaito* artists, describes it as follows: "It's all about ghetto music. For me, it's ghetto dance music" <McCloy [n.d.]:3>. *Kwaito* incorporates all the languages spoken in former townships, which include English, Afrikaans, Sotho and *Iscamtho* (township slang).

There is uncertainty about the etymology of the term. It is phonetically associated with the Afrikaans word 'kwaai' meaning 'bad-tempered' or 'strict' (Bosman 1964:159). Arthur believes it refers to the gang known as the 'Amakwaitos' that were active in the townships in Johannesburg where *kwaito* originated. Mdu, on the other hand, believes that the term '*kwaito*' is derived from its slang association – people refer to something that is 'hot', 'trendy' or 'cool' as being 'kwaai'. Oscar agrees with Mdu when he recounts that "when I was DJing, the music that people felt was outstanding they called *Kwaito*, cause it was 'slammin'" <McCloy [n.d.]:3>. *Kwaito* was also not the only term associated with these new trends – Kalawa and Skeem refer to it as 'D'Gong', TKZee as 'Guz' and Joe Nina as 'Disco-fusion'. *Kwaito*, however, is the term that was adopted in most social environments and is most frequently used <McCloy [n.d.]:3>.

The origins of *kwaito* are also debatable, since several people claim to be the creator of *kwaito*. The first *kwaito* single, *It's about time* by Boom Shaka, was recorded in 1993 and was produced by Don Laka. He established Boom Shaka by combining the talents of DJ Oscar, the vocalist, Theo, and the rapper, Junior Sokhela <Steingo 2005:4>. Oscar 'Warona' Mdlongwa states that in the early 1990s:

[...] we started remixing those international house tracks to give them a local feeling, we added a bit of piano, slowing the tempo down and putting in percussion and African melodies but maintaining the house groove. <McCloy [n.d.]:1>

Mdu, who is also credited with being the creator of *kwaito*, stated that "people were into US and UK House, so I mixed the House and Bubblegum and I came up with *Kwaito*" <Steingo 2005:2>.

Kwaito's origins coincided with the demise of the apartheid regime and South Africa's first democratic election in 1994. It was at this time when economical, political, sports and cultural sanctions were lifted.

From the beginning, *kwaito* carried with it an undercurrent of oppression. The throbbing, pulsating music was often accompanied by politically motivated lyrics that embodied the newly animated youth culture <Swink 2003:2>.

Kwaito lyrics served as reflections on history. The *kwaito* album, *Words of Wisdom*, by Boom Shaka praises heroes from South African black history such as Steve Biko and Chris Hani <Smith 2000:3>.

This was a period in which *kwaito*'s development was very politically charged, but it was also a time filled with hope, since 'reconciliation' and 'transformation' was the prominent focus of the new era. South Africa's black youth now had freedom of expression when the previous censorship laws were repealed. Neo Ntsoma (2004:1), a photographer, described *kwaito* in the following way:

[...] it became clear to me that the youth of South Africa refuse to be condemned by the politics of the past, but choose to find their own identity. They have been developing one which is truly and proudly South African – *Kwaito* culture. It's about peace, love and unity; about yourself and loving yourself enough to be YOU.

Kwaito music depicts the milieu of the black urban youth of South Africa. It represents all the facets in their lives, including fashion and their use of language. Yet, most prominently, it represents their social environment and the political issues that they face. Coplan (2001:120) asked the following: "...can battles lost in economics and/or politics be won in culture?" According to *kwaito* artists, it can. Oscarwa Rona, a *Kwaito* artist, asked: "We used to do tracks where we would ask why is the divorce rate so high? Why are little children being found in shabeens [sic] drinking?" <Clark [n.d.]:3>. In the magazine, *Hola*, Natizea (a *kwaito* group) remarked: "*Kwaito* is our way of contributing to change in this country. It is also a way to remind public opinion what the ghetto expects from change: jobs, better schools and peace on the streets" <Swink 2003:2>. Even though *kwaito* was born in an oppressed environment, it became a positive means of expressing the black community's social needs.

Over 75% of South Africa's population is black and mostly situated in former townships <Swink 2003:2>. Furthermore, the youth of South Africa forms more than half of the entire population <Clark [n.d.]:1>. Thus, the majority of South Africa's population is young and black and their opinions should be influential upon the country's future. George Hill (1999:12) is a news producer at *Yfm*, a radio station specialising in *kwaito* music. He addressed the older generation's criticism on *kwaito* in his essay, *The Kwaito Revolution*:

[...] to us this musical form and culture expresses our hopes, fears and dreams. It's ours. It talks to us in languages and postures we recognise as our truths. This music that you find vulgar and offensive means more to the youth of this country than you can imagine. It is a mirror of our lives. Once you understand *kwaito*, you'll begin to understand us.

The impact of *kwaito*

The media's contribution to the distribution of local music, such as *kwaito*, is important, especially if local music exposure needs to be increased. The Independent Broadcasting Authority's law of 1998 states that 20% of airtime should be allocated to locally produced music. This increased to 25% in 2003 <Steingo 2005:3> and according to the Government Gazette <Icasa 2006:22> it increased to a minimum of 40% in 2006. In recent years, *Kwaito* music has become one of South Africa's leading sellers in the music industry, with several albums selling over 100 000 copies. These include albums by Arthur, Mawillies and Mdu <McCloy [n.d.]:4; Swink 2003:3>. In 2003 a study by the South African radio station, *Yfm*, established that an estimate of 30% of hit records from the previous five years had been *kwaito* tracks. This makes *kwaito* the second most popular music style at this station, next to gospel <Robinson 2004:1>. *Yfm* is a radio station established in Gauteng in 1997. The following year *YMag* was created to address the same social and political issues that were discussed on *Yfm*.

There are also other areas where *kwaito* is starting to receive more exposure to racially mixed audiences. Advertising is such an example. *Kwaito* has been used in several advertisements, since it appeals to a large number of consumers. One of these campaigns, 'Love Life', focuses on projecting an anti-Aids message to children and uses Thandiswa (the lead singer of the group Bongo Maffin) as one of their spokespersons <McCloy 2000:2>.

Kwaito has also been used in the film industry, for example in *Jump the Gun*, *Fools*, *High Lack Stories* and the 2006 Oscar-winner for best foreign film, *Tsotsi* <Doctor Logic 2006:1>. This brought *kwaito* music to a wider, international audience (similar to the exposure disco received through the film, *Saturday Night Fever*). There are also locally produced television programs that reflect the *kwaito* lifestyle, such as 'Generations' and 'Backstage'. All these forms of media help to expose *kwaito* to a larger audience, including more of the white population of South Africa.

Kwaito has been associated with major sporting events in South Africa, including rugby and soccer. *Kwaito* hits like Mandoza's *Goboda* and Mzekezeke's *S'guqa ngamadolo* have often been played at such events. TKZee's *Shibobo*, for example, was played during the 1998 Soccer World Cup (Mhlambi 2004:117 & 124) and Mandoza's *Nkalakatha* was played at the Tri-Nations Cricket Tournament in Australia in 2002 (Boloka 2003:103). Some of these songs have become synonymous to such events and are well known by many sport fans.

On an international level, *Kwaito* performers like TKZee, Boom Shaka, Arthur and Bongo Maffin have achieved international success through various tours to the US and the UK (Mhlambi 2004:124). A UK radio station, 'Radio 1XTRA', organised by Willber Willberforce as an affiliation to the BBC, has broadcasted *kwaito* songs during their African tour in 2005. *Kwaito* was well received with their British audience, aged between 16 and 24. This has helped to promote *kwaito*'s international exposure <Burrell 2005:1–3>.

The first white person to become a *kwaito* artist was the 27-year-old Francois 'Lekgoa' Henning ('Lekgoa' refers to his nickname, which means 'white boy' in Sotho). Francois is fluent in English, Afrikaans, Sotho and *Iscamtho*, all of which he uses on his debut album *Basetsana* (1999). His objective is to help to dismantle the racial barriers that still exist in South Africa. He is of the opinion that radio stations still specialise in certain musical genres and that music shops in white areas only have a limited amount of *kwaito* music. This is partly due to the fact that a white consumer market for *kwaito* has not yet been properly

developed <Smith 2000:1–2>. Musica and Look ‘n’ Listen are both well-known music stores that distribute CD’s to a predominantly white clientele. Yet, no *kwaito* albums have featured on their Top 20 lists for this year (Musica staff members 2007; Look ‘n’ Listen staff member 2007).

Critique of *Kwaito*

Like any music genre, *kwaito* does not always suit everyone’s taste. This may be one of the major reasons why *kwaito* has not yet been accepted by different races within South Africa. It is the freedom of interpretation that allows a music style, like *kwaito*, to be influenced in various ways and to develop continuously, adjusting to new tastes. Brown (1999:245) writes:

There are no facts of the matter that will tell us how to weigh specific cultural contributions to the music so as to entail either that the music should sound one way, be heard one way, or be played authentically only by people with one kind of racial consciousness.

As mentioned above, *kwaito* has had a generally positive reception on an international level, but this has not always been the case. On her South African ‘Velvet Tour’ in 1998, Janet Jackson cancelled her *kwaito* support act since she perceived it as being “unauthentic” and “[...] too much like a hotchpotch of gangsta rap, house, hip-hop and raga” <Smith 2000:2>. Critics argue that this ‘unoriginality’ is a result of *kwaito*’s neglect of everything that was relevant to the style. It is feared that the essence that made *kwaito* a local attribute, is being replaced with global tendencies – commercialism is replacing *kwaito*’s initial aesthetics. Gladney (1995:293) wrote:

[...] it is necessary to examine the issue of cultural production within the context of a capitalist environment, and to consider the effects such an environment has on the development of aesthetic criteria or performance and analysis.

In contrast to the earlier politically orientated *kwaito* tracks, recent *kwaito* songs focus on having fun and partying. Hip-hop is undergoing similar transformations and it is also feared, as is the case with *kwaito*, that hip-hop will lose its essence. Ronald Jemal Stephens (1991:38) wrote:

[...] the majority of commercialized rap lyrics are concerned with humor and mockery, a lighter version of rap that reduces it to another faddish new musical from whose newness...allows it a hearing from white culture...

As mentioned in the above quote, commercialism can also be beneficial to *kwaito*’s development, since it increases *kwaito*’s audience. Moore (2002-2003:65) observed, with specific reference to the hip-hop culture, that whites have “always been the primary consumers of black culture”. Still, the change from politically orientated lyrics to a blasé approach towards life represents the developments in many of the youth’s attitudes. Maria McCloy is a co-owner of a multimedia company and the *kwaito* website, <www.rage.co.za>, and she expresses this focus shift in *kwaito*’s content as follows: “The first generation of musicians was about breaking with the past. The new stars embrace it.” It should not be assumed that South African youth has “[...] no politics just because Mdu, Skeem and Boom Shaka make more sense to us [the youth] than politicians.” (Hill 1999:12). On the other hand, it should also not be assumed that inter-racial appreciation should form the next inevitable phase in *kwaito*’s development. Neal (1989:80) believes:

Should we really be concerned about recognition from a society that oppresses us, exploits us...? Recognition from dominant white society should not be the primary aim of the black artist. He must decide that his art belongs to his own people. This is not to deny that there are some ‘universal’ factors at work; but we

are living in a specific place, at a specific time, and are a specific set of people with a specific historical development.

As is the case with all forms of art, *kwaito* is a representation of social commentary and can only indirectly influence the environment. It is not *kwaito*, per se, that will develop into an inter-racial phenomenon, but the individuals that use *kwaito* as their means of expression (through dancing, for example) that achieve such goals. It is a cyclic process, since an artist experiences his surroundings, and his reflections thereof serve as a cultural influence on society. Boloka (2003:103) writes:

Since popular music is a product of culture, it is a vehicle for identity construction. This is evidenced by the languages it uses, the issues it addresses, the social classes it represents and the cultural spaces it symbolises. These elements contribute to identity formation.

If *kwaito* becomes an inter-racial music style, it will have to adapt to include other cultural elements. It is not yet clear if most white South Africans are willing enough, or interested enough, to contribute to *kwaito*'s development. According to Stephanie Marlin-Curiel (2001:163) white Afrikaans speakers are on their own quest for identity that may contradict the *kwaito* lifestyle. Still, some forms of change would be necessary to bring *kwaito* culture to an inter-racial market.

As seen above, the changes in *kwaito*'s development, however, are receiving critique for adhering to commercialism and globalisation and change will only lead to more critique. Commercialism influenced jazz, ragtime, rock 'n' roll, disco and hip-hop to a certain extent, but it did not alter their essential characteristics. *Kwaito* will need to do the same by compromising to an inter-racial culture, without relinquishing its unique identity. "Fighting for cultural survival in a nascent democracy is not the same as fighting an oppressive regime." (Marlin-Curiel 2001:164). This process will lead to more criticism, since different opinions exist about what the end result should be. Coplan's (2001:123) view of *kwaito*'s developing cultural identity is as follows:

[...] there is of course the equal danger of constructing African identity as exclusionary out of need to define Africa in opposition to the West and the rest, promoting the false and dangerous notion of a monoracial continent.

Kwaito will progress towards an inter-racial identity if it finds a balance between its inheritance, commercialism, globalisation and various other cultural influences. Marlin-Curiel (2001:163) wrote that the "[...] search for normalisation will end when acceptance replaces stigma." Thus, *kwaito* will only be accepted as part of an inter-racial identity when it forms part of a cultural lifestyle supported by multiple races. *Kwaito* as a style of music cannot achieve this purpose without serving the function of entertainment through the means of dance. Once a music style grows in popularity, through dance, its distribution through other media will follow. This was the case with jazz, rock 'n' roll, disco and hip-hop.

Conclusion

Kwaito is still developing and has not yet predominantly become a music style appreciated by all the races in South Africa. Yet, when *kwaito*'s development is compared to the development of other dance music genres, like jazz, rock 'n' roll, disco and hip-hop, similarities are observed. *Kwaito* possesses characteristics that can help it become an inter-racial dance music genre, like the music styles mentioned above. It has already achieved acclaim with white audiences abroad, but only to a limited extent within South Africa. Are South Africa's social and political barriers that regard *kwaito*'s development towards an inter-racial music style too broad to overcome, or is it just too early in *kwaito*'s development to tell?

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Dr N Jade Gibson - *Short steps to freedom: interfaces, spaces and imaginaries within Cape jazz social dance and the emerging salsa scene in Cape Town*

This paper examines contemporary Cape Jazz social dance, a 'tradition' in Cape Town, as a dynamic and changing social practice over time, in relation to the recent emergence of Salsa dance, perceived as coming from outside South Africa, as a means of exploring imaginaries and constructs of self and community in a shifting social environment that extends transnationally as well as locally. Through playful theoretical approaches to space and time, I examine how concepts such as boundary, geography, history and transnationality are embodied within these dance practices, and how their interstices present conceptual challenges and new strategies for formulating notions of self and community. Consequently, I unpack how a seemingly innocuous and entertaining contemporary social practice is imbued with layered meanings, narratives and desires that provide rich insight into constructs of tradition and change in South Africa, to create plural and contested senses of place, cultural exchange and transformation.

SHORT STEPS TO SOCIAL FREEDOM: INTERFACES, SPACES AND IMAGINARIES WITHIN CAPE JAZZ SOCIAL DANCE AND THE EMERGING SALSA SCENE IN CAPE TOWN

N Jade Gibson

INTRODUCTION

There has been a recent burgeoning of work on cities as creative sites of exchange and transformation, acting as key creative, cultural and control centres within global, economic, cultural and social dynamics (Amin 1997; 2002). Such new cosmopolitan perspectives of belonging and culture extend beyond concepts of territory, and are shaped by trans-national flows of meanings, images and practices (Vertovec 2001).

It has likewise been suggested that studies of urban relationships at a local level give meaning to 'bigger questions' in South Africa (Colvin, 2003). However, there are considerations particular to the study of local creative and dynamic cultural centres within a city such as Cape Town, where, 'Despite concerted city-wide planning initiatives aimed at desegregating the apartheid city, the everyday socio-spatial legacies of apartheid continue to be reproduced...' (Robins 2002: 3; also see Miraftab 2007).

This paper, at a preliminary stage, explores the dynamic transition of Cape Jazz social dance, a local 'tradition', in relation to the emergence of Salsa dance, seen as coming from 'abroad' in Cape Town. The paper draws on a number of excerpts from preliminary interviews with current and previous Jazz dancers, as well as my own observations and conversations over the approximately six years I have danced 'Cape Jazz' dance (commonly referred to as 'Jazz') and four years of salsa dance in Cape Town (having danced salsa in London for many years previously). A study of this kind, I argue, provides rich subject matter to present conceptual challenges and new strategies for formulating notions of community and culture in Cape Town.

THE HISTORICAL SPACE – NARRATIVES OF ORIGIN AND BELONGING IN JAZZ DANCE

Jazz dance is a street social 'couple' dance which emerged around the turn of the 60s/70s within coloured township areas, and around Woodstock in Cape Town. It is popularly described as a 'coloured' tradition, to the extent that many claim, as in the following interview excerpt,

'Jazz is a culture here, almost like the Kaapse Klopse, part of our history... it's in our blood'

There is some blurring in stories to date of how Cape Jazz dance (commonly referred to as 'Jazz') evolved as a dance form, and origin myths and different stories exist. Some individuals suggest that Jazz Dance may have evolved from *langaarm* or *vastrap*, some from swing, some from jive, some from mambo in ballroom (there being a long-rooted tradition of ballroom dance in Cape Town), some from a combination of these, and others have suggested Jazz as a 'youth' reaction to their parents' ballroom activities, in which they wished to establish their own dance form. There are some claims to various precursors to Jazz Dance as it is now known, one being 'Swing', another being the 'Bob' and the 'hopping' Jazz' [see later] whereas others place these dance styles under the Jazz genre. One ex-Jazz dancer in his late forties claimed that it emerged from 'nowhere' with words along the lines of:

'I was at this place, and they put a Santana record on, and suddenly all these people were dancing in couples, swaying from side to side, I'd never seen it before – I thought, what is this?'

There is clearly a historical transition from a dance form based on a shared experience between two people, aimed at 'getting hold of the opposite sex', in which one interviewee explained in detail the allure of being a teenager and being able to hold a woman in the Jazz Dance as a preliminary to the ultimately desired 'slow dance', and Jazz dance emerging as spectacle on the club floor, leading towards performative (sic), or competitive, dance.

Initially, Jazz dance took place in small venues, amongst other forms of dance, described by one interviewee as 'solo dancing' and 'slow dance', within what were known as 'scenes', gatherings at people's houses, or community halls, to music of American origin, and then moved later to Jazz clubs.

Early Jazz dance clubs include a wide variety of venues such as the 'Sherwood Lounge' which became Club Montreal in Manenberg, 'Las Vegas' in Manenberg, 'Goldfinger' in Athlone, and 'Stardust' in Woodstock, and bands such as 'the Rockets', 'the Pacifics' and 'Zayn Adams' band in which, as one previous Jazz dancer described it, 'people only danced when the band didn't play, in the songs in-between the band performances, when the band played, you listened'. Two popular Jazz clubs today are the long-lived Galaxy in Rylands, and the 'G-Spot' (or Generations Café) in Maitland, known for their Saturday afternoon and Wednesday evening jazz nights respectively, with bands such as 'N2', 'Loading Zone' and 'Virtual Reality' and Jazz dancers often dance when the band is playing.

In relation to Cape Jazz music, (Miller 2007; Layne 1005) it has been argued that musicians under apartheid, as a marketing professional measure, declared an 'authentic' 'Cape Jazz' musical form differentiated from 'white' music, that developed within socially restricted arenas to form its 'own genre'. Cape Jazz dance, likewise, through past socio-spatial restrictions that, over time under apartheid, effectively defined 'culture', has become a 'tradition' of 'authentic' and 'naturalised' practice seemingly fixed in a timeless past, and danced to particular genre(s) of music. Possibly, its self-exhibition as semi-professional 'spectacle' has, in part, reinforced helped create its sense of authenticity and tradition, despite contradictions embedded within it.

Jazz dance began to emerge as a 'spectacle' in large clubs where the object was to be 'seen to dance well'. In the late 1990s, and early 2000 Jazz dance became more formalised, into what some call the 'sport' style of Jazz, and the style currently danced in clubs such as Galaxy and West End. A number of Jazz teachers began to emerge, such as 'Terence' who formed the teaching school 'Dance Africa' at the 'Galaxy' and 'Club Cinammon' (then in Bellville) and Anne, in Valeries (then in Kuilsrivier), who later moved to teach at 'Obsessions' in Observatory. This led to a series of yearly competitions across the Western Cape Jazz clubs, the last being in 2005, the 'Set the Night on Fire' competitions funded by commercial sponsorship, and, as a result of which, more competition winners began to teach.

However, the 'old' style of Jazz continues to be danced in suburbs further out from Cape Town. These two Jazz dancers, a couple 'C' from Ravensmead, in her twenties, and 'D', from Retreat, in his late thirties, who met through Jazz dance and competed in the 'Set the Night on Fire' Jazz competitions, coming fifth in 2005, describe the difference between what they term Jazz in the 'backstreet clubs' in the 'suburbs', being places such as Manenberg, Lavender Hill, Retreat, Ravensmead, and Mitchell's Plain, popularly considered to be 'coloured' areas in Cape Town. The 'backstreet Jazz', they argue, is distinguished from Jazz as danced in clubs such as the Galaxy and G-spot, not only through how it is danced, but the type of music it is danced to, as well as the dress code for the dance venues:

'There is two different styles of Jazz in Cape Town, and you can distinctively see the styles... The other way is very rough... it's raw... we call it the 'hoppy' jazz, you turn from side to side. If you go to a club in the suburbs, the guys there will hop, you will see they have a very severe hop in them, They would think we were doing ballroom... They step the other way as well, in the opposite direction... They've got different body movement... Ours is more sensual... you would see some of them at the G Spot, but not much.... he doesn't look at you. What we do is completely different, Galaxy and G-Spot are more reserved.' (D)

'The dress code when you go to the backstreets... they will just have on jeans, takkies... they will think I'm 'all that', if I go dressed like at the G-spot, with heels... I learnt to dance in the suburbs. In the suburbs you will do whatever you see - that's how I learned to dance – unreserved, I would say.' (C)

'In the backstreet clubs they dance to different music, not jazz music like N2 play, they dance to other music, American music.' (D)

Consequently, it appears, two concurrent forms of Jazz in Cape Town have emerged, with different moves and dance music forms. In writing of the transmission of dance forms, their appropriation, and re-inscription Desmond (1994) argues that dance forms, in being transmitted across class, are not merely mimicked, but may change in meaning and practice; often, she claims, on a trajectory of class-based 'upward mobility', in which movements become more refined, polished and desexualised.

However, this refinement and formalisation of the Jazz dance style has resulted in an apparent 'schism' in Jazz dance forms, related to the class or generation of dancers taking part. For example, one previous dancer I spoke to in his late 40s/early 50s, who claimed to have come second in a local dance club competition in the 'old style of dance' in the eighties, and who still goes occasionally to the Galaxy, distinguished between the more 'formalised' taught Jazz dance and the form of Jazz he grew up with, in terms of a cultural context, by responding, 'when you ask about Jazz, do you mean Jazz dance as we coloureds dance it, or how it is danced nowadays?'

This schism is interesting in that it indicates a shift between the idea of Jazz as a being a 'coloured' tradition, and somehow starting to become a form in itself, to some extent being distanced from a 'culturally' constrained sense of ownership.

THE EMERGENCE AND INFLUENCE OF SALSA DANCE IN CAPE TOWN

Salsa dance is also a popular and stylistically fluid 'street' social couple dance, danced in clubs, with wide international appeal, possibly because it encompasses a broad range of ages, cultural backgrounds and styles and derived styles of salsa dance originating from different countries, for example, as 'Puerto-Rican style', 'Colombian' or 'Cuban style' or 'New York style' salsa, to various forms of 'salsa music' (for more information see Flores 2004; Kapchan 2006). The salsa scenes also incorporate a variety of alternative Latin dances, such as bachata, cha cha cha, and reggaeton, in their repertoire. Similar to the fluidity of the Jazz Dance form, within salsa dance, new moves and styles are continually being created, and are often incorporated from other popular dance forms, such as 'break-dance', 'tango' and 'hip hop' while retaining the basic salsa step. The 'Salsa community' as a network now extends world-wide as dancers travel abroad on salsa vacations, to dance in clubs and take classes, or attend international 'salsa conferences' where and from where teachers and competition winners travel abroad to perform or teach at other salsa venues.

Salsa dance began in Central Cape Town on a serious scale with classes given by John Morrison, who had a background in ballroom/latin dance teaching and who had lived in London, at Bossa Nova Club in central Cape Town. From its inception, and a growing number of teachers over time, salsa dance has moved from its initially primarily 'white' majority of students, to incorporate a wide variety of participants, in age, ability and background, including people from overseas either visiting or studying in Cape Town. Since then, it has grown to a large 'community' of several hundred salsa dancers, linked via classes and the internet on Facebook, in Cape Town. There are now a significant number of salsa teachers, hosting classes at different venues Cape Town, teaching different styles of salsa, and from various dance backgrounds (African, ballroom, house, and Cuban salsa), some from other countries such as Cuba and Italy). Dancing takes place during classes often held at restaurants or

bars or at regular salsa dance venues, such as Buena Vista Social Café in Green Point on Sundays, a 'Cuban style' restaurant, complete with photographs of Cuba and pictures of Castro and Che Guevara, evoking a nostalgic Latin location. There are other, sporadic events, such as a previous large beach party on Clifton beach, linked to the emergence of several locally-based 'salsa' bands in recent years, such as the previous 12-piece Maquina Loca, performing Cuban salsa, Frank Paco's Tucan Tucan, which has moved onto 'fusion Afro-Jazz-Latin' music, and a very recent band, apparently led by a 'real Cuban musician'.

Salsa music defines the dance form, which again is primarily a back and forward step shared by two people, based on Los Angeles (LA)/New York (NY) and Cuban styles that are currently popular internationally.

Although not perceived as a 'tradition', it appears that, like salsa danced in urban sites in other countries, salsa dance in Cape Town has created its own sense of 'belonging', in relation to a trans-national salsa community established through a shared musical form and praxis extending beyond national boundaries. Dancers and teachers often refer to salsa in Cape Town as the 'South African style' of Salsa. 'Indigenising' a new salsa form is not new – in fact the NY 'mambo on two' style was established as a 'new' form of salsa created in the United States of America (USA), although Cape Town is currently far from establishing its own latin dance genre (Kapchan 2006; Flores 2004).

THE CROSSING OF DANCE STYLES AND PRACTICES WITHIN THE DANCE

The similarities between the two dances, Cape Jazz and Salsa, in part as a consequence of their relative fluidity and flexibility in style, has resulted in a 'crossing over' between jazz and salsa dancers and to some extent, of dance forms. Stylistically, there is an overlap between the two forms of dance. Both dances currently involve a synchronised back and forth movement in which the body movements are very similar, creating a situation where one dance can 'borrow' from the other, and overlaps make it difficult to distinguish which style is being danced. The similarities between Jazz and salsa have even been ascribed to an 'origin story' of Jazz dance originating in Cuban salsa, in which an interviewee quoted his dance teacher: 'Before 1994... a lot of Cubans came in here and had an influence with our people where jazz was concerned... there was a lot of underground movement and Cubans also had a role in our apartheid era, and that is how some of them came in here, working with... the ANC, the UDN, they used to go out as well and dance and some of them went onto the dance floor...'¹

Salsa has attracted many dancers from the jazz dance community, who have come to dance in the same venues, and some who have come to classes or picked up 'moves' by watching salsa dancers. 'D' claims that many dancers in the 'Set the Night on Fire' competitions had, often unwittingly, 'borrowed' moves from salsa, even prior to knowing about it being taught in Cape Town, or salsa being taught, either through seeing salsa dancers dancing in clubs, including dance shows at Jazz clubs, by a team of Cuban dancers sent from Cuba in order to promote Cuban rum, occurring annually at the Galaxy, - 'there's people, they'll watch you continually and they'll do it, but they've never heard of salsa, and that's how salsa becomes an influence in Jazz' He also claimed that Jazz teachers and competitors, including himself, had also used salsa sequences downloaded on the internet, without understanding them as such, and that 'Salsa is having an influence... it's going to be big. People copy Salsa, influencing Jazz.'

¹ I personally know of no real evidence supporting this argument.

However, it is interesting to note that there is also a fear expressed by some Jazz teachers, and dancers, as salsa increases in popularity, of 'losing ones culture' as a consequence of salsa 'taking over': 'I think the jazz people is somehow afraid of the salsa community [that] they want to dominate, they want to kill jazz in Cape Town...' suggesting the threatened 'loss' of Jazz as a social practice is strongly tied to notions of preserving cultural identities. For example, the 'Set the Night on Fire' Jazz competition' (2004/2005) created an opposition between Jazz, based on notions of locality and authenticity, and Salsa as a dance form that threatened to 'spoil' Jazz. One judge (a Jazz teacher) for the competition told me at the time that officially no Salsa steps or moves were allowed in the Jazz competition, and that they would mark people down if they have salsa moves, because Jazz is 'a local thing'. When I asked how he would know which moves were which he said, 'I can tell, I can't describe it, but I can see it.'

The dances are similar enough for each to be difficult to distinguish the two forms without the music. However, there are some differences as defined by the following Jazz dancer and teacher, in the forms used and the difference in 'beat' or rhythm being different as a consequence of the different music genres danced to. A major distinction between Jazz and Salsa is the music people dance to, and the beat or rhythm of the step. Jazz music is one genre, and salsa another, although salsa, D says, is sometimes played in Jazz clubs, 'but people don't know it's salsa'.

'People who dance Jazz, they don't always like the beat... when I first heard salsa, I couldn't get the beat, I didn't like it.' The different step, D claims, is the extra fourth beat of salsa, although the steps are exactly the same, a back and forth step (sometimes a fourth tap instead of a 'silent' step is added in salsa)...

'Jazz doesn't have that pause... you feel that salsa music, it drops, you tend to slow down... in Jazz there's no slow down, they don't have that sensuality or sexiness, you just do your thing then you get off the floor, it doesn't have that 'flow'....In Jazz, the guy doesn't do that much... you hardly see him spinning... He's always just in front of the woman, spinning her left and right... In salsa you get the guys spinning, it's the way the dance is.'

However, in their case, D said they did eventually both 'pick up' the rhythm and they began to 'fuse' their jazz with their salsa, to create their style D calls 'Jazz Fusion', a phenomenon he claims is happening naturally on the Jazz club floor anyway.

Jazz dancers would always borrow from salsa, he claimed, but the dance would still remain Jazz. 'I won't forget where I came from... I'll point you out Jazz dancers, Capetownian Jazz dancers, and you won't change them from Jazz to Salsa, but you'll find them fusing the two.'

For D, Jazz dance 'has changed, and changed, and changed, and is always changing. More recently, the Jazz club the 'G-spot' has started having the occasional 'salsa night' on the Wednesday jazz dance night, and it appears that more salsa dancers are, in trickling numbers, turning up at the jazz clubs to dance.

OF 'OTHER' SPACES - INTERFACES, CHALLENGES AND BOUNDARIES

The fact that so many teachers come from abroad, and the styling of salsa as 'latin', it creates the desire and imaginary, of being part of a Latin community, broader than the immediate locality. Likewise, salsa dancers sometimes travel abroad, and international links with a broader community, experienced through travel and the internet.

However, despite international social links, the city is limited when it comes to interactions at a local level. D, for example, claims that many Jazz dancers go to salsa venues, but less salsa dancers go to

Jazz venues, 'one rarely sees a white person' and that he feels there is fear of going to dance in the Jazz clubs from salsa dancers. Although, he stresses, they are made very welcome at the Jazz clubs. It seems that salsa teachers are not so willing to teach in venues across the city, partly, D suspects, for financial reasons as well as fear.

Boundaries between dance genres thus exist not just through the sense of music and dance form, but also through the sense of place, and occupation of the city by the individuals who take part in them, circumscribed by feelings of cultural exclusion which must first be overcome. D and C described part of their early dislike of salsa as not only feeling uncomfortable dancing to the music, but also partly based on the fact that:

'...because we're from the suburbs... I don't want to get into political statements, but, we've been growing up only amongst us coloured people, so for us to come into that environment it felt strange... it was three years back.... The Nation's suburbs is still very full of apartheid... they are still very racist, some of them... Our country has been democratic and we could go anywhere we wanted to go, but yet still those people, that' been cut off... have never actually gone there (D).

'The suburbs, it's a world on its own... it's a different world out there... you hardly get white people. Some of the people out in Ravensmead, the kids, even the older people... we can see Table Mountain from there, but they don't know about the city itself... it's a totally different world. (C)

However, D came back about three months later to salsa classes and this time he 'loved it' and became an avid participant. Overall, through the dance community, D claims, he met an entirely new set of people:

'It's great to be able to communicate with people from different cultures... you meet people from different backgrounds and you get to know them; also the salsa world; white, black, community and international people, and you start interacting with them, it's very nice to be part of both.. in Jazz and Salsa you become like a close-knit family... and it's a nice safe environment because everyone knows you.

Likewise, it is D and his dancing wife/partner's aim to spread their 'Jazz fusion' dance out of the city centre through teaching children in 'suburbs' such as Retreat, Lavender Hill and Hout Bay, and having 'get-togethers' as a means of bringing people together across different communities, through their 'Jazz Fusion' style:

In Hout Bay, it's really cut off... we want to work with schools, get three areas, Hout Bay, Retreat and Lavender Hill, then every three months or so, get them together, it's their only chance to see a different community... then maybe some of them, they will want to find out more, and realise there is a world out there... like we did.

Now, he dreams of visiting Cuba: 'We would like to go to Cuba just for two or three months... you've got to go out there and experience the world.'

CONCLUSION

The juxtaposition of jazz and salsa creates interesting conflicts between what is seen as a 'local' and indeed, a formalised 'traditional' dance style, and salsa, coming from abroad. As the two dance forms form links and crossovers in style and form, different concepts of community, tradition, culture and participation come together, challenging existing tropes and forcing individuals to define new trajectories of growth and self-definition. As Friedman (2002) states, 'borders signify a contact zone where fluid differences meet, where power circulates in complex and multi-directional ways, where agency exists on both sides of the shifting and permeable divide (3). Jazz Dance is imbued with

concepts of a 'coloured' culture defined through shared practices, and, some would argue, ethnicised (sic) due to the relative social isolation of those who practiced it under apartheid segregation, and yet, through its own shifting practices, and incorporation of salsa moves, is shifting beyond its own definitions. Debates about whether Jazz will 'die' out, and whether the Jazz danced today is influenced by salsa, prevail, whilst Jazz has its own stylistic schism based on class and locality.

For those taking part in salsa, including the growing number of Jazz dancers, boundaries break down between participants within the flexibility of the dance space and for those who participate, relationships are struck up with people from other 'cultures' and countries. Through dance, as a creative centre of social activity derived from within the city, as well as experiential participation within a world of musical genres and embodied stylistic contexts, plural and contested notions of community open up, expressed through multiple imaginaries, desires and realities, of 'belonging'.

This raises questions, when a Jazz dance or salsa community extends, or has the potential to extend, as a creative and fluid form of people-derived social interaction beyond its own territorial limits, whether approaches towards communities in cities should remain spatially divided. It has been argued by Miraftab (2007) for example, that it would be more productive for the focus of government policies to be on people's ownership of Cape Town City to enable some people dispossessed in the past to 'regain' the city, than on creating City Improvement Districts that act as bounded and territorialized notions of community, that only recreate apartheid segregation. Although I am not attempting to paint an overly rosy situation, I believe that the dance forms of Jazz and Salsa described in this study, through their shared interfaces, do open up some new possibilities for interaction and awareness beyond the very divided and bounded realities that people live in Cape Town, and where there is a 'need to consider whether the scale upon which sameness and difference are calculated might be altered productively so that the strangeness of strangers goes out of focus and other dimensions of a basic sameness can be acknowledged and made significant' (Gilroy 04: 3-4). After all, 'D' claims that what brought him into the city centre:

'It's the salsa... otherwise we wouldn't have come to the city. What else is there for us in the city, there's no Jazz club in the city... We would only have ended up at the G-Spot and West End. ... Now you have shopping malls in your community, why else would people come out of their areas?

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Maxwell Xolani Rani - *An overview of traditional dance on South African Townships: Lost meaning-New traditions-the effects of modernity*

The paper focuses on the Western influences from rural to urban migration, which changed the physical, socio-cultural and ideological spaces in which dance takes place. As people moved to the Townships, cultures were mixed and new forms were created. This has impacted the meaning, context, and function of African traditional dance. In this paper, I hope to examine the impact of migration on traditional dance in South Africa. I will address the elements of modernity that led to change; discuss aspects of traditional dance which have been lost; describe the new forms of dance which have been created; examine the implications of modernity for traditional dance today.

Maxwell Xolani Rani

**An overview of traditional dance on South African Townships:
Lost meaning- New traditions- The effects of modernity.**

Since the colonisation of Africa, traditional African dance has undergone extensive changes. Western influence and rural-to-urban migration has changed the physical, socio-cultural and ideological spaces in which dance takes places, as people moved to townships, cultures mixed and new forms were created. This has impacted the meaning, context, and function of African dance.

In this paper, I hope to examine the impact of migration on traditional dance in South Africa. I will address the elements of modernity that led to change; discuss aspects of traditional dance which have been lost; describe the new forms of dance which have been created; and examine the implications of modernity for traditional dance today.

Characteristics of African dance

In order to discuss the transformation of South African traditional dance, I first want to briefly discuss elements of traditional dance in Africa. According to Doris Green, dance in African culture is a way of life (1996). It is passed down from generation to generation within a group for religious, social or other ceremonial purposes (Snipe 1996, p. 68). It is associated with everyday activities, such as birth, death, puberty, war, recreation, initiation and ritual (1996). Dance is a way to communicate, to express feelings and beliefs, and to preserve history and cultural traditions. African dance is not detached from people, but part of “a whole complex of living,” according to Pearl Primus (p. 6). It functions as the community’s cultural and artistic expression (Snipe 1996, p. 63). Primus describes African dance as “a hypnotic marriage between life and dance” (1996, p. 6). Traditional dance also tends to be participatory in nature, and the role of the dancer and the observer is often interchangeable (Nicholls 1996). It is important to note that although much has been written on the subject, a lot of the existing scholarly literature on African dance is written by Western academics, rather than by the “true” African dancers themselves. Even when written by dancers from traditional cultures, it is generally written on a plane that is inaccessible to most Africans, in language and format that is reserved for Western scholars. It is important, then, to read scholarship on and definitions of African dance critically. Art and craft means different things to each person, and we should bear in mind the question, ‘Can writing about African dance as an outsider ever truly capture the essence of African dance is?’ Here, I will attempt to discuss the historical events and influences that have transformed traditional dance in the townships “Township refers to a small geographic area, denoting a lower level territorial with a poorer standard of life, such behaviour was called divide and rule, subdivision and areas that were established to exclude white people from black. It has no entertaining centres, no downtown, few stores and few public amenities” (Copland 1985:183) I will be exploring the negative and positive implications of modernity, and examine the meaning of those changes for dancers and people today.

Historical overview: Migration and Modernity in South Africa

Until 1870, South Africa was primarily an agricultural country. The discovery of gold in the Witwatersrand and diamonds in Kimberley, however, caused a massive migration of people from rural areas in the cities as they came looking for work in the mines (Louw

2004, p. 107). Thus, modernity and industrialisation caused many South Africans to move to cities. People also migrated to urban areas because of the 1913 and 1936 Land Acts. These laws restricted black settlement in rural areas to a few well-defined areas which were largely unsuitable for farming. That's because they could no longer make a living in rural areas, black people were forced to abandon subsistence living and move to the cities (Gelderblom 2004, p. 123). Black urbanisation accelerated rapidly in the 20th Century, from 13% in 1911 to 33% in 1970 and 38.6% in 1980. By 1986, at least 50% of South Africa's African population was living in urban areas (Louw 2004, p. 108). When laws on black migration were lifted in 1994 with the creation of the new government, migration rates rose even more sharply, and South Africa became the most urbanised region in sub-Saharan Africa (Louw 2004, p. 110). Today, "black" South Africans are drawn to townships by a higher general standard of education, better housing and employment opportunities, the possibility of having piped water and decent sanitation services, and food subsidies (Louw 2004, p.110). Thus, this will depend as a South African which Township are you from, because most of them, as a Township man myself, do not have good housing, educational facilities and clinics. This mass migration had an enormous effect on traditional culture, and in particular, traditional dance.

Migration: Dancing in New Spaces

Traditional dance has lost many of its vital elements as it has moved from rural areas to townships, and has been forced to adapt to changing circumstances. One causal factor of change has been the mix of different cultures in urban areas, which most of my African dance colleagues call "transcultural". People from all the different South African tribes were moving to the townships to find work, including people from Xhosa, Sotho, Zulu, Venda, and Tswana ethnic backgrounds. These are very distinct cultural groups with widely varying traditions. For example, Xhosa traditional dances involve a lot of shuffling, shimmying and digging, while Tswana dances requires dynamics that are identical to the San people, and Sotho dances include a lot of striding in particular from the man, as per the mountainous terrains from which their tribes come from. The different tribes also have widely varying rituals and beliefs concerning issues of the rite of passage. When Africans of different cultures met in urban areas, such as the Johannesburg gold mines, they met in a new environment "with peculiar culture, values and norms to which they willy-nilly had to adapt" (Maqoma 2001, p. 75). Through such a cocktail of cultures and traditions in one space, domestication of movements, language, dress codes, and dances came to play.

This mix of cultures can lead to a loss of differences in favour of the new culture or nation. In traditional context, people were only concerned with their local areas. However, with modernity and the subsequent migration to the cities, people's loyalty shifted from the village to the township, city or nation. They attempted to submerge their differences to forge a new unity, which caused a loss of diversity and traditions that came from particular villages (Hanna 1976). When people move from rural homelands to townships, their dances also take place in a completely new physical and geographical environment. Traditionally, dance and the environment were intimately connected. Primus has written that "African dance uses the earth as if it were an extension of the dancer's own feet, as if it were a stage of rubber from which he can bounce to the skies, as if it were a soft bed upon which he could roll and be protected". This love of the earth, she argues, is one of the main factors of African dance, and gives the dance a certain vitality and dynamic strength (1996, pgs. 6-7).

In townships, however, people have had to adapt dance to new environments and contexts. For example, the amaXhosa people, who came originally from South Africa's south-eastern coastal region, traditionally built their huts arranged in a well-defined semi-circle. The entrances faced a cattle kraal. The kraal is very symbolic in Xhosa culture, the venue for important social functions, ceremonies and rituals. It is also valued because it is the home of the ancestors. Now, however, people in townships usually live in shacks or houses that are formally arranged in lines and separated by streets. This is a completely different arrangement, which significantly changes the environment and context, and thus the meaning, of the dance (Molapisi 2005, p. 11). In addition, performing traditional ceremonies in the urban area is difficult since they are not accorded the dignity they deserve (Cox 2005, p. 27).

In addition to a new physical space, urban migration to the townships caused traditional dance to take place in a new socio-cultural space. Initially, most migrants to the cities were single male workers, and so new township communities did not have the same demographics as villages. For example, mining communities were largely made up of male workers, while women and children remained in the rural areas. The gumboots dance, a workers' dance that evolved in the mines that incorporates highly complex rhythms anchored in weight, an element of competition, and vocal call and response, with socio-political elements attached to it was influenced by these new social demographics in townships (Sichel 1997, p. 152). While traditional South African dances had clearly defined roles for different members of society and for men, women and children of different ages, in the townships these roles have changed significantly, representing a loss of traditional culture. "Experiences, insight, and methodology that have sustained African communities for generations could well be lost to future generations," Nicholls writes (1996). This is because traditional African dance is meaningful only within a given socio-cultural context. Traditional African dance has also moved onto the stage, a Western context and format. This is a major departure from dance's traditional role. "For the majority of South Africans, dance is something you do at weddings, funerals, celebrations, rite of passage or traditional healing rituals, even in the workplace or simply spontaneously. It is not necessarily something you purchase a ticket for to see in a theatre," writes Adrienne Sichel (1997, p. 151). When moved onto a western stage, traditional dance in South Africa loses its context and thus loses much of its meaning. Christopher Hurst has argued that the staging of traditional or "fusion" dances in a Western concert format is inaccessible to different audiences because its highly contextualised associations are not accessible to different cultures (2001, p. 67). African governments, including the South African government, have begun holding cultural festivals to preserve traditional dances. However, these festivals do not actually showcase authentic traditional dances. Rather, what is performed is better described as *neo-traditional* (Nicholls 1996). Moving traditional dance onto the stage also makes it an elitist commodity, because not everyone can afford a ticket. This is against the participatory and inclusive nature of traditional dance.

Modernity: Through Western eyes

As different African cultures were mixing in the townships and adapting to new physical and socio-cultural spaces, they were also confronting new ideological spaces and the influence of modernity's Western norms and values. Nicholls, among others, has argued that modernity is having an adverse affect on traditional dance in Africa (1996). The influence of education, mass media, Christianity and urbanisation has eroded indigenous culture, and it ceases to be practised. One township dweller described the effect of urbanisation and modernity to Kevin Cox in 2005:

"People who have culture, to me, are those who strive to keep their traditions alive, even if they have appreciation for the cultures of others. Most people in the city disregard the culture of African people. Even those who claim to practice it mostly talk about their own modified cultures, not The Culture. Many no longer practice the fundamental rituals of African culture. I mean, they no longer consult with their ancestors. And as soon as you have forsaken your ancestors, you have lost culture" (27).

In the past, cultural norms and values were handed down from generation to generation in many ways, not least of which was through dance. When traditional cultures encountered modernity, however, schools began to take on responsibility for teaching norms and values to the younger generation (Molapisi 2005, pgs. 14-15). For instance, patriarchy, a cornerstone of African traditional culture, has been strongly challenged by Western education (Molapisi 2005, p. 12). The prevalence of foreign pop culture has pushed African tradition to the side and created a generation gap. Furthermore, because of Africa's colonial legacy, African traditional dance has long been devalued as an art form. Although "blacks" were well versed in Europe's cultural heritage, colonisers were not often knowledgeable about "the heritage of the vanquished." When they were exposed to traditional African culture, they often approached it with negative perceptions. According to Sir Rex Nettleford, "African dance for a long time was reported, described and classified as 'licentious, savage and heathenistic'" (1990, p. xv). Nettleford points out that in circumstances of coloniser-colonised, "the dance and all other artistic expressions of the overlord take precedence over those of the subjugated" (1990, p. xv). Simply put, Westerners did not appreciate African dance.

In South Africa in particular, when Europeans colonised this country they brought ballet with them. The apartheid government distinguished between African traditional dances and "high art," which came from the Western aesthetic tradition. Ballet was the main component of this "high art." It was accessible only to the white middle class and supported by the government and businesses. African dance forms, on the other hand, were viewed through a Western lens as primitive, exotic and simple, and were given little place or value (Waterman 1997, pgs. 174-5). This is poignantly illustrated by a story about renowned ballerina Anna Pavlova's visit to South Africa. Pavlova was introduced to a Zulu dancer as "the best dancer in the world," to which he replied, "No, I am the best dancer in the world." Perhaps he was the best dancer in the world, or at least a very talented and skilled dancer, but Western ideals of "high art" and "low art" — or rather, tribal spectacle — did not allow a space in which the Zulu dancer's skills and talents could be appreciated (Hurwitz 1997, p. 110).

The arrival of Christianity in South Africa has had a detrimental effect on the conservation of traditional dance. Dance had always been an integral part of African traditional religion, just as traditional religion was a central part of dance. However, Christianity's arrival challenged not only the place of dance in religion, but the existence of traditional dance itself. Christian worship was dominated by verbal expression; there was no place for dance in religion, and its primacy became threatened (Ajayi 1996, p. 192). Further, because it was vital for Christian missionaries to establish "an undisputed monopoly of their own notion of the sacred," dance was blamed for perpetuating traditional religion and became the target of "unrelieving and often indiscriminate attack" (Ajayi 1996, p. 192). Modernity and Western religion have also caused many traditional dances to become secularised, losing much of their original context and meaning

(Hazzard-Gordon 1996, p. 109). Although dance was targeted and repressed as an agent that perpetuated traditional religion, which was seen by missionaries as satanic and a threat, it is still an important force in religious worship in Africa today. It has been “appropriated” and has become integral to Christianity, the religion that initially sought its destruction (Ajayi 1996, p. 200). Often, dances that “whites” abroad and in South Africa consider “uniquely African” actually evolved because of Western influences. For example, the “gumboot” dance, which evolved among migrant workers in the gold mines of South Africa, would not have developed if Westerners had not introduced gumboots, mines, and dance competitions (Marce 1997, p. 146). Furthermore, these dances have been misunderstood and appropriated. Although the “gumboot” dance can actually be seen as a political statement, Hugh Tracey, a “white” South African, wrote in 1952 that mine dances are secular dances “performed wholly and singly for the fun and enjoyment of dancing” (p. 1). He writes, “The dances are exactly what they appear to be, movement for the love of movement, without a hidden, secondary or spiritual meaning behind the physical actions; a little clowning, maybe, and a little mime, but as a rule, nothing more” (2). Tracey entirely misses the deeper social and political meanings of the gumboot dance. Likewise, when Africans find themselves immersed in a culture and value system that can’t appreciate the deep and numerous meanings of traditional African dance, those meanings begin to be lost. Western music has also influenced the music of traditional South African dance. Further, with the advent of modernity and urbanisation, people no longer only danced to traditional music. American jazz music, for instance, had a huge influence on South Africa’s culture of music and dance from the 1920s onward. According to Ballantine, in the early 1900s, urban Africans were enthralled by American culture (1993, p. 13). American jazz led to the creation of the South African jazz tradition, which replaced traditional music as the primary accompaniment for dancing. Today, new forms of township dance often turn to Western music for inspiration, rather than traditional or indigenous South African music. Decades ago, for example, Pantsula dance was often performed to live music, but today Pantsula dancers often use American and international music such as ‘JM Silk’ and ‘2 Unlimited’ (Myburgh 1993, p. 1). One young Pantsula dancer testified that many Pantsula groups prefer American music to local music because “it’s got more power, meaning it’s got more beat, more rhythm and more instruments” (Myburgh 1993, p. 21).

Dancing for money: a loss of integrity?

The loss of many aspects of traditional African dance is considered by many people to be a tragic effect of modernisation. New, modern forms of dance and neo-traditional revivals of indigenous dances are simply recreation and entertainment, Nicholls argues; they do not have the same function as traditional dances once did, or produce the same social outcomes (1996). However, modernity has caused Africans to perform traditional dances for a new purpose: money. Tourists want to see traditional African dances and find a bit of “local colour” (Nicholls 1996) As a result, exploitation of traditional dance is common. Many Africans perform in cabaret acts for tourists or at nightclubs. The audiences do not understand African dance, and don’t care whether the performers use authentic masks, dance gestures or drum passages. The net effect is a loss of dignity and authenticity. The original purpose of the dance, whether to celebrate, mourn, or simply communicate everyday activities, is lost; to tourists, it is only a spectacle. During my own travels around South Africa I have witnessed several “traditional African dances” in situations that made me uncomfortable. Once I watched a group of four young Xhosa boys perform traditional ‘gumboot’ dances for money. Removed from its context of protest and competition, the dance did not have the same meaning; in addition, I felt very voyeuristic. The dancers and the audience were very clearly delineated, a notable

departure from the character of traditional African dance, where participant and observer are one and the same with a fluid and interactive relationship. This trend of African traditional dance as a tourist spectacle is often blamed as the cause of the decline in cultural and artistic standards (Nicholls 1996). In addition to the moneymaking potential of tourist enterprises, which cheapen the integrity of traditional African dance, modernity and township life has also created a dancing culture where many dancers compete for money. In Collin Myburgh's interviews with Pantsula dancers (1993), many of his respondents said that they dance in order to win money. I must say that personally, there are deep reasons for performing for money; some people come from a very disadvantaged background with financial problems. Such people then use dance positively, it depends how you view it as a catalyst to aid family poverty, some pay school fees, clothe themselves, and this is another factor that needs to be explored. Presently, most of the Township performers reverse the tourism norm by finding better ways of entertaining and capitalising in on what is assumed as "African" by their employers, "tourism associations". They even have unions and western presentations based on expected performing ability, but still the issue of appreciation is questionable.

New traditions, new meanings

As traditional dance has lost significance and meaning in urban areas, it is important to recognise that the new forms of dance which have emerged have a positive value; they allow people living in the townships who have never experienced traditional rural life to construct meaning from the lives around them (Nicholls 1996).

Like traditional dances, these forms of dance have developed historically and have deep social and cultural significance. Some, like the gumboots dance and the Marabi style, have been passed from generation to generation. They are influenced by different cultures, and not taught or learned in dance studios (Myburgh 1993, p. 30). These new forms of dance are vital because today, many young people do not identify with traditional culture. Instead, testified Gregory Maqoma in 2001, many find their identity within the "cocktail and confluence of township life," not within traditional culture (2001, p. 76). One Zulu girl in a township high school said that she enjoys Zulu traditional dance, but has to practice it; it is not natural for her (Dolby 2001, p. 54). New forms of dance give people living in South African townships who have never lived traditional lifestyles in rural areas a way to identify and a vehicle for expression of their identity, which is a confluence of traditional and Western values.

Marabi is one example of a dance born in the Townships in the 1920s that has become a traditional South African dance and contributed to the formation of new urban identities. According to Maqoma, marabi gave "exuberant meaning" to the new urban culture. It created hope, opened the possibilities for racial mix, and brought people together (2001, p. 75). Pantsula, created in Sophiatown and Alexandra townships in the 1950s and 1960s, is another dance born in urban areas that "provides a language for expressing the frustrations, ideals and dreams of many black South Africans" (Myburgh 1993, p. 1). It has also opened the way for cultural shifts in gender and age roles. It used to only be performed by older men, but now it is widespread, performed by youngsters, teens and adults alike. Unlike traditional dance, there are no gender, age or colour differences when it comes to who can perform Pantsula dance (Myburgh 1993, p. 1). Some new traditional dances also have political meaning. For example, the gumboots dance of mine workers was, according to Snipe, "a testament of the struggle these men face on a daily basis under the exploitative apartheid policy" (1996, p. 70). Ballantine writes that new forms of township music and dance, such as Marabi, were sometimes

associated with a moral persuasion. They believed that “whites” were racist oppressors because they were ignorant; new forms of dance were meant to demonstrate to whites that “blacks” were *worthy* of better social, political and economic treatment (1993, p. 40). In this way, new forms of dance served as an emancipatory social role of protesting apartheid policies. Pantsula can also be used to make social comments or statements. For example, it can be used to express political concerns, educational worries, issues about sexuality and relationships, and statements about violence, and Shebeen and township life (Myburgh 1993, p. 3).

Where to from here? Traditional dance in a changing world

It is a challenge today for people living in South African townships to override Western stereotypes of Africa and maintain the integrity of traditional dance. “The world sees Africa as a war zone, ravaged by the AIDS pandemic, poverty...on the other hand, [Africa] is seen as exotic, colourful and primitive,” Maqoma writes (2001, p. 79). People do not recognise the reality of Africa today because they are blinded by expectations of Africa of the past. Maqoma argues that African dancers cannot keep simply presenting “old” traditions if there is a “new reality”, or they will simply perpetuate these Western stereotypes. At the same time, however, Nicholls has emphasised the importance of remembering elements of traditional African dance and keeping traditions alive. He calls for an agenda of conservation, which is “continuity within a living tradition,” rather than preservation, which is oriented towards the academic community and freezes tradition in time without room for evolution (1996). Many African dancers, then, are aiming to remember elements of traditional dance and keep traditions alive while simultaneously adapting to change. This offers the potential for great creativity, and an opportunity to educate the world about the many-faceted nature of African dance and break down stereotypes of a “primitive”, primal Africa while remembering and conserving traditional art and knowledge.

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Gerard Samuel - *Undressing the (w)rapper: Disability dance*

The artistic expressions of dancers with physical and mental handicaps/ impairments/ disabilities is for many audiences an indulgent, simple past time. Why do we relegate some dancers to the margins of dance performance? How is this played out in relation to rurality and shifting notions of urban culture for the person with a disability? Cultural theorists - Richard Schechner's works are drawn to suggest a frame for the re-contextualisation of disability dance within notions of popular dance and the mass and high cultural space.

This paper explores the difficult terrain of who can and should not dance by accessing Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence. It will raise many questions around the context that is disability arts chiefly in South Africa to suggest a unique position for contemporary dance by people with disabilities that profoundly rocks notions of perfection, dancing and black bodies in dance.

Undressing the (w)rapper: Disability dance

Key words: disability dance, subversion, perfection, euphemism

Introduction

The plight of Cape Town's wheelchair dancers highlighted in Cape Town journalist, Cosmo Duff-Gordon's (2008), recent newspaper article "Re-inventing the wheel" intrigues me on several levels. The commentary provides a welcome affirmation of disability arts in a South African context on the one hand and a mournful recognition of its self-relegated category - dance sport (a term which needs further exploration) for this contemporary, and largely urban dance form on the other. For many uninitiated audiences of disability dance (another term to which I will return) these artistic expressions of dancers from the disabled¹ community are often seen as harmless, simple past time. For me, this unique space offers much insight into notion of contemporary theatre dance particularly in the South African context. Why do we cage these aspiring Western Cape dancers who wish to fly like birds (ibid)? This paper will raise many questions around the context that disability arts finds itself in the high culture, mass culture debates and in the urban (and I would like to add rural) understandings - whose dance, when is it dance and how does a claimed position in dance evolve in order to suggest a survival cloak of the body.

As we grapple with this broad topic more questions emerge in the negotiation of a difficult terrain that also asks who can and should not dance, what is the dancing body, when is it dance and where is the place of modern educational dance and creative movement for someone with a physical or mental disability who performs in a contemporary and/or urban setting? The complexity of the dancer confined to a wheelchair within the praxis of contemporary theatre dance is thus added to this mixed masala².

Duff-Gordon's bold assertion that "dancing is one of those things that defines us as human" (2008:10) allows for deeper reflection and hints at the fundamental humanity of such dancers who are differently-abled. In my view, her³ entry into the trajectory that is the development of so-called high-, mass- and urban culture reveal notions of the body as contemporary survivor and reservoir.

At the outset what one needs to consider is a few working definitions for disability dance and my location of the form under the umbrella of contemporary theatre dance in South Africa. In my view, the body's artistic impulse to music, crime and violence, religion, socio-economic circumstances and a myriad of other stimuli is filtered (Sherborne 1990) through movement to which the artist's need for story-sharing is layered. Through my own contemporary theatre dance praxis with children and youth with disabilities in KwaZulu – Natal and in Denmark, these glimmers of hope provide unique insight into our

¹ The use of the term 'the disabled' is used as collective for all persons with disabilities and accepts the complex differentiation that exists within these communities.

² Masala – the Indian word/term used for a mixture or blend of many aromatic spices is used here to highlight the many layered contexts in which the dancer with disabilities find herself.

³The subject position of male is contested throughout this paper to subvert any linguistic hegemony and to question the position and role of female in Dance

common humanity. These dance explorations suggest that as theatre performances they are distinct voices not unlike rap artists - uncomfortable poets in our contemporary music society. Therefore, as one undresses the wrapping and rapper of disability dance a basis for my paper emerges.

From my subjective position disability arts choreographer I am simultaneously insider given my heritage as classical trained ballet dancer and choreographer of children's theatre works with and for young people with disabilities, and outsider defined by my so called able body status and overwhelming urban experience. Feminist author Gayathri Spivak's (1990) comment 'For me, the question 'Who should speak?' is less crucial than 'Who is listening?' is apt in this sense. Much of my work foregoes the authenticity argument as I enter into the fight for the recognition of disability dance as meaningful theatrical art.

In Front Of The Closet Mirror: A Few Questions Laid Bare

When examining disability dance in a contemporary urban setting in Africa what new knowledge of the subject Dance emerges for those who are in the rural frame on the one hand and for the city dweller on the other? How will the mushrooming of multi-disciplinary Arts Festivals in unkempt (sic) rural settings such as the Klein Karoo Kunstefees shift notions of the subject of Dance for the local/indigenous populace as well as deviant dance-makers? Who is being bumped onto the margins? Does disabled dance choose to speak from the edge or is it coerced into the wings of our mainstages?

I posit that the experience of rural based dance groups and dances with disabilities can be paralleled to illustrate the degree to which both groups are isolated and largely voiceless.

As contemporary theatre practices evolve chiefly in the city spaces, many farming communities face isolation and deal with the stigma of ignorance. With rapid technological advancements, cell phones and televisions, gaps between city stages and rural community halls are shrinking and groundbreaking performances are beginning to occur in unconventional performance spaces such as escalators in shopping malls and hotel rooms (Pather: 1999). It is conceivable that such works can now be beamed live into the remotest of communities in an unprecedented manner thus radically altering the contemporary rural landscape. It can therefore be argued that these acts of theatre can be seen as acts of subversion and of celebration of popular and sub-cultural expression. On the one hand such performances shatter the myth that contemporary theatre dance can only be considered serious performance when in formal theatre space. By taking such works to public spaces, the educative interaction with the man (sic) in the street is as much for the performer as it is for the passing viewer. With new layers of communication beginning to be explored cracks in the foundation of contemporary theatre dance become exposed.

For many the confrontation of the wheelchair dancer in the territorial boundaries of a formal theatre space stirs uncomfortable feelings of the body, aesthetics and in the South African context the particular difficulty of unwrapping the 'black dancing body' – exotic and noble savage (Steeves, E: 1973) falls under the spotlight. Thus, my casual witness of Vincent's (a single legged dancing Capetonian at a social gathering in a community/ school hall in the Southern suburbs of Lansdowne in April 2008) could be interpreted as his deliberate exhibition of subversive dance and can be seen as a thread

in the formation of urban subculture. As struggling, wheelchair dance pioneer in Cape Town, Gladys Bullock and award winning choreographers like Nicola Visser and Malcolm Black of Remix Dance Project⁴, also assert their subversive work and constantly argue for legitimacy of the disabled as dancer and valued human being.

It is useful to remember that this difficult fight occurs within the progressive space and world renowned new constitution of South Africa. One can only imagine the limitations to success for those in disability arts in countries such as Zimbabwe and a global perspective of prejudice which millions of others endure. When one contemplates the difficulties of the new South African scenario, then the extent to which education for the acceptance for people with disabilities as dancers in many other *verkramp*⁵ governments globally that still needs to be undertaken can truly begin to be understood. Can any elitist culture in dance maintain its relevance whilst the onslaught of such contemporary comets such as performance art, disabled dance, hip hop, new musical theatre works, reality TV dance shows collide?

Where does one begin when undressing the wrapping that shrouds the dancer with disabilities? Who is being protected the rap poet-dancer or the audience? And what is it about the dancer confined to a wheelchair that some of us may not want to have knowledge of or to know? KwaZulu-Natal educationist and scholar Nyna Amin (2008) offers some insight by suggesting that 'knowledge' could be interpreted as precise and 'knowing' as tentative with a shifting notion of implicit truth. This can be extended to problematise a fixed aesthetic for contemporary theatre dance.

For South African choreographer, the shifting spaces and tilting times (Pather: 1999) in which one operates is ever mindful of the fluidity in which the work will be performed and received by dancers, audiences and the media. Any notion especially by a powerful media of who should dance in such contexts must be challenged for the deepening of one's understanding of the dancing body. The central position of the physically fit, youth and able body types should therefore be contested sites for exploration. The dominant aesthetic of white female dancing bodies in South Africa that still persists in many theatre spaces, and the subversive role that disability arts could play becomes even more urgent in this kaleidoscope. The position of 'black is beautiful' and disability dance as beautiful could be likened to a consciousness movement⁶, redefining the very nature of what constitutes a dancing body and can begin to address many social ills through its performance. In boldly arguing for dance to be performed by all persons/ human beings much could be taught to a 21st c. youth obsessed cultures and xenophobic societies.

These and a myriad other challenges to notions of the perfect ideal dancing body need further debating as one forges notions of popular culture for some, mass cultural experience by a few and urban-culture explored in farms and villages.

⁴ Remix Dance Project, based in Cape Town, is an acclaimed contemporary dance initiative that brings together performers with physical disabilities and performers without.

⁵ The Afrikaans word for conservative, narrow minded is used here to highlight the restrictive, dehumanizing Apartheid regime that was the old South African government effect for people with disabilities.

⁶ The Black Consciousness Movement which began in the US in the 1960s and was jettisoned to prominence by human rights activist Steve Biko in SA, had as an underpinning value that beauty was also in black in a highly racially charged and separatist apartheid environment.

The Unhinged Closet: some Historical Contexts For Disability Dance In KwaZulu-Natal

Whilst there is undoubtedly dance practices by persons with disabilities prior to 1990s in South Africa, in KwaZulu-Natal in particular a resurgence of interest in dance by the disabled by the provincial cultural institution – The Playhouse Company in KwaZulu-Natal coincided with the birth of the new South Africa. Durban based, John Mthethwa had undertaken pioneering work through his KwaZulu-Natal Ballroom Dance Association for Disabled from as early as the 1980s. The organisation was based at the infamous (sic) Stable Theatre, Alice Street, Durban - an arts venue noted for its 'protest theatre' works.

For many artists with disabilities opportunities for performance was largely limited to a few concerts in school and or community halls and failed to attract a wider recognition within the performing arts industry and thus contemporary theatre dance practitioners. The re-birth or renaissance of disability dance could be located in the flowering of the Human Rights culture of the new South Africa post 1994. As equal rights for the disabled became enshrined through many improved laws greater access to funds and spaces for these fledgling artists with disabilities more performances and dance projects followed.

The demise of apartheid also saw a repositioning of contemporary dance as a vehicle highly suited to a maneuverability between dance forms as former separate dance 'cultures collided' (Schechner) in newly established neutral zones. Multi-cultural presentations, productions and festivals became the vogue for much of the 1990s in South Africa. The disabled were encouraged by local and foreign government initiatives to participate in collaborations and experiments such as the In Touch Tshwarangano disability integrated arts project funded in part by the British Council. Many small companies such as Gladys Agulhas's Agulhas Theatre Works⁷ based in Johannesburg sprung up in former townships and found themselves in established / and formal theatre spaces that was once the sole prerogative of high cultural expressions like classical ballet.

The dismantling of the collective baggage of the past at these events saw many dance forms battling on a uneven playing fields as the claiming and re-claiming of the all important centre position for new role-players was argued. For some dance forms such as classical ballet their reserved position, as government fully subsidized high art form was unquestionable whereas for others such as many so called traditional/ cultural African and Indian dances any hint at relegation to the 'back of the bus'⁸ was fiercely resisted. Therefore, transitions and transformations in the notion of mainstream contemporary theatre dance have been a feature of much dance making for the past 14

⁷ Agulhas Theatre Works is based in Johannesburg and is led by pioneering artist and award-winning choreographer Gladys Agulhas. Their unapologetic approach to integrated arts has been strongly influenced by UK dance pioneer Adam Benjamin of Candoco

⁸ On 1 December 1955 Rosa Parks a black/ African American woman in the United States of America's deep South acted in defiance of her order to sit at the back of the bus sparking the Montgomery bus boycott. The event galvanized much support for the work of human rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. and jettisoned the fight for freedom and human dignity for all Americans black and white.

years. A plethora of newspaper dance reviews of South African events and festivals provide much insightful information of new labels in dance for the intrepid dance researcher and are beyond the scope of this paper.

Euphemisms and other stitched labels

In her seminal work, British psychotherapist and poet Valerie Sinason based at the Tavistock Clinic illustrates the pattern of euphemism and harmful labelling for persons with disabilities. Sinason (2002) reflects that from as early as 1500s English words such as retard, dunce, idiot, sub-normal, moron, mad were created around our painful reaction in the face of an encounter with a person with disabilities. If we accept Sinason's notion that 'numbed with grief' is the original definition of the word stupid then it is we who stupidly insulate ourselves from their experience. This loaded position and placement as Other for the disabled (Schechner: 1991) is also a lived experience for many persons of South Africa's Apartheid past who were defined by the potent race classification and dehumanised as individuals⁹. The effects of these discriminating practices are still manifest in our society and provide a crucial link to interpreting a deviant characteristic that is manifest in some contemporary dance forms.

Whilst the category of abnormal and deviant pre-supposes a norm or mainstream position its remains important that this position is reserved for the able bodied. In the South African context of theatre dance this has also meant white and female. This is problematic as the context of a person with disabilities as deviant separates 'them' from 'our' society (sic) and inflates the position of power and superiority for able bodied, white and female persons.

For the person with disabilities the forced removal to a lowly position through the corrosive labelling is not only a disruption of self-esteem but an insidious denial of her potential and presence. It is noteworthy that Sinason maintains that 'No human group has been forced to change its name so frequently' (Sinason: 2002). With the constant adaptation of her euphemistic name one can imagine how for many people defined as disabled their identity and cultural formation is scarred and positioned as weak and value-less.

Dance academic and KwaZulu-Natal based choreographer Lliane Loots' (2001) offer of 'multiple identities' could be appropriated and thus extended for an understanding of such complex identity formation for the artist with disabilities. Loots suggestion gives one hope that

none of us bear only a single cultural, racial or gendered identity and part of the politics of our 'nationality' is how we mediate amongst identities (Loots. 2001: 5).

Thus, Sandra Shabane who is simultaneously defined as black, mother, LeftfeetFIRST¹⁰ dancer and high school learner at a special needs school in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal

¹⁰ LeftfeetFirst Dance Theatre is a contemporary dance based company of young people with disabilities which is located at the special needs - Open Air School, in Durban KwaZulu-Natal, since 2001. The group's artistic leader and choreographer Gerard M. Samuel has pioneered several integrated and disability arts programmes most notably 'Who says, The Ugly Duckling?' in collaboration with educationalist Lene Bang-Larsen of Klubvest, Albertslund Denmark.

could be seen as the complete antithesis of weak and unworthy. Her constant mediation of these diverse roles could be seen as skilful and powerful as the manipulation of her wheels onto the dance stage. This dancer's central position on that stage becomes more than her participation at a dance festival but mirrors a complex desire to be taken seriously as a young black, female artist, not be assigned to the margins or wings, not to be spoken for, but given a space in which she can "cough out what I want to say" (Mtshali. 2004).

As a choreographer who has been working with Shabane and several dislocated others for over ten years, my own experience attests that the opportunity of a performance space provides a world in which these developing artists can share their insights be thus interpreted and are able to defend a fight for their work as future artists. Through their interaction with other contemporary dancers and performances the possibilities of their dancing bodies are legitimized and their untold human stories can be celebrated.

New Cloaks For Contemporary Theatre Dance

For the person who is defined as disabled a constructed notion of her humanity has over many years been infested by various theoretical constructions including medical-, historical-, political- and I would even posit a cultural definition¹¹ which could obscure her human presence as a complex dancing being.

Disability dance has the unique power to reposition contemporary theatre dance notions and it is my hope that it will relax its hold onto various Sport codes (from which it currently receives some support and funding) and rather pursue the so called artistic route for its long term survival. As enabling choreographers and dancers that work alongside young dancers with disabilities one needs to question why one is more comfortable celebrating award winning sprinter Oscar Pistorius as a supreme athlete and not potential supreme dance artists.

The notion that the body is a vessel of the human experiences both genetic and of environmental (de)construction could be argued for in terms of an ideal body image. We are thus blessed or cursed by our genetic make up and at risk to the elements of road rage and other environmental mishaps in relation to a perfect body. This may explain the implicit acceptance of the dancer's body as whole, incredible machine needing to be manipulated (e.g. through plastic surgery) and or controlled (e.g. by low calorie dieting, steroidal misuse) in order to be defined as perfect. Thus, we turn our eyes away from any broken parts of the body as any acceptance thereof could make us more vulnerable, fragile and imperfect.

In this sense, as expressions within popular and mass culture Hip hop and pantsula dance forms offer unique opportunities to examine the latest trends (Daly: 2008) of the ideal dancing body. Thus bold, armour plated, body hugging actions and violent gestures by young men and women become the order of the day. The ubiquitous reach for the crotch, a potent reminder of virility of man (sic) as we out-size our clothes - buying them to be bigger and better than ourselves offers a resistance to imperfection. Has our

¹¹ Samuel G. MA thesis contends in part for the recognition of disability as a cultural formation in and of itself and an intersection with multi-cultural contemporary dance practices in KwaZulu-Natal.

internalization of the threat of violent crime manifest itself in the “light footed, broken rhythmic pattern and dart-like side steps as if avoiding a switch blade” (Samuel: 2002. 54). The strong emphasis on the body’s ability to break dance – re-assembling and breaking down shoulder -, arm - and leg-parts are akin to this idea of perfect machine. One notices the many hours that are spent to honing dance (sic) skills as if any other form of uncontrolled movement could not be perfect dance. These and other isolated movements such as the stab of fingers in the air from the safety of hooded gear that characterise Hip hop as one of the most popular dance forms suggest an unwritten code for the dancing body.

Our fixation with well-oiled Body-machine extends across the global village through powerful media and thus movement is interpreted as valuable only when it remains in the realm of exercise and sport - a glorification and sublimation of the blood and guts desire for ultimate conquest. When movement is chosen to serve a higher purpose this creative production is labeled as a trivial activity - dance and thus the making of so called high art.

Conclusion

The problem for disability dance as it asserts its position within wider debates of contemporary theatre dance is how will it be received and understood in light of the transforming of Dance and of Sport in the mass society and in the rural constituencies?

As dance scholars, the need to acknowledge and further investigate our changing environments, before we impose our knowledge and knowing (Amin: 2008) of a universal aesthetic for the complexity that is contemporary theatre dance is of critical importance. What is clear is that ‘a one size fits all’ for the dancer makes any process towards a final presentation difficult and the range of review of such art works greatly problematic. Perhaps we have something to learn about what action to undertake and the harvest we could reap from Siyanda Jaca a 17-year wheelchair dancer from Port Shepstone, in KwaZulu Natal who writes,

I planted my beans-
Brown, beneath baked soil-
Sandy, clay and rocky-
Giant, green and slowly growing
My mother will harvest tomorrow.

I planted hard - sweat and tears
And harvested..
Education

If we are to accept our complex urban, rural, mass and high cultural differences, integrate and include one another’s dance practices as we shape a tolerant, ubhuntu contemporary world then our hard work and effort will celebrate our deviance and value the individual spirit of dancing human beings.

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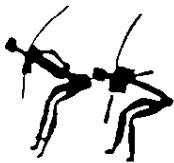
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BIOGRAPHIES



Brenda Dixon Gottschild Professor Dixon – Gottschild is the author of *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance: Dance and Other Contexts* (Greenwood Press 1996, paper 1998); *Waltzing in the Dark: African American Vaudeville and Race Politics in the Swing Era* (Palgrave/St. Martin's Press 2000, paper 2002—**winner of the 2001 Congress on Research in Dance Award for Outstanding Scholarly Dance Publication**); and *The Black Dancing Body – A Geography from Coon to Cool* (Palgrave/Macmillan 2003, paper 2005—**winner of the 2004 de la Torre Bueno prize for scholarly excellence in dance publication**). In 2008 she was awarded a grant to begin work on a new book, titled *Joan Myers Brown and the Philadelphia Dance Complex – A Biohistory of Art and Race*. She is Professor Emerita of dance studies at Temple University and a senior consultant and writer for *Dance Magazine*. She performs with her husband, choreographer Hellmut Gottschild, in an innovative form of somatic and research-based collaboration for which they coined the term, “movement theater discourse”.



Emile YX? is often considered to be one of the Godfathers of South African Hip Hop and continues to be an active B-boy, Mc, Graffiti artist and hip hop activist. In 1990, he published the first edition of Da Juice Hip Hop Magazine. He has created numerous hip hop events and projects has sent more than 70 young dancers to “Battle of the Year”, World B-boy/Breakdance championships held in Germany. Emile currently manages Black Noise and has secured tours for the group to Germany, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Belgium, United States of America and the Netherlands. Emile has also rhymed on and released 7CD’s with Black Noise and one solo album called “Who am I” Since 1995 he has also released 6 compilation CD’s and albums for Plain Madnizz, Lions of Zion and Isaac Mutant. In 1995 he also wrote a booklet called *‘What is Hip Hop?’* 2004 also saw him release the first Hip Hop DVD in South Africa called *‘Hip Hop How To’ Vol#1*.



Nita Liem was born in 1962 in Indonesia, of Chinese parents and grew up in the Netherlands. She studied dance at the theatre school of Amsterdam. Her inspiration came from the hip hop scene during the 1980s and early 1990s. In December 2000 *Don't Hit Mama* was born. *Don't Hit Mama* is a dance theatre organisation around the work of theatre maker Nita Liem. Keywords for her work are celebration and identity together with art and empowerment. Liem's fascination for social dance forms from the Afro-American tradition and her need to connect with the sources of these dance styles, urged her to travel and seek inspiration from dance masters outside the Netherlands and Europe. Nita Liem developed her vision on black dance through encounters with:- *Senegal: L'Ecole des Sables*, the dance centre of Germaine Acogny. In 2008 *Don't Hit Mama* will support an "Educate the educator" programme in Senegal, for a variety of Dutch dance teachers and – makers. Nita worked in South Africa in 1998 to produce works in collaboration with Moeketsi Koena. As artistic leader of *Don't Hit Mama* and as director of dance theatre work, Liem's work often touches issues like the quest of uprooted people, the social effects of the post-colonial era we live in and the contrasts between different worlds.



Daniel Renner was born in Tirol, Austria. In 1984 he discovered street dance which opened him to a new world of movement exploration. He then trained in classical ballet and modern dance and worked extensively as a dancer/ performer in hip hop and modern/contemporary dance. 1998 he went to the Netherlands to study at the Rotterdam Dance Academy where he graduated in 2000 with a specialisation in choreography. Since 1999 he has taught at the ArtEZ academy in Arnhem and is guest teacher in Amsterdam, Tilburg and Rotterdam. Daniel teaches Round Corner Dance. *Round Corner Technique* is a dance vocabulary which uses the elements of modern dance (Limón) and blends them with specific elements of street dance and hip hop. . Different dynamics, rhythmic patterns and specific sequential co-ordination (Wave technique) are brought together in this fusion. This creates a new language and aesthetics in dance. The power of cultural diversity within expressive movement exploration, leads to a fusion of styles, technique and traditions bringing forth creative and innovative ways of expression.



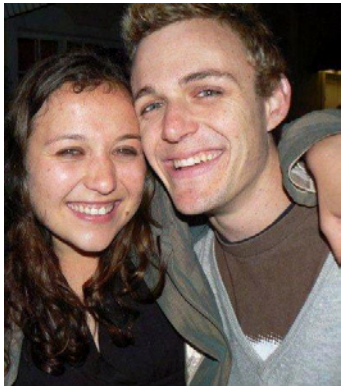
Joan van der Mast who lives in Den Haag, works as a dance teacher, choreographer, dance coach and dance advisor. A lecturer at the Rotterdam Academy, she specialises in the teaching of Modern dance (mix of Laban and Limon, with influences of Release technique, Poweryoga, Capoeira and Bartenieff Fundamentals) as well as Improvisation and composition She also lectures in the Didactics of Modern Dance & Youth Dance, Laban Movement Analysis and notation, and coaches in choreography as well as writing her own works. She is Artistic director of Ex Nunc: Centre of Modern Dance in The Hague and Artistic coordinator of DansPlan Segbroek College, Den Haag. Joan is involved with teacher training and teaches postgraduate courses for the National Centre of Amateur Art of the Netherlands and the Netherlands Dance Theater, department of education.



Bakare Babatunde Allen is currently working on the experimental blending of selected Nigerian ethnic dances such as Bata, Ekonbi and Atilogun with hip-hop, through the coordination of his production outfit called Adonis and Image Productions, Lagos Nigeria. He is a dancer, actor, a burden playwright and artistic director who studied (B.A) Drama and Music) at the Dramatic Arts Department, Obafemi Awolowo University Ile Ife, Osun State, Nigeria. He also holds a Certificate in British and Irish Literature(Modernism and Post-Modernism) from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, UK. He is at the moment at the verge of completing his M.Phil thesis on Reception and Adaptation of Ibsen's Social Political Plays in Nigerian Theatre and Drama Schools, using the Dramatic Arts Department at Obafemi Awolowo University as a Case Study.



Catherine Botha (ARAD) lectures in Philosophy at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. She is currently pursuing her PhD in Philosophy at the University of Nijmegen, the Netherlands, as well as completing her Certificate in Ballet Teaching Studies through the Royal Academy of Dance. She teaches classical ballet on a free-lance basis. Her research interests include Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Science and aesthetics, most especially focusing on dance and the body.



Kyle De Boer and **Joni Barnard** are both MA Choreography students from Rhodes University. Both have studied under the guidance of Award winning South African Choreographer Professor Gary Gordon and his First Physical Company. Completing their Honours Year in 2007 with top grades, both have sought to confront issues of sexuality in dance. Having choreographed works such as “Odd Man Out” (Kyle DB), *Sleeping Imminence* (Joni Barnard) and “One Sideways Glance: II” (Joni Barnard) they seek to explore representations of sexuality. Through creating such representations and analysing their construction through academic analysis they wish to further the explorations of Queer theory.



Nicola Elliott is a young choreographer and graduate student of Rhodes University, currently reading towards her MA in Drama, specialising in Choreography. Within the industry, her works have been presented at the Standard Bank National Arts Festival and at the FNB Dance Umbrella.



Kymberley Feltham holds a B.F.A. in Contemporary Dance from Concordia University, and is currently attending Wilfrid Laurier University where she is continuing graduate studies in Communication Studies. Kymberley has had the privilege of completing an internship with The Centre for the Arts in Human Development at Concordia University under the direction of Dr. Steven Snow, and she continues to regularly facilitate creative dance workshops as well as choreograph for the Carousel Dance Company. Highlights from her professional career include collectively founding the Pebble in Mouth Theatre Company as well as choreographing & performing principle roles for the Cambridge Center for the Arts. Kymberley has a specialized interest in the creative process as it applies to dance, visual culture and communication theory.



Dr Anne Margrete Fiskvik was educated as a dancer, choreographer and teacher in Philadelphia and New York. She wrote her doctoral thesis on choreomusical relations and idealizations in theater dance. Presently she is working on historical as well as ethnological issues, with a focus on Norwegian theatre- and folk dance. She is part of a larger Nordic research group called "Dance in Nordic Spaces". In her research, she tries to draw upon the totality of dance culture, including in the discussion both theater dance and traditional social dance.



Dr Ida Mara Freire is Associate Professor of the Center of Sciences of Education, at the Federal University of Santa Catarina. She has completed post-doctoral studies in Education and Dance. She is Director and dancer of Potlach Group of Dance with non-sighted and sighted dancers. She develops research, writing and supervise students for doctoral and masters degree about perception, body, dance and blindness. She is a member of the international advice editorial of Journal Research in Dance Education.



Sharon Friedman holds an Honours degree in History and a Postgraduate Diploma in Education. Trained in classical ballet, contemporary dance and jazz dance, she taught extensively in both primary and high schools before moving into Arts Education. Her teaching experience includes initiating, coordinating and teaching dance and movement programmes in a wide range of community projects in Cape Town and she has choreographed extensively in the contemporary dance medium as well as for Opera and Music Theatre. Sharon is co-author of "***Teaching Creative Dance --A Handbook***" (Kwela press 1997).She was a member of the daCi International Executive from 2001 -2003. She is currently a **Senior Lecturer** at the **UCT School of Dance** where she lectures in Contemporary Dance, Dance History and Teaching Methodology.



Jacobus Stephanus Gericke is a MMus student at the University of Pretoria. He is a versatile musician and receives piano tuition from Prof Ella Fourie, singing from Prof Werner Nel and he received violin tuition from Prof Zanta Hofmeyr. He has performed on a national and international level as a soloist, accompanist and as a member of various choirs and orchestras. He received several bursaries, prizes and trophies, for example Pretorium Trust, SAMRO, Tirisano, Hennie Joubert and for the best student in Music History. His first composition was published in Musicus. He has been chosen as President of the Golden Key International Honour Society UP Chapter and was one of three students to receive a Chapter Award for academic and leadership excellence.



Dr N Jade Gibson obtained her doctorate in Social Anthropology on South African Visual Art at UCT, South Africa, and has degrees in Anthropology of Art (UCL, London), Fine Art (painting), and Biomedical Science (London). She has lived and/or worked in the UK, Africa, the Caribbean, and the South Pacific. She has a keen interest in working across different cultures and theoretical disciplines, employing both creativity and theory. She has recently spent a year in the UK teaching 'World Art in Collections' for NYU in London and working as a research fellow at the University of London on the 'SUSDIV' ('Sustainable Development in a Diverse World') project. As well as this, she writes creatively (poetry and prose), and dances salsa and Cape Jazz. Her work at the PSHA explores creative cultural production, both locally and transnationally, in relation to the Visual Arts and Material Culture including Jazz/Salsa Dance. She examines practice and representation in relation to concepts of diversity, integration and social change.



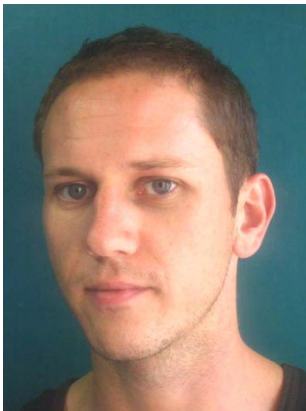
Liane Loots is the artistic director and resident choreographer of *FLATFOOT DANCE COMPANY*, a local cutting edge South African contemporary dance company that is in its sixth year as a professional company. She has won numerous national choreographic awards and commissions including the FNB VITA award for choreography (2002). She has enjoyed a joint commission with Sbonakaliso Ndaba (of *PHENDUKA DANCE THEATER*) from Durban's Playhouse Company for the 2006 Women's Arts Festival for the work "*SIDE BY SIDE*". One of her most recent work with *FLATFOOT DANCE COMPANY* ("*PREMONITIONS*") won her (jointly with David Gouldie) the prestigious 2007 KZN DANCELINK award for choreography. She has been an invited guest choreographer for companies like *SIWELA SONKE DANCE THEATRE* and the *FANTASTIC FLYING FISH DANCE COMPANY*. Loots is also the dance lecturer in the Drama and Performance Studies Programme on the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Durban) campus. She works, part-time, as the dance journalist for *The Mercury*. Loots has traveled and taught dance extensively having enjoyed dance **Liane Loots** exchanges in Denmark, India, Mali and most recently at the Stockholm School of Contemporary Dance in Sweden (2007).



Thokozani Mhlambi is currently a Projects Officer at Southern Hemisphere Consultants, an applied research consulting firm in Cape Town. Mhlambi holds a Bachelor of Music in musicology (with distinction) 2006 from the University of Cape Town and is currently completing his Master's in Public Culture (African Studies). His main research interests have been in the field of youth, music and culture in South Africa as well as Nguni indigenous and early Classical music. Highlights in his life include the publication of his article on Kwaito, in the internationally peer-reviewed *Journal of Musical Arts in Africa* (2004). Prior to joining the Southern Hemisphere, Thokozani was an intern at the Human Sciences Research Council where he worked on youth development projects and in South Africa's Peer Education Programmes report.



Sandra Müller-Spude is a choreographer, dance pedagogue, trained music mentor and teacher for elementary music pedagogy. She received her Diploma for Dance Pedagogy in 2002 at the Palucca Schule in Dresden. Since completing her degree, Ms. Müller-Spude has taught dance in various schools and institutions around the world. She gives workshops and independently produces numerous artistic projects as an event- and project manager, choreographer and/or stage director. In the last two years, Ms. Müller-Spude has focused on running projects and workshops for general educational institutions. This collaboration concentrates on work with students with social disorders. She developed and produced large school projects, involving 250 students, dancers, actors and symphony orchestras in 2006 and 2008.



Alan Parker is dancer, choreographer, teacher and researcher, based at Rhodes University in Grahamstown. He holds a BA (Honours) as well as an MA in Drama, specialising in Choreography, from Rhodes University. Alan is currently employed as a part-time lecturer/teacher in the Drama Department at Rhodes where he teaches physical theatre, contemporary dance, contact improvisation and Ashtanga Yoga. Since 2004, Alan has also worked extensively with the First Physical Theatre Company as both performer and choreographer, presenting works at the FNB Dance Umbrella in Johannesburg, the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown and the KKNK in Oudtshoorn.



Maxwell Xolani Rani In 2001, Maxwell was awarded a BMus degree in African Dance from the University of Cape Town. Since his graduation, he has been lecturer in African Dance, African dance history, African dance teaching method and African contemporary dance at the UCT School of Dance. Maxwell has an extensive portfolio as both a performer and a choreographer. He has taught extensively at A&T State University in North Carolina, Greensboro USA. College of the Arts in Namibia, and taught a master class at Meredith College, Raleigh North Carolina and Temple University in Philadelphia. USA. Maxwell is currently engaged in writing an MMus dissertation.



Gerard Samuel Director of UCT School of Dance since May 2008, holds a Diploma in Ballet from UCT (1984) and an MA (Drama and Performance Studies) UKZN (2002) He danced professionally with NAPAC Ballet Company and The Playhouse Company Dance Company, subsequently holding the senior position of Arts, Education and Development Manger for The Playhouse Company until 2006. Gerard is a pioneer of disability arts and integrated arts projects in Durban, South Africa and in Copenhagen, Denmark with his LeftfeetFIRST Dance theatre group. Some of his most notable projects include *Umcgagco - The Wedding*, *Who says*, *The Ugly Duckling?* and *Anyone Can Dance*. He is a sought after dance teacher and coach and has worked for some of South Africa's leading contemporary dance companies including Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre, The Fantastic Flying Fish and Flatfoot Dance Company. His own works include *Prabhati*, *Milky Tears* and *Awaiting Islands* and musical theatre works - *The Sound of Music*. Consultant of *Chalo Cinema*, *Taal* with the Nateswar Dance company and *The Coolie Odyssey* with RASA Productions. He was artistic Director of several African Renaissance & Office of Premier of KwaZulu-Natal Gala concerts, Traditional and indigenous arts festivals and several South African Women's Arts Festivals.

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